



Dear Saddam: Mackey finds friendship through correspondence in his commentary. See page 6.  
Online: thejambar.com thejambar@gmail.com

The student voice of Youngstown State University

YSU

## Broken pipe floods Moser

By: Bill Rodgers  
NEWS EDITOR

Hundreds of gallons of backed up water pouring from the ceiling into a Moser computer lab like a miniature re-enactment of the Johnstown Flood could result in a rough end of the semester for YSU's engineering students.

Engineering Dean Cynthia Hirtzel met with engineering professors and students yesterday in Moser to discuss the flood and how the engineering school can keep classes on track for the rest of the semester.

The meeting came one week after a roof repairing accident caused backed up water in a roof drain to rush into the building. The water fell through the ceiling of an engineering computer lab on the second floor, Associate Facilities Director Vince Sacco said at the meeting. The deluge destroyed at least eight computers according to Randy Ziobert,

a YSU network administrator.

Ziobert said he expected more computers to fail due to water damage. Eight of the 28 computers in the lab have proven to be seriously damaged already.

"I'm not convinced these machines will be remain reliable. If we have just 10 to 15 running by the end of the semester I'll be tickled pink," Ziobert said.

The loss of the computers is a particularly perplexing problem, Ziobert and Hirtzel said. The damaged computers contained engineering software such as AutoCAD, an industrial design program. Hirtzel said the engineering department only has so many licenses from the software companies to run the programs. Ziobert said few other computers on campus have the memory or space to run the programs.

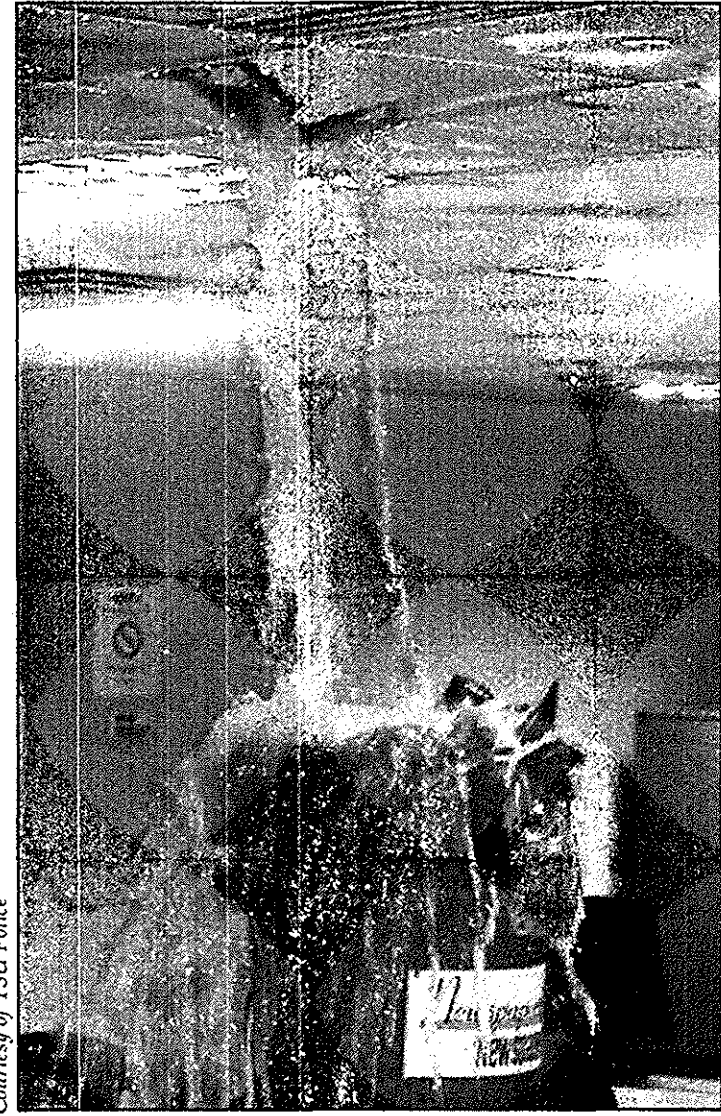
Hirtzel said the engineering school was left in a bind after the flood, which could



cause engineering students problems in completing their coursework.

"I'm concerned that these machines are down just as we're entering crunch time this semester," Hirtzel said.

please see **FLOOD**, Page 2



ABOVE: Computers in the College of Engineering were destroyed when the building flooded during Spring Break. RIGHT: Water poured into the computer lab from a roof drain during recent repairs.

### CONSTRUCTION

## School spirit enhanced with bridge renovations

By: Steve Lettau  
REPORTER

The Ohio Department of Transportation and Youngstown State University are collaborating on an estimated \$7.5 million project to renovate six bridges that cross U.S. Route 422.

The project started in December by ODOT to upgrade the current look of the bridges crossing 422. The bridges on Elm Street, Fifth Avenue, Covington Street, Belmont Avenue and Wick Avenue will be included. It is estimated the project will take about two years to complete. The plans were initially revealed in June of 2004.

Hunter Morrison, director of the YSU Center for Urban and Regional Studies, said the bridges lost their "curb appeal."

"[The bridges] will have new painting, steel, the

walls are being replaced with a rough unfinished stone in front of it that you find on a lot of the foundations in Youngstown," Morrison said. "It will look more like a parkway instead of a highway. It will make it pleasant and more historical looking as a campus gateway."

The bridges that run through the north side of Youngstown will show school spirit with the letter "Y" incorporated into fences and feature the school's red, black and white.

The project also plans to resurface the roads and install new lighting.

Mohamed Darwish, deputy director of ODOT's District 4 in Akron, said he is happy to be working on this project as it gives back to the school and community he was once apart of.

please see **BRIDGE** Page 5



A worker carries a load of wood across the Fifth Avenue bridge, which crosses Route 422, on Monday. The bridge is one of six under renovation in a \$7.5 million ODOT project.

## Student Government rejects \$50 fee proposal

By: Cheryl Thompson  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After delaying votes on a possible additional \$50 fee from students each semester, the Student Government Association has announced that the proposal will not appear on the ballot this spring.

At an emergency meeting Monday afternoon, SGA leaders unanimously tabled a plan that would have had each YSU student paying an extra \$50 for a proposed SGA-controlled fund.

The reversal comes after students pointed out problems with the plan with a Web site, [http://swcas.tri-](http://swcas.tri)

pod.com, calling SGA "useless," and attacking the idea as "a pathetic way to raise voter turnout."

The fund would have generated \$1.2 million a year and was the brainchild of Josh Hiznay, SGA president for financial affairs. He proposed the idea as an option for the ballot so students could influence how administration spends money.

After initially supporting the issue, Hiznay, along with several other representatives, withdrew his support.

"We didn't do as much homework as we should have," Hiznay said during

Monday's meeting.

