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## Coming in the June Issue:

Pictorial review of SASS

Critical reviews of local Open Mic Nights

Updates on SPSU's Intramural Sports activities



## Recent SPSU graduates develop new software

Recent SPSU graduates, Tommy Tornroos and Marshall Miller have developed the first software program available to automatically remove blank spaces, video noise, distortion and other glitches from digital video files, home video cassettes and film, and downloaded movies. Their company, GearSprout, LLC announced the launch of

Continued on page 4

## SPSU students eligible for Fulbright scholarships and study opportunities

by Vicki Nix



Above: Dr. Anne R. Richards, a Fulbright Ambassador speaks to SPSU students  
Lower: SPSU students network and get information about Fulbright opportunities



Students were invited to hear Fulbright Ambassador, Dr. Anne R. Richards discuss the opportunities available to SPSU students through the Fulbright program. Dr. Richards and her husband, our very own Dr. Omidvar, traveled with the program to Tunisia in 2006 and 2007. As a Fulbright Scholar, she learned how important the qualities of grit and flexibility are. She shared her experience with a lot of passion and did a great job of inspiring the standing-room-only crowd.

The opportunity to study abroad is available to U.S. citizens. In addition to the student program, assistant teaching, teaching and research program positions are awarded. Most countries are included in the Fulbright program and provide the platform to expanding the network of professional and personal contacts among this unique group of international colleagues.

Anne Richards is a University Ombuds and Associate Professor of English at Kennesaw State University. She is the author of *Complex Worlds: Digital Culture, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication* (with Adrienne Lamberti, Baywood Publishers, 2010) and *Writing the Visual: A Practical Guide for Teachers of Composition and Communication* (with Carol David, Parlor Press, 2008). With SPSU faculty member Iraj Omidvar, she is editing "Muslims in American Popular Culture", a collection forthcoming with Praeger. She and Omidvar are also completing, for Syracuse University Press, a collection of travel writing by Easterners who have visited the West.

<http://fulbright.state.gov/programs.html>

## Editor in Chief of Tehran Bureau

### meets with SPSU students

by Vicki Nix



SPSU students met with Kelly Golnoush Niknejad, Editor in Chief of Tehran Bureau. She shared her experience of entering the early days of the Arab Spring as her blog took on a key role in the transfer of information around the world. She spent a lot of time taking the students and faculty in the audience through the evolution of how a simple blog became more than just a message board, but became part of a movement.

When asked about her advice to students, she encouraged them to begin searching for their passion, now; to begin blogging, now; to use the access to their professors' advice and counsel toward making a difference. She spoke of the importance of the connections students make along their way toward their career goals and of how those connections can lead to places never imagined. Her internships and experience with Frontline and PBS provided the access and opportunities that have

created the foundation of her success. She continued the pursuit of more and more education until she was confident enough to launch her blog. Starting on the couch in her parent's living room, she never imagined how those tiny steps would catapult her success, but they did.

Kelly Golnoush Niknejad is the Editor in Chief of Tehran Bureau, an English-language news source on Iran in partnership with PBS's Frontline. Niknejad has studied journalism at Columbia University and has won several awards including an Emmy for "A Death in Tehran," her first editorial partnership with Frontline. She has reported for Time, Los Angeles Times, and Foreign Policy, among others and has regularly spoken and moderated discussions about journalism, Iran, and new media at schools such as MIT, Harvard University, and Columbia University. Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Georgia can be added to that list. She thanked Dr. Omidvar of the ETCMA department for his invitation and contributions.

## SPSU SIFE team wins



**2011 - 2012  
Diamond Service  
Leadership Award  
of the Year**



Front row L-R: Dennis Kramer, Da He, Collins Simeu  
Back row L-R: Kazi Newaz, Dr. Muhammad Obeidat

SPSU SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) team was awarded the 2011-2012 Team Diamond Service Leadership Award of the Year at the Regional Competition held on April 2, 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Considered the greatest award for a SIFE student team to earn, the Diamond Service Leadership Award is given to the team who has effectively empowered people in need in their community by applying business and economic concepts, leadership skills and an entrepreneurial approach to improve their quality of life and standard of living.

The SPSU SIFE team's project focused on the improvement of the quality of the life of an Iraqi refugee, by empowering her to improve her conversation skills in English, her financial literacy and her social life.

Founded in 1975, SIFE is an international non-profit organization that brings together the top leaders of today and tomorrow (the students) to create a better, more sustainable world through the positive power of business. For more information, visit [www.sife.org](http://www.sife.org).

President: Collins Simeu [scollin2@spsu.edu](mailto:scollin2@spsu.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Obeidat Muhammad [mobeidat@spsu.edu](mailto:mobeidat@spsu.edu)

**Editorial**

This semester brought heartache and headache; pride and achievement. Hitting the ground running in January, I still struggle to keep my feet beneath me and manage forward momentum, but I'm doing it! As each edition is published, I appreciate all the lessons I'm learning. We've assembled a great team of writers, photographers, graphic designers, and techies to make progress toward a solid team. So, if you are looking to contribute to life on and off our campus, come on aboard.

We are looking forward to our new writers hitting the ground running with movie, music, and game reviews. Some are out searching the city for hot new entertainment and others are utilizing their investigation and research skills to bring new information to you that you can use.

This is a student run newspaper for the students of SPSU. New ideas are welcome and your critique is a gift we will graciously receive. Help us to create the paper **you want**.

**Contact us by email at [sting@spsu.edu](mailto:sting@spsu.edu) or call us 678-915-7310.**



**Meet Ignacio Lau**

SPSU was awarded its First Fulbright Foreign Language Teacher Grant. Ignacio Lau came from Argentina to SPSU and Georgia Highlands College by way of a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) grant through the Fulbright Program and the Institute for International

Education. The two schools are jointly hosting Ignacio Lau in the Department of Social and International Studies for the 2011-2012 academic year.

The Fulbright program is a prestigious flagship of public diplomacy and international educational exchange programs sponsored by the U. S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of United States and other countries. Ignacio, and his fellow Fulbright recipients were chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential, have had the opportunity to study teach and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns. Approximately 300,000 "Fulbrighters" have participated in the program since its inception in 1946.

Mr. Lau is currently a faculty member at the National University of Tucuman in Northern Argentina and has been working with Professors Bernice Nuhfer-Halten and Amanda Nichols to enhance the teaching of Spanish on the campus of SPSU by serving as a native language teacher, resource person, guest speaker, cultural ambassador and student. The FLTA program has enable Mr. Lau to enhance his teaching skills and extend his knowledge and culture of the United States based active involvement in academic and outreach activities.

He has enjoyed traveling around the United States with friends he has made through the program and enjoyed the opportunity to work with the students. We have featured his poetry in this edition and will certainly miss him as he returns to Argentina.

Check out **The Student General** -

he says what you are thinking!

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**The SPSU NECA chapter**

would like to thank Martin Madert of Inglett & Stubbs for sharing case studies and information about their services at the April chapter meeting.



**Martin Madert**  
Senior Technical Consultant

April 2, 2012  
2-2:50pm  
Room H-321

Food & Beverages will be provided to Guests

**The Sting editorial staff**

**Spring 2012**

**Editor in Chief:** Vicki Nix

**Assistant Editors:**

- Robert Barnard - Sports Editor
- Randy Brown, Jr. - Copy Editor & Social Media Editor
- Zachary Duncan - Assistant Sports Editor
- Anna Korosteleva - Copy Editor
- Jimmy Korzun - Webmaster & Assistant. Layout Editor
- Toby Pope - Copy Editor & Social Media Editor
- Hatim Amir Shaw-Hamer - Assistant Layout Editor
- Joshua Vaughn - Layout Editor
- Travis Wood - Copy Editor

**Faculty Adviser:** Jeff Greene

**Administrative Adviser:** Barry Birkhead

Letters to the editor may be hand delivered to the Student Life office in the student center, emailed to [sting@spsu.edu](mailto:sting@spsu.edu), or mailed to: Editor, The Sting Southern Polytechnic State University 1100 South Marietta Parkway, Marietta, GA 30060 Letter must be signed by the author. Publication and editing of letters will be at the discretion of the editor.

