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Ursinus Theater presents “The Crucible”

By Katie Callahan
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“The Crucible” hit the stage to crowded audiences during all three showings this past weekend. Directed by Bev Redman, junior Chelse Schadt applauded the play as being a great success.

Schadt said, “I thought Jon Brink as Hale was very good. Elizabeth Proctor also stuck out to me in the last scene. Although she was only present for one scene the actress who played Tituba’s cell mate was very funny and an excellent actress. I was very impressed by her even though she only had a short part.”

The ability for the actors to cry and demonstrate such strong emotion also stuck out to Schadt as a key component to making the play enjoyable. However, there was a bit of disappointment behind the adaptation of the play. According to Schadt, she was hoping for a bit more change from Arthur Miller’s original version.

“I was hoping to see a little bit of change from the play everyone knows,” said Schadt, “because I knew what was going to happen.” Overall Schadt was pleased with the performance and was impressed with the acting ability of Ursinus College students. Check out UC’s next production, “The Elephant Man,” running from Mar. 24 to Mar. 27.

“The Crucible” is continued to News, page 3.

By Mike Delaney
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Joe Szabo, a well known editor, author, and political cartoonist, visited Ursinus last Tuesday, Feb. 23, for a presentation on his latest project, a book titled “The Image of America.” Szabo’s book is a collection of political and satirical cartoons about America, drawn by artists from around the world, which shows both the positive and negative feelings people harbor towards the United States.

Szabo, who was born in Hungary, told his audience, “I was always fascinated by images of America from a young age.” In the 1960s, he explained, much of Hungary was disappointed by America’s failure to aid Europe effectively following World War II, and Szabo grew up being told very little about America.

Szabo’s experience in America was far from negative, and it became his goal to catalogue the different viewpoints people held about the United States. Although Szabo spoke with farmers, educators, laborers, and Nobel Prize winners alike, as a cartoonist he sought different pieces of political art to feature in his book. Many of these samples he shared during his presentation on Tuesday night.

Comics ranged in subject from “Cartoonist” is continued to News, page 2.

By Liz Kilmer
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Students seeking to partake in the fifth annual Celebration of Student Achievement Day (CoSA) now have until Wednesday, Mar. 17 to apply. The application deadline was extended in order to provide as many possible students with the opportunity to showcase personal accomplishments, as well as to promote clubs and organizations.

“If it is work that students are proud of, we want to see it,” said Greg Weight, Chair of The CoSA Working Group. According to Weight, CoSA is a great way for students to gain presentation and public speaking experience, as well as to receive feedback. “The real benefit comes after you present, and are able to interact with people who might be able to add insight into your work” said Weight, adding “it’s also an opportunity to engage in the intellectual life of a college.”

Past presentations have consisted of artistic performances, readings, roundtable discussions, individual oral presentations, group poster presentations and others.

For senior Abbie Cichowski, whose presentation discussed her study abroad experience in Florence, Italy, learning “about others’ accomplishments that day” caused her to “realize that there should be more frequent events to celebrate student achievement on campus.”

This is especially wise considering the ways in which attendees are able to benefit through the event, apart from presenters. “CoSA” is continued to News, page 3.
By Lisa Jobe
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Saturday, Feb. 20
The NETHERLANDS - The Netherlands' coalition government collapsed on last Saturday, over a disagreement regarding the 1,950 Dutch troops currently serving in Afghanistan. The Netherlands' Labor, Christian Union, and Christian Democratic Alliance Parties formed a coalition government in 2007, led by Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende. Balkenende's office said Saturday that the Labor Party had withdrawn from the government following days of talks about Dutch involvement in Afghanistan. In 2007, NATO officials had asked the Netherlands to extend their involvement in Afghanistan another three years. Earlier this month, NATO once again asked the Netherlands to extend the mission. Balkenende and his party, the Christian Democratic Alliance, had hoped to keep the troops in Afghanistan past an August deadline, but the Labor Party opposed extending the mission a second time. (CNN.com)

Wednesday, Feb. 24
ITALY - An Italian court has convicted three Google employees of violation of privacy laws, over a video that shows an autistic Italian teen being bullied. The video in question was posted in 2006 on Google Video, shortly before the company acquired YouTube. Prosecutors argued that Google had broken Italian privacy laws by not seeking the consent of the parties in the video before allowing it to go online. Google's lawyers countered that the company removed the video as soon as it was brought to their attention, and cooperated by providing information about those who posted the video. Peter Fleischer, David Drummond and George De Los Reyes, the three employees, received suspended six-month sentences. Drummond, who is also Google's chief legal officer, expressed outrage at the decision. "If individuals like myself and my Google colleagues who had nothing to do with the incident... can be held criminally liable solely by virtue of our position at Google, every employee of any internet hosting service faces similar liability," he told reporters. (BBC Online)

