

THE STING

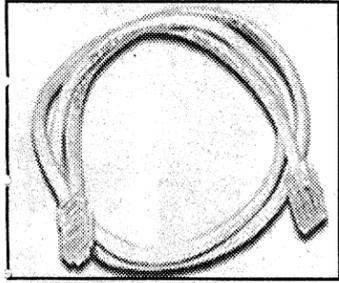
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SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume 59, Edition 5

QUICK NEWS



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TCOM Master's makes name change

Graduate TCOM Master's can look forward to a degree in Information Design and Communication

Elliott Skiles
Staff Writer

With over forty active students, a handful of recognized expert professors, and one of the southeast's most advanced usability labs, Southern Polytechnic's graduate program in technical communication is one of the leading technical and professional communication programs in the nation. In order to maintain this status, the HTC Department decided a change was in order, and so the Master's in what was formerly called Technical and Professional Communication was officially changed to a Master of Science in Information Design and Communication. The reasons for the name change are numerous, but it boils down to two main reasons: it is a better description of what TCOM students do, and it places Poly's program far ahead of the curve in what could end up to be a commu-

nity-wide identity change.

Dr. David Dayton, a professor of TCOM, was asked to comment on what benefits will come from this shift in terminology. His answer was simple: the current name is confusing to people who are unfamiliar with the field and it doesn't shed a great deal of light on what people in his field actually do. He went on

"The reasons for the name change are numerous, but it boils down to two main reasons: it is a better description of what TCOM students do, and it places Poly's program far ahead of the curve in what could end up to be a community-wide identity change."

Comcast scammer found, removed

CJ Shrader
Editor-in-Chief

On November 8, 2004 an e-mail was sent out to all students from Ann Watson, Director of Public Relations at Southern Polytechnic State University. The e-mail detailed how several female students had been approached by a tall black male in construction-type work clothing. All of the approaches were made around the apartments. The man told the women that he had a friend who works at Comcast and that they are hiring. He would then give the women a number to call if they were interested.

Any of the women who called the number soon discovered that it was not Comcast on the other end. The person on the line, who may or may not have been the same man, attempted to get the women to schedule an appointment off-cam-

pus. None of the women made the appointment.

Since this e-mail was sent out, according to Detective Tarcen of the University Police, the suspect had been identified and asked to

"If the man appears on campus an additional time, he will be arrested for trespassing."

leave campus. If the man is seen on campus again, he will be given a criminal trespass warning. If the man appears on campus an additional time, he will be arrested for trespassing.

So far, the police are unwilling to comment on whether or not this man is related to the alleged sexual assault suspect from October 31, though there is no evidence released to the public to show that the two instances are related.



Comcast never had any knowledge of the scam and was not affiliated with it in any way. No one has any reason to hold Comcast responsible.

to state that including the word "information" in the title ties the program into the information age, and "design" lends a sort of skilled art and science related prestige to the program.

The second main reason for the name shift was that the technical communication community in general has had an identity crisis of late, with a good deal of the community pushing for the name of the profession to be changed to "information design." Dr. Dayton noted that due to the TCOM program's international ties to Christ Church Poly-

technic in New Zealand (a school that has already made the name change) it was important that the program stay ahead of the curve.

So will the Bachelor's program be making the big step? The HTC Department says not likely anytime soon, especially after the overhaul of the Catalog and the inclusion of the three specialized concentrations. Despite this, Poly's TCOM program (regardless of its name) continues to be well respected within the technical communication/info design circles throughout our community.

Double Dash dashes dreams

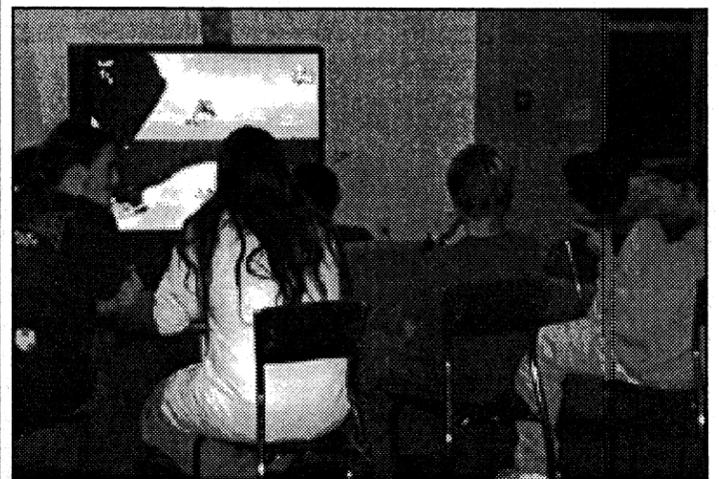
SPSU students compete in a wild Mario Kart: Double Dash tournament

CJ Shiflett
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, November 18, Residence Life sponsored a Mario Kart: Double Dash tournament in the Community Center. Daniel Grant, a

accommodate newer players, each match started with one practice race that would not count.

Each race was on the 150cc setting, the fastest speed the game will allow the players to drive at. The characters were selected on a first-



Some students enjoying themselves in the recent Mario Kart tournament. If pictures could somehow emit sound, then this picture would never shut up. The tournament was filled with hoops and hollars, cheers and gasps.

Community Assistant in the Commons apartments, organized the tournament. Over 20 residents showed up at the event, with 10 teams of 2 participating.

The first round was a single elimination round, with 2 teams pitted against each other. Whichever team lost 2 of 3 games would be eliminated from the tournament. To

come basis. So, if the other team managed to get to your favorite characters first, too bad. The track was selected randomly. If you had already done the track during that round, the track was reselected.

Five teams came out victorious from the fiery first elimination round. The Best, The Badasses, Desi Kart,

Continued on page 2

Double Dash

Continued from Front Page

Smeg in the Head, and, surprisingly, Team Never Played were the ultimate victors of the first round. Because of the odd number of teams, Daniel Grant and his roommate, Derrick Bradley, joined the tournament.

At this stage of the tournament, the format shifted a little bit. Instead of single-elimination, the tournament switched to a double-elimination, round-robin style of play. Whichever team lost their 2 of 3 this time around would still be in the tournament, but would have to work harder to have a chance at winning.

The second stage saw a more competitive experience and much more shouting. These were the not-so-bad players, after the losers had been weeded out. Smeg in the Head managed to overcome a decidedly not-so-Badasses, while Team Never Played pulled a surprise upset, making everyone wonder what The Best were actually good at. Desi Kart

was able to oust Daniel's team in a tough battle lasting to a nail-biting finish in the 3rd race.

While unfortunate, Daniel's loss made the tournament much easier to manage. Instead of having 3 teams in the loser's bracket, there were only 2: The Badasses and The Best. Only one of these brilliantly named teams could continue in the tournament. After much yelling and a little bit of racing, The Badasses made sure that The Best were really only as good as the rest.

The 3rd round brought out the serious side of the players. With only 4 teams left, there was a decidedly smaller audience. Smeg in the Head faced off against Desi Kart, leading to an ultimately exciting Smeg victory. Team Never Played put up a valiant struggle, stretching the round out to all 3 games, but The Badasses showed how truly bad they were by defeating the newcomers.

Fresh out of the loser's bracket and eager to keep their 1-win streak unbroken, The Badasses squared

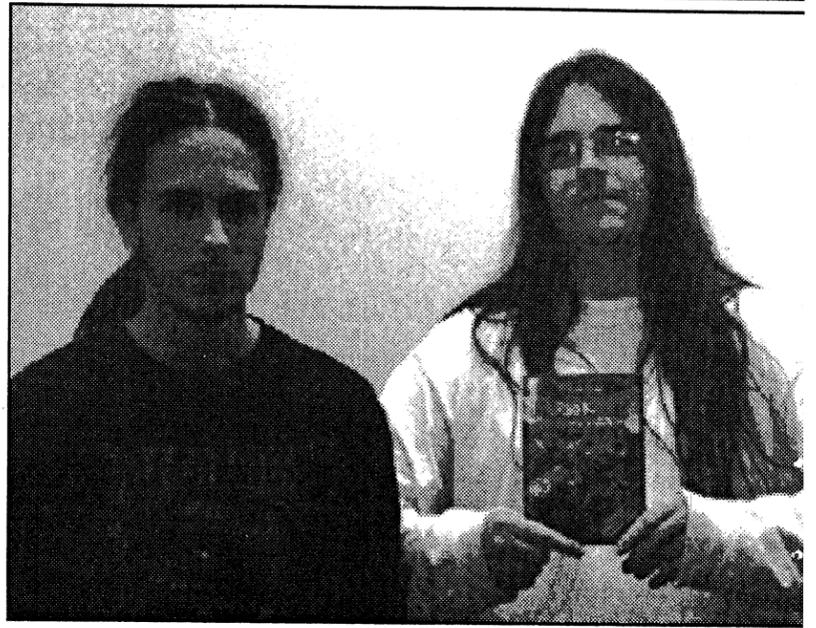
off against Smeg in the Head. Unlike the other rounds, however, the Championship round was a little disappointing. Sure it was louder than the other rounds and with this being the final round, there were a lot more screeches of horror, but the round wasn't very close. The Badasses swept Smeg in the Head in 2 straight games. The 2 team members of The Badasses, Joey Peppers and Stephen Quattlebaum, were jointly awarded a \$30 gift certificate to GameStop.

Overall, the tournament was a big success. The turnout was much larger than that of the pumpkin-carving contest. There seemed to be a lot more enthusiasm in the event, as well. Many participants really got into the matches, with lots

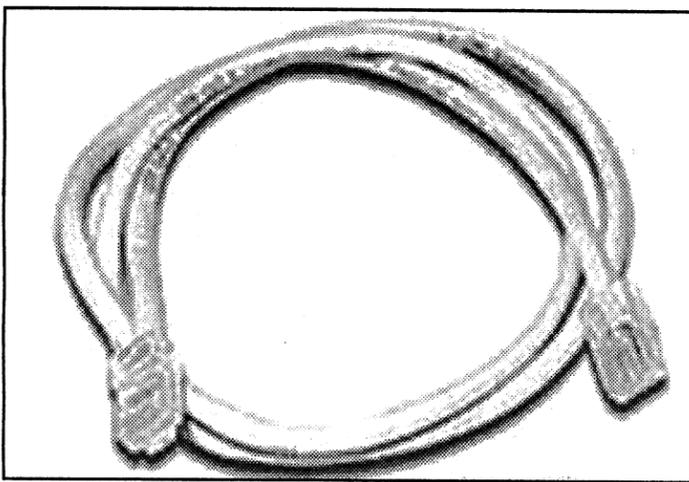
of screaming and many expletives being thrown around whenever something happened. It often didn't matter if that something was someone crashing, throwing a well-aimed turtle shell, or just driving

normally.

Another Double Dash tournament is tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 13th. Refreshments should be provided this time with a hinted larger prize.

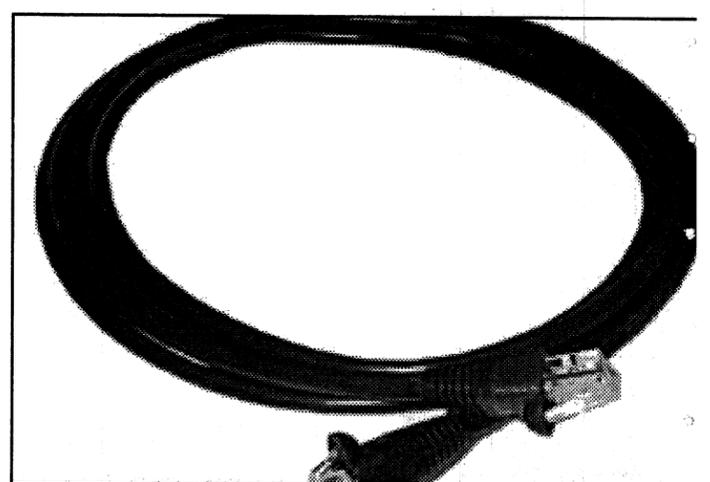


Long hair = racing ability? (Please excuse the photo...it's just a dark, dark room.)



