

THE SOU' WESTER

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Review

Carolyn Cole reviews
Monster, starring
Golden Globe-winner
Charlize Theron.



See **A&E**

Viewpoints

Professors and students respond to last week's article by Chris Ebersole regarding Rigoberta Menchu's upcoming lecture.

See **Opinion**

Candidates call on Memphis as primaries progress

By *Korey Kormick*

As the Democratic Presidential Primaries sweep through Tennessee, invariably, so will the candidates. This past week saw retired General Wesley Clark, former Massachusetts Governor John Kerry and North Carolina Senator John Edwards in town, each vying for votes in what appears to be a very contested state. With Edwards making two separate appearances; at the Orpheum (2/4) and at the University of Memphis (2/7), it appears that Tennessee is an important part of his campaign.

Drawing crowds of several hundred supporters and hoping to sway undecided voters, Edwards continued to promote his platform of the "Two Americas," emphasizing the believed double standard on education, jobs, taxes and health care. The first two areas in particular hit home here in Memphis, where the public education system is seen by many as seriously addled and where jobs continue to move out of the area for a variety of reasons. The issue of race also was mentioned, with Edwards being originally from South Carolina, that he grew up amongst the racial tensions of the Civil Rights movement and vows to continue the struggle for equality.

Kerry, visiting Memphis the evening before the primary, also spoke of the need to bring more jobs back to Tennessee,

as well as focusing on early-childhood education and universal health care. Clark, who is actually ending this round of campaigning in Memphis and awaiting the results at a downtown hotel, held his rallies at B.B.King's on Beale Street, reiterating the need to create jobs and make taxes more equitable.

Following the first twelve primaries and caucuses, only these three candidates have "won" any states (Kerry with ten, and Edwards and Clark with one apiece), but the delegates are split amongst them as well as former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, who chose not to campaign in Tennessee in an effort to focus on Wisconsin, where he believes he will have more support. Kerry, riding his continuing success as the current frontrunner, sees every state as bringing him that much closer to his eventual nomination, whereas both Edwards and Clark are using Tennessee (as well as Virginia, which also has its primary on the tenth) in the logic that being from the south, it only makes sense that they will be politically strong and viable candidates there.

Success in these states is vital to their campaigns, but in this primary process, success has come to have a rather transient definition. "Winning" is, of course, the principle objective of all of the candidates, but a close second or even third will succeed in garnering a roughly equal num-

ber of delegates for your cause. What, then, makes placement important? Two things: publicity and money. Defeating your rivals by more than ten percent clearly shows a marked separation in support for a particular candidate (eliminating the possibility that factors such as voter turnout would have drastically altered the outcome). Also, news coverage of a rout is much more glowing for the victor than that of a nail-biter. Based on these factors, campaign contributions are heavily influenced, allowing for those who succeed to apply more resources to upcoming stages (for example, Kerry, who received massive contributions following his victories in Iowa and New Hampshire), while those who struggle are thenceforth relegated to a more reserved approach (for example, Dean, who, after campaigning heavily everywhere, suddenly had a drop off of contributions following his "lack of success" in the first few primaries and has had to skip a few states in order to regain his composure).

Primary day in Tennessee, February 10th, will be a day of reckoning for the candidates. Victory for Kerry will continue his preexisting momentum and make it that much more difficult for other competitors to catch up to him. Victory for any other candidate would be a major coup, making Kerry's

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Professors explore new teaching medium

By *Caitlin Goodrich*

It's 7:15 on a Monday morning. Your alarm clock rings and you reach to turn it off, all the while dreading the trip down the hall to the shower and that even longer trek across campus to your eight o'clock class. There has got to be a better way, you think. Wouldn't it be great if you could pop in a DVD and watch your professor lecture from the comfort of your cozy bed? Well, now you can - that is, if you are taking a class taught by Professor Muesse or Professor Vandiver.

Both Muesse, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, and Vandiver, the Distinguished Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Greek and Roman Studies, record lectures for The Teaching Company® (TTC). The company, founded in 1990, produces courses from a wide range of disciplines on DVD, CD, video and audiotape for sale to the public. The selection process for professors is highly selective. "Each year we travel the country - Harvard to Stanford, UCLA to UNC - to watch hundreds of top-rated professors from America's best colleges and universities, in search of the finest," TTC's website states. "From this extraordinary group, we choose only those rated highest by panels of our customers. Fewer than ten percent of these world-class scholar-teachers are selected to make The Great Courses." Muesse and Vandiver are among this ten percent.

"I'm honored that I was given this opportunity by TTC because they employ some really fine teachers, a few of whom were my

teachers," Muesse states. His lectures on Hinduism are included in TTC's Great World Religions series. In his next course he "[hopes] to bridge [his] dual interests in comparative religions and theology by offering a cross-cultural study of the idea of god and gods."

Vandiver has recorded more than 100 lectures for the company on Virgil's *Aeneid*, Classical Mythology, Greek Tragedy, Herodotus, and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This year, she will present a two-part lecture in a course entitled "Great Authors of the Western Literary Tradition," a series she calls "a sampler" of Biblical material and Greek and Roman literature. "In this regard," Vandiver says, "my work at Rhodes this year has been invaluable to me. As I'm preparing the written materials for the 'Great Authors' course, I'm teaching Search, and the territory I'm covering for 'Great Authors' is very similar to the syllabus of Search."

