

THE **FEATURE ISSUE: RELIGION ON CAMPUS** SOU'WESTER

September 17, 2008

The Weekly Student Newspaper of Rhodes College

Vol. XCV. NO. 2

How authentic is the Gothic architecture at Rhodes?

See Page 4

Our opinion writers take a hard look at religious values.

See Page 2-3

A modern view of Rhodes' presbyterian affiliation

By **Allyson Pellissier**
Staff Writer

Rhodes College has maintained close ties to the Presbyterian Church—specifically, the PC (USA)—since 1855, when former President William M. Stewart established a relationship between the College and the Presbyterian Synod of Nashville. In the latter portion of the nineteenth century, Rhodes—then known as Southwestern Presbyterian University—served as the sole Presbyterian college in its region.

Although its policies encourage students to formulate and develop their own religious persuasions, Rhodes continues to acknowledge its Presbyterian affiliation both formally and informally.

“The College has a covenant relationship with the Synod of Living Waters [...] and guarantees freedom of inquiry for faculty and students,” as stated in the Catalogue. “[...] the curriculum includes a variety of courses in Bible and religion that explore the Judeo-Christian heritage and its implications for the whole of life.”

Together, the Search for Values in the Light of Western History and Religion and the Life: Then

and Now programs constitute one of the most visible effects of Rhodes' Presbyterian legacy. In accordance with the conditions of the Bellingrath endowment, Rhodes stipulates a 12-credit minimum in either the Search or the Life program before conferring a degree.

However, as an institution which prides itself on fostering a lifelong commitment to learning, the programs do not aim to indoctrinate students. Rather, Rhodes marries a commitment to fully educating students about Christianity and its role in the context of human history with a respect for the students' abilities to draw their own conclusions regarding the veracity of Christian theology.

“Both programs incorporate “a heavy dose of modern criticism,” says Dr. Steve Haynes, Director of the Life Program. “In recent years,” adds Haynes, “the identity of the College has become less controversial,” as College rhetoric has shifted its emphasis to one of openness and interdenominational dialogue.

In the past, some faculty members and students

Presbyterian, continued on Page 5

Life and Search promote personal growth in students

By **Matt McCulloch**
Staff Writer

“Life and Search: personal growth”

The Life and Search programs at Rhodes have become a cornerstone of the college's curriculum. For many students, the academic study of religion is the intersection of personal identity and critical thinking. Students' experiences in these courses have influenced not only their worldview but also their knowledge.

“It's certainly a challenge for students when they come here because usually they've never looked at the Bible the way we look at it—they've never studied it academically,” explained Religious Studies Professor Steve McKenzie. “Most students haven't had that opportunity.”

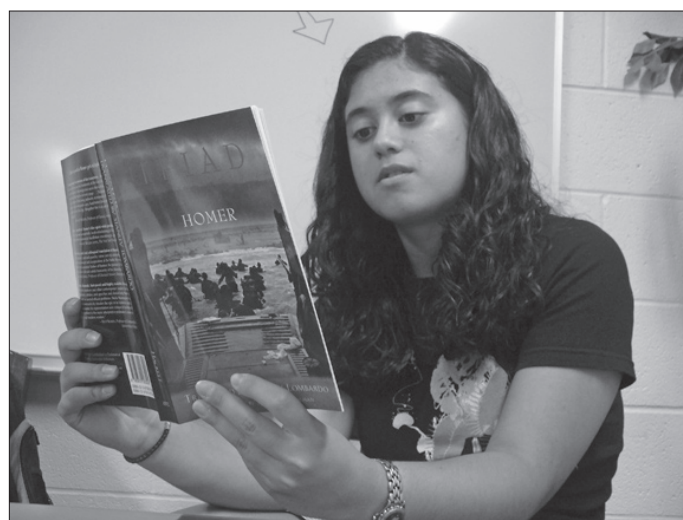
While students may be surprised initially, they garner different experiences from their Life or Search courses.

“Some students find it liberating, some find it really challenging,” says Professor Steve Haynes. “Some find it just strange because it's not part of their tradition and they don't know how to react.”

When students of various faiths enter the classroom, one might hypothesize that their varying beliefs could conflict with one another's or with their professor's.

“I really didn't feel any personal conflict in my Life class,” said Sophomore Kevin Wu. “My professor didn't really try to force her beliefs, and neither did any of the students. We didn't directly focus on faith systems, so I think that is what kept us away from controversy.”

Encounters in Search and Life challenged some students to reflect on and analyze their values, and to make them



Melody Lopez/The Souwester

Search exposes students to Greek and Roman classics such as Homer's Iliad.

Life and Search, continued on Page 5



Noelle Smith/The Souwester

Students in the Muslim Student Association discuss ways to educate other students about Islamic traditions such as Ramadan.

Islam on campus

By **Nene Bafford**

September marks the celebration of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, and members of the Muslim Student Association are using it as an opportunity to make the campus more aware about of their faith.

On September 24th, the Muslim Student Association is holding their annual fast-breaking dinner, Iftar, at 6:45pm

“This dinner encourages non-Muslims to experience the fast as Muslims do so that they can feel how the poor do and so that they can learn more about Ramadan and the importance it has for Muslims and in Islam,” said Shan Khan.

The Muslim Student Association of Memphis (MSA) has been an active organization on campus for 2 ½ years and currently has 10-15 members. The Muslim Student Association places emphasis on promoting a greater understanding of Islam.

It is currently Ramadan and members of the Muslim Student Association are continuing to help the campus become more aware of their faith. Ramadan is the holy month for Muslims. It is the month that the Qur'an was revealed. During this month, Muslims are fasting, which includes no eating, drinking, or negative behaviors such as lying, cursing, or cheating.

In response to Ramadan, the Rat has been preparing special meals that meet the Muslim students on campus religious requirements.

“I do not break my fast on campus most days and when I do, I bring my own food because the time for breaking the fast is during a lab a have at night,” says Shan Khan. Shan Khan, the current Director of Public-

ity (elections are now being held).

Khan thinks that the Muslim Student Association is succeeding in their mission to promote a greater understanding of Islam and they have faced no challenges in doing so.

“Muslims are supposed to be people that act upon their faith. A lot of people have preconceived stereotypes, such as, Muslims are violent or disrespectful towards women,” said Shan Khan.

“After people meet Muslims they began to realize that we are not violent or disrespectful,” Shan added.

Although he does not break his fast, Shan Khan does feel as though the campus is respectful towards his religion.

“I can say that my religion and beliefs are respected on campus, for the most part,” said Shan Khan. “I have only heard one person make a disparaging and highly offensive comment about my religion.”

The current president of the Muslim Student Association, Anum Minhas, also thinks that the campus is respectful when it comes to her religion.

“I think the Rhodes campus is extremely respectful,” said Anum Minhas.

“Heads of other religious organizations are really good friends of mine,” she added.

Although the campus is respectful, members of the Muslim Student Association feel as though many people do not understand their religion.

With help from the administration, such as the Chaplin's office, the Muslim Student Association is able to sponsor events as well as find places to pray.

Perspectives on faith and reason: Islam

By **Rami Abdoch**
Staff Writer

Since the Enlightenment of the 18th century, reason has taken a center stage in the West and the world at large. As a result, a great deal of religious skepticism has pervaded since that time. Furthermore, some scholars ascribe to the reductionist notion that reason is entirely divorced from faith. Indeed, religion is perceived as a type of blind faith.

