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The Grizzly, October 29, 2009

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Senator John C. Rafferty speaks in Olin

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In front of a small audience made up of the Ursinus community, Pennsylvania State Senator John Rafferty (R.) of the 44th senatorial district, which consists of Berks, Montgomery, and Chester County, candidly spoke about the struggle to finish the state budget, the ups and downs of being a state legislator, and Ursinus' involvement in the Pfizer-Wyeth merger among other topics. On Wednesday Oct. 22nd, at 6 p.m., the state senator, idiosyncratically tagging at the lapels of his suit jacket, called the town hall meeting at Ursinus College to order, explaining that he is one of the "odd ducks that starts on time."

Rafferty has developed a close relationship with Ursinus over the years; having participated in an environmental round table on campus in the past, and formulating a friendship with President Strassburger, who at one point

Students enjoy the PA Renaissance Faire

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Time travel, in a sense, has technically been invented. In fact, it doesn't even involve Michael J. Fox or a Deloran. All it involves is a trip to Manheim, Pennsylvania, home of The Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. You're not literally traveling through time but the sites you'll see are right out of the past. It's not like watching a movie though, it's quite like living a movie. You can attend in your normal dress, but you'll find there are many who choose to partake in the spirit of the event and go dressed up in period clothes or however they want to experience it. It's a unique thing to say the least.

According to the website, The Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire is a "recreation of a 16th century village and marketplace." It's held on a 35-acre area and takes place from Aug. 8 through Nov. 1 on Saturdays and Sundays. Whether it's watching "Shakespeare's plays on a three story replica of London's Globe Theatre," marveling at the jugglers and daredevils, or munching on turkey legs, there's sure to be something to pique your interest. You can be sure to see quite a show wherever you look. Upsilon Phi Delta sent out emails stating they were selling tickets, so it's an experience you could share with your fellow students. If you've got time on the weekends and need something to partake in to break from your boring work schedule or cramming, then hitch a ride out to the Faire.

Several attendees encourage you to eat the food at the Renaissance Faire, calling it an experience in its own. "I suggest eating a turkey leg," says Jack Teed, a UC graduate who also said: "you should at least go once." Eliza Ruder, a student, was quick to call the food "good" and suggested the shows, saying: "the joust was really fun." From Oct. 17 to Nov. 1, the Fair has "Halloween Daze & Spooky Knights" on the weekends. The Faire grounds

Mid-term aftermath

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With a quarter of the 2009-2010 academic year over, we now face the aftermath of the midterm season. Expected or unexpected grades, phone calls home to parents, or meetings with advisors are some of the consequences of these stressful exams or papers. Continuing successful academic performance or changing study habits after a "wake-up" call of poor grades can produce even more stress and anxiety for the Ursinus student body. This is the class of 2013's first experience with mid-term exams and it can be a very stressful time for students.

Unfortunately, much of this stress and anxiety lands on the shoulders of freshmen. Receiving mid-term "progress reports" in their campus mailboxes brings either smiles or tears. In a previous interview, on Oct. 14, 2009, Maria Beazley, the Director of Advising, Tutoring, and First Year Programs, discussed the relationship between first year advisors and freshmen's mid-term grades. Beazley said: "advisors get copies of the grades for first-year students." A meeting with a student and his or her advisor is not mandatory but suggested for students who are not performing at a satisfactory level. Beazley said: "students are encouraged to persevere with help from their advisors. Telling parents is a stressful thing. Getting a plan together is important." She further discussed a student's option to withdraw from a certain class. "The professor, advisor, and student discuss the best decision for the student at this point and time." Withdrawing from a class is an option for a student who is not performing well or at a satisfactory level. Mid-term progress reports are therefore very informative for freshmen students, and helpful in determining their present schedule as well as the following semester's classes.

Furthermore, many freshmen students were more stressed about the results of their mid-terms and less concerned with the exam itself. For example, freshman Erin Boyce said, "Yes, I received all the grades I expected, but one class was unexpected." This is typical because many freshmen are unfamiliar with a certain professor's grading system or the policy of the college itself. Lisa Altieri, a freshman, was confused about the system of receiving grades in her mailboxes. She commented: "they were pretty much what I expected. But I wasn't exactly familiar with the system, but I like it." Dominic Mallon, a freshman student, commented, "I did alright in most of my classes except in Spanish class. I need to work on vocabulary."
Tuesday, October 20

JERUSALEM – Israeli President Shimon Peres rejected a U.N. report on Israel’s invasion into Gaza at the end of last year, saying in an interview Monday that the report was “one-sided” and “unfair.” The U.N. Council for Human Rights approved the report last week, which says both Israel and the Palestinian Hamas movement committed acts “amounting to war crimes, possibly crimes against humanity” during the three-week offensive. Peres, however, insists that Israel was only defending itself, which it had a right to do. Israel’s offensive in Gaza, known as Operation Cast Lead, was supposed to halt Palestinians Center for Human rights claims 1,419 were killed, with 1,167 which it had a right to do. Israel’s offensive in Gaza, known “terror operatives.”

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Wednesday, October 21

SOMALIA – Pirate attacks are a problem around the world, even more so than they were last year; in the first nine months of this year alone, there have been more attacks than there were all of last year. The International Maritime Bureau, a watchdog group, believes that over half of these attacks were carried out by Somali pirates. Most attacks take place on the east coast of Somalia or in the Gulf of Aden. They have hijacked 32 ships, taken 533 hostages, wounded eight, killed four, and one person is still missing. Somalia’s transitional government is too weak to do much about the pirate attacks, leaving Europe and other western nations to increase maritime patrols of the area. So while the number of attacks is going up, the number of successful hijackings is decreasing because of naval response. Piracy has accelerated in recent years because companies pay the ransoms demanded; pirates can make up to $40,000 a year in ransom money, which is considered a fortune in Somalia and other impoverished countries.