Thursday, Feb. 25
HEBRON, West Bank - Handfuls of Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli forces at various points in Hebron, in one of many recent skirmishes over the inclusion of the Cave of the Patriarchs on a list of Jewish heritage sites. The Cave of the Patriarchs is worshipped as a holy site by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. It is believed to be the burial place of Abraham, his wife Sarah, and other biblical figures. Both sides of the current conflict called for Thursday to be a day of widespread protests and confrontations; however the confrontations that occurred were mostly minor incidents in which Palestinian boys burned tires and threw rocks at Israeli soldiers, who responded with tear gas. No major injuries have been reported. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Sunday the plans to include the tomb in the list of national heritage sites to be preserved, a move that enraged Muslims. Palestine's Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas fired back by claiming the move could start a "religious war." (NYT.com)

Friday, Feb. 26
LIBYA - Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi has called for a jihad, or holy war, against Switzerland, in a move the U.N. is condemning as "inadmissible." Gaddafi's remarks are in response to last November, in which 57 percent of "Swiss voters approved a constitutional ban on the building of minarets." An appeal has been issued on the ban. However, the diplomatic dispute between the two nations goes back to July 2008, when Gaddafi's son and wife were arrested in Geneva on charges of assault from hotel servants, though the charges have since been dropped. (BBC Online)

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"Cartoonist" is continued from front page.

democracy, hypocrisy, justice, capitalism, 9/11, obesity, and politics, but one thing they shared was a purposeful lack of captions or text, allowing viewers to come to their own opinion about the meaning of this art. "Outside the U.S., real cartoons are captionless," said Szabo, "and communicate visually, with no punch lines or speech bubbles. The point is to engage, and if people have different ideas that's no problem." While roughly half the cartoons Szabo presented showed America as a wasteful, chaotic nation, whose citizens have no regard for international law or human rights, others lauded America for leading the world in culture and technology, and for keeping peace. Both arguments seemed justified in their own right, and sparked much thought amongst Tuesday night's audience. Along with cartoons, Szabo shared a number of statements he collected from people he met abroad, most of whom are highly educated and consciously follow current events. Again, there seemed to be a 50/50 split between those who feel America is proving itself in a good or bad light, but Szabo felt it was important to share several critical though thought-provoking statements he collected in the Middle East when he asked the cause of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. One spokesman for Al Jazeera said, "America is a superficial power-culture that's forcing its own shallow way of life on profoundly intellectual countries." Meanwhile, a man in Egypt explained how at first he felt great jubilation, watching the "great empire" finally topple, but shortly thereafter the scope of the attack hit him, and he felt great sorrow at what he describes as "the stupidest action in history." Another interesting comment was made by a man from Spain, who wondered, with so much bad in the world, why should the U.S. be exempt from violence? Finally, author Dan Brown pointed out that the terrorists, who were educated in America, learned to fly in America, and hijacked American airlines, effectively "used America to destroy America." When asked during a question and answer segment what he feels America has done to deserve such criticism, Szabo retorted asking what America has done to not deserve harsh comments. Trying to be unbiased, Szabo agreed that America has done much to aid the world, but at the same time, news from America, both good and bad, often makes its way across the world and elicits various responses, including anything from empathy to jealousy. However, Szabo believes that by taking all viewpoints into consideration, people's perceptions are bound to change, which is the goal of his upcoming book. Joe Szabo welcomes everyone to leave comments and answer surveys on his website, www.joeszabo.us.
Interests in bioethics rise in medicine at UC

By Gianna Paone

Whether you support or oppose them, advances in medical drugs, treatments, and the technologies used to develop them remain hugely progressive in industrialized nations. Often receiving less attention from the general public, however, are the ethical issues related to such advances, or biomedical ethics. The Ursinus community—fostering not only students who aspire to become involved in medical fields, but also ones whose studies focus on ethics, morals, or political affairs—is increasingly establishing ways to embrace and promote awareness of biomedical ethics.