Have you seen us?
CAT.5 cables have gone missing from the library

Tony Perez
Staff Writer



There is a CAT burglar at large here at Southern Polytechnic who has been prowling the campus library. A computer located upstairs in the library has had its network cable taken twice. The computer is a reference computer used to access Galileo in order to find books and retrieve online articles. Its location was in an obscure area that is not easily monitored by library personnel. It was placed there so students would not have to walk downstairs to look up information. The computer has since been moved back downstairs. The network cable is an ordinary CAT.5 cable about six feet or so and is used to connect the computer to a wall jack for internet access. It looks similar to a phone cord except the plugs are larger and the cable is round instead of flat. Today, the cable is commonplace and can be found almost anywhere, even in some supermarkets for under \$10. The money to replace the cable comes from the Technology Fee, which all students are paying. If these trends continue, then it is no doubt that an increase in the Technology Fee can be expected for everyone in the upcoming years.

“The Amazing Banachek” performs for SPSU students

CJ Shrader
Editor-in-Chief

In the audience, four completely random students are asked to choose any card from a deck and stand up. A man in a bright blue jacket and black pants studies each student, watching their position and their eyes as he speaks. As he watches each student, he begins to concentrate.

He asks one student if his card was black. The student nods yes, but isn't impressed so far. The man had a fifty-fifty chance.

The man tells the student that the way he's holding his arms behind his back, curved with his hands together, tells him that it's a curved shape. He asks if the card is a spade. The student nods yes again, and the audience begins to lean forward in anticipation. So far, the man could just be getting lucky. Could the man actually guess the number?

The man talks a little to the student, speaking as much with his hands as with his mouth. The man studies the student, and then, amazingly guesses the number. Shocked, the student sits down. The man repeats this act with the three other students.

Is this magic? Or maybe evidence of psychic ability? Not at all.

The man is England-born Steven Banachek, a self-proclaimed mentalist, a mix between a magician and a psychologist.

Students who have taken a Psychology course recently at Southern Polytechnic State University might recognize the name. Banachek is one of a group of three men who once fooled scientists into thinking their group had psychic powers. You can see his picture in the psychic section of the current Psychology book.

Banachek recently performed for SPSU students in the Community Center, hosted by the Campus Activity Board. He entertained with a vast array of sleight of hand and psychological tricks. Banachek would have students flip through a book and stop on any word, without Banachek viewing the book. He would then guess the word. He would have students find a random number in a phone book, and then reveal that he had mystically already written down the number earlier. He duct taped coins over his eyes, and then put on a blinder, and was still able to accurately guess three random objects from the audience without ever touching them. He took two students, had them close their eyes, and tapped one of them. Somehow, the other student felt the



This is the same image of (from left to right) Banachek, Edwards, and James Randi that you would find in a current SPSU Psychology book

tap as well.

Banachek admitted that his tricks didn't always work, but the vast majority of them were dead on. Some of his most impressive tricks were when he set a pen on the edge of a table and, “with only the use of his mind,” made it fall off. He was also able to bend forks by shaking the forks back and forth or rubbing them. Most students who were able to touch the forks believed they were actual, real forks. Banachek

told the audience that when he was younger his high school cafeteria switched to plastic utensils because he was asked so many times to bend their metals ones.

Before his final trick, Banachek explained that what he did was not magic or psychic ability. It was simply science. He demonstrated how he could subconsciously influence the thoughts of the audience through various hand movements as he talked. When asked to choose two simple geometric shapes that

were not a square, most of the audience chose triangle and circle because Banachek would wave his arms in a circle or steeple his fingers into a triangle while he spoke.

Banachek ended the show with a daring trick that, according to him could have been fatal. He selected five students, and wrapped two open knives in paper. He wrapped three closed knives in paper as well so they would have the same weight as the open knives. He then asked each student to select one paper wrapped knife. Using his manipulative abilities, he was able to sort the students into the three he believed had the closed knives and the two with the open. He then had the three whom he believed had the closed knives jab them into his stomach, and naturally, all ended up being closed, as Banachek had believed. If he had guessed wrong then the title of this article would be “Mentalist Stabbed at SPSU.”

Banachek ended the show to a standing ovation. Everyone seemed to enjoy his special brand of pseudo-magic and psychology. Students interested in reading more about Steven Banachek or seeing videos of some of the stunts he performs can go to www.banachek.com for a wealth of media.

SAFE discussion continues

Another piece of the epic SAFE saga

Anonymous Contributor
Member of SAFE

I want to thank Christiaan for admitting to his error and the opportunity to keep this discussion going. We recognize that we will never be able to change your mind about the value of a diverse campus nor will we be able to respond to your attacks without getting yet another. We think it is important to recognize that your opinion is not the only opinion on campus.

The idea of essential versus non-essential groups is a scary concept. Who decides what is essential or not and exactly what criteria should be used? Why would groups that foster leadership, social responsibility and cultural diversity be considered non-essential and sports are essential. The Greek organizations and the culture based organizations are just as important as sports to our school's

future. These groups are also important to all students' futures. That is one reason why the Board of Regents requires social and cultural classes in the core curriculum.

The budget problems are troubling and its effects will linger on this campus for many years. The students will be able to recover financially much quicker than the school ever will. Do we really want to stunt our growth on campus? The

more diverse the campus gets, the more students that will consider enrolling here. We all win.

Finally, the idea about homosexual's choice is laughable. Choose to be hated, killed or just politely disliked? It just does not happen. I challenge everyone to think about it with an open mind. If you are not anti-gay then why end your article with an anti-gay statement?



He is...SAFE!

Library copiers (or lack thereof)

Remy Lebeaux
Staff Writer, formerly Anonymous X

If you've visited the library in the past week or so, then you've probably noticed a disturbing lack of working copiers on the lower level and first floor. In fact, the most frequently used copying machine, the one formerly located on the lower level near the Architecture/Construction materials, has been removed since it made copies roughly as effectively as your average blind pigeon.

The reason for this situation is simple; the library's copiers were seemingly purchased in the mid-to-late 1840s and have never been replaced, resulting in machines that work sporadically at best.

Even when the copiers do work, the outdated machines are unable to perform simple tasks such as two-sided copying or document stapling

(apparently, neither was invented when this version of the copier was released). In fact, none of the copiers available have document feeders, instead opting for the dated



I wanted a picture of someone photocopying their own rump. But we sometimes don't get everything we want, do you?

scan-only method which can take decades when copying several documents.

The library placed myriad requests for replacement copiers when there were three barely functioning machines, now with only one barely functional machine, students are forced to wait in line to copy materials that may be required for a class.

If you would like to rectify this situation, you should complain, vehemently, to Patrick McCord at the Business Office and to our illustrious President. Or, you may take a less direct route and visit the library Circulation Desk and ask for the "One-Minute Survey" (which, as of this writing, there are plenty of) which deals directly with this problem.

Are you in need of proof that the Second Amendment works?

You don't need to look further than Iraq

Dave Bachtel
Staff Writer

Criticism of the second amendment has always been at the center of the movement to ban the personal ownership of firearms. For reference, the second amendment states that, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." As the death toll in Iraq continues to steadily climb, only one thing seems certain. The second amendment works.

The conflict in Iraq has proven that a well-armed insurgency can inflict painful losses on an occupy-

ing force, even if said force happens to be the best trained and equipped military power on the face of the Earth. If the citizens of an occupied country are unarmed and choose to resist occupation, uprisings can usually be quelled easily by the use of nonlethal force. When one is unarmed, there is no real way to physically resist.

Now here's the fun part. Let's say (hypothetically) that France convinces the United Nations to go to war against the United States. Let's also say (again, hypothetically) that somehow the United States loses the war or surrenders and an occupying force arrives. Since fifty percent of American

households own firearms, and one hundred percent of Americans don't enjoy being told what to do, an uprising would occur in about... five minutes. It would be like trying to occupy Fallujah times ten.

The second amendment exists for a reason. And it is not for "hunting and sporting purposes." Those who claim that it is are delusional, retarded, or quite possibly both. Hunting is just an added bonus. The amendment clearly states that it is for the purpose of ensuring that the United States remains free. The opening hours of the War for Independence were fought as a Guerilla war against an occupying force, just as the war in Iraq is being fought now. For us, or against us, the second amendment works.

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ORGANIZATIONS

Articles written by organizations to inform the campus of activities and events are welcome. Articles must be submitted in electronic format (e-mail, disk) by the deadline printed below. Please limit articles to two hundred words. All such articles are subject to editing for style, content and size, and are run on a space-available basis.

JOINING *The Sting*

Any student paying Activity Fees is eligible to join *The Sting*, though final decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief. We prefer creative students who have passed English 1101. Come to our meetings Friday at 1:00 PM in A252, upstairs in the student center, or call (678) 915-7310. This includes YOU, all you so-called members that never attend. *The Sting*: It's not a job, 'cause a real job pays more.

DEADLINE

Deadline for the next issue is currently unknown. When it is decided, all members of *The Sting* will be informed. Articles submitted after deadline will not be printed in the next issue of *The Sting*, except through special permission.

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Re-energizing the Tax Code

Mark Campbell
Staff Writer

One of the reasons that the Bush administration has given for rejecting the Kyoto global-warming treaty is that its cap on greenhouse gas emissions would compel reduced energy usage, which would retard the American economy. It is evident that a high per capita energy usage correlates well with a high per capita gross national product.

Although we've made good strides in increasing our energy efficiency, Americans have tended to use those gains to do more, rather than less. There is no doubt that the engine in a Hummer H2 is more efficient per cubic inch of displacement than engines from the muscle car era of the 1960s. But that gain in efficiency is swallowed up in a vehicle that is much larger, capable of going off-road (though it seldom will), and chocked full of all sorts of power accessories as standard features.

Our energy habits are like using less vegetable oil to fry a given French fry, but then super-sizing our order. In the end, more vegetable oil is used than ever before.

European economies and the Japanese too, have managed to be more energy efficient in their creation and use of wealth, while attaining similar per capita GNPs. A large part of that is that the energy costs that their consumers see is much higher – due to taxes on energy consumption.

Since taxes are going to be collected anyway, and the Bush ad-

ministration is considering changing *how* those taxes will be collected, we're going to suggest another radical proposal.

How about a national energy tax as the sole source of federal taxation?

Although we have a myriad of energy sources, we can simplify

Our energy habits are like using less vegetable oil to fry a given French fry, but then super-sizing our order.

such a tax by reducing it to three forms of energy – petroleum products, gasses (natural, propane, and coal gas), and electricity. Hydro-power, solar power, wind power, coal and nuclear power are primarily used to generate electricity. A flat tax on equivalent kilowatt-hour on all three forms would be a fair method to let the market best decide where real gains in national efficiency are to be made.

It is true that such a tax might miss the homeowner who decides to take his household off the national grid by installing solar panels, chopping wood, building a windmill and a waterwheel, digging his own coal mine, or, heaven forbid, building his own clandestine nuclear tea kettle. But unless he also manufactures everything himself and grows his own food, he's going to be hard-pressed to completely avoid his share of taxation in such an economy. If he can, then more self-empowerment to him, lit-

erally; I think we can be generous enough to let the Amish be Amish.

