Dangerous "Squirrel Girl" Lurks in Campus Woods

Mysterious Mutant Terrorizes Area

by Tim McGahey
Times Contributing Writer

The tips had to be altered from the form apparently been attacked by Blafferty. Campus squirrel populations have, historically, been rather docile. No reported incidents of squirrel attack have been recorded in the College's archives. Squirrel attack however, is never out of the question. "Squirrels are very territorial; she was probably in the wrong place at the wrong time."

The Blafferty case, however, represents more than the mere mauling of a student by an ordinary squirrel. After the attack, the body of the perpetrator was examined and found to be that of a Vampire Squirrel, a breed not native to this part of Michigan and considered to be very dangerous. Some cultures believe that an attack by a Vampire Squirrel transforms the victim into a mutant, half-human / half-squirrel being that thrives for blood.

The evidence, at least in the AQ "Squirrel Girl" case, is mounting in support of that scenario. The Grand Rapids Police have been notified to help investigate the situation. According to police, the bodies of three victims were found crammed into the notches of three separate trees on the Aquinas campus. There seems to be no predictable pattern to Squirrel Girl's choice of victim, nor to her storage system.

"She doesn't keep all her nuts in one basket," commented Bob Schomtoll of the G.R.P.D. in a recent press conference, "but we've placed peanut butter traps in a few places...we'll get her."

Meanwhile, Public Safety urges all students to stay away from, "unsuspectingly fluffy" students, and proceed about campus with an overriding sense of caution. Squirrel Girl is considered to be very, very dangerous.

Aquinas College will be opening its brand new Learning Resource Center on January 25, 1996. The date of the project's completion, nearly a decade ahead of schedule, is sure to come as a pleasant surprise to many students, faculty, and staff members. An even bigger surprise is the fact that the structure, which will house the $7 million dollar complex, has been right under our noses all along.

That structure is located directly beneath the current Academic Building. It stretches four stories below the AB's basement. The hole in which the library is being constructed has been there since the 1940's, when it was originally built as a fallout shelter for the Dominican Sisters, who desperately wanted to continue to carry out their ministry even after a nuclear disaster.

Months of secrecy planning has gone into the remodeling of this massive space, and construction was almost complete at the time this issue went to press. One stumbling block that project planners had to overcome was the difficulty they faced in designing a facility so deep within the earth. Ventilation systems will ensure that air circulation is adequate, but four stories completely underground make natural lighting an impossibility.

Senior Karen Kulaga dismissed this concern, saying "Windows would be nice, but the important thing is the books."

The project was kept a secret for so long because the money for the project came from the estate of the former residents of the Carmem in which it is now being built. The shelter sat vacant for thirty years. In 1976, the photographer was mauled soon after this shot was taken.

The photographer was mauled soon after this shot was taken. Originally posted at the beginning of the 1995-96 academic year because of the recent up-rises caused by the former student who has become known around the area as the "Squirrel Girl."

According to sources, "Squirrel Girl" is actually AQ student Diane Blafferty. Blafferty was last seen on December 7 on route to her Macro Economics class. Several witnesses report seeing a large fox squirrel lunging at Blafferty's neck as she passed under a tree in which the creature had perched itself. The squirrel then made a series of small bites into Blafferty's face and neck before falling dead at Blafferty's feet. One witness said that at this point, Blafferty "ran off in the direction of the Classroom Building, but then ducked into the woods. It looked like she had sprouted a fuzzy squirrel-like tail."

Another declared, "I've never seen anything that scary." Since the December 7 incident, Public Safety officers have recovered the bodies of three victims, covered extensively with bites on their faces and neck, all of whom had apparently been attacked by Blafferty. Campus squirrel populations have, historically, been rather docile. No reported incidents of squirrel attack have been recorded in the College's archives. Squirrel attack however, is never out of the question. "Squirrels are very territorial; she was probably in the wrong place at the wrong time."

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The Resurgence of Gerald R. Ford: 
Former President Launches New White House Bid 
with AQ Senior as Running Mate

by Andy Pieper
Times News Editor

Last week on December 13, former President Gerald R. Ford announced that he was stepping out of retirement and throwing his hat back into the ring as a candidate for the Republican nomination for President of the United States. He also released his selection of running mates, and, surprising the entire nation, he named Aquinas Senior Eric VanGessel.

VanGessel and Ford met at a top secret meeting in Wege Cafeteria after Ford spoke to the Freshman Inquiry and Expression students on November 7. It was then that VanGessel coaxed Ford into the idea that the two, running on a platform of "Closing the Generation Gap," could win the party's nomination over other, more conventional Republican candidates like Robert Dole and Phil Gramm.

The announcement shocked President Clinton, who said he'll concede defeat if the duo can win the Republican nomination. For Ford and VanGessel, this means traveling for the next 4.5 months campaigning and fund-raising. The two will rely on senior citizens and college students for most of their funding, while also dipping into Ford's massive re-election hope chest which was left over from the 1976 elections. Rumors have been swirling around that if VanGessel is aiding to have shaken thousands of senior citizens' hands this month and Ford has said that he will begin frequenting his former college hang outs, Duke's Sports Bar and The Intersection.