On Wednesday, Feb. 24, Ursinus Bioethics Society teamed up with Student Enterprise (SIFE) to host two representatives from major U.S. pharmaceutical companies—one from GlaxoSmithKline and one from AstraZeneca—to discuss ethical issues that pertain to the research, development, and sales of the medical products that they promote as well as some of the laws that govern them.

Collaboratively explaining the process by which a new drug or treatment comes about, the speakers described testing procedures, required approvals and regulations, and commercialization involved. Joseph Henry, the representative from GlaxoSmithKline, then asked audience members to consider possible problems that could arise throughout the process, some of which—he explained—include issues related to integrity in testing, different reactions by humans as biological samples, counterfeit products in the marketplace, and impermissible use of promotional materials or “gifts” related to medical products.

Henry also emphasized the company’s policy of maintaining the patient’s best interest as a foremost priority, describing their key values of integrity and respect for people—noting that 972 employees were disciplined for ethically-related violations in 2009—as well as patient focus and transparency, which refers to disclosure of practices such as educational and charitable grants, marketing policies, and clinical trial results.

In terms of patient focus, both speakers highlighted an interesting point regarding current issues in healthcare finances. “Call up AstraZeneca and explain that you can’t afford a certain drug,” said their representative, referring to the company’s patient assistance program. Likewise, GlaxoSmithKline, according to Henry, “has a whole department to handle that, which gave away $28 million in prescriptions last year to those who couldn’t afford them.”

When a student noted that medical and pharmaceutical affairs regarding underprivileged countries are an area in which the U.S. is accused of unethical neglect, Henry explained that GlaxoSmithKline offers a knowledge pool for neglected tropical diseases that provides an open laboratory in Tres Cantos, Spain, where scientists are invited to research the diseases as well as orphan drugs that might be used to treat them.

The presentation concluded with a summation of how and why the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) came to be responsible for regulating food and drug rules. From the viewpoint of a neuropharmacologist, the audience learned about some of the laws and amendments pertaining to how food and drugs are presented to buyers and how such regulations changed throughout the twentieth century. For example, he explained that the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, which essentially founded FDA’s eventual regulation of food, drugs, and cosmetics—according to an American Journal of Public Health article—required only that medicine labels said what was contained inside. Today’s more complex and descriptive labels, obviously, reflect the numerous changes in drug-regulatory laws over time.

While the talks were informative, they raised further ethical questions for some. Junior Veronica Perry describes her appreciation for the chance to look at passing new medicines from medical sales associates’ perspectives but was surprised to hear of their companies’ interests in lowering the amount of time required for drugs to be passed and allowed on the market. She explains, “I think that, if anything, the amount of time should be increased and that testing should be done more extensively, especially for non-life threatening diseases/illnesses,” referring to her disappointment in seeing recalls on certain drugs because of their horrific and/or fatal effects.

On campus, bioethics are also being examined in course and research material. For example, one of this semester’s CJF 300 courses, Genetics and Ethics, examines bioethics’ role in past and present attempts to tie genetics into politics, discussing matters such as the societal role of the genetic mutation linked to breast cancer and the biological basis behind racial and ethnic discriminatory practices.

Additionally, Perry explains her prospective summer fellowships research plans, which would investigate nurses’ roles in determining the best interests and standards of living for terminally ill children.

The campus community continues their efforts in raising biomedical ethics awareness, so keep an eye out for more events held by the Bioethics Society and other student organizations!

“CoSA” is continued from page 1.

Underclassmen in particular are able to get a taste of the opportunities that may be awaiting them—presentations could even play a role in the declaration of a major or minor. More than anything, though, attendees are able to learn something new while simultaneously supporting their peers’ achievement.

“As an English major, it was interesting to see the biology poster presentations [last year],” said sophomore Sarah Dougherty. “You rarely get a chance to see student work from other departments.”

According to Weight, this latter idea reflects the reason for CoSA’s initial development; prior to the event’s induction, student projects were typically unseen by the campus at large. Now, however, an entire day is devoted to reviewing work from all disciplines.

This year, that day is scheduled for Wednesday, Apr. 21. Students interested in applying can do so over spring break, seeing as the deadline has been extended from yesterday. The application may be completed online through the Ursinus website, and in a relatively short amount of time.

There are no special requirements; the application simply asks for a summary of the proposed presentation, and for the name of an overseeing faculty member.

Students are also encouraged to participate in the CoSA logo competition, to be conducted through an online voting process. The winning logo will be featured on T-shirts, programs, and advertisements for the event. Submissions must be in black and white, no more than 6” wide and 6” tall, and have “2010” as well as “CoSA” or “Celebration of Student Achievement” incorporated into the design.

