Senate funds Casa Hogar trip, denies AQ Times

By Mary Harwood
Times Writer

At the Senate meeting on Wednesday Jan. 28, there were several important items on the agenda. After standing committee reports, the Senate was addressed by Dr. Edward Balog, Provost, and Nanette Klatterbuck, Assistant Professor. The meeting was held in the college's upcoming North Central Association accreditation.

NCA is a volunteer organization that has accredited more than 9,000 schools since its beginning. NCA's website states "Through accreditation and related services, NCA continuously improves the quality of education and challenges educational entities to prepare each and every learner for success." Aquinas' evaluation will take place Mar. 22-24. Evaluators will do several things during their visit including interviewing individual students and hosting an open session for all students.

The evaluators are interested in the processes that happen in the college such as the grievance process and the running of Student Senate. The evaluators will also be looking at by-laws of various organizations, samples of students' work, student records, library loans, maintenance, Campus Safety, and Student Support Services.

Following guest speakers from Junior Achievement and Conference Services, Budget Director Brooke Murphy brought the Aquinas Times' request for additional funding to the Senate.

"They [the AQ Times] approached the Budget Committee with a request for $2,000. After much deliberation, the committee came to recommendation for the full amount.

The Times requested the additional allocation because the organization was allocated less than half the amount, funding it received in previous years from the Senate.

Unfortunately, the Times representatives mistakenly believed there was an outside source of funding for the newspaper, and voted to approve the Senate budget allocation in November 2003. Much debate ensued on the floor, with various speakers calling into question everything from money management to advertising rates to the quality of the paper. Editor in Chief Curtis Burdette and members of the paper's staff fielded questions.

"The Times is the voice of the students, it's the heart of the Aquinas community. We've been on a restricted budget and since we learned this information we started to do everything that we can to save money and that includes cutting our extra costs with reviews, using digital cameras whenever possible, and reducing paper costs," said Burdette.

Despite the Budget Committee's recommendation for the full allocation, the Senate voted to deny the Aquinas Times' funding request by a narrow margin.

The additional $2,000 allocation would have enabled the Aquinas Times to put out at least one more issue. Combined with advertising sold, there could have been two more issues. It stands currently, this issue is the last for the semester.

Following the Times' request, Murphy brought Casa Hogar's funding request for an allocation of $1,500 to the floor. The Senate approved the request by a majority of the votes. The money will be used to help 12 students go abroad to the group-sponsored orphanage in Peru this summer.

Michael Moore visits Grand Rapids
Standing room only at Fountain Street Church

By Emily Johnson
Times Writer

An energized crowd wrapped hundreds deep around Fountain Street church, waiting for the doors to open, anticipating a charismatic message not from the clergy, but from Michael Moore.

On Saturday Jan. 31, Moore, who is most recently known for his movie "Bowling for Columbine," visited Grand Rapids to promote his new book, "Dude, Where's My Country?" He also had a few things to say about the state of liberals in America.

"Liberal leaders have a tendency to bend with the issues," Moore said, contrasting them to Republican leaders. "I have always admired one thing about right-winged conservatives. They stand up for what they believe in. They live, breathe, eat and so — that stuff!"

One thing you'll learn about Michael Moore, he says whatever is on his mind.

Moore painted a humorous picture of the right-wingers getting up before the crack of dawn and having ten new bills in place by noon, whereas the liberals are finally getting up around noon worrying about where to go to get a cappuccino. "This is why they win so much. They're committed, disciplined, and organized," said Moore.

According to Moore, 62 percent of the American population is comprised of women and people of color. "Democrats need to quit campaigning to angry white guys," Moore said, contrasting them to Republican leaders. "I have always admired one thing about right-winged conservatives. They stand up for what they believe in. They live, breathe, eat and so — that stuff!"

"I believe we live in a liberal progressive country," said Moore. "Imagine what it would be like if liberals were in control!" He expressed his sympathy for people who are disenfranchised and who have been hurt the most by the system. "These are the people that have given up and don't get out to vote," said Moore.

Using everything from humor to hard and fast punches, Moore entertained the audience while fervently encouraging everyone to get involved in the election process.

"Conservatives know we're in a liberal country. We just don't know it yet, but there's been a shift," Moore said.

"The only way to get representatives that care about the issues important to most Americans is to decide which ten slackers you're going to take to the voting booth with you."
Super Bowl incident gives FCC a chance to step up enforcement

Even if you weren't one of the millions of people watching the Super Bowl this past weekend, it's pretty likely you knew what happened at 9:30 p.m.

"I'll get you naked by the end of this song," said Justin Timberlake just moments before he ripped off his shirt, exposing a matching, tacky underskirt.

The FCC also issued a $755,000 fine to CBS and MTV for indecency.

The fine was a record for CBS, said the stunt was "unrehearsed, unplanned, completely unintentional and was inconsistent with assurances we had about the content of the performance.”

"I'm sorry that anyone was offended by the wardrobe malfunction during the halftime performance of the Super Bowl. It was not intentional and is regrettable," Timberlake said in a statement. A wardrobe malfunction? Unintentional? Honestly, what exactly was supposed to happen then?

Federal Communications Commission chief Michael Powell called the incident "a classless, crass and deplorable stunt." Federal regulations prohibit the broadcast of "obscene material," and "imply "indecent material" to shows after 10:00 p.m., when children are less likely to be watching. According to the FCC, obscene material is anything that describes sexual conduct "in a patently offensive way" and lacks "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."

