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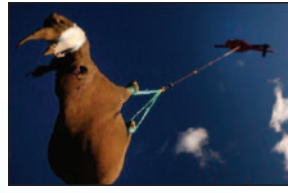
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RHINO TRANSPORT

A herd of 19 critically endangered rhinoceroses from South Africa was recently transported via helicopter due to the rise of poachers.

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GREEK DEBT CRISIS

Deliberations to abate the Greek debt crisis result in a ratified bailout plan from the eurozone. Response to the plan leaves leaders pressured and citizens unhappy.

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GALLERY DEBUT

A BFA student explains her painting techniques, her near-death experience and what her art show debuting tonight at the DAAC means.

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CALVIN COLLEGE CHIMES

November 11, 2011

Volume 106 - Issue 11

CLUBS.CALVIN.EDU/CHIMES

Beach Boys 'new' album brings listeners into the studio

BY JOHN KLOOSTERMAN
Op-Ed Editor

By now, the Beach Boys are not very interesting except as examples of what happens when you fail to realize it's time to quit. They might have hit it moderately big again after their 1960s stardom with "Kokomo," but that was not only released before I was born, but is also one of the most hideous pieces of music I know about, peers with "Ice Ice Baby" and "Achy Breaky Heart." You can sing about girls on the beach when you are 25; creepiness begins to consume any artistic merit (and there was none there to start with in this case) after that.

So why would the new Beach Boys album "Smile" be of any interest to me? For one thing, it was recorded back in 1967, but never finished. Brian Wilson, the member of the band that composed and recorded most of their songs by the late 60s, got lost in the complexity of putting the album together. "Good Vibrations," a track everyone knows, was incredibly expensive to create and produce because Wilson could not settle on a version he liked. When it was finally released well after the album it was supposed to be on, it was a huge hit.

Wilson aspired to create an album the same way he created "Good Vibrations": songs made

up of strings of small sections with simple melodies and lots of overdubs. When the record label finally demanded something

the Internet since the respective mediums were introduced, but most of the tracks were missing the vocals and were completely

and the arrangements were missing the detail of the bootleg sessions.

However, "Smile" is, at its heart, a psychedelic surf-pop album. If that concept sounds strange, that's because it is. The songs are not about surfing but the Wild West, barnyards and vegetables, to pick a few. Many of the lyrics are in a stream-of-consciousness style that makes them difficult to decipher, not that people on the Internet haven't tried. I would hazard a guess that you, the average Chimes reader, would not enjoy this album — while the Beatles mixed in tracks like "Blackbird" whenever they created experiments like "Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except Me and My Monkey," there is nothing of the sort on "Smile." If you are more into the Beach Boys for Wilson's excellent production, there are better takes and arrangements in the bootlegs.

Given that, why listen to this new release? There is only one reason — the four bonus discs of recording sessions. It's like the "Lord of the Rings" extended editions: I would much rather have the special features discs than the movie itself. As I alluded to earlier, Wilson was far ahead of the audio technology of the time. He would spend hours in the studio making sure the contraclarinet (no joke — it's on disc five, track two) was playing at the right dynamic, only to have his tracks played over AM radio and become sonic sandpaper. The mastered version of "Good Vibrations" (and most other Beach Boys singles) sounds like it was recorded on a boom box with a few friends in a garage. Little could be further

from the truth.

Wilson assembled a group of musicians called the "Wrecking Crew" to record his complex arrangements for "Smile" and the Beach Boys' previous album "Pet Sounds." He would spend endless hours in the studio with them, pointing out all the minor flaws he heard in their immaculate arrangements, making them do more takes. Listening to the sessions can be frustrating: Wilson will stop a heavenly-sounding take because he wants an extra organ stop or the drum fill wasn't exactly what he wanted.

On the track "Good Vibrations: Gold Star" he just stops the take and says, "You're playing it wrong." There is an entire disc devoted to takes of "Heroes and Villains," and another whole disc for the four versions of "Good Vibrations." There are usually two or three versions in the set of every track on the album. The reason the album was never finished is right before your ears.

Wading through this material is rewarding, in the same way sorting through other large unorganized data sets like the Wikileaks cables or old architecture journals is. You get a sense that tight vocal harmonies don't come together in one take, that someone needs to compose or commission a concerto for Electro-Theremin and that jokes said in a studio are at least five times as funny.

So I would suggest you give this album a listen. The five-CD collection is available on Spotify, which I suggest especially since you can't get most of the session material on the reasonably priced (\$30) two-CD set, and the full five-CD box set is over \$100.



FILE PHOTO

This Beach Boys album is decades in the making. Lead singer Brian Wilson was a fastidious recorder, so hearing all his takes is fascinating.

to release, Wilson put together "Smiley Smile," which is the feeling you have after pulling an all-nighter condensed into album form.

Better selections from the recording sessions have been floating around on tapes and

unedited. Wilson recorded a version of the album in 2004 with the backing band he was on tour with, but his voice was pretty raspy by that point, the production was poor (most of the instruments sound like they were generated using an electric keyboard)

CTC produces gem

BY ABBY ZWART
Editor in Chief

"Latecomers will not be seated."

So claimed my ticket for the Calvin Theatre Company production of "Antigone" last week. "Sheesh," I thought. "Getting a little persnickety now, aren't we, CTC?"

Little did I know, the production crew had a good reason for making such a statement. When the doors opened a mere 10 minutes before the show last Thursday, the actors were already in position. This is a typical CTC play, but I'm suckered every time. The minute the audience enters the theater they are drawn into the atmosphere of the show. Voices are hushed, cell phones are turned off and bags are stashed under seats.

During the few minutes before the show started, I examined my surroundings. The set was minimal — a platform beautifully painted to look like a marble

floor and a simple backdrop that reflected the triangle motif. The platform would later begin rotating, and huge doors would open at the back of the stage, imitating a set of palace gates to great effect.

This year's version of "Antigone" was advertised as an updated interpretation of the classic play, a new translation by Calvin classics professor Umit Dhuga. I wasn't sure what to expect, and to be honest, I was nervous. Ever seen Baz Luhrmann's abomination "Romeo + Juliet"? I was anticipating something horrific like that — retention of the old language but set in modern times with strange costumes. But what I got was a tasteful rendition of this beloved play.

I don't know if I would exactly call this version "updated." True, it isn't your typical Greek aesthetic — Corinthian columns, a dais and throne, white togas and strappy sandals — but other than the set and the costumes, it is pretty traditional. Togas are

See "Greek," page 11

Shoebox blessings gathered

Operation Christmas Child comes to Calvin, collects gifts

BY ANDREW STEINER
Head Copy Editor

Founded in 1970, Samaritan's Purse is a non-denominational evangelical organization dedicated, in its own words, to following "Christ's command by going to the aid of the world's poor, sick and suffering." Active in countries around the world including Haiti, Sudan and Bolivia, Samaritan's Purse provides food and medical assistance to communities stricken by violent conflict, disease and natural disaster.

But at this time of year, one arm of the organization focuses on acts of compassion of a different kind. Operation Christmas Child gathers Christmas gifts to ship out to children living in poverty. Along with the gifts, which

may include such basic accoutrements as shoes and number two pencils, the children are given copies of "The Greatest Gift of All," a booklet that lays out the message of the gospel in an accessible way. Children who express interest can also be enrolled in a discipleship program offered at the local churches that distribute the presents.

This year, student senate and INTRO, the student-run international reconciliation organization, are co-sponsoring an Operation Christmas Child collection on campus. Next week Monday through Friday, students are welcomed to stop by the student development office (located in the Commons Annex) where they will find gift guidelines and shoe boxes to fill. Student development staff will be available to assist students in packing their boxes from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. each

day, though ready-to-go boxes may be dropped off at any time throughout the day.

For students wanting to pack their own shoe boxes, www.samaritanpurse.org offers suggestions based on age and gender. Givers are encouraged to include a \$7 donation to cover the cost of international shipping as well as a personal note, if they desire.

Izabella McMillon received a snow globe through Operation Christmas Child while growing up in Romania under Ceausescu at a time when possessing a Bible was illegal. Now living in North Carolina, McMillon serves as a distribution organizer for Christmas Child. She believes the gifts and the message that accompanies them can offer hope to children living in potentially hopeless situations today. "It touched my life so many years ago ...," she said. "God is going to change their lives too."

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Poetry in motion

LIBBY STILLE
Staff Writer

Motionpoems, a Minnesota-based coalition of poets and filmmakers that makes recently published poems into short films, chose English professor Lew Klatt's poem, "Andrew Wyeth, Painter, Dies at 91," to represent visually for its 2012 season.

Artist Tom Jacobsen chose Klatt's poem to animate, and Klatt read his poem for the video. It runs for less than a minute and a half, features sepia pen-and-ink illustrations and can be found on Vimeo.

It was a "labor of love" for the artist, according to Klatt. Jacobsen illustrates in his spare time and receives no compensation for his work with Motionpoems.

Motionpoems began in 2009 when poet Todd Boss and animator/producer Angella Kassube united to create a short film of one of Boss' poems after meeting in a coffee house poetry reading in St. Paul, Minn.

Motionpoems releases 12 poems a year in a public screening in Open Book, a bookstore in downtown Minneapolis.

The theme of 2012 is a selection of poems from "The Best American Poetry of 2011," which features Klatt's poem, among other contemporary works.

To form the 2012 Motionpoems season, 40 of the 75 poems featured in "The Best American Poetry of 2011" were sent to 12 video artists. Each artist chose a poem to make into a short film.

Klatt received an email from Boss alerting him that his poem had been selected. He asked Klatt to sign a contract, where, "basically, you give up the artistic rights," he said.

Some poets have no contact after that with the illustrator, but,

Klatt said, "They asked me to send an audio of the poem." Klatt did 12 or 13 takes in a recording studio on Calvin's campus, and Jacobsen chose his favorite to use.

Klatt attended the 2012 Motionpoems premier on Oct. 25 and met Boss and others. He is working on obtaining a grant to host a showing of a Motionpoems season on Calvin's campus.

Klatt was excited to be chosen; he thinks Motionpoetry's concept of a visual poem "makes poetry more accessible since it is delivered in a different, [yet] familiar way. ... People are inundated with film their whole life, so it creates another portal for them to access the poem."

He encourages all people, including college students, to read poetry, even if it may seem difficult. "Because we don't know how it works, we don't get into it," he said. "We need to be trained."

Klatt emphasizes that poetry is not a "high stakes commitment" and hopes all students, including non-English majors, will try some sort of poetry class, even after college. "Hopefully all of our lives we'll be involved in

continued education to grow as human beings," he said.

For tastes of poetry, Klatt recommends looking at "Poetry Magazine" online (www.poetry-foundation.org). The magazine publishes poetry from the "simple or trite to the complex and abstract" as well as articles on the artistic medium of poetry, Klatt said. The website also links users to events, interviews and sign-up forms for newsletters and poems of the day.

Motionpoems also has a newsletter as well as archives of all past videos available for free on its website, www.motionpoems.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVIN.EDU

Klatt's poem was recently adapted as a short film.

Test standards revised

MARISSA BEVERSLUIS
Staff Writer

Calvin students who grew up in Michigan may remember having to take those dreaded standardized tests, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), throughout elementary, middle and high school. And now they're getting more difficult; starting this fall, students will need to score higher than in past years in order to be considered "proficient."

