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The Grizzly, October 1, 2009

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Students composting to create sustainability

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As a collective consciousness the Ursinus Community has sparked an urge to reduce waste on campus, whether through reducing, reusing or recycling, composting, or simply through personal behavior. For the past several years composting was one of the many sustainability options that has lingered over the minds of active thinkers here at Ursinus. This year composting has sparked an urge to reduce waste on campus, whether less than three miles from Ursinus College.

Ursinus takes its food scraps to now 23 miles away, so with the compost site almost eight times closer to campus we are also decreasing our carbon emissions.

What is composting anyway? In Ned’s words “Mother nature is going to do the work, she does all the work around here. We just help speed it up.” And he is right; composting is a natural process that occurs with the decomposition of organic matter.

“Sustainability” is continued to Features, page 4.

Former NY Times editor gives students advice

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From Sept. 21 to 24, Ursinus College welcomed Woodrow Wilson Fellow and former journalist and editor for the New York Times, Karen Arenson, to campus. According to recent publications on the UC website, The Woodrow Wilson Fellows is a program dedicated to bringing leaders in their professional fields to campuses for a week “to create better understanding and new connections between the academic and non-academic worlds.”

In an interview with the Long Island native, Karen stated, “I don’t know if I’m that quotable. We can do better than a quote; she can have an entire article.”

Karen’s official schedule was packed. On Wednesday afternoon, she regaled her audience with tales of stories that occurred in the five years spent at Business Week and her impressive thirty years of experience at the Times. The topic of her discussion alluded to the ever-surfacing question of the digital revolution and its transformative role in reporting. “Journalism is making the headlines, not just printing them,” she claimed. Karen’s “Writer’s Lives” session concluded with a question and answer session, during which she addressed concerns regarding the journalists of today, the decline of print publications, and the current economic status, particularly as it affects higher education institutions.

Mrs. Arenson engaged the student body with her visit to the Print Journalism class, taught by Dr. Lynne Edwards of the Media and Communication Studies Department. On Tuesday, Karen guided students through profile assignments by sharing advice gleaned from her own experience covering higher education and business. Thursday of that week, she generated ideas for “beats” for an event.

“NY Times Editor” is continued to News, page 2.

Students fight the yawn and stay Up til’ Dawn

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An event for students to keep an eye out for this year is Up ‘til Dawn, a fundraiser for St. Jude Children’s Hospital. The executive board, headed by Zina Habib, is in the process of putting together an event that is not only philanthropic, but also guaranteed to be a great time.

St. Jude Children’s Hospital is located in Memphis, Tennessee, and is a non-profit medical center founded by comedian Danny Thomas. St. Jude’s is dedicated to fighting life-threatening childhood diseases. Not only does St. Jude Children’s Hospital treat patients on a daily basis, but it also works on cancer research. In fact, since the hospital opened in 1962, the survival rate for the most common type of childhood leukemia has increased from a mere 4 percent to an astonishing 94 percent today.

Currently, the hospital is responsible for the survival of 270,000 children. Additionally, Dr. Doherty, winner of a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, is a member of the St. Jude staff. Through its outreach program, St. Jude helps to educate doctors around the world on the newest and most advanced forms of pediatric cancer treatment.

The hospital shares all of its discoveries with the world, selflessly putting progress above all else.

As if fighting and researching childhood cancers is not help enough, St. Jude takes it a step further by guaranteeing completely free care to all accepted patients. Obviously, funding studies and providing free medical care are extremely costly. With daily operating costs averaging at 1.3 million dollars, colleges across the country participate in Up ‘til Dawn to fundraise and support the amazing cause.

For the third consecutive year, Up ‘til Dawn events are being held at Ursinus College. Students have a chance to help out and support St. Jude by participating. From Sunday, Oct. 11th through Friday, Oct. 16th, awareness week will take place across campus. Information concerning St. Jude Children’s Hospital will be distributed in a number of ways, including chalkings, pamphlets, candy and bracelets, so look around campus during the second full week in October to learn more.

On Nov. 17th the Up ‘til Dawn finale event will take place. Before the date of the event, participants will spend the evening in the field house, where they will address pre-written letters to St. Jude.

“Up ‘til Dawn” is continued to Features, page 3.
News

News-in-brief: China goes green, new vaccine for HIV

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Tuesday, September 22

UNITED NATIONS - Chinese President Hu Jintao spoke at a U.N. summit on climate change Tuesday, pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in China. It was the first speech at the U.N. by a Chinese leader on the subject of climate change. The world only needs around 8,500 tons of opium a year; however, senior UNODC member Walter Kemp warns against taking these numbers as good news. He claims that the world will use around 4,000 tons of opium a year for legal and illegal purposes; however, last year 6,900 tons were produced, with 7,700 tons produced the year before that and 8,500 tons the year before that. “So if the world only needs around 4,000 tons of opium and a further 1,000 is seized, where is the rest of it going?” Kemp asks. He believes that 12,000 tons of opium is stored in and around Afghanistan. It is believed that the Taliban may be using this stockpiled opium to fund their activities, and to forge ties with gangs like the Turkish and Iranian mafia.

