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Crew team does well in meet.

See Page 8

Obama cruises to victory

Pre-election activities on campus

By William Bruce
News Editor

An election that has lasted two long years ended last night with a win for Barack Obama. When CNN called the election at 11 p.m. Tuesday night there were hugs in the Lair and a few excited shrieks pierced the mild November night.

An election night party in the Lair was one of the activities organized on campus leading up to the election.

"For the past month and a half the RSG voting commission has had a number of drives to increase voter participation on campus," said Aaron Fitzgerald, vice president of RSG. "This was just the last bit of campus awareness before the results came in."

Several students felt positive about the viewing party.

"I thought it was pretty exciting," said John Jackson, a senior. "Most schools are too big for you to hear real discussion going on."

"I think the event is good," said Martha Rotzoll, a junior. "It brings more attention to politics."

Political activism was also felt on campus on Monday evening with a student organized political discussion forum. With a focus on the 2008 presidential election, the forum had a faculty panel composed of six professors. The professors came from the departments of: chemistry, international studies, history, english, and political science. The panel provided opening remarks on matters important to them in the election, and then fielded questions from students.

"I thought the discussion went generally well, especially given the short notice of the event," said Kyle Wukasch, a sophomore, and the organizer of the event. "If anything, it proved students were eager for political discussion on issues pertinent to the election."

A number of participants believed the discussion was long overdue.

"There hasn't been a lot of obvious political discussion happening on campus," said Professor Dagger, a member of the panel and political science professor.

"We haven't really done anything like this since the start of the election," said LaRosa.



Daniel Jacobs/The Sou'wester

Students gathered to watch Obama's acceptance speech in the Williford common room. See page 4 for more pictures.

In spite of the fact that it was organized hastily, approximately 50 students came out to the forum.

Election, continued on Page 4

Making the major decision

By William Bruce
News Editor

For most students, choosing a major is a complicated decision that requires time and patience.

Based on experience many advisors agree that freshmen have very little idea as to what they want to major in.

"I haven't kept a count and don't have firm numbers, but I would guess that about 75% of incoming students don't know what they want to do or major in," said Professor Steven McKenzie of the Religious studies department. "Some have an idea or two but aren't certain and others come in certain of what they want to do but then change their minds for various reasons."

A number of students said that uncertainty about what they wanted to study was an influence on their decision to attend

Rhodes College. As a liberal arts institution, a large part of the academics is connecting different fields of study.

"I think the whole point of liberal arts is finding out what you want to do along the way," said Rebecca Bates, a senior creative writing major. "My wanting to explore options affected my choice to come here."

"The new curriculum is designed to prod students toward exploring where their real interests lie rather than simply seeking a job path," said McKenzie. "We hope the Foundation requirements will provide areas for exploration rather than just a checklist of things to get out of the way."

A small group of students said they knew what they wanted to major in coming into college. The bulk of these students are majoring, or plan to major in a science related subject.

"Rhodes is one of the most selective schools, and has a great science program," said Alex Tong, a sophomore. "It also has close proximity to St. Jude children's research hospital. I work there now"

"I major in biology because I've always wanted to be a doctor," said Kyle Pipkin, a sophomore.

Certainty or uncertainty aside, numerous professors said that students can expect to change their mind about what they wish to study at some point during college.

"It is very common for a student's interests to change over time, and it is very healthy," said McKenzie. "It reflects development and growing intellectual curiosity."

The reasons behind major declaration

Major, continued on Page 4

RSG update: Keeping Lair open 24/7?

By Steven Johanson
RSG Correspondent

The RSG had one of its regular Senate sessions on Thursday, October 23. The topics of the session included an announcement that the Student Services Committee is working with the school to extend hours in the library and the Lair.

The Voter Registration Commission decided to have their "Rock the Vote" Monday, so that students can get their absentee ballots notarized and mailed in.

The Alcohol Task force has set down a preliminary vision to "Align students, faculty and staff with the alcohol policy on campus." This vision is not quite concrete but they hope to continue development of this idea in their weekly meeting.

As the meeting proceeded into the Steering Committee Chair reports, there were even more significant developments. Internal affairs filled all of their open positions through faculty appointments.

The Community and Alumni Relations Board are working on the development of a discount card and a November flyer to be placed in the bathrooms. Student Services met with Dean Johnson this past week in an effort to get library hours extended. They said they believe this venture could be successful.

This same committee also is hoping to get the Lair opened 24 hours a day, providing another place besides Middle Ground for students. Campus Outreach is developing a plan to have a monthly business where students can go to get a discount. The business will be advertised by flyers around campus.

The Social Satisfaction Committee had some important information to contribute to the meeting. They already had 20 people running for class councils as of last Thursday. This shows student's interest in their student government and the success of this venture. The SSC is also making a survey for students. They plan to present this to the administration in an effort to improve student life.

The final order of business in the final session was an appointment of a new member to the allocation board. A freshman, Adam Rivkin, cited as the "King of Glassell Castle in a good way" by Senator Jonathan Berube, was appointed to the allocations board and approved by all members of the Senate there assembled.

Obama offers US change and balance

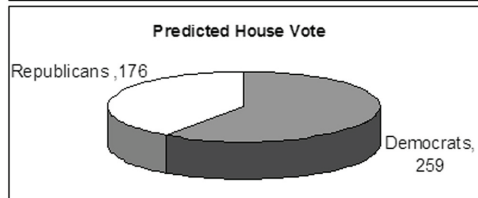
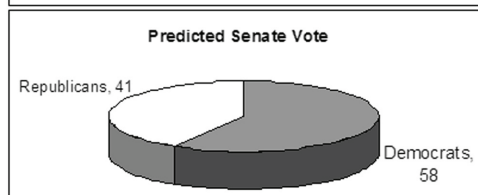
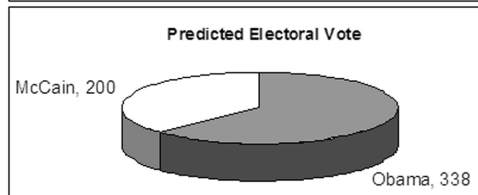
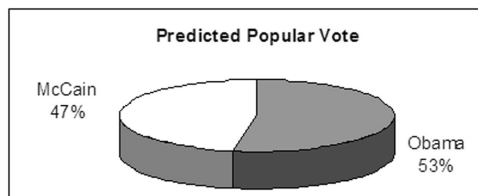
By Paul Yacoubian
Opinion Editor

What would election coverage be without pie charts? I have compiled the accompanying charts for this article from information gathered from the Huffington Post website. The site compiled election predictions from 27 well known political pundits from all points of the political spectrum. I have averaged out all the forecasts, a poll of polls as popularized, noting no significant outliers and here are the results.