The MEAP and the MME are achievement tests used statewide to measure how students are doing in basic subjects and to see whether or not they are on track to be successful throughout the rest of their schooling and beyond.

This September, the State Board of Education of Michigan decided to raise the bar when it comes to assessing student scores on these exams. Students are put into one of four categories — advanced, proficient, partially proficient or not proficient — based on the number of questions they answer correctly. In the past, students had to answer only 39 percent of questions correctly in order to be labeled proficient in a subject. Now that standard has been raised so that students must correctly answer about 65 percent of questions to be considered proficient. These "cut scores," as they are called, have been updated because the old standards were not seen as rigorous enough to indicate whether students would be career- or college-ready after high school.

State superintendent of public instruction Mike Flanagan

explained that the old standards were put in place back when the economy was based on industrial manufacturing and only basic knowledge was needed in order to get a good job after high school. The economy and the skills needed to be successful in the current workforce have changed dramatically since then, and the new standards reflect this.

On Nov. 3, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) re-released the test scores from the past four years after adjusting them to the new standards. This was done to show how schools have been doing recently in preparing their students. The results came as a shock to many. Of course, raising the requirements to pass a test will obviously cause the amount of students who passed it to drop, but the change was dramatic: The MDE reports that third grade math scores in 2010 went from 95 percent proficient with the old cut scores to 35 percent proficient with the new. The MME, which is taken each spring by 11th graders, saw a sharp decline as well, with the percentage of students passing the math section dropping from 52 to only 27, according to the Grand Rapids Press.

It seems that many Michigan schools have a daunting task ahead of them as they work toward the new standards, but educators are hopeful that these updated scores will help spark changes in schools to help children do better. "We have to be honest with ourselves about where we are in preparing our kids for the reality of today's global economy," said Flanagan, according to the MDE's website. "These updated scores, while they may be difficult to accept, will help lead Michigan forward. Just looking good is not better than being good."

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The presidential search committee met Wednesday to continue discussing the narrowed pool of candidates from our first round of interviews. We are contacting references and preparing for a second round of interviews later this semester, and continuing to pray for discernment and guidance as we move through the process.

We are excited about our pool of candidates who are considering serving Calvin College as its ninth president, and are praying daily for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this complicated decision. We covet your prayers as well. We believe God is present and directing this process, and that we have nothing to fear, so please also be free from anxiety, as we are working hard to maintain transparency and accountability with the Calvin community and its concerns. As Professor Holberg reminded the faculty at the recent faculty assembly, "Cast all your cares on the Lord, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

As always, we welcome your input and feedback. Questions and comments can be sent to the confidential email address presidentsearch@calvin.edu, and you can receive prayer updates through our Facebook page, "Praying for the Calvin College Presidential Search." Thanks for your support and participation. We as a committee are grateful for Calvin's continuous involvement in this important and exciting process.



Campus Safety Report

Saturday, 11/5

- Campus safety took a report of harassment from a student claiming to have received unwanted attention from another student, who had been following the former on and off for several months. Information was obtained from both students regarding the unwanted attention. Both students were advised to stay away from the other. The information was forwarded to judicial affairs for further action.

Sunday, 11/6

- Campus safety officers responded to the third floor of Veenstra Hall to assist residence life employees with a violation of the student conduct code concerning alcohol. Officers made contact with three students who acknowledged consuming alcohol. All three students were administered portable breath tests with the assistance of the Grand Rapids Police Department. The information on all three students was forwarded to judicial affairs for further action.

Sunday, 10/30

- Campus safety discovered several empty alcohol containers in the Kalsbeek-Huizengavan Reken parking lot. The containers were in a box that also had the name of a student on it. Officers interviewed the student, who denied knowledge of the origin of the alcohol containers. The information on the student was forwarded to residence life for further investigation.

Thursday, 11/3

- Campus safety took a report of a larceny of personal property from outside the main entrance to the Hekman Library. On Nov. 2, the victim had left his skateboard outside the main entrance and gone into the library at 10 p.m. When he exited the Library at 11:30 p.m. the skateboard was missing. The area was searched, but the skateboard was not located.

Senate Corner

What's up with Fieldhouse hours on Sunday?

Several years ago, student senate began a push to open the Fieldhouse on Sunday. Six years ago we were allowed to open the Fieldhouse on Sunday for several hours if senators staffed the front desk. Five years ago the Fieldhouse began staffing its own hours on Sunday. Hours on Sunday have always run from Oct. 15 to March 16. The reasoning is that as the days get colder and shorter students are more likely to run/work out in the Fieldhouse rather than going outside. The fitness center is currently open from 1-5 p.m. on Sundays and will remain so until March 16, after which you might as well go outside anyway.

What's up with ReigKnight this Saturday?

Every year, student senate runs a year-long campaign on issues that we deem necessary for students to be aware of. In the past, we have focused on issues such as poverty, sex-trafficking and the like. Realizing we tend to pay more attention to external issues, this year we decided to look a little more inward and run with a spiritual emphasis campaign. We will be hosting a monthly **Night of Worship**, the second of which comes up:

WHEN? This Saturday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m.
WHERE? CFAC Recital Hall

This will be two hours in the presence of God to worship and give him praise as we know how: without fear and unhindered by rules, norms and tradition but spurred on by the joy we feel just being in his presence. Come to the Night of Worship and join student senate in "re-igKnight-ing" our lives our campus, and our community with the fire of Christ!

Middle class marches on downtown

EVERY JOHNSON
 Staff Writer

These days, evidence of our nation's struggling economy is everywhere. Everyone has been affected by inflation, unemployment or budget cuts in some way or another. We see homeless people on the streets, pay more for gas, try to find a way to fund our education and worry about being hired after graduation. This weekend in Grand Rapids, some of those who have been affected tried to make their voices heard as they protested the decisions of Michigan governor Rick Snyder and the state legislature.

Snyder has been under fire for various policies, including his cuts to education, taxing of pensions and emergency leadership legislation, which the protestors believe privileges the wealthy over the middle class.

"Today's march was intended to protest job losses, education cuts and an increasing tax burden on individuals," said one of the organizers of the Death of the Middle Class March that took place downtown on Saturday. The march was organized by a group

of disgruntled Grand Rapids residents who are associated with We are the People Grand Rapids. They spread the word about the event via Facebook and more than 300 protesters came to take part in the march.

The marchers wore all black and looked solemn as they made their way through downtown, past shops and Christmas decorations, in a mock funeral procession. They carried plain, black coffins and styrofoam tombstones

They recently lost their home because they could no longer afford to make payments and are now renting while they try to recover from their losses. Corrie's brother, Ron Wood, is also struggling in these hard times. He currently lives with his sister.

"And right down to the whole Republican thing of not doing a thing — they refuse to do anything except keep a focus on getting Obama out of office," Wood said.

Joyce Clark, a local librarian, said that she has seen the labor unions begin to dissipate. "The middle class is disappearing," she said. "It's on its way out. The middle class is what made our country great."

One of the stories that hits home is Pam Boomer's. "I've got a 21-year-old son who is unemployed," she said. "I'm kind of looking for the future for him by coming here. He's busting

his butt to find something, but hasn't been able to."

Will the voices of the people make a difference or fall on deaf ears? Will this inspire changes or spark the right debate. With the unrest all over the country, it is getting hard to ignore the anger and fear of the American people whose futures are uncertain.



FILE PHOTO

West Michigan residents protest Governor Snyder's economic policies downtown last weekend.

with R.I.P. and messages such as "Middle Class," "K-12 Funding" and "Good Jobs," written on them. Others carried signs saying, for example, "Purge the 1 percent."

Some of those who were involved spoke about how the economy has affected their lives. Corrie and Steve Van Ravenswaay were among those who spoke out.

Weekly Calendar Events

<p>11 FRIDAY</p> <p><i>Veteran's Day</i></p> <p>4:30 p.m. Volleyball NCAA Regionals 5:00 p.m. Men's Soccer NCAAs 7:00 p.m. "Exploration of Aesthetics" opens at the DAAC 7:30 p.m. Antigone Performance 8:00 p.m. Capella Concert</p> 	<p>12 SATURDAY</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Men's Soccer NCAAs 7:00 p.m. Re-IgKnight Worship 7:00 p.m. Volleyball NCAA Regionals 7:30 p.m. Antigone Performance 8:00 p.m. Film Arts - Adam's Apples 8:00 p.m. Wind Ensemble Concert 9:00 p.m. CARE & David Bazan in concert</p>	<p>13 SUNDAY</p> <p><i>National Young Reader's Day</i></p>  <p>8:00 p.m. LOFT, Chapel</p>	<p>14 MONDAY</p> <p><i>National American Teddy Bear Day</i></p> 
<p>TUESDAY 15</p> <p><i>America Recycles Day</i></p>  <p>3:30 p.m. Asian Studies Lecture 5:00 p.m. Articles due to Chimes</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY 16</p> <p><i>Birthday of the Roman emperor Tiberius</i></p>  <p>7:00 p.m. SMAC Lessons, Hoogenboom 280</p>	<p>THURSDAY 17</p> <p><i>Homemade Bread Day</i></p>  <p>12:00 p.m. Noontime Series 12:00 p.m. Volleyball NCAA Nationals 7:30 p.m. Alvin Plantinga Lecture</p>	<p>FRIDAY 18</p> <p>12:00 p.m. Volleyball NCAA Nationals 12:00 p.m. Men's Soccer NCAAs 5:30 p.m. Men's Basketball Tip-Off Tourney</p>

Rhinos transported to new home

BY ALLISON SCHEPERS
Sci-Tech Editor

The sight of a rhinoceros suspended upside down in mid-air is definitely not something one sees everyday. However, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) did exactly this, transporting a herd of 19 endangered black rhinoceroses from South Africa's Eastern Cape to the country's Limpopo province.

Rhinos are often hunted for their ivory horns. Poachers invade safaris and animal preserves to kill them. According to statistics from the WWF, over 340 rhinos have been killed already this year, up from 333 total last year, 196 of these deaths in South Africa's Kruger National Park. Rhinos' ivory horns are worth more than gold in the black market. Sixteen of the rhinos killed in 2011 have been black rhinos, which are classified as “critically endangered.”

Last month, the WWF and the International Rhinoceros Foundation declared a species of Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*) extinct, after a rhino was found with a gunshot to its head and its horn missing. Another subspecies of Javan rhino may exist in Vietnam, but less than 50 remain.

The WWF Black Rhino Range Expansion Project has rescued over 120 rhinos in the past eight years. The organization aims to move the animals to a habitat that will be safe from poachers, and because the rhinos were in such a remote area, military helicopters were required to access the animals. The animals were tranquilized before the 20-minute, 10-mile journey. The helicopter transport procedure has been previously tested using elephants, demonstrating that the procedure was both humane and effective.

WWF team leader Jacques Flamand explained, “Previously rhinos were either transported by lorry over very difficult tracks or airlifted in a net. This new procedure is gentler on the darted rhino because it shortens the time it has to be kept asleep with drugs. The respiration is not as compromised as it can be in a net, and it avoids the need for travel in a crate over terrible tracks.”

Veterinarians are carefully monitoring the relocated rhinos, who are enjoying a more spacious breeding ground.



Top — a veterinarian assists a rhino after transport. Bottom — To prevent poaching, a herd of rhinos was transported to a new habitat by military helicopter.