Students interested in participating are asked to submit their entries in an electronic format. Look for e-mails with more information; deadline is also Mar. 17.

“The Crucible” is continued from page 1.

“American Heart Month

By Chelsea Nehila

To urge Americans to join the battle against heart disease, Congress, since 1963, has required the president to proclaim February “American Heart Month.” Each February thousands of volunteers visit neighborhoods, schools, and trendy grocery stores to raise funds for research and to educate the public about the symptoms, risk factors, and prevention techniques associated with heart disease.

As stated by the Cook County of Public Health, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. In fact, it was approximated that in 2008, over one million American lives were affected by heart disease.

On Tuesday, Feb. 23, the Ursinus Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (MAPS) held a discussion in the Unity House in honor of the month, which was “aimed to emphasize that heart disease is largely preventable, and the majority of things that lead to heart disease we are doing to our bodies now,” said sophomore Alaina Geary.

According to Geary, the night began with the recitation of some “fun facts” and then led into a “discussion about heart disease and some common risk factors.”
“Neshoba” highlights Civil Rights corruption in honor of Black History Month

By Joshua Walsh
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Last Thursday, Feb. 24, 2010, Emmy Award-winning writer-director Micki Dickoff presented her critically acclaimed documentary, “Neshoba”, in Musser Auditorium at 7 p.m. The showing was followed by a question-and-answer period where Dickoff, as well as Leroy Clower, president of the Philadelphia Mississippi chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—answered questions about the film’s production, their motives in making the film, and their experiences in Neshoba County.

The film “Neshoba” centers on the indictment of Edgar Ray Killen, an avid Ku Klux Klan supporter who is wanted in connection to the notorious murders of three young civil rights workers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—in Neshoba County in the summer of 1964. Killen is accused of being involved in the murders. The documentary offers a radical insight into the mind of an unabashed racist. He openly admits to being pro-segregation since, according to him, no one wants a mulatto child and many of the civil rights workers fighting for African American equality were just immoral people who wanted to indulge in the filthy debauchery of the black lifestyle. Similarly, the media present at his trial were all Jews and civil rights workers often doubled as ignorant communists. Killen is clearly an enlightened man who would never harm a fly.

Another glimpse into modern race relations exists in the form of the Neshoba County Fair. Dickoff takes cameras to the fair to gauge local reaction to incidents involving with the 1964 murders. When asked about what their feelings were on that day, they wouldn’t have been found buried in a dam.

The fair itself is populated “Neshoba” is continued to page 7.

Career Corner: Thinking of Relocating After Graduation?

By Career Services
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With new job growth slowing, relocation has become a real option for job seekers. Being open to relocation can lead to more job opportunities and can be a great skill-builder and valuable resume boost. The risks associated with relocation actually makes the year after college a great time to make the move because new graduates carry less obligation and have fewer commitments.

Do a little self-exploration and investigation. Consider the following factors regarding a move:

Climate choices
It sounds simple, but think twice before moving to Seattle if you like warm, dry weather or to landlocked Kansas if your greatest passion is surfing. Consider the weather and terrain that you prefer. Use http://www.findyourspot.com and keep an open mind.

Cultural choices
Keep in mind that despite the many hours that you devote to work, it is only one part of life. Consider which activities you enjoy and what keeps you afloat. Some people are better served by moving to a new city for a change while others prefer to stay close to home.

Cost of living
Undergrads often forget that although they may be able to live off their $28,000 entry-level salary, it barely covers rent in Manhattan. Make sure that you have enough to make ends meet by making a budget. Research cost of living in different areas by visiting chamber of commerce pages and sites like http://www.bestplaces.net and http://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator.

Opportunities in the area
Research “Best Cities for Young Professionals.” Research where your specific industry of interest is growing.

The chicken or the egg: The job or the move
Ideally, job seekers should line up a job before moving. But if that strategy does not work within a reasonable period of time, give yourself a better chance by moving to the area and giving it all you’ve got.

Adapted from Wetfeet.com.
Chat Roulette gambles with the issues of social networking

By Deb Yannessa
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So you’ve got an hour or seven to kill, a webcam, and a puppet. Welcome to your new favorite pastime. It’s called Chat Roulette, and it’s completely wonderful. However, this just makes it “Next” set of son. Users can be from anywhere on the edge of town, why not turned out to be a pervert of mixed vegetables and beans.

