

Downpours send students scurrying

www.thejambar.com

By La'el Hughes & Elizabeth Tabek The Jambar

Vol. 73

Williamson Hall had no idea Tuesday's weather reports said there would be a chance of showers and thunderstorms. That was an understatement. Those on the campus of

YSU were soaked from the torrential rains that fell on the

emergency has been reported." university in the early afternoon hours Tuesday. The electronic voice repeated As the sky began to darkthe same message over and en, students sitting in class in over Hoards of students exited

what was developing outside. their classrooms into the As class winded down and the humid hallways. clock inched toward 12:15 Faculty, staff and students

p.m., an alarm sounded, telling walked calmly down the staireveryone to exit the building. well, with looks of confusion "Attention, attention an on their faces.

William Binning, chair and professor of political science, ushered students into the hallways.

"This could be serious," Binning said. As students and faculty

reached the bottom of the stair-WALKER well, many were halted by the heavy downpour and claps of since early July. WFMJ-TV21 lightning outside. meteorologist Dr. Dave Walker

The condi- told a Jambar reporter tions were all Wednesday that July's rainfall too familiar for measured 10.4 inches above Mahoning average. Valley resi-Tuesday's unexpected rainfall caused a number of dents who

have

literally

BJ Lisko / The Jambar

problems on campus. There been dumped on were reports of students drenched, literally dripping ------

See RAIN, page 2

Issue 2

Bush says YSU bookstore hopes to edge out competition

By LA'EL HUGHES The Jambar

The directors of the YSU bookstore next week will argue that they are better than two national companies and should be allowed to continue selling books to university students the way they have been for almost 100 years.

The YSU bookstore is competing against two national book stores - Barnes and Noble and the Follett Company - and university officials will pick one to be the official campus bookstore.

Representatives of the three companies will present their cases Wednesday with each having 75 minutes to argue why they should be chosen.

Bookstore Committee Chair Don Cagigas said the committee will listen to the presentations and make a decision within 30 to 60 days. Committee member Richard Delisio said the

presentations, scheduled for the glass board room of Tod Hall, will include an audience of students, YSU Board of Trustees, SGA representatives and the bookstore team.

K.J Satrum, executive director of Student Services, has maintained that the YSU bookstore should be chosen and she has been helping bookstore officials with their presentation.

She said she believes the two key factors are costs of books to students and the financial return to the university.

"I think we are strong on both ends," she said.

In its bid to the university, the YSU Bookstore has said it will provide the best financial return to the university, guaranteeing at least \$10 million in profit over the 16-year contract. The YSU Bookstore has said it has a strong

sales record, including selling more used books





BOOKSTORE CHANGE?: Students move through lines purchasing textbooks from the YSU bookstore Wednesday. The store hopes it can stay put as it hopes to fend off bidding competition from Barnes & Noble and the Follett Company.

no retreat from Iraq

BY EDWIN CHEN, CHRIS KRAUL & PATRICK J. McDonnell 3 Los Angelas Times

ST. LOUIS President Bush vowed there would be no retreat from Iraq, even as the toll of dead U.S. soldiers BUSH since May 1

rose to 141, surpassing the number killed during the six weeks of major combat.

The stakes, Bush said, 'could not be greater for the American people," adding: "Our military is confronting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other places so our people will not have to confront terrorist violence in New York or St. Louis or Los Angeles."

"There will be no retreat," he told the American Legion's 85th annual convention.

"Our only goal, our only option, is total victory in the war on terror."

Bush's comments came at a particularly challenging time for the administration.

With mounting U.S.



The Jambar

RAIN, continued from page 1

unexpected rain.

said. "Then I was running into

Freshman Cassi Giamirria

"The whole way to class

In Williamson Hall, stu-

Manager of Facilities Mike Orto said the lightning caused

said she was more worried

about the thunder and light-

my roommate and I heard car

alarms going off because of lightning and thunder,"

dents waited to hear why the

alarm sounded off and if it was

OK to return to their classes.

Mojahed.

ning.

Giamirria said.

puddles in classes and isolated flooding.

Crowds of students watched lightning flash through the sky as they crowded in doorways to avoid heavy rainfall.

Freshman Kari Klemook was caught in the rain on her walk from Lyden House to Ward Beecher.

"There were two of us umbrella. under a miniature umbrella and there were puddles everywhere," Klemook said. "I was running to class in rolled up khakis, and was the only one in class that had gotten caught because the floor was so wet." in the rain. There was a puddle underneath my seat because my clothes were so soaked."

Leonard Perry, director of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety, said there were reports of flooding in Beeghly Center.

Flooding in the past few months is an ongoing problem due to the heavy rain. Perry said the university is working with the city to get bigger sewer lines.