For the presidential race, the predicted popular vote margin is 6 points across the board. As for the Electoral College, we should not see a repeat of the 2000 election, as only one picked a McCain win (and it was not Karl Rove). In fact Rove, the master political strategist, has predicted an electoral vote of 338 to 200.

As for the congressional races, the smallest predicted margin in the Senate is a seven seat advantage for Democrats, with the largest being a colossal twelve seat advantage which I believe to be highly unlikely. This would be a filibuster proof majority that would allow Democrats to vote for cloture any time Republicans try to stall proceedings. James Carville was the only pundit to pick a 60 seat supermajority for the Democrats. I distinctly remember him picking Jeb Bush as this year's Republican nominee when he spoke here at Rhodes. I am not sure what happened there James.

Election predictions of political pundits



In the house, the pundits have predicted ranges from 63 seats advantage Democrats, all the way to a 103 seat advantage. Serving the Rhodes college constituents, Congressman Steve Cohen has been successfully re-elected to a second term. Having shown exceptional poise in the House Judiciary Committee, I believe we can continue to expect great things from him for the next two years, despite his obstinacy towards the

Armenian Genocide bill.

To those who abhor the thought of Democrats controlling all of the branches of government, I understand your concerns. I had the same thoughts when Republicans held control of all of three branches of government for the greater part of the last four years. However, it is up to the party in power to ensure that both parties work together in order to ensure the cooperation and compromise that no one can deny benefits our country.

When given the option of including Democrats on important issues in Congress, Republicans decided that their majority constituted a mandate for authoritarianism. I wrote an article about the peril of this type of thinking in 2005 for my high school newspaper. The subject was the pursuit of the elimination of the senate filibuster, sponsored by Tennessee Senator Bill Frist.

In order to control judicial appointments, Republicans sought to eliminate the power of the minority party in checking the power of the majority. This key feature of senate procedure has kept our federal government in check for over two hundred years. Had that legislation passed, Republicans would be pushing to undo that damage in the face of this Democratic sweep. That type of short-sighted thinking became a looming problem for the Republican Party. By not questioning any of George W. Bush's agenda such as waterboarding or corruption, Republican candidates became inseparable from a president whose approval rating hit the lowest of lows, an incredible 72% disapproval rating according to CNN.

Democrats responded to these many blatant violations of well-principled government by recruiting two highly capable candidates who gathered a tremendous and active base. The Republicans on the other hand, became lackadaisical as demonstrated in their debates, confusing and boring. The only bright spots of excitement on the campaign trail came from Ron Paul and Sarah Palin supporters.

Ron Paul would have been the better choice for McCain as he has demonstrated leadership in banking regulation, the fiscal conservatism (never voted for a tax increase) as well as a "maverickness" that would have complemented McCain's core message. Instead he chose a vice-president that he met once and spoke with over the phone once. The result of McCain's poor judgment is entering Election Day with a running mate whose disapproval rating is 51%.

In February of 2003 I marched down Cooper Street in protest of the looming war in Iraq. I believed that the war was inevitable yet entirely unjustified. People who gathered on the streets to meet us called us "un-American" and "un-Patriotic". I asserted that without a voice of reason or dissent our government could make incredibly poor decisions. Likewise, the electorate, Americans can make poor voting decisions without good information on the candidates whom have been chosen for us by political parties.

During campaign 2004, I was excited

by the prospects of a Howard Dean presidency. Essentially anti-Iraq war and an advocate of peace, I believed Dean offered substantial change from the first Bush term. His outreach to the grassroots community and excellence in small denomination fundraising provided a foundation for the resurgence of the Democratic Party. His speech was impassioned, but he was not smooth, as demonstrated by the monstrous of a gaffe (Byahh!!!) that cut his campaign short, but not this article.

For the past 18 months I have seen the same energy and excitement that met Howard Dean in the support for Barack Obama. Gathering in front of massive rallies of 100,000 supports, Obama has provided hope and optimism in the face of a cynicism promoted by the reality of the Bush administration as well as the campaign of John McCain. For McCain, announcing his displeasure with government does not suffice, unless it is coupled with a plan of attacking those problems. Promoting an across the board spending freeze is not a presidential plan. Vowing to veto every bill containing pork product is not a presidential plan. His responses to serious problems amounted to little more than a kid throwing a temper tantrum.

This race came down to a battle of American Philosophy. John McCain a renowned war hero wrote books on heroism and patriotism that he undoubtedly has shown in his own life. However by projecting a view of patriotism that requires supporting all wars instead of troops, by placing them in harm's way to protect the interests of those other than the American people, we must draw the line. If he cared about the troops he would have fought for funding veterans' benefits instead of voting against it. He would have stood hard and steadfast against Whitehouse authorization of torture against our enemies. John McCain should have known that torture is a heinous act that brings our troops down to the level of the terrorists whom we abhor.

In offering a message of hope and yes, idealism, Barack Obama has inspired millions of Americans who have felt disenfranchised for the past eight years to have the courage to stand up in support of the way things should be. Although he denies having all of the answers the problems facing America, Obama has shown that he is willing to work to resolve the causes and not the effects that lead to the low approval ratings of the federal government.

By embracing the diversity of Americans throughout the country and appealing to aspirations that defy party lines, Obama has been able to convince growing demographics that he can offer a sustainable vision for the future. The face of the electorate is changing and Obama has captured its support. I believe that voters respond well to a candidate that stands for something and not one who simply offers a critique of bad government (i.e. John Kerry '04). Despite the past few years marred by corruption in politics, people are excited about government again.

This just in.... Obama wins.

THE SOU'WESTER

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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.