Thursday, October 22

NEW YORK – According to a report released Wednesday by the U.N. refugee council, Iraqis top a list of people seeking asylum in industrialized nations. This is the fourth year in a row that Iraqis have topped this list; this year, they are immediately followed by Afghans and Somalis. According to the agency, the numbers are 13,200 Iraqis; 12,000 Afghans; and 11,000 Somalis. The U.N. said that 185,000 people total “filed for asylum in the first six months of 2009, a 10 percent increase over last year.” These people were trying to escape from religious or political persecution in nations such as China, Serbia, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, and others. The United States received the most applications, 13 percent of them; while 38 countries in Europe received 75 percent total. Antonio Gutierres, the U.N. high commissioner of refugees, says that the statistics show that, “There is an acute need for countries to keep their asylum doors open to those who are in genuine need of international protection.”

Thursday, October 22

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala – Guatemalan authorities, along with help from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, managed to capture a makeshift submarine that was carrying thousands of kilos of cocaine. The exact amount of cocaine on the ship is still unconfirmed, but local reports estimate it was carrying 11,000 kilos or 22,000 pounds; if this is true, it would make it the largest Guatemalan drug bust. Colombian officials notified American and Guatemalan authorities of the ship, and a nearby DEA vessel intercepted the ship Wednesday night. Three Colombians and one Mexican were arrested, but the DEA vessel ran out of fuel, resulting in a delay back to port. It should return sometime on Friday.

“Senator” continued from page 1.

Unfortunately some students, especially freshmen, were extremely stressed about their science and lab exams. Jennilyn Weber, a freshman softball player, discussed her anxieties. “I was stressed about everything. My most stressful class was chemistry lab. To relieve some stress I played softball and visited my friends at Penn State.” Beazley remarked that this is a very stressful time of the year. “I think for every major it’s different. Science students are overwhelmed in this time of the year because labs start building up,” said Beazley.

Overall it seemed to be a successful experience for many freshmen. Students continue to be proactive and to seek help when needed. With mid-term season over and students’ return from fall break, the focus now turns to daily assignments and continued preparation for final exams in December.

“Midterms” continued from page 1.
Copyright infringement on rise amongst college students

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College students are known for pushing the limits of certain activities. The most obvious example could perhaps be the consumption of alcohol, but that's not the only example. Over the past decade, college students have been enjoying another form of otherwise legal entertainment – music, movies, and television shows – via illegal means such as the Internet. Copyright holders have taken offense upon finding out that their songs, films, and episodic TV features are being downloaded on the Internet for free. One of the major guilty demographics is college students. Most college students have more bandwidth on their college campus than they have at their permanent home residence, so it is easier and more feasible to download large numbers of files during the school year. In some cases, copyright holders have gone after the perpetrators.

According to a CNN.com article by Marci A. Hamilton, many members of the public look down upon college students who go after students for copyright infringement. However, that doesn't change the copyright holders' position that they need to protect their intellectual property at all costs. Many colleges, including Ursinus (according to an April 2008 mass e-mail by Dean Deborah Nolan), do not voluntarily turn over personally identifying information unless they receive a valid subpoena ordering them to do so. Hamilton writes that the more seriously copyright holders treat illegal downloads of their property, the more likely the amount of violations will be reduced. At Ursinus, one can only speculate how widespread illegal downloading is because Network Technologies Manager James Shuttlesworth is only able to make limited comments on the subject, due to legal and confidentiality issues. However, senior Emily White, a Tech Support student worker, says that there is some evidence that a large number of Ursinus students use illegal means to view copyrighted material. “I do see a solid number of people who have viruses from streaming TV or movies online.” When there is a report of a copyright violation by an Ursinus student, the IT department, according to Shuttlesworth, “thoroughly investigate each such complaint that we receive.” He says that such “infringement notices” are received by the college “periodically.”

According to the Messiah College Web site, in one semester at the college during the 2006-2007 school year, 40 students out of a population of less than 3,000 were served copyright violation notices. Messiah’s Web site indicates that music and film businesses monitor peer-to-peer sharing services such as KaZaa and Morpheus and can trace downloads to individual users. These services usually have their users confirm in agreements when they join that they, not the service, are liable for any copyright violations.

How much trouble can you get in for downloading copyrighted material? According to the Messiah College Web site, in just one week in 2007, 260 lawsuits were filed in the U.S. against individuals (granted, not all were college students) who had downloaded material illegally. Many of these lawsuits are initiated by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), which issues subpoenas to educational institutions ordering the release of their users’ information. There is a minimum of a $700 fine, and a maximum of $50,000, per illegally downloaded file. Messiah College’s Web site writes: “The law says that it is individual internet users – not their internet service providers (ISPs) that are liable for illegal file downloading.” In other words, it’s the student who gets in trouble, not the college. In addition, students who are caught downloading content illegally generally are sanctioned by the campus on which the downloads occurred for violations of the institution’s computer use agreement.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), passed in 1998, regulates illegal sharing of copyrighted material, according to a 2001 article on the UCLA Web site. It served to update copyright law to the digital age while also limiting liability for Internet service providers, such as colleges. According to a 2004 article entitled “The war over internet piracy” in Black Issues in Higher Education, each educational institution must formally register with the United States Copyright Office an on-campus employee. That employee is charged with the responsibility to address any alleged copyright violations that arise on college campuses. At Ursinus, according to Shuttlesworth, it is an e-mail address (abuse@ursinus.edu), rather than a person, which is registered.

The Berman Museum receives gifts from expressionist painter

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The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College received a gift of art works made by the abstract expressionist painter, Ben Wilson from the Ben and Evelyn Wilson Foundation, this fall. Through the museum, students and the community obtained access to the Wilson’s works.

