Earth month has AQ community thinking green

By Emily Johnson
Times Writer

April is Earth month and the Aquinas community is gearing up to celebrate. Earth Day is also this week, Thursday, April 22. This year marks the 34th anniversary of Earth Day, which commemorates environmental consciousness, emphasizing the need to conserve the planet’s natural resources. Aquinas College will be hosting events right here on campus in the spirit of Earth month.

**Earthfest**

Students Against the Violation of the Environment will be holding its fifth-annual Earthfest, an educational community celebration on Saturday, April 24 from 1-6 p.m. at the Wege Center Mall.

Students can learn about issues concerning the planet through local businesses, organizations and AQ clubs. They will have tables providing information about their environmental causes.

Also, Thomas Leopold, executive director of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council will present a speech titled “Water Scarcity: An Emerging Great Lakes Issue.” There will also be live music, including bands Happy Hour at 2:00 p.m., The Sleeves at 3:30 p.m. and Sweet Japanic at 5:00 p.m. Admission is free and open to everyone in the community. Free T-shirts will be available to the first 100 people.

**Campus Clean-Up Day**

President Harry Klopke has announced that Friday, April 30 will be “Campus Clean-Up Day” at Aquinas.

Two three-hour work shifts are scheduled for 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Faculty, staff and students are invited to take part in gardening, mucking, waterway clean up, power washing, removing vines from buildings and various other activities.

As an added incentive, there will be a cook-out on Wege Mall between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Contact Marty Fahey in the College Relations Department for more information.

**Project Pride (rescheduled)**

Due to inclement weather last weekend, CAVA has rescheduled Project Pride to this Saturday, April 24.

Students will join Heartside residents and help clean the neighborhood by raking, picking up trash, sweeping, and other activities.

For more information, contact Elissa Sangalli, extension 1101.

**WMEAC Earth Day Celebration**

If you're willing to venture off campus and have a bit of money to spend you may be interested in the West Michigan Environmental Action Council’s Annual Meeting, Awards Ceremony & Earth Day Celebration.

The event is at Fountain Street Church located at 24 Fountain Street N on Thursday, April 22. It starts at 6:30 p.m.

Mary Reusch, local artist and WMEAC member will be a special guest.

"As civilization has encroached on the landscape, artists have been working hard to preserve the memory of wild areas. Our current wilderness continues to disappear right here in West Michigan," Reusch said that what we have left is increasingly sacred in my eyes," Reusch said. "This sacredness is something that I wish to capture."

The keynote speaker is Dave Dempsey, policy advisor for the Michigan Environmental Council and author of "Ruins and Recovery: Michigan’s Rise as a Conservation Leader" and more recently, "On the Brink: The Great Lakes in the 21st Century."

The topic of his speech will be "Bringing the Great Lakes Back from the Brink: What We Can Do in West Michigan for the World’s Largest Freshwater Ecosystem.”

Other events include a social hour and vegetarian dinner; Tickets are $30 for members and $35 for non-members. Contact Lisa Locke, 451-3051, or llocke@wmeac.org.

**CEOs of Green Building Council to speak at AQ**

By Lisa Gast
News Editor

These days, green buildings aren’t necessarily “green.” Green building is a new movement that promotes energy efficiency and environmentally responsible building construction.

Christine Ervin, president and CEO of the U.S. Green Building Council, will speak at Aquinas on Thursday, April 29 at 4:00 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

**Christine Ervin**

CEO and President of the Green Building Council

**Thursday, April 29**

4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Performing Arts Center

**Her speech, titled “Building a Healthy Future: The Role of the Built Environment,” is part of the annual Wege Speaker Series, now in its eighth year.**

Ervin is the former assistant secretary for the Department of Energy’s energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, and also served as the director of the Oregon Department of Energy.

She has been involved in such programs as Energy Star and the Buildings for the 21st Century roadmap initiative.

Ervin’s visit is significant to Aquinas because of the college’s sustainable ability program. The new major, combining business, science, environmental studies and sustainable business courses, is the only program of its kind in Michigan.

It is also possibly the only one of its kind in the entire country.

It uses non-traditional strategies to emphasize the business community can operate without draining the environment.