Contact 678-915-7310 or [sting@spsu.edu](mailto:sting@spsu.edu)

More information can be found at [www.spsu.edu/thesting](http://www.spsu.edu/thesting)

**June 2012 edition articles are due Monday, June 4, 2012**

**Poems**

by Ignacio Lau

**Save it for the morning after**

I wake up to the smell of foul tobacco gently shaking my lips  
The stench of your cheap perfume confuses me  
Your rotten shameful eyes follow me through the path  
I start again to cry tears of whisky over the bathtub  
You heart takes too much and collapse into lust

**Starlit Awakening**

Sunlight at night  
Flashes of red stars raining down  
A vision in front of my sight  
Horses from the sun galloping in line  
Happiness towards me all the time

**Super ad**

Exercise your mental body young man  
Grow unique capacities beyond cruel reality right now  
Amazing product made of light to buy two times  
The power of words and life just in your hands  
Poetry designed to reside forever in your heart

**Counter-prayer**

Awoken from the dirtiest ash  
It wanted to shelter from the dust

Mud in the back  
Flies all around

All I hear is this chant  
In the coldest night  
To counter-pray this annoying light

**Pollen problems**

Maria Guerra

Spring time is finally here to stay. After many weeks of roller coaster weather and several rainy days we at last welcome warm days, sunny skies, chirping birds, and incredible amounts of pollen with open arms. Or do we?

It happened overnight, we all woke up one day to a massive green carpet covering our streets and cars. These floating particles are everywhere and we are breaking records. According to USA Today, a count of 9,369 particles of pollen per cubic meter was measured in Atlanta at the end of March. This is a true nightmare for those of us who like to exercise outside; the constant sneezing, coughing and itching eyes accompany us on our jog, and they come home with us to remind us who is in charge.

Sitting outside to eat lunch between classes is a risk that only brave ones dare to endure, not to mention the layers of what looks like green powder covering our TVs, night stands, etc that appeared out of nowhere and that seems to multiply each day. According to National Institutes of Health, 35 million Americans are sensitive to pollen and if you turn out to be allergic then it can trigger other allergic reactions as well.

If you are like me and you want to go out and enjoy sunny days before the flaming Georgia Summer arrives then all you need to do is follow my tips to survive pollen season:

- 1) Stay indoors (If pollen count is high or very high).
- 2) Protect your eyes. This means wearing sunglasses when you are outside: this helps keep the particles out of your eyes. PS. All contact lens wearers are especially encouraged to do this.
- 3) Wash your hair every day. Believe it or not pollen particles stick not only to our cars but also to our hair, clothes, and skin.
- 4) Take over the counter allergy medicine. If it is becoming hard to go through your day because of bothersome eyes, nose and throat then go to the grocery store and buy an over the counter allergy relief medicine. There are LOTS to choose from!
- 5) Last but not least: Enjoy this season. Spring is filled with beautiful flowers, great weather and brighter days. Know that the pollen will disappear the same way it came and that summer is almost here.

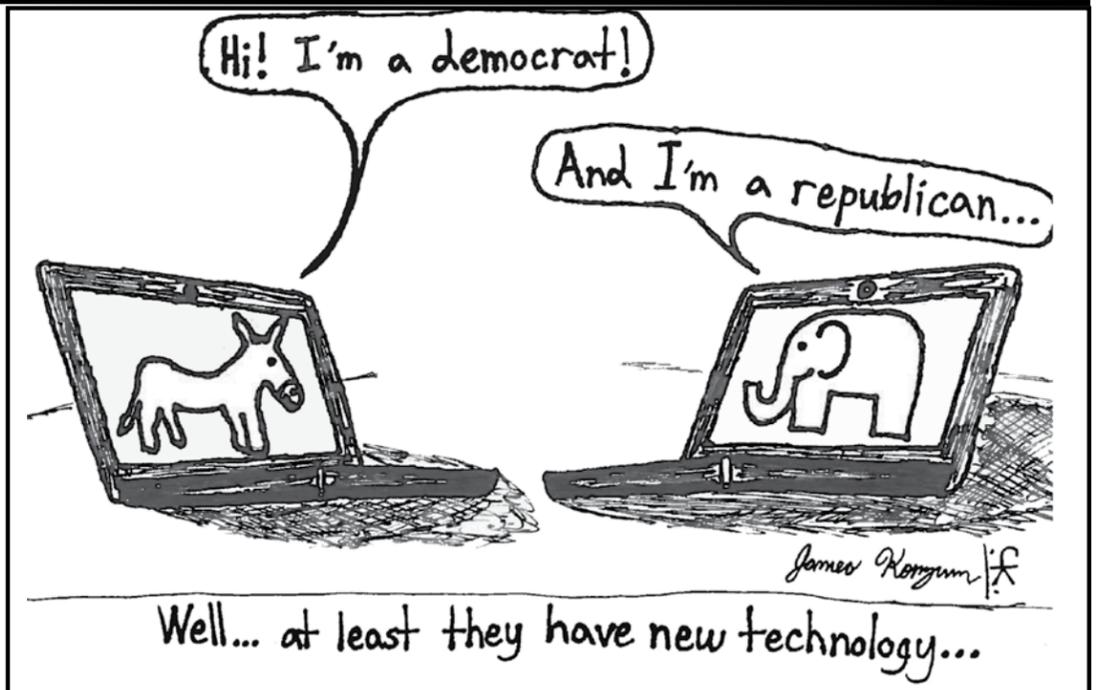
## Chipper Jones Announces His Retirement

Zachary Duncan

Before this season began veteran switch hitter, Chipper Jones, announced that he would retire at the end of the season. Jones, who was selected as the first overall draft pick in 1990 by the Atlanta Braves, has now played 17 full major league seasons and will play his 18th in 2012, all of which were with the Braves. Jones entered the big leagues on September 11, 1993 as a late roster add-on. He has accomplished a lot in his career with the Braves; winning with the 1995 Atlanta Braves World Series team; and going to the playoffs many other times. In 1995 he won the National League Rookie of the Year award. He has been named a National League All-Star seven times and won the MVP award in 1999 and two Silver Slugger awards at third base. I might add that I feel he was snubbed at least once for a Golden Glove award when David Wright won it in 2007, then again that may be just because I hate the Mets. Who knows? In 2008 he was the National League and Major League batting champ with an average of .364. For a while it looked like he was going to have an above .400 average that year. He also had the highest on base percentage that year with .470. He will go down in history as one of the greatest switch hitters the game has ever seen with over 450 home runs, over 2,500 hits, and over 1,500 RBI's. He is a sure inductee into the Hall of Fame.

Chipper Jones has had a good start to his farewell season. He has had a little trouble with his knees over the first couple of weeks, but he hasn't let that stop him when he has been in the lineup. The Braves have also had a pretty good start this year, so let's hope that they can keep it up and send Chipper Jones out with a second World Series ring.

Chipper has been a very important part of the Braves organization for the past twenty years. I have been thinking about players who have recently chosen to leave teams that they had spent their whole career with. Albert Pujols is an example, not that I think there is anything wrong. It is understandable to want to get the best contract you can get. I just think of how unfortunate it is for the Cardinal's fans to have lost such an important and beloved player. Thinking about that makes me realize how honored I feel as a Braves fan to have had a player that was loyal enough to spend his whole career in Atlanta. I think it means a lot to the fans. He has no-doubt been one of the most iconic and respected players to play in Atlanta. Time and again Chipper has helped the Braves, whether it was through his hitting, his fielding, or even his wisdom as a veteran player, so I am writing this article in recognition of a great player who will definitely be missed. Thank you for all the great seasons, Chipper!