As students without umbrellas huddled under

awnings, there was talk about the alarm to sound in missing class or arriving late to Williamson.

avoid being drenched by the As students came into Binning's class with their hair dripping onto the backs of "It started raining and I was stuck at Beeghly for a half their shoulders, the political science professor sat with his hour," said freshman Tina legs crossed on a bench up Another student, freshagainst a wall watching the man Mandy Rapp, was unforscene.

tunate enough to not have an "Man, these students are dedicated," Binning said. "I know I'm not leaving." "I ran from DeBartolo to Kilcawley and was so

drenched my friend gave me a Call Beth Tabak @ (330) 941new T-shirt to wear," Rapp 3758

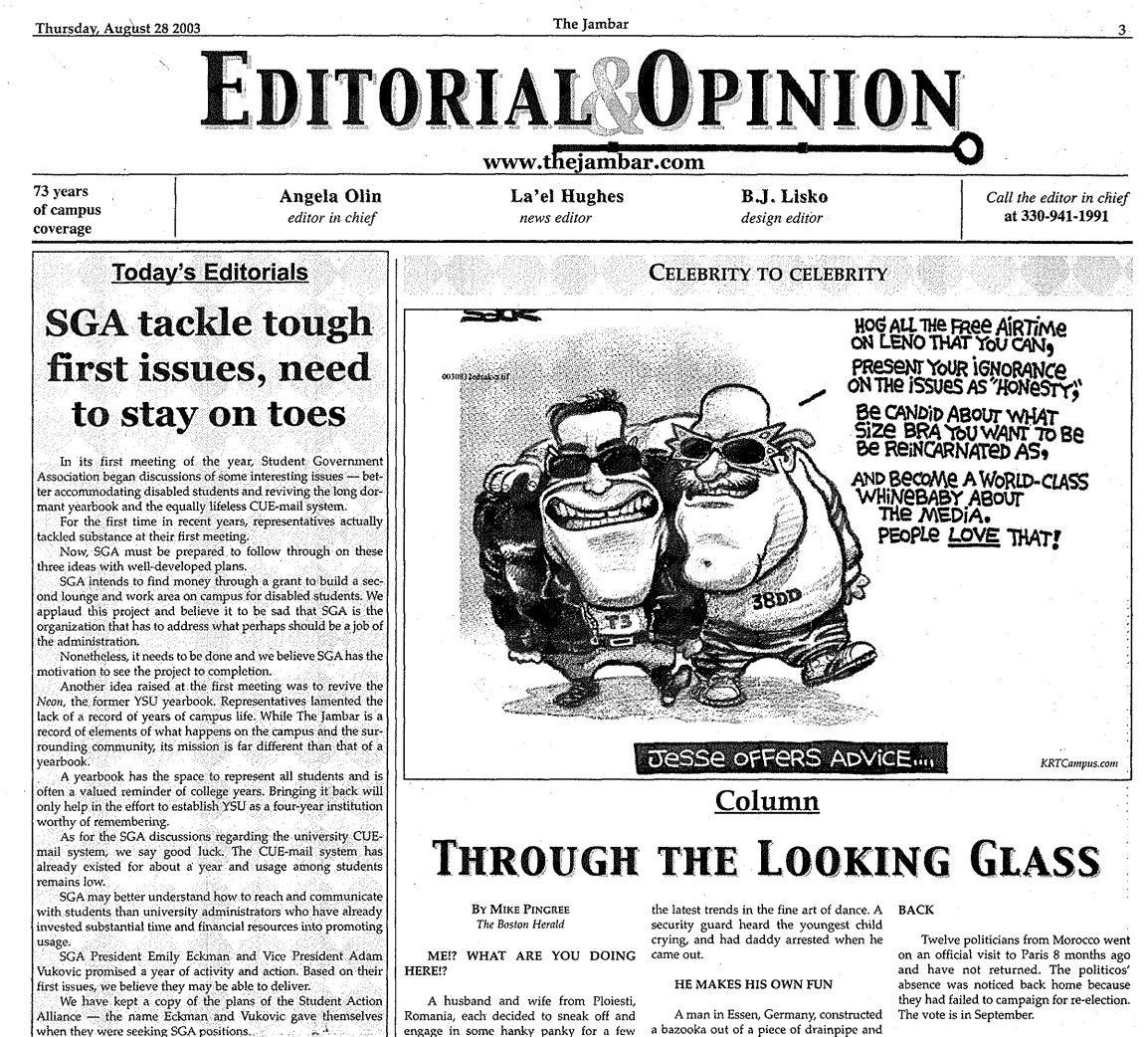
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HEY PAL, I HOPE SHE WAS WORTH IT

engage in some hanky panky for a few

days - unbeknownst to the other - and Other issues they promised to bring forward were a radio made up phony stories as to their future at passers-by. He was arrested. station, looking at student wages and making SGA more whereabouts. In an amazing coincidence, countable and accessible to students they both went to the same resort at Mamia on the Black Sea. While they were talking to each other on their cell phones as they walked along the beach, they bumped into each other. They are getting a divorce.

a bazooka out of a piece of drainpipe and then got drunk and used it to fire potatoes

We will be watching closely and now have high expectations for future SGA work and accomplishments.

Got an opinion? We want to hear from you... Please submit letters to the editor electronically to thejambar@hotmail.com

WE DON'T LIKE TO DO PAPER-WORK

A very liberal court in the Netherlands ruled that a monthly allowance be given to a physically handicapped 50-year-old man so he can pay for sex after he argued that sexual encounters make him less dependent on medicine and give him peace and rest. Unfortunately, he later found that no prostitute was willing to give him a receipt.

DADDY WILL BE RIGHT BACK, KIDS

Unable to get a babysitter, a Tampa, Fla., man left his four children — ages 1 to 8 — in his car in the parking lot of the Deja Vu strip club while he went inside to study

FROM ABOVE, IT'S HARD TO TELL

In an effort to cut the huge pigeon population in New York City, officials brought in trained hawks. Alas, one of them swooped down on a Chihuahua, strolling in a local park, mistaking it for a rat. Master falconer Thomas Cullen said his bird made "an honest mistake."