Both professors maintain that their teaching style for TTC differs from that presented in the classroom. "For one thing," Muesse states, "at TTC one lectures in a television studio to an audience of two or three people, and these people must remain silent." As a result, professors are unable to play off of the feedback or questions of their students; everything they say must be prepared in advance. However, the professors' real life classroom experiences often shape the lectures that they give for TTC. "I incorporate questions that I've been asked, in the past, by students in actual classrooms," Vandiver says. Muesse does the same: "The feedback and responses of students to my lectures have undoubtedly shaped and sharpened the content of the

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Letters to the editor

To the editor,

We would like to respectfully dissent from Mr. Chris Ebersole's opinion column, published in the *Sou'wester* this past February 4, titled "(Blank), loyalty and Service." The Rhodes community should enthusiastically receive Ms. Rigoberta Menchú when she arrives on campus this weekend as the first Native American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize (1992). Her testimony, as conveyed to the anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray in the early 1980s, helped the world focus attention on a murderous campaign of genocide in Guatemala, a war that resulted in the deaths of about 250,000 persons. The vast majority of the murders were committed by the Guatemalan army. That army was supported by the U.S. Government (except during the Carter Administration), and many high ranking officials in the Guatemalan army trained at the notorious U.S.-run "School of the Americas."

Those searching for absolute truth in Rigoberta's testimony (like the American anthropologist David Stoll of Middlebury College) discovered discrepancies in her published story, but the discrepancies hardly minimize the horrific reality of a 36-year long war. In this war Rigoberta's parents and brothers were brutally tortured and killed, and she was forced into exile. As a 23-year-old girl, and as a solitary indigenous voice, she bore witness to the truth of this horror experienced by herself and her people. Mr. Ebersole writes, "Here is a woman who has not only lied in

print, but also has shown no remorse for doing so..." This is an irresponsible and antiquated charge that could only be made by someone who has neither studied her book carefully, nor examined the vast debate generated by Stoll's book, nor, more importantly, studied contemporary Guatemalan history and/or Mayan culture. Ms. Menchú's testimony must not be isolated from Central American *real politick* of the late 1980s, a time when the attention of the United States was focused, quite disproportionately, on Nicaragua, and the stated policy of the U.S. during the 1980s was to topple the Sandinista Government of Daniel Ortega. Meanwhile, in Guatemala, hundreds of Mayan communities were being bulldozed by governments that declared Native Americans as sympathizers with the insurgents; for this reason, about 83 percent of all victims in the 36-year old Guatemalan war were Maya.

It seems that some inconsistencies and inaccuracies appear in Ms. Menchú's testimony, but why do we assume that David Stoll's version of Guatemalan history is complete truth? Mr. Ebersole reports that Stoll "conducted nearly a decade's worth of interviews with over 120 people..." Should we assume that each interviewee told the American anthropologist the absolute truth? Would Guatemalans, during an ongoing war (the civil war officially ended there in 1996) be willing to tell "the truth" about their involvement in the insurgency, their fears about the war

or their hopes for the future, to an outsider—a privileged white American anthropologist? Indeed, one anthropologist, C. Smith, argues: "More broadly, Stoll's basic documentary strategy—"I saw, or was told, x"—is not a scholarly argument; it is a journalistic argument. Anthropological scholarship requires more than many interviews. It requires attention to one's sample and possible biases within it as well as to the conditions under which the interviews took place and the timing of the interviews in relations to events..." (p.82). We encourage both Mr. Ebersole and the readers of this newspaper to consult Issue 109, Vol. 26, No. 6, 1999 of *Latin American Perspectives* to read an overwhelming consensus of anthropologists and historians who point out the serious flaws in Mr. Stoll's methodology, arguments and evidence. Indeed, C. Smith goes on to write in this journal volume: "A considerable number of Stoll's arguments take this form - poor literature reviews, documentation that is irrelevant, evidence that does not support the argument" (p. 82). Nevertheless, Mr. Stoll's arguments did catch the media's attention, but the work of other more qualified scholars did not, and we should be interested in understanding why and how this situation came about.

It is further important to appreciate a point that many

anthropologists working with indigenous peoples both inside and outside Latin America understand. The collective memories of indigenous peoples, their oral histories and literatures, are indeed *collective*. We grossly distort the nature of the truth of this "literature" if we impose as absolute categories what are in fact our relative and "indigenous" categories, of the "individual", "history", "literature" and "myth" on these "transmissions." Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, who transcribed Menchú's testimony, argues [in the same volume of *Latin American Perspectives*] that "Perhaps the greatest misunderstanding about *I, Rigoberta Menchú* in the United States, I believe now, comes from its having been confined within a rigid framework labeled 'testimony,' which has been given a connotation closer to legal evidence than to literature. Meanwhile, the same critics also pretend that they are talking about a literary genre when nothing is farther from literature than rigidity" (p. 86). Certainly, a short editorial piece to this newspaper does not allow sufficient space to fully explore the implications of the arguments made here. Yet, in the setting of Rhodes as a Liberal Arts College, there is bountiful room inside many classes that explore anthropology, history, literature and Latin American history and literature to explore the implications of the arguments we make above. Indeed, Professor Kus invites Mr. Ebersole and other interested individuals to enroll in her course, "Anthropology and the Written Word," where issues of orality and literacy and indigenous peoples are explored in more depth.

For the moment, however, let us remember that Rigoberta's brave, compelling testimony, her being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1992 and her continual struggle to inform the world of the magnitude of the human rights struggle in Guatemala—taken together—

helped push the peace process forward in Guatemala. She, alone, probably saved the lives of thousands of persons in Guatemala. The real story of Rigoberta is one of courage, determination and optimism amidst the madness of a murderous civil war. Her struggle is universal; her testimony saved lives.