The program also focuses on how to increase corporate profitability without any negative environmental impacts.

The green building movement started in the early ’70’s, and has become increasingly popular during the past 20 years.

The U.S. Green Building Council was founded in 1993 and works with organizations and government agencies to promote environmentally-friendly buildings.

It also developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, a certification system for green buildings.
GRPD TV show is a waste of money

I’m not a big fan of television. So, when I find out taxpayer dollars are being spent to fund more of it, I’m not a happy camper.

Yes, the friendly folks at the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy have decided that the fastest nation in the world should spend more time in front of the TV.

What vitally important message could this new show be sending? Why, the ins and outs of a city of Grand Rapids police cruiser, of course. If that doesn’t get your blood rushing, maybe the fact that $30,000 of state money is being used to fund the show in a time of rising budget deficits will.

You can’t beat the “Blue.” It’s made its debut last Wednesday on public access television as a monthly, half-hour show focusing on “the tough issues” in the Grand Rapids Police Department. For example, there was a feature on the department’s German Shepherds. You’d be awfully hard-pressed to think of a tougher topic than discussing the GRPD canine unit.

Well, except maybe the issue of how you’re supposed to feel in a city that can’t pay enough officers to protect you, but thinks a TV show is vitally important.

The police chief told The Grand Rapids Press that after the state grant runs out, the department plans to continue funding the program on its own, because it’s such a high priority.

The city of Grand Rapids has to eliminate 40 police officers this year, because of a $3 million budget reduction, due to declining revenue sharing (aka money that cities receive from the state). How did funding television shows become more important than funding public safety?

Informing the public about the police department is important, but in a year when both the city and state budgets are drowning in red ink, television should be one of the first things cut. I’m disappointed in both the state of Michigan and the city of Grand Rapids.

The $30,000 grant is wasted money. I hate to be the one to break it to the world, but my generation is not going to voluntarily watch a boring documentary on any police department, let alone one made in Grand Rapids.

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Students, employers hold different outlooks at Career Expo

By Lisa Gast
News Editor

Local businesses, churches and government agencies and other organizations gathered at the Lacks/Jarecki Center for Career Expo 2004 on Wednesday, April 14.

While many organizations at the expo said job prospects for new college grads were good, students held mixed perspectives.

Most businesses said they were satisfied with the crop of students that turned out for the event.

"The traffic has been a little light, but I think it’s a better class of students than some of the other expos we’ve been at," said Liz Van Diepenbos, a representative from St. Mary’s Mercy Medical Center.

By Lisa Gast
News Editor

Seniors Shaun Hambleton and Brett Cagney check out information at the Michigan Department of Transportation booth at Career Expo 2004.

Lacks/Jarecki center for Career Expo 2004 on Wednesday, April 14.

Students for Life host Msgr. Lisante

By Lisa Gast
News Editor

On Thursday April 29, at 12:30 p.m., Msgr. James Lisante will speak on sex and the issues of life and death. The lecture is titled "Defending Life in Death-Defying Times."

Lisante’s talk, which is sponsored by the Students for Life, will include issues such as sexual ethics, abortion, assisted suicide and capital punishment. A question and answer session will follow.

Lisante is currently a pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hemptead, Long Island, New York.

He previously served as director of The Christophers, a Christian media organization.

He is a well-known Catholic public speaker, and has been on shows such as “Nightline” and “The Phil Donahue Show,” and many news shows.

Althicor representative said he didn’t think graduates are facing that tough of a job market and noted that Althicor is constantly hiring new people.

Jim Villarreal, a Michigan Department of Transportation recruitment specialist agreed.

“We’re hiring three to ten statewide positions at any time, ranging from no degree needed to a bachelor’s degree,” he said.

“There aren’t necessarily any disadvantages to being a new college graduate entering the workforce because they can bring a new perspective to the workplace.”

However, many senior Aquinas students didn’t hold such a bright outlook.

A few soon-to-be grads are hoping they’ll just be able to find jobs, even if they aren’t in their field.

Seniors Brett Cagney and Shaun Hambleton didn’t find any interesting prospects at the career expo, but expressed hope that they’ll find jobs soon.

Others weren’t so hopeful.