Spotify has potential

BY JON HIELKEMA
Staff Writer

Unlike most music services (e.g. iTunes, eMusic, Rhapsody) that start in the United States and take many months or years to cross the pond to the old world, Spotify was something different.

It was born in Europe in 2006, the creation of a pair of entrepreneurs named Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon. The service offered an innovative model that record labels, until now, were unwilling to embrace in the largest music market in the West, the United States.

The service, and its front-end interface, have both now landed in the United States. Like another British invasion a few decades ago, this has caused a great deal of excitement (poofy-haired teenyboppers screeching not yet confirmed this time).

So, is the service worth your while, and how does it compare to other services that offer streaming? I've been using it for a couple of months now (on Mac OS X, though I understand it's nearly identical to the Windows version), and think that while the software's interface has several areas in need of refinement, and there are concerns over the integration with Facebook, it has a promising future in America.

Download the Spotify app, and you'll be presented with a prompt to either create a new account or use Facebook Connect to log in.

Spotify, from top to bottom, is deeply connected to Facebook if you have an account. I used my Facebook account since it meant one fewer password to remember.

Spotify's main interface has borrowed nearly every aspect from iTunes. If you've ever used a music player application on a computer, you'll know what to do.

There are categories for organizing tracks on the left side along with an adjustable thumbnail displaying album art. The track playing shows on the bottom of the window

and there is a search field on the top left, and occupying most of the space is the main window for albums and track lists. On the right side there is a social media connection.

All of your Facebook friends who have linked to Spotify are there, and you can look at their public playlists, send messages and view their profile pictures.

Spotify as a service presents a compelling but imperfect alternative to established streaming music subscription services like Rhapsody.

First, though most major new releases can be found, there are big gaps in the library. Arcade Fire, Mumford and Sons and many other artists not under major label umbrellas cannot be found in the store except for a few stray tracks or albums.

So if one's listening tastes skew toward indie, consider carefully before using. That's not to say the selection for that kind of music isn't huge — it is — but there are annoying gaps that Rhapsody and iTunes will be able to provide.

If you use the free service, you also have to deal with ads.

Upgrading to the unlimited package (\$4.99 per month) removes the ads and the monthly time limit (which is there, but vague and curiously unmentioned on the company's web site at spotify.com).

Premium (\$9.99 per month) allows the playing of tracks while offline and the use of a suite of smartphone apps (I was unable to test this for the review).

For \$9.99 per month, you can get unlimited streaming from Rhapsody with a more comprehensive selection, the ability to permanently buy high-quality tracks, and a slightly friendlier interface. So, the Spotify premium service may be too expensive for what it offers.

In my experience with the free service, though, it offers a compelling and no-cost solution to music streaming with minimal ad intrusion.

If you can stomach advertising and don't mind running into a few missing albums here and there, Spotify can help fill that specific need. Hopefully it will improve over time, but what we have now is highly useful and loaded with potential.

Michigan State professor invents device to identify plant ills

BY GENEVA LANGELAND
Staff Writer

Crop blights, rusts, musts and molds that plague farmers around the world can now be detected quickly and inexpensively, thanks to a device developed at Michigan State University.

Syed Hashsham teaches civil and environmental engineering at MSU. He headed up the team that developed the device, known as Gene-Z. This inexpensive, handheld gadget relies on microarrays and smartphone technology to detect and diagnose plant pathogens, all without having to leave the field.

Farmers in the United States and around the world lose massive amounts of money and sleep each year thanks to plant pathogens that cripple or destroy their crops. Usually, they have no easy way of detecting these pathogens before the arrival of damaging symptoms. Distant labs can take weeks or months to process samples, and the diagnoses often arrive too late.

Gene-Z, however, can provide detailed answers in less than half an hour.

The secret lies in a tidy piece of engineering known as a microfluidic chip. These versatile, dog-tag-sized tools are sometimes called “a lab on a chip” because they perform complex activities such as sorting cells or identifying disease antibodies in a blood sample.

These chips are becoming increasingly common in developing nations, used by scientists who often have little access to expensive laboratory equipment.

To understand how microchip arrays function, consider one of Hashsham's past

projects. Before turning to plant pathogens, he used Gene-Z to analyze blood samples for indicators of cancer. Cancer cells can

nucleic acid chains that act as genetic regulators. Researchers can build microchips packed with single-stranded nucleic acids

that correspond to the common cancer microRNAs they're trying to detect.

When they wash a blood sample over one of these chips, microRNA strands in the sample will bind to their complementary strands built into the chip. By mapping out which strands on the chip matched up with strands in the sample, researchers can determine whether or not the microRNA collection indicates the presence of cancer.

In a similar way, Hashsham's lab can create microarrays on

chips that correspond to proteins or nucleotides commonly present in samples contaminated by a variety of bacteria, viruses or fungi pathogenic to plants. When they expose the chip to a sample from, say, a soybean leaf coated in an unidentified fungus, the chip will flag the presence of whatever indicators might help identify the scourge.

The Gene-Z device then sends the results of the microarray to a smartphone or tablet, which will present the farmer or scientist with the identification, genotype and amount of any pathogens present. And all this happens in 10 to 30 minutes.

The device isn't yet available to the public, but Gene-Z has already aided MSU researchers in detecting a cucumber disease in the US.

Hashsham is eager to see where else his device might travel. “With this application,” he says, “we can speed the analysis of pathogens in plants, water and food with the ultimate goal of improving the safety and security of food supplies anywhere in the world.”



A device invented by an engineering professor at Michigan State University could identify diseases in crops such as corn.

produce a variety of distinctive microRNAs, single-stranded

Rising tide against censorship in China

BY JOSH DELACY
Staff Writer

Murong Xuecun has established himself as one of China's most famous novelists and critics of censorship. He acquired this position gradually over the past decade by means of the Internet, distributing his most inflammatory writing online.

Murong Xuecun (pronounced "moo-rong shweh-tswen") is the pen name of Hao Qun, 37. Murong regularly writes about subjects that deliberately defy the Chinese Communist Party's censorship policies.

According to The New York Times, his work is "racy and violent and nihilistic." His novels describe corruption among businessmen and government officials. Characters take bribes, drink alcohol, sleep with prostitutes, gamble, and fight. Murong's friends have even intro-

duced him as a pornographic writer at certain dinner parties. These subjects place Murong at odds with China's censorship policies. Although the government has gradually relaxed its stringent publishing regulations, authors frequently encounter strong resistance when attempting to publish provocative work.

In his own words, the state considers Murong a "word criminal."

In response, he has worked to become one of China's most vocal opponents of censorship.

He addresses political topics via his blog and Twitter-like microblog, which have attracted 1.1 million followers. Murong releases his novels online, chapter-by-chapter.

According to The New York

cal officials denounced the book. Harvey Tomlinson translated an uncensored version into English, "Leave Me Alone: A Novel of Chengdu." This translation won the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2008.

Murong's use of the Internet has inspired other Chinese authors to do the same. This has increased publishing companies' abilities to find and publish a diverse range of writers.

These changes have helped contribute to publishing reform and censorship relaxation as the Communist Party wrestles with the issue. But although censorship has declined, it still exists.

In response to the Chinese Communist Party's continued censorship, Murong has used his blog to criticize censorship practices. When he was banned from delivering a particular speech at a literary awards ceremony last year, he turned the speech into an act of protest. Instead of speaking at the ceremony, he simply walked on stage, zipping motion across his lips, and left.

The text of the banned speech appeared online later; in it, Murong wrote, "Chinese writing exhibits symptoms of a mental disorder." He continued to call censored writing "castrated writing."

But Murong criticizes himself as well. He admits that he engages in self-censorship, for which he calls himself a "coward."



Murong Xuecun is a rising voice against censorship.

Times, this serialization increases excitement among readers and lets Murong incorporate reader feedback into later chapters.

When he finishes a novel Murong then signs with a publisher for a print version. These versions, however, are subject to censorship and are not as complete as his online work.

Murong's first novel was called a "cyber-trendsetter" in 2004. It is set in the city of Chengdu, and lo-

Under pressured Greek economy, many middle class families struggle

BY GREG KIM
Staff Writer

The eurozone has reached a boiling point in its recent dealing with the Greek debt crisis with leaders both of the zone and Greece entrenched in intense — even night-long — deliberations to abate the Greek debt crisis, which in recent months has brought the nation dangerously close to defaulting on its nearly \$470 billion worth of debt.

Last month, the EU ratified a bailout plan, over three months in the making, of \$178 billion — Greece's second in the last two years. The first payment of \$11 billion was thereafter approved in an attempt to steer Greece away from defaulting on its loans — or even worse, leaving the EU, which would plunge the global economy into a deeper recession.

The nation is teetering precariously close to a financial meltdown, not just for itself but for major European actors, such as Britain, Germany and France, as all have substantial outstanding loans to Greece.

However, in response to the decision made by the EU, Greek prime minister George Papandreou, to the shock of investors and financial actors worldwide, told EU leaders he would leave it up to a general referendum to decide whether or not to accept the bailout cash.

This act enraged eurozone leaders and domestic actors to the point of pressuring Papandreou to step down, as the referendum would have prolonged the bailout process for at least another two months. The EU promptly decid-

ed to withhold the allocated bailout cash of \$11 billion, potentially putting the nation of Greece, foreign investors with significant outstanding loans — mainly French, British and German — and the international economic condition all on the line.

Papandreou withdrew his referendum plan last Thursday in the face of such mounting pressures. The next day, a vote of confidence was put in motion in the Greek parliament, attempting to oust Papandreou. This motion failed to gain the majority vote as Papandreou publicly promised to step down before the vote could take place.

Amidst the rising pressure from civilians against Greek's austerity measures (policies implemented by the Greek government to counter the debt crisis, that include increasing taxes and reducing spending), vocal opposition parties and cash-withholding EU leaders, Papandreou ultimately agreed to step down in place of a new prime minister. He also pledged, in the meantime, to work for a national unity government.

In keeping his promise, Papandreou and opposition coalition leader Antonis Samaras have presented a mandate for a 15-week interim government governed by a new set of leaders to be decided within the

upcoming week.

Its first order of business is to pass the \$11 billion bailout cash from the EU through parliament to avoid defaulting on its loans, which does not appear to be a problem with the two large parties represented by Papandreou and Samaras in cooperation at the moment.



Angelos Belitsakos, a store owner, is among the many struggling.

They have also set the election date for the new prime minister to be around Feb. 19 of next year.

Though coming to the surface in recent months, the Greek debt crisis is not the first of its kind in the current global financial recession. In Europe alone, Portugal and Ireland have also had to receive bailouts from the eurozone as massive amounts of debt have left the governments nearly bankrupt, and in Ireland, officially so.

In joining the EU, nations cannot resort to national institutions for bailout like the U.S., which provided itself with a stimulus package (\$787 billion) nor can they artificially devalue their currency to regain economic competition. Therefore, the special supranational commission,

the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), had to bail out Portugal, Ireland and now Greece for the second time.

In response to the debt situation of numerous eurozone nations as a result of the global financial crisis, the EU has set up a special unit in charge of calculating and negotiating bailouts

for countries in need of financial assistance calling it the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). Its budget currently stands at \$1 trillion.

A look at Greece's financial history over the past decade shows current debt

its path to the crisis.