"A couple of ideas for campaign slogans have already been tossed around, with "Ford and VanGessel: Elect Them Again," as stated earlier, closing the generation gap and healing the nation of its factional hatred is the goal of the running mates. Already VanGessel is said to have shaken thousands of senior citizens' hands this month and Ford has said that he will begin frequenting his former college hang outs, Duke's Sports Bar and The Intersection.

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The legislation was the result of many disagreements on how to balance the budget. The solution was to cut all educational loans, in order to spare a tax increase for big businesses and the rich. Senate Majority Leader and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole agreed with the plan. "Most college kids don't vote anyway," he rationalized, "besides, by the time they graduate no jobs will be left. They might fall under the poverty line due to debt, but hey, that's why we were working on eliminating welfare." His statement, "Let them pay for it themselves," was cited by Democrats as a modern day, "Let them eat cake."
Federal Gov't Threatens Second Shutdown

by Eric VanGessel
Times News Editor

In a dramatic replay from last month, the Federal government is in serious trouble of once again stopping operations for an indefinite period of time. Late-night negotiations between Republican leaders, the White House, and Democratic leaders failed to produce any kind of compromise on key budget issues. As of Friday night, the continuing resolution, which provided for government offices to remain open while a new budget was being debated, expired. Therefore without funding, the government is forced to cease operations in many areas. Many of the same things that occurred in the last government shutdown will occur again. Many agencies have already been closed for the weekend and will continue to remain closed unless Congress approves, and President Clinton signs, either a continuing resolution or passes a budget. This would effectively lay off 300,000 non-essential government employees and close many agencies starting Monday. The various military branches, law enforcement personnel, and other essential functions would remain open. Agencies that would close include the Interior Department (which administers the nations parks), the Environmental Protection Agency, and Housing and Urban Development to name a few.

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According to Republican leaders, the White House was looking to "cook the government books" and make it look like the budget was being balanced when, in essence, nothing was really being done. They further contend that no progress was being made to balance the budget by cutting huge programs like Medicare, Medicaid, education, and environmental funding. Even though no agreement was reached, the Republicans say they have no plans to introduce any legislation that would provide for some kind of continuing resolution.

Democrats, including President Clinton, accuse Republicans of cutting too deeply into programs that traditionally help the most under-privileged of American society: the poor, senior citizens, and students. President Clinton stated, "I wouldn't give into such threats a month ago, and I won't give in to them now." Therefore the President has made it clear that he will not budge on certain issues, and the Republicans have done the same.

Towards the end of last month Congress proposed legislation that would effectively lay off government employees that were "laid off" due to the shutdown, any salaries they gave up due. Many experts point out that this was a monumental waste of money and that the country actually lost money by sending people home.

Those who work for the government worry that they could once again be laid off and, due to public pressure not to approve retroactive pay, not get reimbursed. Considering the inability of either side to compromise on their respective issues, look for another shutdown come Monday, right before the Holiday Season fully kicks in.

Studies Show: Beer Drinking Leads to Big Bellies

by Eric VanGessel
Times News Editor

In an attempt to prove what every first-year college student probably knows anyway, researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, established a positive link between beer consumption and the development of a fat which has come to be known as a "beer belly." They have shown, through testing and use of experimental groups, that the more people consume, the bigger their bellies tend to get.

The tendency to carry fat around one's abdominal region is known, in scientific terms, as central adiposity, and this type of fat deposition has developed in a decisive number of those who were part of the experiment. Scientists propose that this is due to the high number of calories in beer and the tendency of many people to store excess fat in these regions. This can be a serious problem according to Joseph T. Barbolarik, former head of Biochemistry at the Zablocki Veteran's Affairs Medical Center, because people who store fat in their abdominal region are much more prone to heart attacks than those who store fat on their thighs or buttocks.

Calories, according to Barbolarik, are found in all kinds of food which include too many of them, whether in beer or spaghetti, can cause a "beer belly." This reaffirms a phenomena that many students experience as they enter college, the gradual building up of fat due to higher calorie intake and less physical activity. A major defect in the study, according to researchers, is not accounting for the lifestyle that many beer drinkers lead. This type of personality study, which would examine other dietary habits, was noticeable absent. Some believe that those who drink excessive amounts of beer are also those who eat fatty foods like hot dogs, french fries, and cheeseburgers. Most of us have seen someone drink beer and develop a serious case of "the munchies," which would also add to someone's caloric input. Another interesting aspect to this study was the effect drinking large amounts of wine have on someone's "belly." It seems, according to the report, that "excessive wine intake" has the opposite effect, it actually decreases fat in the abdominal region. Those in the experimental group who drank above average amounts of wine, whatever amount that is, found their percentage of body fat decline during the time of the study. Researchers state that since there have been positive connections made between moderate wine consumption and life expectancy, if you would like a drink, have a glass of wine instead of a beer. Student opinion so far seems to be one of passive denial. Junior Scott Schmidt summed up his thoughts on the study, saying, "I've been 21 for a few months now and I'm still skinnier than Doug Dooley."
The Debate Rages: Does Santa Claus Really Exist?

Point

by Andy Pieper

Times News Editor

Even A. J. Foyt could not travel the world in a single night, delivering toys to all the girls and boys of Earth.