Is it not the case that (many) Americans have faith in democracy and certain inalienable rights of man? Do they not have reasons for believing this to be the case? A basic look at any number of social phenomena highlights that the concept of faith is not restricted to religion, so one is not justified in making a grand claim about religion as categorically false based on its supposed irrationality.

Either the universe has a beginning, or it doesn't have a beginning. If it were the case that the universe had no beginning, this point in time 2008 CE [B], taken back infinitely must be an infinite amount of time. Similarly, take 1008 CE, [A] and go back infinitely and you have an infinite amount of time. However, it MUST also be the case that point B is 1,000 years more than point A. The implica-

tion is that both $A = B$ and A does not equal B , which is clearly a logical contradiction. It must be noted that we are discussing actual infinities, not infinite sets. Put another way, one might ask, "could there have been an infinite

“The Islamic faith is one that does not belittle the sound mind and promotes moderation, humility, and the value of knowledge.”

number of yesterdays?” Now, we have asserted that the universe has a beginning.

The creed of Sunni Islam, that of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'h, is that the Creator (Allah) exists without a place. The Creator is not subject to time and is not designated with

place. Also, the Creator does not change, for change implies imperfection. Anything that changes must necessarily go to a state of being that is superior or inferior to the previous state. Assuming the former case, it would mean the initial state was somehow insufficient; the latter case is self-evidently flawed.

The Creator (Allah) is absolutely different from the creation and exists without a beginning, whereas all of the creation exists with a beginning. The Creator (Allah) is absolutely free of need, for neediness is a sign of weakness. The Creator is One, meaning without an associate or partner, and does not resemble the creation at all. The Creator (Allah) is not a spirit, a soul, or a body.

To be clear, Muslims do not posit that the Creator can be imagined or encompassed; rather, our knowledge consists in what is befitting and non-befitting, which can be deduced by reason. The Islamic faith is one that does not belittle the sound mind and promotes moderation, humility, and the value of knowledge. No, faith and reason are not incompatible, but not all religions are equivalents. I offer this very brief synopsis of Islam to provide a level of understanding about both faith and reason with respect to this faith.

Religion: Holy irrational?

By **William Smith**

Can religion and reason coexist? Is religion wholly irrational? If so, then religious debate cannot lead to a truer understanding of religion. Many believe religious faith and reason to be mutually exclusive. While reason may be found in certain religious beliefs, the majority of religious beliefs cannot be rationally “known” and proved.

In his book *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, English philosopher John Locke explains how many of the tenets in Christianity constitute a rational religion. One of his primary citations includes the concept of salvation in the form of Jesus Christ. We end up with the argument that religion must be rational, since the religious followers must have a rationale behind their faithful religiousness in seeking salvation.

“To claim that religious beliefs are based on reason when they are not opens the door to wanton speculation”

David Hume, the 18th century Scottish philosopher, says that even if a religion's beliefs are rational, they are almost always to an extent moot because none of those beliefs can be logically supported. According to Hume, if we believe that God created existence, then all we can rationally know about this God must come from analysis of his creations. When retracing observable effects back towards the point of causation, the only quality of the cause we can infer is that it had the ability to produce the effect. Any attribute we give to this God cannot be known because there is no logical method of observing the truth. Thus, Christianity and reason go together because those beliefs are rationalizations.

The point of all of this is not to attack religion; on the contrary, like Hume, I support the belief in faith like many religious people. To claim that religious beliefs are based on reason when they are not opens the door to wanton speculation. Religious people's efforts to bring new people to their faith, as well as their overall image, will be improved if they stop insisting on faulty arguments that reduce their credibility and alienate others. Abandoning logically faulty arguments is necessary for religions to improve their integrity and effectiveness.

A quantum conundrum of biblical proportions

By **Kevin Kifer**

Western civilization owes its prosperity to the explorers and conquerors who attribute their successes to the power of Christ. From Constantine and Charlemagne, to Cortes and Pizarro, the hierarchical Roman Catholic Church has endorsed countless acts of violence in the name of Christian salvation. The ascent of the Church towards authoritarianism in many societies has been undeniable. As Spanish conquistadors carved out empires from Latin America, so did the United States devastate native peoples under the supervision of “Christian” presidents.

As wars against enemies are glorified throughout the Old Testament, the New Testament questions the validity of these practices in establishing everlasting peace. War often creates great wealth for powerful figures, and since the vast majority of the Christian world finds moral guidance in the Old Testament, let's remember that Deuteronomy 8:17-18 tells us, “Do not say to yourself, ‘My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.’” According to the “Word of God,” no power but the Lord's allows us to gain wealth. We can logically conclude from this statement that if you do have wealth, then the Lord must have given it to you. As a result, gaining wealth by any means necessary must require the blessings of God.

Let us turn to a later account of God's work. Bartolome de Las Casas' *The Devastation of the Indies* shows the vast wealth a nation can acquire through Church-sponsored slavery and violence. The Spanish conquistadors traveled throughout Latin America with Catholic priests for various reasons, one of which being the conversion of the native peoples. Friars were often the only defense the natives possessed against the Spanish war machine, but as the Christian warriors amassed incredible wealth, evidence of God's distaste of genocide never surfaced. Las Casas attributes the protests of friars to divine intervention, while acknowledging the Spanish assumption that God was granting them military might and profitable victories.

Millions of people were directly slaughtered, starved, or simply worked to death to fill the coffers of the Spanish royalty and spread fear of the Lord. The problem with a non-falsifiable religion is that both glorious atrocities and a struggle for basic human rights are neatly sewn into the many folds of God's plan. The miracle of the schizophrenic collaboration of books into one biblical canon is that, whether you are a savage pirate or an innocent native, you will find comfort in these sacred words... “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

THE SOU'WESTER

Editor-In-Chief
Daniel Jacobs
Managing Editor
Avery Pribila
News Editor
William Bruce
Opinion Editor
Paul Yacoubian
Entertainment Editor
Ralph MacDonald
Sports Editor
Onalee Carson
Layout Editor
Lee Bryant
Copy Editor
Suzi Van Sickle
Photography Editor
Noelle Smith
Business Manager
Jamie Young
Executive Assistants
Anna Meyerrose
Jerica Sandifer

How to Reach Our Authors and Us

As the official newspaper of Rhodes College, *The Sou'wester* is produced entirely by 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.

The Sou'wester is a member of the Student Media Board, a consortium that includes the editors of all student media outlets, 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 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, but cannot exceed 350 words; all letters must be signed and will be edited for clarity.

Reaching *The Sou'wester*

Phone: (901) 843-3402
Fax: (901) 843-3409
E-mail: thesouwester@gmail.com
Address: Rhodes Box 3010
The Sou'wester
2000 North Parkway
Memphis, TN 38112-1690


ASSOCIATED
COLLEGIATE
PRESS

Richard “Mr. Fallacious” Dawkins

By Austin Freeman
Staff Writer

No, I have not read all of *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins' popular book attempting to prove Atheistic beliefs. But the parts that I have read, don't really give any powerful evidence to make me discount my beliefs. For starters, there's quite a lot of the book, or at least the first part of it, that isn't really relevant to orthodox Christianity. One needs to distinguish between the *teachings* of a particular religion and the *actions* of fallible human beings.