Sean Buikle, a May, 2003 Aquinas grad, came to the job fair not because he doesn’t have a job, but because he was hoping to find a better one.

He didn’t find what he was looking for the latter.

“There’s jobs available, just not in our field — that’s the problem,” agreed senior Tara Daniel, a business and arts major.

She also has been unsuccessful in her job search, and figures she’ll probably end up working in retail once she graduates, like she is now.

For some, grad school is Plan B if they can’t find a job soon.

Senior Alex Lentini will receive a degree in psychology and math this spring, but isn’t sure what he’d like to do once he graduates.

He figures if he doesn’t get a job soon he’ll probably go to grad school.

Senior Jenny Haynes-Daly also plans on attending graduate school but attended the career fair to check out prospects nonetheless.

“If someone wanted to hire me now, with a bachelor’s, and it was a good job, I’d probably take it,” Haynes-Daly said, adding that she would still like to attend graduate school on the side.

Hayes-Daly said a lot of her friends that are graduating in the business and education fields already have jobs lined up, but she hadn’t been actively looking for a job up until the expo.

Not all of the students at the job fair were seniors, however.

“I just came to look around, see what there is, I get my feet wet,” said Sophomore Regina Hayes.

That seemed to be the sentiment of many undergraduates students wandering the job fair.

Sophomore and psychology major Teresa Cancellosi came to check out a few specific businesses in her field, to get more information and a better feel for the companies.

“I really came for Pine Rest,” she said, “I’ll be done with my psych major next year and I’d like to get a job then.”

Students, employers hold different outlooks at Career Expo

By Jim Villarreal
Michigan Department of Transportation.

By Lisa Gast
News Editor

Many seniors were looking to hire science majors, and emphasized that personality was a key trait they looked for when talking to prospects at the expo.

“We’re looking for people with enthusiasm, students who really want a chance,” Van Diepenbos said.

Althicor, formerly Amway, had representatives from its protection service department, who were also hiring.

When asked about job prospects for local grads, an Althicor representative said he didn’t think graduates are facing that tough of a job market and noted that Althicor is constantly hiring new people.

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President notes Iraq difficulties in speech

By Jameel Naqvi
Michigan Daily (U. Mich.)

(WIRE) ANN ARBOR, Mich. - President Bush held a nationally televised press conference Thursday night to address the worsening situation in Iraq and the intense scrutiny his administration has come under in the past weeks over pre-Sept. 11 intelligence.

Throughout the conference, Bush portrayed the war on Iraq as one against the "ideology of terror," casting those who had inflicted casualties on coalition forces in the past month in the same light as those who carried out the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"Terrorist agents infiltrated Iraq to incite and carry out attacks," Bush said. Whether part of the Sunni or Shia "dual forces," the President said.

"We know there are insurgent groups who have used that same sort of terror tactic as their main goal — to start a civil war in Iraq," Bush said.

Bush named only one resistance leader, influential Iraqi Sheik Moqdad al-Sadd, whose militia is responsible for many coalition deaths.

"Al-Sadr must answer the charges against him and dis­band his illegal militia," he said. "In U.S. military officials want Al-Sadr dead or captured.

Mounting casualties have led some politicians to ques­tion whether the United States is dangerously undercommitted in Iraq, Bush answered these criticism Tuesday night.

"If additional forces are needed, I will send them. If additional resources are needed, I will provide them," he said. There are currently about 135,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. If U.S. casualties continue to mount at the current pace — 50 killed so far this month — April will soon eclipse November 2003 as the deadliest month since Bush declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003.

While Bush left open the possibility of an increased military presence, he also re­affirmed his dedication to the June 30 deadline for the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people and said he did not support a military commit­ment of an indefinite duration.

"We’re not an imperial power... We’re a liberating power," he said. "We seek an independent, secure and free Iraq."...Bush later said a coali­tion presence will remain in Iraq after the June 30 deadline.

A recurring theme in Bush’s remarks was Iraq de­mocracy as an important pre­cedent in the Arab world.

"The Iraqi Constitution will include a bill of rights that contribute to the freedom and the respect for human rights that is unprecedented in the Arab world," he said. Establishing democracy overseas was a central goal of the idealistic foreign policy Bush pre­sented.