I met one young man named Michael from France who really seemed like an interesting guy. Since one of my friends speaks French, she took over the keyboard and had a grand time practicing her foreign language skills. Being one of our more successful endeavors, we spoke to Michael for approximately 15 minutes before he exposed himself.

After several forays ending similarly to the one just described, we decided to try to “out-weird” our fellow Chat Roulteers. Enter Paul Santos*, a bald maroonhead from Eshy. We set Paul up in various “costumes” and left him on the screen while a ghostwriter typed for him. We figured anyone only interested in seeing topless girls would immediately “next” a plastic dummy-headed. We were wrong. Paul has no hair, body, or personality, but he still got propositions upwards of 6 times (some may argue the personality bit).

Some articles deroy Chat Roulette because it is unsafe for children. One parent’s opinion was, “It’s like inviting pedophiles into your home.” To that I say, “Of course it is. If you don’t want your children corrupted by graphic sexual images, you probably shouldn’t give them full range of freedom on the internet anyway.” More importantly, it may irreversibly damage the way they see their favorite Muppets (i.e., the Kermit incident). And what of its addictive nature? From what we’ve seen, the site doesn’t function reliably enough to become addictive–you’re more likely to get bored waiting for the next image of an actual person (not a penis) to come up. In fact, one anonymous user said, “The best thing about Chat Roulette is that I now can accurately rate penis size.” Fair enough. Whatever your reason for taking part in this latest of internet crazes, enjoy it while it lasts. Something tells me the world (and law enforcement) are probably not quite ready to accept Chat Roulette as a “networking tool” so much as a connection method for online predators and creepy puppeteers.

Paul Santos declined to comment.

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The perfect remedy for the winter blues

By Cory Kram and Elizabeth Mahoney
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Instead of driving all the way to a restaurant or giant supermarket on the edge of town, why not walk down to the dollar store? It has everything that you need to make a delicious, hearty soup. We picked up some Kendale Farm chicken broth (with no MSG!), Columbia enriched egg noodles, 1 can of Libby’s mixed vegetables, and 1 can of Goya pinto beans. All that we had to do was cook the noodles in the broth and add the vegetables and beans. It’s that simple! It took less than ten minutes, and we had enough soup to serve seven people; there was even some leftover. For some added flavor, we seasoned the soup with lemon pepper—also purchased at the dollar store.

Elizabeth: I’m not a big soup eater, so this was the first soup that I’ve ever made. While I’m sure that it would have been better with fresh vegetables and beans, the soup was overall quite tasty. It was a little mushy, but that didn’t detract much from the overall appeal. There was a lot going on, making each bite an adventure. It was a little bland, but the lemon pepper really took this dish to a new level. It may not be Campbell’s, but with new ingredients coming to the dollar store all the time, this soup is filled with possibilities.

Cory: This soup is perfect for any winter night. I was in soup heaven! There seemed to be a lot going on in the soup: tons of mixed vegetables and beans, which is always a good thing. Who wants a boring soup? The chicken broth was a tad bit bland but this was fixed by adding some lemon pepper. I had no idea that lemon pepper existed until now, and I was pleased with its flavor. The lemon pepper adds a zing to the soup that is bound to wake up any sleepy head! Mmm good soup!!

For dessert, we had Puffy Crips cookies—imported from Argentina. As one guest noted, “They’re very flaky, like my aunt.” Another person was so overcome by their greatness that all he could say was, “I like these!!!” With an appearance much like that of baklava, these scrumptious cookies made the meal. The only downside was that the coating sticks to your teeth, a minor inconvenience that did not detract from the taste.

Overall, this meal was a success. Altogether, it cost only $6, and there was more than enough food for seven people. For those cold winter nights, nothing quite beats a bowl of hot soup. Bon Appétit!

We give this $5 out of $5.
Point/Counterpoint: “Avatar” should not win Best Picture

By Carly Siegler
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Humans are programmed to be blinded by flashiness. Why do girls love diamonds and vampires? Because they are flashy. Why do boys love fast cars and girls? Because they (we) are flashy! Why is the world enamored with “Avatar”? You guessed it: flashy. Let me tell you something about James Cameron’s flash-fest: It may have worked its magic on us mere mortals, but the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is an amalgamation of Hollywood demigods, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and while no god is infallible, I am confident that come Sunday, Mar. 7, the Academy will not make the mammoth mistake of awarding of Oscars is based on certain principles that other films better exemplify than “Avatar”. As a disclaimer: I do not have any special vendetta against “Avatar”. Or at least I am no more against this film winning the Oscar than “District Nine”, “The Blind Side”, and “Up”, but very few people are arguing that these popcorn flicks should take home cinema’s most coveted prize. There is, however, a contingent of the population (hi, Zach) who adamantly believes that “Avatar” is worthy of Best Picture. While I respect these opinions, I believe myself justified in saying that the awarding of Oscars is based on certain principles that other films better exemplify than “Avatar”.