 **Banzai Anime Club**

Meets every Friday during the semester  
7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.  
Student Center A-215

email: [ba@spsu.edu](mailto:ba@spsu.edu)

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Discount cards are available for discounts at local restaurants and stores near the SPSU campus!

**See an SGA officer to receive your card!**

## Hunger Games

Continued from page 8

towards the gratitude that they had for Katniss, how much the tributes of district 11 meant to their district, and what may take place in the 2nd and 3rd books.

In the end, I have allowed my feelings for The Hunger Games film to settle. I have realized that this happens all the time, directors saturating a book's plot for the sake of Hollywood. It happens all the time, viewers being cheated out of a really good story for visual pleasures. Yes fine, the majority of the book's readers were young teens. In order for the readers to see the movie the director had to dumb it down, no graphic material. From a moral stand point, it is difficult getting parents to warm to the idea of children killing children. With everything that is put under the microscope today, I am surprised that The Hunger Games book was praised by so many households.

Nevertheless, I believe that movies should possess as much of the reality as possible. Maybe the actual scenes from the book would have jolted parents where they sat, realizing that there may be something troubling about what takes place in the book, something troubling about what we, as readers, are glorifying on paper. And all the while, the director and author missed out on a great opportunity to bring this form of actualization to us.

This makes me wonder, who's at fault here? The director for "adjusting" the story or the author for accepting the lucrative movie deal which allowed the director to "adjust" the story? The "story" itself was as daunting as we read it to be.

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### New software

Continued from  
front page

SproutConverter for Mac OS X and its delivery April 12th. This startup tech-company is not the first for Tornroos, as he started TuneTransfers in 2006 to convert music and video media to CDs and DVDs for customers in Georgia.

"I realized that when converting home videos like VHS or 8mm tapes there were lots of distorted sections that had to be manually removed and there was no software available to do this automatically, so we decided to create it ourselves," Tornroos explained. The two creators of SproutConverter met at SPSU in 2010 and decided to quit their full-time day jobs in 2012 to pursue their goals to start GearSprout LLC and develop SproutConverter together.

SproutConverter helps the do-it-yourselfers transfer their home movies to digital by removing distorted sections, this new software can also convert DVDs and downloaded video files to play on your iPhone, iPad, AppleTV, Xbox 360, PS3 and more. "And this is just the beginning, we are excited to finish the Windows version of our software in the next two months," added Tornroos.

*(Patent Pending software for Apple computers)*

<http://www.gearsprout.com>

Have a safe and  
happy Summer...  
we'll be here  
when you get back!



**On-campus housing prices on the rise**

The Student General

If you are one of the many students who live on campus here at SPSU, then you most likely received a letter from housing in late February that read something like this: "Dear (Resident's first name),

On behalf of the Department of Housing & Resident Life I want to thank you for choosing to live with us this year. Living on-campus at SPSU is the best choice you can make for your college career." –From a letter by Chris Bruno the Director of Housing & Residence Life on 02/28/2012.

The letter continues to inform the reader about the fact that housing has decided to raise its rates across the board by 3.23% again. The letter continues with a "highlight [of] some successes" in the 2011-2012 school year which included: New Locks, New HD Cable Channels, Cell Phone Booster in the Hornet Village, and their Housing events where in the fall semester alone they "gave away almost \$5000 worth of prizes."

A lot of people might think that 3.23% is not much in the grand scheme of things but it adds up quickly. The rent for the Courtyard Apartments, for instance, right now is \$6960 per year or about \$580 a month if you pay that in installments. Increasing this price adds a total of \$244,808 to the annual cost of rent for the courtyard apartments up to just under \$7200 per year and the monthly installments up to \$600 a month provided that the Department of Housing & Resident Life doesn't decide to completely drop the installment plans. If housing drops the installment plan then they will be effectively forcing a good portion of the residents who live on campus and can't afford to make the semester payments for housing in one lump sum to move off campus. What the Department of Housing & Resident Life needs to realize is that the students who attend SPSU do not have a limitless amount of money to give to the college; in fact most of the students at SPSU are getting deeper and deeper in debt with each year they spend at this institution.

The real reason that Housing is raising their prices is because they are wasting too much of the money they get. Before housing raises the prices of rent they should stop spending so much of our money on prizes that they give away at their events. It is understood that if you advertise a free giveaway that more people will show up to the event you plan but SPSU Housing should not be spending \$5000 on prizes to give away. May I suggest that instead of spending a lot of money to get prizes to bribe people into coming to your housing events that you instead make the events things that the people of this college will actually want to go to. After all, I'm sure hosting a video game tournament will cost you much less than buying HDTVs and iPhones to give away at your stereotypical college parties with non-alcoholic mixer drinks.

**The Greatest Gift from Southern Poly**

Daniel Silver

Starting the first year in the fall of 2009, at Southern Polytechnic State University as a student was a journey. This is a journey that is still changing my life. Keep in mind that half of the campus that is widely used today was not even built during 2009 fall semester.

It is ironic using the word journey to describe my first three years at this university, because orientation here is called Journey. I can recall sitting in the theater excited, but nervous all at same time. President Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher's remarks about Journey Orientation 2009 still resonate today. "We call orientation at Southern Polytechnic State University, Journey, because of the journey that Southern Poly will take you."

I have learned so many life lessons at this University in my third year alone because of a mistake I made starting freshman year. As the Assistant Director of Residence Life, Jenny Brown always says, "We at Housing and Residence Life try to teach residents at SPSU to learn from their mistakes." This is something Jenny usually calls as a "teachable moment." The mistake that I made early on is something I now call a teachable moment.

The life lesson I recently learned was to never take on more responsibility than you can handle. There was a time at Southern Poly when I was involved in over 15 different organizations, being an officer in over half. It was my life, and I thought I enjoyed being so involved. I forgot how to have fun without being so involved, and not remembering what it was like to relax without the tension of the organizations around you.

Taking on too much was my mistake and even though there were warning signs, I didn't understand what the big deal was. It wasn't until unexpected events occurred that I realized the mess I was in, doing too much.

I think this teachable moment was much needed for me. The Latin phrase, "carpe diem" or "seize the day" means a lot to me, because I wasn't really satisfying what I loved to do but rather satisfying the needs of others. You are the captain of your life. It is your job to own it and to, of course, seize the day! Even though I may not be graduating this spring, I feel like this article should be written to advise others (incoming freshman and graduating seniors alike) that the greatest gift that any person can get from Southern Poly is the degree, it is life lessons that each student learns from within.

**Thoughts of a Graduating Senior**

Alex Boyd

When I first got to SPSU in summer 2008 fresh off graduating from Chattahoochee Technical College, I believed I knew everything I needed to know to get through college. After all I had already done it once. Boy was I mistaken. You should have seen me stumbling around this sprawling campus back when the X building and the new engineering building were only lines on a blueprint; trying to figure out why the Atrium building was also called the J building. One of the biggest hurdles I had to overcome was trying to get from the Joe Mack Wilson Student center to the Architecture building for a team meeting. I spent most of my first semester running as fast as possible to get between three different buildings within ten minutes because I was new enough to not know better than to sign up for three classes, one right after another. During the beginning couple of weeks of that semester I had considered dropping out because I didn't think I could handle the work load, that is a question I ask myself every semester on the first day of class. This is a lot of work Can I handle this or should I get out now? I am sure that many people ask themselves the same question before a difficult task. The best way for me to handle it was to dive in and see; and seek advice from people that have taken the class before me on how to handle it.

Now it is Spring 2012 and with luck I will graduate at the end of this semester. The thought of this has put me in a reflective frame of mind, bringing up memories of experiences, fun times, and especially some professors and classmates that made my time at SPSU a little easier. There are too many to mention them all. I will take a couple and discuss them here.

Dr. Christina Scherrer (IET, Statistics)

Statistics was by far the most difficult classes that I had to take here at SPSU. In fact I had to drop it the first time and retry the next semester. I stayed with her because of a couple of things that she did to make me feel comfortable.

