

THE SOU'WESTER

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Review

Allison Brown reviews
Meg Ryan's latest flick
Against the Ropes.
The movie also stars
Omar Epps.

SeeScene



Opinion

Josh Low and Jay Sulzmann offer their viewpoints on the living wage.

SeeOpinion

Living wage debate thrives in Memphis

By Michelle Hope

As proposals to mandate a living wage in the city of Memphis move towards serious consideration by the city council, it seems only natural that the fire behind the living wage debate has been reignited. A living wage, as opposed to the minimum wage, is one that enables an individual and their family to live above the poverty line (the federal poverty level is \$18,400 per year for a family of four). Thus, the living wage campaign aims to raise the minimum wage, currently at \$5.15 an hour, to the living wage.

Overall, Cisel, a professor of Economics at the University of Memphis, estimates that for a single parent living in Memphis, a living wage would constitute earnings of around \$26,128 per year compared to the \$10,712 a year earned by a full time worker on minimum wage (*Living Wage Research*). The concept of a living wage has numerous disadvantages and advantages, all of which have been subject to much debate.

At the center of these debates are the living wage campaigns, which lobby for the passing of such legislation. *Living Wage Research* estimates that there are 106 living wage ordinances (locations where a living wage is instated) enforced by 98 counties and cities, 3 universities and 4 other local jurisdictions in 31 states. It is thought that with an average wage of \$11.25 per hour without health benefits (more than double the current federal minimum wage) these ordinances are being adopted at a rate of one every month. There

are over 120 living wage campaigns in cities and counties around the country.

For the most part, the living wage is consistently proposed as a way for local governments, school districts and universities to address concerns about those forced to live below the poverty line. A living wage campaign works to pass legislation that requires companies to pay a living wage to their workers. The Memphis Living Wage Campaign defines a living wage as \$20,000 per year, not including employer-provided health care benefits. This equals around \$10 per hour.

The Memphis Living Wage Coalition includes twenty-seven member groups, congregations and faith groups, community organizations and labor unions, as well as a number of concerned individuals. According to the Living Wage Organization, the basic premise behind the living wage campaign is that no one who undertakes full-time legitimate employment should be forced to live below the poverty line where basic needs for a comfortable and sustainable lifestyle remain unmet. Moreover, living wage ordinances work to change the downward trend in incomes for low-wage workers.

Indeed, though the minimum wage has increased over the past few years to accommodate changes in consumerism, definitions of what it means to live comfortably have changed. Thus, economists have identified a downward spiraling of incomes for wage workers (i.e. those paid per hour instead of an annual salary). Some suggest that the ever-changing nature of the poverty

threshold may account for this; indeed, according to the Census Bureau, the poverty line increased from \$18,248 per year for a family of four in 2000 to \$18,400 in 2002. This rise occurred alongside an increase in the number of people living in poverty from 11.7 percent in 2001, to 12.1 percent in 2002. The living wage campaigns hope to correct this downward spiraling and offer a comfortable and sustainable standard of living to all workers.

Perhaps the strongest argument against living wage ordinances is the fact that increasing the minimum wage to the living wage may lead to inflation. However, advocates of the program still insist that the social benefits far outweigh the economic costs. Overall, the most obvious advantage of the living wage is the increase in quality of life for those who currently live below the poverty line (around 12.1 percent of the population). In addition, and according to the Living Wage Organization, though living wage laws help ensure that individual workers and their families maintain at least a minimal standard of living, the benefits of increased economic activity as a result of this are spread throughout the community. To be certain, an increase in income leads to an increase in consumerism, which ultimately benefits the economy. Thus, the living wage benefits the community by reducing the costs of public assistance. Moreover, living wages not only benefit those who earn them, but also workers at many different wage levels due to the fact that the overall wage threshold is pushed upwards, in-

creasing overall earnings in the workforce.

In response to this, Professor Bethany Peters in the Rhodes Economics Department calls attention to the theoretical implications of raising the minimum wage based on standard neoclassical models. She states that even though the living wage will draw more people into the labor force, firms will hire fewer workers if the wage is higher. Thus, there is an increase in economic unemployment (the difference between the number of workers willing to work and the number of workers firms will hire) when there is an increase in the minimum wage.

Also, she adds, even though it is true that workers who are still working will get greater benefits due to the higher minimum wage, some workers who would have a job under the current minimum wage will be jobless. Furthermore, Professor Coldwell Daniel, who teaches Economics at the University of Memphis, believes that the introduction of a living wage would have a serious effect on the "distribution of wealth and the growth of per capita income in our city" (*The Commercial Appeal*, January 9, 2004). In an article in *The Commercial Appeal*, he states that "any increase in wages that is not induced by the operation of a competitive free market transfers wealth from those who pay the necessary increase in the cost of products to those who receive the higher wages. But unless the higher wages are subsidized by a source from outside the market, the process yields a loss for which there is no compensation." Thus, fewer wage earners can be pro-

ductively employed at these higher wages (*The Commercial Appeal*, January 9, 2004).