There are those that argue that this will increase the cost of doing business. Perhaps, but isn't one of the key arguments of capitalism the fact that costs to corporations are passed on to the consumer? The same would be true of increased

energy costs due to such an energy tax.

Since energy use is pervasive, avoidance of the tax will be more difficult than under the bevy of exemptions and tax cuts and loopholes present in the current tax system. Energy suppliers have a strong incentive to collect what they are owed by energy users, and a federally mandated flat and fair excise will not add significantly to that burden. In fact, those users who are past due might find themselves reported to the feds, who would also have a vested interest in seeing energy bills paid on time and in full.

Since users are going to have a difficult time persuading energy suppliers to under-report their usage, their alternative to reduce their tax obligation is to be more energy efficient. This even applies to manufacturing and

the service sectors – the gain in efficiency can be used to reduce prices to gain market share, or alternatively, to boost profits.

If America can increase her national energy efficiency, then generating wealth will be less dependent on foreign energy supplies such as Saudi Arabian oil. That means that our Arab 'allies' won't have us quite over their barrel.

One could argue that such energy efficiency would reduce government income over the long haul. That may be true, and may not be such a bad thing; it may, at the very least, compel the government to explain why any increase in an energy tax rate should be made at the time.

Another possible fault with a flat national energy tax is that it may encourage energy intensive industries to move offshore. That may also be true, but the elimination of all other federal taxes should be a boon to the American economy, leading to increased American ownership opportunities by overseas investment. Besides, specialization

is also a hallmark of capitalism.

It could be said that further outsourcing of manufacturing harms the American economy. In that case, it can be reasonably argued that the failure of other nations to tax their energy usage is an unfair subsidy of their industries. And then it becomes logical to introduce a surcharge on imported goods to level the playing field.

Is such a plan likely? No. Just as with the flat national sales tax as proposed by Congressman Linder, or a flat national income tax as preferred by President Bush, such a tax is unlikely to survive the special interest lobbies that will seek a competitive niche in the tax code. A look at the current tax code should be evidence enough of the havoc that will be wrought in the long haul on any tax that started off simple.

But the options are certainly worth discussing, if only to define what our nation finds as its priorities, and how we'll meet our expenses.

Calling a Spade a Spade: Final thoughts

Erik Hadley
Staff Writer

I am going to take a break from my usual political commentary to provide students with a few insights into academic studies. You see from what I have been told this is going to be the last issue of The Sting for this semester and I am going to be graduating (as long as I pass my three remaining classes). Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the things that I have learned about college since I started back in the fall of 1999.

For starters I will share the greatest piece of advice I ever received. The key to all of your success in college comes down to one word: balance. There is plenty of time for you to get all of your work done and plenty of time for the fun/games/parties. The key is to find the balance between them.

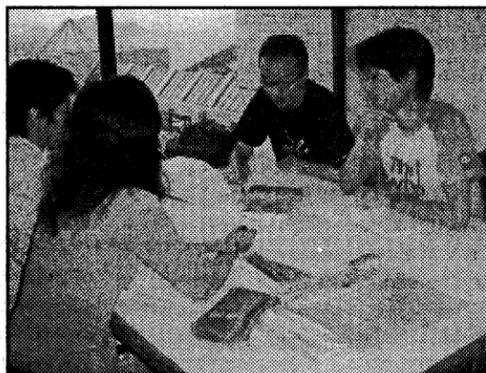
The next biggest piece of advice I can give is do not put anything off. If you have any assignment, be it as simple as homework or as complicated as a semester long project; do not wait until the end to work on it. Get it done early. Working on projects early will save you a lot of grief down the road. If you hit a snag early you have plenty of time to fix the problem. If you wait until the end you will never fix the

snags.

Be very careful who you choose to work with on projects. Depending on whom you choose you may end up suffering. After

all if you are determined to get an A in the class and you pick a group of people that will be happy to just get a C guess what kind of work they are going to produce. That's right – they will only produce C level work and guess what grade you will get. That's right a C. You also want to make sure you find people willing to pull their share of the load. Unless you really like freeloaders that will ride your coattails and let you do all the work make sure you find people that will be willing to actively work with you.

Get to know your professors, and make sure they get to know you. Eventually you are going to need letters of recommendation for something. So unless you are already working in industry where you can get people in industry to write the letters for you, you will have to go to your professors. It is a lot easier for them to do that if they know who you are.



Read this article. Then, go out and do what's in the picture. No, not be Asian. Study. Not that there's anything wrong with being Asian. It'd probably help.

Do not be afraid to change major if

what you are studying just doesn't seem right. I spent two years at another university studying biology before I realized that I didn't have a chance in the major. So I changed to Computer Information Systems (similar to IT management track here). I did that for a year then moved to Georgia and changed again to Computer Science. I finally found a major that suited me. If I had stuck with biology maybe I would have graduated already, but I would be miserable with my work.

Last I just want to say that it really is true, college really is the best four, five, six, seven, eight... years of your life. Maybe you will finish in four years maybe it will take you longer. The point is you need to finish, it will be well worth it.

So with that I wish you all the best in your studies and in your career. Remember what I have said, it will help you down the road.



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Career Fair? For whom?

Heather Giroux and Remy Lebeaux
Staff Writers

On Tuesday, November 16th a career fair was held at the Cobb Galleria Center from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm. All students who have signed up with the SPSU Career and Counseling Center's Career Lane were notified via email a few weeks prior to the engagement.

We both went to the event expecting to network with at least two or three companies in our perspective fields of study. Instead, the most promising company we ended up conversing with was Waffle House. Not to say that Waffle House is not a great company with staying power, but it isn't really where a college graduate would like to start out. The vast majority of employers present were looking for more managerial or financial oriented students rather than the engineer majors that our school offers.

Another problem the two of us ran into was the pamphlet given out

before we walked into the networking area. There is a section entitled "Employers by Major" which categorizes each representative by various majors. Let's take the major of Computer Science for example: in the "Employers by Major" section there are seven companies listed with the inclination to hire graduates with a CS degree. In all actuality only one of the seven companies listed (Choice Point Inc.) was even looking for someone from this field of study. Another example of this we ran into was the field of construction. The Construction Department has over 300 students enrolled in it and yet there was not a single company there listed to be looking for graduates of this degree.

Honestly, why was our school participating in this Career Fair in the first place? SPSU is one of Georgia's most prominent "technology" universities. So one would think our school would be taking part in a more engineering based career fair as opposed to this obviously management oriented one.

See, I told you Jason Lee was evil: *The Incredibles*

Remy Lebeaux
Staff Writer

Running Time: 105 minutes
Rated: PG

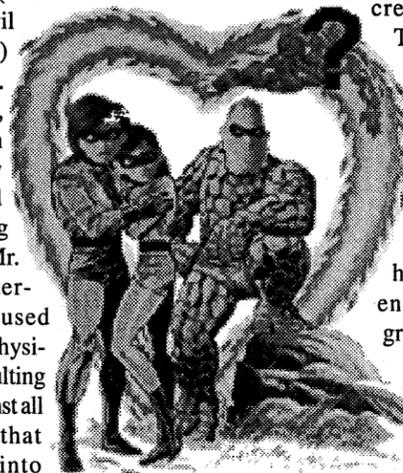
Once again, I find myself reviewing a movie that everyone with even the slightest bit of interest has already formed an opinion on. The last time I did such a review the culprit was *Spider-Man 2*, a movie that I did nothing but gush over for a solid couple of pages. This time around, the movie in question is

Pixar's *The Incredibles*, a fast, fun, funny eye-candy romp from the people that are known for fast, fun, funny eye-candy romps.

For those of you that are not up to speed about this movie's premise (all three of you), *The Incredibles* is an animated (well, CGI) superhero tale that goes above and beyond the call of duty to show the private lives of a town's popular and powerful heroes. The movie focuses on Mr. Incredible himself, Bob Parr (voiced with wicked charisma by Coach's Craig T. Nelson)

enjoying himself immensely as he performs incredible feats of strength to rescue civilians from all of the perils of everyday life (like giant robot attacks). Mr. Incredible, the viewer soon learns, is in high spirits due to his nigh nuptials with Elastigirl (voiced by Holly Hunter) and his judgment becomes a little stunted. After noticing a man falling from a building, Mr. Incredible leaps forward and tackles the man through a large window thus saving the man's life. Inside the building, Mr. Incredible encounters the

deadly French-villain Bomb Voyage, he also encounters a ruthlessly persistent fan (the frighteningly evil Jason Lee) named Buddy. As it turns out, the falling man wasn't in any danger at all and was committing suicide when Mr. Incredible intervened and caused the man some physical damage, resulting in a lawsuit against all superheroes that sends them into semi-permanent seclusion.



Draw your own conclusions.

tic, Violet has the invisibility and invisible force fields of (get this creative name) The Invisible Woman, and Dash (the youngest Incredible)...okay I got nothing for Dash, he's going to have to be the enigma of the group.

Those of you that don't like animated films will probably not be won over

by this movie, especially if you weren't won over by the *Shreks* or *Toy Storys* of the cinema world. *The Incredibles* doesn't pretend to be anything more than what is shown in the previews: a fun romp with powerful characters that have actual personalities. Therein lies the rub. You should NOT go into this movie expecting a superhero slug fest. *The Incredibles* focuses on Bob Parr, Mr. Incredible, and his family with an occasional appearance by FroZone and not one other solitary hero. Maybe with the sequel (and there WILL be a sequel) we'll get to see a bit more of all the heroes so constantly mentioned in the movie.

Oh and lest I forgot, whatever you do, AVOID the insanely weird and less than entertaining short movie at the beginning of this film: *Boundin'*. I'm about eighty percent certain I actually heard a five year old kid turn to his mommy and say; "WTF mate?"

What's good: Stunning visuals, great humor, you can bring the kids and the old folks, it's Pixar!!!

What's bad: The world's oddest short movie caps off the actual film, people that have animated movie paranoia need not apply.

The Verdict: 4.5 "FroZones" out of 5

The Histories that Matter: Holiday grab bag 2

CJ Shrader
Editor-in-Chief

Hey folks. Unofficially, this would mark the beginning of The Histories that Matter's third year here in The Sting (Officially, it'll be next issue). Certainly, my first article wasn't called The Histories that Matter at the time, but it all started with a history of the word X-Mas. The following year, I expounded on the past of the 12 days of Christmas, Fruit Cake, Mistletoe, and the Canadian Thanksgiving.

This year, I hope to go over some more holiday-related stuff. You know, like old times.

The Christmas Tree

Just like nearly any tradition, the Christmas tree's roots (get it, roots?) begin far before the birth of Jesus. Evergreen trees, like pine, have been respected for thousands of years, especially during the winter solstice, where night was at its longest. While people were cold and all other plants were dying, the evergreens continued to stay green and prosper.



Due to this almost-magical property of evergreens, they began to be revered by many various societies. Ancient Egyptians used a palm tree branch to symbolize resurrection, and would decorate their homes with branches during the winter solstice. Pagan Romans decorated their trees with pieces of metal and tiny replicas of their god Bacchus. Druids, in honor of their god Woden (Whom the day Wednesday is named after), would attach candles and fruit to the tree.

What's interesting about the Christmas tree is that the prophet Jeremiah wrote against them in the Bible. He said, "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not."

Even so, Christians obviously

adopted the Christmas tree. The legend circles around St. Boniface, who would use the triangular shape of a fir tree to describe the Holy Trinity. According to the legend, Boniface cut down an oak tree, sacred to Pagans, which miraculously split into four pieces and revealed an evergreen growing from the center of the oak stump.

Converted Christians began to revere the fir as God's tree, much like they had done with the oak. By the 12th century, the fir was being hung upside-down from ceilings as a symbol of Christianity.