Yours truly,

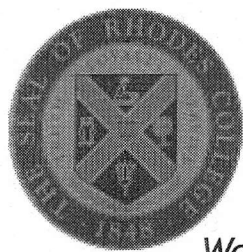
Susan Kus
 Associate Professor of
 Anthropology

Michael LaRosa
 Associate Professor of
 History

To the editor,

When I had to read Rigoberta Menchú's book a few semesters ago, I also discovered the evidence that David Stoll provides about the falsehoods in the life of Rigoberta Menchú. I even felt disappointed and slightly disturbed just as you did when you read Stoll's research. However, I think that there is a larger issue here at stake. Many times throughout book, Rigoberta Menchú explains that many Native Americans did not know how to speak Spanish, so they had to suffer without being able to convey their stories or hardships to the outside world. Menchú gave her people a voice during a time when harsh dictators restricted Native American rights and forced them to work on coffee plantations only to earn a dollar or two a day. Perhaps some of these events never took place in her life, but more than likely, she knew other families who had undergone similar problems through different organizations she worked with over the years in Guatemala. At the time, this was the only Native American testimony the world had and with this important work, the world was able to respond to a problem it did

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OPINION

JEFF KNOWLES

Our standards of truth

I believe each person has a right to their opinions and may freely express those opinions through any means available. I do not believe a person, or a writer for a college newspaper, should foment destructive sentiments regarding an internationally acclaimed human-rights activist like Rigoberta Menchú Tum. Chris Ebersole, in the recent edition of our *Sou'wester*, chose to denigrate Ms. Menchú's testimony, even though it appears he has neither read her book or Dr. Stoll's. However, I have spent many hours reviewing both sides of the controversy, reading Ms. Menchú's book, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* and the anthropologist David Stoll's *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. My understanding of the controversy regarding her "untruths" extends beyond the sensationalism Mr. Ebersole would have us take to be gospel truth. I am not an expert concerning the facts of her life nor Dr. Stoll's research, and I certainly cannot arbitrate truth like Mr. Ebersole has attempted, but I would like to offer a counter opinion to the Rhodes community, hopefully one more fair and balanced.

Mr. Ebersole believes that Ms. Menchú misled us by giving an inaccurate account of her life and then was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace based on the information in that text. Mr. Ebersole would have us stand at the gates, linked arm to arm, barring her entrance into our pristine, and all righteous community of scholarship and the illustrious truth. Truth, Mr. Ebersole, is above all others, the easiest word to abuse. So let us look at her account and put it to the test to see if she deserves to be admitted as a distinguished speaker at our college—I think we will find that not only does she deserve to speak before us, but it is our esteemed privilege to have her visit Rhodes College.

Rigoberta Menchú did give an account of her people, but she

never claimed her life's testimony to be historically specific. In fact, if we read the very first paragraph of her book she makes it clear that *her* words are, in fact *her people's* words.

"The important thing is that what has happened to me has happened to many other people too: My story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people."

Mr. Ebersole, like David Stoll, approaches this testimony (oral autobiography), through a Western perspective deriving from notions of scholastic objectivity and empiricism rather than as a collective/narrative history. The details of what she saw and experienced should not be seen as absolute, but neither should we categorically accept the counter-attacks by David Stoll. The fact of the matter is not that she intended to deceive or spice-up her account of the genocide taking place around her, but that she illustrated and brought attention to the real and gruesome atrocities taking place in Guatemala. Anthropologist and coordinating editor of *Latin American Perspectives*, Jan Rus, explores the true reason why we respect a woman like Rigoberta Menchú.

"Even more than the facts and argument of her testimonio, Rigoberta Menchú and Elisabeth Burgos brought to the discussion of events in Guatemala was a face and a voice—a human presence."

What is more, Stoll's research methodology has been criticized by experts in his own field and throughout the community of Latin American scholars. The November 1999 edition of *Latin American Perspectives* is completely focused on this very controversy. Why are we to disregard the entirety of Rigoberta Menchú's narrative and wholeheartedly believe the work of a North American anthropologist/journalist? His interviews and the conclusions he draws from

these interviews are cited as highly dubious. For instance, the claim that the leftist *guerrillas* brought violence upon themselves is an outright misconstruction of reality. He also downplays the fact that the Quiché and other indigenous groups were targeted specifically due to race, claiming that many *ladinos* (non-Indians) were also victims of the army's extermination campaign. It is true many *ladinos* were murdered, however a much higher and telling percentage of the victims were indigenous peoples.

Methodological critique follows Stoll to his interviewing process and selection. He interviews individuals who are more apt to distrust outsiders than probably any other people in the region. The majority of his interviews were conducted during and just following the war in which I am sure many interviewees feared being targeted by state recrimination and would gladly attempt to distance themselves from sympathetic associations with the insurgents. There are many reasons why we should distrust Stoll's argument against Rigoberta. Again, I refer to the *Latin American Perspectives* issue as well as a book called *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, edited by Arturo Arias in 2001. In the end, and perhaps most importantly, Stoll makes it clear that he supports her winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992.

"The prize was also intended to encourage peace talks in her homeland of Guatemala."

And it did. Peace accords were signed in 1996 ending nearly four decades of civil war.

Stoll continues, "Although Rigoberta's village background is an interesting issue, it is not the most important one. There is no doubt about the most important points: that a dictatorship massacred thousands of indigenous peasants, that the victims included half of Rigoberta's immediate family, that she fled

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CHRIS EBERSOLE OPINION EDITOR

A response

I wish to thank Professor Kus, Professor LaRosa, Kristen Bach and Jeff Knowles for their responses to my column. People often disagree with things published in this section, but rarely do they respond in writing. The *Sou'wester* wants to accommodate as many voices as possible, and dissenting viewpoints are always welcomed.