"Even if you are getting your clothes off, they are not supposed to come off, especially in a Super Bowl event," according to St. Thomas Aquinas College, according to The Dominican College and Universities.

"Aquinas College is a sacrifice of God's grace," said Kennedy. "Aquinas College is a sacrifice of God's grace." she said.

The incident could end up being mediated through ordinary human experience and dedication.

"Every general factor in the Dominican tradition combine to shape the College's Catholic influence.

Aquinas College Student Support Services

By Gabriella Dekker

Times Writer

For over 20 years, Student Support Services has been assisting Aquinas students on their college journeys toward success. As a federally-funded grant program, Student Support Services enrolls 125 Aquinas students yearly, based on government-stated criteria.

With focus in the areas of mathematics, reading, study skills and writing, staff specialists meet individually with program participants to help with test preparation, organization, reading comprehension, "writer's block" etc. when needed. Staff members of SSS also accompany undergraduates to academic advising appointments to assist with scheduling. Participants of SSS also receive numerous benefits beyond their academic success. They may also be eligible for additional scholarships ranging from $500-$800, including a state-wide scholarship competition which has been won by Aquinas College students the past four years.

"Even if you are getting the grades to be successful at Aquinas, even if you use the Financial Aid available to stay at Aquinas, chances are if you don't feel like you fit here at Aquinas, you probably are not going to stay," said Monica Tyler, Director of SSS. It is for this reason that SSS also offers social activities for participants.

The SSS Cultural Events Program, coordinated by senior Monique Hayes, allows students to participate in grant-funded activities to raise cultural awareness and connect on a more personal level with other participants. In the past, SSS has taken trips to Chicago for various theater productions, Mackinac Island, and also participated in local activities, such as visiting Fredrick Meijer Gardens and their recent canoe trip.

Additionally, the SSS Peer Mentor Program begins this year. In this program, upperclassmen become mentors to lowerclassmen. Hayes, Peer Mentor Program initiator said, "It's a good support system, even if you don't need academic help...there's a good camaraderie between staff and students."

Though there are only 125 available spots for students each year, additional spots become available as participants graduate and transfer. If you are interested in participating in Student Support Services, you can visit the SSS office in AB320, or call the office (616)459-8281, ext. 3711.
### Calendar of Events

**Monday Feb. 9**  
Alternative Healing Fair, 12:00-3:00, Moose Cafe

**Tuesday Feb. 10**  
Dr. Peter McPherson, 7:00-8:30, Performing Arts Center, $5

**Wednesday Feb. 11**  
Senate Fall Assembly Meeting, 3:00 p.m., Wege Ballroom

**Friday Feb. 13**  
JH Women's Studies Equality Bake Sale, 10:00-4:00, entrance of the Academic Building

**Monday Feb. 16**  
World Affairs Council Lecture Series; “Refoitn in the Middle East” Dr. Peter McPherson, 7:00-8:30, Performing Arts Center, $5

**Tuesday Feb. 17**  
Aquinas College Lecture Series; “Building the Nest Egg: Issues in Retirement Planning,” Tom Dooley, Wege Ballroom

**Thursday Feb. 19**  
JSL 10:00 p.m., Moose Cafe

**Friday Feb. 20**  
“Loveline,” 8:30, Performing Arts Center, $5

**Wednesday Feb. 25**  
Bellini Singled Out, 7:00-8:30, Performing Arts Center, $5 entrance of the Academic Building

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### International Studies: Life in Costa Rica

It’s a whole other world down here in Costa Rica. Everything from the food, to traveling, to the way of using the bathroom — the manner of living around here is shockingly different from life in America. Though some of these striking contrasts show themselves later to be just a slightly different way doing the same thing in our culture, for other things it’s just the opposite.

I noticed this while watching the town gather together last Tuesday for a high school soccer game. The first thing that caught my attention was the extreme casuality and apparent familiarity everyone had with the place and community. Instead of an organized seating arrangement, there were individuals, groups of friends, and even families sitting or wandering around outside the brightly lit fenced-in field, in a completely nonchalant way. There was no admission to the event. Coming and going was something that was done at whim. Even stray dogs were allowed to weave in and out of the people like trout in a shallow stream.

Another difference was the music. Instead of the brass horns and drums that we’re used to in the Midwest, the large group of swaying adolescents played wooden percussion instruments and xylophones. Their repeating rhythm was hypnotizing, whirling out from its point of origin like incense into the mouths, feet, and hearts of the onlookers and passersby. They seemed to know something that I didn’t. Their steps moved to a different beat, their lips to a different way of considering things, and their heads to the chords of a different history, community, and set of goals.

Nevertheless, these differences, however deep they do run, don’t blot out or diminish the similarities that all cultures share in one way or another. Moms, dads, and little siblings still came out sharing blankets to root for their family stars. Young couple still kissed in the shadows of trees. And the flushing determination of victory could still be seen in young players’ eyes — just as they do in Michigan.

In getting to know a different culture, many things, once we believe we know them, sweep away from our simple-minded confidence, only to come back later absorbed with in-depth understanding. About the culture, and sometimes on ourselves.

I’ve just tip down all of the similarities and differences between the cultures here in Costa Rica and the one I grew up in. Maybe I never will, but it wouldn’t take away from what this place has already given me; nor would it make me any less in love with this beautiful different country and its people.