Professor Scherrer did something I have never seen a professor do before. She took the time to get to know you as a person before trying to teach you. How she did this was, on the first class day she handed out a short questionnaire, this was no big deal because other professors had done the same thing, well that lasted until I read the questions. They included all the standards, your name, major, email, phone number, and "What do you expect to get out of this class?" Those were all handled at the top half of the paper, on the second half included "Tell me something about yourself that other people don't know." It was incredible that someone with six classes in a semester and all the work that entitles would do this. Then she took it one step further, instead turning it in as an assignment that day, she arranged one on one meetings with us and discussed the answers on the questionnaire, to get to know us. She didn't stop there. When I had to drop out of the class the first time, she was nice enough to let me audit the remainder of the classes that semester to get a head start on the next attempt. When I attempted it the next time it was the first hybrid class I took at SPSU. Part of that was having the availability to get online with her on some nights during the week to help with homework. She gave up much of her time, having a young child she had precious little time to spare. She gave much of it to us. That made such a lasting impression on me that even though I have moved on with my studies I still check in with her and see how she is doing. To her husband and children, thank you for being supportive so she could be there for us.

Prof. Robert Thacker (Management)

I challenge anyone who takes a night class from Professor Thacker to try to get a nap during class. You will find out it is mission impossible. If you are expecting to have a monotone drone that will help put you to sleep DON'T TAKE HIS CLASS. His method of insuring you get the important information is to talk loud. It was effective enough that no one took naps in either of the two night classes I took with him. His classes are interesting; tests are difficult but not impossible. Be ready to write a paper on the first week of class, and one every couple of weeks after. He is a fair minded grader. If you put in the effort and CITE YOUR SOURCES, you should do fine. He assigns class projects due at the end of semester, to which you will be given ample time to get them done. He is not against allowing you to use what is left of a class period to get into teams to work on it. He will take some time to get with your team and see how you are doing with the project, and offer ideas and give you a boot in the correct direction if needed. When you present your paper he will ask questions to insure understanding (his own and the rest of the classes) it is not meant to break the group down but to make you think in another way. Professor Thacker thanks for the good times in class.

Dr. Sandra Vasa-Sideris (Management)

My dealings with Dr. Vasa-Sideris was that of an advisor. I never had her in class. As an advisor she took the time to meet with me when I needed and lay out a straight path to graduation. Letting me know when it was time to put in my paperwork, and how giving a copy of my transcript to the department secretary, would save me time when it came time to sign off on my petition to graduate. Thank you for your positive and supportive advice and counsel of the past four years.

Prof. Gregory Quinet (Management)

This guy is great! He knows the material and can teach without notes. He is very engaging with students and will help you if you need it. He does not just talk about the stuff in the book but he puts his practical experience in there with it. So be ready to hear stories about the billion dollar jumbo jets he has flown, or the parties he has attended with Japanese business men while trying to make a sale, then going back to his boss and telling him that it will take a while to get this account because of the slower paced business practices of the Japanese executive. The Japanese are more about the relationship; and take the time to create relationships, unlike the "get in - get the deal done and get out" mentality that is prevalent in the states. By far my favorite portions of his classes came in International Management, where he spent two class periods showing the movie Gung Ho and used it to illustrate the difference in American and Japanese management styles that he had been talking about the whole semester. To be honest I really didn't get it until he showed that movie. The difference was clear as day, and the movie made the remainder of the semester less challenging by pointing back to the movie as a reference. This coupled with the stories about the companies he created and sold made all my classes with him interesting. Professor Quinet thanks for all the stories.

There are so many that I could go on forever, but I won't. Just when I was getting SPSU figured out and knew where most of the nooks are that you can hide in and get your work done - it is time for me to leave and move off to another part of my journey through life. I will always remember the people I have met here. The personal time and experience they have given me as I made this journey has been invaluable and will not be forgotten. To all the Professors, Administration, Student life personnel, and to my fellow Hornets, there are no words to express what the time and effort you have put into my journey and how it has made my SPSU experience how as great as it was. So I will state it simply. THANK YOU!

## Open House - Student organizations put out the Welcome mat



**Open House captures the ROCK?**



Photos by Anna, Randy, Sana & Vicki



## OrgSync

Sign up with orgsync today and connect with the Southern Polytechnic State University organizations!

[www.orgsync.com](http://www.orgsync.com)

**Faking your way to facing it**

Toby Pope

Have you ever heard of “fake it till you make it”? If our emotions are influenced by our facial expressions, then that’s all we have to do: fake being happy until we are.

The science suggests that whenever we feel an emotion, our brain checks out our face to see if we express it. If we are happy, but we aren’t smiling, then the brain dampens that chemical response. If we are happy, and we are smiling, then the brain heightens that response.

The next time that you are sad, look at the mirror. Make a few absurd faces, and make yourself smile. The feedback given to the brain by both smiling and seeing that smile will provide a chemical response that’ll take the edge off of things. Take a page out of Dory’s book from Finding Nemo: Just keep smiling.

And hey, a smile is contagious too, so you never know when you might make someone else’s day, but don’t take my word for it; take a look at some of the science behind this.

“Refuse to express a passion, and it dies,” said William James, American psychologist and philosopher. James first wrote this in 1890, in his book *The Principles of Psychology*. He was referring to a link between facial expressions and the emotion that a person feels, and he wasn’t the first to recognize this.

Charles Darwin also theorized this in his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, back in 1872. Darwin postulated that our physical selves had an influence on our emotions, rather than merely being a consequence of an emotion. According to Charles Darwin, “The free expression by outward signs of an emotion intensifies it. On the other hand, the repression, as far as this is possible, of all outward signs softens our emotions.”

Today, there is something called “facial feedback hypothesis” that essentially states that facial movement can influence your emotion. This concept has been around, as you can see, in one form or another for over a hundred years. But within the past two years, there have been a number of studies that has given us more concrete evidence of this hypothesis.

In 2010, a team led by Joshua Davis from Barnard College tested the idea that muscles and emotion are tied together by injecting people with either BOTOX or Restylane. Both are used in cosmetic surgeries, but Restylane, injected to firm up sagging skin, does not constrict muscle movements like BOTOX does. The findings showed that relative to control groups, the BOTOX participants exhibited an overall significant decrease in the strength of emotional experience.

Also in 2010, a peer-reviewed article called *Cosmetic Use of Botulinum Toxin-A Affects Processing of Emotional Language* published by a team led by David A. Havas, tested the effect of BOTOX on emotional responses. According to the article, their findings “suggest a bi-directional link between emotion and language mediated in part by moving the face.”

The science doesn’t lie, so keep smiling ladies and gentlemen. However, one final caveat: facial expression influences your emotion; it does not control it entirely. That means that if you are clinically depressed, smiling in the mirror will not help, and you should seek medical counsel.

**The Hunger Games Review**

Randy Brown Jr.

SPOILER ALERT! (This article contains important content from the actual *Hunger Games* book and movie. Read at your own risk!)

I would first like to admit that I read *The Hunger Games* before actually going to see the movie. I don’t think you heard me. On March 29 I read the book from start to finish and on March 30 I went to go see the movie. (Side note: that was the first time that I had ever finished reading a book that was also accompanied by a motion picture)

What did I think about the book?

I enjoyed the read. The story was very well written by Suzanne Collins. The relationships between the characters were great. The story provided layers upon layers of history, history of the world that the characters lived in. The description of each character was very vivid, from the paunchy and drunk Haymitch Abernathy to the fluorescently dressed Effie Trinket, every character visually stood on their own. The story was unique, children killing children, gladiator style till the death; cynical for some, intriguing for me to read. There were vivid details of each kill and the struggles that Katniss Everdeen faced from the moment she stepped foot in the arena.

Though the events in the arena became a little drawn out towards the end, I still enjoyed the book. I especially, favored Katniss’ will to defy *The Hunger Games*, the capitol by threatening to commit suicide alongside Peeta (there would have been no winner/something the viewer’s would have hated). I do, however, feel like I was tricked into reading a love story. I know that Katniss was playing to Haymitch with all the kissing, but some part of me feels like she developed feelings for Peeta by the end of the story.