One of Dawkins' arguments in particular rejects the trinitarian concept. It basically says that it's confusing and no one can really make sense of it, and that people tend to get very divisive over fine distinctions. Therefore, it must not be true.

If the doctrine is true, then it questions the fundamental composition of an infinitely higher order of being. There should be no hope of comprehending such an idea, given the limited perceptive abilities of humans. However, the fact that we have a clearly-established concept of such an idea, and the probability of a human thinking it up, we have a reasonable argument in favor of its validity.

Secondly, the tendency of theologians to split hairs and brand heretics over this idea can be interpreted in three ways: 1) We are fallible human beings and every action of every Christian cannot be tak-

en as valid evidence for the rejection of the belief system; 2) since it is a concept which we cannot adequately understand, we don't really know which part is crucially important and which part is a triviality (if there is any); 3) and almost all the debates about the Trinitarian controversy deal with the implications of such beliefs, not the wording of the beliefs themselves.

C.S. Lewis, a convert from atheism, wrote that one of the reasons he became a Christian was because Christianity was something he couldn't have guessed. It had just the right twist to be something a human being wouldn't have created. Some of it doesn't make sense to us, some of it is a mystery, and all of it is strange. This is exactly what we would expect of something revealed not *by* humans, but *to* humans. If it all made sense, it would just show us that God isn't who He claims to be, because we can figure Him out.

This is not to say that Christianity, or faith in general, is contrary to reason. Indeed, the entire basis for the Christian belief is based not on some nebulous notion of self-betterment or higher morality, but the real, concrete, historical testimony of the Resurrection. We believe because we have evidence, both of the reality of Jesus' work in us. To believe contrary to reason is not faith, it is madness. Faith and Reason were both created by the same God.

Encompassing modern faith-based practices difficult

By Kristin Marchell
Staff Writer

Yes, religion is a big deal and a dangerous thing. For the alternative to not being religious is not to be neutral; it's merely to subscribe to a different worldview, one which could be treacherous in its own right. Still, theistic worldviews often get a bum rap as “illogical comfort for simple-minded” at best or “needless conflict producers” at worst. It would be a lie to say that religions don't sometimes serve in both these capacities. However, let me speak of the religion I know best, Christianity, and explain why these charges are ill-founded.

Faith is an integral part of Christianity, yes, but there is a lot more to it than that. Christians aren't called to shut their eyes and merely believe; rather they can “love their God with all [their] mind” and explore the world. The question isn't faith vs. science as a legitimate method of inquiry, but where you place your faith after scientific observation has reached its limit. There are many things that science cannot explain and, moreover, things in science that point to a creator.

Could the universe have sprung forth from nothing or did something outside of it create it? What accounts for the difference between mere chemicals and proteins

and true life? This topic is far too complex to be covered here, but for those interested, I'd recommend the book “I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist” by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek.

Christianity is a comfort, but it is not an easy one. It calls for the believer to joy-

“Christianity is a comfort, but it is not an easy one.”

fully deny oneself and sacrifice for others. It calls for confidence paired with humility. It's both personal and communal. It explores both the strength faith can provide and the weakness of humanity, allowing for the inevitability of struggle and doubt. It gives a perfect ideal to follow and tells its followers that they will fail to live up to it. Yet, it picks them up, offers full forgiveness and grace. Christianity offers hope in its faith, but it is not simple, nor effortless, nor blind. Some may try to use it merely as an opiate, some may even distort it to inspire hate, but for most Christians, the reality of their religion is utterly different.

Universalism is anything but

By Ryan Costello

Religions are based on moral codes, values, and traditions; however, religion contains a major flaw. While one of the purposes of it includes the unification of individuals of the same belief into a pact, a reciprocal effect occurs. Consequently, a person who differs in faith from this pact is immediately excluded and told that their way of thinking is “wrong.” Is this not a direct violation of the moral codes upon which religion was founded? Is the acceptance of others not a virtue taught to children at a young age? Or is it acceptable to follow certain principles and ignore others in religion?

Religion tears society itself apart, particularly the Christian faith. Universalist followers adamantly believe their faith is the only acceptable one to follow. Therefore, according to the Bible, the duty of the believers in the Christian faith is to convince others of this statement. While in some cases they achieve this, the majority of time they are unsuccessful in their efforts, usually because of the fact that the other person

probably has his own set of beliefs. The Christian teachings of eternal struggle encourages followers to not accept others for who they are. Instead, one must impose that faith upon them in order to *save* them from eternal damnation. The consequential conflict between both believers has been widely documented.

While many who do this believe that they have good intentions, how would they feel if someone else tried to impose a different religion on them?

Thus, I have a difficult time actually believing in religion. How can you believe so strongly in something that encourages people to live by moral principles, but not accept anyone's faith that is different? I believe the best way to live is not by religion at all, but by ethical standards. Which do you think a “divine spirit” would prefer, a person who is unaccepting of others or a person who can agree to disagree and live by moral maxims?

My choice is clear.

Blame people, not religion

By Dean Galaro
Staff Writer

September 18, 2008. Muslims extremists are blowing themselves and others up and Christian extremists are picketing outside funerals of dead soldiers; and you thought most religions taught peace?

Religions break people apart into very distinct groups and assign divergent values to each group, namely believers and non-believers. This might seem a cause for concern, since the best thing about humanity is that we can all similarly share in our human experience...right?

People are segregated and always will be, regardless of religion. Psychologically, people like to be around others who are similar to themselves, such as those of the same race, social class, gender, nationality, or sports team affiliation. These are not problems for most people, and yet they still manage to separate us and can put pressure on the normal social bonds around us.

In the same vein, people need not chas-

tise religions because a few people decide to do something inhumane in the name of God. When the Westboro Baptist Church belittles people at a funeral, or a man detonates himself in a crowded bazaar, it does not mean any Christians or Muslim would gladly do the same. There is a good reason why we call people like that ‘extremists’.

Still, the best way to discern how to live a religious life is to study the religion and its texts, not simply its members. In the book of John, Jesus says “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). The Qur'an notes “That Allah may know those who believe...who see and sacrifice (for the sake of truth). And Allah loves not those who do wrong” (3:140). It must be understood that these are two verses out of thousands of pages of text, but they do help summarize the ideas presented throughout. People are not perfect, but it is the duty of everyone, Christians and Muslims alike, to serve as an inspirational example of love and piety.

Is it really a matter of life or death?

By Jacquelyn Hammerton

While I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, and, for much of my life, have believed in a “heaven,” I still question other's perceptions of the afterlife. Some anthropologists believe that the development of the human consciousness led to mankind's anxiety of what happens after death, resulting in man's creation of God. This is the idea that man created God and the afterlife as a source of comfort.

Religions around the globe have established characteristics describing the afterlife and ways to reach that destination. Buddhism's Nirvana, Christianity's Heaven, and even Atheism's “eternal nothingness” provide an answer to man's question, “Is there life after death?” Promises of rewards in the afterlife or threats of eternal damnation have affected the way millions of people live their daily lives. Whether it be doing good deeds in hopes

of reuniting with their Maker or avoiding immoral acts against their religion for fear of endless pain and suffering, people are left to change their lives accordingly. Still, I wonder what really happens to us when our body dies.