Wednesday, September 23

AFGHANISTAN - The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) revealed Wednesday that enough opium to essentially supply the world for two years has gone missing. They believe that the Taliban is stockpiling this opium in an attempt to corner the world market for the drug. A recent UNODC report revealed that opium production and cultivation have dropped within the last year; however, senior UNODC member Walter Kemp warns against taking these numbers as good news. He claims that the world will use around 4,000 tons of opium a year for legal and illegal purposes; however, last year 6,900 tons were produced, with 7,700 tons produced the year before that and 8,500 tons the year before that. “So if the world only needs around 4,000 tons of opium and a further 1,000 is seized, where is the rest of it going?” Kemp asks. He believes that 12,000 tons of opium is stored in and around Afghanistan. It is believed that the Taliban may be using this stockpiled opium to fund their activities, and to forge ties with gangs like the Turkish and Iranian mafia.

Thursday, September 24

THAILAND - Tests of a new vaccine to prevent HIV infection have shown modest results for the first time. The trial, which involved 16,000 participants in Thailand, is the largest test of an HIV vaccine. Researchers found that those who received a series of inoculations of both a prime vaccine and booster vaccines were 31 percent less likely to contract HIV than those who did not receive inoculations. Though the results are modest, researchers say they are statistically significant. However, the vaccine did not prevent everyone from being infected; 51 people in the vaccine group contracted HIV (compared with 74 in the placebo group).

Furthermore, the vaccine specifically targeted strains of HIV found in Thailand, so it is unclear how the vaccine would perform in the rest of the world. Still, researchers hope that the results of this study will guide science in the production of future HIV vaccines, especially considering that previous HIV vaccines did nothing to prevent infection and, in one case, even seemed to increase an individual’s likelihood of contracting HIV.

Friday, September 25

KENYA - The U.N. refugee council released a statement Friday calling attention to the plight of the 281,000 Somali refugees in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee complex, which currently houses three times the population that it was built to accommodate. Somalis are fleeing to Kenya at an average rate of 6,400 a month, due to the internal strife plaguing Somalia. Pro-government forces have been at odds with rebel groups for years. One group in particular, Al-Shabaab, an Islamist militia with ties to al-Qaeda, tends to target the African Union Mission, a peacekeeping operation currently serving as the de facto military force of the Somali government. This conflict alone, which is centered in the capital city of Mogadishu, has driven 250,000 Somalis from their homes. Besides those who flee to Kenya and other neighboring nations, many refugees attempt to travel by sea to Yemen or Europe, and many have drowned or gone missing in the journey.

(All stories come from CNN.com.)

“NY Time Editor” continued from page 1

with the class and helped students on a one-to-one basis with their individual articles.

Liz Kilmer, a sophomore who serves as the news editor for The Grizzly, reflected upon Karen’s visit to class: “I was grateful to meet someone of such prominence within the world of journalism. Arenson had a long and successful career working for one of the nation’s top newspapers- or, arguably, the nation’s top newspaper. Who better to conduct a lecture revolving around journalism than one with this experience?”

Karen also served as a guest lecturer for Professor Buckley’s Economic Issues class, shared breakfast with Dean Levy, dined with President Strassburger for dinner, met with the editors of the Grizzly, engaged in dialogue with Summer Fellows and mentors, and facilitated a panel entitled “Curry Career Paths: Unexpected Twists and Turns,” which featured discussions with professors Lynne Edwards, Jon Volkmer, and Cathy Young. Dr. Edwards was instrumental in arranging Arenson’s stay on campus, and was engaged in planning with Arenson as early as a month before her visit.

Arenson received a brief campus tour on the first day of her residency. During the tour, she became highly interested in the campus’ outdoor sculpture collection, which perhaps prompted a later visit to the Berman Art Museum. Like any good journalist, she had done her homework and, by the end of her stay, was able to entertain her company with more facts about our statues than most people can boast.

But that is Karen for you. “I like learning,” she said at her final dinner at Ursinus. After all, as a self-acclaimed “math kid,” she has enjoyed a successful career in the field of journalism. Although planning a lecture appeared daunting at first, Karen conquered the world of PowerPoint. During my interview with her, Karen confided that our chat was a somewhat unfamiliar territory for her, as she was the one who primarily asked the questions.

Karen did ask questions.

From Monday morning until her residency concluded on Thursday night, she engaged in probing dialogue with the faculty, staff, administration, and students of Ursinus College. Her quest for knowledge and her inherent ability to capture what is “sexy” about a particular story has indelibly left her marks on our campus.