Representatives said concerns about controlling and spending the money coupled with fears about asking students to spend any more money played into the decision not to place the issue on the ballot.

Other representatives said they feared poor voter turnout at SGA elections would mean few students would be dictating for many.

Parliamentarian Chad Miller withdrew his support for the resolution, saying it's a flawed idea to give future SGA administrations control of such a large fund. Although Miller called the

"We didn't do as much homework as we should have."

Josh Hiznay, SGA President for Financial Affairs

proposal an innovative way to raise funds, he said being accountable for the money scared him.

SGA will tackle the issue again in the fall, after more research is conducted concerning what improvements students would like to see on campus.

"If we could go to the

please see **SGA**, Page 5

### SGA

### YSU

## Reduced emissions sought for rifle range

By: Leonard Glenn Crist  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Mike Bowman ordered the first nine shooters in his marksmanship course to their booths.

Bowman, a part-time instructor and full-time campus recreation staff member at Youngstown State University, called for his students to put on hearing protection. A moment later, he shouted, "Load your weapons."

"Commence firing." The nine shooters aimed their .22-caliber rifles toward the targets at the end of the 50-foot Beeghly Center Rifle Range and began firing until 50 rounds were exhausted.

Every .22-caliber bullet fired releases a small amount of lead into the air. Bowman said a ventilation system inside the room sucks the lead-filled air down-wind and up toward a recently replaced exhaust fan on Beeghly Center's roof. Unlike the old exhaust system, which had a furnace-like pleated filter, the new fan is filter-less and blasts lead-laden air particles high into the atmosphere.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency reported toxic blood lead levels can result in irritability, abdominal pain, seizures and developmental defects in children



Mike Bowman demonstrates a shooting position he teaches in his marksmanship class, taught in the Beeghly Center Rifle Range, which has been the focus of a lead investigation.

and headache, nausea, constipation, fatigue and hearing loss in adults.

YSU's staff union filed a grievance in October claiming the new fan might

release enough lead to be harmful to employees. Administrators responded with testing that showed

please see **GUNS**, Page 4

Weather >> cloudy

33 | 25

wednesday: snow, 40/28  
thursday: cloudy, 40/27

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### Mayor Williams keynote speaker

Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams is the keynote speaker for The 2006 Celebration of Diversity and Recognition Banquet, which will be held 5 p.m. Wednesday, March in the Chestnut Room. Call (330) 941-2086 for

more information.

### Panel discussion on women set

A panel discussion on "The Changing Role of Women in the University" will be held Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the McKay Auditorium of Beeghly

Hall. The discussion is part of YSU's recognition of Women's History Month.

### Student awards banquet deadline

The deadline to submit all annual award nominations to the Student Activities Office is 5 p.m.

Friday. The Annual Student Awards Banquet will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 24 in Killcawley Center where all individual and organization award winners will be recognized. For questions contact the Student Activities Office.

### News Briefs

the jambar poll question  
Last Question  
Do you have plans for spring break?  
62% YES  
38% NO  
Today's Question  
Have you ever had a pen pal?  
vote online  
www.thejambar.com

**FLOOD**, continued from page 1

Ziobert said it was unlikely new computers could arrive before the end of the semester, so Hirtzel suggested ways for the school to cope with the technology loss while asking for suggestions from the engineering professors attending the meeting. She said she asked Robert Hirtzel, YSU's Provost, for additional funds to keep the computer lab open for longer hours to accommodate students. It was suggested that students could use computers in other engineering classrooms when class wasn't in session.

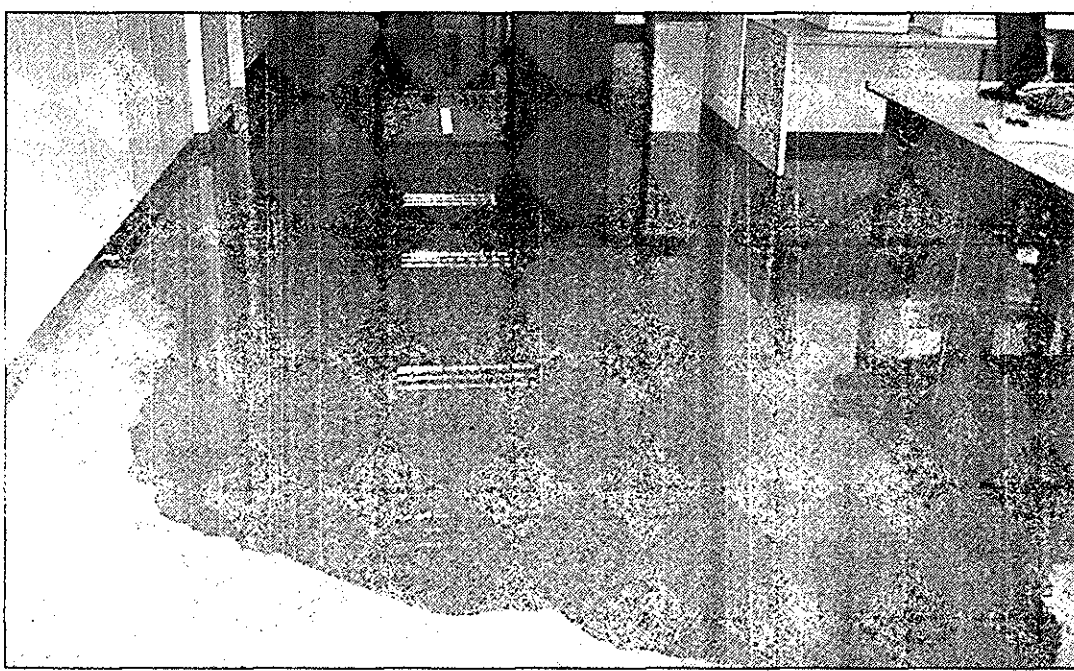
If nothing else, Hirtzel suggested professors could "lighten up" on assigned coursework.

"We don't want to hold up students who are trying to graduate," Hirtzel said.

The water worked its way through the floors of the building, soaking labs in the first floor and the basement of Moser. Ziobert said some labs on the first floor had other computer hardware damaged. He also said that the building's computer network, which is wired under the floor of the labs, has been falling occasionally due to the flooding.

John Hyden, YSU's Director of Facilities, said repairing the flooding damage could cost the university \$50,000 to \$100,000, depending on how many computers were damaged.

The total sum of the damages is still unknown and Hirtzel said the damage



Courtesy of YSU Police

Water covered the floor in Moser Hall last week after an accident caused backed up water to rush into the building. Damage is estimated at between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

could take up to four weeks to assess. She said YSU was working with its insurance company to help repair efforts. It remains to be seen if the roofing company's insurance would be responsible for paying for any of the damages.