"We’re changing the world and the world will be better off," Bush said.

Bush responded to the claim he took the country to war on false preten­tions. All evidence, he said, pointed to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein being in possession of illicit weapons.

"That’s the assessment I made, Congress made and the U.N. Security Council made," he said.

But he also addressed his personal responsibility for the events of Sept. 11. He at­tibuted any questionable decisions he may have made additional military and informa­tion at his disposal.

He cited Central Intelli­gence Agency Director George Tenet as his primary source of information about terrorist threats. Tenet came under fire in 2003 when he admitted showing faulty intel­ligence — alleging Hussein attempted to buy African ura­nium — to remain in Bush’s 2003 State of the Union Ad­dress.

"Had had any inkling that those people would fly planes into the buildings, I would have moved heaven and earth to prevent that," Bush said.

Bush stressed the war on terror is not over. "Iraq is only one theater in the war on ter­ror," he said. "I’m afraid [ter­rorists] want to hurt us again," he added, suggesting additional military action may be necessary to combat the global terrorism threat.
The Moose is on the loose... or is it?

By Jamie LaDronka
Assistant Editor

So we waited. For three years and some change, we waited. And after that three-year wait, we have been jipped. It is too much to expect nothing less than the best from Modest Mouse? They gave us the white-trash-simpleton, schizophrenic, spastic grace that was “The Lonesome Crowded West,” then took fans for a turn when they dug deep inside, harvesting depressed emotions and hearts, minds and souls and managed to squeeze them into a compact disc called “The Moon & Antarctica.”

And now, following with their “trend” of changing styles, Mouse offers up their latest album — “Good News for People Who Love Bad News.”

Their quirky name paradox strikes a similar chord when trying to pin down which direction in which Mouse is exactly going. It grabs for some of the rugged, rustic-metal that inspired “West,” while turning toward the other part self-commentary mixed with three parts social commentary to add to the coagulated melody which creates a rather interesting album. “News” starts off with an interesting Mouse musing — an amicable, light-hearted romp aptly titled “World So Large” which vocalist Isaac Brock takes jabs at the world and its inhabitants for never really looking at the global aspect of our effect on the earth and how we all just move on in some way to avoid our personal problems.

Mouse continues its pop buffet with the main course (and new single). Check out the video — “Float On,” which, like all pop songs today, carries a progressive message that no matter how difficult life gets, and we all will manage and serve some sort of purpose in our lives. Case in point: the video’s main character — a flock of sheep — the video shows them all over a farm and being herded onto a conveyor belt and into a barn, but never showing what happens inside the barn. What awakes the sheep’s spirit? Mouse manages to play its trump card: the ability to play on 80’s, 90’s, 70’s, whatever you please. A musical mosaic of sorts, “Good News” gets better throughout the CD. All of time in all of its forms missing something without a unique feel. It adds an extra dimension to a more sophisticated debut album. The combination of Ward’s keyboard as their lead instrument gives their music a unique feel.

Buckwheat Penny is a local rock band headquartered in Grind Rapids, featuring Aquinas senior Nate Mehren on lead vocals, Latte Zimmermann on guitar, Brandon Ward on keyboards, Terry Wolter on bass, and Mike Nelson on drums. Their debut CD, entitled “Greatest Hits Volume One,” brings to mind other contemporary bands such as Train and the Counting Crows. But Buckwheat Penny is certainly not a copy of any band, and their CD attests to this.

For one thing, Buckwheat Penny’s music expresses a musical style which both youth and nostalgia, two trends that don’t usually fit together very well. In the moving song, “Lone Time,” Mehren reflects: “All my wishes, all my dreams / They’re coming on around.” This band simultaneously possesses a deep reverence for the past and a vibrant hope for the future, and this appreciation of time in all of its forms stands out in their CD as a whole.

If nothing else, Buckwheat Penny is full of heart. Their music expresses a musical style which both youth and nostalgia, two trends that don’t usually fit together very well. In the moving song, “Lone Time,” Mehren reflects: “All my wishes, all my dreams / They’re coming on around.” This band simultaneously possesses a deep reverence for the past and a vibrant hope for the future, and this appreciation of time in all of its forms stands out in their CD as a whole.