FIRST MAKE SURE THE COAST IS CLEAR

A man driving down a Tennessee highway threw a half-empty can of Their car was hit more than a dozen times, Budweiser out of his car, not realizing that a Tennessee Highway Patrol car was right behind him. The beer can hit the cop car tocks. right on the windshield. The man was arrested for reckless endangerment with a deadly weapon, violation of the open con- Herald. tainer law, and littering.

UH, YEAH, OF COURSE WE'LL BE

Letter to the Editor

A married woman working as an accountant in West Point, Miss., got into a sexual relationship with one of her bosses, and ended up getting a divorce. But the scorned ex-husband refused to take it lying down, and sued his rival for stealing his wife. He was awarded \$175,000.

SPLAT! SPLAT! BANG! BANG!

Three drugged-up teenagers drove around Pittsburgh shooting at people with paint-ball guns just for the fun of it. Then, they shot their paintballs at a group of local toughs who responded with real bullets. and two of the teens were wounded, one on the left arm and the other in the but-

Mike Pingree is a columnist for the Boston

The Jambar editorials reflect the opinions of The Jambar and its Editorial Board members: Editor in Chief Angela Olin, News Editor La'el Hughes, Design Editor B.J. Lisko and Copy Editor Rebecca Marquis. Those wishing to schedule retings with the Editorial Board should call the editor in chief.

Letters must be typed and should not exceed 400 words. Each letter must iclude a name and telephone number for verification purposes. All submissions are subject to editing for spelling and grammar, Submissions must be received by noon ^eriday for Tuesday's edition and by noon Tuesday for Thursday's edition.

The Jambar will not print letters that libel others or threaten harm. The editor the chief reserves the right to reject letters that do not follow policy. The views and pinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar staff or YSU facdty, staff or administration.

ANGELA	LA'EL	BJ
Olin	HUGHES	LISKO
Editor-in-chief	News editor	Design Editor
(330) 941-1991	(330) 941-1989	(330) 941-1807
Olga	ALYSSA	SARA
ZIOBERT	LENHOFF	Τκάς
Business manager	Adviser	Advertising manager
(330) 941-3094	(330) 941-1908	(330) 941-1990
	Deers	D
MARK	Ветн	DAN
STEVENS	TABAK	PROCOPIO
Sports Reporter	Features Reporter	Sales Manager
(330) 941-1811	(330) 941-3758	(330) 941-3758
		E-MAIL U: thejambar@hot

The Jambar is published twice weekly during fall and spring semesters and weekly during summer sessions. The first copy of The Jambar is free; each additional copy is 5 cents. Mail subscriptions are 525 per academic year. Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931. The Jambar has won mine Associated Collegiate Press All-American honors.

Emergency protocol not up to snuff

Editor:

On Tuesday, August 26, I was nearing the end of a class in Williamson Hall when the alarm went off and instructed everyone to evacuate the building. The only thing anyone heard was that the National Weather Service had issued a severe weather warning. I asked myself, "If the weather is severe then why must we all go outside?" This question was soon overshadowed though, as I made my way into the stairwell to exit.

-Å got to the bottom of the first flight of stairs from the third floor when it occurred to me that it shouldn't have taken two and one half minutes. Five to seven minutes later, when I reached the front doors, I was enraged at what I found. Gathered under the overhang in front of the building were an estimated 80 to 100 students huddled together to stay dry.

Normally, this would not be very strange, but hundreds more people inching their way down the stairwell, unaware of the reasoning behind the evacuation, were only being released into the rain after wrestling their way through the crowd in front of the doors one at a time. If these people were thinking the same as I, then they were on the verge of panic, and also bottlenecked up three flights of stairs. There was a definite danger of disaster when there needn't be one at all.

Thunderstorms are dangerous, but evacuating a building because of one, particularly when the building is not conducive to the process, does nothing but add to the danger. I cannot even fathom the peril should there have been a real emergency. All the people who were scared of the rain would have caused a catastrophe that we would all have to relive on the national news for weeks. Not to mention the fact that this was the third such alarm that I've heard this year on campus when there was no need for one, and by all intents and purposes, no immediate danger.

State law says that any educational building being evacuated, for any reason, must be cleared of all people in under five minutes to be given an acceptable rating, and it took me nearly ten minutes to even get to the door. Serious looks must be taken at the emergency protocols of the university, and its students must have more respect for emergency alarms, or at the very least, some level of consideration for the safety of their classmates.

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Robert D. Rhoads Iunior Professional Writing and Editing

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SPORTS RECREATION

Clarett returns, will miss contests

BY MATT DUVAL The Lantern (Ohio State U.)

U-WIRE, COLUMBUS — After missing more than 20 days of practice, Ohio State sophomore tailback Maurice Clarett joined his teammates on the practice field Monday after being reinstated to practice Friday.

But while Clarett is allowed to work out with the team, he is still facing a multiple game suspension from the university and the NCAA for an exaggerated theft report after a car he was borrowing from a local dealership was burglarized.

OSU Director of Athletics Andy Geiger and the NCAA have yet to announce the specific number of games Clarett will miss, but Clarett's dad, Myke Clarett, told USA Today his son will miss six games. If Myke Clarett's statements are true, Maurice Clarett would be back on the field Oct. 18 for the Homecoming game against Iowa.