The Berman Museum was given eight large oil paintings, two drawings, and a sketchpad that are Wilson’s early works, Lamentation (1945), and the works from the 1960s to the late 1980s. These pieces were introduced by Jerome Jaffe, the director of the Ben and Evelyn Wilson Foundation and the artist’s daughter. Lisa Hanover, the director of the Berman Museum mentioned the pieces in an Oct. 17th Ursinus press release, saying: “Wilson’s drawings, like his paintings, reveal a tremendous fertility of imagination. He was a real virtuoso.”

Last fall, the museum was also the recipient of a gift of five sculptures made by Evelyn Wilson, who is a sculptor and the wife of Ben Wilson. Jaffe mentioned the gift in an E-mail that the Foundation, based in Blairstown, NJ, has put an effort to familiarize Wilson’s works to the public for several years. It has made gifts to about 50 colleges, museums, and women’s studies programs mainly in the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania area. Jaffe said in the E-mail that since “having learned that the Berman Museum has a strong collection and a reputation for being an excellent university museum,” she met with Hanover and reached an agreement to give her father’s works to the Berman Museum.

Ben Wilson (1913-2001) was an abstract expressionist painter who worked actively from the mid 1930s to the 1960s. According to eldersantiques.com, Wilson graduated from the College of the City of New York, which is now part of CUNY, and also studied at National Academy of Design, Masters Institute, and Academic Julien in Paris. His works varied from paintings which reflected social situations of the time, such as the World War II era, the Holocaust, and the Spanish Civil War, to challenging styles of paintings, using unusual colors and compositions, and writing Haiku on wood panels. Art critic Alfredo Valente referred to his works from Nov. 1946 on Promenade, saying: “of contemporary painters, the work of Ben Wilson is exceptional in its profound and revealing understanding of the great truths of our time. Here the contradictions, the distortions, the misery, the incomplete victory, the groping of our epoch are strongly mirrored. The freedom with which Wilson establishes new and original forms and tries to tell us of these things is a testament to his tremendous ability as an artist.”

Wilson actively held both personal and group exhibitions around the United States, and has also taught painting in his own studio, City College, New York University School of Education, and other schools for close to 40 years.

Hanover commented in an E-mail that the Berman Museum now plans to hold an exhibition of Ben Wilson’s paintings along with West Chester University in 2011.

The Grizzly
October 29, 2009
Features

A healthy spin on America’s economic recession

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Our nation’s economic status is currently under the weather, and its negative impacts on American businesses and individuals may be causing some of them to feel—at least emotionally—likewise. Many have cut back on former spending habits, some of which include medical-related expenditures; however, recent and past findings suggest that despite expectations, Americans’ collective health has actually improved.

Christopher J. Ruhm, Ph. D., a University of North Carolina professor of economics, conducted an array of studies that reveal a positive correlation between physical health improvement and a temporarily weakened economy. According to his 2009 article in the North Carolina Medical Journal, for each 1 percent increase in the country’s unemployment rate, a 0.5 percent decrease in total mortality becomes evident. The results stem from what Ruhm calls “time series data aggregated over a single geographic location,” which, in this case, focuses on the United States.

How could having more unemployed Americans yield a lower number of deaths? One reason is transportation. Unemployment reduces the number of commutes to work and creates more difficulty for someone to afford vehicular expenses. People drive less, avoiding fatal collisions which, Ruhm observed, tend to decrease by one percent to three percent with each one percent increase in unemployment.

Cars also contribute environmental pollutants, and such harmful substances are reduced when driving is decreased.

Another mortality-reducing factor is a decrease in health-depleting purchases, such as alcohol, tobacco, and restaurant food. Along with William E. Black, D.M.D., Ruhm used the U.S. Behavioral Risk Surveillance System to predict a 1.5 percent decrease in drinking among heavy drinkers, a 0.3 percent decrease in smoking among heavy smokers, and a 0.2 percent decrease in unhealthy dining habits among obese Americans in response to a one percent increase in nationwide unemployment. The same health-economy relationship is visible on a narrower scale. Caitlyn Berardi, a 2009 college graduate who began a career during the recession—an issue with which Ursinus students may soon be faced—explains, “Even though I’m making money, I have real things to pay for—bills, loans, rent—so I’ve had to cut back.” Berardi notes that the Wawa and Dunkin’ Donut shops that frequented her college days are gone, which has led to her decreased junk food intake and moderate weight loss.

Healthy outcomes of recessions are not unprecedented. The Great Depression—arguably the most drastic economic downturn that the U.S. experienced during the twentieth century—reveals similar effects. Researchers Jose Tapia Granados and Ana Diez Roux from the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan had findings published in “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America” that illuminate life expectancy’s increase from 57.1 years in 1929 to 63.3 years in 1933—the span of the Great Depression’s peak. Their discoveries, arising from research using previous studies and government demographic data from sources such as the Milbank Memorial Fund, also reveal peak mortality rates over certain years between 1920 and 1940 that coincide with a flourishing economy.

Opposing economists suggest that unsteady economies increase negative health impacts. In two articles in the American Journal of Public Health, Dr. Meyer Harvey Brenner, a professor at University of Texas’ Health Science Center, argues that overall mortality, infant deaths, and fatalities from cardiovascular disease, cirrhosis, homicide, and suicide increase during recession and instability periods. According to Ruhm, however, most time series data suggest the opposite, and researchers have indicated flaws in Brenner’s research including use of inconsistent or insufficiently documented data and alterations in specifications in his analyses.