I would like to clarify a few things. My intention was not to comment on the Guatemalan civil war itself. Much of the debate over *I, Rigoberta Menchú* deals with the conclusions that Dr. Stoll drew from both his own research and the discrepancies in Ms. Menchú's story. This is not my concern; my knowledge in that area is somewhat limited, and I thank the writers for providing some further background information into the conflict. Similarly, my intention was not to label Ms. Menchú as a bad person, or to downplay the strides that she has made for human rights (to do so would be both ad hominem and unnecessary, to borrow a phrase). With that said, however, my position remains the same.

The professors raise three major issues. First, they contend that my argument can only stem from a relative lack of knowledge of the Guatemalan conflict and of Ms. Menchú's book itself. Is this to imply that, were I to be more familiar with these subjects, I would be willing to overlook the discrepancies in Ms. Menchú's story? If I knew more about this conflict, would I then be able to draw the arbitrary distinction, as Ms. Menchu and the professors do, between when it is necessary to tell the truth and when it is not? The fact remains that Ms. Menchú promoted fiction as fact and thumbed her nose at the scholars who exposed her. Did the discrepancies in Ms. Menchu's book take away from her overall message? Probably not. Did the book call international attention to a genocidal conflict in Guatemala? Undoubtedly. Did Ms. Menchú claim to

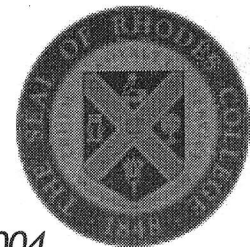
personally have experiences that she never had? Yes, and this is what I object to.

Secondly, Professors Kus and LaRosa refer to attacks on Dr. Stoll's methodology to question his findings. They cite an article by Professor Carol A. Smith entitled "Stoll as Victim," in which the author criticizes the anthropologist for failing to account for possible biases in his sample related to the timing and context of his interviews. Of course, these biases should be considered, as should the fact that many of Stoll's interviewees were relatives and friends of Menchú. One should seriously wonder what these people would hope to gain from lying to a "privileged white American anthropologist."

We can also apply this "scholarly" approach to Ms. Menchú's book. In what context was she telling her story? Here was a woman who could potentially (and has) become an international icon of the left, as long as she said the right things. If Ms. Menchú produced a relatively uneventful book that downplayed the persecution that took place, would it have received the acclaim that *I, Rigoberta Menchú* did?

Professors Kus and LaRosa raise one more objection. It is a variation on the now-classic "what is truth/who are we to judge" argument. The professors argue, in essence, that Ms. Menchú's story cannot fit within our "Western" framework where we draw distinctions between individual and collective, and between fact and fiction. Ms. Menchú's testimony is collective, they argue, because she is a member of an indigenous group and its experiences are her own. What the professors ignore, however, is that there is a difference between claiming to

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immediate family, that she fled to Mexico to save her life, and that she joined a revolutionary movement to liberate her country. On these points, Rigoberta's account is beyond challenge and deserves the attention it receives."

Rus, in 1999, reiterates the reality of the situation, one neither Stoll nor Ebersole can dispute. "Neither Stoll nor any serious observer questions that the Guatemalan state and army are guilty of this genocide. Indeed, in the past year the extent of the army's brutality has been documented by the United Nations commission (which positively attributed 93% of the violations during the civil war to the state and only 3% to the guerrillas)."

The legitimacy of Rigoberta's story is often attacked and spun in a direction that places the victim on trial and not the perpetrators. The fact, the truth, is that a war raged in Guatemala from about 1954 to 1996, leaving 150,000 Guatemalans dead, 150,000 disappeared, one million people exiled, 40,000 widows and 200,000 orphans. In stark terms, Guatemala represented the worst form of genocide to take place in our hemisphere in the last century.

Essentially, in 1983 a woman named Rigoberta Menchu described her life and the collective experiences of her community throughout the Guatemalan civil war. Her recorded testimony brought much needed attention to the plight of indigenous Guatemalans, the major target of state-led violence throughout the carnage. She was awarded the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize for her continued support of "social justice and ethno-cultural reconciliation based on respect for the rights of indigenous peoples," according to the Norwegian Nobel Committee. She continues to defend human rights and the movement for peace within her own nation and throughout the world.

Mr. Ebersole readily espouses many of Stoll's conclusions yet does not seem to share Dr. Stoll's deference towards our honored guest. Mr. Ebersole, using Stoll's suspicious research as a point of departure, contends that Rigoberta Menchu's testimony is not accurate. I challenge him to consider whether the "inexactness" of her tale derides the struggle of her people or the atrocities of her government? Can her experiences and life's work devoted to human rights be useful to a community seeking such values as Truth, Loyalty and Service?

I believe her willingness and courage to speak out during a period of horrendous human rights violations and tell her story merits her invitation to speak before us. Additionally, she deserves our respect and praise as a champion for peace and human rights.

Professors, continued from Page 1

[TTC] talks. Sixteen years of lecturing on Hinduism to Rhodes students has had a salutary effect." And, for Muesse, the detail required to plan his TTC lectures has enhanced the quality of the lectures he gives to his students at Rhodes. "I've rewritten all my Hinduism lectures for clarity and conciseness, so they are better than before," he says.

Both Muesse and Vandiver hope that their lectures are well received by the public. "The most gratifying thing to me is to see the depth and extent of interest out there in Greek and Roman culture and literature," Vandiver states. "I hope that my lectures will provide interesting and thought-provoking information to the listeners and viewers and will also whet their appetites for more information about the ancient world." Muesse's goal is similar: "I hope the lectures provoke a greater appreciation of Hinduism and pluralism among Americans."

