

# The Bent Tree

Tuesday, May 1, 2007



Crystal Wright/The Bent Tree

On April 19, a candlelight vigil was held in memorial of the shootings at Virginia Tech. In an emotional ceremony, balloons were released, but the windy weather did not allow the candles to stay lit for long.

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## African Studies Minor Announced

Clayton State University will be offering a concentration in African American Studies in its Integrative Studies program beginning in fall 2007. The first course, "Introduction to African American Studies," will begin what is hoped to grow into a minor and major program. Clayton State already has courses geared towards African American studies, such as "Civil Rights and the Media, 1955 to the Present" and "The Reign of Hip Hop," both taught as special topic courses within the Communication and Media Studies program, and "African American Literature," taught in the English Studies program by Dr. LaJuan Simpson, assistant professor of English.

Simpson began looking into expanding the program as early as fall 2005. "I looked at the demographics of the university and compared it to the curriculum," explains Simpson. "I noticed that although the student population reflected a large percentage of African Americans, the curriculum reflected a small percentage of classes that focused on African American issues/curriculum."

Last year, a committee was formed in order to develop the African American Studies Curriculum. Several classes are currently being developed to complement the

course already offered by Clayton State. Simpson works very closely with Dr. Thomas Barnett, department chair of Communicative Arts and Integrative Studies, to oversee the development of the program. Members of the African American Studies Curriculum include: Dr. Karen Young, Dr. Shondrika Moss-Bouldin, Dr. Celeste Wally-Jean, Dr. Victoria Pasley, Dr. Hamin Shabazz, Dr. Joe Carrodo, and Dr. Eric Bridges.

"We have an overwhelming response in support of both a minor and a major in African American Studies," says Simpson in response to a survey done in spring 2006. Minor and Major programs will be pursued in response to student demand.

The African American Studies Curriculum Committee hopes to develop programs that promote cultural, ethnic and gender diversity, to provide insight into the historical and cultural context of the peoples of the African Diaspora, to teach, investigate, and analyze the knowledge and contributions of the descendants of African civilizations and to further the knowledge and the connections to the understanding of Africa.

Story adapted from Clayton State University press release.

## SGA ELECTION TACTICS PROVE CONTROVERSIAL

By CHRISTINA SEMPLE

2007 has proved to be an election year unlike any other at Clayton State University. With passionate individuals adding their names at the last moment, enthusiastic campaigns, as well as an increase in voter turnout, this year's election to choose the president and vice-president of the Student Government Association (SGA) was destined to be convoluted at best.

With competition being fierce and dynamic, candidates showed their ability to come up with new and creative ways to not only increase awareness of SGA but to garner more votes than their competitors. But before and after the surprising win of Williams Azubike for president, individuals expressed interest, awe, and disgruntlement about some of the methods employed by a few of the candidates and their staff.

We observed that some supporters and staff of some candidates directly approached students, sometimes donned in 'vote for..' paraphernalia and sometimes toting laptops, all in an effort to educate the perspective voter on their candidate of choice. While some candidates like Vice-President Brandon Johnson thought it a fair campaign, others like presidential candidate Roland Benoit, Jr. thought the methods violated the ethics inherent in the voting

process.

Williams Azubike shares this sentiment by explaining, "[By] carrying laptops and going to people, you are influencing their votes—I agree, I accept that." And he also offers an alternative to this tactic, "You can tell them about the candidate you support but employ them to vote and talk to them in a way that will make them want to vote but leave it to them to choose who they want to vote for."

Despite the popular misconception that he was alone in the implementation of these tactics, others were seen doing the same thing. He said that he purposefully stayed off campus for most of election week so as not to influence students. Only after being made aware of these tactics and urged by his staff did he decide to use laptops as well, though regretfully.

Campus Life staff member and former SGA President Gerald Heavens stated that it was not just Williams' staff that approached students, but the staff and supporters of other candidates as well. Being a seasoned Clayton State student and staff member, he said that this was not the first time that a candidate has been accused of wrongful voting methods but this was the first time the use of personal computers were brought into question. It seems as

Continued on page 2

## Election Results

President	Votes	%
Williams Azubike	295	44%
Roland Benoit, Jr.	107	16%
Jeanna Brooks	54	8%
Darius Thomas	191	28%
Abstain (no vote)	24	4%

Vice-President	Votes	%
Laurence DeShields	165	26%
Brandon Johnson	463	69%
Abstain (no vote)	43	5%



## Election Controversy

*Continued from page 1*

though the use of laptops was one of the variables that determined the election results.

When asked if this situation impacted the SGA organization, Jeff Jacobs, Assistant Dean of Students, explained that this year yielded the highest voter turnout at Clayton State and if the election results are in direct relation to the methods used to get votes is open to interpretation.