Cleaning equipment caused flooding

Sacco said the roofing company was removing tar buildup from the drains on Moser's roof last Monday. He said that the tar on the roof heats up during the summer and melts, clogging the drains and causing rainwater to build up in the drainage pipes. The roofers were cleaning the tar with a pressurized cleaning system. The equipment caused the pipe to break, releasing backed-up water into the

building. Sacco said maintenance crews and students in the building reacted quickly by carrying computers out of the flooding lab. Power to the building was shut off during the cleanup to prevent electrical hazards.

YSU's facilities department called in Marrocco Services Inc. to dry the floors and behind the walls. Hyden said this was to prevent mold from growing in dark, damp areas in the building. The dehumidifying cost the university \$15,000, Hyden said.

Sacco said that the building was operational with the exception of the damaged computers and cleanup was completed in just a few days.

"If you would have

walked in there on Thursday, you wouldn't have known a thing happened," Sacco said.

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# Editorial & Opinion

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

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## OUR SIDE Survey shows many YSU students apathetic

Chances are if you're reading this editorial, you're not part of the problem.

Your classmates, however, probably are. Your classmates who are woefully ignorant of the simplest of campus issues probably are. Your classmates who only have the foggiest idea that labor relations are strained at YSU probably are. Your classmates who kinda maybe heard something once about tuition going up next year probably are. Your classmates who can't even name the president of the university they pay money to attend probably are.

Last week, an informal survey of 71 randomly selected students affirmed what many of us knew all along: most YSU students are apathetic about campus issues to the point where they simply don't care whether their continued inactivity affects their quality of education or their wallets.

Of the 71 students polled, 51 couldn't name the president of the university, the man who is pushing for a 6 percent tuition hike next school year.

Of the 71, a dismal seven could identify John Habat, the YSU Vice President who, though he may or may not be at fault, was a force in the failed labor negotiations last summer. The labor negotiations and strike which nearly delayed classes last semester and have been targeted by university administrators as a reason for - yep - increasing tuition another 6 percent next year.

These are the same students who are more likely than not blind to the workings of student government. The group who up until recently wanted to tack an additional \$50 fee to students' bills next year.

Sixty-six of the 71 had an idea tuition might be going up next semester. This, too, is a number that anyone who cares about their education at YSU should be shaking their heads over. What sort of apathetic world are we living in where even a handful of students are unaware to the point that they passively pony up an extra \$380 because they didn't open their eyes to what was going on.

This passiveness is a problem for both the ignorant and the informed. The ancient Greeks used the word "idiotes" (idiot) to refer to anyone who didn't participate in government. To participate you must be informed. To be informed, you have to pay attention and occasionally read a newspaper.

By not reading, by not caring, these students are willingly giving up their right to have a say in the way YSU spends their tuition and Ohio tax dollars. To quote an old G.I. Joe adage: "Knowing is half the battle. You have to actually know something about your government before you can stand up for yourself."

But for the apathetic, standing up and having a say is entirely out of the question. These people would rather work an extra 74 hours in a typical college minimum-wage job next year to pay for a tuition hike rather than take the one hour required to read a newspaper article about tuition and write a letter to the university president, their SGA representative or their congressman.

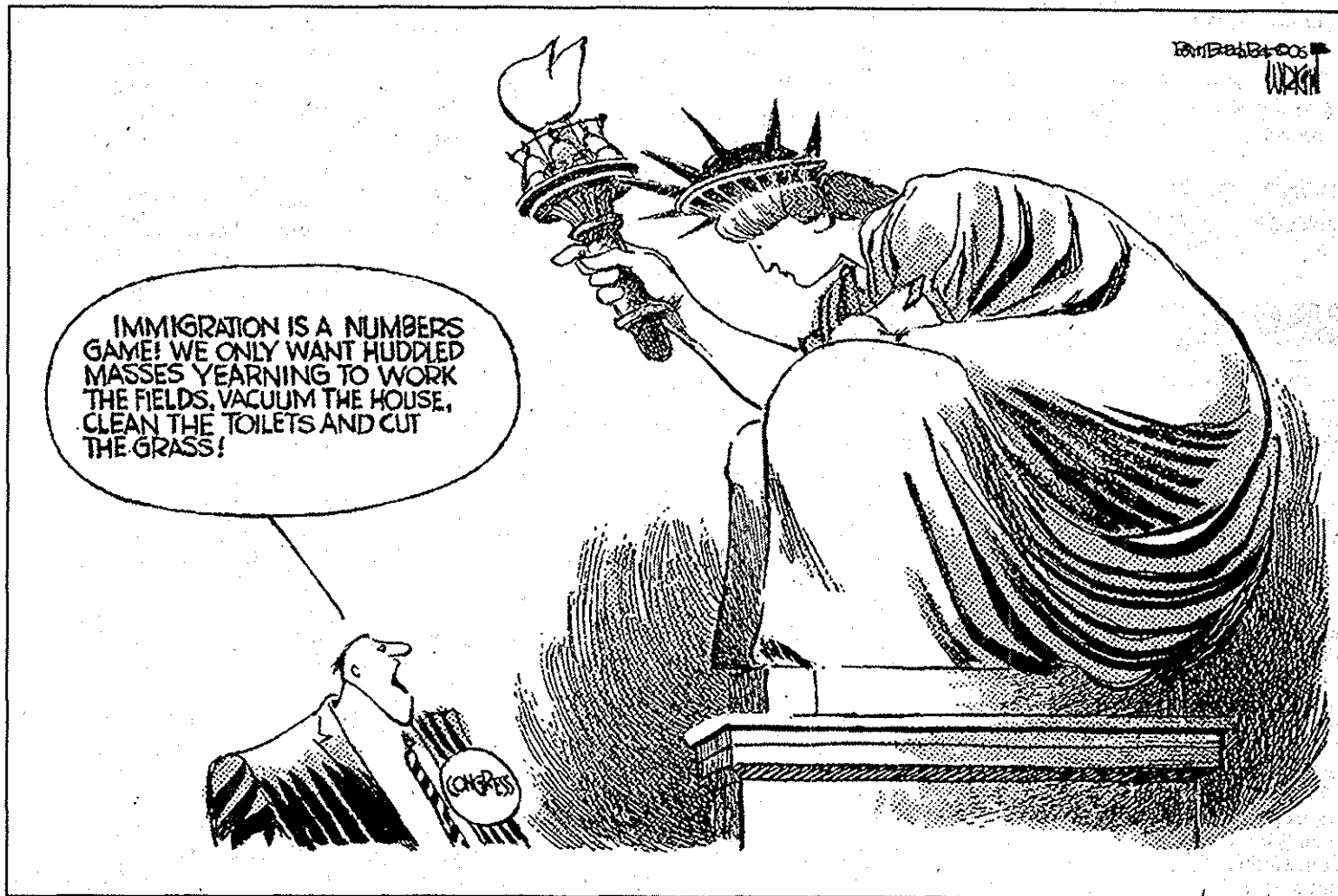
How does this affect you, the informed? Well, if you were one of the students or SGA members or labor officials lobbying for more federal funding for higher education, lower tuition increases, or improvements to YSU's labor relations, you're missing out on a lot of people who could support you. You can't get the changes you want because your peers are too indifferent or lazy to bother.