Their great minds cannot come to a consensus on the issue of Santa's existence. After taking Physical Geography of Michigan this semester, another issue has floated to the forefront of our minds. How many times have we seen him on TV? Are there any similarities between Santa and the North Pole?! How many times have we seen those items floating around the world? Santa Claus simply does not exist. How can we prove that Santa Claus is not real? We must know that even A. J. Foyt could not travel the world in a single night, delivering toys to all the girls and boys of Earth.

Counterpoint

by Eric VanGessel

Times News Editor

Andy, this time you've gone too far. Since we started Point/Counterpoint, in August there has always existed a mutual respect for each other's opinion but this time you've crossed the point of no return. You've taken one of the most sacred, time honored figures in Earth's history and tried to prove that he doesn't exist. This is unforgivable, you are wrong, and I don't consider you my friend anymore. The only thing I can do to decry your argument, once again, is to offer evidence to the contrary. When trying to show that Santa is not real, I would offer evidence to the contrary. Consider this little fact: "353,000 tons (the presumed weight of Santa's sleigh), traveling 650 feet per second would create enormous weight resistance. Therefore the lead reindeer would absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy. Supposedly they would not have been able to move--a fact Santa would be pinned to the back of his sleigh (due to incredible amounts of gravity) by 4,315,015 pounds of force." There's one small flaw in this argument, we're talking about Santa. He isn't subject to physical laws of the universe. Remember all those cookies you left out for Santa? He certainly gets an out-of-shape goatee. We would be bombarded with a Santa Claus endorsed hiking and snow boots. He would have his own line of outdoorwear. Perhaps he would even copyright the "Santa" name for display on the sides of his red, fluffy Nike "Air Claus" boots.

How many times have I left out cookies on Christmas Eve and found only crumbs left the next morning? I lose count. How do you explain the fact that they were eaten at some point during the night and none were left the next day? The only possible explanation for this is that someone must have eaten them at some point between 11:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. It wasn't the dog, we never had a dog. Instead of trying to analyze every argument detailing the nonexistence of something that obviously exists, I'll stop now and let the reader get back to studying for exams. But if you come up with any more ideas, Andy, there is one simple explanation to every question. The man's name is Santa Claus, he can do anything, including giving you your first gift of coal this year.

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...)
FATHER OF THE BRIDE Part II

by Duffy Cavanaugh
Times Staff Movie Reviewer

Sequels are notoriously short on originality, hoping to rival the hit that its predecessor was. However, remake sequels have got to be even harder. Father of the Bride II has a difficult job in remaking a sequel. What I mean is Father of the Bride was a remake of the 1950 Vincente Minnelli version which starred Spencer Tracy, and it too had a sequel called Father's Little Dividend. Future sequences, like this one, are returning and Nancy Meyers and Charles Shyer, had a tough job modernizing the remake/sequel to appeal to the "90s viewer. What they came up with is a light-hearted comedy of a family we already know as the Banks family, who, a year ago, saw their oldest daughter get married.

Everything seems to be going great for George and family. Fully recovered after having been the "father of the bride," George finally feels ahead of the game. With his loving wife Nina (Diane Keaton), and son Matty (Kieran Culkin), living in the Banks' house has never been easier. Daughter Annie (Kimberly Williams), and son-in-law Brian (George Newborn), are happily married and responsible working adults and NOT living with them.

George starts thinking of retirement (or at least plans of it) when his life turns upside down.

First Annie and Brian unexpectedly announce they're going to have a baby. George of course has a crisis when he learns that he is also going to be a father... again. Nina finds out that the too is expecting. George is now befuddled; he feels too old for new parenthood yet too young for grandparenthood.

Add in that both women in George's life want Franck Eglehoff (Martin Short) to plan a double baby shower, and create a nursery for the new Banks baby.

George finds himself with a "90s style case of mid-life crisis.

Ministry

The Fall/Reload

Rapture!

Yes, Al Jourgensen, Paul Barker, and co. have finally, after what seems like centuries (well, three-and-a-half years, anyway), released some new material. This single is just a three-song taste of the 11-record that opened the CD is its release. Slugger's hosted the CD release party, which featured live performances by Agginess' own Doug Stamp, as well as Millhouse, Troll For Trout, Pillbox, Monkey Chuck and the Voice — all of whom are featured on the new release. There was food, libations, mer­chandise, tables, decorations, the whole ball of wax.

Available at a variety of local music stores, including Vinyl Solution and Schuler's Books, the CD features 15 bands, each performing one song. Besides the aforementioned, RadioActive features Grand Rapids-based bands The Bridges, Saacuhus Jihah, Jawbone and Karmic, as well as The Voice from Holland, Killer Iguanas from Big Rapids, Kalamazoo's Zone Deep Slag and the East Lansing bands Bothly and Fat Amy.

On the tracks on the disc, highlights include the Phishish "Let Yourself Feel Free" by Kamcirk, and straight-forward, rockin' "Chili Dawg" by Fat Amy, the goofy "Tree Tower Park Shuttle" from Bothly and the delightfully annoying song "Lover's In A Dream" from Detroit's own 22.