Efforts toward a positive response to the economic downturn are taking place nearby. Ursinus ESS Professor Dr. Monaco explains that the Trappe Borough Council—to which she belongs—received over 300 sign-ups for a “PACE Car Program” in which drivers sport bumper stickers to signify commitment to drive within the speed limit. The program intends to reduce traffic-clogging expenses while maintaining a safer community.

Ursinus students are also adapting. Junior Jacqi Clymer explains that news, magazines, and radio stations now offer ways for young adults to cut back on spending while still having fun, such as by keeping dinner or movie dates at home. She adds, “Starbucks can add up to $10 for a few coffees. It’s cheaper just to make it at home.” Similarly, Granados’ findings reveal a connection between obesity and prosperity. The self-prepared, healthier meals being advocated are just one example of the multitude of ways that the UC community can gain better health from a struggling economy.

Kindle: Electronic reading device, next iPod?

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These days, carrying around 160 gigs of music and movies on a device smaller than a cell phone is old news. Updating my Facebook status and creating an iTunes playlist while I sit in Wismer with my iPod has become routine. With technology always changing, it is not surprising that even literature would be on the short list to catch the technology bug.

Every year, students at Ursinus make their semiannual pilgrimage to the campus bookstore, equipped with class schedules and credit cards to invest in their education. The line wraps around the store; students carry stacks of books to the register, holding their breath as the final price tag shows up on the register, delivering a serious blow to many. The last thing students want is to drop several hundred dollars on books, when that money could go toward many other perfectly good uses. Little has been done in changing this routine, but with technology taking over in several other aspects of our lives, it is about time for the well-worn textbooks and anthologies to meet their technological match.

As one of the most popular electronic reading devices on the market, Amazon.com’s Kindle got a makeover last spring when the website released Kindle DX, a more powerful and much larger version than the original, which sold thousands due to its inexpensive bestseller and publication lists and easy usage. With just a few clicks, the user can have access to thousands of books, newspapers, and magazines, all at discounted prices. The DX, with its 9.7” diagonal screen display, is close to four inches larger than its original counterpart, and costs almost twice as much, weighing in at a hefty $489, excluding online book purchases. The product aims to rectify what we as college students deplore the most: expensive prices and bulky textbooks that only return a fraction of the cost at the end of the year. But with a host of paperless classroom are simultaneously met with problems.

With technology clearly an integral part of our lives, it seems like all our free cash goes straight toward some flashy gadget or entertainment device. iTunes has made a fortune from selling expensive "Renaissance Fair" is continued from page 1. sports the Halloween necessities, including jack-o-lanterns, cornhusks and a giant scarecrow. The day is filled with events for children and adults alike, such as trick-or-treating and costume contests. Ted says to “expect a lot of people dressed up every which way,” although it’s not a necessity. There are plenty of crafts and souvenirs to buy and if you’re over 21 you can get yourself some ale at the Swashbuckler Brewery and Restaurant. Cathy Haak, a senior at Ursinus, was unfortunately bogged down with schoolwork but said, “I would definitely go, given the opportunity.”

The press site for the Renaissance Faire was check-full of information. The Renaissance Faire was filled with themed and event laden weekends, like the Wine Harvest Weekend and the Pyrates Invasion Weekend. When the Faire ground closes there will still be events at “The Mount Hope Mansion” like Poe Evermore from Nov. 3 to Nov. 15 and Dickens of a Christmas from Nov. 27 to Dec. 27. So even if you miss the main attraction, you can still enjoy a blast from the past.

October 29, 2009

The Grizzly
Have you ever walked up to a recycling bin on campus and not known if the plastic you hold in your hand is even recyclable? Even as an environmental studies student, I often find myself questioning whether or not the number on the plastic is compatible with campus recycling, if I can even read that number inside that tiny little recycling symbol, if I can find that symbol in the first place. Well those days of frustration have ended, because Ursinus College Facilities Services is in the process of signing onto a new and improved contract with J.P. Mascaro and Sons to recycle plastics 1-7! Facilities Services is probably one of the least recognized advocates for the sustainability initiatives here on campus. All the work facilities does behind the scenes is "out of sight, out of mind" for most of us here at Ursinus, and unless we need them for something; we simply don't think about what they are capable of doing, and we're simply unaware of what they are doing and have done. One of the many issues that has always been on the mind of Facilities is the presence and accumulation of waste on campus, and they have been working over the years to not only improve the recycling program as a method of waste allocation but also trying to find more efficient ways to deal with the waste that they can't recycle or compost.

For example, right now Facilities is beginning construction of a trash compactor here on campus, meaning J.P. Mascaro and Sons will not have to make as many trips back and forth to Ursinus, cutting their travel by about 50% while also decreasing emissions. Another change in our waste distribution is the cardboard we usually give to J.P. Mascaro to recycle, is going to be going to Ned Foley's composting site "Two Particular Acres," where Ursinus will soon be sending their food waste. Ned can reuse this cardboard for his compost, which takes much less energy than recycling and goes into making a product we can all use. This will also decrease emissions by sending both food waste and cardboard to one place, less than 3 miles away, which is much closer than the J.P. Mascaro site.

As far as recycling goes, Ursinus currently only recycles plastics 1-5, but as previously stated, we are going to be recycling numbers 1-7. Facilities Services is hoping that we'll be able to implement this upgrade by November 1st. Hopefully that will be the case but if not, it will most certainly go into action before the semester is out. So when November 1st rolls around, look for signs by the recycling bins to see if it's time to put your magnifying glass away and not have to look for those tiny numbers. But keep in mind not all plastics are recyclable, so you should still look or feel around for that recycling symbol. Until then, try to keep that on the lookout just a little while longer to make sure what you have is recyclable.