What to do? Well, you can't force anyone to care. There's no anti-apathy machine to make students care about how much money they pay out to YSU.

But to the informed: stay informed. Read The Jambar, read The Vindicator, talk to YSU officials and spread news. Keep your finger on the pulse of what's going on and spare a condescending smirk for the "idiotes" who are too sedate to care how other people spend their money.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

The Jambar editorials reflect the opinions of The Jambar and its Editorial Board members. Commentaries and columns reflect only the views of the individual who wrote the piece. Those wishing to schedule meetings with the Editorial Board should call the editor in chief.



### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Getting heaven high on spring break

It was an Epiphany-Eureka moment during Spring Break when I decided not to be so hard on Bush, yet try more to emulate him — and just possibly, I'd have a shot at becoming president myself — of my midnight shift at Burger King. So, I sniffed some beer and drank more coke.

Folks! It became all so clear! Remember how Jesus

showed up in the market place when he was 12, then for 20 years not seen or heard from. Folks! Bush showed up for pilot duty in Texas and for 20 months was a complete mystery. Coincidence? I think not.

Look, Jesus took a fish and a piece of bread and fed five thousand. Folks! Bush took over 5,000 jobs—in one month alone from Ohio—and fed five million in India with the exported employment. Eerie, yes! But coincidence? C'mon!

Getting back from Break, I couldn't wait to tell my pet, Mr. Republican Maggot about my rapture and enlightenment. But he was in a bad mood because he didn't get to go—and too—that I had taken out the garbage before leaving; so convincing him of anything was futile—in spite of the fact that he sees no harm in Church & State being combined. He just yelled: "You twit liberal commie bastard! What about the holes in his hands, if he really is the Second

Coming?"

Gleefully I retorted: Maggot, Bush doesn't even know his %@# from a hole in the ground! C'mon! This is not about coincidence!

Mag thought about it for a second, turning fire engine red then dejectedly slunk off into the Tequila bottle I had brought back with me; saying he'd sleep on it, then call Pat Robertson in the morning to let him know that Ralph Reed ain't the one.

Ted Williams

### COMMENTARY

## through the looking glass

By: Mike Pingree  
KRT CAMPUS

#### YOU THE GUY WHO CALLED A CAB? HOP IN

Upon being pulled over in the town of Wallkill, N.Y., a parole violator decided to make a run for it. He drove a few miles, then ran into the woods, forcing police to spend hours searching for him. Then the cops noticed a taxi cab out in the middle of nowhere. The driver told them that a man called on a cell phone asking to be picked up at a nearby bridge. A policeman got into the cab and went to the destination where the suspect was waiting.

HEY BIG BOY, WANNA

#### DANCE?

A man's attempt at stealing food from a Spring Hill, Fla., supermarket was foiled when the manager noticed him trying to leave the premises with a 12-inch pepperoni in his shorts.

#### I SAW IT IN MY HOUSE AND ASSUMED IT WAS MINE, SORRY

While a young burglar was being sentenced in Oroville, Calif., his mother showed up in court holding a distinctive pink Chanel purse that was among the items that the thief had stolen. The woman was informed that possession of stolen property is a crime. She immediately returned the purse to its owner.

POOF! HEY, WHERE

#### DID MACTAVISH GO?

Officials at a maximum security prison in Scotland refused an inmate permission to purchase books on magic. They felt that the books would provide him tips on how to escape. A spokesman said, "The titles requested were not thought appropriate."

#### IS THAT YOU, DOC? TALK SO I CAN FIND YOU

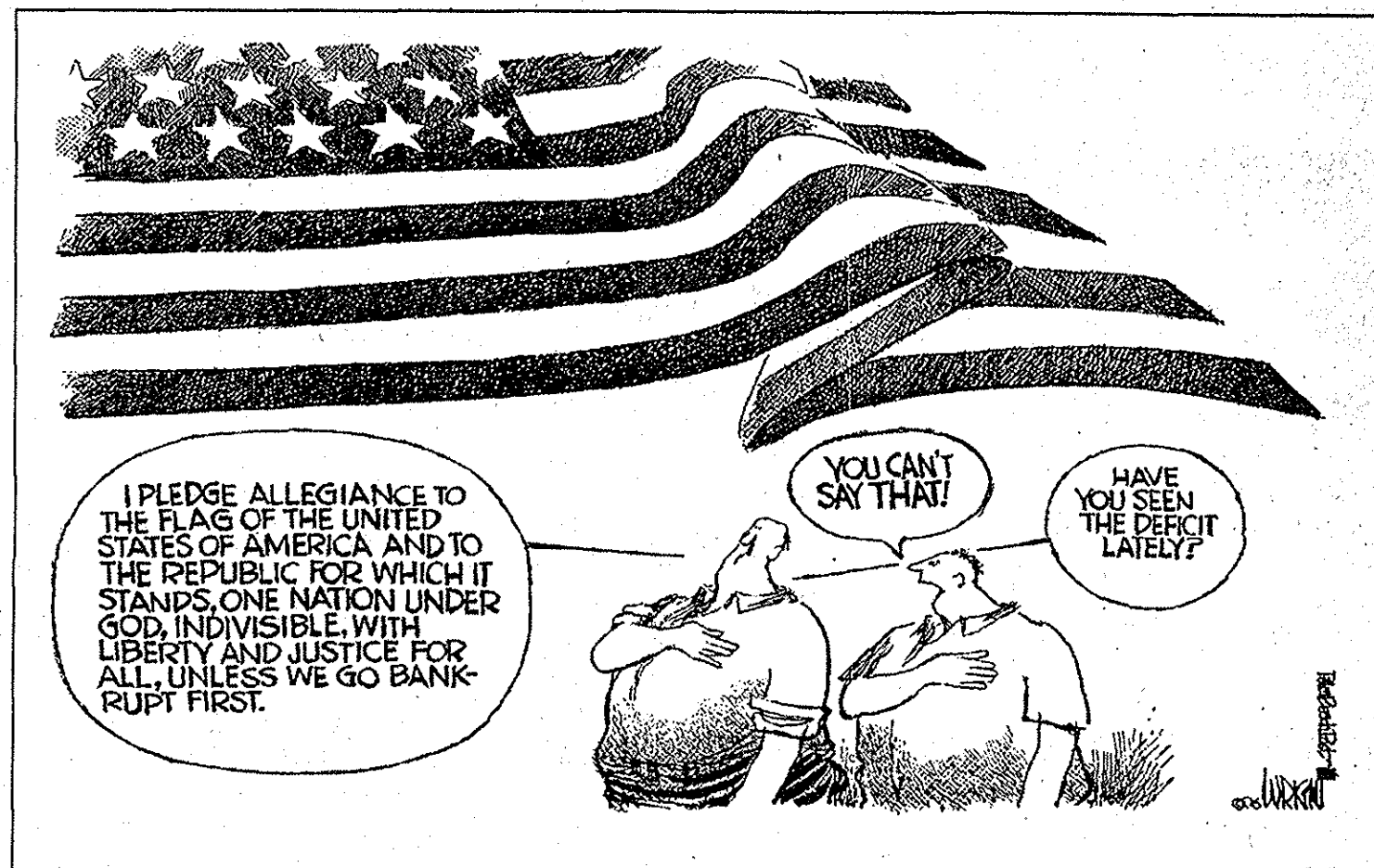
A motorist in San Rafael, Calif., ran into a bicyclist who had flashed an obscene gesture, and the bike rider later sued claiming he was blinded when his head hit the pavement. But charges against the driver were dropped when a doctor found that the victim can, in fact, see very well.