All in all, WGRD's RadioActive CD is a long-overdue treat that shows that West Michigan has the talent to be the nation's next hotbed for music. If you have a CD player, then it would be a crime not to have this release.

Stay tuned for information on WKLQ's local compilation, which is sure to be equally attractive.
Detroit Lions: Playoff Bound?

by Brian Matzke
Times Sports Editor

Watch out NFL. There is a team from the Motor City that is coming by storm. On Sunday, the Detroit Lions won by the biggest margin in their history, beating the Jacksonville Jaguars by the score of 44-0. This beats their previous blowout high of 45-3, set on Thanksgiving Day 1985, when the Lions beat the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The Lions #1 ranked offense is unstoppable. They have as many weapons to choose from that Scott Mitchell must get headaches figuring out who is most open. Morton, Moore and Perriman form the best tandem in the league, and that Barry Sanders guy can play too. But, for the Lions to win, the defense needs to play well also. Shutting out the Jaguars, who are lead by a veteran quarterback, showed that the “D” may be back in Detroit. If this is the case, beware!

The Lions could end up winning the NFC’s Central Division. A Lions win over Tampa Bay, coupled with a Green Bay loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers, spells a Central Division Championship for the Lions. More importantly, this means that they get to host the first round playoff game rather than having to go to Philly. The Lions have shown that they are a great home team, but winning on the road is not a certainty for them. If they can host the game, they would likely travel to Dallas after a win, and Dallas, although being the road, has a domed stadium.

The Lions are currently riding a six game winning streak. They are the hottest team in the NFC. Nobody really wants to play them in the playoffs (they’ve already beaten San Francisco this year, and that is when they were not playing well), and there is no reason that the Lions cannot continue on their current winning streak all the way through the month of January.

Dana Maelst grabbed eight rebounds and scored 13 points on 6-9 shooting. After easily defeating the Jaguars at home, the Saints made the long trip up north to take on the Scots from Alma College. The long bus trip obviously had an effect on the Lady Saints as they made only 15 of 56 shots during the game for a poor 27.1 percent.

“They couldn’t hit the broad side of a barn,” stated Biggs. “It seemed like we were coming together after the Indiana Tech game, then we just fell apart.”

Nikki Tuttle was held to only seven points for the game. “They were double-teaming Nikki the whole game, and then they were triple-teaming her once she got the ball,” added Biggs.

Sophomore guard Carmen Brown led the way for the Saints as she scored 11 points while connecting on three 3-pointers. Dana Maelst added eight points and Jen Norman finished with seven.

The Lady Saints have some time off before they play their next game at Madonna University on Saturday, December 30. The Saints will then play host to Purdue/Calumet on January 6, and will travel to UMW Dearborn on Tuesday, January 9. On Saturday, January 9th, the Lady Saints begin league play with a home game against Sienna Heights.

The new year looks to be promising for the Lady Saints as eight of their 14 games will be played at home. There will be plenty of opportunities to come cheer the Ladies to the WHAC championship, so come out and support the Lady Saints, you won’t be disappointed.

The Detroit Lions played host to the Lady Warriors of Indiana Tech. After earning trips to the NAIA Division II National Tournament four straight years and advancing to the “Sweet Sixteen,” and the “Elite Eight,” the Warriors came to the Aquinas Fieldhouse sporting an unimpressive 3-9 record. After being knocked out of the national tournament twice during those years, the Lady Saints were hoping to get revenge while playing on familiar territory.

After convincingly beating the ladies from Hope College, the Lady Saints came into the game sporting a decent 6-4 record. The result, which included four players in double figures, led by Nikki Tuttle’s 18 points and 16 rebounds, was a 66-44 blowout. Aquinas shot 55.6 percent from the field in the first half while holding the Warriors to just 30.6 percent to take a 33-26 lead at halftime. The Saint’s defense held up in the second half as well. The Warriors made only 6 of 27 shots in the second half and ended up making only 27 percent for the game. "We keyed on their two big scorers and forced their other players to try to beat us," stated junior point guard Nicki Biggs. Nobody really stepped up for the Warriors as only one player reached double figures. Aquinas, on the other hand, was definitely up for the challenge. They made half of their shots in the second stanza, finishing the game at 52.8 percent and outscoring their opponents 33-18 to claim their seventh victory of the year.

Alysa Dykgraaf and Bridget Lamoreaux each added 14 points for the Saints, while

The Lady Saints' next two home games will be against Purdue/Calumet on December 30, and Siena Heights on January 9.

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Men's Basketball Topples Hope

by Dana Sanotis
Times Contributing Writer

Saturday was an exciting afternoon for Men's Basketball at Aquinas. Not only did the Saints beat the Flying Dutchmen from Hope College for the first time since 1980, they annihilated them 97-58.

"We played with more emotion and intensity," said senior center Brain Zawierucha, who got things rolling in the right direction for the Saints by winning the tip. Along with Zawierucha, the starting lineup for St. Michael's McNeal, Lowe, Corey McNeal and Jim Richards. Starting guard Troy Wilbon was on the injured list, which caused some concern. "With Troy being out we all had to step up and we did," said rebounding leader Jim Richards.