Between “Avatar”s pre-creen momentum and its post-release hype, it is like the entire world wants a one-way ticket to Pandora, the planet of Cameron’s imagination, not to mention Na’vi citizenship, but to be honest, blue is just not my color. Personally, I would prefer a seat on the plane next to Ryan Bingham (George Clooney) of “Up in the Air”, one of six other pictures that I believe to be more deserving of an Oscar than “Avatar”. Some would argue that “Avatar” should win because it is relevant, with its glaring message of the environmental consequences of declaring war on a nation over its natural resources, but when has that not been relevant? On the other hand, “Up in the Air” comes at a time of economic recession, the worst since the Great Depression, and it deals with a man whose job it is to hand complete strangers their pink slips, directed by Jason Reitman even hired real people who had been laid off to make cameo appearances as themselves in the movie. Talk about poignant.

Then there is “The Hurt Locker”, Kathryn Bigelow’s indie-film extraordinary, and the first made about the Iraq War that has actually managed to surpass the War itself in popularity. This seems to be the favorite among critics going into Sunday’s presentation. The movie follows a bomb squad headed by Oscar-nominated Jeremy Renner, and if it were not for appearances by the likes of Ralph Fiennes and Guy Pearce, it could easily be taken for a documentary. Perhaps you are thinking that you see enough realistic violence on the news, and you would much rather watch an overlong epic battle scene such as that at the end of “Avatar”, but “The Hurt Locker” is not about violence in its physical manifestation, but rather the emotional toll that war takes on humans. The Academy has consistently favored films that attempt to tackle psychological warfare.

Take for example “Schindler’s List”, the 1994 winner for Best Picture, as well as my all-time favorite movie. It is the true story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) who, horrified by the crimes of the Nazis, managed to save over one thousand Polish Jews at great personal risk. I have never cried so much in a movie than when Neeson is overcome with emotion that he was not able to save more. Another film in the running this year, and my personal choice for Best Picture is Quentin Tarantino’s “Inglourious Basterds”, another WWII film, but one that could not differ more from Spielberg’s masterpiece if it tried. As much as we would all love to open our history books and read about the Jewish cinema proprietor who achieved the ultimate revenge on Hitler, Tarantino makes clear that his film is a mere fairy tale. In short, he takes a subject that has been explored countless times, and makes it new. The same cannot be said for “Avatar”. This movie has been done before. Again, it is just flashier than its predecessors “Dances with Wolves” and “Pocahontas”. The Academy loves awarding Oscars to films that showcase some great adversity is overcome and “Precious” certainly fits the bill. “A Serious Man” stands no chance of winning, as it is just too bizarre to have universal appeal, but it is original and witty. I can guarantee you that fifty years from now no one will be quoting “Avatar” (I’m sorry, but “I see you” is an example of telling rather than showing, a big literary and cinematic faux-pas), while the Coen brothers are two of the most quotable screenwriters working today. Who can forget Javier Bardem’s Anton Chigurh and his ominous coin toss in “No Country for Old Men”. “Call it”.

Possibly the biggest issue I have with “Avatar” winning Best Picture is that it is missing one of the fundamental elements that makes a movie a movie. Where are the actors? Those brief spurts (I’m sorry, but too little) of Jack Black charm, Gary Oldman and Emma Thompson. As an actress, I have learned how the external manifestation of a character can add to one’s performance, and I cannot see the Academy in good conscience awarding a movie in which the only facial expressions are created with CGI technology.