Buckwheat Penny’s use of keyboard as their lead instrument gives their music a unique feel. It adds an extra dimension to a more sophisticated debut album. The combination of Ward’s keyboard and Mehren’s yearning voice adds a sense of sincerity and purity to Penny’s sound that is missing in much of today’s contemporary radio music.

Like all good CDs, “Greatest Hits” gets better with every listen. Each time you catch a lyric that you missed before or a poignant note that you didn’t notice, and you get a better sense of the search for meaning that drives this song. And that’s the charm.

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By By Aaron Ogg

April 1, 2004

The Ogg Show

Buckwheat Penny

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Sure, they share the same name, but that doesn’t mean the two “Kill Bill” volumes are anything like one another.

Where “1” was a blood-infused, disembowelment-driven festa, “2” harbors the bulk of the plot development. And that’s a good thing. The movie starts out with a Tarantino flash-back—the infamous wedding day massacre. And strangely, instead of being all blood and guts like “1,” it’s hard to see Bill as the heartless bastard he was portrayed as in “1.” That’s part of magic in “2.” We’re given the chance to see Thurman’s and Carradine’s relationship in a startling new light—a light that almost makes you feel empathetic to the aging Bill, especially when we see he’s been raising Thurman’s daughter, B.B., for the four years Thurman was in a coma. Carradine does an Oscar-worthy job with Bill, so much so that his acting really carries “2.”

That isn’t to say, though, that the other main characters aren’t exceptionally well-performed either—Thurman’s mentor, Pai Mei, played by Chia Hui Liu, is like an especially sour and sarcastic Mr. Miyagi with a longer beard he tends to whip all the time after providing his witty take on life. Daryl Hannah’s Elle Driver proves exactly why she is the top female of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad when she meets up with Thurman in Budd’s (Michael Madsen) trailer.

What umans is possibly the best fight in the whole “Bill” saga. Leave it to Tarantino and his imagination to use things like television antennas and floor lamps as weapons. And speaking of Michael Madsen, he pulls off the perfect “I lost pretty much everything, but I’m content now not doing much except living the life in my trailer” attitude.

Like the first “Bill,” the soundtrack is nothing less than astounding. It’s a perfect post-modern mix of western, modern beats and then some. In no scene does the music distract from the movie, it always improves it—something slightly uncharacteristic of action-oriented film today.

Those who were looking for another bloodbath along the lines of the first “Bill” will probably be disappointed to a very high degree, while those who were looking for something more than the first “Bill” will be rewarded. And those in between, well, you’ll enjoy the film either way.

‘Mr. Johnson’: Clapton’s sad blues tribute

By Curtis R. Burdette
Editor in Chief

Eric Clapton stands as one of the most influential disciples of delta blues legend Robert Johnson, which he proves with the release of his latest album. Clapton’s recently released album, titled “Me and Mr. Johnson,” includes renditions of 14 of the 29 songs that the Mississippi legend wrote and recorded in his lifetime.

Clapton’s deep bluesy voice attempts to recapture the soulful feel of Johnson’s gritty lyrics that deal with poverty, suffering and epitomize the delta blues sound.

Although the vocals are impressive, as a whole the instrumentation sounds sometimes like jazzy blues, other times like contemporary blues and frequently has about as much intensity as elevator music.

Instead of following the lone man and guitar classic blues motif, Eric Clapton chose to collaborate with a group of veteran musicians including former Beatles organist Billy Preston on piano and organ, Nathan East on bass, Steve Gadd on drums and Jerry Portnoy playing harmonica.

The first track, “When You Got a Good Friend,” takes the listener right into the full band orchestration of one of Johnson’s lesser known tunes. Clapton’s interpretation offers a modern blues feel with electric guitar, piano and harmonica filling in the harmonies as well as bass and drums strengthening the rhythms.

Although Clapton and company play with the accuracy of professional musicians, the harmonies, rhythms and melodies are too crisp and lack the unrefined blues sound that was Johnson.

Clapton chose “Hell Hound on My Trail” as the last track, and here he finally succeeds in mixing the passion of the delta blues with a modern sound. Heavy use of slides and bending notes on the electric guitar meld Johnson’s style with modern technology.