Decorating the Tree

Of course, the Druids and Romans decorated trees very early on. The earliest mention of the decoration of a Christmas tree, however, takes place in the early 16th century. It is stated, and possibly could be legend, that Martin Luther was the first to decorate a Christmas tree by placing and lighting candles on the tree to show his children how the stars twinkled through the night.

If the above is legend, the legend itself could still very well be the reason why we put lights on our trees today.

However, if Martin Luther didn't start the tradition, it did begin in western Germany. Families would bring home "paradise trees" to celebrate the feast of Adam and Eve, which, coincidentally enough, took place on December 24. German families would decorate the trees with paper roses, apples, wafers, gilt and sugar.

Tinsel

Tinsel was invented in Germany in 1610. Originally, tinsel was made of pure silver. A special machine was designed that would stretch the silver into a very thin strip, which was then used to decorate the tree. The tradition of using real silver continued until the mid-20th century.

Back to the Tree

The tree moved to England with the help of the Georgian Kings, who were from Germany. The tradition of the time was to have a tree for each member of the family on a table. The gifts for each person would be placed under the table under that person's tree.



The tree has a lot more history, but I'm going to skip to it coming to America. Several different groups are responsible for bringing the tree over. First, there was the Hessian soldier (German mercenaries) during the 18th century. Cattle barons from Britain who lived in Texas brought over the tree tradition, and the East Coast Society copied the English Court. And the tree, don't forget about the tree.

(Special thanks to religioustolerance.org and christmasarchives.com for most of this information.)

Christmas Caroling

Originally, caroling was actually a circle dance that had no singing. Since the church was actually struggling to rid itself of pagan customs, the singing of carols was actually banned from sacred services. However, nativity carols, simple folk songs, were written outside of the church and became quite popular.

Saint Francis of Assisi (teehee) is credited with bringing carols back into the church. During a Christmas Midnight Mass in a cave...for some reason...it is said that the music played that night was far more similar to the Christmas carols of today than anything that had been allowed in the church before.

Carols began to spread through wandering minstrels. Later on, villages formed bands of waits to sing.

What's a wait, you ask? I didn't know either, at first. Originally, waits were watchmen who patrolled the streets of cities at night keeping guard against fire. To pass the time, they would sing. During the holiday season, they would sometimes throw some carols into their play lists.

Eventually, the term wait was used to describe groups of musicians who sang and played for various civic events during the Christmas season. But I'm sure you can see how the waits began the tradition of singing Christmas carols.

That wasn't so much of a "grab bag" after all, but still entertaining. If you ever have a History request, please send it my way to rshrader@spsu.edu. I hope you've enjoyed the past two years of The Histories that Matter and I look forward to pumping out more in 2005.

Grand Theft Auto San Andreas

Steven Merritt
Staff Writer

The latest installment in the Grand Theft Auto series is out, and is for the most part, exactly what you've come to expect from a GTA game: gangs, cars, guns, seedy deals and a total lack of morals.

While San Andreas is in many ways just like other GTA games, this one does add a few new things. First and foremost is the larger environment size. GTA has the biggest environment of pretty much any game that I can think of and more importantly there are no load times while driving along. The only time you have wait for a load time is when you start the game up and when you enter and exit a building.

San Andreas also adds in a few nice little features such as the ability to start a gang war and gain more turf to make more money from. Also, you can go to a casino and gamble

the money you've made from missions and your territories. You can also go and rob someone if you get the right type of automobile. In fact, there is so much to do in GTA San Andreas that it's easy to spend more time just running around doing miscellaneous tasks than actually beating the game.

All in all though, the general feel of the game is the same as other GTA games. The cars control the same. It isn't long after starting the game that the feeling of having already played the game sets in. This isn't necessarily such a bad thing as the other GTA games have been great games and San Andreas does add in plenty of new experiences to make it more than just an expansion pack but you shouldn't expect this game to be a huge revolution for the series that is still king of the hill in it's now well populated sub-genre made of GTA knock-offs like The Simpsons: Hit And Run.

Finish him!

Julian Joseph
Staff Writer

Intro: A year ago, after years of hiatus, *Mortal Kombat* came back into the gaming scene with *Deadly Alliance*, a successful entry into the series. For the first time, the series was in full 3-D, and featured many innovations to the series such as the style change system that allows you in and out of your fighter's fighting style, and featured a beefy mode called *Konquest*, which allowed the user to travel around *Outworld*, and master the characters and their moves. Now, this year they released a sequel called *Deception*. When I first heard of the game, and the new modes, I was ecstatic. After playing the game, I must say that the game delivered, yet left me wanting more.

The Good: Well, it's always good to start with the pros, and so I will. First off, the developers in Midway decided to beef up the roster, by bringing classic characters like *Nightwolf* and *Jade*, and added new ones like *Hotaru* and *Kobra*, and all of them offer balance and variety, which makes them more interesting.

Also, Midway added three new elements into the game that really has affected the flow of the fight.

First off, the stages are now multi-tiered, which allows more danger and more variety in each stage. Also, it just looks funny when you're blasting your opponent through the next level of the stage. An example of that is the *Sky Temple*. You start out the fight at the very top of the stage, but when you blast your opponent through the wooden fences, they then fly off, and hit a roof, and then fall to the next level. Then, if you knock them off the stage again, then they fall and fall until they hit the ground and get squashed, which leads to the second innovation into the series; the *Death Traps*. Midway wanted to spice up the fight, and decided to do so by adding these carefully planned killing machines. An example of that is the *Yin-Yang Arena*. When it turns dark, and you knock off your opponent into the water, they get eaten by a black shark. So, it really adds a lot more strategy into the game, and makes you more careful of where you are in the stage. The third innovation to the series is the *Breaker*. By holding the block button, and pressing the forward button in the d-pad, you can break your opponent's combo, which helps turn the tide and gaining the momentum.

Another thing Midway decided to expand upon is *Konquest*. Instead of being just another boring mode, they decided to beef it up by turning it into a fighting RPG. You play as *Shunjinko*, a young monk that wants to be the greatest fighter ever, and his quest to retrieve the *Kamidogus*. The worlds are huge and created faithfully, and it will take you awhile to finish the mode, adding more replay value to the game. As always, you can use *Konquest* to gain koin in order to unlock the game's secrets in the *Krypt*, the game's "bank." New modes include *Chess Kombat*, a *Mortal Kombat*-based chess game, *Puzzle Kombat*, which is basically a rip off of *Super*

Street Fighter Puzzle Turbo, except with *MK* elements, and added the icing to the cake by adding online play, which allows to talk the talk and walk the walk online against the best of the best around the U.S., and other countries. The controls are solid, and the sound effects and music sounds perfect and fit the game perfectly. All in all, they really went all out to make this game fun and competitive, and have succeeded well.

The Bad: But unfortunately, this game is not perfect, and unfortunately, it suffers its own share of flaws. To start, the graphics are not that good. Even compared to an older game like *Soul Calibur 2*, the graphics don't compare. The characters look stiff and plastic, and while the background look nice, they lack the colors and awe that the backgrounds in *Soul Calibur 2* have. Also, the animation looks very stiff, and doesn't really allow this fluid fighting system this game is able to have, and would have made the fighting styles look much better. While the background music and the sound effects sound very crisp, the voice acting in *Konquest* so-so. Very few characters sound right, like *Ermac* and *Ashrah*, others like *Sub-Zero*, and *Bo'Ro Cho* sound horrible and right out of an old kung-fu movie. I wish they had spent more money in the voice acting like other fighting games have. Also, what happened to *Full Motion Video (FMV)*? You beat the game, and all you get are images with an older *Shunjinko* telling the ending. I wish they put *FMV* endings in the next one.

Another flaw, and a major flaw that the developers in Midway will have to consider before making another *MK* game, is the fighting system. While the style change, *Death Traps*, and multi-tiered levels add a new element to the game, they all have their negative effects. The fighting system allows each character to have three fighting styles, but yet all have a limited move list. This can turn off a lot of technical fighting gamers who love games like *Tekken* and *Soul Calibur*, and expect a deep move list. It would add so much depth and strategy if you have more than 25 moves for each style.

The *Death Traps*, while adding a new dimension to the *MK* universe and are fun, can be very cheap. People, especially newbies and button-mashers, always try to go for the death traps, which turns off the fun of a good fight, and even when you send your opponent into one, they somehow come back, which decrease the effect of the *Death Trap*. They should make it a permanent thing, thus making it much more dangerous than it is.

Overall: This game is a great game for a get-together, and even by yourself. *Konquest* will take you hours to finish, and the other modes will keep you playing, especially the online play. Midway really went all out, and succeeded in creating a must-buy. Even with its flaws, it's still one of the best fighting games of the year, and you should definitely have some great fun. You certainly won't regret it. I give it an 8.5 out of 10.

Halo 2

Doug Lacher
Web Manager

Developer: Bungie
Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios
Rating: 3.5 plasma grenades out of 5

Halo 2 was released earlier this November on the 9th. Day-1 sales topped even those of *Grand Theft Auto*. 2.4 million copies were sold on November 9th alone, grossing approximately \$125 million. The sales can be partially attributed to an immense amount of hype that surrounded the game before it was released. Is there any merit to the hype, or is it a lot of hot air?

The Good

Halo 2 has a lot of good points. The graphics are the first thing most people notice. They are without a doubt top-notch. Shortly after your eyes are saturated with eye candy, you should begin to notice the sound track has changed for the better since the original *Halo*. With such artists as *Breaking Benjamin*, *Incubus* and *Hoobastank* included in the mix, your ears will be overjoyed.

The combat system is tuned up a bit from the original *Halo*. You can now dual-wield almost any small firearm. The only exception to that is the *Covenant sword*, which can only be wielded one at a time. I'm not complaining about that, though. The sword, not usable in the original *Halo*, is very powerful. One powerful upper-cut is enough to take out most shield-less enemies or take the shields down on most other enemies.

Dual-wielding does have its drawbacks. You cannot use your grenades (plasma or frag) when holding two weapons. If you try to melee attack while dual-wielding, you will throw your left weapon to the floor and swing your right weapon in an attack. This makes emergency melee attacks possible, but you will have to pickup your second weapon again if you want to continue to use it.

The artificial intelligence that controls both your flank-mates and your enemies is outstanding. There are some times when it acts up, but

for the most part it does a good job. You have plenty of other non-player characters (NPCs) helping you to defeat your enemies during the first half of the game. As you cross the halfway point, you'll notice there aren't many NPCs at your side helping you out, except for your AI helper, *Cortana*, talking in your ear most of the way.

The Bad

There are a few things I noticed that weren't all that great. First, the graphics, while very nice, were nothing "new" in this age of great computing power. The graphics are actually about par for today's technology. They aren't bad, but they aren't spectacular. There's nothing revolutionary there or in the rest of the game's technology.

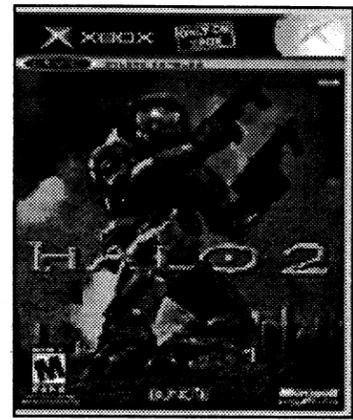
The first half of *Halo 2* was pretty good about level design, but the latter half fell back into the same repetitiveness of the original *Halo*. They aren't nearly as bad as the original *Halo*'s cut-and-paste ship corridors, but there were a few times I was left wondering "Where do I go now?" or "Wasn't I just here?"