From my own experiences I haven't a doubt in my mind that a god exists, and that all things in creation came into being through intelligent design. As far as the afterlife, I am open to the idea but not entirely convinced that it's a place or a “reward” for good behavior or fidelity. Rather, I believe that death is only a door to another state of being. The part of me that is aware of my existence helps me to have faith in existence after death. As real as this life is and as perennial as everything that exists, I welcome the idea that I will also exist in death, wherever I am or whatever I become.

Student Voice

Student views on religion



"I like that Rhodes is closely connected to the Presbyterian Church; but I also like the fact that we don't have a bunch of rules and religious class requirements to belong to this affiliation."
-Alice Havner ('12)

"I don't think there's any pressure from other students to be religious, just like there isn't any pressure to join a fraternity or sorority if you don't want to."
-Lauren Rodriguez ('09)



"I don't feel the various religious group on campus are in conflict with one another. However, I do feel like there are more religious organizations than there is interest amongst the students."
-Julianne Lindner ('09)

"I think religion was very strong in the first few weeks for freshmen because those who are religious turned to God. But there also seems to be a strong agnostic tendency which seems to be a more modern perspective that college students have on religion."
-Elliot Gusdorf ('12)



"I consider myself to be religious, but in general I would not say that Rhodes students are particularly religious."
-Alycia Hayne ('09)

How Gothic is Rhodes?



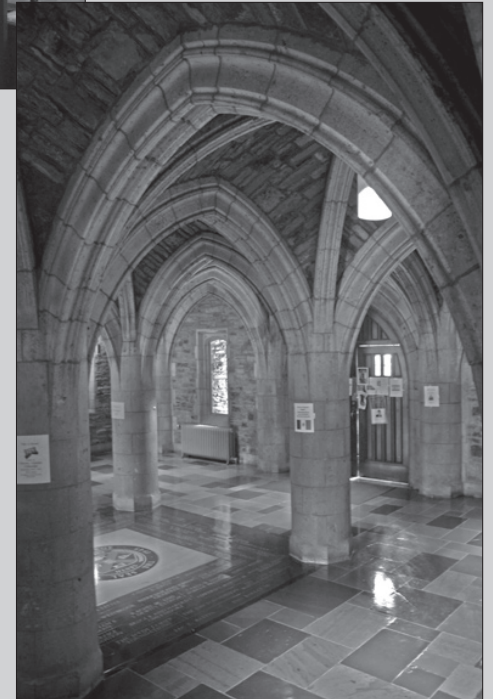
The Williams Prayer room, located in Voorhies hall, is one two chapels on campus. Because it is used specifically for religious activities, it has a higher level of gothic influence than most of the other buildings on campus. The room itself is crafted like a pointed archway, it has detailed stained glass windows, and the façade is heavy stone.

Palmer hall was constructed in 1925, and was the first completed building on the Memphis campus. Although it has a pointed roofline and heavy stone façade (characteristics of Gothic Architecture), its low ceilings and bay windows (as noted above) are a deviation from true gothic.



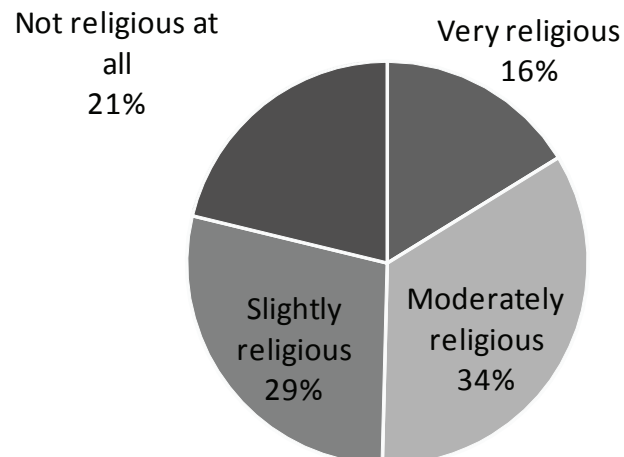
all photos Noelle Smith/ The Sou'wester

"We don't really have the Gothic spirit," says Professor David McCarthy. "Our campus is Disneyworld."



Located in the heart of Palmer hall, the Cloister carries the school seal as well as a large level of Gothic influences. It has a heavy stone façade, stone columns, and the ceiling is composed primarily of pointed archways. This area carries a higher level of the Gothic architectural style than most of the campus.

How religious do Rhodes students think they are?



Data collected by the 2008 Campus Climate Survey.

Presbyterian, continued from Page 1

religious policy.

"As compulsory chapel ended and overt advocacy of belief faded from the mission of the college, service became the primary way that the College's religious identity was lived out," Chaplain Walt Tennyson says. "The Reformation movement in Geneva that gave birth to Presbyterianism was innovative in the way it brought together the "spiritual" and "temporal" concerns that other Christian traditions have separated. [...] At Rhodes, the gospel's concern for social righteousness has led to extensive institutional investment and student involvement in acts of mercy, civil rights work and social change."

Life and Search, continued from Page 1

personally significant.

"Search made me realize that a lot of the values I hold today are surprisingly similar to those of philosophers from thousands of years ago," said sophomore Sarah Holloway.

For others, their experiences were not as influential.

"While I really enjoyed my Search courses," said sophomore Anna Laymon, "I do not feel like we ever got deep enough into any conversation... to truly be enlightened by much of anything."

For some, their first thorough exposure to studying the Bible was an exploratory and memorable encounter.

"Before Life class, I had never read a single verse besides those quoted on billboards and t-shirts, so each chapter we read was like something new to me," said sophomore Audrey Hughes. "My beliefs pretty much stayed the same."

Being required to complete these classes helped some students sculpt and reform their ethical beliefs.

"Search helped me to place long-held values within social and historical contexts, fostering critical examination and reflection," said sophomore Evan Tyler. "This both reaffirmed and, in many ways, challenged the beliefs with which I entered the program."

"After two complete semesters on studying the Bible, I noticed that I had begun to take a deeper interest in my own faith," said sophomore Lindsey Dortch.

Professor Haynes noted that some students gained insight by learning from a new perspective.

"It's mostly Christian students who have been disturbed by the way the Christian tradition is presented and its connection to the holocaust," said Haynes.

Overall, students seem to be open to studying the Bible academically.

"I've had Muslim students, I've had Hindu students, and I've never had any of them say I don't want to study the Bible," said Professor Hotz. "It's one of those documents you've got to come to terms with if you want to term with westerners."

"Nobody in our department is trying to improve or not improve a student's spiritual life," said McKenzie. "It may be years after you graduate that some of these things start coming back to you and you...see the truth of them. The light dawns."

"You're being pushed to think for yourself," commented Professor Kendra Hotz. "What do you value? What do you think is meaningful in the world?"

Today, about 80% of students participate in some form of community service during their tenure at Rhodes.

Rhodes does not allow its link to the Presbyterian Church to discourage students from participating in organizations not subscribing to Presbyterianism, as evidenced by the presence of organizations such as the Muslim Student Association, the Catholic Student Association, the Community of Rhodes Episcopalians, and the Rhodes Atheist Fellowship. Within the past decade in particular, the College has sought to balance a respect for its Presbyterian history with the open-mindedness that is the hallmark of the liberal arts education.