#### UH, CONCENTRATE, YEAH, THAT'S IT, WE CAN'T CONCENTRATE

Officials at a university in Bosnia have installed surveillance cameras in all of the classrooms to combat widespread cheating. Students are objecting vociferously, claiming that they can't concentrate on their exams because they are being filmed.

#### HOW DID YOU CATCH ME?

A newspaperwoman in Birmingham, England, wrote a column detailing how she killed her elderly great aunt, who had been suffering from cancer, by giving her an overdose of morphine 30 years ago. The police arrested her on suspicion of murder.



# 5 things you ought to know about recycling

By: Beth Botts  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
(KRT)

For many people, it's a habit to sort cans, glass, paper and plastic into recycling bins. But to really minimize the resources we use and the waste we leave for future generations, we have a few ways to go. Here are a few things you might not know about recycling.

**1. DON'T COUNT ON IT:** Just because something is labeled "recyclable" doesn't

mean it will be recycled. And "recycled" doesn't necessarily mean "refilled" or "made back into another one." Plastic milk bottles, for instance, are often made into lumber substitutes rather than new bottles. But recycling is now an international commodities industry driven by market demand and labor costs, according to Mike Mitchell, executive director of the Illinois Recycling Association, a trade group. Often programs don't take materials, such as some plastics, that aren't available in large enough numbers, to

make reusing them profitable. And many recyclables still are tossed in the trash because of inadequate recycling programs.

**2. THE PLASTIC CODE:** That little triangle of arrows surrounding a number says what kind of plastic a thing is made of, such as code 1, polyethylene terephthalate, or PET, used for soda and water bottles. "The best market for recyclables is the 1s and 2s," said Gary Mielke, recycling coordinator in Kane County, Ill. "The demand is insatiable at this point." But "plastics are problematic" for many reasons, Mielke says. Wide-

mouthed containers, such as margarine, cottage cheese and yogurt tubs, are more difficult to recycle and less likely to be accepted. Check with your local recycling officials to see what materials they accept, and don't put other things in the bin.

**3. CANS OR BOTTLES?** A star of the recycling bin is the aluminum can, because it is made into another can with a huge savings of electricity and other costs over mining new metal. "It's a circle," says Betsy Vandercook, president of the Chicago Recycling Coalition. "A can becomes a can becomes a can becomes a

can." Although there is strong demand for recycling PET, a soda bottle can only be recycled once — into, for instance, carpet — but the carpet cannot be recycled.

**4. THOSE PESKY LABELS:** Rinse out containers, just so you don't have funky substances sitting around your house for days. But don't bother removing the labels. When glass, plastic and metal are melted down, the temperatures are so high that the labels "just go away," Vandercook says. Do remove caps, though.

**5. GARDEN GARBAGE:** When you buy a plant, what does it come in? A plastic pot. You can reuse pots yourself, of course, and sometimes garden clubs or conservatories need them for plant sales, but most recycling programs don't accept them. Still, there are ways to recycle in the garden. Instead of buying plastic hanging baskets, use wire baskets with moss or coir liners. When a liner frays in a few years, replace it and tear up the old one for the compost pile, where it will break down. And remember: Composting is pure recycling.

## Classified

### Help Wanted

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### Miscellaneous

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### GUNS, continued from page 1

some lead contamination on the roof, attributable to the old fan.

The independent assessment firm that conducted the testing recommended a complete clean-up of the roof, and more testing of airborne lead levels coming out of the exhaust fan when the rifle range is in full use.

**Lead-free bullets**  
Sandra Denman, YSU's Director of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety, has said the university will comply with the recommendations, but now she is going a step further. Her department has decided to pay the difference between traditional ammunition and frangible, lead-free bullets.

"One of the things we've been thinking about is what we can do to reduce the amount of lead at the rifle range, and therefore reduce the problem," Denman said. "What we're going to do is support the use of lead-free bullets by the police academy and the YSU police by paying the difference between the cost of the regular bullet and the cost of the lead-free bullet. Then we'll be using that money to reduce lead instead of paying for clean-up. And that will be better. There will be less [lead] exhausted. It will

improve the whole situation." YSU police, who carry .40-caliber Glock pistols, already use frangible bullets for training. Students in the police academy, however, do not.

Frangible bullets are not available for the .22-caliber rifles used by students in the marksmanship course.

YSU Police Lt. Mark Adovasio said frangible bullets cost about twice as much as regular bullets.

Bowman's class  
From just outside the rifle range, the gunshots are startlingly loud. From one floor above, the shots sound more like a loud ping. From outside Beeghly Center, near Fedor Hall and the Wee Care Day Care playground, they sound more like a muffled crack.

Despite safety concerns raised by YSU's staff union, the students taking Bowman's class don't seem alarmed.

"We're not worried about lead," senior Courtney Cline said before class one morning earlier this month. "We're all very safe in here."

All of Bowman's students wash their hands after firing. Bowman himself had his blood tested for lead several years ago and said he came up with better than average results. Bowman said he stressed safety in the course,

and students are graded more for their safety skills than for their marksmanship talent.

Because some students in marksmanship have never used a firearm before, Bowman treats the class like a beginner's course. Bowman said he tries to make sure students improve, "but basically, they're just there to have fun."

Bowman's own experience with firearms stretches back to youth hunting trips with his family. He served in the United States Air Force for 11 years and has taught the marksmanship course at YSU since the early 1990s.

Senior Matt Celio had never handled a gun before taking the course and said he was amazed at how much discipline it takes to fire a rifle.

"The breath control and muscle control, it takes a great amount of concentration; not to mention the responsibility you take on when firing a weapon. I am constantly aware of its power when I'm in the range," Celio said.

Because of the range's ventilation system, Celio said he wasn't concerned about lead exposure. He said he hoped

lead levels were checked for the safety of the children who play on the nearby Wee Care Daycare playground, though he didn't believe they were in any danger.