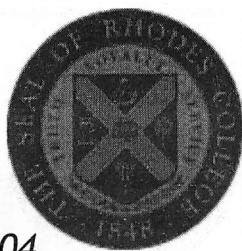
It seems then that the living wage would have an overall inhibiting effect on the economy of Memphis. Indeed, as Daniel continues, the increase in taxes required to subsidize higher wages will inhibit incentives to work and invest in the economy, leading to minimum economic growth. Rising tax burdens and reduced employment opportunities will slow population growth, which itself affects economic growth. In addition, if the living wage ordinance does raise the general wage level, the increase in workforce costs will inhibit competition within the market place (*The Commercial Appeal*, January 9, 2004).

Despite this, the Living Wage Organization suggests that evidence from cities that already have living wage laws indicates that most of the costs of living wage ordinances are absorbed by businesses through reduced training and recruitment costs or by small reductions in profits. Evaluations of living wage laws found no evidence of job loss, and the costs of contracts for the city increased by only insignificant amounts. There is also the fact that where there may be small increases in costs to taxpayers (primarily because of city workers' wages being raised by the ordinance), there will likely be an accompanying reduction in the cost of public assistance for low-wage workers that taxpayers currently bear (Daniel, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 9, 2004).

The content of such debate makes it clear that the issues

Living wage, continued on Page 5

OPINION



Wednesday, February 25, 2004



THE SOU'WESTER
founded 1848

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Amber Shaw

Member of the Associated College Press (ACP)

Letter to the editor

Professor Drompp,

I respectfully concede your point. I made a terrible error when I wrote that "Homosexuals, Muslims and the poor have not been herded into cattle cars by the millions and transported to facilities in which they were tortured before being gassed or burned to

death." Homosexuals were indeed persecuted, tortured and killed by the Nazis, as were many other minorities, and I regret the falsehoods that I used in a recent response to another student.

Although the example I provided was hasty and flawed, my point still stands that no matter what, there will always groups

and individuals who have suffered more, and that it would be just as unfair to compare my situation with that of persecuted homosexuals, Muslims after 9/11 or any other group as it would be to compare those victims with any Albanian persecuted by Milosovic, for example. There are endless examples of "worse," and I unfortunately chose a bad one when making that argument. For that I sincerely apologize, but I still think that particular point has merit despite a very poor illustration.

Furthermore, I think it important to re-emphasize the purpose of the original opinion piece that sparked this particular debate. I was not writing so that students and faculty should feel sorry for me and the posters on my door; that portion of the piece was meant merely to illustrate a disconnect I see, especially in academia: lip service is played to diversity, but somehow the goal of diversity of ideas doesn't extend far enough to include conservative political thought. Traditional minorities are not the only ones who experience irrational behavior from closeminded individuals, and a person should be held accountable for his or her prejudices regardless of political leanings.

Again, please accept my apology for the undeniably inaccurate statements I made previously.

Alex Hornaday '05

Editor's note: The letter is a response to the Professor Michael Drompp's letter in the February 18 issue of The Sou'Wester.