"It will be a total of six games — but he could've lost everything," Myke Clarett said in the report. "We're relieved that it's finally over and that he was able to maintain his college eligibility and his scholarship. That was the goal."

Clarett's father said he heard the length of the suspension from a source on the university board of trustees. Contradicting Geiger, who said Clarett's suspension would be for "nonacademic" transgressions, Myke Clarett said his son would be suspended three games for academic reasons and three for the car. Yesterday's report from Myke Clarett was just the end of a long and busy weekend for OSU and Maurice Clarett. After weeks of speculation,

Geiger and OSU received a letter from the NCAA Thursday, listing all of the allegations against Clarett. Geiger then met with Clarett, his mother and attorney in a three-hour long meeting Friday morning. Clarett emerged from the meeting smiling and playfully hiding behind his mother as reporters and cameras descended upon the star sophomore.

Five hours after their meeting concluded, the first definitive news of Clarett's suspension and subsequent reinstatement came during Geiger and coach Jim Tressel's press conference.

"Maurice is anxious to get back in the fold," Tressel said. "We are very satisfied with the process in everything. Our people did a great job playing their role."

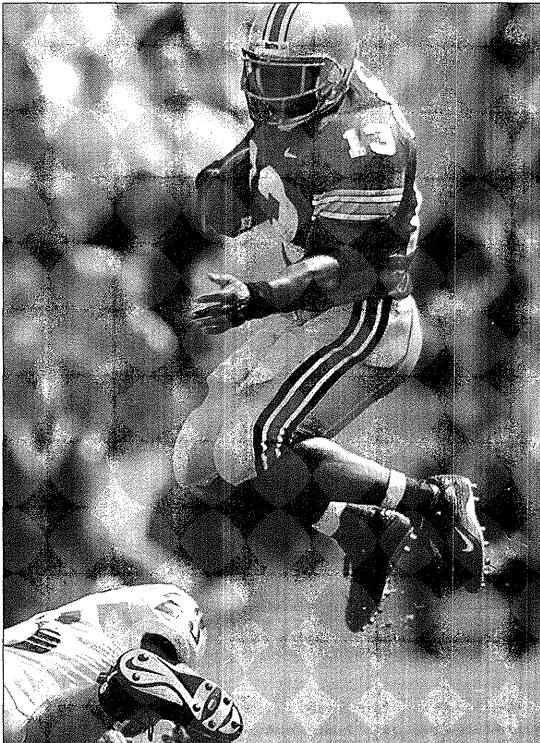
Despite comments from Clarett family friend and NFL Hall of Famer Jim Brown, who said Clarett would explore his options with the Canadian Football League or the NFL, Tressel said Clarett seemed excited to rejoin the Buckeyes. "He gave me every indication that he wants to be back with his teammates," Tressel

said. "Just to see his face, to see him smile a little bit, was great." Geiger was not allowed to discuss exactly what the NCAA found; however, he did say it was unfair to blame Clarett for everything.

"To load 100 percent of everything on him is a bit heavy," Geiger said.

The Buckeyes open up the 2003 season Saturday against

Washington.



against OUT SIX GAMES: Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett was suspended for the first six games of the season for his off-field conduct.

<u>News</u>

BOOKSTORE, continued from page 1

than competitors.

YSU faculty, alumni and staff receive a 20 percent discount on everything sold in the store, said April Newmann, a YSU bookstore manager.

Barnes and Noble officials tout their experiences with other colleges.

The Barnes and Noble bid lists its locations at Cleveland State University, Oberlin College, Ohio State University, and the University of Akron.

Barnes and Noble also said it will buy back books every day and is the nation's largest distributor of used textbooks.

At least one student who has purchased textbooks at Barnes and Noble gives the company a mixed review. Pam Woodall, a senior at the University of Akron, said Barnes and Noble can be expensive. "But they have an ample supply of used books. And, I find them to be very cooperative," Woodall said in a recent telephone interview.

Woodall said the Barnes and Noble store has co-sponsored several University of Akron campus activities and is willing to hold books for students who are having financial trouble.

The University of Akron Barnes and Noble store recently remodeled its facility and it is now on several floors.

In its bid, the Follett Company featured its plans to offer faculty, staff and alumni 20 percent discounts on some merchandise, but not textbooks, sales merchandise, and academically discounted software.

Follett also promised to create a \$10,000 textbook

<u>Sports Wrap-up</u> Sampras retires, Romanowski blows his top

By MARK STEVENS The Jambar



It is time to say goodbye to Pete Sampras, although many around sports feel that the real Sampras has been gone for some time. By the real Sampras, it is intended

that Sampras was once one of the most dominant athletes in his particular SAMPRAS sports and is simply no longer competing at the level he once was.

Although, there are few tennis players to ever reach the level that Sampras did in his prime. Sampras won 64 tournaments, including a record

14 Grand Slam titles, over the course of his career.

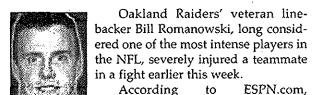
He held the number one ranking for six consecutive years, also a record, and was 14-4 in Grand Slam final matches, a testament to his ability to step his game up when it mattered the most.