C. Michael Shea is an Aquinas senior studying abroad in Santa Ana, Costa Rica this semester. This is the first in a series of articles from students participating in the International Studies’ study-abroad program.

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### WAQU spreads its reach

By Lisa Gast  
News Editor

For students tired of only being able to listen to WAQU in the parking lots, there’s good news. The student-run radio station, which currently broadcasts on 1500 AM, will soon be streaming on the Moose website too.

Though access will be limited to those students connected to Aquinas’ network (i.e. the dorms, the computer lab and the library), it will be a vast improvement from the strict SEC restrictions the station has to abide by to broadcast regularly, which makes it hard to hear the station clearly from anywhere, it seems, but the campus parking lot. The station hopes to increase the number of listeners by offering students increased access to the station. The station will be available 24 hours a day on the Moose once it starts.

“We were looking at broadcast­­ing over the internet, but found out it would cost quite a bit,” said Music Director Rob Sturm, explaining the decision to do LAN streaming instead of internet broadcasting. The station, a student organization, is funded by student activity fees.

According to Sturm, the radio station’s website, which will be linked to the Moose, will also include individual pages for the DJs.

Elisabeth Godin, a freshman, said she doesn’t currently listen to the radio station, but it’s likely she will once it starts streaming on the Moose. “Catching some AQ tunes will be as easy as catching a cold when they stream onto the mouse,” said Godin.

Senior Jennifer Wheat agreed. “I don’t currently listen to the radio station...but I would really be interested in lis­­tening to it and hope they get it going,” she said.

The station will start streaming on the Moose early next week. For more information on WAQU or how you can get involved with the station, contact Station Manager Andrew Cheff at 631-1220. The website for the Moose is http://www.themoose.aquinas.edu.
Necessary Roughness
by Leah Herland

Aquinas' athletic program is a-okay

I never had the opportunity to play a collegiate sport; I never excelled enough in any of my many athletic endeavors to be able to play. I played a little of everything growing up, but I wasn't exceptional at any of them. I always was better at writing about things then actually doing them.

On top of that, I was missing at least one or more of the key essentials that are required for collegiate sports in every sport I tried. To play sports at the collegiate level requires three things: natural athleticism, determination, and years of dedication to the sport you play. There are no easy ins to playing college sports. It takes hard work and lots of it, to make it to a level of skill that allows you to play college sports.

And it doesn't end there. College athletics requires hours of practice and training. Unlike other levels of play, like high school or recreation leagues, college athletes train year round. When they stop playing for a season, they start training for the next one. This is all while carrying a full course load. They get one credit for the time they dedicate to making a successful program in their sports.

Since 1995, 72 scholar-athletes have helped Aquinas get to the next level. Aquinas is a program that participates in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) competition. Aquinas College has 20 varsity teams and 12 club sports.

The men's and women's indoor track and field teams have numerous strong performances in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) as well as in the WHAC. Aquinas' athletic program emphasizes not only athletic but academic excellence. More than 200 students participate in varsity intercollegiate sports here at AQ. That is nearly 10 percent of our student body. We have an athletic program comparable to schools nearly twice our size.

The caliber of students who participate in athletics here also says a lot about the campus itself. The athletes are among the most friendly and accepting individuals on campus. Working with the newspaper this year gave me an opportunity to interact with many of the athletes, but many of them I already knew from around campus.

The reason I came to Aquinas was because it was a good school with a fun and friendly campus. The people who gave me this impression were the athletes I gave an opportunity to interact with many of the athletes here are exceptional to say the least. The athletes have an attitude shared by members of the coaches, that it is better to try and win, and if you lose, it is because you didn't try your best.

The Aquinas men's basketball team had a great season as well. The men's basketball team finished 19-4 in the GLIAC and 20-5 overall. They finished the season ranked fifth in the GLIAC and second in the WHAC.

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Athletic Alternatives
by Emily Johnson
Featured Columnist

Climbing to New Heights

Growing in popularity, rock climbing is proving to be a satisfying athletic alternative to weight lifting, aerobics, or competitive sports. Like all sports, climbing demands dedication to master. Yet there's something alluring about climbing that overshadowes its physical challenge.

The beauty of climbing is that you don't have to be tall, muscular or unusually fit to be successful. Climbing stresses balance and coordination over strength, according to Frank Abissi, owner of Higher Ground Rock Climbing Center.

"The reason I started the gym was so all of my friends could climb with me," said Abissi. Now, eight and a half years later, Abissi has lots of friends. Hardly a day goes by where someone isn't enjoying climbing at Higher Ground just as much as he does.

In operation since 1995, Higher Ground Rock Climbing Center offers a safe yet challenging environment for climbers of all ages and abilities. Climbers use artificial rock holds to scale 23-foot walls. There is more than 5,500 square feet of climbing surface, including two bouldering rooms.

"Climbing encourages discipline," said Suzanne Bladey, an avid climber, who frequents Higher Ground with her son, Alex. "It's also an enjoyable family activity," said Bladey.

You may have never considered rock climbing before, but you'll be surprised at how well rounded a sport it is. "You meet a lot of really cool people that come from different situations in their life," said Mike Lee, from East Grand Rapids.

"We come together with a common interest and it creates a unique bond that makes you want to keep coming back to work the [climbing] projects together," said Lee.

The staff is friendly and helpful at Higher Ground. They'll offer pointers if you want them. Otherwise you'll probably find them hanging around the top of the ceiling somewhere. Consider it on the job training.