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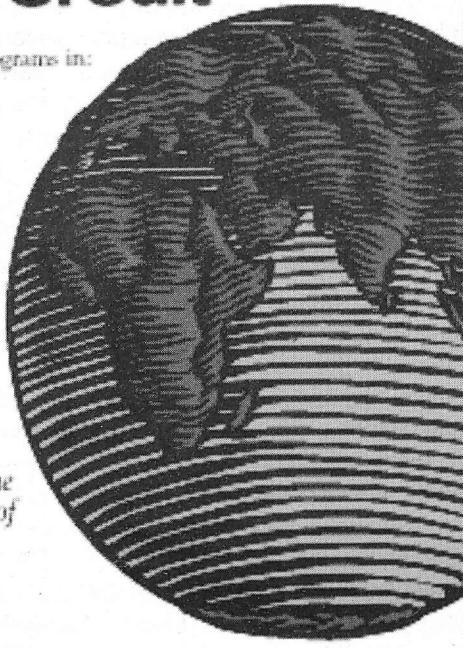
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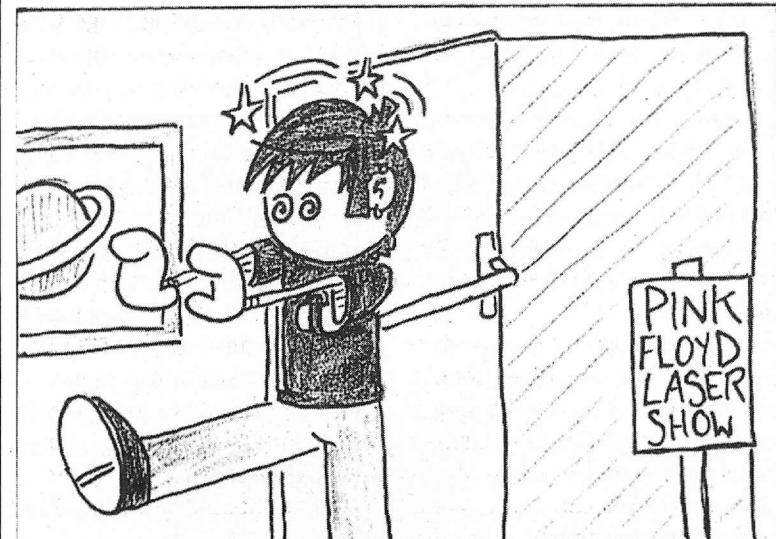
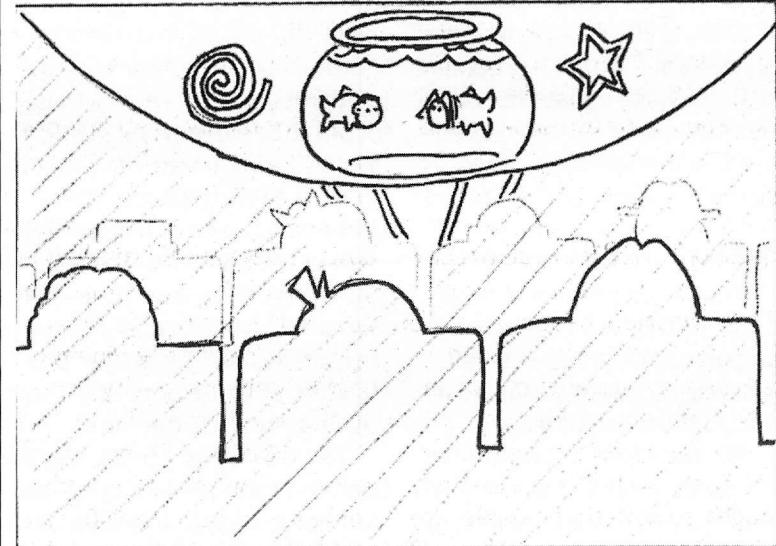
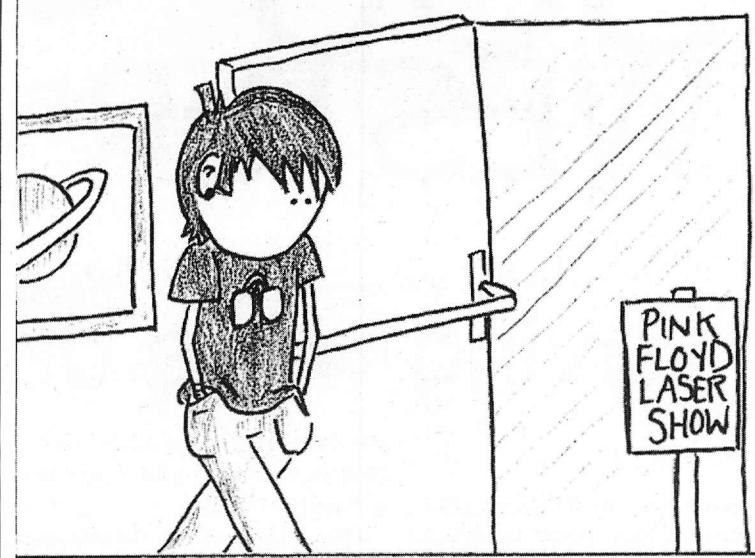
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FRIENDS WORLD PROGRAM
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THIS WEEKEND

by LOGAN WHEELER



**Have an opinion?
Share it with us!**

submit your letters to ebecm@rhodes.edu



Wednesday, February 25, 2004

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OPINION

Student Viewpoints: *The Living Wage*

JOSHUA LOW

Government must step up where business has failed

When you graduate from Rhodes, how many jobs should you have to work to survive? Two? Three? Should you have to work 70 hours a week just so that your family can live above poverty? Could you get by on less than 10 dollars an hour with a family? The answers to these questions lead many people to suggest that wages should be higher. The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour, equaling \$10,712 a year. These wages are not enough to live in Memphis. It simply takes more than ten thousand dollars to survive in Memphis. This raises a moral question—Is it right to allow companies to pay poverty wages? This question becomes more tenuous when it is applied to companies that are contracting with the city of Memphis. In other words, some tax dollars are going to companies that pay wages so low that people are either working more than 40 hours a week or are on public assistance just to make ends meet.

Once the moral argument that people should be able to support themselves on one job has been established, the search for the solution to poverty begins. One method that has been attempted is a governmental assistance program to raise the incomes of impoverished people above the poverty line by giving them money. Other subsidies have been tried, such as food stamps and Section 8 vouchers. While I am not going to argue the merits and faults of these programs at this time, the fact remains that many people work and live below the poverty line.

Business has FAILED to provide for thousands of workers and their families. Over 20 percent of all Memphis residents live in poverty. Business certainly does provide a livable wage for

many people, but I will not accept a society that says that our poverty levels are the best that can be done. Requiring businesses to pay a minimum wage has helped many people. Requiring businesses to pay a living wage has been proven to benefit workers. A living wage is not a cure all for societal ills, but it will help a considerable amount of people.

A living wage is a wage that is enough to allow a worker and his or her family to escape poverty. Economist Dr. David Ciscel of the University of Memphis has done a study of wages and costs in Memphis detailing what a living wage is. A living wage does not provide for luxuries such as occasionally dining out or even getting a candy bar out of the vending machine. He found that for a family of one guardian and one child an income of about \$26,000 was needed to survive in Memphis. The Memphis Living Wage Coalition, a group of community groups, churches and other religious associations, and labor organizations, defines a living wage as \$10.00 an hour with health insurance.