Even before joining the EU in 2001, the Greek government spent heavily, and its financial infrastructure was rife with tax evasion. Spending only increased, especially after Greece hosted the 2004 Athens Olympics and undertook other large projects, widespread tax evasion continuing all the while.

When the global financial crisis struck in 2008, Greece was especially hard-hit. By the end of 2009, Finance Minister Sachinidis announced that Greece's debt had reached \$442 billion, which, according to the BBC, was the greatest amount of debt in the country's modern history.

Terrorism after Iraq War?

BY CHRISTINE BENNETT
Staff Writer

President Obama announced on Oct. 21 that, apart from a handful to guard the embassy, all American troops will be brought home from Iraq before the end of the year. Former negotiations with Iraq had explored the possibility of having some troops remain as military trainers, but while Iraq had agreed to this idea, they refused to grant military trainers immunity, a point which the American government was adamant upon.

While Americans are generally glad to see what is officially their longest war finally draw to a close, there are also worries that al-Qaeda might reestablish its influence once the American army had left.

It is true that al-Qaeda in Iraq has taken some major hits since the American invasion. The counterinsurgency strategy adopted by the United States, for example, has led to tribal groups cooperation against the terrorist group. The deaths of important leaders were also particularly damaging to the group. Their founder and leader Osama bin Laden was killed in May, after being discovered in Pakistan. Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, second in command after bin Laden's death, was also killed in August. And the turmoil in Syria has devastated their traditional supply of foreign fighters.

However, al-Qaeda has proven quite resilient to these attacks and has also been learning to change their tactics in Iraq. The New York Times reports that al-Qaeda still conducts over 30 attacks

a week in Iraq, while "[carrying] out a large-scale strike every four to six weeks." Their efforts to recruit Iraqis have also increased, especially as the bad economy has provided a mass of rather susceptible young people. That al-Qaeda has been attempting to form an alliance with the Baath Party of Saddam Hussein has also been discomfiting, but experts highly doubt that al-Qaeda holds any high office in the Iraqi government.

Concerns of whether the Iraqi government is capable of governing the country and dealing with the al-Qaeda threat on its own remains. Over the summer al-Qaeda had attempted to prompt sectarian violence by capturing and executing a number of Shiite pilgrims. Local security forces responded by conducting raids and arrested several people in the following days, but they also angered local authorities. After the intervention of Prime Minister Maliki, the local authorities settled for a mere lawsuit, an idea which would once have been completely unthinkable.

Alternatively, intelligence-sharing between American forces and Iraqi forces will be greatly reduced with the withdrawal of American troops. This, some fear, may especially hinder their nighttime abilities, since they used to rely quite heavily on their American counterparts for transportation and intelligence.

The White House announced last Friday there will be a meeting on Dec. 12 between President Obama and Prime Minister Maliki to discuss "strategic partnership." Some officials explained that America was still hoping to form some sort of military cooperation with Iraq in which American Special Forces will continue to train and assist their Iraqi counterparts.

At that point, the debt amounted to 113 percent of its GDP, well over the 60 percent limit set by the EU.

February of 2010, Greece adopted severe austerity measures to counter the debt crisis, sparking riots from protestors.

By May, the financial situation had worsened, and the EU and the International Monetary Fund presented their first bailout package of \$150 billion with Greece's guarantee that it would implement austerity measures.

The following summer, in July of 2011, the second bailout plan was already on the table. The EFSF's budget was increased to 1 trillion € and by October, a 130 billion € or \$178 billion bailout plan was outlined for Greece with a 50 percent cut of profits for private investors.

This plan provides for the present outstanding \$11 billion payment, which has been stalled by Papandreou's announcement of a referendum and the subsequent domestic and international fallout.

However, the recent, and hopefully smooth, transition of power from Papandreou to the interim government as well as the soon-to-come formation of a crucial majority coalition in Greece have demonstrated the will of the country's political leaders to temporarily set aside differences to work out the immediate problems.

However, masses of Greek citizens, who have lost jobs and businesses and are out on the streets in protest against the severe austerity measures, the progress will mean little until there is a visible change in their circumstances.

Cain attempts to move past allegations

Accusations of sexual harassment dog the GOP candidate

BY RACHEL HEKMAN
Staff Writer

GOP presidential hopeful Herman Cain says he's moved on, but neither his opponents nor his own party are following.

Last week, two women accused Cain of sexual harassment which had eventually led them to leave their jobs at the National Restaurant Association where Cain was the president for a few years in the 1990s.

The women assert that the association gave them large sums of money with the agreement that they would not discuss the reason behind their resignations.

Two more women have now also accused Cain of similar offenses. The latest, Sharon Bialek, is the only one to be legally allowed to speak publicly against Cain, as the other three signed confidentiality agreements.

Bialek has used this freedom for her advantage, describing in no uncertain terms what she alleges Cain did to her: when they were in a car as colleagues together in 1997, Cain reached under her skirt and attempted to grope her, and when she pushed his hand away, he took her head and pulled it down towards his crotch, saying that if she wanted a job, she'd

have to comply.

Though she did not file a complaint at the time, Bialek admits regretting the decision and is using her opportunity to speak "on behalf of all women who are sexually harassed in the workplace but do not come out of fear or retaliation or public humiliation."

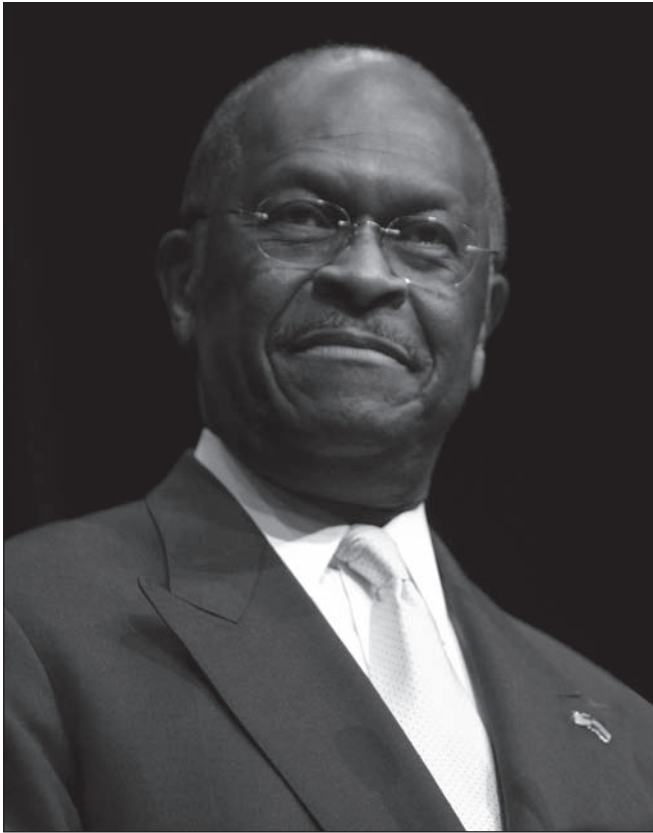
not only feel violated physically and emotionally, but the perpetrator of the assault is often a man in authority over her, leading most victims to feel that they can't report the behavior.

As such, less than 40 percent of all victims take any action whatsoever. Most women try to bury the memory and move on with their lives, rather than face the months or years fighting courts and thousands of dollars in legal fees it takes to bring any sort of legal action against the offender.

Cain and his campaign have been consistent in their denouncement of all the claims brought against him, and even more consistent in their ignoring of questions put to him, but the press and even the Republican Party are urging him to face the charges and explain himself. Meanwhile, Cain's supporters are redoubling their donations, but Republican strategists say this influx of cash contributions will only last for so long before Cain will have to face the allegations.

Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi told "Meet the Press" this Sunday that "people need to know what the facts are."

It seems that at this point, the question is no longer "Did Cain do it?" but what effect the scandal will have on his bid for the White House next year.



Presidential candidate Herman Cain claims to have moved past the allegations of sexual harassment brought against him, but many remain skeptical.

Cain's supporters accuse Bialek and her fellow victims of attempting to sabotage Cain's presidential campaign, citing their timely accusations.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is an extremely sensitive issue; women who are harassed

New report suggests that Iran can produce nuclear weapons

BY JOSEPH MATHESON
Nat-World Co-Editor

A report to be released later this week by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will report that Iran has the technological capacity to master all of the critical steps required to build a nuclear weapon. However, due in part to Iran's restrictions on inspectors, the case is not completely conclusive, nor is it clear that Iran is actually taking strategic steps to build nuclear weapons.

The United States has, for the most part, chosen to stay uninvolved in the immediate debate, wary of comparisons to Iraq. Poor information from intelligence agencies led to the invasion of Iraq under the suspicion that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, which turned out not to be the case and led to sharp criticisms of American actions and loss of credibility for the American government.

The roles are reversed to some degree this time around, with the IAEA accelerating fears of an

Iranian nuclear weapon, rather than punching holes in the argument for invasion of Iraq.

Similar to last time, the report that Iran could or is likely to build a nuclear weapon is based on a great deal of conjecture, in-

the director of the IAEA, Yukia Amano, visited the White House on Oct. 26 to meet top security officials of the National Security Council, the administration declined to confirm that he had ever even been in the building.

Western diplomats briefed on the report say that it will contain much more information than previously released regarding efforts of Iran to build a nuclear weapon, including Iranian development of computer models of a nuclear warhead. However, they point out that the report doesn't seem to consider any other explanations than that Iran is seeking to develop a nuclear weapon.

Iran itself has repeatedly insisted that its nuclear program is intended only for peaceful energy purposes.

The report also indicates that Iran has only reached this ability through the aid of foreign scientists, especially by former Soviet scientists who may have taught the Iranians how to build high-precision detonators of the sort required to trigger a nuclear explosion.

The response from Iran has been fairly dismissive — Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Salehi suggested that the report is "100 percent political" and that the IAEA is "under pressure from foreign powers."

"Let them publish and see what happens," Salehi said.

A top Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami, said in the state-run media that the IAEA director should be wary of allowing the "disclosure of forged documents against Iran."

While the United States is still continuing its policy of economic

Difficult military cuts likely

BY DAVID RYOU
Nat-World Co-Editor

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has been put under much pressure by the Pentagon lately as he is forced to consider cutting military spending costs in the next 10 years in areas once thought untouchable. These areas include medical and retirement benefits, as well as the reduction in the number of troops abroad and weapons purchases.

Panetta, who was also a former White House budget chief, stated the difficulty behind making critical cuts to Pentagon spending, which have reached up to costs of \$700 billion per year since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 10 years ago.

With many members of Congress regularly defending military deployments and jobs within their own communities, Panetta's attempts at targeting these areas would be highly contested. Against strong opposition, Panetta has been looking into and considering other areas where spending-cut opportunities lie — such as reducing the number of troops placed in Europe, while offering to compensate for such losses by assisting NATO allies to improve or develop their own militaries. By doing so, the U.S. would be able to increase its efforts in Asia, which currently remains a high priority for President Obama and his administration.

With less than three weeks before the special bipartisan committee is expected to come up with a deficit-reduction plan, Panetta and the rest of the committee are pressured into making quick, crucial decisions because, should the committee hit a dead end and fail to find a way to reduce \$1.2 trillion in deficits, automatic cuts will come into effect, adding an additional \$500

billion to reductions over the next 10 years.