The Spoilers

First and foremost, everything I say in this section is likely to spoil the ending of *Halo 2* and could potentially spoil the future release(s?). I left out as many specifics as I could to preserve the "ending" of *Halo 2*, but I had to include some generalizations to describe

Now that that's out of the way, let the fun begin. The ending (or "non-ending") of *Halo 2* really pissed me off and made me feel gypped. It would be impossible for there to not be some sort of follow-up game (*Halo 3*, maybe?). Exactly what will be released and when it will be released is another matter that's currently left to speculation based on the scattered clues here and there.

In the end we see *Master Chief* riding a particular ship to Earth with the intent of "finishing the battle."



This seems like an odd place for another game to pickup from but it's possible. I believe the ship he is riding on will be a critical element in the story, and I don't mean that

as simply the setting of the next game.

There is an Easter-egg at the end of *Halo 2*'s credits when you beat it on the maximum difficulty *Legendary*. At the very end of the credits, there is a line that says "Coming February 9th". It does not appear when you beat the game on any other difficulty setting. This is one pivot of the many theories about *Halo 3*. Could Bungie and Microsoft really be releasing the third installment of *Halo* this coming February, only three months after *Halo 2*? Is it going to be a full-blown *Halo 3*, or an add-on pack for *Halo 2*? It could also be something entirely different, such as information. The year is left off of the date, so it's also possible that it's hinting at a 2006 or later release. Then again, it's always possible that this is just a programming artifact that was unintentionally left in by a developer, but that seems unlikely when you consider what you must do to see it. It's not the first time there has been some strange marketing around *Halo* (I love bees).

Another clue that there will be a follow-up is a short cut-scene that plays after the credits roll. You'll have to see it for yourself, but it raises even more questions. Something to keep in mind while you view this clip is why the humans wanted to get *Cortana* away from the *Covenant* in the original *Halo*'s beginning.

Yet another clue that points to an add-on for *Halo 2* is the title of the game's sound track: *Volume 1*. Usually when a single item is numbered, one can conclude that there are other similar items of similar numberings. Bungie and Microsoft are up to something, but I'm not entirely sure what.

Half-Life 2

Steven Merritt
Staff Writer

Half-Life 2 is the sequel to 1997's *Half-Life* which was one of the most revolutionary shooters of all time. Yes, you read that right, 1997. *Half-Life 2* has been in development for a LONG time now and has been making appearances on vapor ware awards for years until it was finally released on Nov 16th.

Much like its predecessor, *Half-Life* is revolutionarily amazing due to its depth of story line rather than its graphics. However, unlike *Half-Life*, *Half-Life 2* has the amazing physics to boot. One of the first things you notice in *Half-Life 2* is the emotions that character can show. As you look at the character in the train with you, you can see his facial expressions change as he is talking to you. It adds a lot to

making the world more believable.

As the game continues, you get to see the even more fun side of *Half-Life 2*, the physics engine. This engine allows you do things like throw objects around, blast away wooden objects and let things swing on ropes. More than that though, *Half-Life 2*'s levels fully take advantage of the physics by continually presenting the player with physics based puzzles.

These puzzles include things like loading a see saw so that you can jump off of one end and navigating your way through a radioactive pond by placing boxes and other rubbish to jump on.

Moving these heavy objects is done by means of the "zero point gravity gun", which is one hell of a cool toy. You can use it to throw saw blades to chop enemies in half or hit them with a can of paint and

watch the paint splatter all over them.

Half-Life 2 also includes the obligatory vehicles which are now so common in first-person shooters and a lot of the time spent in the game is using the vehicles to navigate from one point to next at some pretty good speeds. These sequences generally revolve around going pretty fast so that you can jump off of a ramp while shooting at various enemies along the way. These sequences are generally some of the more action oriented parts of the game.

Half-Life 2 is the best FPS I've ever played. The physics engine is by far the best in any game and no other FPS has characters capable of the depth of emotion as those found in *Half-Life 2*.

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Matt Finn
Staff Writer

At 9:00am, on the streets of New York, the 2004 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade began rolling down Central Park West, gracing all whom looked on with excitement and cold teeth.

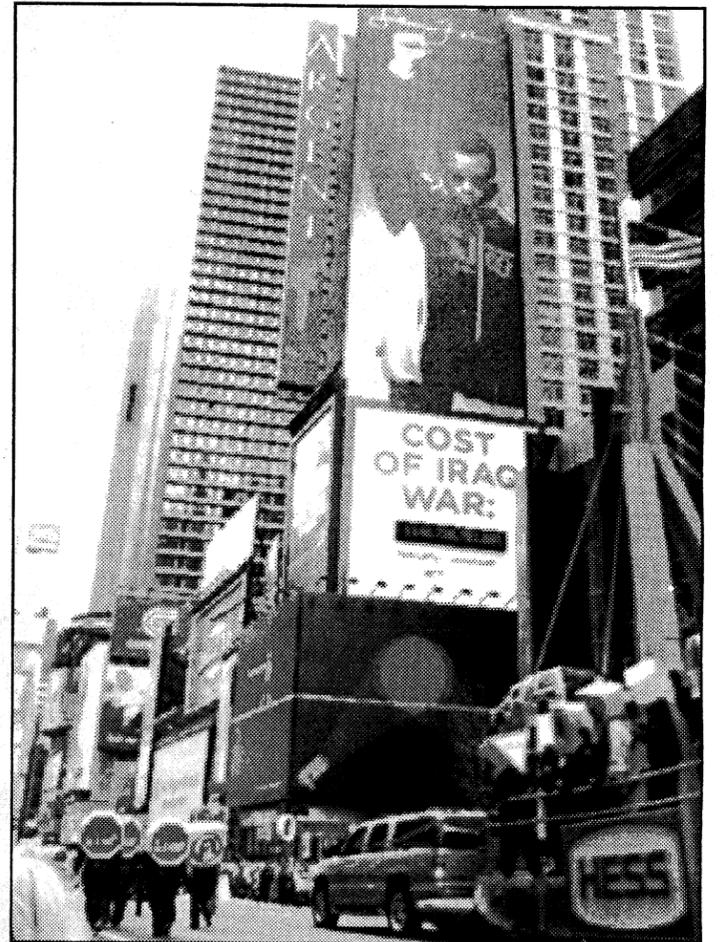
Like every year at this time, we are reminded to be thankful, but unlike many years past, we've just concluded one of the most divided elections in our country's history. In a state that voted almost 60% Democratic earlier this month, subtle reminders of the war on terror, and election gone by, seemed no more significant than talks from the night before regarding the possibility of winds prohibiting the balloons from flying.

Neither wind nor rain held off the parade, further-

more the unusually warm weather now holds the record for the third highest temperature in the parade's 78 years. This was appreciated most by those claiming a front row seat on the road as early as 5:30am.

Of this year's 59 balloons, including favorites like Kermit the Frog and Charlie Brown, SpongeBob proved to be most popular with kids of all ages. In addition to the many colorful and exciting balloons were an array of floats, celebrities, and marching bands, including the Lassiter High School Marching Band from Marietta, who made the 880-mile drive to be in the parade.

Amidst the estimated 2.5 million spectators, the local high school band was supported by friends and family along the 2 1/2 mile route to Herald Square, where all performers in the parade put on a show for the NBC cameras broadcasting live to an estimated audience of 50 million. Shebang!



RamaHanuKwanzMas

Christiaan Funkhouser
Staff Writer

Is the new, politically correct holiday out there RamaHanuKwanzMas? Since Christmas is such an offensive word to anyone who isn't a Christian, we've simply combined all the holidays in a politically correct manner, left Christ out of Christmas and put in part of Ramadan, Hanukah, Kwanzaa (gag) and the Mas of Christmas, which is actually Spanish for more. So really, we're saying we want More Ramadan, Hanukah and Kwanzaa. How about that for all of you people who favor a separation of church and state?

Make sure you all wish each other a RamaHanuKwanzMas instead of Christmas, because the more important thing in life is not to stand by your beliefs and be proud of them, but not offend people by them.

Staying politically correct, here is the picture of the 'new' Santa Claus, because we all know this is what he really looked like, not some old, fat, white man, with a red outfit, drenched with the blood of innocent animals.



The cynicism is your gift.

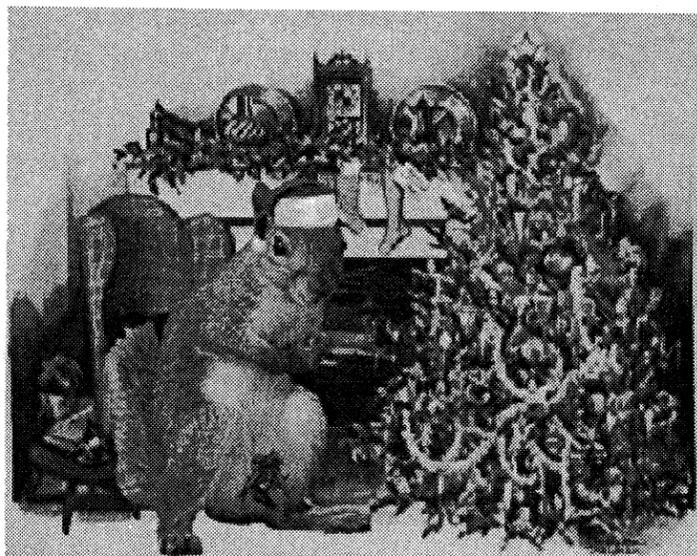
A conservative Christmas

Christiaan Funkhouser
Staff Writer

Well, as many of you all know, I'm a conservative. But I'm stepping out of the closet so to speak, and I want to tell all of you liberals that you're right. I recently got together with a couple of my conservative friends like Glenn Beck and others on campus that will remain nameless, because, after all, they're conservatives, and that's not the popular

thing to be. But I want you liberals, and young conservatives to realize what true conservatives do. I warn you all that this is true <wink wink> with noooooooooooooooooooooo sarcasm whatsoever implied. This is my new Christmas anthem, and it sums up my life pretty good. Not one single bit of sarcasm or anything making fun of what liberals accuse us conservatives of doing, basically, everyday.

“So this is Christmas, Conservatives cry,
Cause children are happy, and we want them to die.
War mongering Christmas, We all had some fun,
Bombing all the A-rabs, and starving their young
Conservative Christmas, Drive my SUV
Right over the homeless, Speed bump them with glee
Conservative Christmas, What a happy day
'Cause we just stole 4 million, From your 401k's
An intolerant Christmas, On the colored we spit
And beat them for crimes that, They did not commit
Conservative Christmas, Have a happy new year
Unless you're a red man, Black, yellow or queer
There's a new Christmas anthem, On this holiday
For all those who hate us, No matter what we say
A Conservative Christmas, Have a great holiday
Unless of course you're a liberal, Or a conservative gay
A Conservative Christmas, And a write off next year
Pray for a bull market, And go kill a deer
We're war mongers, Love no longer
White race stronger, Blah Blah Blah Blahhhhh”



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Top 29 Holiday Movies

Movies to help ease the pain of holiday blues.

Bailey Humphries
Staff Writer

1. A CHRISTMAS STORY

The number one staple movie of the holiday season. I myself try to watch at least 18 hours of the 24 hour Christmas Story marathon on TNT every 25th. You'll shoot your eye out.

2. SCROOGED

God bless us everyone!

3. MIXED NUTS

Mixed Nuts is Steve Martin before he sold out, well before he sold out the 4th time and after he had kind of gotten some credibility back after he sold out the 3rd time.

4. SE7EN

For those of you who get a little angry every holiday season you should sit back, relax, and watch Kevin Spacey ruin Brad Pitt's life in a very creative manner.

5. NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

I like when he gets locked in the attic and when the tree catches fire and when Chevy Chase holds the gun up to Jon Candy and makes him go on the roller coaster even though he doesn't want to.

6. IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

It truly is a wonderful life, if you end up with a bag of money at the end of the movie.

7. A CHRISTMAS CAROL

God bless us everyone!

8. A MUPPET'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

God bless us everyone!

9. BAH, HUMBUG!

God bless us everyone!

10. HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

I always thought Jodi Foster and Holly Hunter were the same person. Claire Danes and Robert Downey Jr. are also in it, they are holidayicious.

11. HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

It just came out recently on DVD and it's the ultimate choice for those nights you just want to get drunk and watch a kids movie with your cousin Alvie.

12. THE BRADY BUNCH MOVIE

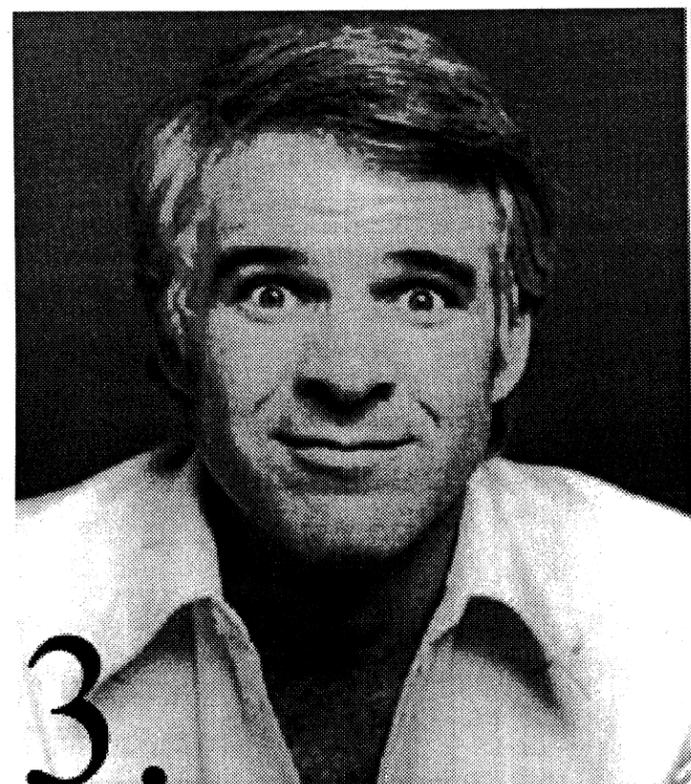
I'm running out of ideas here.

13. MIRACLE ON ELM STREET

Freddy Krueger terrorizes the poor people of Elm street until a mall Santa teaches him the real meaning of Christmas.

14. GROUNDHOG DAY

Bill Murray relives the same day as only Bill Murray can when he's playing a character. I like this movie because it reminds me of that time I had to relive the same day over and over again which also resulted in hilarious situations.



15. A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

Nobody does it better than the Peanuts. Actually, if this were a serious article this would be number three. Number one would still be A Christmas Story, and number two would be It's A Wonderful Life. Good grief!

16. 200 Cigarettes

200 Cigarettes – It's about a new years eve party, and it's got Elvis in it.

17. SURVIVING CHRISTMAS

Affleck was the bomb in Phantoms.

18. REINDEER GAMES

Affleck was the bomb in Phantoms.

19. THE PAC-MAN CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Hey, at least it's better than the Kiss Christmas special.

20. THE KISS CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

It's better than the... I got nothing.

21. HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS (CARTOON)

Sometimes it's the only thing on.

22. THE BREAKFAST CLUB

There are many reasons to watch the Breakfast Club, one of them is they all wear very puffy jackets, which is cool. Another reason to watch the breakfast club is for the part where Tony the Tiger and Molly Ringwald make-out while Anthony Michael Hall tries to pick up the pieces of his completely shattered career. Go fetch me a turkey pot pie.

23. 13 MOONS

"Legend has it when there's a full moon, anything can happen. Just imagine what can take place on a night of 13 moons..."

24. ANNIE HALL

It's got Christmas in it.

25. A CHRISTMAS STORY

It's on for 24 hours!

26. KANGAROO JACK

If you have family trouble chug a Foster's every time they say "g'day."

27. DIE HARD

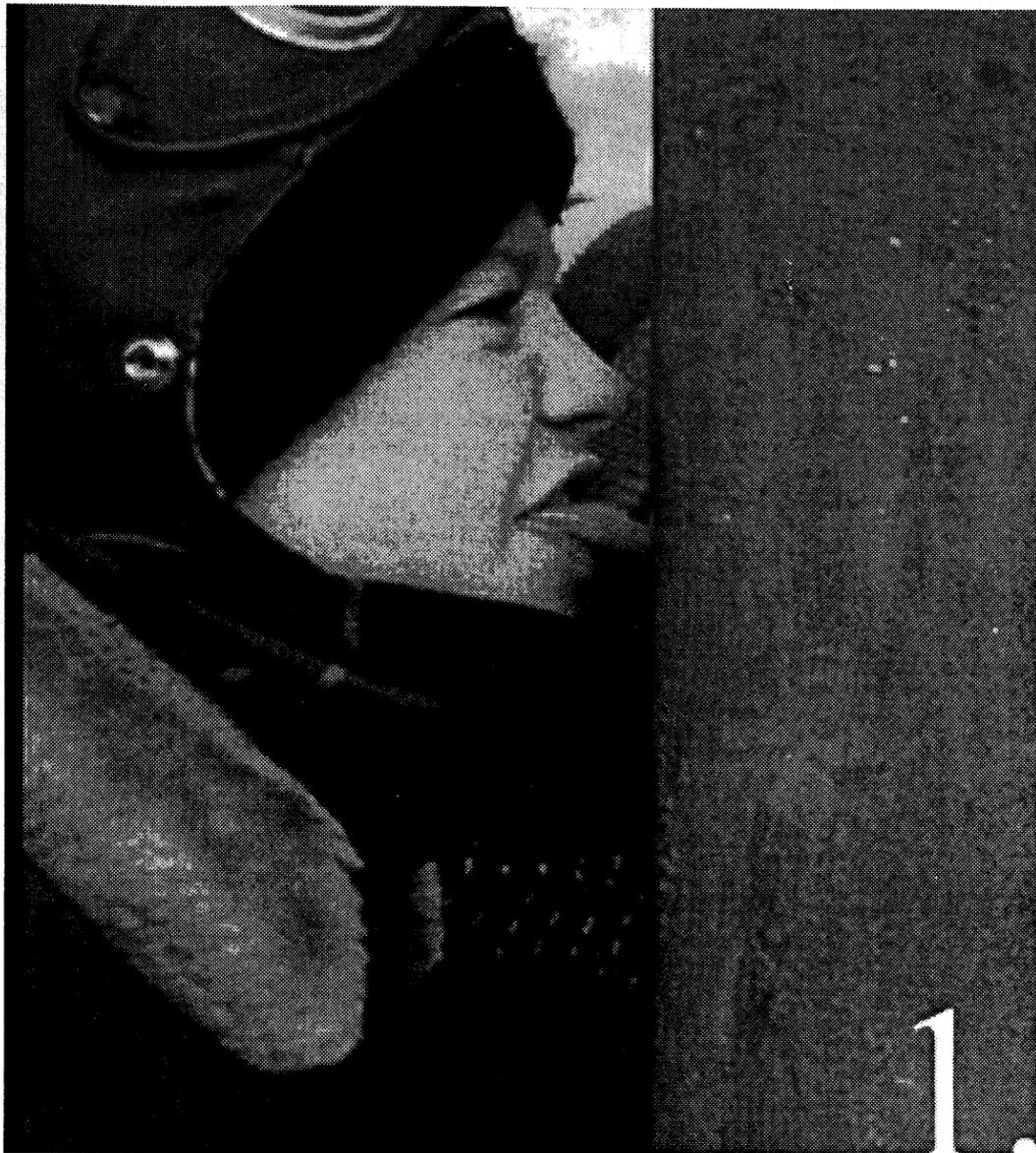
Bruce Willis walks on glass, and I'm not talking about the Whole Ten Yards kind of glass.

28. LOVE ACTUALLY

Love Actually is actually unlovable.

29. CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS

Just kidding.



Remy's Picks

A list of movies and the reasons why they're on the list

Remy Lebeaux
 Staff Writer

Well people, it's almost that time of year. The time when the leaves change colors, the temperature drops all the way to a chilly 65 degrees, and the squirrels realize they've lost all their nuts and have to spend the season at the IHOP. Even though, as of this writing, I'm not feeling particularly festive, you can bet that by the time you read this you'll have been shoved to the ground by a little old lady at the mall at least twenty-seven times. That means it's my duty, as a journalist, to regale you with a holiday movie viewing list worthy of one such as yourself, the loyal Sting reader. This article is an addendum to the one that you'll find elsewhere in this issue, the major difference being that this one features movies that you'll all think I'm a weird psycho for suggesting.

A Christmas Story (1983) – What we have here is a young fella by the name of Ralphie spending the holiday season trying to convince his parents to purchase him a BB gun. The movie follows this young man as he goes through the anticipatory period leading up to the main event with all of his thoughts narrated for you to experience Christmas as a kid again (if you were weird looking and neurotic kid with a huge monkey-like head).

Why it's here: The seminal "be a kid again" Christmas movie. The narration makes you feel like you ARE Ralphie (sort of) and you actually feel his anticipation when he starts opening his presents on Christmas day.

Where to get it: Newly released on DVD in a two-disc set. For the cheap-skates out there, TNT usually plays this movie for 24 hours straight starting early on Christmas Eve.

Lord of the Rings Trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003) – Yes, this isn't a "holiday" movie per se, but it is an epic blockbuster that was released during the holiday season. On December 7th, you can pick up *The Return of the King* with its 1.5 billion minutes of extra footage and complete your set. Clear out a month or two, kick back, relax, turn up the heater (thus making the room temperature around 115 degrees) and watch Legolas beat the living hell out of a dozen or two orcs.

Why it's here: Fans of this epic series looked forward to it every holiday season, eschewing such interests as shopping or caroling to sit in a crowded movie theater with weird dudes dressed up as long haired elves.

Jingle All the Way (1996) – The Guhvanator in his very first (and thankfully last) holiday movie. This movie is, essentially, the cheesiest film you'll ever lay eyes on and you'll think I'm an insane bastige for recommending it the first time you watch it. Trust me though; this

movie deals directly with one of the most common annoyances of the holiday season: finding that rare toy your li'l snot-nosed brat wants. This movie also deals with one of the most horrible creatures in existence: Jake Lloyd.

Why it's here: It's got Arnold, what more could you want?

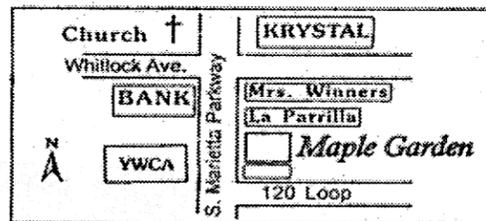
Where to get it: This movie got pulled off the shelves and became a hot commodity about three years ago, making it an instant collector's item. Now, it's 10 bucks at Wal-mart.

Home Alone 1 and 2 (1990, 1992) – Macaulay Culkin beats the living hell out of Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern for an hour and a half. No, seriously, these fun little holiday movies feature Kevin McCallister (Culkin) defending his home from thugs that are looking to break into homes in a wealthy neighborhood. Kevin is a spoiled little brat whom, not once, but TWICE gets on his family's bad side and gets left behind when his family goes on vacation (someone call DFAC). As soon as the family leaves, the burglars (played by Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern) stumble upon Kevin and systematically get beaten like they owe him money, but in a funny way.