Some people are opposed to requiring businesses and government to pay a living wage. Some people say that it is bad for business. Some say that costs will increase for consumers. Some people say that a living wage will cause job loss. None of these arguments hold much water.

In Memphis, business produces far more income than is needed to pay a living wage for every single worker in Memphis. Looking at only labor income, Dr. Ciscel found that there is \$32,000 of labor income per job in Memphis. Yet, business is not paying a living wage to every worker.

Having people paid a living wage does not significantly increase costs for businesses. As Jay Sulzmann has pointed out on Rhodes Connect, wage costs are only part of the cost of doing business. Furthermore, wage costs are not the only part of labor costs for a business. Recruitment is a major cost for a business. Training workers is another significant cost for business. A study done at the University Of Massachusetts at Amherst found that increasing wages to a living wage would only increase labor costs by less than one percent (Working Paper Nine).

The costs of raising wages of the lowest incomes need not be passed on to consumers. Raising the wages of a certain group of people happens all of the time. The *New York Times* reported that CEO pay rose 6 percent, which is faster than inflation. Wage compression could be used by businesses to reduce overall labor costs while paying working families a livable wage. After all, the CEO does not have to choose between paying the doctor bills and eating.

As for job loss, economists debate this. Some say that raising wages increases unemployment. Some say that it does not. In the late 1960's, the minimum wage was as high as ever, but unemployment was low. In 1997, the minimum wage was increased. The impact on the unemployment figures is indiscernible.

Enacting a living wage ordinance would be good for Memphis. If you want to become involved in the campaign to help many working families, please contact the Memphis Living Wage Coalition at 901-332-3570 or go to www.midsouthinterfaith.org.

JAY SULZMANN

An ill-conceived solution to a real problem

On February 5, 2003, a group of Tennessee state legislators including State Representative Paul Stanley (R-Memphis) introduced House Bill 421 to prevent local governments from enacting "living wage" ordinances. The bill passed the state Senate in March, 2003 and awaits a vote in the House this year. In the meantime, it has become a flashpoint for criticism from supporters of living wage laws, and a hot topic of debate here at Rhodes as well.

A living wage is typically defined as a mandated wage corresponding to a salary at or above the federally defined poverty line. More broadly, it encompasses any local rule setting a minimum wage higher than the federal or state minimum. Opponents of HB 421 have mustered two distinct arguments against the bill. First, they say, the living wage is a good idea that can help to reduce poverty; it should be encouraged, not prohibited. Second, even if you personally think the living wage is a bad idea, local governments should be able to decide for themselves whether or not to have one.

If the living wage were as effective a tool against poverty as its supporters insist, it would be worth serious consideration. The economic facts, however, tell a very different story. It is easy to look at cities that have living wage ordinances and find individual workers whose lives have been improved. But selective case studies miss the broader impact of the living wage. Because of the dramatically higher wage rates, the cost of doing business increases substantially. Firms have little choice but to lay off workers.

Thus, while some workers are better off because they are getting paid more, others are worse off because they now have no income at all. It gets even more complicated: laying off workers may mean cutting production (reduced

supply), which in turn leads to higher prices. This calls into question the benefits even to those who remain employed at the higher rate. Increasing my salary does not do me much good if my expenses are going up just as fast.

Specific aspects of many living wage ordinances only make their consequences worse. In many cities, the living wage applies only to companies doing business with the municipal government. A frequently cited study by economist David Neumark found that such limited ordinances primarily benefit employees of the municipal government, while leading to a 7% increase in unemployment *in job sectors not bound by the living wage!* This is the worst of both worlds for the average worker. Also, tying the living wage to the poverty line is inefficient because many families have two wage-earners. A \$9.50/hour minimum wage (fairly typical of existing statutes) means that a family with two full-time workers will take in a minimum of \$38,000 a year. That happens to be slightly above the average household income in the U.S. today. In effect, this kind of living wage tries to make everyone's income above average - an obviously unrealistic goal.

But why not let local governments make the decision for themselves? The Neumark study finding that living wages primarily benefit local government employees suggests one obvious answer. Pursuing a statewide policy, in fact, makes eminent sense for a state like Tennessee. Economic activity in Tennessee is heavily concentrated in three or four

Ill-conceived, continued on Page 2

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

CampusSafety

2.14.04-2.20.04

2/14	NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED	
2/15	4:29 p.m.	Spann Place, vandalism inside a room, report filed.
2/16	NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED	
2/17	4:30 p.m.	Tutwiler Street; received call from resident on Tutwiler concerning a suspicious man. CS responded and made ID of subject and found him to be harmless.
2/18	NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED	
2/19	9:45 a.m.	Soloman practice field; property damage, photos are taken and incident report filed.
	6:19 p.m.	Lynx Lair parking area; Aramark employee, infant daughter is locked inside a car, with car keys inside. MFD is called; they respond and free child from vehicle, no one is hurt.
2/20	2:45 a.m.	Ellett dorm, officer is called by RA to investigate an unusual incident, report is filed.
	4:10 a.m.	Tutwiler street; three cars are broken into. MPD is called and respond with dog squad. Officers search area for hours, to find suspect, but no one is found. Report is filed.