Such additional reductions, Panetta states, could be dangerous. He and several other members of Congress, specifically Republicans on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, are now putting together a legislation which will attempt to undo these "automatic cuts" across military programs.

The Defense Department's base operating budget is roughly \$530 billion with the rest of the \$170 billion being used to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. With U.S. troops pulling out of Iraq by the end of this year, total spending is expected to drop significantly.

However, Panetta stated that cuts in spending would not be enough to fix wasteful spending and inefficient investments. "There will be some huge political challenges," he said. "When you reduce defense spending, there's likely to be base closures, possible reduction in air wings."

Panetta also showed interest in making investments in other areas, along with his proposals in cuts. He showed strong approval in maintaining spending in areas that included developments in recent technology, such as unmanned aircraft or drones, which had been proven effective in recent years against fighting the Taliban.

"We're going to be developing a smaller, lighter, more agile, flexible joint force that has to conduct a full range of military activities that are necessary to defend our national interests," he stated.

Given that the U.S. defense budget accounts for 43 percent of the total military expenditures of the entire world, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, as well as the United States' burgeoning debt problem, efficiency may be a major new goal for the military.

sanctions on Iran, some U.S. politicians have suggested that the United States' current cautious attitude towards Iran is a move in the right direction. Texas Rep. Ron Paul has argued that Iran is not a credible threat to the United States.

one, arguing that we should be going even further. He is against even sanctions on Iran, opposing a bill passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week that would strengthen sanctions on Iran. "When you put on strong sanctions, those are acts of war," Paul said.

Instead, Paul suggests that the best way to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons or using them would be "maybe offering friendship to them." Instead of overreacting to this report, he suggests, we ought to extend the hand of friendship to the Iranians.

Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), however, urged increased pressure on Iran in response to the report. "The facts of the IAEA report make it clear that Iran has not been truthful about its nuclear program," he argued.

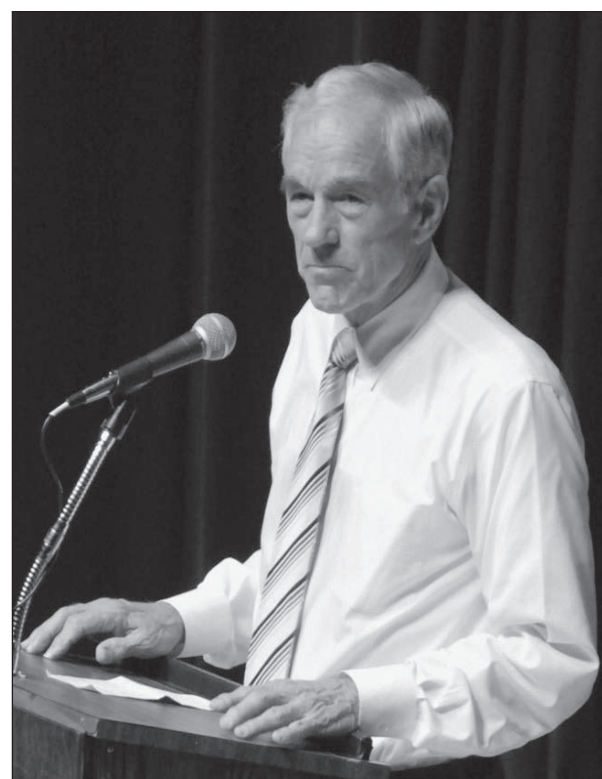
"The international community must continue to stand strong and increase pressure on Iran to comply with its international obligations. Iran's leaders know what they need to do, the question is how we ensure they start doing it."



Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Salehi calls the IAEA report "100 percent political."

tuition and sleuthing on the part of inspectors.

This time around, then, the United States is hoping to stay out of the process as much as possible to ensure that any conclusions are entirely the IAEA's. In fact, when



U.S. Representative Ron Paul argues that the report is "blown out of proportion."

"Iranians can't make enough gasoline for themselves," he said on "Fox News Sunday." "For them to be a threat to us and to anyone in the region, I think it's blown out of proportion."

He suggests that the current lack of response is the correct

“I’m fascinated with death...because really it’s one of the most human things that can happen to you, because it happens to everybody.”

—Bridgitte Keehl, “Calvin Artist,” pg. 11

Netflix dramatically changed

A less flexible option cause for major set backs

BY KATERINA PARSONS
Staff Writer

If I want to catch up on “Mad Men,” “Doctor Who,” or “The Office,” the episodes are all on Netflix Instant. Any time I want to, I can catch a classic movie like “On the Waterfront” or “Memento,” a popular recent movie like “Tron,” or even a hidden low-budget gem like “Sweet Land.”

While it isn’t perfect, it’s a pretty great thing. My family got Netflix about a year ago. Back then, it was only \$9.99 for unlimited streaming and as many DVDs as we could find the envelopes for and remember to send back. We loved it. For the price of two or three Blockbuster movies a month, we had a seemingly limitless DVD selection, and could also watch a decent selection of TV shows and movies on our computer wherever we were. We weren’t the only ones who thought this was a good deal. Early this year on a Brand Keys survey, Netflix came out on top of over 500 other brands to earn the highest rankings in customer loyalty.

Now, less than a year later, Netflix has lost over 800,000 customers, their stock has dropped 35%, and they’re being vilified everywhere from twitter to Saturday Night Live. I’m sure the employees at Netflix are shaking their heads. How did the most-loved company in America become so despised? A lot of this animosity started this past Sept. 1 when they put into place a new plan that split up their streaming and DVD-by-mail options, and increased the price for both. Gone are the days of unlimited DVDs and streaming for just \$9.99 a month. Now customers can choose one or the other for \$8, or choose both and pay \$16. Customers complained vocally about the abrupt 60 percent pay hike with no added benefits.

The outcry was big enough that just two weeks after the announcement, Netflix CEO Reed Hastings issued a public apology for the way things had been handled.

Said Hastings, “There is a difference between moving quickly — which Netflix has done very well for years — and moving too fast, which is what we did in this case.”

However, he also used the platform to announce that Netflix would focus on its more lucrative streaming-only option, and that the DVD service would be removed from the Netflix brand, given its own website, and renamed “Qwikster,” a name unfortunately evocative of the failed social network “Friendster.” Customers hated the changes. The outcry was so large that just a few weeks later Hastings issued another statement saying that the DVD-by-mail would stay under

the same name and on the same website.

Throughout this whole debacle, Netflix has slid firmly out of favor with its customers. Not only does Netflix no longer top the customer loyalty list, it has slipped beneath such competitors as Redbox and Blockbuster. Now Netflix faces an uncertain future. When it came on the scene at the turn of the millennium it was primarily a DVD-rental service. Now, 75 percent of its customers have the streaming option, either independently or in conjunction with its DVDs. Netflix has to cope with handling two services that are becoming increasingly different. And despite a recent upswing in the DVD-only option due to so many movie rental chains closing, the amount of people signing up for DVDs is becoming smaller and smaller over time.

Netflix also no longer has the monopoly on the streaming industry. Hulu has been increasing its options, and Netflix loses many of its customers to websites that stream pirated films. Another company looking to get in on the market is Amazon, which unveiled a video streaming option for their premium members this past February.

In fact, there are rumors that in the face of Netflix’s uncertain future, Amazon may look to buy them out, and combine their streaming libraries. But Amazon isn’t interested in Netflix’s DVDs by mail. The added taxes and rising costs of postage are making the service more and more cost-prohibitive. It may be that Netflix was looking to make itself more attractive to a buyer by splitting itself up. But due to the way they handled the split, they were unable to do it without upsetting their customers. Really, Qwikster isn’t a bad idea, just a poorly marketed one. It makes sense to separate the streaming and DVD sections of Netflix, especially as they phase DVDs out, and seek to broaden their streaming options. But thanks to a poor handling of the switch, they’ve angered millions of customers and set themselves months back.

Netflix is still a giant in the world of entertainment, but if they want to stay on top of the game, they need to tread carefully and seek more feedback from their customers before making dramatic changes. So, in the years to come will we continue to get those red envelopes in the mail, or curl up on the couch to watch a streamed “Phineas and Ferb” episode? Or will corporations like Amazon, Blockbuster and Hulu capitalize on customer anger to lure people to them instead? We’ve all seen Netflix grow gracefully from mailing company to instant video provider. Despite this rocky patch, I believe they can continue to adapt and grow: as long as they change quickly, but not too fast.

Healing Children of Conflict presents “Budrus”

This award-winning documentary chronicles a non-violent movement against destruction of a Palestinian village. The story of Ayed Morrar, the community organizer at the center of the film, offers the possibility of peaceful protest in a region rife with violence.

Showing Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m. in the Bytwerk Theatre

Electronic ‘Crazy Clown Time’ dark, eerie

Lynch’s first album continues reputation for creating bizarre, abstract creations

BY SAMANTHA WADE
Staff Writer

Like his best films, David Lynch’s debut solo album “Crazy Clown Time” shouldn’t really work. Its songs are weird, sometimes painfully obtuse; the veteran directors’ style is so ingrained in the counter-culture, he has his own adjective — Lynchian. And Lynchian is exactly what “Crazy Clown Time” is.

The album isn’t weird in a completely hopeless sense. It’s exactly what one would imagine a David Lynch album would sound like, title and all.

The record opens with “Pinky’s Brain,” which showcases guest vocals from the Yeah Yeah Yeah’s lead singer Karen O, giving Lynch a little more indie cred (as if he needed any).

Lynch takes it away with the rest of the album, and the 64-year-old’s wobbly croak of a voice is frequently manipulated to sound robotic or distant, or as if his mouth is stuffed with dinner rolls.

“Good Day” switches things up with a surge of house

synths and deceptively cheery lead vocals, processed beyond recognition.

“Noah’s Ark,” is a creepy electronica sequence that segues into the brutally guitar-heavy crunch of “Football Game,” a disarmingly shy tale of infidelity at ... you’ll never guess where.

By the time the record gets into its second half, the whole listening experience becomes rather daunting and exhausting. It’s a long album — just over 70 minutes — and really tries your patience.

Do yourself a huge favor by skipping “Strange and Unproductive Thinking,” a seven-plus-minute tirade of just that. Lynch’s newfound love of pseudo-philosophical nonsense sounds heaps more asinine coming from a robot’s voice.

The entire track derails the record’s accessibility with a monologue about dentists, existentialism and philosophy.

You’re better off with “Stone’s Gone Up,” an uptempo guitar groove reminiscent of a club track with some great keyboard textures over the outro. The down-tempo “These Are My Friends” kicks off the album’s dragging of a final act, but things pick up

at the very end with “She Rise Up,” a finale of industrial grind and synth.

Lynch gets away with things that no self-respecting artist would ever attempt to do on a serious note.

Outside of the director’s name, you’ve got a dark electronic album that is niche in its appeal, but will gain a wide audience because of its authorship.

The album isn’t for everyone of course; “Crazy Clown Time” works only if you are on the same wavelength as the man himself.

If you’re not a fan, or haven’t seen any of Lynch’s work, you’re not likely to “get” the album.

I know that sounds pretentious, but the work is a quintessentially Lynchian experience, without the frustrating non-plots of his films.

Sure, there’s a lot of filler and skip-worthy material, but the warm synths and woozy guitars create a debut album that is dark, unsettling and often confusing — which is to say, quite a bit like his films.