Preston adds some flair with piano fills and Portnoy’s harmonica creates a full sound that skillfully blends more than one hundred years of musical evolution.

This album lacks the energy and inventiveness that Robert Johnson exemplified. The final result offers some standout songs, but most sound like jazzy imitations of popular delta blues tunes.

The album offers a reinvention of Johnson’s music, but does not reinvigorate the genre. As a prolific blues artist who brought new life to John Lee Hooker’s “Crossroads” when he was with Cream, Clapton has offered better tributes to the raw melodies that define the delta blues.
Graduation lurks around the corner, approaching at the speed of light and I’m left with one final column at the end of a two-year stint as editor in chief of The Aquinas Times. Again I’m forced to ask myself: what is my message? A fond farewell? No, that’s too predictable. A remembrance of some of the finer moments that have passed? No, that’s too sentimental.

Instead I would like to impart some of the wisdom that I’ve gained working for the campus newspaper because many of the lessons applied to life as well.

1. Strive for a balance between thoroughness and perfection. Good newspapers are timely, meet deadlines, and always willing to adapt. Improvement starts from what you don’t. Don’t sacrifice quantity in an attempt to achieve perfection.

2. Don’t wait for positive feedback. The greatest compliment is seeing more than 1,000 copies of the newspaper in the hands of students, faculty/staff and administrators every two weeks. Readers should never be surprised at the excellent quality of the newspaper.

3. Have a backup plan. Cameras can malfunction, batteries can run low, film can go bad, articles can arrive late or never arrive, editors can get sick, computers can crash, and emergencies will happen when they are least expected. Preparation means being ready to improvise, adapt and overcome when the situation requires it.

4. Newspapers don’t have feelings, people do. Working for a newspaper is a job, but wanting each issue to be a success and wanting to succeed as an individual are not the same. Separating personal and professional responsibilities isn’t always easy, but it is necessary.

5. Learn when to stand and when to walk away. Some battles are worth tackling even when it’s only a battle of principle. Other times the wisest measure is to save your energy because the conflict isn’t worth winning.

6. Good leaders know how to compromise. Great leaders know when to compromise. The difference is subtle, but essential. There are times when it pays to do what your convictions are, but other times it is wise to listen and find a middle ground.

7. It’s ok to smile after someone pays you a compliment. Just remember that success is a lifelong goal, not a milestone and let that positive reinforcement lead you to achieve greater deeds.

8. Listen to everyone, but make your own decisions. Life isn’t a democracy and sometimes you have to make choices that others will not like. Choosing not to decide is always the worst choice.

9. Don’t make major changes at the last minute. Finding and fixing small problems shortly before a deadline can result in big messes. Always give yourself enough time to review a big project after you make your decisions, but other times it is wise to与时俱进 and find a middle ground.

10. Don’t believe everything you read. There was a yet in a Hawaiian shirt sighted at Aquinas College this week. Would you believe that just because you read it in a newspaper? Be aware that not all information is factual and everyone has an opinion.

Thank you to the Aquinas Times Editorial Board, Dr. Brooks, and the Aquinas community for the unique opportunity to serve as editor in chief of the Aquinas Times for the past two years. It has been an honor and a privilege to work beside some of the finest students that I have ever met and deliver the news to Aquinas every week. Thank you all!

— Curtis R. Burdette ‘04 Editor in Chief (‘02-‘04)
Gender Corner

How will an increase in the cigarette tax affect MI students?

By Emily Johnson

Videogames: the silent killer

By Josh Willford

In 1999, in Littleton, Colorado two Columbine High School students went into their school armed with guns. By the end of the day, they killed one teacher, twelve students and wounded twenty-three other students before turning the guns on themselves.

When asked why they did such a thing, one answer that came up often was video games. Parents went in an uproar. They found it unthinkable that their child could play a game and become a mass murderer. Some parents even blamed video games for the murders.

In reality, the video game industry should be baffled by how few violent games get into the hands of children, when parents are the only hindrance.

Parents have long grumbled about the kinds of children's programs on TV, but when parents are buying the games for their kids, they don't bother to actually read about the game beforehand.