Jerica Sandifer/The Sou'wester

"Darius Goes West," which was shown at the BCLC Tuesday night, is about Darius Weems (shown seated), who has muscular dystrophy, and his journey to get his wheelchair pimped by MTV's "Pimp My Ride." According to Darius, "the film will make you laugh and cry and also awaken you to an important life issue." For more information, visit dariusgoeswest.org or view any of several videos on youtube.

START COMMANDING ATTENTION.

START OUT ON TOP.

START RAISING THE BAR.

START HIGHER.

START ONE STEP AHEAD.

START MOVING UP.

START LEADING FROM DAY ONE.

START STRONG.™

There's strong. Then there's Army Strong. If you want to be a leader in life, joining Army ROTC in college is the strongest way to start. Army ROTC provides hands-on leadership development to round out your college studies. Plus you can earn a full-tuition, merit-based scholarship. After graduation, you'll begin your career as an Army Officer. With a start like that, there's no limit to what you can achieve.

ARMY ROTC

U.S. ARMY

ARMY STRONG.®

ASK ABOUT ARMY ROTC LEADERSHIP COURSES & SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS!
Contact Major Mike Schoenborn at 901-678-2934 or mschnbrn@memphis.edu

©2008. Paid for by the United States Army. All rights reserved.

Hollywood seeks Teer's approval: results are mixed

By Adam Teer
Former A&E Editor

Now that we have officially moved into the middle of September, I can officially announce that the summer movie season has ended. Now it is time for the Fall Doldrums, which is one of the worst times to see a movie (see the article I wrote last year for the paper if you are curious to find out why). In contrast to last summer, Hollywood has attempted to put out less sequels and more "original" ideas. I use the term loosely because most of the new ideas were taken from previously written material. Below is a quick rundown of a majority of the summer releases if you did not get a chance to see some or all of them.

Inscribed Into the Book of Life

Iron Man

I am a huge fan of the comic book series, and the movie did not disappoint. Robert Downy, Jr. played perfectly in one of the most memorable roles of the year. Iron Man is the story of a billionaire industrialist who creates a suit of armor to combat terrorists. It was one of the highest grossing movies of the summer, and for good reason. The cast as a whole works well together (Gwenyth Paltrow, Terrence Howard, and Jeff Bridges) and Jon Favreau works his magic behind the camera. This is not your basic superhero action movie. There is a superb balance between character development and action. It is not just for comic book fans. I know several 40 and 50 year olds who saw the movie and loved it. Go out of your way to see this. I guarantee that you will find something about the movie you like. Iron Man will be coming out on DVD on September 30th.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

This is my pick for the most underrated movie of the summer. People expected way too much out of this film, and punished it unfairly when it did not meet their absurd expectations. It has been in discussion for almost two decades. And with two decades of discussion comes two decades worth of hype. So, of course, die hard fans are going to be upset. This one was not as good as *Raiders* or *Last Crusade*, but for a fun adventure movie, it definitely fits the bill. Harrison Ford is back as Indiana Jones and does superbly in his old role, even though he is pushing 70. The film is a little goofy in some areas, and I think that is where people got upset. Besides the premise being a little odd (it involves alien skulls made of crystal) the only other

major hiccup was the casting of Shia LeBeouf*, the scourge of today's pop culture. He misses the mark as wannabe cool biker boy Mutt Williams. If you enjoyed any of the other Indiana Jones movies, definitely check it out. The movie is excellent, but it does get a little nuts in the last 15 minutes. It is released on October 14th on DVD.

Wall-E

Pixar strikes gold again with the so-cute-it-hurts robot, Wall-E. I was smitten with this thing from the first preview. While *Wall-E* is one of Pixar's best films, it is also one of its most different. There is not a whole lot of human dialogue; it is mostly robots squeaking and beeping at each other, which just happens to be adorable. Even though not a whole lot of words are spoken, the message that the movie conveys is not easily overlooked. It is another wonderful adventure from Pixar that is pretty much a shoe-in for a best animated, if not best picture, Oscar nomination. *Wall-E* comes out in the middle of November on DVD.

The Dark Knight

This is the biggest movie of the year. If you have not seen it yet, you are probably going to see it. The movie picks up where the first one left off, following a new wave of crime from the Joker. Batman is forced to have a mental battle with himself over what he has created for himself and others. There is a whole lot more to this movie than what meets the eye. Next time you see it, think about the dog imagery they use as well as the duality of dogs. This is one of the best ensemble casts put together ever. Yes, I said it. Well besides Maggie Gyllenhaal, who sucks just as much as Katie Holmes did as Rachel

Dawes in the first film. Aaron Eckhardt stands out above everyone else though, even Heath Ledger. I am saying it now, HEATH LEDGER DOES NOT DESERVE AN OSCAR NOMINATION!! (More to come on this in my article for next week.) The script is intricate and bullet proof. They did not take a turn to campiness like the original series of movies did, and I applaud Christopher Nolan for that. *The Dark Knight* is a must see film, whether you want to see it or not. Do it. It is still in theatres.

Tropic Thunder

Robert Downey Jr. and Ben Stiller hit gold with this ridiculously amazing, hard R-comedy about actors making a war movie in the jungle, but they come across actual bad guys. Profanity, offensiveness, action, and some Booty Sweat all come together to make a comedy masterpiece. Downey Jr. steals the show as a pretentious Australian actor who dyes his skin to become the African American soldier of the troop. If that is not offensive enough, Ben Stiller's character starred in a movie about a mentally-handicapped man-boy, named *Simple Jack*. They take that a little too close to the border of funny and offensive. Again, you are not Jack Black-ed out. There is enough balance with the other characters that Black can be funny, but not annoying as hell. Tom Cruise makes a cameo appearance as the producer of the movie the actors are filming. It is unexpected, but genius. Go see *Tropic Thunder* if you want to laugh, and don't mind the offensive nature of the film. But hey, it is all in good fun. It is still in theatres.

The Bombs

The Happening

I am going to keep this one short. Don't see it if you do not want to think. If you want a huge intellectual conversation about what the hell this movie means, then see it. As far as an entertaining two hours, this movie does not cut it. M. Night Shyamalan tries to create another spooky hit, but epically fails unless you go into a 30 minute conversation about the meaning. I would say skip it.

Sex and the City

If you are not a fan of the show, skip this review and move on to the next movie. There is not a whole lot that people who have not seen the show can pick up while seeing the movie. But for die hard fans, like myself, we get to see the girls back in action. The story picks up several years after Carrie gets with Big... finally. They decided to get married, and shit hits the fan. The movie is a must see if you watched the series, but do not expect it to be the Second Coming or anything. It is simply four episodes put together to span a several month period. Most of the girls are up to their same old antics. Charlotte and Samantha are most like their TV

show characters while Miranda and Carrie's characters drift from their essence as put forth in the series. They tend to do things un-Miranda and Carrie-like. Especially Carrie. So if you put all of that to the side, you get a continuation of the series with just the same number of laughs and heartaches. The film comes out on September 22, and is a must have to complete your *Sex and the City* collection.