Twenty-two seconds into the game, Richards found three point specialists Crittendon for the first basket and the Saints continued to go hard from there. In the next few trips up the court, McNeal went to Zawierucha for two, Richards nailed a bucket from McNeal, seven straight points from Lowe, and three jumpers from Zawierucha, which led to a 31 point lead for the Saints with fifteen minutes left to play.

Giving no mercy, AQ continued to show their skills and did not let up offensively or defensively as they went on. On the defensive end, they forced seven turnovers, grabbed eighteen boards and left Hope hopeless. Second half offensive stats included outscoring the opponent by thirteen and shooting an impressive seventy-one percent from the floor.

Brandon Lowe once again had a high scoring performance with eleven field goals (three of which were beyond the arc) and five free throws for a total of 30 points. Guyton was also on fire, hitting all six of his field goals and finishing with nineteen.

Out-rebounding Hope, another major defensive accomplishment was containing their All-American center Bosma to only ten points. This major team accomplishment was about more than just physical talent and hustle. The team gave heart and soul and came up with one of the biggest victories in years for the Men's program. Freshman Michael Jackson noticed, "We were all working together, giving each other compliments and we were excited to play." Jackson also feels, "If we can continue to play with as much emotion and intensity as we did against Hope, we shouldn't lose a game the rest of the year."

The Saints are now 8-4 and have a full conference slate in the end of January, against Siena Heights. Be sure to show your skills and did not let up on your favorite team.

Yearbook Production Delays Cause Student Concern

by Mellissa Ann Pline
Times Contributing Writer

The yearbooks are late. The 1994-95 school year, which was to be covered in that volume, is over. The seniors have graduated. A new year has begun. Yet, not a single copy of last year's edition of The Aquinas yearbook, has been delivered.

Around campus, students are wondering why there has been such a delay in yearbook production. "I would like to know what pushed it back, and whether or not we will get a refund if they don't come," said sophomore Ren Palilio. He is one of the 100 students who ordered yearbooks at the end of last year with the expectation of receiving one this fall.

Fall has come and gone, however, and Palilio and the rest are still awaiting their yearbooks. The arrival is now projected for the end of January.

According to Amy Marben, last year's Yearbook Editor, "There are many contributing factors to their delay." Among these factors, Marben cites a delay in the delivery of a new computer and lack of people-power in putting it together. Marben declined to comment on any other factors saying, "I would not care to disclose them."

Yearbook Advisor Tim Hough also noted the computer as a problem. "The purchase of a computer from Jostens (the company which publishes AQ's book) left us three months behind."

The computer is a laptop that allows students to work outside of the yearbook office. It also contains a special program for page layout.

"We learned a lot from the mistakes made last year," said current Yearbook Editor, Patti McDonald. "The yearbook is an organization that is not very old. It's had a slow start, but we're building up." As for this year's yearbook, McDonald said, "It is going ahead of schedule. Our goal is for after Christmas Break."

The yearbook is currently in its third year. "I like to give programs three years to see how they go," said Hough. "After this year, we'll consider whether we need it on campus."

The Aquinas College Community Senate helps fund the yearbook in an effort to lower the actual price for students. Senate Budget Committee Chair, John Langan, expressed concern in the production delays, saying, "I've spoken to the staff of the Yearbook and they explained to me that all setbacks are just about overcoming and things are running smoothly again from what I could tell."
To some of us, Christmas is a time of celebration—celebrating our families, our friends and our religions. To others, it is merely a time to give and receive presents. To Aquinas professor Russ Pitts, Christmas is a time to perform the rituals that we have always celebrated, whether we know we are doing them or not.

On Tuesday, December 5, Pitts delivered, to a Wege Ballroom audience of about 80 students, faculty, and staff members, a presentation entitled “The Primitive Roots of Christmas Traditions and Rituals.” This month’s issue of “On the Town,” a local arts and entertainment magazine, and the December 8 issue of The Grand Rapids Press both published a feature on Pitts’ speech. After an introduction by Aquinas’ Chair of English, Dr. Daniel Brooks, Pitts began by reminding his audience of the rituals people perform each and every year around this time. Decorations all over our houses and windows and lights in our decidedly “perfect” trees—Pitts claims that we have no choice in these matters. We have to do these things because of the way our Christmas traditions have evolved over the centuries.

“Christmas is a myth, a rich, deep and unfolding myth,” Pitts said. He added, “As a community we have a ‘collective unconscious’ with which we base our traditions. The basis for our Christmas traditions, as Pitts described it, comes from pagan rituals. Pitts described it, comes from pagan rituals. According to Pitts, this “collective unconscious” comes from within, and is common throughout all of humanity, although it may be different in different cultures.

The basis for our Christmas traditions, as Pitts described it, comes from pagan rituals. In these rituals, the pagans would climb atop the highest hills during the winter solstice and burn fires, which would insurance that the sun would eventually return in the Spring. The early Catholic Church decided that if they could not end these rituals, they would

merely place the celebration of Christmas at the same time so that they could convert the rituals to a Christian celebration, as opposed to tributes to pagan gods.