Why it's here: Safe, clean (albeit sometimes a little violent for the kiddies) fun for your whole family. Parents should show it to their kids and say "See, you act bad, we'll leave you here alone and some burglars will come get you." Okay, maybe they shouldn't do that.

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Holiday Spirits

Heather Giroux
Staff Writer

"Tis the season to be jolly" and what better way to get jolly than by drinking? I combed bartending books and the internet to bring you not one, not two, but five drinks for the holidays. So sit back, relax, and enjoy these seasonal spirits...especially you Michael Lee.

The very first drink I thought of for this article was of course Eggnog. The great thing about this drink is that it's already made for you. All you have to do is look in the dairy aisle of your local grocery store (in my case I picked up a bottle from a gas station) and there it will be, glowing a milky golden color. To my glass of eggnog I added a shot of rum, though you could also use either brandy or cognac.

This drink, my friends, was spicy yet disgusting! After drinking it I was left with a thick coating on my tongue that held a slight buttery sweetness, but not in a good way. My friend Chris, however, found it

delightful. He described it as having a "creamy, eggnog taste and rummy bite. The more you drink the better it tastes!" Oh well, to each his own.

Along the lines of buttery, the next drink I had was Hot Buttered Rum. You're right, that does sound disgusting. I thought I'd give it a try since Rachel Ray (Food Network personality and Queen of 30 Minute Meals) had it at a hotel up north and loved it. I should have known better, she says that everything tastes good. It looked like a cloudy grey with yellow on top, it smelled like rubbing alcohol, and the taste...well Chris put it best when he related it to tasting like "pool water at the YMCA." Maybe I made it wrong, maybe it can be tasty, but I highly doubt it.

Straying away from yellow and moving over to red, I made myself a Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. I thought it was going to be just a shot of something, but turns out it's a 14oz drink. Please be mindful that

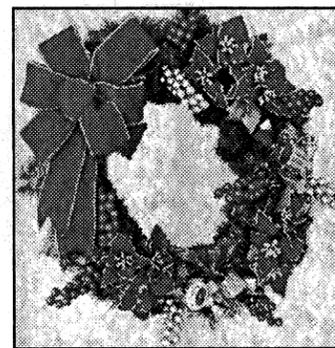
of those 14 ounces only 1 1/4 ounces of that is rum. That right there puts this drink off to a bad start in my opinion. The other ingredients are lemon juice, grenadine, cranberry juice, and a garnish of a lemon wedge. Needless to say this was a very citrusy drink. It looked like Hawaiian Punch and tasted like a Warhead or Lemonhead, whichever you prefer. I like sour things, but a whole drink of sour was just a little too much for me.

Another red drink I had was a Poinsettia. I found out about this drink from the catering company I work for. It's very simple, just a little bit of cranberry juice in champagne. It was a fairly nice combination...fruity, yet bubbly. It was also a deep red in color that I found to be quite festive and pretty. This one gets a thumbs up.

Now you might be thinking that I was focusing only on Christmas. Well, you're wrong. I tried to find alcoholic drinks for all of the different December holidays; it just so happened that they were all Christmas related save one: Manischewitz. According to their website, "Manischewitz is the nations' largest manufacturer of processed kosher food products."

Lucky for me they left no stone unturned and have three flavors of wine, Cream White, Concord Grape, and Blackberry. I chose the Concord Grape and what a good choice that was. It had a deep purple color and possessed a tangy, grape smell. The first sip was smooth and reminded me of grape juice. This is the kind of drink I'd be wanting at holiday parties.

There was supposed to be one more drink: Wassail. It's an orange spiced wine that's actually referenced in the California Raisins' Claymation Christmas Special. I thought it'd be nice to try, especially since there's a song about it, but alas I can only drink so much in one night. So there you have it folks. I hope this article helped get you into the spirit of the holidays. Cheers!



Merry Christmas from the Nat. Bar Association

Christiaan Funkhouser
Staff Writer

The National Bar Association recently wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

But what you didn't hear was all the fine print. After a day of studying, I took the Bar exam in Georgia and passed, allowing me inside the in-crowd, so I could see the evidence first hand at what they meant by that. Here now is the full 'script', if you will, including the fine print. (The actual documents were compliments of Bill Burket and Glenn Beck, and I was granted access to them after first intercepting a fax to Dan Rather at CBS news with this information)

Merry Christmas from the National Bar Association!

Restrictions apply, from us the wisher, after called the wishee please accept without obligation implied or explicit our best wishes for environmentally conscious, socially responsible, politically correct, low stress, gender neutral, celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practice within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice or secular practices of your choice, with respect to the religious/secular persuasions and traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all, or financially fulfilling and medically uncomplicated on the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2004 but with due respect to the calendar of choice of other cultures or sex and in regard to the race, creed, color, age, physical ability, religion, choice of computer platform or dietary preference of the wishee.

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Politically correct "holiday" songs

Christiaan Funkhouser
Staff Writer

Recently there have been a lot of complaints in regards to Christmas. So some people have created Politically Correct versions of different songs. Their premise was that of "Never be insulted again by insensitive lyrics of one-sided Christmas Winter Festivities songs." However, those of you who are not WASPs (White Angry Sexist Protestants) may still be offended.

So I, in all my wonderfulness, have decided to help you because I don't want to force my beliefs down your throat by having these offensive Christmas carols. I am aware that people have different opinions, and if people know that I have a different opinion, I apologize for my open Christianity and that I understand now is wrong. I've tried to rinse Christianity right out of Christmas' hair.

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas"

"It's beginning to look a lot like [winter] everywhere you go, there's a [restroom] in the grand hotel, one in the park as well; the sturdy kind that doesn't mind the snow. It's beginning to look a lot like [winter] soon the bells will start, and the thing that'll make them ring is the carol that you sing, right within your heart."

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, that song still had bells in it. Hello!?! Where do you find bells? IN CHURCHES! People can't play things that could remind people who don't celebrate Christmas about churches by playing things that have bells in it. I wonder how many people I've offended by putting that in the newspaper. Because there are people who want function carols, not function carols that talk

about the bells and the spirit in "your heart". I hope this next one is edited right, because I can only guess how many people are being offended.

"Christmas Time" by Alvin and the Chipmunks

"All right you chipmunks, ready to sing your song? I'll say we are, let's sing it... [Holiday, Holiday] time is here, time for toys and time for [non-religion associated excitement] we've been good, but we can't laugh, hurry [week before the New Year] hurry fast... (Something about loof da loof probably that hippity-hop language.) Me, I want a [Playstation 2 console by Sony available at Toys R Us.] We can

oh come let us [look at him or her], oh come let us [LOOK AT HIM OR HER] Christ, [the average kid, of earthly parents]."

Whoa. If you're trying to have a function carol you can just leave the "C" word in there. <Sighs>. Triumphant. Triumphant, why are they triumphant, because they conquered something. HELLO?! Conquered? Having songs about people conquering stuff? The Bush Administration must have censored this former 'hate speech' song. That's just like the Bush Administration, to put all that hate-mongering war stuff into happy times. And then, come to Los Angeles? Stupid Bush administration can't even spell

error pining, till he appeared and the [internal wellness unit] felt his word. The thrill of hope, the weary world [parting] for yonder breaks a new and [happy] morn, fall [is a great time of year], hear the [non-supernatural] voice. Oh night [that was dark], a [a non-descript infant] was born."

WHOA!!! "Goodness challenged activity" What the heck?! Children can't hear that people do bad things. Goodness challenged activity means that there's a right or wrong, and that people may do the wrong thing. I guess the neo-fascist Christians who censored this song forgot that there is no such thing as right or wrong, and that as

long as someone believes that what they're doing isn't wrong it isn't. The pure hate mongering that went into this song is probably the same hate mongering that America did when it razed Iraq in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Kahn. Well, close enough anyway. The nerve and utter gall that those fundamentalist Christians have to force their beliefs down Saddam's throat and say that Saddam brutally torturing and having rape rooms, and torture chambers for those that didn't agree with him was wrong is appalling.

They finally got their act together; but I think it was too late. Please send all e-mails with your outrage and offenses to my e-mail

Angels right. He's just trying to shove his Christian beliefs down all the open-minded tolerant people. "Oh Holy Night"

hardly stand the wait, please [Saturday December 25th] don't be late."

"Oh, come all ye faithful."

"Oh come all [you people] joyful and triumphant. Oh come [you] oh come [you] to [Los Angeles] Come and behold [the young individual] born the [kid] of [parents]. Oh come let us, [look at him or her]

"Oh [somewhat important] night, the stars are brightly shining, it is the night of our dear [persons] birth. Long lay the world, in [goodness challenged activity] and



If this choir were singing these awful songs, they'd have about as many listeners as William Shatner at a deaf convention.

Consensus editorial:

The water we drink

Sting Staff
Staff Writers

It's always an interesting exercise to compare and contrast. In mid-November, Bill Clinton's presidential library opened in Little Rock, Ark., and the STING procured a copy of 'Viewpoints,' Southern Polytechnic's President's Annual Report. Both Bill and the University have put an interesting spin on their own history.

In President Clinton's case, he did indeed address the Monica Lewinsky scandal and subsequent impeachment, though certainly with less prominence and in a light that portrays his opposition in a persecutory light. His critics found a voice in the national media to let their displeasure be known. But it is *his* presidential library, and so his view stands.

The same goes with Dr. Rossbacher's report, an expensive hi-gloss portrayal of the University in its best light (as seen by the administration) sent to our alumni. SPSU, however, lacks the visibility for criticism to find a voice in anything other than the campus newspaper.

We at the STING may not be proficient writers, but we can read with a discerning eye, and we certainly can read between the lines. For instance, we noted that in the introductory section on students, the campus newspaper was the only student organization explicitly named, and named first at that. All others were relegated to second-class status as "fraternities, sororities, and a significant number of professional organizations."

We think that this is because the publication is produced by SPSU's Office of Advancement. This slight to the plethora of student organizations lies in the relationship the STING has with the university's public relations arm. Our belief is that they hold true the old adage of keeping your friends close, and your enemies closer. It *might* be explained away by the fact

that the newspaper is the oldest student organization, having first published on Sept. 1st, 1948 – but we're not buying that, and neither should you.

Next year, we hope the president's report mentions a few other student organizations ahead of, or in lieu of, the newspaper. For instance, some of those professional organizations are the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. Alternatively, a competent public relations department might mention that Tau Alpha Pi, the National Engineering Technology Honors Society, was founded at the university on Jan. 15th, 1953.

But glaring omissions are best addressed by the department. While a full page of text and a full-page photo spread could be addressed to Dr. Julie Newell's research to formulate a manuscript based on her dissertation on the history of American geologists – Dr. Rossbacher, coincidentally, is a geologist – not a mention was made of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology department.

Also entirely forgotten within the university's propaganda was the Management department, the Industrial Engineering Technology department, the Technical Communications department, and the Physics department. On the inside cover, a small photograph of Professor Kathy Hall, who retired a while back, is the only link to the Mathematics department, and that's only evident by the math on the blackboard behind her.

Profiles of three students, Marie 'Rella' Stresing, Yolanda Jones, and Ernest John 'E. J.' Campbell, III, served a secondary role of giving some recognition to the Biology, Textile Engineering Technology, and Construction majors. Given the administration's antipathy towards Textile Engineering – the administration did not send a delegate to a key meeting with the

industry's board two summers ago, resulting in the industry shifting almost all its resources to Georgia Tech – its prominence was surprising. But a careful reading of the student profile in question reveals that student worked for the University's Office of Advancement.

Architecture, with its new building, gets prominent mention. Add to that another student profile, of William Norris, and a faculty profile of Dr. Ameen Farooq, both in Architecture, and the total coverage in text and photos comes out to almost five pages.