She leaves Ursinus to make her mark elsewhere. Visit mit.edu and you will see she is serving as an active participant and driving force of MIT’s Alumni Association and venturing into projects that combine her expertise in higher education and economics.

Karen described Ursinus as “fascinating” and “exhibiting a real sense of a tighter community here.” Lucky enough for us, Ursinus College can now feel proud to include Karen Arenson among the members of that community.

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October 1, 2009

The Grizzly
Unsolved vandalism on campus could hit students' wallets

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On Friday Sept. 18, 2009 one of the more brazen acts of vandalism occurred on the Ursinus Campus. Two buildings, Pfahler and Reimert were tagged with red spray paint and black marker. Campus safety, upon seeing the markings, responded accordingly and contacted the Residential Director of Reimert, Dana Pienta. As the RD of Reimert, Pienta was responsible for trying to figure out who was responsible for the act, and whether or not there needed to be an immediate clean-up.

The investigation commenced that evening, operating off of tips; however, the information gathered on Friday led to a dead-end. "We didn’t have enough evidence to continue on with any type of prosecution at that time," according to Pienta.

The administration has narrowed down the suspects, and determined that it was a non-student who had committed this act, though this has not yet been officially confirmed. The investigation is ongoing.

Students are still being questioned, and the police have been notified, according to Kim Taylor, Director of Campus Safety. To develop more leads, Dana Pienta sent out an email, asking for students to step up and provide information. While this is a logical tactic, one member of the Ursinus community, and a Reimert resident, felt that the administration should not "pit students against each other."

Those who were directly affected by this act of vandalism felt disrespected and violated. Shakeeeta Parker of Reimert 108 brought up the point that the graffiti "not only cost the school the money, but it costs us money, too." The money she is referring to is the potential for a "community damage charge," something non-Reimert residents may not be familiar with. "Depending if we can find someone accountable just for that specific incident we can bill it to that person, or it can be split up between people, or the whole complex gets a community damage charge."

Dissatisfaction erupts with mass E-mail

Luke Benko
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Ursinus students had their email inboxes flooded with a long string of emails on the evening of Sunday, September 20. The email was originally sent out by the Ursinus table Tennis Association to the student body about an upcoming ping pong tournament that would be occurring on September 26. An Ursinus student then replied to the email asking the student body if they had seen his lost "Kanye West Sunglasses." This seemingly innocent email somehow turned into a weekend long saga of multiple different students mass emailing the entire school. The student body had no choice but to sit back and wait for the seemingly endless string of emails to end.

The conversation ranged from inappropriate comments to advertisements about the upcoming intramural flag football season. Several confused students asked to have their names taken off the email list. While some students seemed to really get a kick out of the email, thinking of it as harmless fun, most students seemed to just be annoyed. Opening up your email account to find over 50 pointless emails is not a fun time for most people.

Moreover, mass emailing the school is against Ursinus policy. President of the USGA Danielle Harris sent out an email warning students that sending emails to more than 25 percent of the student body was against Ursinus emailing policy. Many students ignored the warning given by Danielle and continued emailing. Then Ursinus Network Operations got involved and sent out an email titled "Email Abuse," which stated more specifically what policies had and were continuing to broken. Quoting from the Mass Emailing policy that can be found on the Ursinus website in the Technology section, "Circumventing the permissions on distribution lists or sending a mass message by those not authorized to do so may result in judicial action."

The Ursinus Responsible Use policy was also broken, specifically clauses 3.5, 6.7, and 8. If students would like to send mass email they must notify the Technology section. Why aren’t Ursinus Students allowed to send mass emails? Danielle Harris said "students aren’t allowed to send mass emails because it would be overwhelming for the student body. We already get enough emails as it is and allowing anyone to send a school-wide email would be irresponsible. A little over a year ago the student Activities Services Committee (SASC) extended the Mass Emailing policy because students were complaining about getting too many emails."

However, there seems to be no set punishment for breaking these policies. RDS Dana Pieta and Melissa Sanders commented on how the punishment will be decided. They said that they did not wish to comment on which students would be punished, as that is still being decided. However, the decision will come from a collaboration of Residence Life and Technology Services.

While what will become of the students that broke policy and participated in this mass email is unknown, students can still learn from this experience. It seems to be apparent that Ursinus will not tolerate its policies being broken without regard. It is important to know the rules of an organization that one is involved in; in this case the organization is Ursinus College. While some of the Ursinus student body learned this the hard way, it would be fair to say that the students of Ursinus now know the policy on mass emailing.