What did I think about the movie?

I honestly did not care for the movie. For the sake of every reader I will keep this mild rant short.

It seemed as though *The Hunger Games* died and went to Disney World or something. They should have rated the movie G for all ages, because it was nowhere near as graphic as the novel.

Katniss practically left the arena unscathed. No dehydration, no burns; the girl basically found water within seconds of leaving the Cornucopia. She had no dirt on her face. Her clothes were

spotless. At the end of all the fighting, was she returning from the arena or a sporty fashion show? I mean goodness, Peeta was supposed to be crippled by the end of the movie. He was also rejected by Katniss at the end of the book. The movie makes it seem as though the two were a match made in heaven.

Several other things bothered me like the relationship between Katniss and Rue. Their relationship was rushed. The movie version of Katniss and Rue’s relationship was pretty much, “Nice to meet you”—“Oh no! I’ll avenge your death.” 30 pages in the book give or take, but their relationship was meaningful to the overall story. Katniss provided for and protected Rue the same way that she provided for and protected her sister.

The Mockingjay pin: Come on Mr. Director Ross, you have to do better than this. The Mockingjay pin was more than just some trade souvenir. The Mockingjay pin was a symbol of the previous rebellion against the capitol. I agree, Madge the mayor’s daughter was irrelevant, but at least give a flashback or dialogue that explains the meaning of the pin (it is a major part of the ongoing novel series).

Haymitch was way too soft in the film. (For starters, he punched Peeta to the floor in the book)

I can hear people shouting now. “Randy, it’s a movie not a book. They can’t include everything.” This is true. However, it wouldn’t have taken extra film to have Haymitch express more gut and grit. He was supposed to be nasty, in lighter terms.

Through all the pain, I did enjoy two things about *The Hunger Games* film.

One: the dialogue was dead on. Not much of the dialogue from the book was changed. It was not perfect, but the majority of it remained the same.

Number two: the scene that never took place in the book, the riots of District 11. For those that read the book, this scene was moving because it spoke to the depth of the situation that preceded the riots. All readers knew what Rue’s death meant to Katniss. Revisit her defying salute to the district via live footage. To see how Rue’s district actually responded spoke volumes

continued on page 11

[randybrownejr.tumblr.com](http://randybrownejr.tumblr.com)
**Pliable**

Randy Brown Jr.

We were up to no good.

We hemmed and tucked woods, grains, and species that we never sympathized over.

Our tolerance level was little to none and then she turned.

It was during siesta that she made us pay.

An event of postulation by a minority of the population went unheard.

A herd of wildebeests stalked our backyards.

Cause and effect, divide and conquer,

so it’s here where they rest.

We picked her minerals clean to construct carburetors

only to trash them later along with plastic and feces.

Dark, mandolin notes formulated from charging feathered creatures.

Harpichords became more relevant than a race of humans that

raced to debunk their doing.

Doings of wrong,

eschewed far later.

Later left us and dug its grave next to rusted trusses.

She trusted us.

Lust brought her back to reclaim what nearly expired.

Advancement,

the future was no longer fun.

We camped in darkness,

melted, dispersed, and faded one by one.

Physically done.

**10 things to do this summer**

Randy Brown Jr.

10. Try a dish with international flavor or better; try a dish with international flavor, WITH a newly acquainted, international friend. (I’m trying to help you out here!)

9. Finish that journal that you started writing in when you were ten years old; nothing like unfinished business. Add that to the fun that comes with reading over your childhood thoughts and you have yourself a party.

8. Go to a drive-in movie. Whether it’s with a group of friends or your partner, this is a must do. Summer usually brings out the best movies of the year. Drive-in movies are always a win-win situation.

7. Attend an outing/party on a patio or rooftop. Let’s see, there’s the skyline, well dressed people, a midsummer night’s breeze, and great cocktails (if you’re over 21). Need I say more?

6. Go on a 5-7 day trip, preferably to a beach. Listen, beaches always seem overrated until you actually get there and realize that the experience is sovereign to any other vacation experience that you’ve ever had before in your life. After a school year of drama, pressure, and headache you owe it to yourself to do this.

5. Go to an outdoor concert! I don’t care if it is rock, jazz, or hip-hop just go! Live music and good weather are always a plus, they go hand in hand.

4. Go to a water park or a pool (White Waters is down the street). Somewhere that’s appropriate for you to show off that body that you’ve been working on all winter or maybe you haven’t. (If not see number #3)

3. Get in a gym, join a gym, or live in the gym; do all three if possible. You have a lot of catching up to do and the summer is only but so long.

2. Attend a cookout. For the love of food, attend a cookout! It should be against the law to make it through the summer without attending a cookout. Baked beans, hamburgers, bar-b-que chicken, coleslaw, macaroni, kabobs, corn on the cob, hot dogs, potato salad, ribs, steaks, homemade lemonade, cold kool-aid, iced tea, apple pie, Italian ice cream, and strawberry cheesecake. (WHEW! What did I leave out?)

1. Last but not least, get a head start on those classes that you’ll be taking in the fall. Read and take notes if it’s possible to do so. Do not overwhelm yourself in any way. But do become more familiar with the material. (It’s what the responsible students do)

Enjoy and have a safe summer!

## The Wonders of Homemade Pizza

Anna Korosteleva

Pizza is a beloved food around the world, and I dare to say college students are big fans of it too. A great, although possibly expensive, way to enjoy delicious pizza is to buy it from your favorite pizza place. But, did you know that making homemade pizza is not all that complicated? It's a relatively quick process and you can put exactly what you want on your pizza. No more issues with too much or too little sauce! And, it just might turn out to be kind of fun.

The first step towards a great pizza is a great crust. Try making your own. This is the hardest part, but the end result is worth it. Don't worry, hard simply means that you'll have to mix things together for a bit. You only need a few common ingredients to make the crust:

- 1 packet active dry yeast (2 teaspoons.)
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ cup warm water
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Start by dissolving a packet of yeast (or 2 teaspoons if you're measuring from a jar) and 2 teaspoons of sugar in ½ cup of warm water; Gently mix everything together and let the mixture sit for about 10 minutes. Once the yeast mixture gets frothy and bubbly on top, it's ready. Now the messy, but fun, part comes in. Fill a large bowl with 1 ½ cups flour and 1 teaspoon of salt. If you're feeling daring, add some Italian seasoning or other spices you like for an extra kick in flavor. Pour the yeast into the flour and have your olive oil ready. Wash your hands and dig in! Mix the dough well while gradually adding the 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Put some of the oil on your hands to keep the dough from sticking. You can also add a little flour throughout the mixing process to prevent the sticking. Knead the dough by folding it into itself. Once the dough is tough and smooth, form it into a ball and cover it in a bowl. Let it sit until it doubles in size.

Once the dough is ready, there is a variety of options for stretching and forming it. I like to keep it simple and suggest you do the same. Gently fold the dough a few times to deflate it and turn it out onto a greased-up pizza tray (a round pizza tray above 13" will work best, but you can also use a square cookie sheet). Rub a little olive oil on your hands and form the dough by gently pushing down with your palms and spreading it to the edges of the tray.