STATS:

ACCESES: 106
CITATIONS: 108
ESCORTS: 21
BOOT: 1

VISITORS: 1,187
PROPPED DOORS: 1
JUMP: 1
TOW: 0

III-conceived, continued from Page 3
large metropolitan areas. If Memphis or Nashville were to adopt a living wage, the consequences - inflationary pressures in particular - would affect the entire state. The text of HB 421 contains a clear and convincing description of the destabilizing effects of a living wage in one part of the state.

The travesty in the pro-living wage campaign is that there are many far more effective ways of combating the real problem of poverty in Tennessee. Foremost among these is reform of the tax code. A 1995 study found that the bottom 20% of Tennessee's residents pay

about 12% of their income in state taxes, while the top 20% pay about 4%. And that was before Tennessee legislators increased the sales tax and added a state lottery, a notoriously regressive source of revenue. One way to truly help Tennessee's poor would be to cut the sales tax and eliminate it entirely for food and medicine as most states have done. This and other economically sound policies could bring far greater actual benefits for the poor, while creating none of the counter-productive inflation and unemployment that are sure to result from a living wage.

Living wage, continued from Page 1

surrounding the living wage are fraught. On the one hand, it can seriously improve the lives of those currently surviving below the poverty line and bring economic prosperity to the community by increasing market consumerism. However, it is also possible that the benefits of such a program will be confined to city employees, while rising costs and tax burdens will actually lead to a slowing of economic growth. Thus, the overall issue surrounding the living wage, and the possible reinstatement of a living wage ordinance in the city of Memphis or indeed anywhere in the country, has serious consequences both for the economy and society, for those directly affected by changes to minimum wage, and for the population as a whole.

The question then remains why it is that we as students should take an active interest in the living wage debate; what impact does it have on our lives, both now and for the future? For this, Professor Peters believes that "students at Rhodes will be affected by an increase in the minimum wage [for the simple reason] that it will be more difficult to find a job while in college." Indeed, the already-competitive nature of the job market makes this an important issue, especially for those students needing to work either for economic reasons or because of the valuable work experience it may provide.

With regards to the future, Professor Peters hopes that the issues surrounding the concept of a living wage will appeal more to the graduate's sense of social awareness and responsibility rather than being something that has a direct impact on their lives. In closing, she suggests that "students who care about the welfare effects of policies (that is, how policies positively or negatively affect certain groups) will care about policies involving raising the minimum wage because it affects members of our society." Thus it seems that the living wage debate is still something about which we should care, if only because of the fact that we share a market economy and society with those whom it does affect.

Judy Shepard speaks at Rhodes

By Ashley Kutz

Judy Shepard is a self-proclaimed "mom with a story and many opinions." Her lecture, sponsored by FOSTER, chronicled her own experience with the death of her son and her subsequent work in hate crimes prevention. Her hope is that by sharing her grief, she will make the world a more accepting place.

Matthew Shepard was enrolled at the University of Wyoming in October 1998 when he was fatally beaten and tortured by two men because he was gay. The savagery of the crime and its motivation made national headlines, shocked the Laramie community and devastated the Shepard family.

As Judy Shepard dealt with her grief, she received expressions of sympathy and support from across the nation. Ultimately, she found purpose in joining the effort against hate crimes and considers her work as a daily tribute to her son.

The presentation began with a video response to hate crimes, which centered on the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. incidents. This video recounted not only the details of each of these hate crimes, but also provided insight into areas of progress, and areas that have not yet changed.

Mrs. Shepard shared her Victim Impact Statement, which was prepared for the Court in an effort to attempt to express the impact of her loss and illustrate "what Matthew's life and death" means to their family. Matthew had "such hopes for the future, his future." He was "a friend, confidant, and reminder of how great life can be."

The Shepard parents were living in Saudi when they found out about what Judy Shepard describes as a "mother's worst nightmare." Throughout their 25-hour long trip back to the United States, the image of Matthew "alone, tied to a fence in a prairie" kept running through her head.

When they were finally able to see him, Matthew was "motionless, unaware" and there were "tubes everywhere enabling him to hold onto life." Everyone, including the family and medical staff, was "painfully aware that Matthew would never wake up."

On October 12, 1998, Matthew Shepard died. Mrs. Shepard remembers "praying over him and for ourselves" because she realized that their "suffering was just beginning."

After reconciling herself and her family, Judy began doing everything possible to put an end to hate crimes because she "does not want this to happen anymore." Education is one of her priorities because hate crimes "happen because people are ignorant and fearful." She adamantly argues that "hate is a learned behavior" that is "handed down from generation to generation." Hate "diminishes us" and "makes us less"—there is a better alternative, and she believes that with effort everyone can learn it.