Bowman said he has allowed other university officials to handle the lead issues.

"I teach the class. We're here to have fun. The building, the lead, that stuff is all part of [the environmental and occupational health and safety department's] job. I have no experience, no expertise. Not my thing," Bowman said.

Denman said Monday that the Ohio firm Onyx Environmental Services will perform the Beeghly Center roof lead abatement on March 31. A company has not yet been found to test levels of airborne lead. Denman said April 28 would be ideal for the testing because a full day of range use is scheduled.

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**BRIDGE**, continued from page 1

"It's a neat project. You owe your alma mater. It's pride. That's the only way I can help give to the community," Darwish said.

Darwish received bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from YSU. Morrison called Darwish "one of the best."

Freshman Greg Mook, who lives in the Cafaro House and traverses the expressway often, said he sees the need to work on the bridges but the construction negatively impacted his driving.

"The bridge construction is pretty annoying because they tend to close the roads. It gets annoying to travel to and from the dorms," Mook said. "But it's kind of cool that they're fixing the bridge to the dorms across 422 because it's pretty dirty. A lot of people just throw trash there."

ODOT and the East Gate Regional Council of Governments are funding the project.

Call Steve Lettau at (330) 941-1913.

**SGA**, continued from page 1

students and guarantee specific improvement, then more people might be more supportive of the issue," Hiznay said.

During the meeting, Lori Griffin, Financial Appropriations Committee Chair and Williamson College of Business representative, said most students who vote in campus elections are University Scholars who receive full-ride scholarships and wouldn't have to pay the fee.

The Web site, Students Who Care About Students is intended to represent students who are not part of the University Scholars program.

Using the tagline "Promoting stu-

dents, who aren't scholars, but still matter to YSU," the Web site lists several students who have contributed, including Arts and Science Representative Joe Iesue.

Part of the mission statement included on the Web site reads, "Those proposing this tax do not have to pay this tax because they are scholars and have earned the right to have their tuition and fees paid for by the university."

The Web site said scholars wouldn't understand other students who struggle to pay tuition and pointed out the hypocrisy in asking students to pay extra money.

"SGA asking for more money for SGAs while still complaining about rising tuition makes SGA lose credibility," one portion of the site reads.

For more than 30 minutes after voting to scrap the plan to ask students for the extra \$50, SGA officials continued bickering about the Web site.

Most of the disagreement was between Hiznay and Iesue, with each accusing the other of engaging in personal attacks.

Call Cheryl Thompson at (330) 941-1913.

**CHAPPELLE**, continued from page 6

Sunshine of the Spotless Mind") that features the comedian's favorite artists — Kweli, Mos Def, Badu, Big Daddy Kane, the Roots, Jill Scott, Common, Kanye West, John Legend, Dead Prez and, in their first reunion in seven years, the Fugees.

But it's the nonconcert stuff that is the most engaging: Chappelle cracking jokes off-camera with a drums-playing Mos Def, picking out a surprisingly serviceable rendition of "Round Midnight" on the piano, trading comedic riffs with his set-up man, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson of the Roots.

Cameras follow Chappelle as he wanders around his hometown of Yellow Springs, Ohio ("It's such a small community," he says. "It's where my father is buried. The people here watch my back...I'm like Krusty the Clown in my town"). He distributes "golden tickets" to random residents — the woman who works at the convenience store where he buys his cigarettes, a pair of teenage golfers, the entire Central State University marching band — for his concert, which takes place in a residential neighborhood in Brooklyn. Chappelle used a nearby Brooklyn daycare center as his headquarters, the same center that slain rapper Christopher Wallace, the Notorious B.I.G., attended.

Shot over five days in September 2004, "Block Party" is equal parts concert movie and social commentary as seen through Chappelle's comic lens.

"We were hoping to define an era and a community without being too lecturing — to show people having a good time," says director Gondry. The Academy Award winner is now part of Chappelle's touring entourage. "On camera and off, Dave is charming. I thought it would be good to follow him around with a camera because he generates so much warmth."

During filming, Gondry says, he noticed his star was under pressure. Seven months later, in April 2005, Chappelle went AWOL from his own television show with no explanation — not even to his closest handlers.

There were rumors that he was on drugs, in therapy or downright crazy. Turns out he spent two weeks in Durban, South Africa, on what he described to Time magazine as a "spiritual retreat." He spent the rest of the year at the Yellow Springs farm where he lives with his wife and two children.

He later said creative differences caused him to flee, with the tipping point coming in November 2004. While taping a sketch in blackface, about racial stereotypes, Chappelle heard a white spectator laughing in a way that sounded as if it were at him, not with him. For the son of two academics, the youngest of three kids, a man who described himself as a "tension-breaker," the tension had broken him.

He started to question his own happiness. As he told interviewer James Lipton on "Inside the Actors Studio" last month: "Is this what I want for myself? Did I get too big? I like people, and the higher up I go the less happy I get. I'm an artist, man. I don't need a sneaker deal."

Before he exited "Chappelle's Show," Chappelle taped enough sketches for roughly four episodes, which Comedy Central plans to air in July. A spokesman said the network would be thrilled to have Chappelle back.

When told that, Chappelle, who had said previously that he was uncertain whether or not he would return, declared: "If they do air those shows, I will be so (ticked) off that it will be over. They have a contractual right, but they know those were not the shows I was happy with...I say, boycott!"

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COMMENTARY

# Mackey befriends former dictator

By: Bob Mackey  
COLUMNIST

Dear Saddam,  
How are you? I am fine. I'm just kicking back in The Great Satan (Ohio, which I am guessing is The Great Satan's right shoulder — please get back to me on this), playing Metal Gear Solid 3 on my Playstation 2. You ever check that out? Oh, I guess that's kind of a stupid question. You seem like you'd be more into puzzle games. If so, you should really check out that Sudoku stuff. My mom thinks it's a hoot! Maybe you can grab one of those books at the prison gift shop. No looking in the back and cheating, buddy! But I kid.

I should probably let you know that you are my first pen pal. Yeah, I had the option to get one back in grade school, but I opted not to because that would mean writing awkward letters to some foreigner who didn't even know about the Ninja Turtles, let alone how much better Raphael was compared to the rest of those green losers. But, you seem to be pretty on the ball, and — more importantly — you're famous, which should give me some buzz in the pen pal world. And let me tell you, once we get our pictures on the cover of "Pen Pal Monthly," we'll have finally made it. I mean, I write for a college newspaper, and you have killed countless numbers of your own people — these are both things we'd like to overcome.