"Go bigger." You'll hear them say. It's all about personal progression. Whether you're a beginner that can hardly "stick" a hold, or a devoted regular, climbing offers an opportunity to test your courage and develop your skills. Going bigger is inevitable. You can't help it. You just want to try it one more time.

Abissi encourages everyone to try rock climbing at least once. He likes to quote one of his favorite authors, Ernest Hemingway, when describing the significance of climbing. "There are only three sports: mountain climbing, bull fighting, and motor racing. All the rest are merely hobbies."}

Climbing Center

Tony Puzzuoli
Times Writer

The Aquinas College field house was packed on Saturday Jan. 24, as the Saints took on rival Cornerstone. The excited and energetic crowd behind them however, was not enough, as the Saints fell to the Golden Eagles 67-33.

Despite the absence of starting point guard Mike Blicher on the floor, who is out with a broken foot, Aquinas came out strong in the first half and built a 38-36 halftime lead. Senior Aaron Alsgaard who has been an asset off the bench this year, was led to put up some good fights. The Renegades have found a way to win with only three-pointers which set a school record.

The Saints lead down and eventually took the lead. The team continued to trade baskets until back to back shots by Cornerstone led to an Aquinas timeout with the Saints trailing 63-57 with around four minutes remaining. Things didn't change much after the timeout, as Cornerstone increased its lead to eight 69-61, and eventually to ten to win 73-63.

The Cornerstone Golden Eagles improved to 19-4, (5-2 WHAC) while Aquinas fell to an Aquinas timeout with the Saints trailing 63-57 with around four minutes remaining. Things didn't change much after the timeout, as Cornerstone increased its lead to eight 69-61, and eventually to ten to win 73-63.

Aquinas came out in the second half with the same fire and determination. "We need to put it together," said Coach Alsgaard. aquinas beat the Saints with 22 points. With 49 points led by Keith Wurm, who scored a game high 17 points, and the sudden inability of Aquinas to put the ball in the basket, the Golden Eagles cut the Saints lead down and eventually in the lead. The team continued to trade baskets until back to back shots by Cornerstone led to an Aquinas timeout with the Saints trailing 63-57 with around four minutes remaining. Things didn't change much after the timeout, as Cornerstone increased its lead to eight 69-61, and eventually to ten to win 73-63.

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Da Vinci offers controversy insight

By Laura Knack
Times Writer

What do art, religion, secret societies and cryptography have in common? They make up cryptology, a complex and intriguing novel by Dan Brown.

Author of three previous novels, Brown has had a band consisting of a much more complicated puzzle which seems to be tied to the Priory of Sion, an ancient secret society whose past members include Leonardo da Vinci, St. Francis of Assisi and Isaac Newton.

With the help of clues hidden in the works of Da Vinci and the connection to the Priory, Langdon realizes that he and Neveu might have stumbled onto the necessity of a new search for the Holy Grail, which historians and religious scholars have been desperate to find for centuries.

However, as Langdon reveals to Sophie, the French cryptologist, Langdon unravels the clues and begins to realize that the murder is just one piece of a much more complicated puzzle which seems to be tied to the Priory of Sion, an ancient secret society whose past members include Leonardo da Vinci and St. Francis of Assisi.

“The Da Vinci Code” is a bit long at 454 pages, but Brown keeps the reader hooked with a fast-moving plot and intricate foreshadowing. The way he reveals “true” nature of the Grail in tantalizing bits ensures that you will be kept guessing until the very last page. Readers will have time to ponder their own feelings about the Grail.

“The Da Vinci Code” might be of particular interest to some Aquinas students considering its bold claims about the life of Jesus Christ and his last few days on earth. One might feel compelled to do some research of one’s own after reading it in order to see how much of Brown’s narrative is fact-based, and how much is the result of rumors or his own imagination. No matter what your personal position on the Holy Grail is, Brown’s writing will at least get you thinking about not questioning what you thought you knew to be true.

Besides the controversial plot points, “The Da Vinci Code” will appeal to anyone who likes suspenseful, intelligent reading, or just good writing. Brown crafts the novel in such a way that even those little previous knowledge about art or religious history is required — weaving in the necessary facts along with the narrative. The realistically written characters and detailed descriptions of foreign locales such as the Louvre and London’s Westminster Abbey are enjoyable. The layout and décor of these historical landmarks is described effectively. You won’t be lost in the shuffle you’ve never been to England or France.

If you’re interested in reading one of the year’s best-selling and most well-written novels, “The Da Vinci Code” is definitely for you. If you have a very strong Catholic background, you may want to read with an especially open mind and take some of what Langdon uncovers with a grain of salt. However, the story’s strong characters and details derived from the value of this story, which has a little bit of something for everyone.

Oval Opus: talented musical engineers

By Joel Schindlbeck
Times Writer


Each song is fully scored with synthesizers and acoustic instruments gently blended with the electric-rock standards. The Cincinnati-based band has been on tour for the past five years during which time they have managed to perfect their musical style and release three albums.

Each song showcases the distinct and multifaceted style of the band, offering a little bit of rock here and little bit of soul/funk there and never too much of either. Start with some feel-good style in the song “Everytime.” In this triumph, the band leaves backup in a Jackson Five pop-doo-wop groove with a touch of modern “boy” roughness. Move on to “Say Anything,” which offers a great modern-rock beat, leaning more upon the electric side of the band, including laser effects and a driving lead guitar.