As an Ursinus Community we will soon have the luxury of not worrying about what that little number is, and know that if it is plastic and has the recycling symbol on it, we can toss it into the green bins and know we've just taken one of many steps as an environmentally conscious individual. As you can see the shift in recycling on campus is not the only project Facilities has been working on, and these are only a few of the many efforts to simultaneously increase efficiency, reduce cost, and increase sustainability here at Ursinus. In the process, they are making it easier for busy students to find ways to help reduce Ursinus College's impact on the environment, helping to facilitate change by making the act of recycling a little less stressful.

Some resources for the curious at heart:
http://recyclingfacts.org/
http://www.jpmascaro.com/

"Kindle" is continued from page 4.

"Kindle" is turned off, and Amazon.com prides itself on their huge e-book collection with over 350,000 at the ready. Most bestsellers and fiction books are priced at only $9.99, much less than a hardcover for the same book. According to an article published in a September issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, it is important to realize "how many printed textbooks become obsolete each year when publishers put out new versions." Think of all the books you’ve returned for cash over the years. Now multiply that by every college student in the United States alone. It's a massive number.

Just sitting at my computer desk, I’m inundated with technological clutter. music is playing from my portable USB speakers, Panasonic headphones hang from my desk lamp and the newest addition to my technological family, a terabyte external hard drive, hides under cables snaking in every direction. Technology has taken over every aspect of my life, why should I add one more product to my arsenal of beeping, flashing, devices? What can I say, I'm a literature purist. I adore my paperbacks. I love going home and looking at the stacks of books I’ve collected over the years, from Dr. Seuss to Dr Zhivago. I’ve come to the realization that the last thing I want to do is stare at another screen. Although I’d like to hang on to my paperback copies forever, I feel the transition is ultimately inevitable. One day, and probably soon, my stacks of books may meet their untimely fate as the Kindle becomes introduced to my technological repertoire.
“Amelia” and other films like it never achieve lift off... is it the films or our society?

Apparantly, you can crash and burn twice.

Amelia Earhart, the heroine of the new film “Amelia,” is famous for vanishing in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in 1937 while flying around the world with her navigator, Fred Noonan. Two years later, she was declared legally deceased. So to recap: she took off, yada yada yada, she died. No one’s sure exactly what happened on that plane ride, but this much is true: we’ve somehow been led to believe that she is more captivating than any “balloon boy” could ever be. So why make a two-hour movie about her life when the only interesting part is somewhere beneath the Pacific Ocean, shrouded in mystery? I suppose you can make the same argument for a film like “Titanic,” but that had one of the biggest action-adventure directors and two rising young stars going for it. “Amelia” has... Hilary Swank, Richard Gere, and the director of “Vanity Fair” Not exactly a fair fight.

Last weekend, “Amelia” tanked worse than an Obama healthcare proposal. It grossed a nearly $4 million, which is probably enough to recoup the budget for Richard Gere’s hair gel supply. Films such as “Saw VI,” “Astro Boy,” and even “Cirque de Freak” earned more, which begs the question: Has the general public lost interest in the biopic genre, or has the genre lost touch with what the public wants to see? Movies like “Walk the Line” and “Ray” performed well at the box-office, but they were basically dramatic musicals. People paid to hear the soundtracks, not necessarily to see the actors. What about a movie like “Ali”? It scored Will Smith an Oscar nod, made director Michael Mann a mainstream success (but also allowed him to make “Miami Vice”), and earned more than $100 million. So was “Amelia” simply the perfect storm of bad casting, directing, and timing, or is it something more?

Movie studios have, in the last few years, pushed for three types of films: sequels, animation, and comic-book adaptations (or remakes). They’ve slowly backed away from making adult-fare, as films such as “Burn After Reading” and “Michael Clayton” score rave reviews but fail to bring people into theaters. Everyone forgets that Oscar buzz and critical praise do not equal more money at the box-office; in some cases, it can actually hurt the film and convince people to wait for the DVD release. A movie like “Amelia” doesn’t appeal to the mainstream because it’s built for an adult audience. It’s the kind of movie that is tailor-made for Oscar season: big-name actors, a sweeping score, gorgeous shots of planes flying over oceans and mountains, and an iconic event in American history. It’s the “English Patient” of this decade: over-sentimental, over-directed, and overacted. But it’s marketed towards us: adults.

And there’s my point. As we leave Ursinus and go out into the real world as adults, we will see less and less of these kinds of movies being made. Soon, if the studios get their way, we’ll see nothing but digital animation and adaptations of obscure comic-books like “Archie Meets the Punisher” (yes, that is a real comic-book). We are the generation that will lose movies geared towards the subjects and historical accounts that we might hope to see. It’s quite depressing to think that, one day, I’ll leave my children (Zach Jr. and Zacharina) with a babysitter and go to a local movie theatre to see a film meant for someone twenty years younger than myself. I can’t fathom the idea of having to wait in line alongside teenagers and toddlers to see the next Oscar winner for Best Picture of the Year. That should be something my generation is able to hold onto and call our own.

Am I telling you to go out and see “Amelia”? Absolutely not. But don’t simply dismiss it (or any other film) for being geared towards adults. Fight for what will soon be ours. If not, I’ll see you at “Astro Boy 2.” I just hope Zach Jr. won’t be mad at me for seeing it without him.

Full frontal wizards are so last year: Broadway review

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Wolverine could kick James Bond’s ass. Seriously. I am in no way attempting to ignite a battle between fans of the X-Men franchise and 007 enthusiasts. I am simply making the objective observation that Hugh Jackman is a giant, while Daniel Craig is relatively compact, at least in relation to his mutant counterpart. However, in Keith Hearn’s “A Steady Rain,” which began a limited run on Broadway last month, Craig and Jackman are on equal footing. The larger than life presences that both possess on screen translate to the stage, making for a 90-minute tour de force of a two-man show.