His quiet exit from the world stage is just another example of the calm, controlled manner in which he went about his workman-like approach to his work. By walking away now, Sampras takes his health

into his new life as a husband and a father, and he

walks away before everyone starts to question his place in the history of his sport. In other sports news around the world:

Romanowski Loses Control Again



ROMANOW ROMANOW

SKI Williams suffered a broken orbital bone, damage to his nose and also lost a tooth.

The team reports that Williams could miss as much as six weeks while recovering from the injuries. Romanowski has a long history of fighting with opponents on the field, having been fined several times by the NFL.

YSU Fall Sports to Get Underway Soon

YSU's fall sports teams will be kicking off their schedules soon.

KRTCampus.com

The volleyball team begins its 2003 campaign this weekend at the Western New York Tournament. This year's team returns 11 letter winners and four starters from last year's squad.

The cross country team begins its schedule next month at the Spiked Shoe Invitational at University Park, Pa. In November, YSU will play host to the Horizon League Cross Country Championships.

After placing three team members on last year's All-Conference Team and winning the conference championship, the YSU women's golf team begins its season next month at the Ball State Cardinal Classic.

The men's team, which finished sixth last season, also begins its season next month at the BGSU John Piper Invitational.

The YSU soccer team's season starts this week against Niagra in Niagra Falls, NY.

Both the men's and women's tennis teams will begin to play later next month, and the swimming and diving team will start its fall schedule in late October.

Call Mark Stevens at (330) 941-1811.

ENROLLMENT, continued from page 1 SGA, continued from page 1 With the addition of the Countryman said the ago, freshman and Cleveland Vukovic said he wants to students to have to travel that dents are expected to register. Bitonte College of Health and native, Robert Fellows, said hisnew off-campus Courtyard far," Vukovic said. Savage said finding the use the first 10 weeks of the Human Services is helping decision was made. The cam-Apartments, Countryman said space for this type of lounge is semester searching for stu-Vukovic said he would YSU's overall enrollment numthe university can now attract pus is what attracted Fellows like to see a second lounge difficult. dents interested in signing up to YSU. "I like the campus and bers. students from more than just "It would be great to get for CUE-mail. built in Meshel Hall where "There is a demand for the the surrounding five-county how close everything is," said money for bigger desks," she "Because Dr. Sweet is talkmany computer science classes type of courses they are offer-Fellows, as he talked animatarea ing about using it for billing are taught. Vukovic said many said. "The small desks in classing in the areas of allied health Freshman Nikki Evans edly about his choice. people with disabilities are rooms do not accommodate and scheduling, it would be and nursing," Countryman said she is from Amsterdam, a Although there were other computer science majors. these students and facilities is useful to access it now," he small Ohio town about two schools, including some closer said. running out of tables and Disability Services said. In this time of high unemhours from campus. to home, Fellows said there Coordinator Jain Savage said For the remainder of the chairs." ployment, Countryman said She said she based her was no doubt that YSU was a she could not say whether YSU In addition to concerns week, SGA representatives will the university is trying to prodecision to attend YSU on perfect fit for him even though meets national standards for about meeting the needs of disbe outside of their colleges vide courses for degrees that finances and the size of the his parents opposed his choice. disabled people. Savage said abled students, SGA members introducing themselves to stuare in demand. campus. Countryman said school dents within the colleges they grant money would certainly said they would like to see Explaining the increase at "It's far away but not too officials have been trying to lishelp obtain items that would YSU revive its yearbook. represent. the Beeghly College of far, said Evans, who is from ten to what the students want be useful to disabled students "Nothing has been docu-Jindal said, "We want their Education, Countryman said Amsterdam, a small Ohio and need. "We've got growing attending the university. mented for the past 10 years," faces to be familiar to stuteaching is one of the more town. The two-hour commute pains. We are not always going "We could always use said SGA Chief of Staff Shivani dents.' steady professions at this time. is short enough for her to drive to be successful but we are more adaptive software and Iindal. Iindal said a committee He also said there is a constant home if she wants but also learning," Countryman said. computers," Savage said, notis forming to develop the pro-La'el Hughes contributed to need to offer classes to help gives her a chance to be out on "Sometimes, we can do it and ing that the number of disthis article. ject. teachers maintain their certifiher own. Although she looked sometimes we can't, but there abled students at YSU is SGA members also disat other schools, Evans said she cations. is an attempt to get things increasing. cussed strategies for increasing Call Melissa Moschella at chose YSU because "it's not Countryman also said done.' During the 2001-2002 student use of CUE-mail - an (330) 941-3523. real expensive and it's not a progress is being made on school year, about 400 disabled objective shared by University campus to attract students to small campus but it's not real-Call Zetta Dumkrieger at Call La'el Hughes at (330) students reported their disabil-President David Sweet. YSU. "We have a beautiful, (330) 941-3523. big, it's a nice size for me." ities to YSU Disability Services. "It's a good tool, but it's 941-1989. small; centrally located cam-After attending a basket-This year, Savage said 460 stu- not being used," Vukovic said. ball camp at YSU two years pus," Countryman said. 7

scholarship fund each year for students.