I have to admit that, until recently, I didn't find you that interesting. I would see you on television, looking stoic and occasionally firing rifles into the air, and all I could think was, "booring." It wasn't until we declared war on your country, killed your sons (just look at it as a few less Christmas presents you'll have to buy) and pulled you out of that spider hole when I said, "Hey! He looks just like Tom Hanks in 'Cast Away!'" Then I remembered that "Cast Away" wasn't very good, and I became even more bored and also irritable. By the way, were there really spiders in that

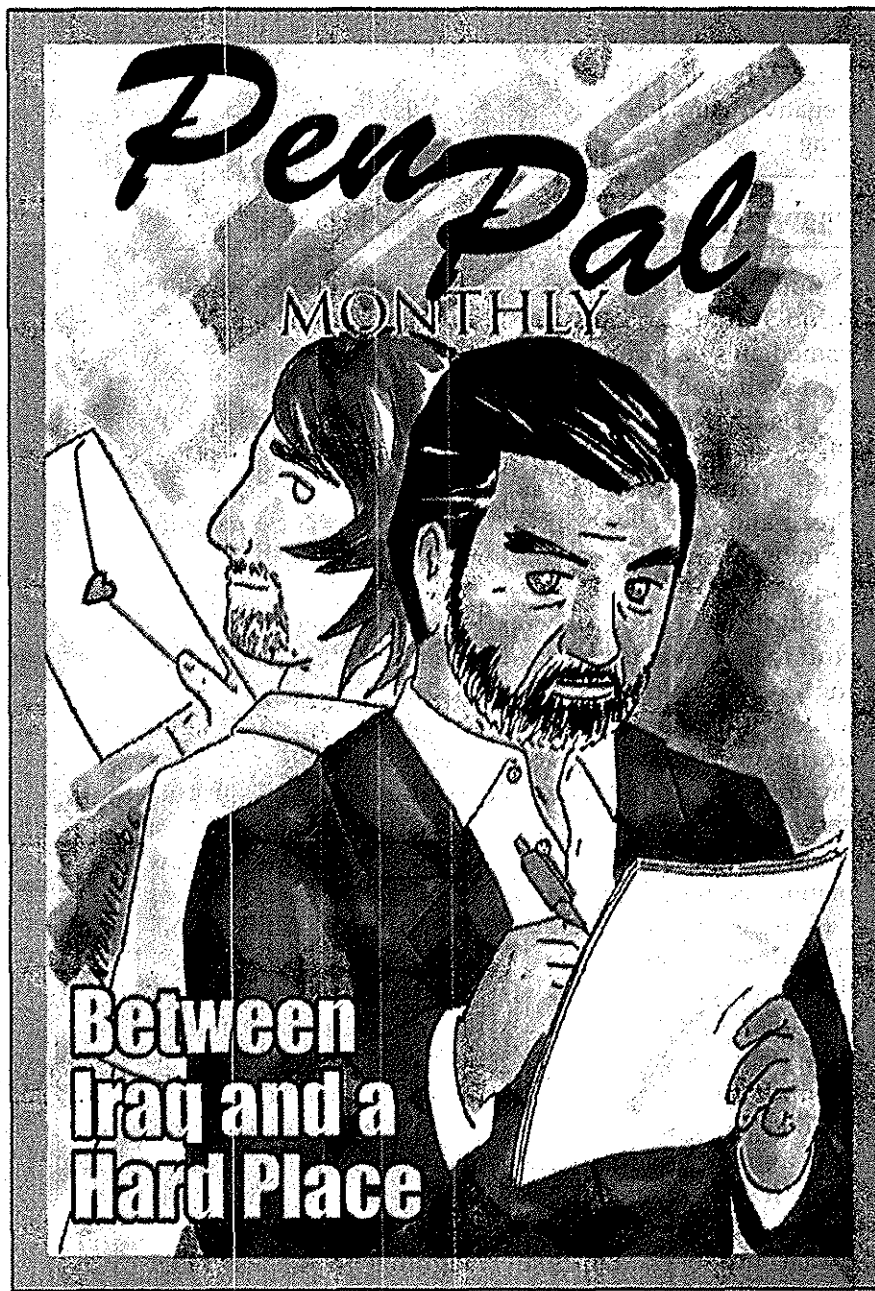
hole? Because, if not, I think "spider hole" is a really stupid name. A few days ago, I was driving, and I thought there was a spider in my car, but it was really on the outside of my windshield. Talk about a close call!

Since your capture, Saddam, you've been so darn entertaining and — dare I say — adorable? Every day I check the news to see your latest antics at the wackiest war crimes trial in the Middle East. It's way better than "Law & Order," despite the absence of the "Law & Order" noise that lets us know that the justice system is working. I love when the judge is like, "Hey prisoner," and then you say, "What prisoner? I am the President of Iraq!" And then the judge says, "No, you are a prisoner," to which you reply, "No, now I'm the judge and I sentence you to life as a jerk — whoops, looks like someone already did that!" Okay, you never said that last part, but you can borrow that from me if you want. Your eruptions are great, but they lack that Chandler-esque zing that we Americans love. Also, if the judge says, "Order in the court!" make sure you respond with, "I'll have a ham and Swiss on rye!" That may be stolen from The Three Stooges, but they are dead, and that line is classic. Just don't do any "A Few Good Men" references. Those are totally played out.

I've got a bone to pick with you, though. This may be a bit critical for a pen pal, but I believe in honesty. Saddam, we spent more than \$300 billion invading your country to take out weapons you didn't have, which was an awesome burn, but I can't help but feel like we're getting a little ripped off. That's a lot of cash, and even though our future children will have to pay it off, and they're too poor and unborn to do anything about it, I'm still a little miffed. Here in America, we pay crazy people like Tom Cruise to play pretend for 90 minutes, and all we give him is a lousy \$20 million. For what it cost to capture you, is it too much to ask for you to carry a flattened cardboard box into that giant crib they put you in and

bust some phat breakdancing moves? Just pretend you're spinning on all of those infidels you can't stop blabbing about. Maybe you can smash some watermelons or something, too. Gallagher may have had his day over here, but his style of comedy could be a breakthrough for you guys if you'd just give it a chance!

Listen to me, being a Negative Nancy. I didn't mean to get you down, Beardo (that's your new nickname). In fact, you should be happy to know that I've been so entertained that I've begun to pitch a new reality show to various networks starring you. It's going to be called "Who's Occupied Now?" and it's going to be like "The Real World," where you live in a jail cell with our very own President. Let's face it, when it comes to the deaths of thousands upon thousands of innocent people, he's awesome — and responsible! Tensions would rise as you would both try to make each other look worse, leaving the viewer to decide as they vote in an "American



Art by Nick Daniel

Idol" fashion. There'll be more tension than that time on "The Real World 3" when Puck ate peanut butter out of the jar and made AIDS jokes! Also, there will be a tug-of-war contest.

Your Pal,  
- Bob  
P.S. — Who's the President of Iraq? Take it sleazy, Beardo!

Call Bob Mackey at (330) 941-1913.

## COMEDY Chappelle goes back to his roots

By: Annette John-Hall  
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

This is how Dave Chappelle is coming back, back from eight months out of the public eye, back from being called crazy and a crack head, back from the infamy of being famous, back from turning down \$50 million, son!