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ASSOCIATED
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PRESS

Media continues to undermine our consciousness

By Rami Abdoch and Dean Galaro
Staff Writers

Turn on the television and observe the avalanche of coverage the presidential race has produced. News channels cover their every move and word 24 hours a day and campaign ads show up during every commercial break. Listen to the radio and you get to hear discussion about more of the same, followed by ads that contain more of the same. Even the internet is not safe, with banners for both candidates covering websites and the blogosphere run amuck with thousands of opinions about the election every second.

Over the past two years the race for the Oval Office has been chewed up, spit out, and put under the microscope from every direction; but what do we have to show for it, other than some moderately funny SNL skits? We are firmly planted in the age of information, a time when there is almost no escape from the data stream and nothing stopping us from finding it. The presidential race that is coming to a rapid close has made use of this, but at what cost?

Mass media (propaganda) is everywhere, whether it is on the television or the computer or the signs in front yards that line the streets. There is no shortage of it, and it is due to the fact that a run for president means a candidate must get as much face time as possible. For the 2008 presidential cycle, the combined amount of money spent on media has totaled \$418 million for all candidates (broadcast, print, internet, and miscellaneous media). This portion of expenditures is second only to administrative costs, with both accounting for around two-thirds of all money spent this presidential cycle. Clearly it is essential for someone running for president to spend exorbitant amounts of money getting their message to the people; but why?

In the 1960's, sociologist Marshall McLuhan wrote extensively about the effects of mass media on society in the early days of television. He famously observed that "it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action," meaning that media has become

both the end and the means. People put less value in what is being said and more value into the fact that it is being said; it's an issue of quantity instead of quality.

Campaign ads normally tell people about problems and don't speak to palpable solutions other than the standard "cutting taxes" or "protecting the middle class", because people are OK with not fully understanding all that an election entails. If they can see a candidate's smiling face, they're satisfied because the candidate is reaching out to them.

Since the average voter is not terribly educated as to the specifics of the candidate's plans if they were to be elected, media from each camp is tailored to be simple to understand and very vague. Ads tell of "plans for change" and harp on "lack of experience", something ads have been doing since the television boom in the 1950's, and attack ads have been pointing out inexperience and critiquing foreign policy for almost sixty years: all packaged in neat 1 minute parcels. Not to pick on Democrat Barack Obama, but slogans have not changed much either, with Eisenhower ('52), Carter ('76), Clinton ('92), and Bush ('04) all using slogans promoting "change".

This condensation of political positions into small, easy to understand segments, is something that is detrimental to intellectual thought as a whole. The fact that most people are fine with this restricted dialogue, if it can even be called a dialogue, does not render it legitimate. To believe that it does entails a logical fallacy, namely appeal to popularity. Nay, it is a one-sided discourse prompted by and powered by those willing and able: in this case, media moguls. Moreover, this phenomenon is part of a larger problem that has resulted from the Information Age: the promulgation of bad information.

Joel Achenbach, a staff writer for the Washington Post, highlights an example of the importance of a certain degree of skepticism in interpreting information. "It's good and necessary for people to be skeptical; the government does, in fact, tell lies. It lied about Vietnam, it lied about Watergate. The African American patients at Tuskegee were told they were

being treated for syphilis when in fact they were given placebos for years so researchers could watch the progression of the disease. Oliver North lied to Congress on national television, under oath."

The sparse knowledge speaks to the lack of information about a particular subject with respect to the one receiving the information. One must develop an extremely practiced eye when dealing with such complex subjects to derive truth from falsehood. Furthermore, figures of authority are not infallible when it comes to disseminating information, so do not put full stock in people that you have no personal relationship with.

The introduction of such mediums as radio, television, and the information superhighway that is the internet has affected the body politic tremendously. "Good" information is usually lost among a swath of "bad" information that pervades the collective body of information. The problem lies in the inability of the mainstream to take the time to sift through this information core to distinguish one from the other. That is not to say that most people do not have reasons (work, family, education, etc) for doing their part to understand the world around them, but this does not excuse them for not making some time to gain a general sense of the events around them.

Merely accepting the information presented one at face value is both foolish and naïve, and will only lead to a distressed and ignorant populace that is dumb to the reality around them. Sarah Nardi, a freelance writer based in Chicago, sums this up as such: "I lie on the couch, mind blank, and listen to biased, imperious opinion presented with the authority of fact. Information so highly processed – by the anchor, the analyst, the network, the conglomerate – that by the time it gets to me, it requires no digestion, no analysis. And after every binge, I purge – regurgitating unsound information back into the system of collective thought, into an already malnourished body politic."

Our future looks hazy

Max Hardy
Letter to the Editor

It is imperative that Rhodes College give fraternities two choices: remove any and all hazing practices unconditionally, or be dissolved. Hazing activities contradict Rhodes College policies, are detrimental to group dynamic and cast a negative image of the college community as a whole.

On September 26, where a feeling of cheer permeated the gym and philanthropy was on everybody's mind at Kappa Delta's All Sing, there was one fraternity in particular that did not fit in with the rest. Instead of entertaining the audience with a playful song and dance act, they—the freshmen ordained by the fraternity's upper-classmen to go on stage—offended by executing a strip-tease that ended in nothing but skin-colored underwear. A once family-oriented event had suddenly become anything but. (They were rumored to have been forced to drink excessive amounts of alcohol earlier in the day.

In what way does such a graphic display of disregard for civility affect our image as a college as a whole? What does one say to the grandmothers and small children in the audience after they squirmed uncomfortably through such a presentation? I do not believe that these actions promote the morals fraternities are supposed to instill in their youngest members?

This brings me to a contradiction of Rhodes College policy. "Each chapter is responsible for following the guidelines of its national headquarters as well as the policies of Rhodes College and applicable state law," as the College website details. Every organization of Rhodes is supposed to provide a place "that inspires integrity and high achievement through its beauty, its emphasis on values, its Presbyterian history, and its heritage as a leader in the liberal arts and sciences."

When I asked a Kappa Delta representative who had a hand in overseeing each fraternity the night before to make sure the performance was in good taste, she said, "they only stripped down to their shorts for us." This, my friend, is dishonesty, which breaches our prized Honor Code.

I see no plausible circumstances in which the environment that forced alcohol consumption on All Sing Day and Bid Day—when red plastic cups and empty beer cans made it hard to see the grass on which they were strewn—and during other times help promote an integral "brotherhood" support system. Stripping in front of the entire school and its president cannot, either—nor can the upper-classmen of the fraternity laughing uncontrollably on the sidelines.