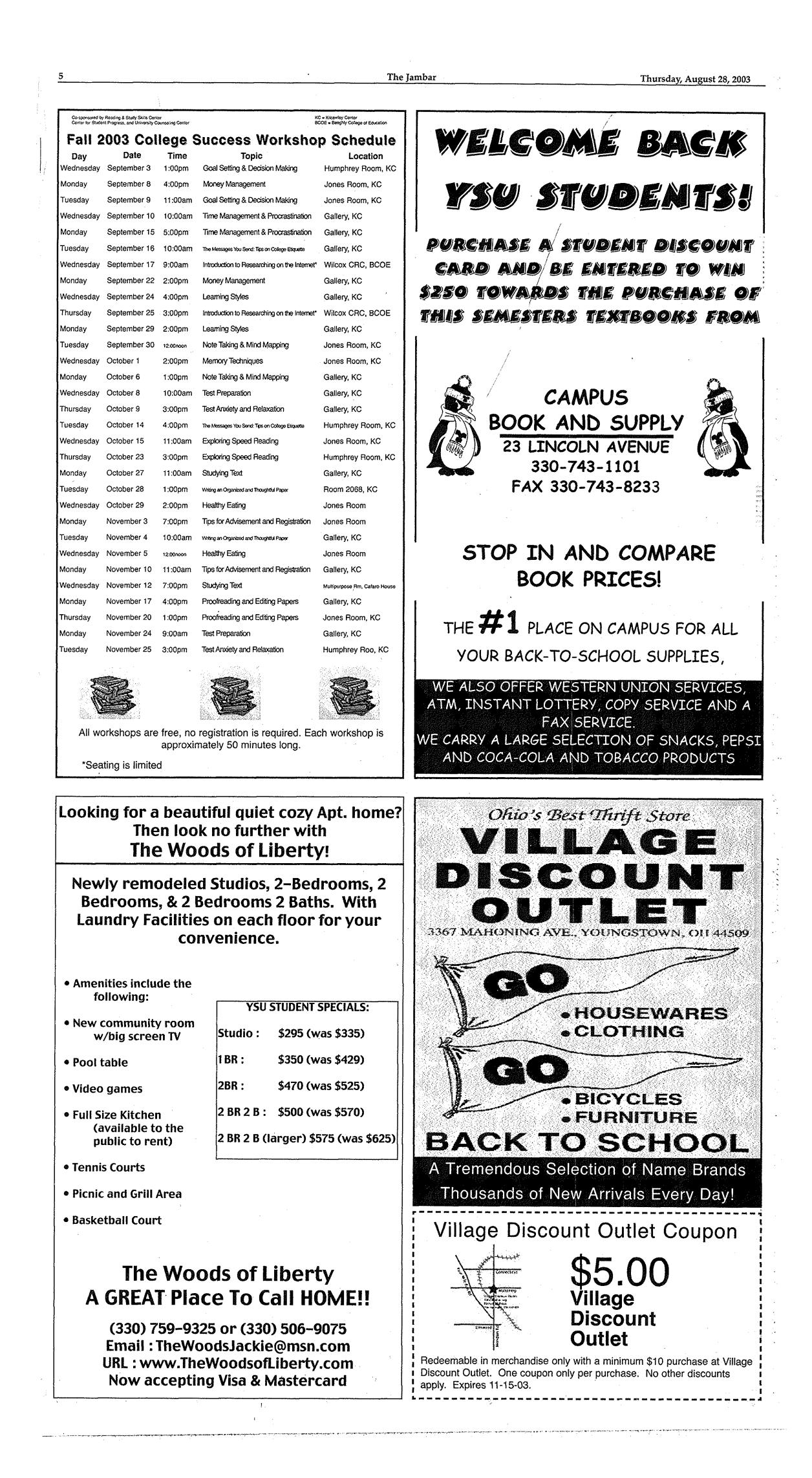
Follett officials have promised the university 10 percent of all gross revenue over \$10 million if they open in the current bookstore in Kilcawley.

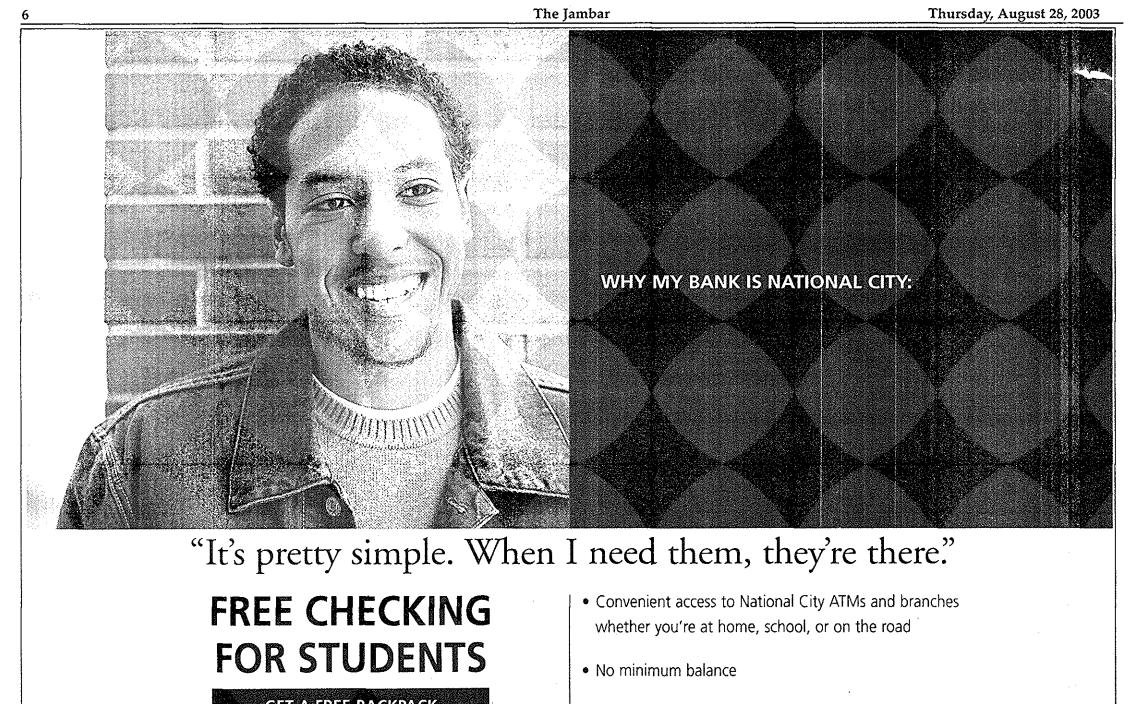
The second option Follett officials proposed would give the university 9.5 percent of gross revenue over \$10 million if Follett builds a new bookstore.