This is how — with stand-up comedy, the world in which he feels most comfortable, winding up a nine-city tour with a cadre of fellow artists who shelter him like a security blanket.

"This," he says, standing backstage at the Tower Theater in Philadelphia, "is the perfect way to come back."

Never mind the movie "Dave Chappelle's Block Party," the movie that takes the brilliance of Chappelle's live act and mixes it up with some of his favorite musicians, was filmed before he said goodbye to \$50 million.

He's back live now, because the live stage is the safest place for Chappelle to deliver his provocative, often profane, sharply drawn takes on the complexities of race and culture that have made him the hottest comic working, his brilliance compared to Richard Pryor's. Who else speaks about the twisted nature of racism through the character Clayton Bigsby, a blind white supremacist who doesn't know he's black? Who else has been able to insert an irreverent punchline — "I'm Rick James, beeyatch!" — into pop culture-speak?

It would make sense that Chappelle would re-establish

himself back at his stand-up roots, especially after the year he's had.

After spending two years producing, writing and starring in "Chappelle's Show," the wildly successful sketch series for Comedy Central, the 32-year-old comic up and bolted last year in the midst of a two-year, \$50 million deal for reasons many of his fans still can't fathom.

So here he is, waiting in the wings of the suburban Philadelphia theater, where the distinctive whiff of spliff fills the air, dad in typical Chappelle attire — T-shirt, baggy jeans, sneakers. He's alternately chain-smoking cigarettes and guzzling a venti coffee as he paces.

In seconds, he'll amble out to center stage with a mic in his hand and a joke on his tongue that he delivers in a D.C. drawl ("I confessed on Oprah. That (expletive) was pressure...I'd rather get shot by Dick Cheney than to go through some (expletive) like that again..."), as the sold-out crowd gives him a hero's welcome.

"I like this hosting gig," the gangly comedian says later, between introducing Brooklyn MC Talib Kweli and neo-soul singer Erykah Badu. "Normally, stand-up is an individual kind of sport. But these artists are peers of mine. Real free spirits."

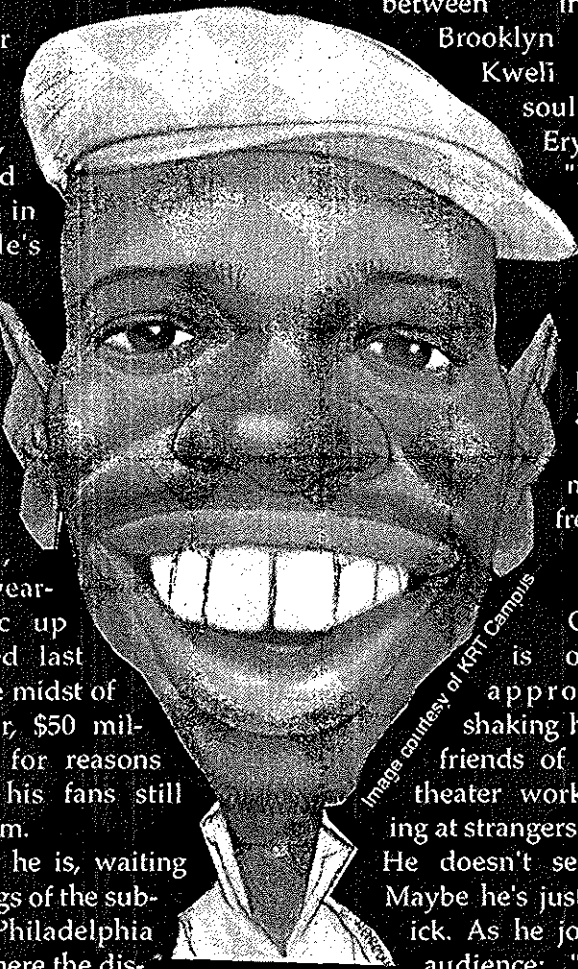
Chappelle is open and approachable, shaking hands with friends of musicians, theater workers, waving at strangers backstage. He doesn't seem crazy. Maybe he's just a maverick. As he jokes to his audience: "I walked away from \$50 million. I must be the most gangsta (expletive) in show business!"

The Tower crowd laughs uproariously.

"The people. Man, the people..." Later, Chappelle shakes his shaved head in appreciation. "I've just been getting a real warm reception, man. It's pretty much been like this everywhere I've been."

His tour is a live version of "Dave Chappelle's Block Party," a concert-documentary filmed by director Michel Gondry ("Eternal

please see CHAPPELLE, Page 5



## NCAA BASKETBALL March Madness bracket busting creates underdogs

By: Justin Smolkovich  
SPORTS REPORTER

A soothsayer once cautioned the great Roman leader Julius Caesar to "beware the Ides of March." Perhaps better advice would have been to beware the Mid-Majors of March.

It is likely that before this year's March Madness took swing, many — if not all — college basketball fans were ignorant to the likes of George Mason, Bradley and Wichita State. But now that a fair amount of brackets have been busted it is a safe bet that many will be pulling for them because everyone loves an underdog.

The David's versus the Goliath's. The Average Joe's versus Globogym Inc. (see the movie "Dodgeball, A True Underdog Story" for obscure reference). The beloved Philadelphia Rocky Balboa verses the steroid-machine Ivan Drago. The list goes on. We all love an underdog.

So why, when I turn on ESPN or any major sports program do the pundits and prognosticators seem disappointed that the college basketball powers that be are losing to teams with obscure names?

Why were CBS color men Jim Nantz and Billy Packer so enraged that the lowly Missouri Valley Conference placed a few teams into the tournament? Isn't that the point? It's for the big guys to prove that they are the big boys on the block and punish the tiny schools for even daring to step foot on the

same floor as the mighty Tarheels or the powerful Panthers of Pitt? Both North Carolina and Pitt were smacked in the mouth by the tiny Davis of college basketball.

The argument Nantz and Packer made was in regards to the strength of smaller conferences, and that they had not proven themselves against the supposed elites of the college basketball community. This argument may have held water with some when the committee chose the field of 64 teams for the tournament. The argument now resembles a sieve. My question now to the detractors of "small time" conferences is: What does it say about the big boys when Bradley, who finished a paltry sixth in their conference, defeats Big12 champ Kansas and a 21-6 Pitt squad? What do they have to say when Horizon League champ Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a seventh seed, pounds an Oklahoma squad that finished third in the Big12?

Maybe we shouldn't label these games as upsets. Who are they upsetting? I would venture a guess and say most sports fans are mildly amused, hardly upset. Maybe the better team just won despite the prayers of Vitale at the altar of Mike Krzyzewski for an ideal dream matchup between Duke and Duke in the finals.

For what it is worth, here is hoping for a Bradley and Wichita State final. Hey, it can happen.

Call Justin Smolkovich at (330) 941-3758.