Every weekend, or Thursday evening, students and non-students alike venture into Reimert, partaking in its infamous party scene; however, as beer supplies run dry and the village of music lovers, the building’s interior and exterior are left in shambles. The staff responsible for cleaning up the concrete complex, unfortunately, is then required to deal with both a mental and physical pollution. This disregard for the Ursinus Campus community leads to a harmful indifference toward others’ quality of life. Chelsea Alexander, a resident of the Reimert 105 suite said, "It doesn’t matter, this is a dorm, this is someone’s house, you don’t go around destroying people’s property. Yeah, Reimert is where everybody parties but it’s also where people live so it’s pretty disrespectful."

One of the more graphic images spray painted on Reimert suite 105’s window was a penis. Though this act was extremely disrespectful and vulgar, it was refreshing to hear that the women of the Sigma Sigma Sigma suite, maintained a light hearted attitude when recounting how they had first heard about or seen the image. The day after the incident occurred, one of the women, who had been at a wedding, received a text message that read “there’s a penis on our window.”

In the mean time, the administration is still in the process of meeting with students and developing a solid case against the culprit. "As soon as we know something we’ll hold that student, the suite, a non-student, whoever is responsible, accountable" says Pienta.

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the people on their lists. The letters simply provide information on the work done at St. Jude Children’s Hospital and request donations.

The finale even will include much more than just letter writing, however. Food and drinks will be provided, in addition to activities and entertainment. Best of all, participants receive raffle tickets when they write letters. These tickets can be entered to win prizes, which range from gift certificates to a new Wii system.

Starting in October, make sure to look out for information concerning Up ’Til Dawn. Not only is participation fun, but it helps fight cancer and save the lives of children.

COMMENTS SOUGHT FOR TENURE REVIEW

In accordance with the Ursinus College Faculty Handbook, student comments on teaching effectiveness and student-faculty interaction are invited at the time of a faculty member’s review for tenure. Although student letters must be signed to be considered, student names may be withheld, upon request, when their comments are shared with the Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the faculty member.

This year, the following members of the faculty are being reviewed for tenure:

Professor Meredith Goldsmith, English
Professor Walter Grenou, History
Professor Codrina Popescu, Chemistry

Your feedback is strongly encouraged and will assist the Committee in its review process. Letters should be sent to Dean Judith T. Levy, Office of the Dean by October 9, 2009.
Teaching Assistants indulge in the UC culture

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This year, Ursinus College welcomed three new teaching assistants from France, Spain, and Austria. Their first month spent at Ursinus, while very busy, was filled with surprise and enjoyment.

Premiere Laurence French TA, came from Serris, a suburb in France. He received his undergraduate degree in American Literature two years ago at the Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée. He is now a second-year Master’s degree student at the same school while also teaching at Ursinus because of a Fulbright grant, a program that sponsors international teaching assistants.

Besides teaching nine intermediate-level French classes, he takes classes in American literature and history of film as a student. He also joined many different clubs, including the French Club, German Club, Japan Club, College Choir, Meditation Club, and Literary Society Club.

He says, "They all interested me. I want to meet different people and see different cultures."

While this is not the first time he has come to the United States, Laurens says, "It is important to know American culture when I teach languages." He has great curiosity about the U.S. and people at Ursinus. This curiosity compels him to communicate with many of the people he meets on campus. He says he wants to "appeal French presence...[the] TA is the only representative of France, so I wanna share my culture."

Santiago “Santi” Sanchez Blazquez, the Spanish TA, came from Plasencia, Spain and graduated from the University of Salamanca with a degree in translating and interpreting. He then received a scholarship from the European Union to teach Spanish at a high school in Germany. After spending one year in Germany, he won the Fulbright grant and came to Ursinus.

This is his first time in the U.S. and he claims that something that is “difficult for him to adapt to” is the time for meals. In Spain, since people usually eat lunch at about 3 p.m. and dinner at 10 p.m., it is hard for him to adjust to having lunch and dinner a much earlier time here.

Sanchez Blazquez teaches ten intermediate Spanish classes, which include 93 total students. In the tight schedule, he tries to make time for relaxing. He loves to play sports, tennis being his favorite. He also plans to travel around during the break. "I want to spend much more time in America. I want to meet many American people, and become good friends. I want to learn American traditions."

Miriam Wagner is the German TA from Salzburg, Austria. She graduated from Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, with a B.A. in English combined with psychology, philosophy, and education. Before coming to Ursinus, Wagner taught English at several schools in Austria.

Wagner has been to Arkansas for a year as a student. Compared to the university she attended there, Ursinus is a much smaller college. She says she was surprised at the size of Ursinus, but she absolutely loves it. "I like Ursinus because it has a personal atmosphere. I can get to know people. Everyone is open. I feel I’m experiencing a college life”.

With hopes to be a high school teacher and her love for colleges in the U.S., she enjoys teaching classes and living as a student on campus. She says, “I want to experience everything that is to do with the college life. It’s just the thing I’m doing already.”