As a whole, the album makes a reasonable case for Lynch’s ability to wring something worthy out of whatever art form he chooses to tackle.

AMC’s newest attempts to resurrect Western TV

BY NICK KEELEY
Staff Writer

In recent memory, one genre that has seen some resurgence in American popular culture is the Western, as evidenced by last year’s “True Grit” and the acclaimed video game “Red Dead Redemption.” Building on that resurgence, cable channel AMC recently debuted “Hell on Wheels,” a new Western TV series based around revenge and corruption. Thanks to strong production values and solid acting, “Hell on Wheels” is off to a grim and promising start.

In “Hell on Wheels,” Anson Mount stars as Cullen Bohannon, a former Confederate soldier searching for the men who killed his wife in the aftermath of the Civil War. His search brings him to Iowa, where he takes part in the construction of the first Transcontinental Railroad. The construction of the railroad is the passion of Thomas Durant (Colm Meaney), a corrupt businessman who will stop at nothing to make a fortune.

The pilot also introduces several minor characters: Lilly Bell, widow of a railroad surveyor, is trying to escape an attack while a preacher, played by Tom Noonan, is attempting to establish a church in a town where the population is “one less every day.”

The pilot for “Hell on Wheels” is very grim, effectively conveying the dark nature of the time period and the Western genre. The grim tone is made possible by the show’s strong direction and production values.

David Von Ancken capably directs the pilot by heighten-

ing the intensity and conveying a violent tone, such as in the harrowing attack on Lily Bell’s camp by Native Americans. “Hell on Wheels” doesn’t hold back on showing intense and disturbing imagery, such as scalping and blood from gun, arrow and knife wounds.

The grim nature of the series is also conveyed through its superb cinematography. Drained of color to give the show a desolate look,

acters such as Joseph, a Native American who is born-again baptized, and Reverend Cole, who seem important but not necessary for the pilot, which is usually used to develop central characters. The lack of development for the majority of the pilot’s characters is also a flaw.

The only characters who receive any form of development are Cullen, Elam Ferguson, a former slave, and Daniel Johnson, a guest character filled with hatred for African-Americans. Despite its faults, the script capably sets the show’s ambitious story in motion and conveys the interesting theme of morality in a time of greed and corruption.

Along with its strong production values, “Hell on Wheels” features a solid cast. Mount capably portrays Cullen Bohannon, especially strong in conveying the pain of losing a loved one. Mount also fits the role of a hardened gunslinger well, finding a blend of violence and moral kindness.

Rapper-turned-actor Common does a solid job as Elam, conveying the anger of his past as a slave convincingly. Dominique McElligott makes the viewer feel for Lily in her time of grief, as well as root for her in her actions.

Meaney as the corrupt Durant doesn’t fare as well, over-the-top in his mannerisms to the point that he comes off as cartoonish.

Full of potential, AMC’s “Hell on Wheels” is a solid series improved by excellent production values and capable actors. Attempting to resurrect the TV Western, the show got off to a successful start, receiving the second best ratings for a premiere in AMC history, despite a tepid critical reception.

Grim and desolate in nature, “Hell on Wheels” is a series to watch out for this fall.



FILE PHOTO

the cinematography is a wonder to behold, as are the show’s sets and costumes, which accurately depict the West in 1865.

The weak link of “Hell on Wheels” in the early stages is its writing, specifically its characterization.

Written by show creators Joe and Tony Gayton, “Hell on Wheels” at the onset is overpopulated, so much so that it was hard at times to decipher that Cullen was the main character from the pilot.

This is evidenced by char-

Volleyball continues streak, clinches MIAA with tournament victories

BY MARK DEHAAN
 Staff Writer

Ending the regular season at 29-0, the Calvin volleyball team hosted the MIAA tournament as the number one seed. Just as in the regular season, the Knights crushed the competition on their way to a perfect regular season.

In the first game the Knights faced the Thunder of Trine. Trine came into the match with a 9-7 MIAA record and an overall record of 15-12. Calvin beat Trine in both meetings earlier in the year by scores of 25-13, 25-13 and 25-15 and 25-17, 28-26 and 25-21. With a trip to the MIAA Tournament Finals on the line, both teams came out swinging. The Knights and Thunder were tied at a score of 10-10 before Calvin was able to break away and claim the first set 25-15 victory.

Trine came out stronger in the second set, building an 18-12 lead. Calvin fought back, but was held off by two points as the Thunder pushed to a 23-20 lead. Led by senior Rebecca Kamp, the Knights retaliated tying the match at 23-23. After a back-and-forth exchange, Calvin won the set 28-26, going up two sets to none.

In the third set, Calvin used some strong serving and back row play to build a 19-10 lead. The Thunder were unable to come back from the deficit, and fell in

the third and final set of the game, 25-14. Leading the Knights to a three-set victory was the front line, composed of junior Lizzie Kamp and seniors Renee DeHaan and Rebecca Kamp. Lizze Kamp led the team with 11 kills while DeHaan added 10 and Rebecca Kamp added eight. The back line was phenomenal for Calvin, recording 43 digs in the contest, led by senior Kelly Gordon and sophomore Kristin Zietse, each with 11. Sophomore Megan Rietema added another nine digs and 33 assists. The win for the Knights set up a finals match-up with the Flying Dutch of rival Hope.

Calvin's two regular season match-ups against Hope had been some of the toughest of the MIAA season. The Knights defeated the Dutch at home 26-24, 25-20 and 25-16 on Sept. 28. For a late-season match, Calvin traveled to Holland, and was struggling out of the gate. However, the Knights were able to compose themselves enough to take victory in four sets with scores of 22-25, 25-16, 25-20 and 26-24.

Beating a team three times in a season is a feat, but with their perfect record on the line,

Calvin looked up to the challenge. The Knights jumped out in the first set,

Hope tied the set at nine. The Knights continued to fight and build up another lead, this one at 19-15. Calvin then used kills from seniors Rebecca Kamp and Erin VanderPlas to close out the set at 25-20, earning the three set victory and the MIAA Championship.

The Kamp sisters led the Knights with 14 kills apiece, with Rebecca posting a .765 attacking percentage, good for a Van Noord Arena single match record. Junior Kelly Gordon was once again strong on the back line, digging out 17 balls while Rietema added 34 assists for Calvin.

At the conclusion of the tournament, the MIAA MVP, Defensive Player of the Year, Freshmen of the Year, and All-MIAA first and second teams were named.

Earning honors for the Knights was Rebecca Kamp, who was named MIAA MVP and All-MIAA first team. Kamp was named MVP for the third time in her career and All-MIAA first team for her fourth straight season.

Joining her on the first team were Lizzie Kamp and Rietema. VanderPlas and DeHaan were also named to the second team.

Calvin, ranked first in the country with a 31-0 overall record, now looks forward to hosting an NCAA Tournament Regional at Van Noord Arena Nov. 10-12.



Calvin claimed the MIAA championship with a win over Hope in the finals on Saturday.

Swim/dive teams prevail

BY MARK ZYLSTRA
 Staff Writer

The fifth of November will be remembered by Calvin's swimming and diving teams as a very successful day. Both squads recorded dual meet wins over Wheaton College at Calvin's Venema Aquatic Center. The women beat the Thunder by a narrow 10-point margin, 147-137, and the men won by score of 169-129.

For the women, it was a nip and tuck affair with Wheaton. Calvin was led by juniors Stephanie Fox and Elizabeth Counsell. Fox claimed two individual events. She won the 100-freestyle and the 200-freestyle in times of 0:55.02 and 1:57.95, respectively. She also swam the leadoff leg of Calvin's victorious 200-medley relay, and she anchored the winning 400-freestyle relay team as well. Counsell also swam on the medley relay. She won two individual events as well: the 200-breaststroke and the 100-breaststroke. She finished runner-up to teammate Alexi Scott in the 200-IM as well. Calvin was solid in the dives as well, taking home both titles. Sam Klaasen placed first at the 3-meter height and Rebecca Mumby won the -meter event.

Calvin's men had a more com-

fortable day, securing a 40 point win. They got off to a great start when they won the 200-medley relay. Then junior Mathias Bares showed off his stamina by winning the 1000-yard freestyle swim in a time of 10:21.47, which was 14 seconds ahead of Wheaton's top competitor. Bares also took second in the 500-free. Calvin ran off several more event victories. Senior Ross Battoclette led a 1-2-3 Calvin sweep of the 200-free. He also comfortably won the 100-free, and was a part of both of Calvin's winning relays - the 200-medley relay and the 400-free relay.

Battoclette's performance prompted coach Dan Geldrloos to comment, "[Ross] lead the charge for us, in the 200-free and the 100-free. He really set the tone." Sophomore Peter Johnson also was a double event winner individually. He captured the top spot in both the 100-and 200-backstroke. Sophomore standout Andrew Krafft won both diving events handily for Calvin as well.

Up next, the Knights will hope to continue their success on Friday at Wayne State University before dueling with Hope in Holland Saturday afternoon. The meet with Hope will be the first MIAA action this season for both teams.



PHOTOS BY JOSH YONKER

The Knights are heading into the NCAA D-III Tournament ranked number one nationally with a perfect 31-0 record. They will host the regional competition tonight and tomorrow.

Fall 2011 All-MIAA Picks

MIAA MVPs

Rebecca Kamp – volleyball (Sr)
 (three-time MVP)

Jodi Hoekstra – cross country (Sr)
 (two-time MVP)

Dan Kerr – cross country (Sr)

Ben Kuiper – golf (Jr)

Out of seven MVP titles, Calvin won four

MIAA 1st team

Dan Kerr – cross country (Sr)**
 Matt VanderRoest – cross country (Sr)**
 Greg Whittle – cross country (Jr)*
 David VandeBunte – cross country (Jr)*
 Rhett Morici – cross country (Sr)*
 Job Christiansen – cross country (Jr)*
 Jodi Hoekstra – cross country (Sr)**
 Alyssa Penning – cross country (Jr)**
 Kaitlin Diemer – cross country (Sr)*
 Ben Kuiper – golf (Jr)*
 Francesca Smith – soccer (Jr)**
 Liz Cancel – soccer (Jr)*
 Rebecca Kamp – volleyball (Sr)**
 Megan Rietema – volleyball (So)**
 Lizzie Kamp – volleyball (Jr)**
 Miles Colago – soccer (Sr)*
 Dan Nederhoed – soccer (Jr)*

Nick Holtrop – soccer (Jr)*
 Dino Duratovic – soccer (Fr)*
 Zach Willis – soccer (So)*
 *denotes how many times the athlete has been on first team

MIAA 2nd team

Sam Kerk – cross country (So)
 Kevin Peterson – cross country (Jr)
 Alyssa Oram – cross country (So)
 Dave Sarkipato – golf (Jr)
 Carlia Canto – golf (So)
 Elise Doezema – golf (Jr)
 Danielle Carter – soccer (So)
 Erin VanderPlas – volleyball (Sr)
 Renee DeHaan – volleyball (Sr)
 Mike Dolan – soccer (Jr)
 Justin Ahearne – soccer (Sr)
 Chris Nance – soccer (Jr)

MIAA CHAMPIONS

Volleyball

Men's soccer

Men's cross country



FROM THE EDITOR

There has been some discussion in *Chimes* concerning what I consider to be the college's greatest challenge this year — the selection of a new Calvin president. This decision holds so much weight that it's been difficult for me to form meaningful thoughts about it. But I can wait no longer. Anonymous sources have told me that the search committee is beginning to narrow the field of candidates, so it's time to let them know what is important to each of us. Here are my two cents.