Lectures from The Teaching Company may be purchased at www.teachco.com.



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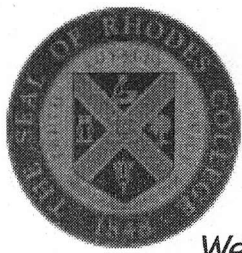
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Campus Safety

1.31.04-2.6.04

- 1/31 7:10 p.m. East Village B, fire alarm caused by fire in electric stove. MFD responds and extinguishes fire. No one is hurt, building is declared safe. Report filed.
- 2/1 2:22 a.m. Bellingrath dorm, four suspicious people are reported hanging around the dorm. CS officers respond, but no one is found.
- 2/2 NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED
- 2/3 12:58 p.m. University Street; vehicle accident. ACS officer is involved, but not hurt. MPD is notified.
- 2/4 7:00 a.m. University Street, vehicle accident; cab driver crashes into two parked cars; cars are not occupied, but belong to Rhodes students. MPD responds, cab driver is injured and transported to the MED.
12:50 p.m. CLC, six males are escorted off campus, for unauthorized entry into multisports complex.
9:00 p.m. Fire drills are conducted in East Village/Robb/White/Ellett/Bellingrath/Stewart.
- 2/5 NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED
- 2/6 NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED

STATS:

ACCESSES: 101	VISITORS: 1,133
CITATIONS: 132	PROPPED DOORS: 4
ESCORTS: 30	JUMP: 3
BOOT: 0	TOW: 0

Primary, continued from Page 1

invincibility seem less than accurate, while a strong second place will definitely keep the candidate in the running for a while longer yet. A third place finish, unless extremely close, will be a blow towards any future running, even

though all of the candidates vow to stay in the race until at least "Super Tuesday" on March 2nd. After then, it is very likely that Democrats will see but two candidates hoping to be the eventual contender to President George W. Bush in November.

Want to contribute to the conversation about presidential politics?

Write a news article!

Contact Frances Rabalais at rabfj@rhodes.edu.

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...speak for a group and claiming to have witnessed specific events that may or may not have taken place before other members of that group. It may be true that Ms. Menchu identifies with the Quich people, but it is also true that she possesses a sense of individual self and accountability. One need look no further than the title of her book.

Teach for America alumni visit campus, recruit students

By Erin Hoekstra

Over the past two weeks, four Rhodes alumni have visited campus to recruit students to apply for Teach for America, an organization that seeks to address education inequity by placing college graduates in two-year teaching positions across the country. These former Rhodes students met with current students, professors, and staff members to educate them about the program.

Julie Hallums, Cindy Hallums and Grace Williams, all from the class of 2003, led information sessions about Teach for America with prospective applicants. Julie is currently educating third graders in a bilingual class in Chicago. Cindy lives in the Rio Grande Valley, where she teaches sixth grade special education, and Grace is teaching high school English in Helena, Arkansas. In addition to these alumni, Aaron Brenner, class of 1995, taught in McCallen, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley. After his two year commitment with Teach for America, Aaron remained at the school for several more years and has now become involved in starting KIPP schools across the country. Additionally, he began a non-profit organization in the Rio Grande Valley, which trains teachers about the incorporation of art into literacy programs.

Since 1990, almost 30 former Rhodes students have taught, or are currently teaching, across the country with Teach for America. Placements include major cities such as New York, Chicago, Atlanta, New Orleans, Phoenix, Houston and the Bay Area, as well

The blurring of lines between individual, collective, history and myth has become fashionable in the more politicized realms of academia. The problem is that one can make history say whatever he or she wants if he or she insists that it cannot be judged objectively.

Four years ago, I arrived at Rhodes contemplating a history major. I changed my mind, however, after enroll-

ing in an introductory course where I was taught that, in oral histories, the actual facts are not as important as what the interviewee wants you to think took place. Something about this seems blatantly wrong. When, in their zeal to condemn certain cultures, people are willing to gloss over such things as historical accuracy, the study of history itself is threatened.

as rural areas like the Mississippi Delta, the Rio Grande Valley and the Navajo reservation in New Mexico.

Upon acceptance, the new teachers enter and complete a five-week summer training institute during which they teach summer school classes and learn how to do things like make lesson

plans. The teachers receive a full salary and benefits for the other teachers in the school district.

The final deadline to apply to Teach for America in order to join the 2004 group of teachers is February 15. Applications and additional information can be accessed at www.teachforamerica.org.

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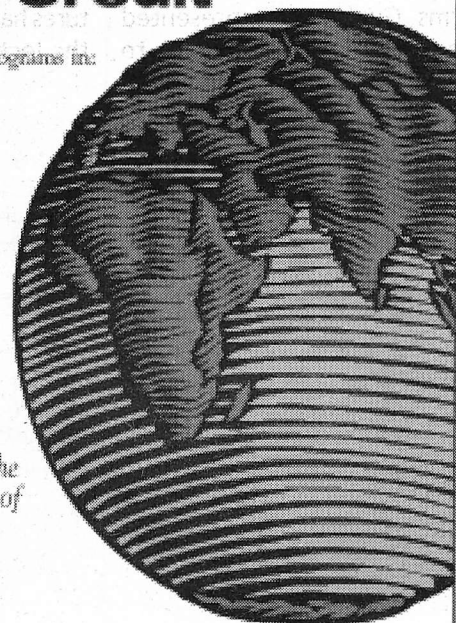
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239 Morneau Highway, Southampton, NY 11968
(631) 287-8474
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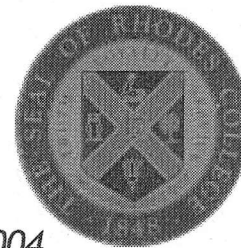
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Wednesday, February 11, 2004