SOMETIMES they will look at the rating. The game might say "T" (for Teens), and below it might say something like "suggestive themes, violence," but no where on the label does it define those terms what is controversial material is included in the game.

Retailers and game distributors suggest that parents read game reviews and talk to the sales clerk before buying a video game for a child.

Long has there been evidence that video games cause violence, yet those studies have indefinite results. Blaming video games for violence doesn't make sense.

Books, cartoons, movies, and TV shows are full of images of violence and no one is blaming those outlets.

Video games could be partly responsible for violent behavior, but the problem that exists is much larger than any single source of entertainment that reaches children.

The protests and demands for video game companies to stop producing violent games have not ended. Every day they receive complaints from parents who think games can be the only explanation to shootings that occur. Despite these lawsuits against John Woo and James Cameron for making violent films.

Recently the US Congress has debated several bills that would require video game retailers to require picture ID for games with adult ratings. However, the industry insists that they need to work with retailer to ensure enforcement of the age restrictions.

Despite the precautions, some of these violent games still find their way into the hands of impressionable pre-teens.

Do opponents of video games really believe that a child can learn to handle a gun by using a video game controller?

The authorities need to step using any single source of information that reaches children.

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Video games: the silent killer

By Emily Johnson

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"Act like" - An athlete who turned into an actor

Athletes make millions each year from their god-given talent and finely honed skills on the court and field. They are amazing examples of athleticism and strength. They are adored by sports fans and idolized by millions of kids whose only dream is to "be like Mike." It has to be a great life.

But for some of the sport's world's finest, it's not good enough. Along the way they get a few million plus endorsements and star in their own commercials. Suddenly, every athlete who did their own shoe commercial decides they are an actor. Or even worse, a musician, it's sickening.

From O.J. Simpson, to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, to Mike Piazza, to the king of the "actletes" Shaquille O'Neal, the last 30 years has seen a surge in pro-starring Hollywood. Unlike the matching rise of cable TV and channels like ESPN and Fox Sports, the "actletes" of the world are something the entertainment industry could do without.

Who ever told these athletes they could act? The idea that athletes could even make such an egotistical assumption boggles my mind. Pro athletes have worked years and years training, practicing and playing to get the level they are at athletically. Yet they take the leap into entertainment so blindly. Just because they have become the best point guards, quarterbacks, or catchers in the nation, they must be able to act.

Making a movie is a lot harder then selling a pair of shoes in a thirty second spot. Especially considering that it is geared to a demographic between the ages 8-16. Yet year after year, we see more multimad, madd-for-TV movies and major motion pictures cameo, if not primary parts played by athletes turned actors. However, recently the storm of "actletes" has abated. Hollywood has come to a consensus that they can't give anymore leading roles to athletes until they live down the disaster of "Kazaam."

Shaquille O'Neal is my best and (worst) example of the "athlete." You give him one supporting part in "Blue Chips" and suddenly he's an actor-extraordinaire. And then came Kazaam, and that is when O'Neal should have throw in the towel and retreated back to basketball. And if you thought he did you must have missed the cinematic masterpieces of "Steel" and "Sha." Thanks ok, so did I.

O'Neal's other shameless attempt to become an usher-star was his ill-fated rap career. His two albums, Shaq Diesel and Shaq Fu: Da Return, just plain suck. No, I haven't heard them but I have seen his music video and that alone made me cringe. It's all right Shag, we forgive you, but if you ever go resurrect your acting or rapping career, I don't think the music or film industry would survive it.

Just because O'Neal is the worst athlete to cross the silver screen, doesn't mean he is alone in his cinematic offerings. Take Rick Fox who has also started his long career with "Blue Chips." Although I liked "Blue Chips," it launched too many "actletes" into the stratosphere. Just because he's married to an actress, it doesn't make him a actor. And who can forget "The Magic Hour," it was more of a wasted hour. Bad Magic Johnson.

In addition, Howie Long, Dick Butkus and Terry Bradshaw all should stick to clear of anything remotely resembling acting, because they don't even remotely resemble actors. There is no reason to take a perfectly good athlete and make him an actor; it's just a cheap and ugly promotion technique. If anyone needs reminding rent "Kazaam."