Judy Shepard has testified before the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee in support of hate crimes legislation and has appeared in television announcements aimed at curbing anti-gay violence and promoting a greater understanding of gay issues. She also has become active in the organization, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and has established the Matthew Shepard Foundation to carry on Matthew's personal interest in social justice.

Her lecture shifted from her personal testimony about her son to the currently controversial subject of homosexual marriage. She cited Massachusetts's recent legalization of homosexual marriage as a step forward, but only in theory. Mrs. Shepard fears that this leap has set the opposition forward, which will ultimately delay the process even more.

Judy Shepard's visit revisits the issues and dialogue started on campus in the fall of 2003 with the McCoy Theatre's presentation of *The Laramie Project*. This play is a tribute to and testament of Matthew Shepard's life and the reactions of residents of Laramie, Wyoming.

There is one key component to change, according to Judy Shepard: voting. She ended her comments by encouraging everyone to always "be honest and vote."



Wednesday, February 25, 2004

REVIEW

Looking for new music? Try VAST ~by Matt Lum



Photo courtesy of www.456entertainment.com

VAST RELEASES NEW ALBUM

VAST's new album *Nude* came out February 24. *Nude* is the followup to *Music for People*, and was released on its new label, 456 Entertainment, co-owned by Carson Daly.

I figure that there are only a handful of people on this campus who have ever heard of VAST, so here's some background info. VAST stands for Visual Audio Sensory Theater (which happens to be the title of VAST's debut album). A man named Jon Crosby is about 95% of the project. There are a few contributors here and there—mainly for co-production, authentic drums or sparse string or wind instruments. But all the vocals, primary instrumentation, composition, and production are done by Jon Crosby. Therefore, VAST is essentially a stage name for his solo project. I will therefore refer to VAST in the singular form.

VAST's new album, *Nude*, Crosby's first album in nearly four years, is an interesting mix of vocals, rock band instruments and electronic samples. It is not a far deviation from any of his previous albums (the last of which is titled *Music for People*) other than the fact that he actually hired a drummer for this one rather than programming drum samples.

Nude opens with "Turquoise," which has an intro that is undeniably reminiscent of Michael Jackson's "Bad." "Turquoise" is by far the most

upbeat song on the album. From there, it moves to "Thrown Away," with heavy emphasis on guitar and vocal samples. After that, the album mellows out a lot. There are a few fast moments beyond that point, but nothing to the point of the first two tracks. Highlights include "Turquoise," "Be with Me," "Ecstacy," [sic] and "I can't say no (to you)."

There's really not much else to say about the album. If you like VAST's other work, then you'll probably like this one. If you don't know what his other work sounds like, imagine listening to a singer who is a cross between Robert Smith and Bono performing with a band that is somewhere between Radiohead, Tori Amos, Collective Soul and The Smashing Pumpkins.

I highly recommend *Nude* or any of VAST's other albums. I think that his music has the capability to appeal to many different audiences, so chances are, you'll find something you'll like, especially if you like any of the bands mentioned above.

The official release date for *Nude* was February 24, but you can still order an autographed special edition pre-release copy directly from VAST's new label, 456 Entertainment (co-owned by Carson Daly, furthering everyone's perception that music label executives suck). Check out that site at www.456entertainment.com as well as VAST's official and very cool website, www.realvast.com, which has many sample audio and video clips to give you a better taste of his music.

The Philadelphia Story satirizes Victorian values, high society

By Ashley McCallen



In 1939, playwright Philip Barry could see only one actress in the role of Tracy Lord in his Broadway production of *The Philadelphia Story*: Katharine Hepburn. Luckily for him, she took the Broadway starring role and reprised it in the subsequent movie. Though Playhouse on the Square is not fortunate enough to have a Hepburn in the making, the production is still entertaining and endearing.

The plot of *The Philadelphia Story* is lighthearted and comic, much like a romantic comedy. Its serious

undertones, however, cannot be ignored, as Philadelphia socialite Tracy Lord prepares for her wedding—that is, her second wedding, where 95 guests are expected at the ceremony and 509 guests are planned for the reception.

Tracy scandalizes the 1920s Philadelphia society with her unconventional pants and uncouth cursing yet wins the heart of conservative and modest George Kittle.

The wedding appears to be a stress-free event until two reporters make their way into the Lords' household as overnight guests. They intend to expose to the world the snobbish (yet fashionable) ways of the elite Philadelphia society. What they discover could possibly turn the Lords into a spectacle bigger than Janet Jackson's Superbowl actions.

Tracy's internal conflict emerges as she struggles to distinguish between love and convenience. She desires to embrace New Woman ideologies of freedom and choice, but Victorianism still prompts her to embrace a socially acceptable marriage mate. Although she dresses and talks like the widely publicized New Woman, Tracy has difficulty understanding that "there aren't rules about human beings," of which her ex-husband constantly reminds her.

Although the actors tend to over-enunciate, and distractingly so, the storyline remains consistent to expectations and can be enjoyed by both women and men. Playhouse on the Square will be hosting one more week of *The Philadelphia Story* with performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening, closing with a Sunday matinee. All shows start at 8:00 p.m., and tickets can be purchased at the Playhouse box office at 51 S. Cooper. Student tickets are \$16 with a valid student ID. Visit the Playhouse on the Square website for information about upcoming shows: <http://www.playhouseonthesquare.org>.