“A Steady Rain” tells the story of Denny (Jackman) and Joey (Craig), who have been best friends since kindergarten, and are now partners as cops in inner-city Chicago. A time is not specified in the setting, only that the events unfold in the “not-so-distant past.” As characters, Denny and Joe serve as foils. Denny is a family man who has difficulty filtering what comes out of his mouth, while Joe is a bachelor who has difficulty filtering what goes into his. The actors take turns recounting the main series of events, which begins with a bullet shattering Denny’s living room window, with devastating consequences. Certain that he knows the identity of the perpetrator, Denny goes on a vendetta mission, while Joey steps into the empty void of husband and father for Denny’s family.

Yet, as he arrives closer to personal justice, he gets further from preserving the justice system that he is sworn to protect.

The role of Denny is a long way away from Hugh Jackman’s first outing on Broadway, his 2003 Tony-award winning portrayal of Australian performer Peter Allen in “The Boy from Oz.” That was the role in which Jackman proved to the world his own versatility as a showman, and since then his popularity has skyrocketed, culminating in his successful gig as host of the Academy Awards earlier this year. Denny is a much darker character than I have ever seen Jackman portray, and the transformation was absolutely mesmerizing. Even as Denny laughs heartily, it is easy to see in Jackman’s face that something uneasy is boiling beneath the surface. Something that later reveals itself to be an animalistic desire to shield his family from those dangers he faces on a daily basis. By the end of the play, as there is definitely something broken in Denny and as he faces off with Joey, who is standing sentinel in front of Denny’s wife, Jackman looks so broken that it is easy to sympathize with this man whose judgment is clouded, but whose determination is no different than the rest of ours.

Daniel Craig is making his Broadway debut in “A Steady Rain,” and although his most prolific film role to date is that of James Bond, he has proven himself quite adept at heavy subject matter. His characters in movies such as “Munich” and “Defiance” actually have stronger echoes of Denny than they do Joey, the more level-headed of the two officers, although not without demons of his own. Underneath the gruff exterior that Craig puts up is a gentle soul. Joey cares just as deeply as Denny, but where his friend exhibits volatility, Joey acts logically. With an uncharacteristic mustache and his British accent completely dropped, Craig was more than a match for Jackman.

Scott Pask designed the minimalist costumes and set, the only furniture consisting of two chairs underneath the stage, which gave the stage a strong (and probably intentional) resemblance to a police interrogation room. When required, backdrops representing the city of Chicago would appear, and even as these images were meant to show some of the worst neighborhoods of the city, these designs were breathtakingly beautiful in their tangibility.

After the show ended, I practically bolted from my seat, considering jumping from the mezzanine, thought better of it, then patiently waited in line while the rest of the audience filed down the stairs. By the time I reached the stage door, I knew I had little hope of meeting either Hugh Jackman or Daniel Craig. In any case, both actors arrived to tumultuous applause, graciously signed some autographs, and Daniel Craig even posed for pictures with fans. “A Steady Rain” runs through Dec. 6 at the Schoenfeld Theatre in New York, and it is truly an experience that will leave you both shaken and stirred (I’m sorry. The opportunity presented itself).
Textual relations: A double edged sword
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My texting has become the bane of my Mother’s existence. I cannot tell you how many times she has screamed that all-too-familiar phrase to me as my phone notification rings: “Could you please stop doing that?” While I do not consider myself to be an avid texter - sending on average less than ten texts a day - I have only recently begun to see her point.

For one thing, I always have my phone on me and, if I forget it or leave it somewhere, I am faced with a panic I am sure only those in the desert experience when they realize they have forgotten their water supply. It is my lifeline. And my guess is, if you are reading this right now, chances are it is yours, as well.

If doubt remains, just sit outside of any Ursinus classroom at the end of each class period and you will see the flurry of students that exit and take out their phones, turn them on (if they were even turned off in the first place), and begin sending a text message. When I think of how many times I have texted while trying to maneuver my way back to my room, through parking lots, dodging cars and other pedestrians, tripping up and down stairs, it is downright comical.

Major phone companies have picked up on the comedy of this obsession and have profited from it. If you take a look at some of the most recent commercials out there today, you will see a wealth of kids, parents, and even grandparents now, with cell phones in hand. YouTube (quickly becoming yet another popular pastime of our generation) offers some examples. AT&T has a “Talking Thumbs” commercial, in which the thumbs of a texter spew the dialogue which the person types. Yet another AT&T commercial portrays Ozzy Osbourne - who may be justified in texting because no one can understand him otherwise - answering his therapist and ordering a coffee through text, despite his face-to-face interaction with these people.

Is interpersonal communication extinct? Is having a phone simply to make a call an idea which has been obliterated in favor of everything else?

CNN.com promises that, with special devices like the iPhone, you can have “the power of CNN in your hands,” allowing you to “Read. Watch. Save. Follow.” and “Report” all at the same time, thus placing communication in the hands of the consumer, not in the ability to converse, necessarily.

Senior media and communications major and self-proclaimed “big texter” Alyce Rasmussen describes the appeal of texting this way: “I use it for different reasons. I use it as a comfort thing, definitely… It’s a convenient and quick way to get in touch with someone.” To which she adds: “And it’s good if you want to avoid talking to someone. I’ve used it for that purpose… on more than one occasion.”

And so, judging from Rasmussen’s comment and the television commercials, like most other things, texting is somewhat of a double-edged sword. It is great in that it allows for quicker, less obstructive communication than does a phone call or actual meeting. It provides a nice opportunity to let someone know you are thinking of them. This is not where my criticisms lie.