REVIEW

The Spitfire Grill: a musical experience with talent to spare -By Taylor Driskill

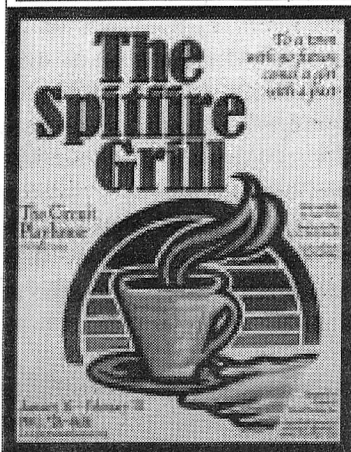


Photo courtesy of www.playhouseonthesquare.org
The Circuit Playhouse presents The Spitfire Grill through February 15.

The Spitfire Grill, currently playing at Circuit Playhouse, follows the story of a convict named Percy Talbott. Percy decides to take her life to a small town in Wisconsin after she is released from prison. The town, of course, is not expecting anyone, much less a convict, to move in and change their lives. But Percy, however, does just that, and by complete accident. This show is the musical version of the movie of the same title. In fact, it could almost be called a small operetta due to its lack of script and plethora of music.

I must admit that as I was approaching the theater, I

was very skeptical of how well the cast could do this show. I know the music all too well, and I know that it is not easy vocally or dramatically. In all honesty, I expected to be writing a terrible review right now. I have to say that I was more than pleasantly surprised by the capabilities of most of the cast.

The cast consists of seven characters, making the show very demanding on all its members. Katie Deal, who plays Percy, absolutely steals the show from the very first note out of her mouth. She has amazing control over the style of the music and an ability to make every person in the audience unwilling to take their eyes off her. The part of Joe Sutter is played by Justin Asher, and he is the perfect vocal complement to Katie Deal. Irene Crist plays the crabby old Hannah Ferguson without error. She is definitely the comic relief in a quite dramatic story, which is not to say that she does not have the ability to bring the audience to tears at the peak of the show.

I was somewhat disappointed by both of the actors who played the supporting

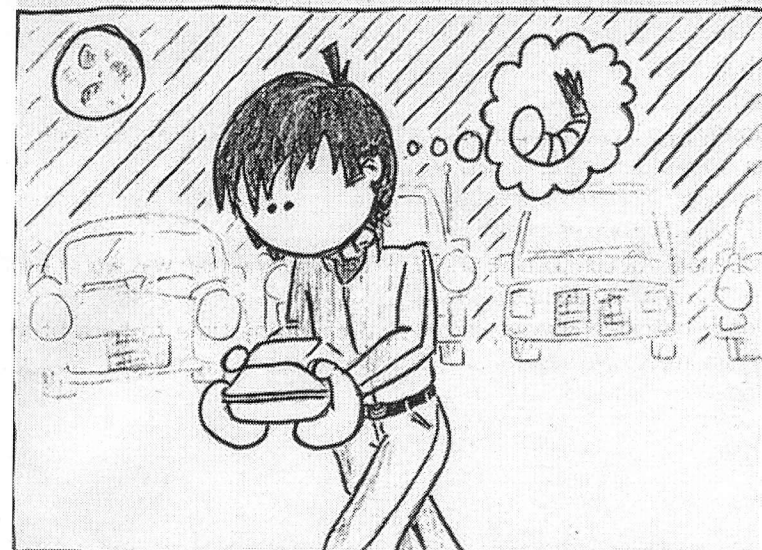
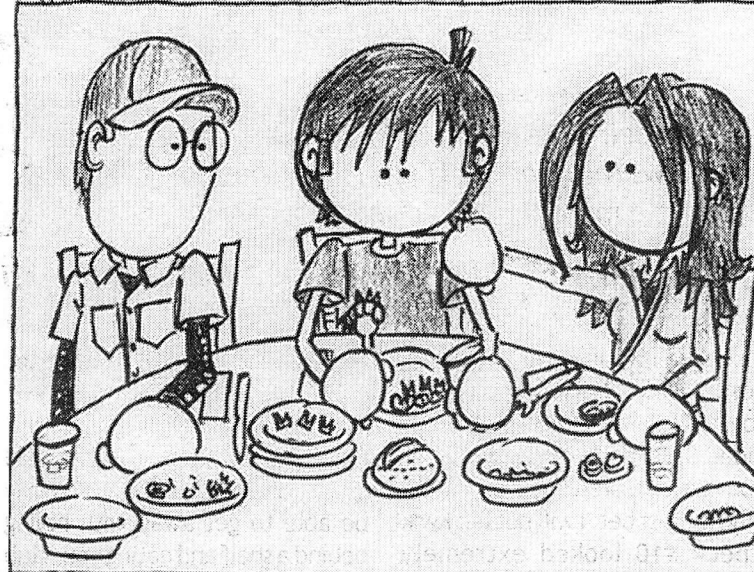
characters. George Dudley, who has credits that include multiple Broadway shows, brings the character of Caleb Thorpe to life. George's Broadway experience is no surprise as far as his acting ability goes; however, vocally, he is somewhat weak compared to the rest of the cast.