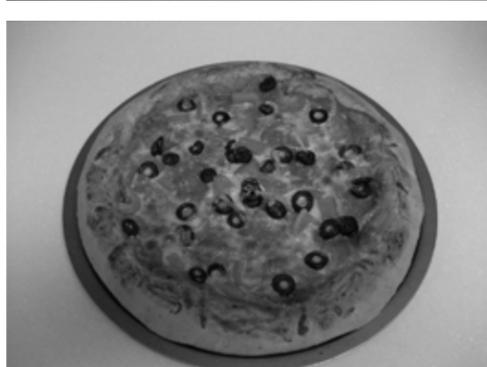
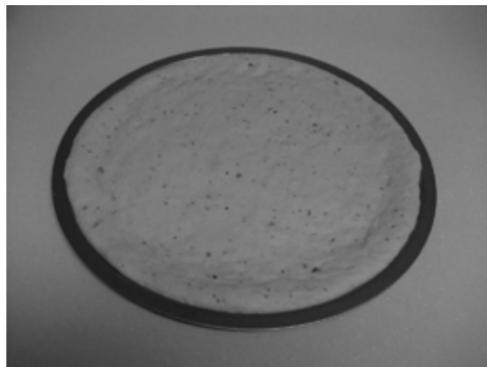
The best thing about making your own pizza is that it's customizable to no end. No need to only use pizza sauce! You can use any sauce that you like; try bar be que, alfredo, or caesar dressing for something different. You can even skip the sauce and go for some olive oil mixed with things like fresh herbs or garlic. But, to keep things simple, pizza sauce is a good way to go. Make sure that you don't go overboard on sauce. If you can't see the dough through it, you've gone too far.

Once you've got your sauce, there are even more choices for the toppings. Mozzarella cheese is a must for any pizza, but don't feel like you have to add it right on top of the sauce. You can add other toppings first and save the cheese for last. I also like to add Parmesan, Romano, or Asiago cheese if I happen to have any on hand. Like with the sauce, go easy on the cheese. Your pizza will turn into an oily mess if you add too much.

If you're not a fan of other toppings, your pizza will be ready to get baked as soon as you add the cheese. Otherwise, go for lots of fresh veggies like olives, bell peppers, or freshly sliced tomatoes. Pepperoni is always a good option for homemade pizza, as is ham or sausage. Use your imagination and try some new combinations that you think might taste good.

Now that your pizza is all set, let it rest and rise a little more while you preheat the oven. You should bake the pizza between 350° and 400° F. Ovens vary, so use your judgment for what temperature will be right. Once the oven is preheated, bake the pizza for 15-20 minutes. Again, use your best judgment for the baking time and check the pizza while it cooks to see if it's done. It will rise some more in the oven, the cheese will be completely melted, and the crust will be nicely browned. Let the pizza cool off a little before you slice it up and enjoy it!

Although I don't expect anyone to become a chef between work and classes, cooking is a lot of fun. You can save money and make dishes that are much tastier than fast food. Cooking with whole and unprocessed ingredients is also a great way to stay healthy. So whenever you get some free time on your hands, get your family, friends, boyfriend, or girlfriend and cook something together. You can't go wrong with a hearty pizza filled with all your favorite toppings.



### RANDY'S RESTAURANT REVIEWS

By: Randy Brown Jr.

#### Marietta Diner

For almost two years I have lived in Marietta without ever experiencing the most popular restaurant in town. On Thursday April 5, 2012 all of that changed. I visited Marietta Diner with some former coworkers and regretted waiting so long to eat at the place.

The service was great. A slew of waitresses, hosts, and yes the radiant desert bar, greeted us at the front counter. (Side note: when a desert bar is greeting you as you enter, you are in good company.)

My two friends were craving pancakes and they were in luck. Marietta Diner serves breakfast 24 hours a day. I had heard rumors that the diner gave their guests huge portions of food. They were just rumors or myths if you will, but I shared the tales with my friends anyway.

Our server was very well mannered and constantly checked on us. The atmosphere was great. Workers laughed with each other while others made sure each table had exactly what they needed. The manager made his rounds, greeting every table individually with a smile. Some televisions featured entrees from the menu, others showed national sporting events.

The menu included a variety of foods. Roasts, bar-b-que dishes, seafood, salad platters, burgers, sandwiches, Italian subs, pancakes, Belgium waffles, omelets, and much more graced the diner's menu. This made my decision tough. There was so much to choose from.

My friends decided to go with pancake platters which included; pancakes of course, sausage or bacon, eggs, and hash browns. I ordered the Texas burger which was served with a fried egg. I decided to go one step further, adding bacon.

To say that our plates were overflowing was an understatement. (Side note: We did not have to wait long for our food. It was all cooked in a timely manner) One of my friends ordered a To-Go box 5 minutes into his meal. My burger was more than I bargained for. I did finish but took my time in doing so.

After we finished our meals, our waitress did her best "you would really enjoy desert" impression. We said no, but struggled in doing so. I am a big fan of deserts and Marietta Diner had a bevy to choose from. Though many people order desert at the diner, each pie and cake looked untouched, inviting every newcomer to take the first bite. If that's not enough, just observe the neighboring tables. Customers will order deserts and have the staff bring it to them in Take-Out box. But waiters and waitresses do not simply bring out the dish in a paper container; they brandish it like a prized possession. I witnessed a male customer salivating over a mountain of strawberry cheesecake for nearly 5 minutes! 5 minutes is a long time to salivate.

All in all I am giving Marietta Diner the green light. I spent \$11, ate well, and the service was excellent. The best time to visit is during a weekday, weekends tend to get overly crowded. Visit Marietta Diner and take an empty stomach, you'll be glad that you did.

**Lady Hornets already preparing for the Fall Season**

Amanda Blanton



Photo by Amanda Blanton

The SPSU women's basketball team finished their 2011-2012 season with a 6-24 overall and 4-15 conference record. While the results were less than what they had hoped for, the team is eager to hit the court running this upcoming season, which begins in November.

This year brought on an almost entirely new squad with only two women returning to SPSU. The fresh faces contributed to the success of the team and a few women had some impressive statistics and awards.

Sr. forward Chase Morgan ranks No. 5 in the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) in total rebounds per game (9.72) and No. 3 in the SSAC in both blocks per game (2.03) and offensive rebounds per game (4.41). In Division 1 she ranks No. 9 in offensive rebounds per game and No. 11 in blocks per game. Morgan was named to the Musco Lighting Champions of Character Team.

With an average of 1.83 steals per game, we have Jr. guard Tara Hay from Canaberra, Australia. Standing at 5'4", Hay is a force to be reckoned with. She ranks No. 5 in the SSAC in free throw percentage (.747) and made 86 free throws and 48 three-pointers this season.

Ashlie Billingslea, Jr. guard for the Lady Hornets, was named to the SSAC All-Conference Team. She has an individual game high of 29 points scored against Lee on Jan. 21 and averages an impressive 20.29 points per game. Billingslea scored a total of 345 points this year and made 44 three-pointers.

One of the highlights of their season came on Feb. 18. The Lady Hornets rocked pink jerseys in support of breast cancer awareness for their game against Truett-McConnell College and shut down their conference opponent 69-34 in a Homecoming victory.

The Lady Hornets are under the leadership of Head Coach LaQuanda Dawkins, who is in her second season with Southern Poly. The Assistant Coaches are Stephon Serralles and Theo Willmon, both in their first seasons. With only three members of the entire team/staff returning this past season, the Lady Hornets are in a transition phase and have a lot to look forward to this fall. I got the chance to ask Coach Dawkins some questions about what's next for the Lady Hornets and what they are up to this off-season.

Amanda Blanton: What was the main thing you learned from this past season?

Coach LaQuanda Dawkins: I learned this season not to worry about things that are out of my control. In basketball, you don't have any control over what the competition is doing. All you need to focus on is what you are doing. How can you make yourself better today? When I was growing up, academics and basketball were a way of life for me. That was basically all I ever did and all that I ever thought about. Now that I am a coach, I've come to realize that I embedded some very important lessons from the game of basketball, lessons that I will have with me for the rest of my life and will share with student-athletes I have an opportunity to coach.

AB: What are you most looking forward to next year? Any specific goals for the team?

CLD: Next year, we have all kinds of goals in different areas for our program. As a former student-athlete, assistant coach and now head coach, I am constantly setting goals that I want to achieve personally and for the women's basketball program here at SPSU. I have goals for how many points, rebounds and steals I wanted to average. I have goals for how many games, regular season and conference titles that I want our team to win. I even have certain goals to achieve academically.