The lying, the harassment, and the coerced alcohol consumption must stop so long as we feel the need to uphold the principles of the Rhodes College tradition.

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Student Voice

How would you describe the election in one word?



“Depressing.”
- John Bryant ('11)

“We’re screwed.”
- Ansley Blalock ('12)



“Long.”
- Sue Chen ('12)

“Overwhelming.”
- Ellie Connick ('11)



“Unprecedented.”
- Carolina Sanchez ('12)

Major, continued from Page 1

vary from student to student.

“I’d say more relevance to real world applications is the main factor I consider when thinking about a major,” said Alex Petraglia, a freshman who is undecided.

“I chose my major because it’s something I like, I mean you’d want to do something you like,” said Bates.

“Hands down practicality. The reason we pay so much money to come here is to get a job later, not just to have fun,” said Pipkin.

“There are a lot of factors - interest, schedule, professor, etc. I

don’t know that there is any one biggest factor,” said McKenzie. “I would hope that the desire to explore becomes an increasing consideration.”

A common factor between many students in picking a major is the intent to pursue graduate school.

“I’ve always wanted to go to medical school,” said Pipkin.

“I’m interested in going to graduate school. College has become what high school used to be,” said Petraglia. “You used to be able to graduate high school and be fine in the real world. College has become a requirement

and graduate school is what college used to be.”

Some students however chose to pursue graduate studies only later in their college lives.

“I didn’t know I wanted to go to graduate school coming into college,” said Bates.

But since students have to declare their major by the end of the fall semester of their sophomore year they can be indecisive for only so long.

“There’s pressure,” said Petraglia. “Not only does everyone ask you what you’re majoring in, but you only have about three semesters before you declare.”

Election coverage continued

Major, continued from Page 1

“I really could not have been more impressed with their intelligent questions and measured conversation,” said Professor Johnson of the philosophy department, and assisted in organizing the event.

Some faculty members and student organizers believed that students have misconceptions as to what is meant by political activism.

“You can have a narrow perspective on politics in which you focus mainly on elections, or you can have a broader view,” said Dagger. “The broader view deals with things like ethics, such as the clothesline project you see on campus.”

“Being in a democracy means doing more than voting every four years,” said LaRosa. “It’s also about staying informed on political activities.”



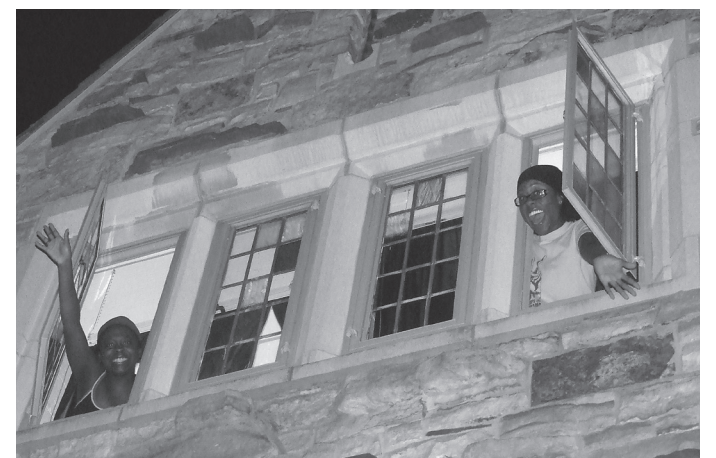
Daniel Jacobs/The Sou'wester

Beginning at 5 p.m., students gathered in the Lair for the RSG sponsored election watching party.



Noelle Smith/The Sou'wester

Students and staff celebrate the news of the election.



Daniel Jacobs/The Sou'wester

After CNN called the election for Obama, some students celebrated.

CAMPUS SAFETY

October 26 – November 2

10/26

12:00 am: Noise complaint Voorhies Hall resulting in alcohol violations; report filed.
6:08 pm: Backpack found in the freshman parking lot containing a laptop and property belonging to a student. Owner identified, property returned.
11:27 pm: Window in the multi-sports complex busted out; physical plant notified.

10/27

4:12 am: Non-Rhodes person passed out behind the wheel of a vehicle at the intersection of Tutwiler and McLean. MPD notified.
3:30 pm: Student who lives off campus called to report that her house had been broken into. Campus Safety patrol will do courtesy drive bys.
6:22 pm: Emergency fire door activated by a student attempting to exit the building; alarm reset.

10/28

1:21 am: Alarm in East Village A; officers responded.
1:36 am: Trouble alarm in Robinson dorm; officers responded.
11:23 am: East Village A smoke alarm; officers dispatched; maintenance notified.

10/29

11:20 am: Student worker driving a golf cart struck a lamp pole at the BCLC front lawn, no injuries to student; golf cart expired at the scene.
7:00 pm: Upper Phillips Lane blocked out for the upcoming trustee's meetings.
7:16 pm: Trouble alarm going off in Glassell Hall; officers dispatched; alarm reset.
9:15 pm: Smoke detector going off in Stewart Hall; students attempting to pop popcorn.

10/30

8:15 am: Board of Trustees starting to arrive; officer posted Upper Phillips Lane.
4:09 pm: Bus accessed to the southwest gym gate.
9:10 pm: Student reported a hit and run in the Phillips Lane parking lot; photos of damage to vehicle taken; report filed.
11:05 pm: Student warned for loud noise in Spann parking lot
11:11 pm: Noise complaint East Village B; issue resolved.

10/31

7:55 am: Fire alarm in East Village A; officers dispatched.
7:57 am: Smoke detector trouble in East Village A; maintenance notified.
6:06 pm: Several busses on campus for football and cross country activity.
6:25 pm: Student found a wallet containing cash at the Bailey Gate; turned in to Campus Safety; property locked in security safe.
11:03 pm: Residents report persons had thrown a pumpkin and shattered a car's rear window on Mignon. Victim of this incident is a Rhodes alumni.
11:32 pm: Report of a possible hit and run accident in the BCLC parking lot; report filed.