RHODES PUZZLER

#43 (February 25, 2004)

Last week's movie pass winner: Jeremy Sadkin

The letters from the following quote have been removed and placed in alphabetical order in the corresponding column in the grid below. (So the letters E, F and R make up the first column of the quote, but not necessarily in that order). Black squares indicate word breaks; words do not break at the end of the lines. What is the quote and who said it?

E	D	O	C	A	T	E	O	D	I	I	C	N	A	E	A	N	C	E
F	E	S	S	I	V	I	W	N	I	G	O	O	R	P	R	O	G	
R	U	U	R	O	N	S	S	V	R	Y	O							

The Rhodes Puzzler sponsored by the Math/CS Department of Rhodes College. Send your solution (with your name!) to shelton@rhodes.edu or turn in a hard copy to Kennan Shelton, 318 Ohlendorf. All solutions must be received by 5:00 p.m. Monday. A weekly winner will be randomly chosen from all correct entries to receive two free movie passes donated by Malco Theatres. See the Rhodes Puzzler Page at <http://www.mathcs.rhodes.edu/Puzzler/puzzler.asp>.



Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Dinner & a Movie

This week, Leah Kaye reviews popular downtown restaurant The North End, and Allison Brown reviews the Meg Ryan movie Against the Ropes.

The North End fails to live up to reputation

By Leah Kaye



Photo courtesy of AOL Citysearch

THE NORTH END: IS IT WORTH THE TROUBLE?

Though it has a certain charm, the North End certainly has its flaws. Table space is limited, and prices are not always indicative of quality.

Maybe the timing was bad; maybe I went with too many people; all I know is that all in all, I was not too impressed with The North End. While it was named for its location on North Main street near the Pyramid, a friend who earlier that day had said they ought to have named it The Rear End was closer to the truth than he realized.

Starting with the highs, the menu was creative and I had a hard time picking one dish. Many of the items had a Southern style, like the fried pickles and the Po-boys. There was also a special section of wild rice dishes that seemed out of place at first. When we realized that they found a way to concoct a cheeseburger heart-attack using otherwise healthy wild rice, the dishes seemed to fit right in.

Overall, there were interesting selections, like the hamburger on an English muffin, and the dinner prices were cheap enough to encourage customers to be daring. The legendary hot fudge pie was good but not worth the exorbitant price.

As for the lows: The food tasted good, but not good enough to make the bill, and the time spent, worth the visit.

Against all rationality, the head waitress saw a party of eleven enter the building and decided to place the newbie waitress on it. This was a disaster from the start. She knew the menu well, but was otherwise quite inept. When it came time to pay, it took an extra hour to get everything sorted out, including the right number of drinks charged to the right people and the correct 15% mandatory gratuity.

I was personally in a rage when leaving the restaurant, because the inept newbie waitress did not understand that the head waitress had put the 15% on our checks, so when I gave her cash, she kept my change and did not even offer to give it back. As a side note to all waiters and waitresses: In my mind, this is theft. Give me back my money, unless I specify otherwise. Granted, it was only a dollar, but it was MY dollar, which I could have used

toward the purchase of textbooks or gasoline or a pint at the Saucer, which is where I should have gone.

If you should choose to venture out and give it a try, I suggest keeping the number of people in your party below five. In addition, stay away from the nights when there are big events at the Pyramid; the place will fill up within five minutes for reasons unbeknownst to me, freaking out the single inept waitress.

The final evaluation can be summed up using an analogy with the chairs at The North End. The chairs were wobbly and breaking; a number had to be switched out when other customers left to use the bathroom. This may have added to the atmosphere of being cheap but getting the job done Podunk style, or it may have been representative of the risk we took in hoping to dine and leave within two hours without spending an ungodly \$28 on some rice, some pickles, and a beer.

The North End

Genre: Pub grub, live entertainment

Location: 364 N. Main, Historic Pinch District

Phone: (901) 526-0319

Website/Menu: www.thenorthendonline.com

Want to complain about a bad dining experience?

Write an article and send it to brian@rhodes.edu!

Ryan plays against type in Against the Ropes

By Allison Brown

This is for all you Meg Ryan fans. And all you pseudo-sports movie fans. In her new film *Against the Ropes*, Meg delivers just what she promises: a good time. While she breaks out of her happy-go-lucky romantic comedy mode for this one, she still retains that trademark liability that makes her fun to watch, even when she's playing a semi-trash tough girl boxing manager.

Against the Ropes is based on the biography of Jackie Kallen, a real-life female sportswriter turned boxing manager who forged into the male-dominated world of pro boxing while raising two daughters by herself. While the two daughters and the former career as a sportswriter are dropped from the script to fit a more traditional Hollywood formula, the fact that Kallen's actual childhood was spent in a family-owned boxing gym is emphasized in the film. It's true: the movie does stray from the absolute truth of Kallen's life, but it's all for the purpose of presenting a more coherent storyline. If you want to know all the ins and outs of Jackie Kallen's real story, *Against the Ropes* is not your movie.