A college exists first and foremost for its students. Am I right? I think that statement is hard to disagree with. A college's primary goal should be to educate and care for its students. If you disagree, you should probably just stop reading right now.

A worrying trend I've noticed over the past couple of years (at Calvin and beyond) is the tendency for colleges and universities to forget about their students. They get so wrapped up in funding, research, educational philosophy and capital improvements that they fail to put students' needs at the forefront.

So what Calvin needs in a president is someone who is concerned firstly about the student body. I want a president who values me as a person, as a student who deserves the best. I want a president who

advocates for my welfare amidst the poor economy, demanding community members and rogue faculty. I want a president who makes Calvin College a place where I feel valued.

What should this president do to make sure I am well cared for? He should put learning first — that means hiring and retaining qualified professors who are passionate about their subjects. She should ensure that I am financially comfortable at school — this means keeping tuition reasonable and offering a lot of scholarships. He should also make certain that I am nurtured as a person at Calvin — that means keeping the spiritual, residence and student life departments in good working order.

I think Calvin needs a change. President Byker has put in a lot of years of work and service into making Calvin what it is today, but we need a few of the things that he is not. What I really long for is a president who communicates well with the student body. I want to know what the president does. I want her to speak frankly and personally to every incoming freshman class, introducing herself, explaining her role and opening her door to dialogue with all students. I want him to send a quarterly or semesterly email outlining a few of Calvin's current issues. I want to see the president as a human, not just a figurehead living in a big house on campus.

I can count on one hand the

number of times I've seen President Byker in person, and even then it's always from a distance (on the stage at commencement, for example). This summer, I saw a news story about the president of Grand Valley helping freshmen move into the dorms. Why can't the president of Calvin, a much smaller and more inter-connected school, do the same? I believe one of President Byker's best moments as a president was jumping into the sem pond in the middle of winter with us. That is a leader. That is someone who wants to commune with the people he represents. That is a human.

Am I being selfish? Is all you've heard for this entire editorial “I want, I want?” Perhaps. But isn't it the primary goal of a college to educate and care for its students?

Am I asking for too much? Probably. I don't have the slightest clue what other responsibilities the president has (whether or not that's my fault is up for debate), though I am sure they are innumerable and difficult.

Nevertheless, I urge the search committee to consider students when selecting our next president. We are the heart, the soul, the lifeblood of Calvin College. To use the infamous QUEST phrase, “We are Calvin College.” Find us someone with compassion and a vision for a happier student body. Find us someone with humanity.

~ajz

Students still human

Personal growth matters more than grades

BY KAYLA VANDERPLOEG
Staff Writer

When I was preparing to come to move to Calvin my freshman year, I remember talking with my family and my relatives, jokingly saying that when I came to Calvin I'd have to choose one of two things: getting good grades or having a social life. We all kind of laughed about it and dismissed it as a joke, but as things become progressively more hectic and I try to balance classes, extracurriculars and time to just relax, I'm starting to believe in that distinction more and more.

Though I feel this overwhelming pressure at Calvin, this isn't just a problem here. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 57 percent of the students enrolled in a four-year college won't complete their degree within six years at that school. Why is the national retention rate so low? I'd say it's because pressure is too high.

I can remember being handed a sheet of paper in seventh grade where I needed to write down what I was going to do for the rest of my life based on my current interests, and I was told that I needed to have it all figured out. That's ridiculous. Most people don't have these issues sorted out when they're 20 years old, much less when they're 13. There's a whole range of career fields and interests that you don't even know are actual jobs at that age. These same kinds of pressures carry over into college. It's okay to go into college not knowing what you're going to do, but you'd better hurry up and make a decision because you'll need to declare your major really soon if you want to graduate on time. You want to change your major? Better drop out and start over: you're going to be in school for the rest of your life. How disappointing.

You need experience in your field when it's hard enough to find a minimum wage summer job. You need to study for hours after each class to get acceptable enough grades to keep up your scholarship, but you also need to work all evening so you can afford to keep going here. All your friends are on track to graduate early, but you just switched majors and all those classes you took don't really count for much anymore. Oh and by the way, that 10-page midterm you forgot

about? You have two days to start and finish it.

When things become overwhelming, it's almost easier to just give up. It's easier to become disengaged and just drop everything than to gradually fall behind and fail to meet expectations. You go off to college and everyone tells you that you're a student, and they present this big glossy picture of who and what you should be.

But you aren't a student; you're a person. You can't schedule and plan out every minute of your life because life just isn't plan-able. You're going to get bad grades sometimes, but that's okay because learning isn't about getting perfect grades. If everything you do turns out perfect the first time you do it, then you didn't learn anything; you already knew what you were doing. You can't be the perfect picture of productivity because people get lonely, people get hungry, people get tired. It's just part of the human experience, and to have that kind of perfection, to be able to hold all that in your arms without wobbling a bit or even falling over, is almost dehumanizing.

It's important to learn, it's important to grow, it's important to look ahead at the possibilities of the future. But quite frankly, that's only a tiny part of what life is, who you are. People always wonder about the meaning of life, and I'll be utterly shocked if it's to turn yourself into a machine. I'm willing to bet that for most of us, the most beautiful or meaningful moment in our lives will not be filling out scholarship applications and registering for those classes we need to get into in order to graduate.

I don't think this is something that Calvin College alone can change. Maybe we can put a little more emphasis on the bigger picture and less on GPA. But this is the kind of problem that needs a massive social shift in perspective. It'll probably take a while, but for now I'll leave some encouragement for you: My cousin changed majors her senior year and is now a professor at a university in Ohio; another cousin almost dropped out of college because of stress and is now a doctor of pharmacy; and my dad failed out of Calvin College his freshman year and he's now a senior engineer for Whirlpool. So don't worry: They ended up okay, and you will too.

Letter to the editor

Cool core classes
central to cultured
Christian community of
Calvin College

Dear Editor,

Regarding the article written by Josh Ngenda on the topic of core classes, I cannot agree more with his position. I consider Calvin to be a “Christian liberal arts” college, two descriptors that are linked more intimately than one may think. An education in the liberal arts provides us with tools of knowledge with which we can better understand God's creation and relate to people with different backgrounds than our own.

I love the classes in my biology major, but I can honestly say that my three favorite classes at Calvin thus far have been core classes (visual rhetoric, Dutch language and fly fishing). Core classes give

us the unique opportunity to explore life outside of our major(s) and become acquainted with many wonderful professors, and I would never consider core classes to be a waste of time.

There's more to life than earning a degree in order to pursue a career. First and foremost, we are called to glorify God in all that we do, and core classes open us up to the many different ways in which we can glorify God; it would be a shame to deprive students of this unique gift. And as for me, I am deeply indebted (literally and figuratively) to Calvin's curriculum and professors for fantastically enriching my life. Thank you. Now my only hope is that the administration and faculty rule more wisely on this ridiculous proposal than did the majority of our student senators.

Jake Zwart, '12

Foreign language core expands minds

BY CHRISTINE BENNETT
Staff Writer

A friend once pointed out to me that it made perfect sense for the Scientific Revolution to happen in Europe and not, say, China. This was not a comment on the abilities of different people, but was more a musing on the difference of languages. Most European languages, coming from a common ancestor, share the characteristic of inflection, that is, changing a word to reflect difference in meaning. An English example would be “eat” and “ate,” in which the vowel is changed to denote difference in tense. Another example would be “cat” and “cats,” in which an “s” is added to make it plural. Inflection allows a language to become specific (though English may be less so than its cousins). My friend thus supposed that such precision in language, thus precision in thought, encouraged the advances in science.

Chinese, on the other hand, has no inflection to speak of. In fact, it is a rather imprecise language (though this is not at all to its discredit). Oftentimes entire words need to be added to a sentence to specify the number of something or the tense of an action. (Tense tends to be especially imprecise in Chinese as compared with Indo-European languages.) My friend would argue that this relatively low precision of the language would have hindered it from a Scientific Revolution of similar nature.

The idea that language influences thought, or vice versa, is known as language relativity. Though rarely do people take it to such lengths as to explain the Scientific Revolution, the theory has been around since the 19th century. In the 1960s it suffered

a brief neglect due to the beliefs concerning the universal nature of language, but regained popularity in the 1980s.

One of the more common examples of language relativity is color. The more names there are for varying shades of colors in a language, the more easily a person differentiates between them. That is not to say that a person cannot see the difference between colors, but that giving names to the different shades simply makes it easier for the mind to process. It is interesting that blue is one of the “newest” colors, only recently gaining its own name in many languages, including Chinese. It was formerly perceived as either a shade of green, or merely that great emptiness above our heads. After all, there is very little in the natural world which is colored blue.

More significant influences of language may revolve around necessary or voluntary information. In English, for example, it is necessary to specify whether a noun is singular or plural, or whether a person is male or female. One can say “he walked into the room,” but not “it walked into the room” when referring to a person. In other languages, such specification is unnecessary. As Lera Boroditsky pointed out in her article “How Language Shapes Thought,” such need-to-know information can affect what information our minds retain. She pointed out that English focuses greatly on the agent, the subject of an active sentence, to the point of detesting passive sentences. Japanese, however, is much less likely to focus on the agent, especially if the action is accidental.

Let's say John was running through the house and knocked the vase over. In English we would say “John broke the vase,”

while in Japanese it would be something more like “the vase was broken.” In an experiment that Boroditsky and her colleague conducted, she showed Americans and Japanese alike short videos of people popping balloons, spilling drinks, or other similar actions. In cases where the action was intentional, both Americans and Japanese could easily identify the person who did it. When the action was accidental, however, Japanese participants had a harder time remembering the agent.

Language definitely influences the way we think in many subtle ways, and different languages in different manners. There is no better or worse language, since a language's strength in one area is its weakness in another. Chinese may be imprecise, yet for its very ambiguity it is a beautifully poetic language, and wordplay is more common and vibrant than it is in English.

One of Calvin's core requirements is a second language. While many think that this is burdensome and even meaningless, I would point out that a second language is a whole new way of thinking. Learning the underlying principles and the fascinating nuances of a foreign tongue opens a new window from which to see the world. Though knowing a new language is certainly not necessary in many fields of study, it is definitely helpful in that it not only enables us to understand another people and culture and thought, but that it also enables us to understand ourselves better, both the way we think and the way we use our own language of English.

Hong Kong domestic workers make a fair wage in context

BY CYNTHIA KUK
Alumnus Contributor

I am writing in response to Christine Bennett's Op-Ed piece "Domestic helpers unfairly treated" published in *Chimes* on Oct. 14. Bennett's piece was on the situation of Southeast-Asian domestic helpers in Hong Kong, which I find myself cannot totally agree with her viewpoint, stating how domestic helpers are "unfairly treated."

I was born and raised in Hong Kong, and my family hired our current domestic helper Fely back when I was four. She has been with us for 21 years since. While I agree better laws should be in place to protect the domestic helpers in Hong Kong, I strongly disagree how Bennett's article compared the domestic helper industry with "The Help" and almost presented it as a modern day slave trade.