11/01

4:22 am: Residents report several acts of vandalism to vehicles on Snowden; MPD notified.
10:30 am: Fire alarm East Village B; officers responded; false alarm.
12:36 pm: Smoke detector in the refectory activated due to steam; maintenance notified; all reset.
4:11 pm: RA for Robb Hall reported a squirrel in the Robb social room. Campus Safety dispatched; critter escaped through a window.
5:18 pm: Student called to report a bird in the conservatory. A door was propped open so the trapped critter could escape.
5:45 pm: alcohol violations issued at KA house.
7:15 pm: Report of a theft in the BCLC from a ladies purse. Report filed.

11/02

5:00 am: Several patrols made through the night on and off campus.



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Fun at the 11th Annual Indie Memphis Film Festival

By Lizz Glaus
Staff Writer

In October, Indie Memphis brought over 100 films including shorts and full-length features from all over the country and the world to Studio on the Square—less than five minutes away from the beautiful bubble we call home.

The Indie Memphis Film Festival, now in its 11th year, showcased documentary, narrative, hometown, music video, and “global-lens” features over a one-week span. Individual tickets, ticket packages, and all-festival passes were available online at indiememphis.com and at the theatre. I opted for a 5 film “sampler-pack,” for which I got to choose one documentary feature, one narrative feature, one global-lens feature, a program of shorts (the one I picked included nine short films, each of which lasted about ten minutes), and a “wild-card.”

Each time I walked into the theatre, with the exception of the global-lens feature, which was not part of the competition, I was handed a ballot for the Audience Choice Award. Each member of the audience at every screening rated the films on a scale from 1 to 5 for shorts and 0 to 4 for full-length features.

I kicked off my Indie Memphis experience with “Shorts Program 2.”

First up, Dan Treharne’s *The Orphan*. This film was like a condensed version of *August Rush*. It had almost exactly the same plot—an orphan boy “finds himself” and reconciles his loneliness through music. There was no dialogue, though. The story was told only through imagery, animation, and the soundtrack behind it, and it was quite beautiful. Two thumbs up for this film meant high scores from me.

After *The Orphan* came *Suspended Animation*, directed by Jose Casado. This one was not so touching (and I don’t attribute that to the brilliance of the film it followed). It was very simply filmed and featured a couple in a park discussing whether or not to move to Tennessee from New York. I understood the conflict between the husband’s great job offer in Tennessee and his wife’s “big city dreams” as an artist, but they failed to make me care what actually happened to them. I shouldn’t be surprised—stories of marital problems that end in compromise are never the most entertaining.

A Bird in the Hand, directed by Geoffrey Brent Shrewsbury, told the story a man named Levi who, once he is released from prison for robbery, comes home to find that his fiancée has sold everything in their house. It was filmed in black and white, which provided a nice and memorable difference between this film and most of the others in the program. Unfortunately, the film’s “lack of color” was more than simply visual. I was confused

from the beginning as to whether I was supposed to like Levi the thief and be angry at his girlfriend or side with her. It also bothered me that nothing really felt like it had been resolved by the end of the ten minutes. This film fell into the mediocre range on my scorecard.

Edward Valibus Phillips’ *L’Hippopotame Vert FTW!* was the most fantastically hilarious thing I have seen in a very long time. The synopsis at indiememphis.com read “On New Year’s Eve, a lone soul battles against Death to save his soul.” I had no idea what to expect from that, but was happily surprised to find that the “battle against Death” in this film was nothing more than a really intense night of Guitar Hero and Hungry Hungry Hippos. The combination of partial French narration and English subtitles even in silent moments added to the comedy of the piece as well.

Katie Barkel’s *Draggers & Rip Spots*, another black and white film set in Detroit, told three separate and seemingly unrelated stories. I never managed to piece together any sort of plot or purpose from the film, so I was pretty disappointed. I gave it a higher score than it may have deserved, though, if only for quality cinematography.

Virtues, directed by David Condolora, followed a keen observer named James through a day in his life as he takes in the beauty of little things like smiles, flowers, and couples in love. He goes on and on cherishing these little moments until one night when he hears a man beating his wife and must decide whether or not to intervene. It was relatively interesting, but not the most captivating of tales.

Joel Rose’s *Oedipus Rex* was a modern rendition of the Greek tragedy by the same name, and it was equally suspenseful and awkward. Within each scene, the camera did not move from the same place, so it felt almost like a hidden camera listening in on uncomfortable conversations between a father and son about the love affair between the son and his stepmother. You all know how the story ends, so I’ll leave it at that. I thought the film was done very well, and the feelings conveyed were appropriate, so I gave it a relatively high score.

After reading the indiememphis.com synopsis for William Bearden and David Tankersley’s hometown feature *The Bench*, I couldn’t wait to see it. It is rare that I am as thoroughly disappointed in a film as I was with this one. I expected a series of very short, interesting conversations on a park bench, preferably in black and white, to address the diversity of public space. What I got, however, was two five-minute stories that may as well have lasted a lifetime without teaching me anything. The first one, entitled “Extraction,” was a conversation be-

tween a woman and a female assassin/seductress, neither of which successfully acted their roles. The second, entitled “Sentry,” was an old war veteran just talking to himself on a bench like there was another person there. All in all the film was an epic failure.

Jessica Powers’ *Frayed*, another hometown feature, was a phenomenal “grand finale” for Shorts Program 2. I definitely cried over this teenager’s tale of domestic neglect and abuse. It’s interesting that when I read the synopsis, I wasn’t too excited—I felt like I had heard the story a thousand times before, but Powers really did it well, and managed to convey a full range of emotions in a very short amount of time. By the end of it I felt refreshed and relieved that the conflict had been resolved and everything was going to be ok. I gave this film the highest score on the card.

Immediately after Shorts Program 2, I headed across the hall for my “wild-card feature”—a narrative film entitled *My Effortless Brilliance*.

Instead of a preview, *My Effortless Brilliance* had sort of a “bonus” short film called *Ginger Sand* attached to it. Apparently it was an epilogue to a full-length film entitled *Team Picture* by the same director, Kentucker Audley. I was a little worried because I hadn’t seen the full-length feature, but, as it turns out, the two are entirely unrelated to each other. It was totally improvisational, according to the director during his Q & A between his film and the feature, and simply illustrated a humorous conflict of personalities between weekend visitors at the home of mutual friends.