The celebration of Christmas on December 25 only traces its roots back to between 336-354 A.D. It was then that Catholic Church leaders set down the date as the celebration to coincide with the burning of the fires. While the pagans once celebrated the new “sun,” they would soon celebrate the new “Son,” that is, the birth of Jesus Christ, whom Catholics believe to be the Son of God.

“I am convinced that God will continue to unfold His mysteries,” said Pitts. “Thus revealing more of His mysteries.” He added “if God has had this plan, He’s given us the clue all along: Sun and Son—how hard is it to figure out?”

Sophomore Stephanie Langstaff was one of the students in attendance and said, “I was quite amazed at the amount of research put into the presentation.” She added “it was very formal in its context, but enjoyed the context. The parallel between the Hubble telescope picture at the end was amazing,” she added, speaking of the picture that Pitts showed at the conclusion of his presentation.

The photo to which Langstaff was referring was a recent picture taken by the Hubble telescope which showed a star with its light extending out, just as the star shines over the stable in Bethlehem in popular artists’ renditions of the manger in which Christ is said to have been born.

So, the next time you hang some lights, trim the tree, or sing some Christmas carols, ask yourself, “Why?” Why do you follow these traditions? Maybe you don’t have a choice. Perhaps its because, as Mr. Pitts concluded, “Our ritual activities are something over which we have no control.”
Opinion

by Curt Woźniak

Tuesday evening, while many an AQ student had his or her head buried in piles of exam preparation materials, Gerry Crane, Byron Center School District Band Teacher, had his future in education decided for him by a homophobic school board—a fair representation of our homophobic society.

Gerry Crane came very close to losing his job because he is gay. Anyone who's familiar with the Grand Rapids area knows that Byron Center is an ultra-conservative community. The ultra-conservative parents in that district have made clear to their school board that if a teacher is to be a proper role model for their children, he or she should conduct him or herself in a morally upright manner.

The conservative religious beliefs of many Byron Center parents lead them to the conclusion that homosexuality is immoral. Therefore, they wanted Crane out. Whatever God it was that decreed what is and is not moral to Byron Center parents is the same God that created Crane, complete with an inborn homosexual sexual orientation. The only thing that is morally wrong about this whole situation is the fact that the twisted mindset of homophobia still pervades society.

Gerry Crane could have denied his sexual orientation. Keep it in the closet, and he, too, could ascend through the social hierarchy to its seat of judgment. Maybe then sexism could be overcome as well.

Is my sarcasm coming through? I'm sorry. Those suggestions, of course, were ludicrous—all of them. This much, however, is true. Justice, at its heart, is allowing everyone to fully be who they are, and in being who they are, realizing that they are all equal. We are a long way from ensuring the social hierarchy to its seat of judgment. Maybe then sexism could be overcome as well.

The degree to which a society is just is easily measured. It's the same as the measure of an individual's willingness to enter into that society without knowing the place they will hold in it. How many of us would be willing to enter into our society, knowing the intolerance that runs rampant in it, as a gay music instructor in Byron Center, Michigan? Just how just are we?

Homosexuality isn't a problem that homosexuals must face. It isn't even a problem that society must face; it's no "problem" at all (facing the "problem" of homosexuality is what went on in Byron Center on Tuesday night). The problem that our society must face here, is the matter of our own homophobia. The sad thing is, however, that society's usual response to problems like this (a.k.a. racism and sexism) is equal. We are a long way from ensuring justice.

What we need to do, not that I'm the one to tell you, is stare us in the face. Confront it. I've been staring homophobia down for years and, I confess, sometimes it still wins out. Knowing that it exists, though, and working against it to the peak of one's capacity, even if an occasional slip occurs, will, in time, carry us all out of its dehumanizing grasp.

It's a constant struggle. How much easier is it to call someone a "fag" or a "dyke" than to learn to understand their humanity, and our own in the process? Making the effort means nothing, nothing easy is ever worth fighting for, and nothing worth fighting for is ever easy.

The Tagalog Times
December 20, 1995

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THE AQUINAS TIMES ARE THOSE OF THE WRITER AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OR OPINIONS OF AQUINAS COLLEGE.
**Voices in the Crowd:**

*All I Want for Christmas is...*

Tis the season to be jolly, and I think we all know the reason. For Christians, it has something to do with a star, three wise men, a manger, two proud parents, and the birth of a special child. What would Christmas be without the celebration of the birth of Christ?

It would be a shallow, commercialized season of greed and envy. Thank goodness that has not happened, though. The concept of gift giving and receiving during this time of year, especially on December 25, originated oh so many years ago after the aforementioned blessed event occurred. Strangely enough, this particular tradition has not diminished over the years. In fact, I asked a few people around campus what gifts they would like to receive this year. Yes, it is better to give than to receive, but for the sake of equal time, I am going to focus on the receiving aspect.