Ursinus will be able to gather food scraps not only from the Dining Hall but from Main street houses as well. Leah Joseph also emphasized the desire to perhaps create an on campus compost site to boost awareness not only of the sustainable projects going on at Ursinus, but to further interactive, engaging environmental education for both the Ursinus Community and anyone else willing to learn. It is important for projects like the shift to composting to not simply stay behind the scenes, because they are one of the many things that makes Ursinus a school we take pride in.

There is so much that is to be said for the development of this composting program on campus, but with little time and space to write, I urge you all to keep reading the Grizzly and look on the UCGreen webpage to see updates on this project as well as other "green" projects on campus. Right now we are literally in the transition from the set up stage of composting, to making it happen. The most important thing to remember is that each of us can take steps towards a greener campus, simply by thinking of reducing our consumption, reusing what we can and recycling as much waste as possible, and even in doing that, we’ve begun our journey as consciously sustainable citizens not only of Ursinus College, but of the world.

Sustainability” continued from page 1

including things such as food scraps, or even cardboard.

The only thing a composting site does, is speed up the decomposition. Compost is good for the soil, plants, and gardens. Ned explained that when it comes to composting, you just need to make sure your dealing with just the right amount of carbon, and you’ve simply got dirt. Ursinus will be able to give him food scraps, including meat and dairy, to process into compost and may even buy some back for places like the Organic Garden on Campus.

The support and time put into making this project a reality has come from all angles on campus, including the administration, ISS, current and alumni environmental studies students, faculty, Ron Wood (Dining Services, and Andy Feick (Facilities Services). The goal is that eventually
First to perform original play in 100 years

Andrea Magnolo

Ursinus College’s theater department is soon to become the first organization in over 100 years to perform the original version of “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” Surprisingly enough the script written by R. L. Stevenson in 1887, just happened to fall right into the lap of Director Domenic Scudera, an Ursinus theater professor. Upon reading “Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized,” a book by Dr. Martin Dananay, Scudera came across the original script that has not been performed since 1907. Dr. Dananay is an English professor at Brock University of Canada where he has taken a keen interest in Victorian literature and culture. In all his years spent researching and critiquing the play he has never seen it performed.

As musicians who have transformed popular culture by Dr. Danahay is performing the play, the performers must take a highly melodramatic approach, which is something they all find rather challenging. For an actress like Melanie who is used to realism, she finds it hard, “Maintaining realism yet expressing the high melodrama that the play calls for. The melodrama is a bit difficult as it requires an exaggeration that I am still working to perfect.”

Aungst claims, “Although I have performed with accents numerous times for plays here, the English accent is one of the hardest that I’ve had to use.”

“Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” is set to premier in the Lenfest Theater Oct 7-10 at 7:30 p.m. Ticket are $2 for students and senior citizens along with $5 for general admission. Don’t miss this unique performance and a chance to view a play that has not been performed this past century!

The Grizzly

October 1, 2009

Features

Career Corner:
Interesting Internship

Zana Mathuthu

Shannon Tully, a senior majoring in Biology with a minor in Politics, spent her 2009 summer in Central NJ working for the Barham Group - a mechanical contracting & construction firm. Shannon’s work focused on the construction of an addition to the Jersey Shore University Hospital.

How did you obtain your internship?
I was researching online, but my dad saw that a company was looking for students, so I applied. I sent in a resume and cover letter describing my experiences and the classes I’ve taken.

Describe a typical day.
It was split. I would work in the hospital shadowing a podiatrist and a gynecological oncologist. I would assist patients and look into different case studies with the doctors. Every day was a little bit different. When working with the engineers, I would assist the project manager with floor plans. Using a computer program, I would create a 3-dimensional image of what the room is supposed to look like. I also attended meetings to discuss the floor plans and finances.

What did you enjoy most about your experience? The best part of my experience was when the podiatrist let me sit in on a procedure. I had already taken anatomy, so it was a nice reinforcement of what I learned in class.

What prepared you most for your internship experience? Taking human physiology and human anatomy really helped for the hospital aspect. As for engineering, my computer skills and bio classes really helped. And physics was a really good class that helped, too.

What challenges did you face and how did you manage them? The challenge was that I had no idea what engineers did! It was just a lack of knowledge. So I asked the engineers a lot of questions at first, and as long as you’re willing to voice your opinions, people will help you out.

Did this Internship help you to better decide where you want to go from here? It has. I’m pre-law, and I now know that I really want to get into biomedical law. And this internship helped me confirm that decision.

What is the best advice you can offer students interested in a great internship experience? Apply early! You’ll find better jobs, get a better internship, and get a better location.

For information about internships, check out the Career Services web site or e-mail Career Services at career@ursinus.edu
Opinions

A “Wise” choice for weekend amusement, a play review

Carly Siegler
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"Who can own God?" asks the actress channeling a young Jewish girl circa 1192 Jerusalem who poses this question to her costar, but also to the audience at the People’s Light & Theatre, a professional theatre company located in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

“Who can own God?” It is truly a CIE worthy question, because as Abigail Adams’ richly crafted revival of “Nathan the Wise,” the 1778 play by Gotthold Lessing, ultimately demonstrates, there is no definitive answer.