I actually chose Lynn Shelton’s *My Effortless Brilliance* as my “wild-card” feature because I thought it would be terrible and I wanted my review of the festival to not only to include all that is good about Indie Memphis, but all that is bad and ugly as well. It turns out there is not too much to bash about the festival. This film was essentially a rekindled “bro-mance” between an author named Eric Lambert Jones and an old friend named Dylan. It’s full of very funny, stereotypical “guy conversations,” like how food gets caught so easily in beards, “what would Dracula do,” and how awesome it would be to cover your entire body with peanut butter.

Watching the movie became more and more comfortable as time progressed, and Eric and Dylan’s friendship rebuilt itself. The thing that struck me most about the film, however, was not the plot but the fact that there was no background music. It was really strange—I don’t think I have ever seen a film before that completely lacked a soundtrack, whether or not the music played a very important role in the drama, and yet I had never noticed that until I watched this movie.

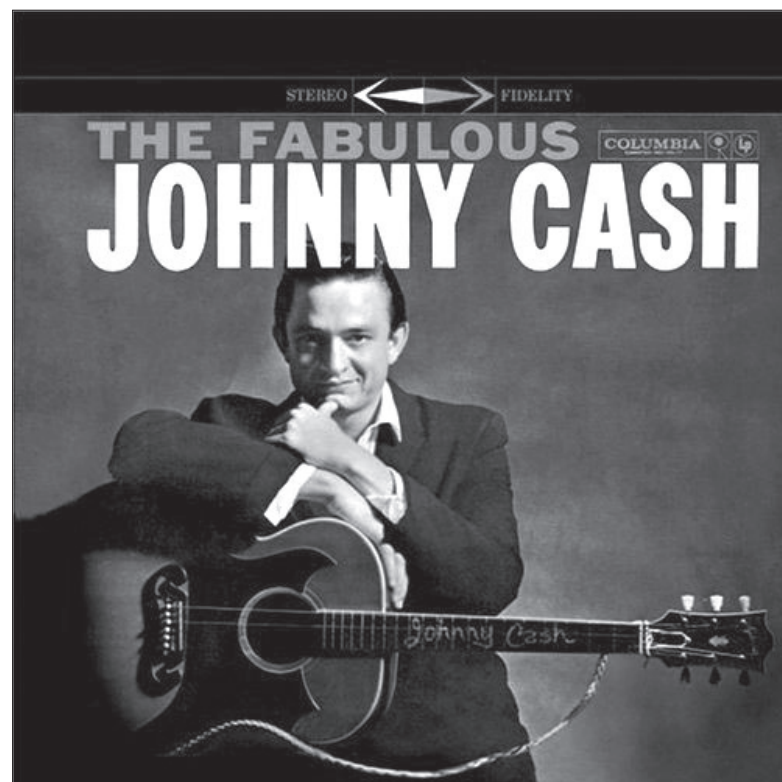


photo courtesy of thedeathhub.com/johnny-cash-america/
The Fabulous Johnny Cash is a new biography about the famous singer who will always be linked to Memphis because of his work at Sun Studios. The movie was amongst the films featured at the 11th Annual Indie Memphis Film Festival.

The next day, I transitioned from a film with no music to a film that wouldn’t exist without it. Sascha Paladino’s documentary feature *Throw Down Your Heart* follows American banjo enthusiast Béla Fleck to Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, Gambia, and Mali to bring the banjo back to where it came from instead of keeping it stuck in the mold of American southern folk, or “hillbilly,” music, where it has unfortunately resided for many years. Béla records an album over the course of the documentary with several different African musicians.

The film highlights the importance of music in cultures all over Africa. It was delightful to see that, since we usually hear such a small piece of what Africa is—we hear the stories of genocide, HIV/AIDS, war, and poverty while just as much joy and celebration can be found there right along with it. Music seemed to be everywhere and in everything there, and the film was a beautiful thing to experience. I am already anxious for Béla’s album *Throw Down Your Heart* to drop in early 2009.

Two days later, I made my final trip to Studio on the Square of hometown narrative feature *OMG/HAHA-HA* and global-lens feature *Bunny Chow*. Morgan Jon Fox’s *OMG/HAHAHA* was filmed like a documentary, or even a series of shorts, looking into the lives of young Memphians, narrated by a teenager’s video diary. In terms of style, it certainly reflected the Myspace/Facebook generation, with cute little emoticons popping up all over

the screen. It was cute, funny, and light one moment, yet deeply emotional at the next. I loved it.

John Barker’s *Bunny Chow: Know Thyself* wrapped up my Indie Memphis experience with less of a “bang” than I had hoped. It was part of the Global Lens Initiative at Indie Memphis, which brought 10 films from all over the world, outside of competition, to the festival. This was a black and white, MTV Europe production filmed in Johannesburg, South Africa. It followed three stand-up-comedians through a road trip to Oppi Koppi, a large music festival in South Africa, as they deal with difficulties in their careers as well as in their friendships and dating relationships. The director aimed to illustrate the fact that Johannesburg is not just about hardship, and he succeeded, but not nearly as interestingly as Sascha Paladino conveyed a similar message in *Throw Down Your Heart*.

Overall, I give the Indie Memphis Film Festival two thumbs up. In addition to the films, the festival featured live music, Q & A sessions with writers and directors before and after screenings, an after-party (which I unfortunately had to give up for fall break), and even a raffle for a PSP game system, donated by Sony.

You can check out the Audience-Choice award and category winners, as well as find more information about the rest of the festival’s films, writers, and directors at indiememphis.com.

Be afraid, be twice as afraid, it's a sequel!

By John Bryant
Staff Writer

Do you enjoy visually-induced bowel failure? How about repeated blows to the face? Yes? Well, then, masochistic maverick, I have the perfect cinematic seed of suffering to help cultivate that cornfield of catastrophe you so yearn to yield. Wow that last sentence was impressive. But do you know what is not? Rhetorical question. Answer: *Troll 2*. It erases the fine line that separates the simply bad from the utterly awful. It is the worst movie ever, ever, ever (due to space constraints, continue repeating "ever" in your head until this point is duly noted).

Troll 2 is like being sucked down a

giant time-toilet that flushes you back to when you were unhappy, unsuccessful, and unattractive (the trifecta of misery). Only, instead of walking around in this time-flushed landscape, you awaken to realize you have not time-traveled at all, but have merely passed out during an immense diarrhea. You now have to come to terms with the grim reality that everything you dreamed is true because you are the type of person who falls asleep on toilets. *Troll 2* reminds you that you will never amount to much, that dreams are just the feeble opiates that dull you to your own petty insignificance. And no matter how hard you try, everyone you know and love will die. Especially you.