Now the problem is that, as I said earlier, gods are not infallible, and I fear that the sheer number of nominated films this year might work to “Avatar”s advantage. Remember that whole outcry over Octomom? The woman was berated for giving birth to octuplets, in addition to the six she already had at home. The public wanted to know how she was supposed to raise all those children at once. How was she going to give them individual attention and care? Well, this year the traditional five Best Picture nominees were bumped to ten, and as much as I would like to believe that every member of the Academy will take great care with each of the nominated films, there is the chance that they may be burnt out after five (good movies, like children, are often physically and emotionally draining), and rather than exert the effort watching some of the lower-budget, more deserving films, they will take the easy way out and let public opinion sway their vote in favor of “Avatar”. If the Academy Awards was a political competition, then the candidate with more style than substance or the big moneymaker or the one that spends nearly three hours preaching on environmental activism may come ahead in the end, leaving the one who is the most deserving all around out in the cold. This is not politics as usual, though. This is the Oscars.
Over the past two years, I’ve been a strong advocate for the importance of smaller films and have urged my readers to break away from the stereotypical Hollywood blockbuster. I have preached about the power of movies such as “There Will Be Blood” and “Milk,” challenging the students and faculty at this fine school to leave their rooms and drive to the nearest non-profit movie theatre to support the artistry of independent filmmakers and studios. And I have fervently defended that the film with the biggest number of independent filmmakers and box-office gross must always take fine school to leave their rooms to watch instead of staying home. I’ve been a strong advocate for the students and faculty at this fine school to leave their rooms and drive to the nearest non-profit movie theatre to support the artistry of independent filmmakers and studios.

I highly doubt it. And if you have, I can only guess that the film you saw may just be one of this year’s other nine Best Picture nominees. And, as much as you hate to admit it, I can guarantee that you liked that film for the same reason that will ultimately prevent a lot of Oscar voters from selecting James Cameron’s epic masterpiece as the Best Picture of the Year: it wasn’t “Avatar.”

Wait a minute. Academy voters are choosing other films as the Best Picture simply because they are not called “Avatar”? Why would they do that? Allow me to explain. Currently, there exists two separate, distinct mindsets in over in sunny Hollywood: (1) “Avatar” is the future of film, and (2) “Avatar” is films’ downfall. In one camp (the belief I currently hold), “Avatar” has single-handedly rejuvenated movie theatres across the nation and made a mockery of the so-called “economic recession.” How can we possibly be in any kind of economic depression when a movie makes more than $700 million in a matter of weeks and people can’t wait to get back to the theatre to see it again? In the other camp (hello, Carly), the belief holds that the massive budget and special effects used in “Avatar” will ultimately destroy the indie studios and typical character dramas. It will render useless human actors. And it will put any director who mocks the device “3-D” out on the street. For these folks, “Avatar” is the end of film as we know it. In the future, movies will simply be less-expensive video games that we watch instead of control. For these folks, “Avatar” is the end of film as we know it. In the future, movies will simply be less-expensive video games that we watch instead of control.

The film has taken on a life of its own. James Cameron built an entire world around one idea, and it’s unlike anything we’ve seen before. Think about this: there have been actual reports about people who watch “Avatar” and the fact that they may experience depression after leaving the theatre. These people are so taken with the planet of Pandora that nothing on our planet will ever suffice. This is real stuff, people! You’re telling me that this film has this kind of effect on people, and you’re willing to dismiss it as just another sci-fi popcorn flick? Please. “Avatar” is a masterpiece, and should be rewarded as such.

When Cameron’s “Titanic” won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1998, it was certainly not the best film of the year. Nor was it the work of genius that teenage girls and middle-age women believed it to be. But it needed to win. It needed to reassure movie fans that big-budget studio films had a chance at the Oscars. We already know that some genres (martial arts, comedy, etc.) will never be awarded golden statues at the Academy Awards. Voters won’t allow that to happen. And in the last few years, I’ve come to the realization that the big-budget action genre may be on that list as well. It’s not fair to keep rewarding films because they fit with all the requirements a seventy-year-old Oscar voter may have. This would be an historic victory for “Avatar,” and would certainly spur some kind of revolution in film over the next twenty years.

I don’t know what else there is to say. Carly will probably talk about the fact that “Avatar” is just a cool, flashy film that blinds the senses and brainwashes viewers into believing that it was actually pretty good. In response to that, I ask one simple question: isn’t that what a truly great film should do? Mesmerize us, captivate us, titillate our senses? “Avatar” did all that and more. It changed our perceptions about what a film can be, and what kind of effect it can have on our daily lives. Do you feel the same way about “The Hurt Locker”? I don’t think so. And I don’t think “Locker” is the best picture of the year. “Avatar” is. And we’ll see if I’m right this Sunday night.
Ursinus Lacrosse looks to outwork opposition

By Stefanie Moyer
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"We're going into the season is to get better every day and compete each day whether it's practice or a game. If we are successful in that it will be exciting to see where this team ends up." The bear's first Centennial Conference game is home on Wednesday, Mar. 17 against Swarthmore.