Unfortunately, I was more than disappointed by the character of Shelby Thorpe. Shelby is played by Anna Lise Jensen, who has it more than together vocally. The problem with her portrayal of Shelby is that there was no evidence of growth in the character. The audience could always expect her to come out on the stage and be louder and pushier than any of the other cast members.

Despite what I have said about some of the actors, I believe everyone should make the effort to go see *The Spitfire Grill* before it closes on February 15. The story is remarkable and charming. The music will give you chills and make you cry. The cast as an ensemble works well together. All in all, the show is a must-see if not for anything else but the music.

THIS WEEKEND

by LOGAN WHEELER.



RHODES PUZZLER

#41 (February 11, 2004)

Last week's movie pass winner: *Michael Lyerly*

The sixteen letters in the grid below form words when read across the rows, but not when read down the columns. Rearrange the letters to form four new words that read the same when read across the rows and down the columns.

R	A	N	T
R	I	F	E
D	A	M	E
T	I	M	E

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. Sunday. 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>.

Want to be heard?
Write for the Sou'wester!
Email shaan@rhodes.edu
for details.



Wednesday, February 11, 2004

Dinner & a Movie

This week, Leah Kaye reviews convenience store deli Kwik Check, and Carolyn Cole reviews the Charlize Theron film *Monster*, about a murderous Florida prostitute.

Convenience store lunch minus the microwave burrito

By Leah Kaye

After multiple students suggested Kwik Check #10 on Madison for falafel in Memphis, I decided I had better find out if this convenience store deli was actually my best bet. I will not lie: Kwik Check #10 looked extremely sketchy at first glance.

My opinion began to change when I saw the brightly painted deli menu on the wall, followed closely by a line of people waiting for their orders. As it turned out, Kwik Check offered a great lunch to go, with better quality than McDonald's at comparable prices.

The deli menu offered a selection of hoagies and gyros, including an impressive vegetarian section. Overall, there was a distinct specialization in Mediterranean cuisine, with muffalata, grape

leaves and lots of other things I could not pronounce (unfortunately, I did not spot any baklava).

Kwik Check is not a dine-in restaurant, but the convenience and quality draw in customers. You may be able to get away with hiding behind a shelf and eating your club sandwich, but it certainly makes more sense to drive it back to campus or eat it in your car like me when you cannot wait the extra four minutes. There is a trade-off for a lack of ambiance: Where else can you get a pita and scratch-it lottery tickets?

Only one man was working in the deli, which caused the food preparation time to be a little longer than I expected. The wait was not that bad, but for me it was especially dangerous as I wandered through the convenience

store shelves in the meantime. I ended up leaving with strawberry milk, Cheetos, and Twinkies in addition to my delicious falafel.

Obviously, Kwik Check is not one of Midtown's best kept secrets. I ran into at least three other Rhodes students while I was there, so it is pretty well-known and approved of. Maybe I am the only Rhodent who lets outward appearances ward me off, but now I know better.

The Kwik Check deli was definitely an interesting alternative to greasy American fast food. It was no Manhattan falafel, but I suppose in Memphis it does not get much better. At \$3-5 for a very filling sandwich or pita, it did not break the wallet either—if you discount the money I spent on the milk and junk food.

Charlize Theron gets her *Monster* on

By Carolyn Cole

Lately, it seems the only way an actress can be taken seriously is by somehow disfiguring her appearance (e.g. Nicole Kidman in *The Hours*, Salma Hayek in *Frida*), and Charlize Theron is the latest to join the club for her part in *Monster*. Theron plays Aileen Wuornos, a prostitute who, after being brutally raped, goes on a murdering spree. Theron's performance is wonderfully raw; she plays a woman who relies completely on instinct, and when that instinct fails her, she becomes almost primal in her rage. Theron reportedly gained thirty pounds for the role, as well as wearing face-altering dental additions and makeup. As Lee Wuornos, her emotions are constantly in the process of swinging between childish idealism and hysterical rage.

The title of the film refers not only to the obvious aspect of Lee's

personality, but also to a childhood memory. The film opens with flashbacks to this childhood, and the pain Lee endures as a child builds a strong foundation of sympathy for her. The adult Lee is first seen, after a heartbreaking speech about her lifelong search for love, sitting under a highway overpass contemplating suicide.

Lee is saved by Selby Wall, a young, conflicted lesbian played by the ever-childlike Christina Ricci. Lee is not gay but turns to Selby for the love she has been searching for. Although she tries to turn her life around for Selby, she is refused a legitimate job, unable to redeem herself in the eyes of society. Her return to prostitution sets off the tragic chain of events.

First time director Patty Jenkins reveals a different Florida from the sun-soaked, palm tree-decorated paradise typically seen in movies. Wuornos' Florida is a squalid place full of sleazy people.

This makes moments of beauty in the film all the more valuable. In one scene, for instance, Selby and Lee euphorically roller skate to Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'," for once completely unaware of the judgmental world around them.

When reality eventually sets in, Lee realizes that she can never go back to any semblance of a normal life. After one murder, she coolly blows a cloud of cigarette smoke in the air, and with it go all her former misgivings. The climax of the film hits at what turns out to be Lee's final murder. Watching Lee sell her soul to the devil, I felt torn between disgust for her actions and acute sympathy for her, and any movie that makes it possible to sympathize with a serial killer is worth seeing. Hopefully Theron, who recently won a Golden Globe for the movie, will continue to take challenging roles like this one.