There are even some contemporary alter­natives revisited with the Rusted Root feel of “As Am,” with surprisingly strays from the reggae/funk beat in favor of a torrid, Pink Floydian mixture of strings, vocals and guitars at the end. But the general attitude of the band can be summed up in “Let Go,” which is a perfect blend of acoustic and electric with a harmonica here and there and Aaron Patrick’s vocals gently pulling back the tempo.

Oval Opus may have spent a little too much time on their finely-scored orchestrations, however, and not enough time on their lyrics. Almost every song on the album seems to be aimed at one specific person and the conversation is usually the same. One can reach a point where the love affair becomes too romanticized for one’s own good. But in the band’s favor, the consistency of story acts as another instrument to peel back the layers of the story. “Red Sky Recovery” is not necessarily about the lyrics themselves, but Patrick’s voice as an expressive, passionate instrument, beautifully accompanied by the tight group of musicians.

On Feb. 19, 2004, Aquinas students will be able to experience Oval Opus as they perform at the Aquinas College Performing Arts Center. Expect more information as it draws closer. If you like music to lay around and groove to or need something to which you can bring a date, Oval Opus will definitely deliver.

DiFranco spawns another inaccessible quasi-gem

By Tim Krauss
Times Writer

Without a drummer, without backup vocalists, and without a producer, Ani DiFranco composed, mixed, and recorded her 21st work to date, “Educated Guess”.

For most of her 14-year career, DiFranco has had a band consisting usually of bass, vocals and drums, with the occasional horns and accordion. She has always had assistance recording. However, when taking into account her past, this completely solo effort makes sense for DiFranco.

Before she was 20, and only by means of touring, she managed to establish herself as a popular underground musician in New York, which made her enough money to start her own record label, Righteous Babe Records, and produce her first album. Thus the very origin of her success points in the direction of self-sufficiency which this solo project symbolizes.

DiFranco has a jumpy and folk-influenced, yet experimentallyotonal guitar style that dominates the album with an always playful yet often frustrated feel. Her voice is smooth, jazzy (she scats occasionally), and has some very interesting, though at times awkward, vocal contortions. Entirely stream-lined, the only elements in addition to DiFranco heard here are the occasional backup guitar and vocals as well as some sporadically used chimes and bells.

“Educated Guess” is an album about many things one might expect to find among the works of an artist born at the peak of the hippie movement: environmental politics, feminist politics, rebellion as patriotism, and love. There are even several tracks of poetry touching on these themes, two of which display hauntingly distant singing and instrumental elements. It is an odd paradox that the love affair becomes too romanticized for one’s own good. But in the band’s favor, the consistency of story acts as another instrument to peel back the layers of the story. “Red Sky Recovery” is not necessarily about the lyrics themselves, but Patrick’s voice as an expressive, passionate instrument, beautifully accompanied by the tight group of musicians.

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Music from the hearts of AQ faculty

By Joel Schindlbeck
Times Writer

Last Thursday at Kretschmer, the ability of the AQ music department was put to the test. In honor of St. Thomas Aquinas Week, the music department presented an evening of classical, jazz and folk music indicative of talent galore.

Among the performers was Vox Angelica, the acclaimed trio of medieval vocalists consisting of alumna Gwendolyn Faenae, adjunct professor Carol S. Grady and Music Department Chairperson Barbara Wass McCarger. With piercing chords and haunting melodies, Vox Angelica delivered the melodies of antiquity by composer Hildegard von Bingen. Later, McCarger delighted the audience with a solo performance featuring her rich soprano voice. With a childlike playful quality, her face beamed with enjoyment, assuring the audience that we were not the only ones enjoying this performance.

The classical portion of the recital continued with such musical delights as Sister Catherine Williams’s rendition of “Trois Morceaux pour Piano” by Lili Boulanger. Williams’s sensuous pull and push of emotion transcended, with ease, feelings of old age and youth. Her emotive delivery was duplicated with her performance of Mary Hurd’s energetic “Deuxième Suite pour Piano.” As the suite ebbed and flowed with impressionist beauty, Hurd reacted to and connected with the music she performed.

Venturing outside of the classical period, professors Paul Brewer and Steve Talaga brought relaxed smiles to faces with his gentle bossanova and Talaga’s elegant jazz improvisations supporting him.

Two other highlights of the evening were Stephanie Wittke’s solo handbell performance and classical guitarist Carlos de la Barrera. A truly expressive person, Wittke began dancing, leaping from bell to bell. One got the impression of watching an artist who lets the bells speak for her as she weaves a story and warms your heart. Each strike of the bell was majestic. Her rendition of the traditional folk tune, “Shenandoah,” was absolutely moving. De la Barrera’s performance of Leo Brower’s “El Decameron Nugra” was music from the heart. The suite was a mellow blend of folk rock and classical guitar with an idyllic sense of heroes, maidens and adventure. Finishing off the recital was a four-handed piano duet by Mary Hurd and Larry Biser.

Aquinas should be proud to have such talent in charge of our music students. Tonight it was difficult to tell the difference between professor and professional.

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March 1, 2004

FEW WIN WITH ‘DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON’

By Sam Sousa
The Diamondback (U Maryland)

(L-WIRE) COLLEGE PARK, Md. — It’s easy to bash romantic comedy but Hollywood wouldn’t be the same without it, and the world would be a much colder place.