But if you're looking for a light, entertaining, and often funny drama with a sporty feminist twist, go for it; *Against the Ropes* is a good use of that seven dollars. The story centers on one scene wherein Ryan's character buys

a struggling boxer for a dollar from a condescending criminal of a boxing promoter, played by Tony Shalhoub. When Kallen goes to find her newly acquired client, she finds that he is a washed-up crack addict being beaten up by his dealer, played by Omar Epps.

Instead of taking the boxer, Kallen opts to train the skeptical Epps, who has boxing potential but is slightly "raw" (as Ryan's character puts it in the film). From here, the movie goes into a barrage of training scenes and brief boxing matches. The boxing clips are some of the least intense sports scenes ever captured on film, but at its core *Against the Ropes* is less about sports than it is about the tumultuous lives of its characters, and those lives just happen to involve a few instances of boxing and sweating.

While the film's toughness is a far cry from Meg Ryan's previous work, and her character wouldn't even dream of watching a romantic comedy, Ryan doesn't completely get away from her America's Sweetheart image; the movie is a little too fun for that. But she does manage to play a different type of character with conviction and sincerity. Overall, if you want a hard-hitting sports movie, don't expect that from *Against the Ropes*, but if you want a Meg Ryan movie with just a bit more punch than you usually get from her, *Against the Ropes* is a great pick.

How to Reach Our Authors and Us

As the official student newspaper of Rhodes College, *The Sou'wester* is produced entirely by the students on staff. It functions independently of faculty and administration. The newspaper is published weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters, except during exam periods and breaks.

Staff meetings are open to the Rhodes community and convene in the second floor of Briggs Student Center every Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. *The Sou'wester* is a member of the Student Publications Board, a six-publication consortium that includes the editors of all student publications, class representatives, and at-large representatives from the student body.

All staff editorials published in *The Sou'wester* represent the majority opinion of the Editorial Board composed of section editors and executive editors. Opinions expressed in *The Sou'wester*, opinion columns, and letters-to-the-editor do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *The Sou'wester* Editorial Board. Letters-to-the-editor are encouraged; all letters must be signed and will be edited for clarity.

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SPORTS



Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Rhodes to host SCAC tournament

By Camelia Trahan

The Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference men's and women's basketball tournament is this weekend.

The top eight teams (both men and women) will be seeded according to regular season finish, and a single-elimination tournament will begin Friday, February 27 and run through Sunday, February 29.

Rhodes College plays host to this year's tournament, with Memphis University School also hosting games at its facility on Friday. All women's first round games on Friday will be played at Memphis University School, with all men's first round games to be held at Rhodes. Both the men's and women's semi-finals and finals will be played at Rhodes in Mallory Gymnasium.

The SCAC is also hosting its charity auction, which promises to be bigger than ever. Sixteen team-signed basketballs (one for each team participating in this year's tournament) will be auctioned as well as other premium items, including a 2004 SCAC tournament t-shirt signed by Atlanta Hawks legend Dominique Wilkins, an official SCAC baseball signed by 2002 Atlanta Braves number one draft choice Jeff Francoeur and a team-signed basketball by the 2003-04

edition of the NBA Memphis Grizzlies. All proceeds from the silent auction will benefit the Memphis Interfaith Association (MIFA).

Also, just as last year, admission to all sessions of the 2004 SCAC Basketball Tournament is free. However, each attendee is asked to bring two canned goods in lieu of an admission fee to each game. As with the money raised through this year's charity auction, all donations benefit MIFA.

Additionally, during halftime of selected SCAC tournament games, 2004 SCAC Basketball Tournament t-shirts will be given away to lucky fans. The DePauw/Rose-Hulman pep band is set to perform again at this year's basketball tournament for all games at both venues as well.

And on semifinal Saturday, the All-SCAC basketball teams will be announced, including this year's SCAC Players-of-the-Year. The men's team will be announced during the half of the 5 p.m. game, while the women's announcement will come during the half of the 7 p.m. contest.

This is the second year the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference has held a postseason tournament which will decide both the men's and women's champion that will represent the SCAC as its automatic qualifier to the NCAA Tournament.

Golf wins Pizza Hut / Bell South inter-collegiate tournament

By Camelia Trahan

The Rhodes men's golf team claimed victory at the Pizza Hut / Bell South Intercollegiate Golf Tournament after firing an opening round team score of 1 over par at the Dancing Rabbit Golf Club in Philadelphia, MS. Rhodes was led by John Jennison ('07), who shot a two under par 70 while Chris Thompson ('04) shot 1 under 71. Cross town foe Christian Brothers University also played in the tournament, capturing 14th place with a score of 328.

With a team score of 289, the Lynx won by 13 shots over second place University of Indiana at Purdue (302) and fourteen shots over third place William & Mary (303).

John Jennison won his first Collegiate Tournament with his 2 under par round of 70. Chris Thompson tied for second with Jeff Moulder of the University of Indiana with one under par 71. Due to rain, day two was cancelled, and since Rhodes led the entire tournament, they were crowned, beating out both Division I and II teams.

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