A faculty profile on Dr. Carlos Ortiz illustrates how Civil Engineering Technology students helped Paulding County decide on a new wastewater treatment system. Not mentioned, of course, was that the lab equipment used was funded in part by the Technology Fee charged to students. The money was allocated *at the urging of students themselves* when an initial faculty committee at the university had placed the proposed equipment as a low priority. Occasionally students and faculty in concert do score some administrative success.

Computer Science, Software Engineering, and Information Technology received some recognition in the faculty profile of Dr. Andy Wang. His profile introduces the Smart Network Appliances Platform Technology effort, wherein software for devices is developed to permit remote operation via the Internet. A former editor of the STING used to refer to such projects as 'internet toasters', but we'll concede that they are more valuable than that.

But the Computer Science program still hasn't received accreditation from the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology since the newspaper mentioned it three years ago. The State University of West Georgia has managed to do so recently, adding



Just in case you didn't believe us about the toilet.

ibility the president gives to some departments. The School of Architecture, CET, and Construction receives prominent mention in her report. We note that Dr. Bill Barnes served as the chair of the faculty committee to recommend the administration's university restructuring four years ago. He was subsequently promoted from

Construction professor to Dean of that school.

Likewise, Dr. Newell served on the same committee as Dr. Barnes; whether that had a role in the prominence her research received in the president's report is for the president to say. Our feeling is that if Dr. Sandy Pfeiffer, who introduced the reorganization that administration adopted, had remained as Vice-President of Academic Affairs, then the Technical Communications department would not have easily been forgotten. It is a boon for the CET department that their Dr. David Hornbeck was promoted internally to replace him. But that came after the STING reported that former Georgia Tech administrator and Physics Dept. head Dr. James Stevenson was consulting with Dr. Rossbacher about the position.

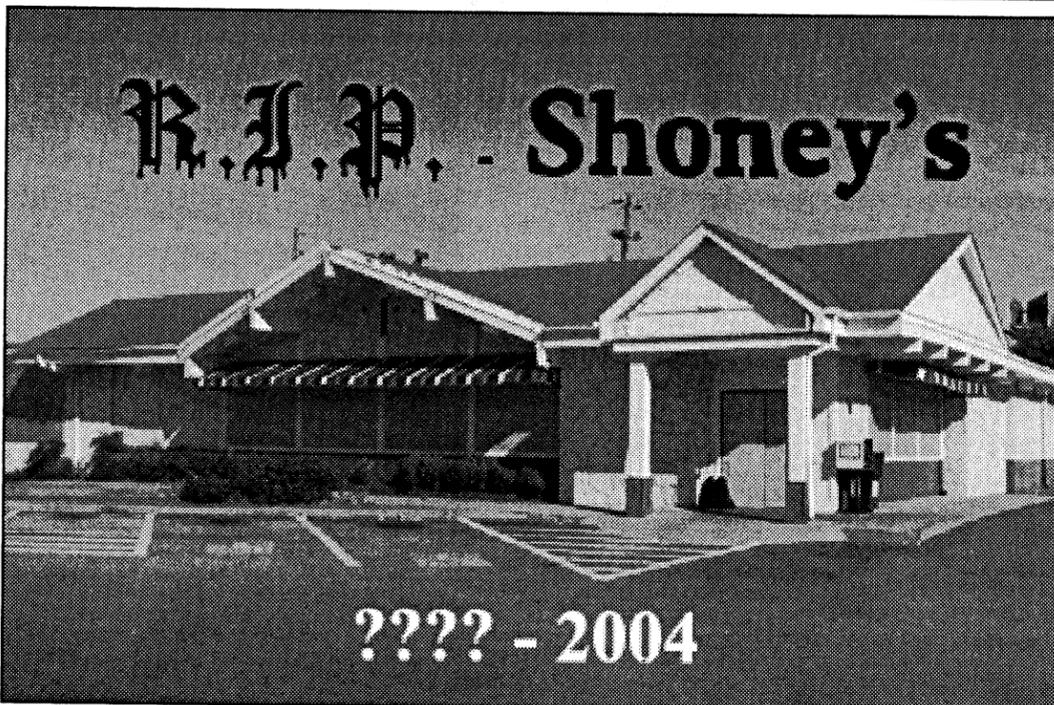
For those forgotten departments, there's a tonic that we at the STING would recommend. There's a toilet in B-167, the men's restroom in the administration building that is oriented at a forty-five degree angle to the wall. According to a source in Facilities Management, it was so re-located because a former administrator kept bumping his head on the stall door when pulling up his pants. After viewing it, a thoughtful walk to the water fountain outside of K-111 in the MET department and tasting a face full is recommended. The foulness will remind the engineers amongst us of 'piezometric head,' and serve as a reflection on how this university functions.

its name to the rolls along with Georgia Tech, Georgia Southern, Armstrong Atlantic State University and Mercer University. Yes, it is not an *essential* accreditation, but it would be nice, and the School of Computing and Software Engineering ought to stop studying it to death and just get it done. If you have to ditch the men's basketball student-athletes who enroll in your program, then so be it.

Mechanical Engineering Technology gets its due with the faculty profile of Professor Glen Allen, and in the section recognizing SPSU's competition clubs. Allen was the primary driver to involve high school students in the "Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology" robotics competition held on campus recently. Outreach is good, and maybe next year mention will also be made of the role that ECET faculty is taking too.

The competition clubs section mentions the Steel Bridge Team from CET, and three teams housed in the MET department. The Society of Automotive Engineers is credited with the Super Mileage Team and the Formula SAE race car team. SPSU's seemingly sole robotics entry is the Aerial Robotics team – omitted was the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineer's robotics team and the General Engineering of Autonomous Robotics efforts; perhaps because both teams were housed in the afore(un)mentioned ECET department.

There may be a rational explanation for the disproportionate vis-

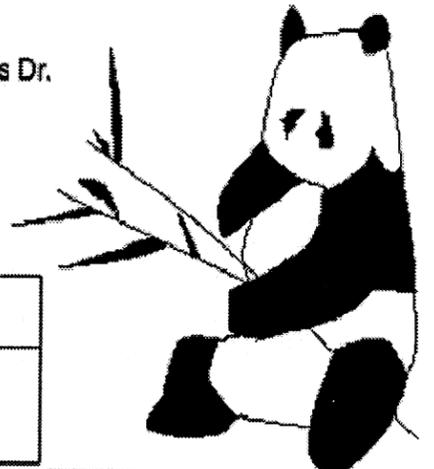


The Sting would like to wish a fond farewell to the Shoney's on Cobb Parkway. Sure, The AnonymousX called it "Food poisoning taking the shape of edible food in a restaurant. I had no idea that germs actually met somewhere for lunch and dinner every night until I ate a meal here." And sure, we don't know of anyone beyond him that actually ate there. But every single day that Shoney's would stand there, stoically, and keep its doors open even though it had virtually no customers. Now, that day is gone. A true American symbol of "never give up even when it would be the logical course of action" is dead. Goodbye, Shoney's. Rest in peace.

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Student Question

What do you **really** want your relatives to get you for Christmas?



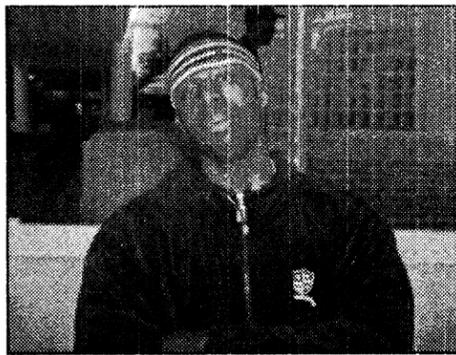
"Some herb." - Brian Banger



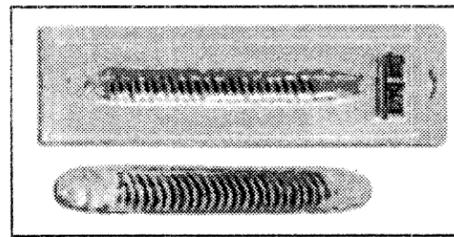
"A three dollar whore and a Porsche." - Jamaal Stewart



"Just an X-Box" - Braxton Wilder



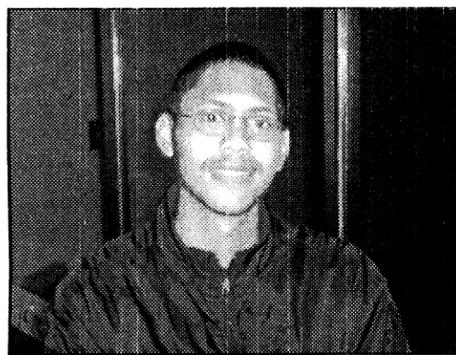
"Portable DVD player." - Troy Sledge



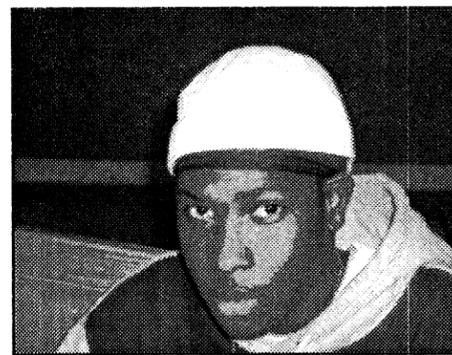
"A double-sided art deco dildo." - Heather Giroux

Bonus Student Question

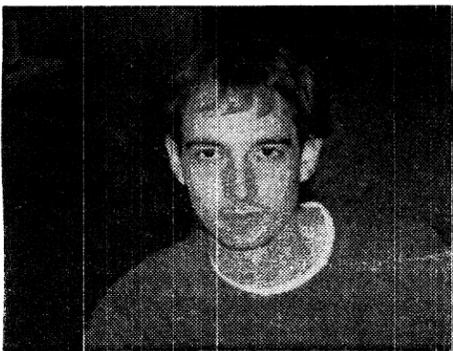
Who would win in a fight: Dumbledore vs. Gandalf?



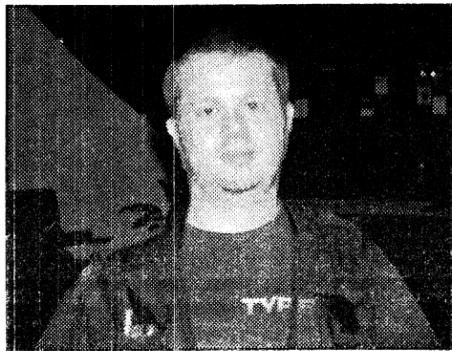
"Who the hell is the first guy?" - Stephen Meyers



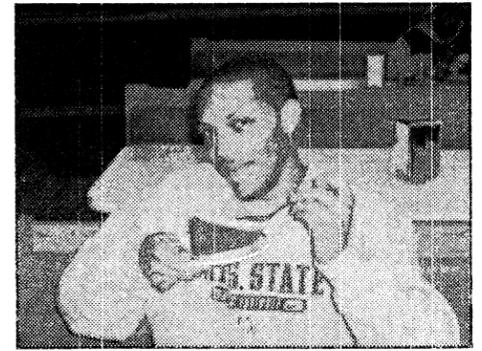
"Who and who?" - Kirk Morris



"Which one's which?" - Brian Everitt



"I don't know the first guy." - Andrew Varnon



"Who the hell are those people?" - Preston Dennis

This student question is brought to you by graduating-senior Erik Hadley, who would never shut up at any meeting (Fridays at 1:00 PM in A252 in the Student Center, you should come) ever about having this as a student question. The answer, however, is obviously Gandalf and the students who answered the question were just trying to look cool by not knowing.