Take this week’s “Win a Date with Tad Hamilton?” A soft hop through a fuzzy land where the ending is clear 15 minutes into the movie, but you still want to go for a ride. And for a romantic comedy, it’s not half bad. Most women will think it’s good, and their dates (the unwilling men dragged into the theater by their snow boots) will think it’s all right.

You can figure out the plot before the previews roll: Movie star needs makeover to smooth party-animal image, holds win-a-date contest, innocent girl from the boonies wins much to the chagrin of her male best friend who has a secret 20-year crush on her.

And when movie star Tad Hamilton (a study Josh Duhamel) takes West Virginia Rosalee Futch (a stunning Kate Bosworth) on a date, her Southern manners and reticence rub him just the right way (bet you didn’t see that one coming). Tad makes a surprise trip to West Virginia to try and turn around his devilish ways and falls in love with Rosalee, crushing the hopes of her best friend Pete Monash (as usual Topher Grace). Oh no! Insert clean, clichéd jokes, high school romance and the typical “funny” supporting actors and you have “Win a Date with Tad Hamilton?”

The film isn’t terrible, but it’s not the perfect love story. This is the world according to director Robert Luketic — his specialty is stereotypes. There’s no way in hell Elle Woods from “Legally Blonde” would ever become a lawyer in the real world, but we don’t care — we want to see her try. These characters are stereotypes: The deviant movie star, the beautiful, pure West Virginia girl with a heart of gold and her nearly jealous best friend with low self-esteem.

Watching them coincide on the silver screen is fun, to a point. Kate Bosworth owns this film. Mainly because she is Rosalee Futch. Few — if any — other actresses could give Futch the sincerity she needs to melt your heart. Bosworth’s grace and charm aren’t forced — if you ran into her on the street today, you would expect the same honest kindness she conveys in the theater. On the other hand, Topher Grace gives Pete Monash exactly what you expected: Eric from “That ‘70s Show.” It’s hard to tell the two apart, and Grace’s film career might go south pretty soon if he doesn’t have any other characters up his sleeve. But it fits here. Pete needs to be the pushover who finally builds enough courage to spill his heart to Rosalee in the end (bet you didn’t see that coming).

Soap opera hunk Duhamel (“All My Children”) comes out of the corner swinging as Tad Hamilton, flexing a few chops in his feature debut. He got a little taste of being a movie star and the soap world, and it transfers smoothly onto the big screen.

“Win a Date with Tad Hamilton?” doesn’t shock Hollywood’s foundation of weathering its underlying narratives and heavy tones. Instead, it gives a nod to a gentler era when films could make fun of themselves without getting dirty. It gets a little tedious and drags at times, and some of the jokes feel like a waste of your money, but overall it leaves you with the warm, fuzzy feeling a good romantic comedy should.

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February 4, 2004

ARTS

“BUTTERFLY” ATTEMPTS TO FLY WITHOUT WINGS

By Wes Creager
Times Writer

“The Butterfly Effect” attempts to be a thought-provoking film, constantly asking the question “what if?” What if I had done something? What if things could have been different? What if I never had to see this movie? Would it be a better person for it?

The film opens somewhat captivatingly with a panicked and then starts moving forward through his life. We learn that he has mental blackouts during which he remembers nothing that he does or sees. The reason for these blackouts is only partially explained later in the film.

Up until this point, the movie drags. Nearly the entire first half gives you the impression that you’re watching a super-par horror flick. Then comes the suspense, which is only a slight improvement. These two genres stick out like opposing, sore thumbs. But, no, how much can we expect from a movie showcasing a thesisian whose most recent credits include a show called “Punk’d.”

The second half of the movie centers on Evan’s realization that he can travel back in time by reading parts of his journals. This is done in hopes of changing past events and making the present better. Perhaps revealing this twist sooner in the movie could have made it more tolerable, but it gets doubtful. The best way to improve this movie would have been to hire a real actor to play the lead. Though, in all fairness, Kucher was better than what was to be expected. That still doesn’t say much.

Instead of being an aggravation he was sliding right past it. Any Smart followed suit and complemented his dullness splendidly. “Butterfly?” Is... oh, sorry, “The Butterfly Effect,” rather, is not a timeless masterpiece. It inflicts pain on the viewer. Where’s a good blackout when you need one?
Your right to privacy in your own room

**The Male View**

Laura Knack
Times Writer

The fallout of living in the information age has reached the Michigan student political process with the latest advancement: Internet voting. On February 7, the Michigan Democratic caucuses will take place, and so will traditional voting at the polls.

However, Michigan residents have had the capability to vote online for several weeks now. According to Mark Brewer, chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party, the decision to add Internet voting to the options available was due to its ease and accessibility. He told Fox News it seemed to him to be the next step in meeting those goals.

This may be true. Considering how many students now Michigan gets in the winter, on Feb. 7, most people would probably prefer to log on and cast their vote as opposed to braving the elements. Another benefit of online voting is that it can be done from any location with a computer.

The improved accessibility helps voters who will be out of town or unable to vote or college students who forgot to get absentee ballots or will be otherwise unable to cast their ballot. Overall, Internet voting could add up to more votes in the caucuses, and a better indication of what Michigan residents think about the Democratic candidates.

However, some critics of Internet voting are very concerned about the technological inequities that exist between different races.

Joel Ferguson, a member of the Democratic National Committee, commented, “The white community has 46 percent of households with that [online] capability, and in minority communities, there’s only 23 percent.”