Made of Honor

I am a sucker for chick flicks, but this one falls quite short of being a classic. Patrick Dempsey stars as a womanizer who realizes he is in love with his best friend, played by Michelle Monaghan, only to discover she has asked him to be the maid of honor at her wedding to a Scottish guy. Predictability ensues. The ladies will love this movie if they love Grey's Anatomy, because Dempsey pretty much just transfers his TV role to the big screen. He does an okay job in a role that anyone could really fill. There are some funny parts here and there, but the movie just falls flat from the get-go. Michelle Monaghan would be the one upside to the movie,

that I could find. *Made of Honor*, to me, was a poor rehash of *27 Dresses*. There is no real reason you should see this movie unless you are bored and it is on television. Do not put this on your Netflix list or pay money of any kind to see it. It is not worth it.

The X-Files: I Want to Believe

If you did not watch the TV series, skip it. If you did watch the TV series, have zero expectations when you see it and it will just be okay. Mulder and Scully reunite to try and stop a serial killer with the help of a pedophilic priest who has visions of where the victims' bodies are. There is not nearly enough supernatural stuff in this movie. I am not expecting aliens or monsters, but come on. You have to give me something more than visions. Boo. Anyway, the movie serves really as a character piece of Scully and Mulder and an in-depth look at how their long work relationship has changed and grown. It is not a masterpiece and it is definitely not up to par for one of the best TV series ever. Skip it.

*Editor's note: Shia LaBeouf was recently executed by a secret Pakistani firing squad for failure to contribute to any society.

The Mediocre

film goes as long as it can on the first part of the plot, they have nowhere to turn to fill in another 45 minutes. Where they do take the film is definitely out in left field. The second half of the film works, kinda. But it is so bizarre that it detracts from the movie more than it adds to it. I would not pay money to see Hancock; but if it is on FX, I would check it out.

Wanted

Comic book movie number three of the summer is a slam-bang murder fest. And that is pretty much it. The movie follows a young assassin as he and a group of other assassins clip people to maintain balance in society. The strength of this movie is not the plot. It is the senseless violence and slow-motion special effects. The eye-candy does put you in overload, and you quickly- and I mean quickly- get bored of people curving bullets. For a senseless action

movie, this is a good one. If you are looking for substance of any kind, pass.

The Incredible Hulk

Edward Norton tries to revive one of the worst movies of all time, Ang Lee's Hulk. The second Marvel comic book movie does not meet the level that Iron Man achieved, but it was a valiant effort. Norton is the sole reason this movie is bearable. The movie is plagued with predictability, which is capped off with an epic slugfest at the end. Even though the film is predictable, it is still a decent action romp. If you enjoyed the first film, you will probably like this. If you hated the first Hulk film, you might also enjoy this one. This movie is not for everyone. If you don't really like comic book movies, I would pass.

The Joker laid a golden egg, Batmobile intact

By Hal Flowers
Staff Writer

It was too easy to feel the frenzied hype about the new Batman movie. With an unprecedented viral marketing campaign, the untimely death of actor Heath Ledger, and trailers that foreshadowed a great follow up to 2005's *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* was easily the most anticipated movie of the year. But where lesser movies have failed to live up to their expectations, *The Dark Knight* triumphed in every way, giving viewers more than they could have imagined. A spell-binding screenplay, combined with a breathtaking performance by Heath Ledger, elevated this dark movie's position to the level of crime thrillers like *Goodfellas* or *The Godfather*, rather than other that of other comic-book adaptations.

Christopher Nolan's re-imagining of the DC Batman franchise features a gloomy, modern context for our hero, who dates back to Bob Kane's original artistic conception in 1939. Like *Batman Begins*, the movie features a nearly immaculate cast, including Christian Bale as the swaggering Bruce Wayne and his nocturnal alter-ego, the Batman; Michael Caine as his loyal butler Alfred; Morgan Freeman as Lucius Fox, the gadgets wiz and head of Wayne Enterprises; Aaron Eckhart as the sparkling clean White Knight of Gotham, Defense Attorney Harvey Dent; Heath Ledger as the Joker; and Maggie Gyllenhall as "Harvey's squeeze," Rachel Dawes.

The film picks up where *Batman Begins* left off, in an increasingly turbulent and corrupt Gotham City. Sal Maroni and his mobsters pull most of the strings, while Hong Kong businessman Lau attempts to control them. Harvey Dent quickly sees that the new position as D.A. is more than he expected, even with help from the Caped Crusader (and his unsolicited copycats). Complicating matters further is the Joker, whose control of the plot is firmly established from the unforgettable first scene. Nolan deliberately keeps the viewer in the dark as to which of the masked robbers is operating the masterfully orchestrated bank robbery.

Herein lies *The Dark Knight's* real ace in the hole: Heath Ledger's Joker. This singular performance is destined to become a classic, a character certainly to be featured in top villain lists for years to come and to parade in the nightmares of viewers long after they have left the movie. According to cast member, Christian Bale, he based his interpretation more on the frenzied performance of Malcolm McDowell, in *A Clockwork Orange*, on Sex Pistols guitarist, Sid Vicious, and on some of the darker comic-books featuring the Joker than on Jack Nicholson's jovial villain from 1989's *Batman*.

Ledger's portrayal is menacing, unpredictable, and mys-

terious. He is a terrorist and a sadist whose opposing accounts of his own past are as unreliable as his next move ("You wanna know how I got these scars?") He's a self-proclaimed "agent of chaos," at times deliciously macabre, and threateningly unstable. The whole movie verily reels with his carefully plotted string of fanatic attacks.

I found myself eagerly anticipating scenes with the Joker in them as the movie progressed. My morals shook in the face his demented, anarchist logic; I rejoiced as he trumped the mobsters at their own "therapy session," and felt chills as he sauntered in a nurse's gown away from an exploding hospital. The

The Joker makes hostage videos and bombs civilian buildings, and politicians trade their morals for money after dusk. Although the Dark Knight is as black as a moonless night, there is always the dawn. Bale is as powerful as ever as Bruce Wayne; his Batman voice may have even deepened a pitch or two. The actor intertwines a dual role as the heroic Batman and the arrogant playboy Bruce Wayne to give us the Batman we know and love. Yet the Joker certainly shakes his worldview. Wayne questions his limitations and his duty to the city of Gotham to Alfred, asking what one can do in the face of such relentless evil. But the powerful closing scene reminds us of his resilience both as a character and as an icon.

Newcomer Eckhart dominates the role of Harvey Dent.

Eckhart's Dent is as pure as he seems, earning the immediate respect of Wayne and making his later transformation

all the more disturbing. His reckless courage and refusal to compromise even in the face of death are the inspiration Gotham needs.