The play opens with Nathan (screen actor David Strathairn), a Jewish merchant, returning from a business venture of unspecified length. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Nathan learns that his adopted daughter, Rachel (Saige Thompson), was recently saved from a house fire by a Christian Knight Templar (Luigi Sottile), who himself has just narrowly avoided death at the hands of the Muslim King Saladin (Stephen Novelli). However, the Templar merely flees from one danger to what he perceives as an even greater one: Rachel is in love with him, and he is quickly falling for her, a big no-no in a Templar’s code of honor. The poigniant and funny second act more than makes up for where the first is lagging, as the true connections between all these seemingly unrelated characters are revealed.

Best known for his stunning performance as Edward M. Murrow in the 2005 biopic “Good Night and Good Luck,” David Strathairn plays the title character with the commanding presence audiences have come to expect of him. He is an excellent actor, and he excels at playing sensible, patriarchal characters, and although his Nathan was perfect, it was nothing Mr. Strathairn’s fans have not seen him do before.

Saige Thompson’s Rachel brought a burst of energy whenever she stepped onstage, and I found myself relating to her unabashed idealism.

Other standouts included Stephen Novelli as a comic, Saladin and Roslyn Ruff as his clever and sharp-tongued sister, Sittah. All of the actors complemented each other onstage, and none seemed fazed by the star power of their costar, meeting his great talent with their own.

Director Abigail Adams made smart choices both with her casting and her staging, creating a picture that was nicely balanced, although at times the audience viewed the actors’ backs more than their faces. The gorgeous sand-colored backdrop depicting Jerusalem, and the jewel-bright costumes were a feast for the eye, although they did not detract from the main focus of the play.

I saw “Nathan the Wise” on Sept. 16, the second night of the Jewish New Year. My own brand of Jewish puts emphasis on the ish, but going into the play I could not help feeling slightly guilty. Should I have been enjoying matzo ball soup at my grandmother’s house? Later, I realized that in those two hours I spent as an audience member, surrounded by strangers from all different backgrounds, I was honoring one of the most important creeds of not only my own faith, but of every religion: unity.

“Nathan the Wise” runs through October 11 at the People’s Light & Theatre in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

Freedom of expression?: Pornography trial

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Last March, I wrote a Grizzly article about the most publicized federal obscenity case since the Larry Flynt prosecutions, as well as my connection to it. Pornography director Rob Zicari (professionally known as “Rob Black”) and his wife, ex-porn star Janet Romano (“Lizzy Borden”), owners of the adult film company Extreme Associates, pleaded guilty to one charge of conspiracy to distribute obscene materials. On July 1 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, they were sentenced to a year and a day each in federal prison. With good time, they will serve a few months less than that, according to their lawyer. Their sentences began on September 24.

Three hundred and sixty six days is a marked reduction from the original 50-year sentence and $2.5 million fine each defendant had faced before the plea bargain. In fact, each defendant faced twice as much prison time as Hemant Lakhani, who tried to smuggle a surface-to-air missile into the U.S. to sell to terrorists. Lakhani faced 25 years. Zicari and Romano’s crime was making adult films considered obscene by the government and shipping the films over state lines.

The Extreme Associates case is illustrative of substantial problems in American society, notably that due process does not apply to obscenity law. According to United States vs. Harris, 347 U.S. 612, 617 (1954), due process mandates that citizens know what activity is criminal so that they can avoid it. Citizens know how to stay within the confines of the law when filing income taxes or when purchasing a gun, and journalists know what they can and cannot write about someone if they don’t want to get sued for libel. However, a person cannot know how to stay within the law when making an adult film. The only way they can know what separates legal, constitutionally protected pornography from illegal, unprotected pornography is when a judge or juror delivers a verdict, and by that time it is too late.

For example, renowned First Amendment attorney Clyde DeWitt recalled in the 2005 documentary “Obscenity” an obscenity case he encountered in Houston. A film was seized from a theater, he said. “They had two trials—one for the ticket takers, one for the projector. Same movie, same courtroom, same police officers, two different juries. One guilty and one not guilty.”

Amazingly, there are cases like that-everywhere. Although some of the stories DeWitt has told in interviews about unjust prosecutions are as appalling as the scenes in Zicari’s movies, the reality is that Zicari’s content is no worse than what goes on in society every day. I happen to be more offended by merely hearing about a homeless mother and daughter eating out of a dumpster than by actually seeing a sex act in a Rob Zicari film.