The DNC rejected Ferguson’s efforts to challenge online voting, on the basis that increasing voter access through the Internet couldn’t hurt turnout.

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500 Internal Server Error: The demoralization of today’s youth

Josh Willford
Times Writer

The face of technology has forever been changing in our education system. No matter what kind of school, what grade, or location, most schools share one thing in common: The Internet. Whether it is a publicly-funded school, or a private institution, they both most likely have a connection to the World Wide Web.

The introduction of the Internet in schools has been happening slowly through the past decade. It has almost always been available in libraries and then later in people’s home computers. How has it changed us?

My sister attended a smaller community college back in 1994 and 1995. Upon inquiring about any type of Internet, she told me that she wasn’t aware of any kind of Internet connection. Now, at any given moment, there are hundreds of college students online at once in this given college. With our browsers open and fingertips ready, we find ourselves poised at the very edge of a technological cliff, high above a world of knowledge.

We have an unimaginable wealth of knowledge before us. Instead of what we do with it is another matter. I’m sure there are a few out there who remember the days of actually going to the library and finding everything we needed. Musing with the aisles and running our fingers along the old books, as if we could just absorb the knowledge right into our brains.

There’s not much absorbing anymore, though. The Internet is the new wave of information. I find it amazing that you can look up a certain passage, on a certain page, in a rare book in under two minutes.

The Internet is an amazing tool. You can communicate with friends across the world or organize all thoughts and questions into a single, simple file. You can even enjoy a game with some friends on the network, while listening to some music that you downloaded. Visited websites made by amateurs, that’s how everyday life.

The list goes on, but the bottom line is that the Internet with an eye of interest only because it serves their needs. We don’t go to the library and grab myself a nice musty book. I’m not about to boycott TomCat, they will have to learn to live with the Internet. The network will shut down, the computer will crash, or something will happen to shut you off from the Internet. Considering that a lot of people don’t know anything about TomCat, they will have to learn to live with the Internet.

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By Erica Rogers
Daily Nebraskan (U. Nebraska)
(U-WIRE) LINCOLN, Neb. — It's coming. The day we set aside to celebrate our love is bearing down on us like the bulls of Pamplona. We know this is going to be one of the great days in the history of all mankind. For some, the passion parade as it
covers boxes of chocolate, or sits in front of the TV like the bulls of Pamplona. For others, it's just as exhilarating.

The Aquinas Times
The Aquinas Times office, located in the Wege Student Center or preferably via e-mail to: aquinas_editor@aquinas.edu

Letters to the Editor

The Aquinas Times is also available online at: http://www.aquinas.edu/aquinas

Dear Editor,

It has come to my attention that the Aquinas Times may be on its last legs due to funding issues. And while I openly admit to not knowing the whole story behind the paper's potential shutdown, one thing is certain: Keeping the Times going via even desperate means is better than seeing a college campus without a newspaper to provide a voice for the students.

In my recent years at the Times, I have had the opportunity to experience the newspaper as a major stepping stone to my career as an entertainment writer for The Grand Rapids Press. Since Aquinas lacks a full-blown journalism program, the Times provides a unique and invaluable experience; truth be told, my editors at the Press, upon considering me for employment, were more concerned with the quality of my published clips from the Times than any degree I may have earned.

More than that, we want someone who will see our nakedness and not gouge their eyes as they churn. "See no evil, see no evil." Because all the flowery prose in the world can't camouflage the underlying truth we're never supposed to speak. As S.J. Perelman said, "Love is not the dying moan of a distant violin — it's the triumphant twang of a bedspring." And no one wants to be alone.

Our culture doesn't want the romantic rush of intoxicating blend of want and illusion, even self-deception. We're carried away by the red and pink, doilly-lined interpretation of adoration. Drunk on Cupid's wine, we're lulled into the satin folds of a passionate embrace with what we hold most dear: the idea of being in love.

Singles assume there's an ebb and flow to their decision to have a romantic embrace with whom they desire.

"Community" Senate fails to show Aquinas values

Dear Editor,

The news that the Aquinas Community Senate failed to allocate more funds for the Aquinas Times was a blow to many within the Aquinas Community. Having worked for the Aquinas Times for nearly three years while a student, I feel a particularly deep connection to the paper, as well as to the function it serves within the Aquinas Community. The decades-old Times is an integral part of theAquinas Community experience. Every other week, readers relied on a new publication to keep them informed and entertained. Without the proper funding, however, the Aquinas Times, a campus staple, cannot be expected to function at its intended capacity.

Printing services, labor, and supplies all cost money that the Aquinas Community Senate has refused to give, although they have the responsibility to the Aquinas Community to do so. After all, "Community" is an integral part of Senate's name, and that community deserves — nay, has a right — to be informed. The Aquinas Times remains the sole forum providing students with unbiased information.

The Senate, whose members profess to be the representatives of the Aquinas student body, has let down the newspaper and its staff, the student body, the college faculty and staff, and the vast alumni community.

Granted, times are tough — enrollment is down at the College and the Grand Rapids area struggles with an uncertain economy — but that is no reason to quash the single forum providing students with unbiased information.

Singles have done the Aquinas Times and the Aquinas Community a great disservice. While I have faith that the members of the Times will find some way to bring the Aquinas student body an unbiased forum, I regretfully cannot say that I hold much faith in the Aquinas Community Senate. Their actions do not reflect the Aquinas student body that I knew as a student.