What have I discovered to be problematic, however, is the fact that one’s desire to text often interferes with and disrupts dinner conversations, distracts a driver who is veering off into my lane, or competes with my ability to hold a conversation with a friend. If we keep going at the rate we are currently travelling, we may lose the ability altogether to interact on a person-to-person basis, free of technological means. We may appear incoherent and more like Oszy Osbourne than we ever would have wanted. We may, in fact, lose our status of articulate human beings to being nothing more than “Talking Thumbs.” Let AT&T keep making those commercials; and let us laugh while we can. In the near future, it may not prove to be so funny.

Wet vs. dry college campuses
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Within the past five to seven years, many colleges and universities have started to ban alcohol completely on their campuses, regardless of age. Some schools, like Rider University, have gone to this extreme because of recent deaths due to binge drinking and fraternity/sorority-related hazing. However, this begs the question: if the death had not been caused at an off-campus location, and the student still died, would the school go to such great lengths to ban alcohol?

It has long been my belief that implementing absolute sanctions only fosters contempt towards said authoritative organization, in this instance the school. Ridding a campus of alcohol completely, even if a student is of legal age, is not dealing with the problem of binge drinking but rather forcing students to engage in reckless behavior elsewhere.

I feel that those colleges should allow drinking if it is in a controlled environment, similar to how Ursinus permits registered parties and allows alcohol in upperclassmen dorms.

In a wet campus atmosphere, drinking is done under the somewhat watchful eye of the school. There are strict rules of where alcohol is and is not permitted. This is not to say that rules aren’t broken and drinking never occurs in the freshman dorms. However, if a student drank a little too much, the college would be able to respond fairly easily and the proper authorities would be contacted.

Furthermore, since parties are registered, campus safety is aware of where alcohol is going to be consumed on any given evening. These social events are meant to promote responsibility within the student body to control their drinking and the structured party environment reduces the risk of alcohol poisoning. Also, parties are required to shut down no later than 2 a.m. to discourage overconsumption of alcohol.

However, this is not always the case on dry campuses. Since drinking is not allowed, students either take the party elsewhere or consume alcohol in secret. In 2005, Benoit Denizet-Lewis published a popular article in the New York Times, “Ban of Brothers,” which highlighted Northwestern University and their recent “no tolerance policy” of alcohol and Greek life. A fraternity member explained to Denizet-Lewis what he felt Northwestern had done in implementing a ban on alcohol, “Before coming to the party, everyone is going to get loaded at their dorm, or off-campus, or in their car. They’re going to drink more, and they’ll drink faster, so that their buzz lasts them through the party. That’s really the disingenuous thing about this policy.”

The ban just moves the drinking somewhere else, and instead of students being in touch with campus police or (at Ursinus) campus safety, they are left up to their own devices.

What bothers me most about banning drinking for all students on dry campuses is that it heightens the risk of driving under the influence. At Ursinus there are not many choices for drinking off-campus if one wants to stay no more than ten minutes from school. By forcing 21-year-olds into bars they are more likely to drink and drive to get back to school. Now, on dry campuses, instead of being aware of where students are and what they are doing, the college has put them at a greater risk of making poor choices while intoxicated.

Note from the Editors: The Grizzly is getting a makeover! Want to see a certain column added? How about a photography spotlight? We want to know what you want to read about! E-mail grizzly@ursinus.edu with ideas that you may have for our new layout. If you want to write for us, feel free to jump in and come to our meetings on Monday nights in Olin 103 at 7 p.m. If you can’t make it, that’s okay, just shoot us an E-mail. Writing for a college newspaper always looks great on any resume! One last note, feel free to E-mail Zach Shamberger, our Opinions Editor, and wish him a happy 22nd birthday today! Happy Birthday Zach!
The game was stopped for 41 minutes in the beginning part McDaniel 48-13 Saturday afternoon at Scott Bair Stadium.

Football Moves into tie for first atop Centennial Conference tied with Dickinson, F&M and Hopkins, lost to F&M, and will were able to run on 60

DePhending Champs, Yankees to battle in “Amtrak Series”

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For the second straight year the Philadelphia Phillies have defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers to become the National League Champions. Despite the Phillies being around since 1883, this is the first time in team history they have ever played in the World Series back-to-back. However, the Phillies aren’t satisfied with just winning two National League pennants in successive years. As Manager Charlie Manuel said after clinching the World Series berth after winning Game 5 of the NLCS, “We’re gonna get it.” The last National League team to win the World Series two times in a row was the “Big Red Machine” Cincinnati Reds of 1975-1976. American League teams have had more success at winning the World Series in consecutive years as the New York Yankees accomplished the feat from 1998-2000 and the Toronto Blue Jays managed to get it done in 1992-1993 (The Blue Jays won the 1993 World Series in 6 games over the Philadelphia Phillies). The Yankees had five World Series appearances in the span of six seasons (1998-2003). The Manager of those Yankee teams was Joe Torre, the current manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers, who lost again to the Phillies in the NLCS for the second year in a row, by the same four games to one deficit.

Winning the World Series is tough already, but doing it the year after you have already won it is even harder, especially in today’s modern era of 30 teams, the Wild Card, and the grueling 162 game schedule. However, the Phillies seem to have a good shot as they have been playing hot baseball.

The Phillies have been hitting well lately, outscoring the Dodgers 35 to 16 in the five game NLCS. Power hitting first baseman Ryan Howard won the 2009 NLCS MVP award. Howard hit .333 with two home runs and eight RBIs. The starting pitching has been solid with great efforts by Cliff Lee and Pedro Martinez, both former Cy Young award winners. Cole Hamels and Joe Blanton have not been as good, but both pitchers have kept the Phillies in the game each time out and have gone deep enough into the games so that the bullpen has been well-rested. The Phillies bullpen was perceived to be a weakness before the series, and although they haven’t been perfect, guys like Chan Ho Park, Scott Eyre, Chad Durbin, and Brad Lidge and been great in the late innings for the Phils.