THEATRE EVENTS

Autumn Brice

In continuation of last week's column, here are three more upcoming theatre happenings around Memphis:

The Good Doctor

By Neil Simon

Germantown Performing Arts Centre

1801 Exeter Rd.

Germantown, TN

(901)757-7256

February 13-25, 2004

www.gpacweb.com

The Good Doctor is Neil Simon's tribute to Anton Chekhov, arguably one of the greatest writers in Russian history. The play consists of comic vignettes adapted from some of Chekhov's stories, with a character called The Writer tying everything together. Originally produced on Broadway in 1973, the cast of *The Good Doctor* included notable actors Christopher Plummer, Rene Auberjonois, Barnard Hughes, Frances Sternhagen and Marsha Mason.

Godspell

Music & Lyrics: Stephen Schwartz

Book: John-Michael Tebelak

University of Memphis

(901)678-2000

February 19-28, 2004

www.memphis.edu

One of the biggest off-Broadway and Broadway successes of all time, *Godspell* is based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. The show, which is not built on a traditional plot, utilizes clowning, pantomime, charades, acrobatics and vaudeville to tell the story of

Christ. A pageant that moves from moment to moment, *Godspell* is a reflection on the life of Jesus by ten performers who are dressed as clowns. Featuring a sparkling score by Stephen Schwartz, *Godspell* boasts a string of recognizable songs, led by the international hit "Day By Day."

Blue

By Charles Randolph-Wright

Music: Nona Hendryx

Lyrics: Nona Hendryx and Charles Randolph-Wright

The Circuit Playhouse

1705 Poplar Avenue

(901)726-4656

February 27 - April 4, 2004

www.playhouseonthesquare.org

Charles Randolph-Wright's play *Blue* does something that few plays about black Americans have done: It presents a drama about a black family without bringing in issues of race. The characters themselves, and not their blackness, are the focus of the play. *Blue* is the story of the Clarks, an upper-middle-class black family in a fictional South Carolina town. As Randolph-Wright slowly reveals the secret at the core of the family, the characters' arrogance and dysfunction become more and more apparent. Humor and drama blend to form a captivating family drama.

Check out the Memphis Arts Council website for theatre, dance, art and music events: www.memphisartscouncil.org

How to Reach Our Authors and Us

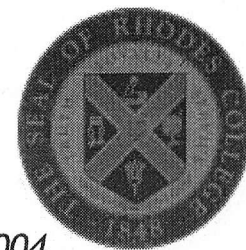
As the official student newspaper of Rhodes College, *The Sou'wester* is produced entirely by the students on staff. It functions independently of faculty and administration. The newspaper is published weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters, except during exam periods and breaks.

Staff meetings are open to the Rhodes community and convene in the second floor of Briggs Student Center every Monday 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 Rhode'ster*, 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.

REACHING THE SOU'WESTER
Phone: (901) 843-3970
Fax: (901) 843-3409
E-mail: sou'wester@rhodes.edu

Address: Rhodes Box 3010
The Sou'wester
2000 North Parkway
Memphis, TN 38112-1690



Wednesday, February 11, 2004

Swim, dive teams compete in championships at Delta State University this Thursday

By Duncan Howell

This Thursday through Saturday, the women's and men's Swimming/Diving Teams will compete in the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference Championships, which will be held at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi. This year's teams are led by senior and four-year letterman Kyle Russ, who is serving as captain of both teams. Kyle will conclude his career at the SCAC meet, where he will swim the 100 and 200 back, as well as five relays.

The men's team has a shot at improving on last year's eighth place finish. Wyatt Franks, '07, Lexington, Ken-

tucky, ranks as one of the top competitors in the SCAC in the 100 back, 100 fly and 100 free. Christopher Ernst, '07, St. Louis, Missouri has the sixth fastest time in the SCAC in the 50 free. Josh Davis, '07, Siloam Springs, Arkansas, should score points in the 100 and 200 breast, as should Chris Bowes, '07, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, in the 100 and 200 back. Shawn Paterakis, '07, will swim the 50 and 100 free.

Will Corvey, '06, Dallas, Texas, is the iron-man on the Rhodes campus. Will is Rhodes' only four-sport athlete. He competes in cross-country, swimming, indoor and outdoor track. He will

swim the 200, 500 and 1650 free at the SCAC meet.

David Hammond, '07, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, will compete in the one and three meter diving competition, where he should score valuable points in the men's team quest to move up in the league standings.

The women's team is comprised of three first-year swimmers, all of whom have had outstanding seasons. Alison Lohse, '07, Fort Smith, Arkansas, has top times in the SCAC in the 200 fly, 200 IM and 400 IM. Taylor Casey, '07, Charleston, South Carolina, should score points in the 200 fly, 500 and 1650 free. Deborah Clarke, '07, Tallahas-

see, Florida, will also swim the 200, 500 and 1655 free.

"Our team really came together during our winter training trip to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in early January. I'm really proud of how hard we've worked this year," said head coach Mike Clary.

This is the sixth year Rhodes has sponsored a varsity swimming/diving team and Coach Clary's second year as head coach. Of the eleven members on the team this year, nine are first-year students.

"Our recruiting for swimming and diving is going great. Hopefully we'll double the number of team members next year and continue to improve the depth and talent on our teams," says Coach Clary.

Letters, continued from page 2

not even know existed. So, you may rant and rave about "what is the truth," but would the Native American citizens of Guatemala and other Latin American countries have received the attention if not for the efforts of Rigoberta Menchu? I believe one has to look past some inconsistencies in order to see the bigger picture: human rights. She is coming to Rhodes to speak about service and human rights, which seems more important than worrying about what David Stoll claims. Human lives are benefiting from Menchu's work because she was able to communicate to the world, giving her people a light in the darkness of Guatemala.

Sincerely,
Kristen Bach
'05

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