JOSEPH B. BOOGAARD
Aquinas '03

Corrections

The article "The Male Vote" published in the Jan. 21, 2004 issue of The Aquinas Times was wrongly credited. The article was written by Times writer Tony Petersen.

Due to an editorial error the article "WAQU to stream on Moos" was printed incorrectly. The letters appear on page 3 of this issue.
The American Empire: Myth or Reality?

By Melissa Conklin

Think back to those elementary school years. We all dealt with bullies and cooties. That number one concern was when recess was. Our research papers consisted of two or three pages of sloppy handwriting and facts found in a picture book. Now look at your little siblings/cooties and what elementary school means for them. They deal with bullies and cooties, too. However, ask them about their last research project.

My guess is that they say at a computer looking up scholarly articles. The requirements were probably very similar to our college assignments. They have to work process the paper in twelve point font and cite their sources.

I am a co-leader of a Browsee Girl Scout Troop. The girls often inform me of their latest assignments. They go to the computer lab at least once a week. Some of them make me believe that they may even know more than most college students. The girls have often even told me about the power point presentations that they have had to prepare.

I understand that the papers and presentations are not quite up to par with college work, but they are definitely beyond what we had to do.

This expansion of technology brings up many concerns for both parents and college.

Students are often concerned with the pressures put on their children because of the available technology. Should a six or seven year old be typing research papers?

Elementary school teachers have to be able to answer this question. It is their responsibility to prepare the students for the world, but what exactly should the child be held responsible for knowing?

This is where colleges are concerned. What do they need to impress upon their graduates? Teachers need to be able to keep up with the technology and the advancing technology.

I am not saying that kids today are smarter than us, but they do have more technology opportunities open to them. With these opportunities comes a lot of extra responsibility and concerns. Is it right that they are required to know so much or are we pushing too hard?

I cannot answer this, but I can tell you that I find it amazing that the same people who think the opposite gender has some contagious condition called cooties can also navigate the cyber world faster than many adults.

The war on drugs claims innocent lives

By Joy Schaefer

The world war on drugs has gone too far. Canadians Randy Sachs and Nguyen Van Hai could face the death penalty in Vietnam for possessing just 1,000 tablets of ecstasy, according to CBC news. Vietnam routinely executes drug dealers. According to Amnesty International, at least one-third of all executions in Vietnam are for drug offenses.

Although Michigan law does not sentence drug dealers to death, it does impose harsh penalties for drug possession. From 1973 to 1998, Michigan Michigan law stated that a person would be sentenced to life in prison without parole if he or she were convicted of possessing more than 650 grams of cocaine or heroin. On July 2, 1998, Governor John Engler signed laws reducing mandatory life terms for drug convictions.

Drug offenses account for nearly 60 percent of the state inmate population and more than 20 percent of the state inmate population, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

If there were a free market for money, drug dealers would no longer be being punished for selling drugs. They should have the right to make a living by selling drugs, providing they would not be wasted on the imprisonment of nonviolent criminals. Most importantly, if drugs were legalized, the war on drugs would cease to claim lives. While possessing drugs is a victimless crime, sustaining the war on drugs is not.
‘Knights’ a crowning achievement

Developer BioWare creates best Star Wars game to-date

By Bridget Brown
The Daily Cougar (U. Houston)

(U-WIRE) HOUSTON - By now you've probably heard it. Some brave soul may have played it on a juke box in a bar, or you may have caught it during its major rotation on MTV or on any modern rock radio station. It's the points accrued and you progress in the game, your choices will begin to physically shape who you are as a character. If you choose the path of the righteous, your character will stand proud and become more defined, whereas on the path of the dark side, your character will begin to lose friends and become more corrupted. Most of the time, there's also the additional chance of just dying.

The real focus of "Knights" deals with the maturation of your character's ability to harness the Force. Your alignment in most "Star Wars" games is determined by your reaction to one event: "This is a different — it utilizes a saperoid system by which each interaction you initiate with a non-player character can give you light or dark side points, or no point at all. For example, you stumble across a character that has been trapped by regimented droids (a venerable girlfriedn found her lover cheating on her, so she turned his droids against him. In this situation, you can either find it in your good will to program the droids back to their normal state if you want light points, or you can demand payment for your assistance if you want dark side points. Most of the time, there's also the additional chance of just dying."

“Neveru inter Nights”

Developer BioWare is known for its role-playing games, namely its impressive "Baldur's Gate" series and its unparalleled "Neverwinter Nights" series.

Now, with the recent release of "Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic," BioWare has added something unique to its list of impressive role-playing games it has released. So impressive, that the, in the current Star Wars of "Star Wars" games for next-gen systems, "Knights" stands alone as a crowning achievement.

The main plot of "Knights" is your quest for the Star Forge — an ancient weapon of mass destruction that the evil Sith lords Malc and Kevan found years ago — allowing the Sith to raise an incalculably large army. The game begins with your customized character aboard a rebel ship bound for destruction.

On your way to an escape pod, you must meet up with a future companion named Earth before you abandon ship.
Students, faculty and staff enjoyed the festivities of St. Thomas Aquinas week Jan. 26-Feb.1. Highlights of the week included an Aquinas family photo, a 36-foot diameter replica of the Labryinth, Wacky Olympics, a pep rally, and a victorious weekend for both Aquinas basketball teams.