Delisio said surveys conducted on campus show that YSU students like the current location of the bookstore.

"The number one customer is the student," Delisio said. But he explained that the committee studying the bookstore issue has a large mandate to try to create a community bookstore. "I don't think there is anything wrong with that," he said.

Call La'el Hughes at (330) 941-1989.





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A STUDENT BUDGET?

The Jambar

BUSH, continued from page 1

The latest deaths included a soldier whose support con- been fiercest. "But May 1 was Hamariyah, 16 miles north- combat operations were finwest of Baghdad. Two other ished with. People were looksoldiers were wounded in the attack Tuesday.

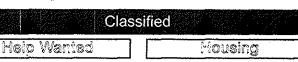
Whoever staged the assault used what is increasingly the insurgents' weapon of choice: an improvised explosive device — IED in military parlance - a kind of homemade bomb gerry-rigged from mortars, artillery shells, hand grenades and whatever is available. The detonators may be beepers, cellular telephones,

even garage-door openers. The other deaths Tuesday included a soldier struck by an Iraqi motorist while changing group a flat tire and one who died of a non-hostile gunshot wound. Some military officials

were quick to downplay the Music significance of the latest deaths, but the growing number had a symbolic importance for some in Baghdad. www.commongroundcommu-"During the war, people nity.net

did expect to get shot at," said Sgt. Danny Martin, a veteran of the so-called "Wild West" theater west of Baghdad where

opposition to the coalition has ing forward to the downward slope and going home. Some voy was bombed in supposed to be when major people aren't exactly happy about being here."



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Campus Calender

Friday August 29 Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship is meeting at 5:30 pm for a Service with Live Worship at Peaberry's in Kilcawley. Contact Nick Angelis at Bloogooroo@aol.com

Wednesday September 3rd Clinical Laboratory Science Club is meeting for the Monthly Meeting at 2 pm to discuss elections in Cushwa Room 2055. Contact Betty Howard at sl

Sigma Alpha Lambda, national leadereship & honors organization is seeking motivated

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"The Gospel According to The Simpsons" Bible study informational meeting for all in terested YSU students, Tuesday night, September 2nd and September 9th at 7:30 at First Christian Church, behind Tod Hall next to Butler Art Museum. Main entrance is on Spring St., and we will beet in the parlor. If you are unable to attend but are interested, or need more information, email campus ministry at: Kathrynpcm@aol.com or call (330) 743-0439 or the church at (330) 746-7645.

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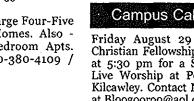
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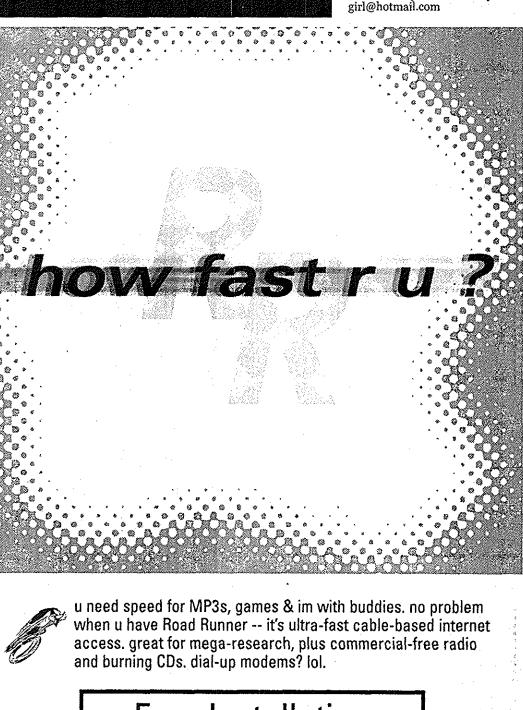
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accept the concept of free, downloadable music.

Online music sharing may not be music to the recording industry's ears, but the practice is here to stay.

Several years after the Internet bubble burst, a few remnants of its hay day remains: instant messaging, broadband connections, and of course, online file swapping. While music sharing has been somewhat scaled back since its introduction, it remains a cornerstone of the Internet culture.

As the technology advanced, more and more people were peering into the file-swapping phenomenon. While most consumers have embraced the idea of free, downloadable music, the entertainment industry refuses to consider the concept.