AB: What are the Lady Hornets doing this off-season to prepare for the fall?

CLD: We meet with our players individually, evaluate their play during the past season, and give them a written list of the things that she needs to concentrate on in their off-season workouts. We then issue a daily workout form especially designed for that particular player. Usually we have one designed for perimeter players and one for post players. We require our athletes to work as hard in the summer as they do during the regular basketball season; therefore, we set up off-season as well as in-season conditioning and weight programs.

Coach Dawkins and the ladies are reviewing last season's outcomes, keeping up with their conditioning and working hard to be the best they can be. The 2012-2013 year is bound to be a season of meeting goals and improving in all aspects of the game. I am eager and excited to see the Lady Hornets play in the SPSU Gymnasium this fall!

**The NBA Playoffs**

Randy Brown Jr.

The 2012 NBA Playoffs are right around the corner and if this lockout shortened season was any indicator of what's to come, we are in for a wild finish. Chris Paul was traded to L.A. twice, LeBron James will probably win his third MVP and no one cares, Kevin Durant has turned into "that" guy, Dwight Howard threw his own coach under the bus after threatening to leave the team, and 16 year veteran Kobe Bryant is the league's leading scorer.

As the NBA regular season ends, several questions still remain; here are a few of them.

**Will the Heat make it back to the Finals?**

This all depends on if Playoff Lebron plays like Regular Season Lebron; if so, look out. Dwayne Wade is going to be Dwayne Wade regardless. That is all on top of the fact that Chris Bosh's consistent play goes unnoticed. The Heat play great team defense (when they want to) and have two of the top guards in the game. With all of that being said, the Heat will probably implode again late in the playoffs; they haven't shown the fans otherwise.

**Are the Indiana Pacers for real?**

Is the sun bright? The Indiana Pacers are the real deal. Roy Hibbert has quietly developed an inside game, David West and Tyler Hansbrough have been solid, and Danny Grainger has been a leader on the court averaging almost 19 points a game. This year the Pacers have defeated Miami, the New York Knicks, Oklahoma City, Boston twice, Orlando, both L.A. teams, and the defending champion Dallas Mavericks. But if there is any team that might present a significant threat to the Pacers it is the Chicago Bulls. The Bulls swept the season series with the Pacers. The Pacers will have to face the Bulls if they plan on moving deep into the playoffs.

**Will the Chicago Bulls be able to make the next leap?**

The Bulls making the "next leap" depends on the health of their star point guard Derrick Rose. Yes, the Chicago Bulls have been playing well without him in the lineup, but make no mistake about it, if the Bulls want to win in the playoffs they will need their main guy. Chicago's chances look really good as long as they can stay healthy. They've proven that they can beat the Heat and their bench has been playing well above lights out. Only time will tell.

**Where have the Mavericks gone?**

It's assumed that even the Mavericks do not know where the Mavericks have gone. Many will point to the fact that they simply over achieved last year, winning the NBA championship, and were bombarded with high expectations at the beginning of the year. However, the Mavericks lost all hope when they did not resign Jose Barea and Tyson Chandler. Jose Barea was a part of the 1-2 punch off of the Dallas Mavericks' bench; along with Jason Terry. Barea was literally a one man fast break. Tyson Chandler was the defensive plug in the middle. Chandler challenged shots, rebounded, and was excellent off of pick and rolls. With these two main pieces gone and an awful whiff on Lamar Odom, it is easy to see how the Mavericks have lost their way.

**Where have the Spurs come from?**

The San Antonio Spurs have returned from the fountain of youth, Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili specifically. These two veterans have been playing like their old selves as of late and they've come bearing gifts. DeJuan Blair, Gary Neal, Kawhi Leonard, Danny Green, and other young role players have risen to the challenge, receiving more playing time and contributing greatly in return. The Spurs will be a force to deal with, if for nothing else, teams take them for granted. With Coach Gregg Popovich at the helm, it's a wonder that this team is never in the championship conversation.

**Can the L.A. Lakers be trusted?**

Fact, the Lakers have been playing pretty good ball since the acquisition of point guard Ramon Sessions. However, another fact is that the Lakers are still inconsistent on the road. Where do championship teams win playoff games? On the road. Ask the Lakers; they can show you the trophies to prove it. Kobe Bryant is currently resting with a "shin" injury. Does the NBA expect anyone to believe this? The same Kobe Bryant that played with a broken nose, battered wrist, and concussion like symptoms? Sure, whatever they say. Kobe is resting for the playoffs and this is bad news for any team that the Lakers face in the playoffs. What else is bad news for other teams? Andrew Bynum has turned into a monster, literally. Bynum pulled in 30 rebounds against the Spurs and has been averaging at least 23 points during Kobe's absence. What else is bad news for other teams? The Lakers role players are finding their place. Metta World Peace, Ramon Sessions, and Matt Barnes are playing very well. Can the Lakers be trusted? Well yes, as long as coach Mike Brown does not get in the way of his players.

**Will the Oklahoma City Thunder win the West?**

Everyone will say yes. Kevin Durant could easily win MVP and Russell Westbrook is no sidekick; this guy can take over all by himself. The Thunder's bench is loaded and with the addition of veteran point guard Derrick Fisher; Oklahoma City is clearly the team to beat. Their roster does not lie; Oklahoma City is covered at every position. However, the West is so wide open that it is too hard to call. Can the Thunder win the West? They have the pieces to.

**Who will play in the Eastern Conference Finals?**

Chicago Bulls versus Miami Heat

**Who will play in the Western Conference Finals?**

Oklahoma City Thunder versus L.A. Lakers

**Who will play in the Finals and win it all?**

The future is uncertain. But what is certain is that the 2012 NBA Playoffs are going to be a joy to watch.

## Along for the Ride: Roller Coaster Enthusiasts

Debbie Hamilton



Click! The belt has been fastened and there's no turning back now. I check the strength of it at least a dozen times to make sure it's not coming undone. Quite unsure, I look over to my friend Allison who got me on this ride in the first place. She is just smiling away, knowing what's to come. It makes sense because she's been on this jumbled piece of metal and grease numerous times before. Everyone else has similar expressions: a sweet mixture of fear and pleasure. And then, the wheels start turning and our seats rise up into a horizontal position. I quickly reach out to hold Allison's hand as we debark from the station.

"Oh no, oh no, oh no..." I repeat countless times as our train slowly crawled up the giant hill that would lead to my untimely end.

"Don't worry Debbie. You'll love it!" Allison yells over the loud noise of the clanks of the wheels, slowly yet surely making a constant noise that only builds up suspension in your heart. The top of the hill was closing in. It was only a matter of seconds now, but it truly felt like hours.

"I think I'm going to be sick," I whisper as I take a look at my dangling feet. The ground is long gone by now. One really shouldn't look down when they are afraid of heights.

Suddenly we stop and I know we are at the top. For a brief moment the world stood still. An eerie silence had overcome the riders. From there, I could have seen the entire park of SeaWorld. Too bad I didn't get the chance to. The next thing I knew, a loud piercing scream was coming from me as I tried to hold myself in my seat. Nothing of the scenery registers. I can only focus on my task at hand; fighting G-forces all the way to another rather large hill while I grip the safety bars for dear life. Loops, double loops, sharp turns, sudden jerks, my head is feeling dizzy. And yet now I notice that my screaming has stopped and turned into battle cries: "Come on world! Show me what you got! Ahhh!!!" I was flying and perhaps slightly starting to enjoy the ride.

After only a few minutes our train pulls back into the station. My body has become limp, but I can only smile inside because of what I've accomplished. I look over to Allison and say, "Fine, one more time."

### Initiating the Pastime

Picture this: groups of people who try to defy gravity, climb new heights, and reach new speeds. Their goals focus on riding as many coasters as possible and experiencing as much as they can. Who could these thrill-seeking daredevils be? They are roller coaster enthusiasts. On average, roller coaster enthusiasts tend to begin admiring roller coasters at a young age. In the case of Cody Phillips, a coaster enthusiast visiting from Evesham, England, his love for coasters started around the age of 16, but in reality he enjoys watching the coasters since he was 4.