I am equally appalled by the actions of former-Attorney General John Ashcroft, who — according to documentaries made about the case — spearheaded the Zicari prosecution. Ashcroft is the same person who made the ultimate decision to spend $10,000 of taxpayers’ money to cover up the exposed nipple of a female statue in the Justice Department building, according to the December 2003 Details Magazine. As indicated in “Obscenity,” Ashcroft even stated in 2001, “I might be willing to trade First Amendment rights to improve culture.”

Zicari, meanwhile, is no longer the crude, brash, and vulgar pornographer he once was. What used to be the most controversial person in the most controversial entertainment industry on the planet has become a modest man trying to put behind him six years of multi-million-dollar legal expenses which cost him his life savings. I have seen first-hand that Zicari has been humbled by the indictment process. While he is far from perfect and he has made innumerable mistakes in the past, he has come to recognize that his own decisions, not the actions of others (as he used to tell anybody who would listen), caused his downfall.

Tastelessness should never be considered a crime because it is an entirely subjective judgment which is not governed by laws.

My friend is paying a sizable price for filming sex acts and selling the footage. Let her and her husband’s prison term be a reminder that freedom of expression doesn’t always come without a cost.

The comic featured at the right is by Michael Delaney. The upcoming issues of The Grizzly will host a comic of his each week. Make sure to check them out! You can email him at midelaney@ursinus.edu if you have any comments. If you think you’ve got what it takes to write an awesome comic, email the editors with your ideas/samples!
How about a universal care-for-your-health plan?: Employer health incentives

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Barack Obama’s presidency is already proving itself a historic era for our nation, not only due to the president’s race but mostly for his numerous plans to reform our nation. Not surprisingly, many oppose Obama’s proposals, some fueled by sheer political alliance, and others founded on more substantial concerns.

Recently, health care coverage has been heavily focused on Representative Addison Graves “Joe” Wilson (R-South Carolina) for interrupting Obama’s Sept. 9th Health Care Speech to Congress by twice shouting “You lie!”

People can argue whether Rep. Wilson was out of line (which I believe he was) and if voting on a resolution of disapproval against him was necessary (which I’m inclined to say was a waste of time), but the question remains is whether Wilson was correct that the President was lying.

Wilson’s outburst was in response to Obama’s claim that his proposed public health insurance option will not apply to illegal immigrants, and he has since been shut down by those who pointed out that the current House bill clearly excludes illegal aliens from governmental coverage. So, no, technically Obama was not lying in regards to denying coverage to foreigners, but does that one point in his favor shine a green light on his entire reform agenda?

A closer look at Obama’s Sept. 9th speech points out several key reforms which few would argue are unnecessary or erroneous. In one sweeping motion Obama promised that his plan will prohibit private health insurance companies from denying coverage based on preexisting conditions, and that it will offer affordable coverage to those currently uninsured. He also dispelled rumors of “death panels” aimed at denying coverage to senior citizens, as well as the belief that the government option would fund abortions. To prove his support of capitalism, Obama also made clear that public health care would be paid for solely by the premiums it collects, not a government budget, and tried to distinguish his proposed plan from the healthcare provided in Canada, England, and other Western nations.

That, and much more, spell out what seems to be a well thought out and sincere health care reform proposal, and I would recommend readers look at transcripts of Obama’s speech themselves. I believe that the Constitution and to protect America, not to take advantage of it.

However, while Obama continues to dismiss “scare tactics” designed to destroy his bill, I am not about to ignore the possibility of “support tactics” meant to pass this resolution as soon as possible without answering all the big questions.

For one, Obama wishes to make denying health insurance based on preexisting conditions a crime. Once that is put into effect, though, is there even a remote possibility, no matter how ridiculous or slim, that an influx of severely ill and uninsured peoples will apply for coverage, knowing they cannot be rejected, thus costing insurance companies millions of dollars?

It is also not part of Obama’s goals to shut down current health insurance providers, but rather foster healthy competition. However, has he planned to assist current insurance providers, just as he bailed out the auto industry, if employers across the country switch over to a more affordable government plan, again costing the insurance industry untold sums?

Finally, and most important to myself, if someone currently taking expensive medications were to join the public option, would they be required by their new insurance to switch over to cheaper medical supplements despite the effectiveness of their current prescriptions? I myself have a serious condition which requires a weekly dose of medication costing $750 a pop, and it would be devastating if I ever found myself on public health care, under the proviso that I take a cheaper yet significantly less effective product.

Obama President said himself, “I will not waste time with those who have made the calculation that it’s better for politicians to kill this plan than improve it.” I hope my queries here are taken as a serious discussion in hopes of bettering health care, not as an attempt to scare people away from the big bad government. I choose to judge people by their character and ideas by their merit, not their political affiliations, and whether or not I voted for Obama last November I am fully prepared to support any health care plan he provides so long as it is clearly constructed and addresses the concerns of the American public. I am dismayed by the unfortunate tactics Joe Wilson adopted last week (essentially, “the louder I say it, the more true it will sound”), for which, I must note, he has apologized for to the President. Still, I look forward to a future where, together, serious study and open forum lead to compromises across the aisle and across the land.