At its heart, *Troll 2* is the heartwarming coming-of-age tale of a young boy consistently in danger of being eaten by goblins. I know what you are thinking, "Hey, jerkhead, the movie is about *trolls*, not *goblins*. There's a difference. I know stuff." To which I reply, "First of all, you're stupid. Second of all, shut up." If you had bothered to read the rest of this article before you had made such a hasty judgment, you would have learned that *Troll 2* is not actually a sequel to *Troll*, but a low-budget indie film hijacking the name to cash in on the franchise. The story is simply thus: a young boy is visited by his corpulently deceased grandfather, whose apparition visits him bi-weekly to tell him a bedtime story about a young prince who is chased by evil goblin vegetarians. These dastardly meat-eschewing goblins bear a conspicuous resemblance to anthropoid midgets dressed in potato sacks wearing paper-mache masks, but the effect is supposedly terrifying. The boy is then warned by grandpap that he must stop his family from vacationing in town Nilbog ("It's goblin spelled backwards!" the boy realizes) whose residents will turn them into plants to be eaten by a cult of gypsy goblin people-gobblers. I could go on, but

life is short. So, I will skip to my favorite scene. To stop his family from eating the Nilbog-ian food that will turn them into plants, the boy (using one of the three wishes his ghost grandpa grants him) stops time, and pisses on the food. Literally: he pulls down his pants and pisses on the food. His father then utters this almost Shakespearean rebuke: "You can't piss on hospitality. I won't allow it!" Other notable scenes include a steamy kissing scene that literally turns corn on the cob into popcorn and a scene involving the brandishing of a double-decker bologna sandwich to vanquish a foul vegetarian goblin onslaught.

I wish this movie knew how bad it is, but it waddles on in an absurd march, curiously ignorant and stupidly triumphant of itself. It is movie that, like child-birth, must be suffered until it is over. But there is no epidural and the viewer gives birth only to the twins of woe and regret. On my deathbed, I will sadly reflect and say, "That was two hours I could have spent with someone I loved." After watching this movie, I stared into the morose eyes of a World War II veteran and nodded in deep, soulful affirmation. I too have known great suffering.

Nick and Norah's Infinite Stupidity

By Hal Flowers
Staff Writer

Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist evokes an abundance of intense emotions; namely boredom at its horribly contrived situations and dialogue, tension at the campy exchanges of meaningless lines, and anxiety at the future of feature films in general. The movie rides like an elephant on the back of its brilliant predecessor *Juno* and fails precisely where the latter prevailed.

Where *Juno's* soundtrack beautifully underscored the movie, prompting the sale of over 500,000 copies of the soundtrack, *Nick and Norah* places its music on a pedestal, forcing it into a grossly inflated role as the focus of the movie. It'll be a miracle if the soundtrack doesn't sell better than the movie itself. Where *Juno* centered on the engaging and relevant topic of teen pregnancy, *Nick and Norah* focuses on... well, nothing. And where *Juno* owed much of its success to a witty and fast-paced screenplay, *Nick and Norah* boasts a sophomoric script where lines like "I met Jesus. He's much taller in person," take center stage and fleeting references to rock bands scrape the surface of profundity.

The rather tame plot follows Nick (Michael Cera) and Norah (Kat Jennings) on what the trailers dubbed a night "with infinite possibilities," but which actually amounts to a pretty average Friday night for most Manhattanites. Nick, a timid and sensitive bassist for punk rock band The Jerk Offs, meets Norah, the straight edge daughter of the Electric Lady Studio's owner, after his show. When she poses as his girlfriend, and his ex-lover Tris (Alexis Deziena) decides she wants Nick back, all events worth mentioning have transpired. Oh and there's the slow-paced, awkward, and inconceivable love story suggested by the movie's title.

About a third of the way through, the subplots have exhausted their options and the movie, like the bewildered jaywalking squirrel I almost hit on the way to the theatre, looks desperately for new directions to turn. Norah's friend with benefits, Tal (Jay Baruchel), adds one such twist to the plot by insulting Nick and generally be-

ing a nuisance. Nick's friends, who are all gay, and Norah's friend, who is a raging alcoholic, join them as they try desperately to make it to a show by the oh-so-cutely named band Where's Fluffy? Instead of providing comic relief though, these characters are found switching in and out of horrible effeminate accents and fishing for cell-phones in vomit filled toilets, both of which are more likely to make the audience hurl with disgust than heave with laughter.

In addition to a mind-numbing plot, *Nick and Norah* provides a plethora of characters remarkably devoid of authentic personalities. Michael Cera (*Juno*) returns with his distinctive and effective "loser with a heart of gold" flavor, but the script offers no real substance for his character. In *Superbad*, he was the honest, worrisome contrast to Seth; in *Juno*, he was the supportive, artsy baby daddy. In *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*, he's just kind of there. Kat Jennings absolutely bombs, seeming at times a snobbish bitch and at others, a genuine free-spirit. Aside from a painfully awkward love scene in a recording studio, the pair fails to ever make a solid connection, and the whole ordeal feels more like a blind date that both parties are all too eager to see end than anything.

Cera and Jennings don't get much support from their cast members either. The drunkard friend Caroline is as obnoxious as she is intoxicated, and the actors playing Nick's friends must have been confused as to which role they were playing. Jay Baruchel, Norah's rapper ex-boyfriend, is more at home in roles like the dweeb roommate he played in *Knocked Up*. The real crime is that tried and true actors like Kevin Corrigan (*Pineapple Express*) and Andy Samberg of SNL, are limited to menial, non-speaking roles.

This is normally where the redeeming qualities of the movie are enumerated but, unfortunately, there are none. With any luck, Michael Cera will still be able to find work, Peter Sollett will give up film-making, and the soundtrack will be available soon for illegal download on Limewire. We can only hope.

"I DON'T WANT TO RISK GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION OR LANDING A GREAT JOB!"

FACT: 87.7% of Rhodes students have never been in trouble with police, residence hall or college authorities as a result of drinking or drug use

Core Alcohol and Drug Survey, Fall 2007 n=554



photo courtesy of Lindsey Akers

The men's novice four row back after the competition at the Head of Tennessee Race in Oak Ridge, TN.