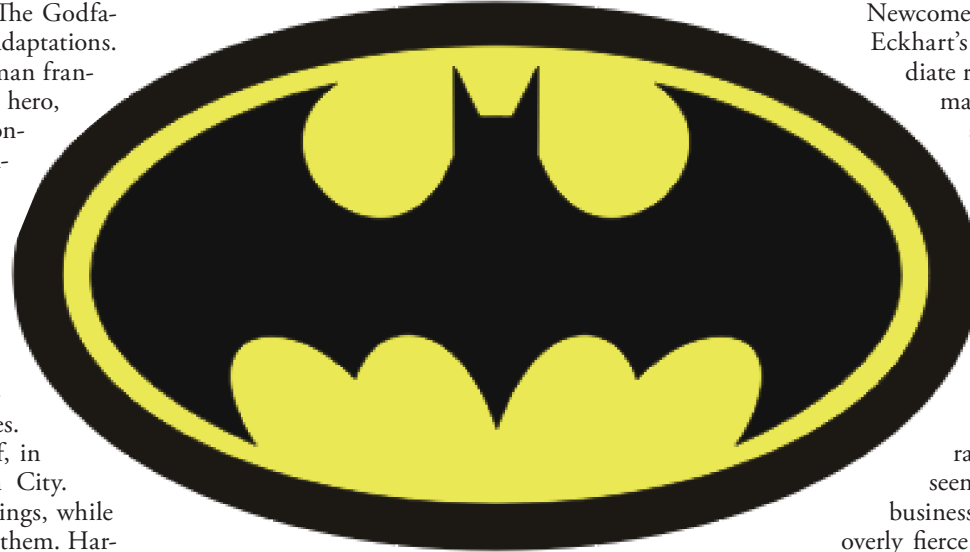
The only acting in the movie that falters is Gyllenhall's portrayal of Associate District Attorney, Rachel Dawes, who pales even in comparison with the lackluster performance of Katie Holmes in *Batman Begins*.

For a character purely created for the big screen, Dawes seems a tough role to nail down. Gyllenhall's Dawes aptly depicts pain, as when she is strapped to explosives and separated from her lover, Dent; but as an attorney she seems far too haughty and overly eager to punish

businessman Lau. She is a damsel in distress with an overly fierce sense of justice. Plus, her two-timing Wayne with Dent makes her just a little sleazy, even as she mirrors the citizens' of Gotham's need for a hero with a face.

The Dark Knight is what a Batman movie should be: an appropriately adapted vision of a bleak and dangerous world with an inspiring message from morally right citizens. Without Heath Ledger, the Dark Knight would have been a great comic-book movie in its own right—better even than its predecessor *Batman Begins*. With Ledger, it is nothing short of a masterpiece.

Although the movie is titled after the Batman, it is the Joker's movie and it is him who commands attention. The publicity following Ledger's accidental overdose aside, his performance as the Joker is as Oscar-worthy as it gets. The brilliance of his performance is highlighted by his sudden death, leaving forever an unfinished and promising career that ended in his best work. *The Dark Knight* is the year's best film and has already secured its place as a landmark superhero movie and piercing social commentary.



Knight succeeds as a sinister drama largely because of Ledger's Joker role, but the stark camera work and chillingly realistic screenplay provide a context within which the Joker seems all too real.

The screenplay by Christopher Nolan with co-writer (and brother) Jonathon Nolan is risky and modern. Where most of the Batman comic books and superhero movies were aimed at a teenage audience, the Dark Knight is sinister and terrifying; probably not suitable for most youngsters. The dicey choice to up the emotional intensity of the movie works, as the screenplay succeeds in part by holding a mirror to modern dilemmas. The Gotham City of the Dark Knight is realistic enough to be equal parts reflection and prediction in our increasingly crazy world. Strip off the black masks and white makeup, and there's something we can empathize with: real political corruption and a growing sense that the future holds something scary and incomprehensible.

Hollywood goes to hell, greeted by Nicholas Cage

By John Bryant

Aren't movies great? Haven't they tugged at your heartstrings, kidnapped your imagination and rocketed it into the stratosphere of hallucinatory bliss, made myth real, and let you, for just the fewest of minutes, forget how wretched and insignificant your life really is? The view from the top is breathtaking. It smells great too, like success and fulfillment with just a whiff of peach-berry zest.

But even though movies set the human spirit soaring, now it's time to crash and burn. If movies can uplift the soul, can't they also crush it? If they can stir us into action, can they not drag us into coma? It's time to remove the chain of art, and run carefree among the fruits of sub-mediocrity.

This is a hymn to all who have run out of friends to alienate and dogs to kick, and to those who are not happy unless everyone they love is wallowing in the throes of misery. Fear

not, pilgrim, for I have what you have been yearning: a few pockets of freedom, choice compartments of despair and regret for you to seize. They are the worst movies of all time, and I have found them in the farthest corners of the video stores, in the exiled spaces of the local blockbuster, where only the hip and the desperate roam without fear.

#5 *Wicker Man*

Have wondered what your life would be like if you had no friends? Have you ever, then, died a little inside because you remember that you actually don't have any friends? And the only reason you know this to be true is because you're sitting through two hours of Nicholas Cage screaming at residents of an idyllic Alaskan honey-bee village? Then you, my friend, know what its like to watch, nay survive, *Wicker Man*. It is so intolerably awful it begs the question: "Is it possible for my eyes to get diarrhea?" The science is in, and the an-

swer is a grief-stricken "Yes."

Wicker Man begins as an innocent thriller: Nicolas Cage escapes a tragic truck accident only to find out that his ex-fiancé, who lives in a matriarchal bee-colony village on the Puget Sound, has lost their daughter. Desperately curious, The Cage travels to this island, run (of course!) by a band of oppressive feminists who enslave men, and begins his investigation. Never satisfied with normal modes of speech, The Cage constantly invents new ways to undermine his career with the most awkward, ill-timed, inadvertently hilarious scenes stamped on celluloid. He gallops through the movie like a disgruntled cave man on a wild tiger, stupidly oblivious to how ludicrous everything he says and does is. His search includes, but is not limited to, the following: stealing a bicycle at gunpoint ("Step away from the bike!" he threatens), shouting at everyone he encounters ("How'd it get

burned!? How'd it get burned!? How'd it get burned!? How'd it get burned!?"). He shrieks in quadruple succession to his ex-fiancé, who stares at him blankly, possibly trying to remember at what point her acting career came to this, after he finds a scorched doll that he thought was his dead daughter and reaches a thundering crescendo of awful, as he runs around in a bear suit, clubbing defenseless women who block his path. So it's a comedy, right? A deliberately campy romp? No and no. There is no wink to the camera. Like a delusional Hitler impersonator, this movie believes in itself and its truly terrifying message. The ending is a howler. I will not spoil it for you, but if you dare to tread to the end you will find out that there is no limit to how bad something can be, only how much of it the human spirit can endure.

Pats: Oh, how the tides have turned

By Andrew Mullins Williams

It's funny how fast things can change in football.

Seven months ago, Tom Brady was leading the undefeated Patriots to Super Bowl XLII. During the season, he had thrown for an unprecedented 50 touchdowns, racked up 4,806 yards passing, and had a passer rating of 117.2. Brady had just finished what was arguably the best season for an NFL quarterback—ever.

Then it all started to go downhill.

After not completing the perfect season, Brady came into 2008 with soaring expectations. A soft schedule and a weak division led many to predict another trip to the Super Bowl for the highly talented Patriots.

However, everything changed when, in week one, Brady was knocked to the turf by Chiefs' safety, Bernard Pollard. Brady, while in obvious pain, was able to limp off the field with the help of two trainers. Nonetheless, after a series of tests, it was found that he had torn not only his ACL but his MCL as well.

In a single moment, the hope and dream of a Patriot Super Bowl went spiraling down the toilet.

There is no doubt the Patriots are now less effective than they were last year. A team can't lose a player like Tom Brady and simply bounce back—it just cannot happen. However, that doesn't mean the season is lost for the Patriots.