* Clothes I can wear on an interview* (Jennifer Michale)
* A hot glue gun (Janelle Ostrowski)
* Candles and a stereo (what a combination) (Jennifer Youssef)
* A video camera (Kimberly Thomas)
* Woods (golf clubs) (Eric Bridge)
* A return visit honeymoon to Jamaica (Mary Ann Bridge)
* Computer component set and a Word Perfect 2200 computer (Callie Warren)
* A warm up suit and children’s books (for the kindergarteners she wants to teach, not for herself) (Kristie Hengesbach)
* "My sanity, from Sanity-Clause" (Rob LaBarre)
* "Fun toys." (anonymous)
* A return visit to Jamaica (Mary Ann Bridge)
* "A wonderful learning experience in Ireland next semester." (Nate Richardson.)
* "My sanity, from Sanity-Clause" (Rob LaBarre)
* Candles and a stereo (what a combination) (Jennifer Youssef)

**NOTE:** Voices in the Crowd is compiled by Morgan Higginbotham, who gives a warm "Merry Christmas" to all.

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**What a Novel Idea!**

_Haiti Connection says, "We've got skis, let's use 'em!"_

by Curt Worniak

**Time Features and Copy Editor**

Even here on the relatively small campus of Aquinas College there are undiscovered treasures waiting to spring themselves on whoever happens to be in the right place at the right time. If you were a pile of abandoned cross country skis, there could be no better place for you to spring yourself than in the basement of the Gate House, and no better time than this Winter. Innocent passer-by, in your case, would have to be none other than the folks from the Haiti Connection.

Let’s drop the personification of the ski pile before it gets out of hand. O.K. So, there actually is a pile of abandoned cross country skis in the basement of the Gate House. How did they get there?

The Aquinas College Community Senate purchased the skis several years ago. “There was once a big outdoors movement with campus activities,” recalled Sister Catherine Williams of Campus Ministry.

After a few seasons of use by Senate, the skis were simply left in the basement of the Gate House and haven’t seen the snow since. However, this is about to change.

The current, active Community Senate has given Campus Ministry the go ahead to incorporate the skis into a unique project.

Under Haiti Connection member Danielle Strope, plans are underway to clean up the skis, organize them, and set up a ski rental service in the garage of the Gate House. Students will be able to rent the skis for use around campus. The rental fee will go directly into the Haiti Connection’s "sister school" program.

Just a little background, the Haiti Connection is a campus organization that works to foster awareness of the plight of the struggling people of Haiti. Specifically, the group strives to strengthen the bond between Aquinas and its sister school, the Andre Pierre Trade School in rural Haiti through funding and education.

Besides helping the Haiti Connection, Campus Ministry’s revitalization of Senate’s old skis will also make way for a new program which will provide the experience of cross country for the blind in our area.

Anyone with "old style" cross country ski boots (the type with three holes in the toe) is encouraged to donate them to Campus Min-

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**Cruise ship Jobs! Attention students.**


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**CLASSIFIEDS**

**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 tutorial coordinating internships**

If interested please schedule an appointment with Karen Brookstra at extension 3711

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**THIS JUST IN:**

WGRD is doing a live remote broadcast for their morning show (6-10 AM) at the Cook Carriage House on January 19. AQ’s Domestic Problems will be performing.
AQ Times Staff
Charged with Excessive Sexism
by Andy Pipher (M)
Times News Editor
Aquinas College was hit with a national media scandal as the editorial staff of the "Aquinas Times" was charged with leading "S.A.F.E." Sexists Against Female Editors, a national organization committed to preventing women from entering the journalistic field as the rank of editor.

The questions began when this year's staff was announced at the end of last year. All of the positions were filled with white males, quite a contradiction of statistics considering Aquinas is composed of 67% females. Editor in Chief John Serba rationalized the staff, claiming that only one female applied for a position last year. However, it is suspected that not only has The Times participated in the discrimination, the paper has actively recruited other college newspapers to do the same.

Several letters from The Times to the student newspapers of Calvin College, Hope College, Grand Rapids Community College and the paper of Western Michigan University, were intercepted by the Aquinas mailroom last year after curious workers discovered the words "Top Secret" stamped on the top. Various right-wing, anti-woman papers of Calvin College, Hope College and the paper of Western Michigan University, were intercepted by the Aquinas Times.

Eventually, the FBI and CIA contacted the Times about perhaps doing some work for the government. Apparently, those organizations didn't like the effect the women on the Supreme Court were having and tried to hire The Times staff as lobbyists, to the President to nominate some males next time.

However, the Times' staff had more important things like classes to attend to and had to refuse the lucrative offer. A leak in the CIA, however, revealed to the American Civil Liberties Union that the CIA had thought about constructing a sexist organization such as "S.A.F.E." and has since brought suit against The Times, the FBI, the CIA, the U.S. Government, Aquinas College and all of the businesses who have ever advertised in The Times.

While nobody has been convicted of discrimination, the case is still in court. The future did not look bright until last week when The Times brought together the legal dream team of former prosecutor Christopher Darden and defense wizards Robert Shapiro and Johnny Cochran. Stay tuned for more information on this case, which could have national consequences because of the precedents it could set.

Sign and Lighting Committee Commended
by Curt Wozniak
Times Features and Copy Editor

Recently the Sign and Lighting Committee of Aquinas College accepted the Sign and Lighting Association for Small American Colleges (S.L.A.S.A.C.) award for Most Navigable Campus in the Nation. S.L.A.S.A.C. bases their annual decision on many criteria, including, but not limited to, the quality of markings used for paths on a particular campus. In AQ's case, however, it was well-marked paths alone that blew away the competition.