Just as the men's lacrosse team, the women's team is looking forward to making some noise in the Centennial Conference this coming season. The women's overall record last season was 5-12-0 and 4-5-0 in the conference.

"It was a bit of a letdown that they didn't make it to playoffs last year because we had projected that we were going to be making a turnaround for the program, and instead we fell very short. This could be because we went in to some games a little too over confident," explained junior defensive wing Hannah Kuranz.

Kuranz believes that the team's performance will be much better this season because the team has put a serious amount of hard work and focus into fall ball and the off season.

Junior goalie Emma Bacharach believes her team will fare well this season because "after last year we have learned that we cannot go into games just expecting to win. We now understand that in order to win we need to put in the work and make every pass, catch, and play count."

When asked what Bacharach's expectations for this season are she mentioned, "We expect to make it into the Centennial Conference playoffs, and with a little luck be semi finalists. The ultimate goal would be to win the Centennial Conference, and it could happen if we keep working as hard as we have been, but as of right now my goal is to make it to the playoffs. The bar may be raised as the season continues."

The women's lacrosse team's first home game is on Saturday, Mar. 6 against Drew University.

Keep an eye on the Ursinus Athletics website for both men's and women's lacrosse updates! Let's Go Bears!

U.S. takes thirty-seven medals in Vancouver

By Kate Haldeman
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As the 2010 Winter Olympics come to a close, it is important to look back and see where all the countries now stand and to take a look at some of the biggest headlines from the 17-day games held in Vancouver, Canada.

The final standings for the 2010 Winter Olympics are as follows: United States with 37 medals, Germany with 30, Canada with 26, and Norway with 23.

As for medals won, Canada leads with 14 gold and 7 silver, while Norway is proud to announce they have the oldest biathlete. Halvard Hanevold, 40 years old from Norway, won a gold medal on the 26th as a perfect end to his Olympic career. He has already announced that he's retiring at the end of this season.

As for curling, Canada is looking to its two assistant coaches Gary Mercadante (Dickinson '99) and David Page (Kenyon '09), for their help in making this season successful.

Last year the Bears overall record was 6-9-0, going 2-6-0 in conference play. Unfortunately, the Bears did not make it to the playoffs last season.

"If our team continues to do the right things consistently on and off the field and we dedicate ourselves to improving each day we will be just fine this year," said senior midfielder Eric Farris.

On This Day In Sports...

1941 - NHL goalie Samuel LoPresti stops record 80 of 83 Boston shots
1970 - Jacksonville is 1st college basketball team to avg 100+ pts per game
1995 - Replacement NY Yankees beat NY Mets 2-1

Indoor Track & Field Championship

By Katie Callahan
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This past weekend Ursinus jumpers, hurdlers, sprinters, throwers, and distance runners performed at Haverford for the Conference Championship meet.

Senior Travis Youngs finished first in the triple jump for the second time in three years. Although not his best jump this season, he did hit an NCAA national qualifying mark with a jump of 14'14m.

"Once you get to a championship meet, you aren't worried so much about performances as you are places," said Coach Bayless.

Top places didn't stop with Youngs.

Junior Lauren Lammers won silver in the 55 meter dash with 7.52s (school record of 7.50s) while sophomore Al Desiderio grabbed gold in both the 200m and 55m for the second time in a row.

Desiderio is one of only two athletes that have done that in conference history, the other being Brandon Evans '08 who won in '06, '07, and '08.

Overall the women's team placed eighth. Not necessarily at the top of the conference, but the outdoor season shows improvement is still to come.

This year marks the closest championship meet in conference history on the men's side.

Going into the last two events of the day, the men were in first place. Because of close encounters with teams like Dickinson, the bears dropped to fourth place by the end of the night.

The top four teams were within 20 points of one another. Second, third, and fourth place teams were only a point or two away from one another.

"I can't be upset about [our finish]," said Coach Callahan. "We had a great meet. If we perform like that in oudoors, with the distance runners scoring a little bit in the 10K, 5K, 3K steeple chase, and the javelin boys, we'll do great.'"

The team enjoys just a few days off to give their legs a little rest before training for the outdoor season begins. The first meet takes place on Mar. 20 when the team will travel to West Chester University.