The first thing to do when trying to understand the Patriots' chances this season is to look at who is taking over at QB. In this case, it is 26-year-old Matt Cassel. Cassel has been around the league for only four years—but he hasn't started a game since high school.

He was the backup at Southern California behind Heisman Trophy winners Carson Palmer and Matt Leinart. While benefiting from playing behind such great quarterbacks, the bottom line is that Cassel's lack of experience in game situations will force the Patriots to claw and scrap for a playoff birth.

Take his performance in Week One against the Chiefs as a prime example. While Cassel was solid, completing 13 of 18 passes, he was not spectacular in any form of the word.

In the end, the Patriots had to fight just to slip by the Chiefs, whose record last year was 4-12. If the Patriots hope to make the playoffs, their explosive playmakers, surrounding Cassel, will need to have top performances.

One of the reasons many believe the Patriots will return to the playoffs this year revolves around veteran Head Coach Bill Belichick. Many believe that Belichick can work his magic again, just as he did for Tom Brady when he took over for the injured Drew Bledsoe.

However, let us realize that for every Tom Brady—a late round pick that turns into a Super Bowl MVP—there are hundreds that don't pan out. While it is true that Bill Belichick has a knack for molding great quarterbacks, note that before Brady he had a 42-58 record—a far cry from anything resembling a mastermind.

If there is any single reason that the Patriots can make the playoffs, it comes from one source: a weak schedule. This year the Patriots' plate includes San Francisco, St. Louis, Oakland, and Miami.

Playing in a weak division will also benefit a playoff run. With the Jets looking only slightly more dangerous than last year—even with their acquisition of Brett Favre—and the Dolphins resembling a half-hearted attempt to put 11 men on the field, it looks like the Bills are the only team that could pose a threat to the Patriots within the division.

On paper, it seems that the Patriots still might make the playoffs this year, if only by inches. They have the coaching playmakers around Cassel to help ease his induction to the starting position.

However, there are a lot of additional questions surrounding the team, such as the Patriots running game, which defense shows up, and how well the offensive line will protect their new quarterback. While they should be safe, by no means are they guaranteed a spot in the playoffs. If any of the question marks holding this team together should go unanswered, we could see the Patriots out of the playoffs for the first time in a long time.

Just don't be surprised when it happens.

With no apologies to The New York Times

By Ralph MacDonald

Arts and Entertainment Editor

When one sees an abomination of an article in *The New York Times*, glances at the date and realizes that it is September 11th, one is prone to make uncouth comparisons. But I will refrain, as I have no need for angry protests that I would have no rational defense against.

But by no means will I let the *Times* guest columnist Buzz Bissinger off the hook. The basic premise of Mr. Bissinger's article is that Nick Saban is paid too much money (\$3.75 million a year plus perks and incentives) and that in such a contract we see the reason for that "the United States has become a second-rate nation." He supports his argument by citing Coach Saban's record in his previous coaching tenure: "He coached there for all of two seasons with a dismal record of 15-17." Beyond the hyperbole of calling a 15-17 NFL record "dismal," the article decided to drop relevance in the midst of its self-righteous fit. A coach's record should be considered when deciding just how much he is worth, but the article made no mention of any of Saban's collegiate record before his arrival at Alabama. But perhaps Saban's 91-42 career record as a head coach, including a 14-0 National Championship run in his last year at LSU might have dampened the writer's arguments against Nick Saban's competence, although their absence in the article helps to form a spectacular argument against Mr. Bissinger's journalistic integrity.

But glaring omissions are not all that makes the article unworthy for any other cause than incineration or possibly as a teaching tool for a class trying to learn the meaning of "unsound logic," "rhetoric," or "the downfall of American journalism." Bissinger seems to believe that if he throws out enough ludicrous statements, then at least a few of them will stick. Another classic argument was that the average teacher at Alabama made \$116,000 a year, making Saban's contract a travesty in American educational values. Of course, Saban runs a football program that produced a \$32 million profit last year, and that money goes to University operations that include educational funding and support for athletic teams that are not self-supporting.

I am running out of space to chart the absurd arguments, so I will close with a rational one in hopes of balancing Buzz's stupidity. Capitalism is one of the things that made this country a first-rate nation, and Saban's contract was a sound, capitalist-driven investment for the University of Alabama. If our nation has slipped at all, then it is because people have decided that the kind of hyperbole and rhetoric exhibited by Buzz Bissinger and many others is acceptable, and worse, is printable. *The New York Times* should be ashamed for enabling this drivel to leave the hole from which it came.

ECU upsetting their way to BCS title

By Zach Walker

A warning to any college or university with Virginia in its name: the Eastern Carolina Pirates don't like you. Change your school name immediately or be prepared to be robbed of, at the very least, your football team's chances at a BCS bid.

It started with Virginia Tech. The poor Hokies—then 17th-ranked in the AP Poll—came strutting into Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium like a bunch of Goliaths, expecting a tune-up game.

All seemed to be in Virginia Tech's hands—until the fourth quarter. The Pirates threw for a touchdown just under the four-minute mark to pull within two. They then proceeded to block a punt, pick it up, and carry it to the end zone for an Appalachian State-style upset.

And that should have been it—a signature, glory win for a small school.

Still, lightning doesn't strike twice. Two major upsets in two weeks... psh. What were the people at ECU doing even scheduling two ranked teams in a row? In week two, No. eight West Virginia was coming to town to crush little ECU.

Predictably, the game was a blow-out—but it was West Virginia who was on the wrong end.

And as the clock hit zero, the Mountaineers' chance at a BCS game wasn't the

only thing on life support. Lying on a bed near by was their star quarterback's Heisman hopes. In the 28-3 route, Pat White threw for an abysmal 72 yards and looked more like *Snow White*.

In terms of rank, this was upset number two. (Well, if you include last season, it's ECU's third consecutive win against a ranked opponent—they beat Boise State in the Hawaii Bowl in 2007.) However, this game didn't look much like your typical upset. There was no comeback or late-game heroics, just a slow, methodical pounding. The Pirates scored on their opening drive and never looked back.

Maybe the Pirates aren't really a Cinderella team after all. Two weeks later, they look more like a legitimate team that, so far, has more quality wins than anyone else. However, that's not to say they don't have a couple of Cinderella stories on their team.

Quarterback Patrick Pickney, the redshirt senior who has emerged as the team's star, suffered through an injury-riddled career prior to this season. This is his first year as the team's starter. After two games, he's a mind-blowing 41-51 with 447 passing yards.

But, the Pirates' greatest Cinderella story belongs to Head Coach Skip Holtz. Prior to taking the job at ECU in 2004, the son of legendary Lou Holtz was six

years removed from his last head-coaching job and was by no means a hot commodity. In fact, ECU Athletic Director Terry Holland had to be talked into even giving Holtz an interview.

Needless to say, Holland is a happy man now. Holtz and his Pirates are off to an unthinkable start. They've shot up to 14th in the AP Poll and now face a considerably softer schedule for the rest of the season.

It will be interesting to see how much love the BCS will show them if they win out.

ECU remaining schedule:

At Tulane

At N.C. State

Houston

At Virginia

Memphis

At UCF

Marshall

At Southern Miss

At UAB

UTEP