To begin with, I would explain Hong Kong job situation. Most of Hong Kong low income jobs pay very little. In fact, my first summer job paid me \$2.50 USD an hour, and that is an average hourly paid for fast food restaurant or a book store. With the newly installed minimum wages in 2011, the hourly paid is now \$3.80 an hour. People in Hong Kong are also accustomed to long working hours.

My father, whose job is supposed to be eight hours a day, typically works 10 to 12 days. My mother used to bring homework and work past midnight before she retired. My parents are both government employees and have better job security than

the average workforce, but yet, that amount of workload is their typical day. So you can easily imagine what kind of lives normal Hong Kong workers are leading. Not to mention that most Hong Kong people have to a work half day every other weekend.

To provide an even better support for my argument, I also want to explain a bit about the Hong Kong property market. My parents own an apartment, which is around 1,300 square feet, located in the crowded city and is currently worth \$1 million. In fact, to buy a 400-square-foot apartment in one of the worst neighborhood in Hong Kong, for a 20-25 year old person earning an average salary (approx. \$1,000-\$1,100), it would still take 400 years even if he or she saves up every single dime. With this background information provided, now let's take a look at the domestic helper situation, and whether it is completely unfair for them.

While \$460 a month may appear to be very low at first glance, once you put other living expenses into consideration, it is an adequate income. Domestic helpers do not have to pay for rent, utilities, insurances and medical expenses. While all other Hong Kong working class pays a large chunk of their salary into the above expenses, which can easily add up to at least \$1,000 dollars a month. Other than that, they are also not required to pay for meals and daily transportation as the costs are mostly covered by their employers in the form of allowances. Considering all these factors, domestic helpers' income is actually comparable to that of a U.S. minimum wage worker even

with the long working hours. In addition, compare to a minimum wage worker in Hong Kong who earn \$608 a month (40 hour work week); rent alone would have covered the difference between a Hong Kong minimum wage worker and a domestic helper. In fact, for the poorest in Hong Kong, renting just a slum room with less than 100 square feet would already cost \$500 a month. So, is their \$460 wage unfair? I don't think so.

Being a domestic helper may not be a desirable job, especially since one has to be so far away from one's family. However, \$460 a month of largely disposable income is not a bad deal. In addition, keep in mind most of this sum of money will be transferred back to their home countries, where the living standards is much lower. In 2009, the income sent home by domestic workers constituted about 10 percent of the Philippines' annual GDP. Their countries need this income as much as we need their help at home.

The main reason why so many Southeast Asians seek jobs in Hong Kong is due to the weak economy in their home countries. As sad as it sound, for most Southeast Asian women, regardless of education, the highest paying job is to be a domestic helper in Hong Kong. The domestic helpers' industry in Hong Kong is not an exploitation, but simply demand and supply. Through these 21 years with my family, Fely was able to put her three kids through college, buy a house and own a small farm. She would be the first one to tell you she could not have done all these if she had

stayed in the Philippines. She is not being exploited; she just decided to make a very difficult and brave choice to support her family distantly.

Some may say it's not a total fair trade because they are overqualified for domestic work, yes, but that is simply a sad fact for bad economic times. I knew bachelor's degree holders working as cashiers, and a master's degree holder working at a clothing retail shop. Sadly, when that is the only job you can get, you get the job regardless of your education background. Furthermore, just because you are overqualified for the job, doesn't mean the employer has to pay you more than others. This holds true no matter where in the world you are; it is unfortunate, but there is nothing unfair about it.

As for abuse between employers and domestic helpers, it happens on both sides. Hiring a domestic helper is like inviting a stranger into your house. I do not deny that abuse happens, but these are rare cases. Hong Kong is a society under the law; once discovered, those who abuse domestic helpers do not go unpunished. Mostly when the relationship doesn't work out, one just dissolves the contract.

There are also cases where domestic helpers abuse the children or elderly they are supposed to take care of, steal from their employers and borrow money from loan sharks and leave Hong Kong without repaying. In one case, a domestic helper added her menstrual blood and urine to her employer's food. I am sure this is a rare case, just as the employer who burnt the domestic helper

with an iron. Most families who hired domestic helpers are middle class families with working parents. Working 10-12 hours per day in the offices, and still having to work at home afterwards leaves them no choice but to hire a domestic helper to take care of their household. So rationally speaking, instead of making trouble for the domestic helpers, most people just want to have a decent dinner, in their tidy little flat.

Hiring a domestic helper is like playing the lottery or marrying blind on both sides. Hong Kong people need the help at home to work their 10-12-hour work days, and the domestic helpers need the income to support their family back in their country. Even though it may be far from ideal, it is not an unfair oppressing industry as presented in Bennett's Op-Ed. And until either these domestic helpers' home countries get stronger economically, or Hong Kong businesses finally decide not to run all of their employees to exhaustion, this might be the only working solution for the time being.

All people have the rights to fight for better lives, of course, and we do not discriminate against people for fighting. But if the arguments that Bennett has summed up as "unfair treatment of domestic helpers" leads to her conclusion that "discrimination is still very much alive in Hong Kong," it then becomes true "unfairness" to the 7 million people of Hong Kong.

My family is one of the lucky few to have our relationship with Fely work out so beautifully, and we all thank God for his blessing.

Halloween prime evangelistic opportunity despite need for discernment

BY CONNOR STERCHI
Staff Writer

Halloween has been both embraced and condemned throughout the history of Christianity. Some Christians have totally denounced it as a pagan holiday ridden with witchcraft, sorcery and other evils strictly forbidden by the Bible. Others see it as a prime opportunity for evangelism. But whether or not Christians should recognize it remains an unresolved question in the Christian community.

Let's take a look at the history of Halloween. The ancient Celtic festival of Samhain took place on Nov. 1. This Celtic New Year's festival celebrated the harvest and the end of summer. The Celts thought that on this day the evil entities of the dead-ghosts, ghouls, goblins, witches, fairies and evil spirits-would interact with the living. Masks and costumes were worn and bonfires were lit in an attempt to ward off and disillusion the evil spirits. They believed that spirits were earthbound until they were given suitable sendoffs (i.e. treats, food, drink, possessions). The spirits who weren't fittingly "treated" would "trick" those who ignored them. Another way thought to keep the spirits at bay was by carving out monstrous faces on gourds and lighting a candle inside (which later became jack-o-lanterns, from the legend of Stingy Jack who tricked the Devil).

Pope Boniface IV designated Nov. 1. as All Saints' Day as a substitute for the pagan holiday of Samhain. All Souls' Day took place on Nov. 2. Eventually these days were combined to make Halloween, or All Saints' Day. "Halloween" is derived from "All Hallows Eve," which means "holy evening." Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on All Hallows' Eve

(the day before All Saints' Day), which became Reformation Day, coinciding with Halloween.

So what should the Christian response be to this holiday with pagan roots? Avoidance, fear or engagement? I think the answer lies somewhere in between. Halloween is an apt time for evangelism. What other time of the year is your house visited by legions of strangers and children?

Of course, the evil aspects of Halloween are to be avoided entirely. "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD" (Deut. 18:10-12, NASB). In the Old Testament, witchcraft was punishable by death (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27). These evil facets of Halloween are to be avoided. But the traditions of trick-or-treating, dressing up in costumes, pumpkin carving and bobbing for apples aren't inherently evil.

There are Christians who denounce Halloween because of its pagan origins. But even Christmas and Easter, two of the most hallowed days of the year commemorating two of the most significant dates in history (the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ) are interspersed with pagan origins. This doesn't mean these days are evil and that we should reject them. For the first few centuries Christmas wasn't on Dec. 25; it wasn't even celebrated at all. The first Christmas celebration on Dec. 25 took place in C.E. 336. The reason for Dec. 25? It is thought that Christ was born sometime in the spring. The date Dec. 25 was commandeered by church leaders and became the

date celebrating Christ's birth in order to eclipse the pagan traditions celebrated on Dec 25, such as the winter solstice and the Roman festival "Natalis solis invicti" ("birth of the unconquered sun"). Bell ringing, caroling, holly, mistletoe and other Christmas traditions have pagan roots. But this doesn't mean these traditions are evil today.

"Easter," the name of the Christian holiday celebrating Christ's resurrection, comes from Eostre, the Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility. This is where the traditions of the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs come from (Eostre's symbols were the hare and the egg, which represent fertility). However, these pagan roots and elements of Easter do not necessitate that Christians discount the holiday or discredit harmless traditions like Easter egg hunting, nor does it diminish Easter's true current meaning and significance (Christ's resurrection). Christmas and Easter are first and foremost about the birth and resurrection (respectively) of Jesus Christ. The various innocuous traditions that accompany the holidays of Christmas, Easter and Halloween don't have to be abandoned by Christians because of their pagan beginnings.

Halloween can be a great opportunity for Christians to show that we are in the world but not of the world. It's a great chance to evangelize and pass out a tract to trick-or-treaters (along with candy, of course). In his article on Christianity Today, Anderson M. Rearick III wrote, "In any event, I doubt the anti-Halloween party will prevail. This tactic was tried before — with Christmas. In the 17th century, because of its pagan ancestry and because it was a Roman Catholic holiday (Christ-mass!), many Protestants decided that true believers should not recognize Christmas. In 1620 our pilgrim forefathers purposely

started unloading the Mayflower on Christmas Day to make the point to the crew that they were not going to observe such an evil day. I'm glad those believers — however well-intended — failed. How bleak and desolate would a winter's December be without Christmas! We could have lost our chance to celebrate Christ's first coming and a chance to witness to the world, as I fear those pilgrims lost a chance to witness to those sailors." I think that we too may be missing evangelistic opportunities if we ignore Halloween.

According to the American Tract Society, there are more conversions to Christ by the use of tracts on Halloween than there are during any other holiday. A

quote from John Piper illustrates my point nicely: "I'm willing to run the risk of attachment to worldliness in order to be biblically faithful in witness. The same thing with Christmas and birthdays and Easter and worshipping on Sunday. All of these things have pagan connections. I want to be loose and broad and give freedom to believers to find their way to be most effective. So I respect those who are renouncing it as too connected with evil, and I respect those who say, 'No, let's redeem it and penetrate it and use it.'" Halloween can be an opportune time for Christians to shine the light of Christ and spread the good news. So as Christians, let's redeem it and utilize it for Christ's sake.

Chimes is attempting to run a series featuring student opinions about what the next president should look like. A few weeks back, we heard from Liz Jennings and an alumnus. But we're looking for more opinions — if you've got one, send it in! This is one of the most important issues Calvin will face during your college career, and the search committee and administration need to hear student voices on the matter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR must include the writer's name and class. Letters received without a name will not be printed. The editors reserve the right to edit any letters. The length of the letter should be no longer than 250 words; longer letters may be shortened at the editor's discretion. The deadline for all letters is 5 p.m. on Tuesday for print on the following Friday. Send letters to chimes@calvin.edu with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line, or send your comments through our website: www.calvin.edu/chimes

ANNOUNCEMENTS can be submitted by Calvin students, faculty and staff to be printed in *Chimes* at no cost. Announcements can be sent via e-mail to chimes@calvin.edu or dropped off at the *Chimes* office during the week. Announcements must be received by 5 p.m. Tuesday to run in Friday's paper. Please stick to a limit of 160 characters and send with the subject line "announcement."



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