Crew team cruising through the fall season

By Onalee Carson
Sports Editor

Mid-way through their fall season, Rhodes Crew is improving their times while facing some steep competition.

The weekend of October 25th, the team competed in their first regatta of the season, the Head of the Tennessee Race in Oak Ridge, TN. Entering five boats in four races, the Lynx came home with two races. One of the women's boats placed second in their race behind Murray State, while the mixed boat (men and women rowing together) finished third behind two UTC boats.

Additionally, the second women's boat finished fifth in the race with the second-place Lynx. And, the men's boat, while not placing, beat out Duke and Berry College in a race that also consisted of Vanderbilt, UTC, Virginia Tech, and Alabama. "Overall, it was a great first race of the season," said Captain Jennifer Long.

The Lynx carried their high spirits into last week's competition, the Head of the Hooch in Chattanooga. The second of the three regattas of the season, Head of Hooch is the largest race in the area.

Once again, the men's varsity boat competed against many big schools, including UNC, Auburn, Tennessee, University of Texas, and Clemson. Beating two of the boats, the men improved their personal time from the Head of Tennessee Race.

"The mixed boat also got a chance to see how fierce the competition is," said Long. The mixed team competed against teams including Stetson, UTC, and the University of Texas. They managed to beat three boats, including Sewanee, and also improved their personal time.

This coming weekend, Rhodes Crew travels to Augusta, GA for the Head of the South, their final regatta of the fall season. But Crew doesn't end there—the Lynx will compete in the spring also. To learn more about Rhodes Crew, contact Jennifer Long at lonjc@rhodes.edu.

Volleyball hosts Rhodes Fall Classic

By Onalee Carson
Sports Editor

This past weekend, the Rhodes Women's Volleyball hosted the Rhodes Classic, involving the Westminster, Maryville, Illinois College, Piedmont, LaGrange, Hendrix, and Huntingdon teams.

Both Maryville College and Piedmont College finished the tournament undefeated, while Rhodes split their record, winning the first two games on Friday and losing the next two on Saturday.

The hosting Lynx jump-started the tournament with a victory against LaGrange. Senior middle blocker Allison Squires led the Lynx with 13 kills, three service aces, and two blocks; also, sophomore libero Kayla McCrury added six service aces, along with 27 digs, in the game with the scores 25-12, 22-25, 25-14, 25-15. With continued success, the Lynx defeated Huntingdon College in three straight sets—25-22, 25-31, 25-22. Junior outside hitter Katherine Delavan led the Lynx

past the Hawks with 12 kills and 10 digs. Junior setter Laura Jensen dished out 33 assists on the match.

Unfortunately, Saturday's match-ups weren't as kind to the Lynx, where they fell to both Piedmont and Maryville. Both matches went into the fifth set, but the Lynx weren't able to pull out the win in either case. Game scores were as follows: (Piedmont) 22-25, 26-28, 25-22, 25-20, 10-15; (Maryville) 18-25, 28-26, 27-25, 20-25, 10-15

Additionally, Squires was honored before the start of the Maryville match. Squires ranks fifth in all time career games played at Rhodes, is seventh all time in career kills, and has already eclipsed her 1000th kill mark for the Lynx.

The Lynx will take on Sewanee in a conference game this Friday at 11:30 a.m. before heading into the SCAC Volleyball Championships being held here on campus on Saturday. The Lynx currently have an 8-7-0 conference record.

Sorting through the BCS Conferences

By Ralph MacDonald
A&E Editor

This week curiosity drove me to scour through all of the scores from the first two-thirds of the college football season to see if any interesting trends appeared, specifically which conferences were more respectable than others. The evidence, while inconclusive, is interesting to consider. Bear in mind, with the exception of USC-OSU, there have been no big inter-conference games (considering that Alabama-Clemson would be a bust if played today). The statistics below are more of a reflection of each conference's strength in regards to a competitive middle and bottom of the conference.

ACC

Overall non-conference record: 25-7. Overall non-conference BCS record: 8-6. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 8-15 with the only out-of-conference victory coming when Maryland defeated No. 23 Cal.

Analysis: The ACC actually looks fairly strong mathematically, but the teams have been so inconsistent that anyone can beat anyone on a given day. Thus, no ACC teams are ranked higher than No. 19.

Big 12

Overall non-conference record: 37-10. Overall non-conference BCS record: 7-8. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 7-21 with out-of-conference victories over No. 14 TCU (Oklahoma) and No. 23 West Virginia (Colorado).

Analysis: The number of top-25 games played shows the strength of the Big-12. Two out-of-conference-top-25 wins tie the Big 12 with the Pac-10 for the most out-of-conference-top-25 wins of any conference.

Big East

Overall non-conference record: 22-11. Overall non-conference BCS record: 6-6. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 1-9 with the one victory coming in-conference.

Analysis: The Big East looks devoid of any kind of dominant team, and the 1-9 is a reflection of how rare a top-25 team is in a down year for this league.

Big 10

Overall non-conference record: 24-11. Overall non-conference BCS record: 5-5. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 2-10 with both victories coming in-conference.

Analysis: The Big 10 has three losses against the MAC and has failed both out-of-conference tests—Illinois falling to Missouri and Ohio State embarrassed by USC.

Pac-10

Overall non-conference record: 13-17. Overall non-conference BCS record: 5-6. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 4-19 with two out-of-conference victories.

Analysis: Despite the non-conference victories, the Pac-10 continues in its top-heavy tradition. Two losses to the WAC and a 1-6 record against the Mountain West Conference are very disturbing trends.

SEC

Overall non-conference record: 32-7. Overall non-conference BCS record: 4-6. Record vs. the current AP top-25 teams: 5-20 with all of the five wins coming in-conference.

Analysis: The SEC has whooped up on C-USA, but Clemson's horrendous season has robbed the SEC of its one big win. Nevertheless, as the home of the last two BCS title winners, the SEC has a proven record of delivering winners.

Statistically, the conferences appear remarkably similar—deeper research is probably needed to garner more meaningful statistics. However, it is interesting to note that the ACC looks much stronger than originally thought and the extent of the Pac-10's decline at lower levels is a bit shocking.



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