The Phillies are 7-2 combined in their two post-season series, which were against the Colorado Rockies and the Los Angeles Dodgers. The Phillies also had one of their patented come from behind wins in the NLCS as they were able to lose Game 4 to the Dodgers 3-4. With runners on first and second and two outs, Shortstop Jimmy Rollins hit a game-winning 2-RBI double in the bottom of the ninth inning to win 5-4. This gave the Phillies a 3-1 lead in the series, and prevented the Dodgers from tying things up and sending the series back to Los Angeles.

The New York Yankees have defeated the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, California four games to two in the American League Championship Series. The Yankees have now won their 40th American League Pennant. The 2009 World Series will be the second time the Yankees and Phillies have faced each other in the Fall Classic. The first time was in 1950 in which the Yankees, led by players such as Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, and Whitey Ford swept the “Whiz Kids” in four games. Although the young Phillies team could not beat the Yankees that year, three out of the four games were decided by only one run, including an extra inning game. Games 1 and 2 of the 2009 World Series will be played on Wednesday Oct. 28th and Thursday, Oct. 29th and will be hosted by the New York Yankees at the new Yankee Stadium in the Bronx. Games 3, 4, and 5 will be played at Citizens’ Bank Park in Philadelphia. Cliff Lee will pitch Game 1 for the Phillies, while the Yankees will counter with their own lefty ace, C.C. Sabathia.

Football Moves into tie for first atop Centennial Conference

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Ursinus Football moved into a first-place tie atop the Centennial Conference on Saturday, as the Bears defeated McDaniel 48-13 Saturday afternoon at Scott Bair Stadium. The game was stopped for 41 minutes in the beginning part of the fourth quarter due to lightning. Both teams played in a downpour for most of the game, before the rain finally stopped in the final part of the fourth quarter.

For Ursinus (4-3, 4-1 Centennial), the Bears are now tied with Dickinson, F&M and Johns Hopkins for the top spot with three weeks to play. Ursinus defeated Johns Hopkins, lost to F&M, and will play Dickinson in week 10. "This was a total team win for us," said Ursinus head coach Peter Gallagher afterwards. "The big thing for us was that we were able to run the ball in the second half and take some time off the clock."

The Bears did run for 276 yards on 60 attempts, with two runners netting 153 yards. Freshman running back Teddy Conrad had three touchdowns as he rushed the ball 29 times. Sophomore running back Travis Evans had 20 attempts for his 133 yards.

Sophomore wide receiver Al Desiderio had five catches, all in the first half, for 154 yards and a score. He also returned a kickoff 77 yards for a touchdown, giving him 252 all purpose yards on the day and earning him Centennial Conference Special Teams player of the week honors.

Senior quarterback Justin Decristoforo was 8-for-14 for 186 yards and a score in the win. The Bears finished with 27 first-downs and 482 yards of total offense on 75 plays.

Defensively, Ursinus had takeaways as sophomore linebacker Greg Martell had six stops. The defense had three interceptions as junior linebacker Joe Galie, freshman defensive back Chris Rountree, and sophomore defensive back Mike Rissmiller each had a pick. McDaniel was held to just 263 yards of total offense.

Ursinus scored on its opening drive as Conrad rushed for a 1-yard score with 9:17 left as the Bears took a 6-0 lead. The drive spanned 10-plays and 63 yards in 5:43. Following a punt by the Green Terror (4-3, 2-3 Centennial), Ursinus scored three plays later on a 49-yard scoring pass from Decristoforo to Desiderio with 5:43 left for a 14-0 lead.

McDaniel got on the board with no time left in the first quarter as Matt Cahill caught a four-yard pass from Thomas Massucci making it a 13-7 Ursinus lead. The Bears scored on the ensuing kickoff as Desiderio returned the kick 77-yards for the score and extending the lead for UC, 20-7.

After another McDaniel punt, the Bears upped their lead to 27-7 via a seven-play, 79-yard drive that ended with an 11-yard touchdown run from Conrad with 9:34 to go in the second quarter.

McDaniel’s next drive was stopped by a Galie interception at the Ursinus 44 with 8:44 left. On the first play following a 15-yard penalty, the Bears got the ball to midfield as junior quarterback Matt McHugh threw a double reverse option pass to junior tight end C.J. Vespel for 20 yards. The drive would eventually end on a 4-yard scoring run by Conrad, making it 34-7 with 4:12 left until half.

The Bears lone turnover of the day came in the third quarter as Conrad fumbled at the Bears’ 31 just 1:49 into the third. That turnover allowed the Green Terror to score as Massucci completed a 17-yard pass to Cahill for a 34-13 Ursinus lead with 12:29 left.

In the fourth quarter, Ursinus’ last score came when Evans rushed the ball from three-yards out for a 48-13 lead with 3:19 left.

Ursinus held the ball for over 36 minutes in the contest, and was 9 for 14 on third down conversions, while holding McDaniel to just seven third-down conversions on 16 attempts. "Performing on third down is key for our defense," said senior defensive captain Nate Mast, "The faster we get the ball back for our offense, the better chance we have to win. Three-and-outs are going to be crucial here in our run for the Conference title."

The Bears return home to host Moravian on Saturday at 1 p.m.

Game Day: Saturday, October 31

XC at Centennial Championships @ Gettysburg 11 a.m.
Field Hockey vs. Johns Hopkins Noon
Football vs. Moravian 1 p.m.
Volleyball vs. Johns Hopkins 1 p.m.
Women’s Soccer vs. Johns Hopkins 1 p.m.
Swimming vs Lebanon Valley 1 p.m.
Men’s Soccer @ Muhlenberg 4 p.m.