A spokesperson for S.L.A.S.A.C. said, "I was very impressed when I came to the Aquinas campus and noticed that, even though it is quite small, all major paths are marked." Although many students and staff probably either haven't noticed the path signs or have just taken them for granted, they really have proved a valuable asset to the campus. "You'd be surprised," commented Freshman P.J. Tannian, "When I first got here, it took me about a week before I really knew where everything was. I can imagine the frustration that a first-time visitor to our campus would have felt asking for directions last year, before those signs were posted."

Transfer student Nolan Gerber, an Environmental Studies major, was quick to point out, "The names of many of the paths are also names of different types of trees."

A monument will be constructed in the Spring to house the S.L.A.S.A.C. award. It will be located in the woods between Regina Hall and Albertus Magnus. A new path connecting the monument to Wege Way will also have to be built, and the Sign and Lighting Committee are holding a "Name the New Path," contest. Entries must include the name of a tree or major college benefactor, and can be sent to the Aquinas Times through inter-campus mail.

AQ Up Close: Irving Slobbercom
by Beth Priest
Times Contributing Writer

Few students will inspire and move you upon first meeting them as much as Junior Irving Slobbercom does.

Slobbercom is an Elementary Education major, but working towards saving tomorrow's future is not enough for this dynamic 20-year-old. Besides his heavy load at Aquinas, Slobbercom has also created a self-designed Expressive Dance cognitive in conjunction with Kendall College of Art and Design.

"I began dancing when I was in a work-release program," said Slobbercom, "It helped me to become more focused and realize that there was more to life than gambling." That was three years ago. Since then, Slobbercom's life has turned around, no, literally pirouetted from the seedy racetrack to the hardwood dance floors of West Michigan.

A young dancing man doesn't live an easy life, but determination and dedication does have its rewards. His ease and genility in movement, often provocative, has earned Slobbercom many awards. In January, he will be traveling to Korea to accept the coveted, "I've Got Seoul" award, and offer his winning performance to "Roll out the Barre."

Even though Slobbercom has received much laud at an early age, he is realistic about the future. "Dancers like me," he explained, "They come and go. What I give to the world of dance, though... My gifts—that's what will live on."

"A dancer's career is short," Slobbercom went on, "You think I'll still be able to do this when I'm thirty and you're looney."

After his dancing days are done, Slobbercom hopes to settle back in Cleveland to teach and enjoy the Browns' lifetime season ticket he was awarded when he received the key to his city. Ask Irving about doing a step or two for you next time you see him on campus. He's a man of few words, but lots of expression.
**AQ Football Team a Reality**

by Brian Matzke

Times Sports Editor

Are you ready for some football? Thanks to a large bag of money that fell out of the sky, football is coming to Aquinas. Until a full-time coach can be hired to take over the duties, Student Activities Director, etc. Timi Hough will act as the college's first ever coach.

Games are to be played at the new 40,000 seat stadium to be built in Wilcox Park. "We are just elated to finally have a football team at Aquinas, we were more than willing to accommodate building them a new stadium," commented Wilcox Park developer Joe Wilcox. "Things won't be easy for the Saints in their inaugural season. First there is a game against Girl Scout Troop 309, who as recently as 3 years ago knocked off the Michigan State Spartans. From there, the Saints will travel to Ann Arbor to battle Tim Blakatubuka and the Michigan Wolverines. "I think we have a chance to beat U of M," commented coach Hough. "My new ten reciever-one quarterback offensive strategy will be unstoppable." The Saints will play 10 games next season, including 5 at the new stadium.

**AQ Recruits Big 10 Superstars**

by Brian Matzke

Times Sports Editor

Once again this year, many big-time players are transferring from their favorite Big 10 universities to the friendly confines of Aquinas College.

So far this year 8 student-athletes have transferred to Aquinas. This brings Aquinas' total to 44 over the last 4 years. Why are so many transferring?

"I don't believe that we get enough prime time television coverage at the University of Michigan," says transfer basketball star Harlem Globetrotter. "Everytime that I was at Michigan, we were never on. All I could catch on ESPN was Aquinas versus Hope and Aquinas playing Tri-State, so to go pro, I figure that I need some of that prime time television."

Another reason that many athletes transfer to Aquinas is because of its facilities. "The field house here is great, it is the best place that I have ever played in," says women's cager Tiffany Gibson. "At MSU they have an intramural fieldhouse and the Breslin Center, that makes it so inconvenient when I want to watch our great I.M. games. Here, all I have to do is wait around for a half-hour after our games and then I get to watch the excitement of the intramural season unfold."

However, it is not only the athletic department of Aquinas that is attracting so many big transfers. "I came here because Penn State is just too small for me," says junior soccer transfer Felipe Kissdebah. "At Penn State my coach expected me to know my professors, and to meet with them regularly. Here, there is none of that. Heck, I don't even know who teaches my econ class."

With its many benefits, Aquinas continually attracts some of the biggest names in high school and Big Ten sports. There is no foreseeable reason for this trend not to continue. With it's top of the line facilities, extensive television coverage, and populus size, Aquinas will continue to be an athletically superior college.