The Recording Industry of America (RIAA) describes its mission as a means to foster a business and legal climate that supports and promotes our members' creative and financial vitality."

Clearly, the RIAA's hundreds of recording label members serve one purpose: profits at any costs.

The RIAA claims that pirated music costs its industry 4.2 billion dollars each year. The industry is partially to blame for those losses; it has become a victim of itself.

Since the invention of the compact disk, the music industry has seen little or no change in the way that it delivers its product to the consumer. While MP3 files are increasingly gaining popularity, the majority of consumers have yet to adopt the file format as their primary music media.

untapped technology. While file sharing has been an integral aspect of computing, the technology had yet to be applied to digital music. Several years after Internet users began sharing music, the RIAA continues to pursue legal action against those taking advantage of the swapping services.

The RIAA may argue that users who download music without first paying for it are abusing the system and essentially stealing. However, for years, the same organization dominated the industry and basically cornered the market.

At last, the industry lost its grip on the consumer.

And therein lies the problem. Consumers no longer need to rely on a store's shelf to enjoy their favorite artists latest hit. They have been set free from relying on a multi-billion dollar profit-seeking industry that was used to calling all the shots. Now, that same industry is attempting to play catch-up to a technology conept that continues to develop faster than the music industry can handle.

Of course, recording artists need to receive some form of compensation for their work, but it is not enough to simply produce music anymore. Consumers want innovation. Artists and the RIAA must come to realize that.

ward, but certain lobbyists and organizations [like the RIAA] remain forever

ocked in one time period and one mindset. Wake up, or face the consequences of failing to adapt to your changing environment or else the industry's weakest and saddest moment will be the day the music died.

Call Jason Kelly at (330) 941-3758.

Movie Review

Open Range a rehash of classic Western flicks

BY BRANDON WILBORN Ka Leo Hawaii (U.Hawaii)

(U-WIRE) HONOLULU -- "Open Range" saunters like the classic Westerns that it tries to copy. There aren't any spectacular fights choreographed by guys from Hong Kong and there are few computerized effects

"Range" relies on old standards in cowboy flicks and predictable drama to hold its audience as Kevin Costner tries to recapture his success from "Dances With Wolves."

From acting in several Westerns, contributing behind the scenes, and researching the best cowboy movies, Costner should know enough to direct, coproduce and star in this new film. He's certainly well established in the genre. But his efforts end up like the generic result of a how-to book.

In the film, Costner plays Charlie Waite, a man running from a bloody past. His employer, Boss Spearman (Robert Duvall), is a free-ranger. Boss seems to be running from his youth more than anything. For 10 years -- "They call that a decade," Boss wisely explains -- they have been running cattle across America. Their help is Mose (Abraham Benrubi), the requisite gentle giant, and Button (Diego Luna), the token Mexican of all old Westerns.

When the group is held up in a small town, their lives and property are threatened by the local rancher, Baxter (Michael Gambon), the icon of the self-made immigrant. Baxter's men kill Mose and the ranger's dog -- you don't ever mess with a cowboy's dog. Anyone who harms a dog in a Western is dead. Button barely survives the attack and spends the rest of the film in bed. Marshal Poole (James Russo) lends the law in town to whomever has money, so the rangers have no legal recourse.

But not everyone in town is against free-rangers. This allows for two more must-have characters. Percy (Michael Jeter) is the irreplaceable "Old Timer" of the town, and remembers how things used to be. Annette Bening plays Sue Barlow, the aging but beautiful sister of the town doctor. She is the flower on the cactus, the virtuous sophisticate among the pretentious hicks of the town. There always has to be one.

As far as acting goes, Costner, black-labeled for his bad acting, does surprisingly well in this film. Perhaps because his character lets Boss do most of the



WILD WEST: Robert Duvall and Kevin Costner star in Open Range, Hollywoods latest Western film.

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talking. Duvall carries his (grand)fatherly warmth into this role as he worries for everyone younger than himself. And Bening plays the spinster nurse with little depth. I suppose like other Westerns, this one assumes that women are simple and lack substance. Gambon hangs in the background, but plays a great self-righteous villain, just like a Western needs.

By the time we meet everyone, about 40 minutes into the movie, we know exactly what is going to happen. All the bad guys are gonna die, and Charlie will hitch up with Sue.

So if we know all of this, why do we keep watching for so long? Partly because, for Western fans, it's something new that feels familiar and comfortable, like a new pair of shoes exactly like the ones you just wore out.

Cowboys throw sound punches with little parrying. But much of the fighting is off-screen. The first brief conflict we see is an hour in, while the attack on win in the end. the free-rangers, and the murder of Mose is happen-

ing elsewhere. Like old tragedies, we only see the result. The violence isn't necessary; it's the anticipation of the showdown that creates drama.

Along with tension the classic Westerns had a solid, gut knowledge of right and wrong, even if right means shooting someone in the face. "Open Range" does capture this feeling. There is no litigation here. Right is still right, even in the fading west that "Range" presents.

"A man has the right," Boss says, "to protect his property and his life." Sounds like a Constitutional idea. But the specifics seem hazy lately, even contradictory.

Where Open Range shines, even as a conglomerate of Western cliches, is in its ability to renew our hope in that fairytale idea that right is infallible. Sure this only lasts for a few hours, but it's there, insisting that good people, even if they've made mistakes, can



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