How about a universal care-for-your-health plan?: Employer health incentives

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Healthcare reform is one of the most heated issues of debate and concern in current United States politics, and opinions about President Obama’s intended changes span over every inch of the spectrum, from total support for universal healthcare to complete opposition. While supportable arguments can be posed from both sides, an economic recession, wouldn’t insurance discounts for living healthfully be convenient? Knowing that my family’s insurance plan will stop covering me after graduation, I know that I’d definitely profit from the incentives—and be a little more motivated to work out!

As appealing as the images may sound to a health-driven employee, the benefits can be mutual. Employers are recognizing the advantages of improved employee health to their workforce and productivity. According to a Research and Markets audio conference published in Business Wire in January 2009, “…challenges are on the rise for employers and health insurance plans, which is prompting even more predictions of growth in the wellness management profession.” They found that the skyrocketing employer healthcare costs, the obesity issue, the aging working population, and the baby boom generation’s impact on the workforce also contribute to predictions that the wellness and health promotion industry is growing.

Encouragement and a positive outlook, though, are essential to success. According to IncentOne, a company that helps businesses with corporate health and productivity, there is an “art and science” to achieving goals through health incentives. Their Sr. Vice President of Health and Productivity solutions, Sue Lewis, advises offering some form of instant gratification—such as payment in portions—and rewards valued $100 or higher, finding such to be typically successful in keeping workers on board with their goals. She discourages disincentives, which punish workers for noncompliance, because they contribute to a negative atmosphere.

Although the fact that Americans need monetary incentives to work out, eat healthier, and avoid harmful substances does not shine a flattering light on us, the solution of incentives may simply make sense. While a person practicing healthy lifestyle habits is still susceptible to thousands of ailments, he or she obviously decreases the chances of developing those for which smokers, obesity sufferers, alcoholics, drug users, and others unconcerned with maintaining proper health are at serious risk. Our nation is experiencing an enormous demand for healthcare reform, and even President Obama, during his Sept. 9th speech, admitted that his proposed healthcare plan would require four years to be fully implemented in order to function effectively. Individual efforts at adapting or working toward an overall healthier lifestyle, on the other hand, can begin as soon as possible, and they are at least a starting point on the path to more affordable healthcare for Americans.

While acts can be as simple as going for a walk or cutting back on junk food, if each American were to find a way to implement or encourage such changes, then small contributions—from nearly every social class—could combine into a much larger, healthy form of preventative healthcare. If we’re willing to have doctors stick needles in our arms to prevent illness, then why shouldn’t we consider cutting back on smoking or burgers?
UCXC continues their long strides in 2009

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"I love my cross country team," Coach Chris Bayless said, "They’re the heart and soul of this program," This year, the Ursinus College Cross Country team could not be any closer to their goals or to each other.

The running Bears have great expectations for this season. A few races at the beginning of the season did not necessarily reflect their potential, yet Coach Bayless does not seem to be shaken by that.

"You don’t want to be the best in the first few weeks...you want to be the best overall," he commented.

With heated rivalries against Haverford, Dickinson and Johns Hopkins, the team aims to be a force in the Centennial Conference.

"This is the best team I’ve had in my six years of being at Ursinus," Coach Bayless added.

Specifically, he looks forward to seeing the full potential of sophomore runner Lauren Alexandra, freshman up-and-coming Sam Stortz, and junior Jeremy Garavel. Bayless mentioned both Stortz and Garavel have the ability to be national qualifiers by the end of this year.

Looking to the previous season, Coach Bayless has quite a void to fill losing star Christa Johnson. In her four years here, she shattered numerous records and led the team to many big wins.

"Losing Christa as an individual is a big hit, but as a team, I think we’ll be just as great," he says.

He then explained that cross country is not as much of an individual sport as one might think. The goal is to get the lowest score possible for the team. To do that, he has to have his runners come in at around the same time.

"It’s the pack that is important," he comments, "and that pack is especially strong this year."

A strong pack of runners on both the men’s and women’s team is helping UC score low and reach major wins.

Continually, he mentions the togetherness and closeness of the team.

Traditionally, he stresses the significance of working together to achieve a common goal, but this year’s team has taken it to a whole new level. The team spends August to May running cross country and then winter and spring track together.

Coach Bayless says that the sheer amount of time together makes them closer, never mind their mutual bond of the love of running. With a team of twenty-six women and nineteen men (forty-five in total), a majority of the runners hang out together both on and off the track.

"We’re a family," he asserts.

Both teams competed at the Philly Metro Small Schools Competition this past Saturday. The men came out fourth while women grabbed third.

Tomorrow morning and afternoon the team heads to the Paul Short run at Lehigh University.