"I waited until I was tall enough to ride Batman at Six Flags, and when I got to, there was nothing better. It was like the rush I got from riding my bike really fast, but a hundred times better," said by a boy who couldn't wait to travel as fast as he could. Today his coaster count is in the high 50's.

In the case of Allison Feldman, a roller coaster queen, she doubles Cody's numbers and enthusiasm. I met her about two years ago and instantly we became close friends. She had occasionally mentioned her love of roller coasters before, yet I thought she was just like most amusement park goers. The enthusiasts call these non-enthusiast riders GPs (General Public). Imagine my surprise when she told me how roller coasters were a strong passion of hers, resulting in having ridden 113 different coasters approximately 992 individual times. She rode her first roller coaster, Georgia Scorcher, in 2002 and has been a true coaster fanatic ever since. She has taken her love of coasters to the point of becoming a yearly subscriber to a coaster magazine, ACE (American Coaster Enthusiast) and a member of an online roller coaster group, CoasterForce.

### Examining the Gears

Age is not the only factor that sets coaster enthusiast apart from other risk-takers. Many enjoy the mechanical aspect of the rides. Cody refers to these features as a part of his "intellectual thrills". For Allison, she loves learning about the inversions (any part of the track that goes upside-down) and examining how all the track

pieces go together. In the case of Brain Andrelczyk, enthusiast rider of 221+ coasters, he has started to collect coaster parts. The running joke being that one day he will be able to build his own coaster in the backyard. I wouldn't be surprised if I went up to Allison or Brian, and asked either one of them to describe the various parts of a coaster.

Allison took pleasure in describing an assortment of coaster parts and tracks to me over dinner one night. In one go and many times since then, I learned about various loops and rolls of a roller coaster (both types of inversions). For instance, when we recently spoke about our past trip to SeaWorld she was able to recall and note in order the proper names of turns and twists for the Kraken and Manta coasters. To further explain, the Kraken coaster alone includes: a vertical loop, a dive loop, followed by a zero-G roll, cobra roll, a MCBR (Mid-Course Brake Run), another vertical loop, and finally a corkscrew/flatspin. Each type of loop or roll is named depending of the company that makes the coaster and what that part of the track does. I asked Allison how she keeps track of all of these facts. Her response was a simple shrug and a finger-point to her coaster log. Not only does she keep track of how many times she rode a coaster but also the number of inversions too. And she's not alone. The online site CoasterForce provides a "Technical Info" and "Inversion" section on the website (CoasterForce.com). This way all enthusiasts can be up to date on the latest technology that goes into making your heart race on a rollercoaster.

Cody sums up the true intellectual drive behind a love for coasters:

"...there's a big mutual interest, and you all know the technical aspects of the rides... you can get some fantastic geek conversations going on about little mechanisms on the coasters, comparing different manufacturers, different harnesses, etc. You couldn't really talk about that stuff with non-enthusiasts without looking like a total dork."

If there is one thing for sure about Cody's statement, it's that coaster enthusiasts really do have interesting technical conversations.

### A Global Connection

Allison and Cody are not the only roller coaster experts that I learned from. Thanks to Allison's online roller coaster group, CoasterForce, I was introduced to Taylor Goddard, premed student at University of Western Ontario, Canada. She is also a dedicated coaster rider, her total coming to 214 coasters. By sharing the same love for roller coasters and a little help from the Internet websites like CoasterForce, Allison and other enthusiasts are able to make friendships internationally.

According to Allison CoasterForce is, "a good place to talk with other coaster enthusiast in the world and learn that you're not alone in this crazy hobby." The group is a way of finding those who accept you for who you are, and there are more than you think. Most of CoasterForce members are also members of ACE magazine. With that in mind, ACE magazine alone has nearly 7,000 members from 12 countries and all 50 states (aceonline.org).

CoasterForce is not just an on-line community. Just as ACE magazine sponsors events, so does CoasterForce. These events are known as lives, where members can meet in real life at the parks and ride coasters together. Aside from meeting new people and riding, CoasterForce and ACE members receive the privilege of ERT (Exclusive Ride Time) at the lives. "Your group gets exclusive access to the roller coasters before or after the park opens. Which is awesome I might add," coming from an energetic Allison. She went onto tell me that there are also special viewings of parks that the majority of the public don't get to see, such as the building of the new roller coaster, Dare Devil Dive, at Six Flags over Georgia.

### More Than a Ride

Determined to learn more about coaster enthusiast I asked Allison and the rest of the group if roller coasters affected their daily lives, not just when they were in the park. In the cases of Allison and Cody they have become extreme thrill-seekers. This past summer they decided to go skydiving. Even after flying through the clouds Allison said she would still continue to ride coasters. It's a controlled thrill seeking, but still provides the rush they need.

There's more to riding than just raising one's adrenaline, but they don't call this group of people roller coaster enthusiasts for nothing. To enthusiast roller coasters also mean learning how machines work to defy gravity and a way to build long lasting friendships. For Allison, when she began riding her father thought it was just a phase, but eight years later and she still enjoys the ride.

### A Good Use for the Brains at SPSU...

#### Travis Wood

Did you join in on the zombie shooting, brain-eating, zombie-Nerf fest hosted by the Foam Ballistics Team in March? If not, you missed out. The Foam Ballistics Team (FBT for the purpose of this article,) established for roughly two years, finally brought about the nationally popular campus game of Humans versus Zombies (HvZ). Although the Housing Office has hosted it a year before, the FBT finally implemented actual Nerf firearms and had a number of people over a hundred.

The idea of HvZ is simple; if you're a zombie, tag humans and turn them into zombies. If you're a human, shoot zombies to prevent them from tagging you and your teammates. Mix in some missions in order to draw humans out of their dorms, and you've got a campus game worth playing. Zombies wore a red headband on their heads while humans wore one on their forearms. There were a handful of off-limit areas, such as roads, parking lots, and the inside of buildings (to avoid civilian involvement or the use of a truck to kill a zombie). Armaments for humans were simple and ranged anywhere from \$5 to \$50, depending on how well-armed you felt you needed to be. A \$10 Maverick, a six-chambered gun that's able to adapt to nearly any bullet, is generally the most trustworthy and reliable; although the \$25 Rayvin, which uses clips and is semi-automatic, fires well under pressure (if the clip doesn't jam.)

The game went on for a week, usually starting with a small amount of zombies. Every day a mission was required, anything from escorting an individual from point A to B, killing X amount of zombies, or making a last stand. And every day, the zombies' numbers continued to grow while the human numbers start to dwindle. The FBT made the game a little more interesting than it has been in the past by hiding certain 'power-ups' around campus. Some Anti-Virus cards were hidden and when found allowed a zombie to revert and become a human once again. Also, hidden blue bandanas allowed a zombie to become a near-invulnerable tentacle zombie. The tentacle zombie joined with other zombies, and they became the blue bandana's tentacles and were immune to Nerf bullets. The only way to take down a tentacle zombie and its many 'arms' was successfully firing into the crowd and hitting the hive center, which is the central tentacle zombie. This helped stop massive groups of humans who would carve their way through campus against more inferior numbers of zombies.

The last mission was the tense last stand, where the humans were supposed to hold out against the horde of zombies accumulated over the week for a certain time limit. Unfortunately for the last handful of humans, all three of the blue headbands had been found, so when they took their positions at the Student Center, three fully massed tentacle zombies began marching toward them. Unfortunately for the humans, the zombies succeeded in wiping out humanity before the time was up.

I interviewed the FBT Officer, Alex Mazyck, and asked him when SPSU students could expect the next HvZ game. He informed me that the group plans to host another one next fall semester. Until then, look out. For more information about FBT and their activities, join their group, Foam Ballistics Team, on Facebook.

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