But many have done exactly that and have interpreted the methods as unfair and creating an unlevelled playing field. SGA Presidential Candidate Roland Benoit, Jr. feels that in regards to approaching others with laptops, "If you're a leader, you shouldn't condone or do it. To win at that cost, I'd rather lose." SGA Presidential Candidate Darius Thomas expressed his disillusionment with the election voting practices of his fellow candidates and called them "outlandish." He is concerned that the student body will be weary in future elections by feeling they are being coerced or forced to vote for a particular candidate because they are being approached by members of the SGA executive staff. Conversely, both Azubike and Johnson think the exposing of these methods have garnered publicity for SGA, increasing awareness.

As for avoiding this irregularity in vote attainment, candidates, as well as, SGA President-Elect Azubike agree that there is a need for reform in the SGA constitution. At the time of this year's election, the constitution had no explicit language regarding the use of laptops.

As Associate Dean of Student Affairs, one of Jeff Jacobs' responsibilities include coordinating elections, evaluating logistical issues of elections, as well as making sure that voting procedures are followed by all candidates and their staff. Though no rules were broken in this election, most SGA members agree that there is a need for reform and according to Jeff Jacobs, "...there is always a need to improve."

One improvement Benoit suggests is to have physical polling stations available during certain hours throughout the campus. He added that having a more user-friendly link emailed to all students including the transient and non-traditional students would also be beneficial. Thomas sees a need for a clarification of policies and a more proactive faculty.

Azubike feels such amendments would make it so that, "when you cross a boundary you know." And knowing is something that all in-



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree Williams Azubike during the debate.



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree Brandon Johnson received a whopping 69 percent of the vote in his bid for Vice-President.

interviewed candidates can attest to in retrospect.

Benoit learned the hard lesson that politics is dirty and that Clayton State's SGA still has a long way to go and urges the elected officials to remember that leaders are never greater than the people they are serving. He adds, "You learn from losing. I don't mind losing, I mind not trying."

Thomas advises those running for candidacy in the future to realize that they need to really know their responsibilities, and whether they win or lose, they are still being watched by staff, students, and SGA members and they will need to put aside their own personal agendas in order to better serve the student body. SGA Vice-President-Elect Brandon Johnson learned that popularity helps, but competency will keep you [in office] and that people will always have something good or bad to say about you, but if you give it your all, it shouldn't matter what people say but in stead your character."

The fact that there are no written rules preventing candidates to use personal computers makes it clear that it is not a legal issue, what still remains is whether or not it is a moral one. And this is a question that each person voting as well as the candidates themselves must answer. As Azubike explains, "it is not against an SGA election rule, but against my personal integrity."

# Student Participation Forum

By KAMAU WAWERU

On February, 26, 2007, The Bent Tree hosted a focus group with three of Clayton State's student organization leaders. Alex Wiggins, president of the Student Life Activities Committee (SLAC), Jessica Charles, vice president of the Student Government Association (SGA), and Lonnie Richards, the founder of the Pan African Forum (PAF).

They discussed student involvement on campus. Each leader described the level of student involvement their organization generates.

Alex Wiggins felt, "It's terrible because you've got 6,000 students, yet you have two or three people coming to events. 30 people here and 50 people there."

Jessica Charles said, "There are 50 slots open in the SGA senate, and the meetings are open to all students, yet we never get more than 20 students per meeting."

Lonnie Richards responded, "I have tried to remain optimistic about the turn out, but this campus often frustrates me. I don't consider Clayton State a university in the sense of its student turn

out."

When asked to identify the factors contributing to their organizations' low attendance numbers, all three cited the university's short history and commuter school status as significant obstacles. Compared to Georgia State University's ninety plus years of history and tradition, Clayton State is left lagging by sixty years. When you factor in the school's non-traditional population, there is little student incentive to sacrifice time towards extracurricular activities.

Though strategic growth in programs and academics is a crucial goal for the university's administration, they should not overlook the importance of increasing the number of morale boosting traditions. Annual celebrations like the Tree Lighting Ceremony and Homecoming Week are prime examples, because they promote camaraderie among students and staff; by helping eliminate the distance between the student body and the administration.

They also rated the level of financial and logistical support their organizations received from the university's administration.

SLAC seemed to be the most effected by this among the three organizations.

Alex Wiggins explained, "Last semester we were presented a projected budget for the next school year. The total was just over one-hundred-thousand dollars, mid-semester the estimate went down to seventy-thousand dollars. This semester we went down to twenty-six-thousand dollars, bear in mind we only held two or three big events last semester. How do you go from a hundred plus to twenty six thousand dollars in a semester? Why was our funding cut?"

Jessica Charles stated, "SGA was the least effected by the budget cuts compared to other organizations on campus. The lack of club participation in the Council of Clubs (COC) makes it difficult for that issue to be addressed. Where did the money go this semester? It was swept under the rug somewhere."

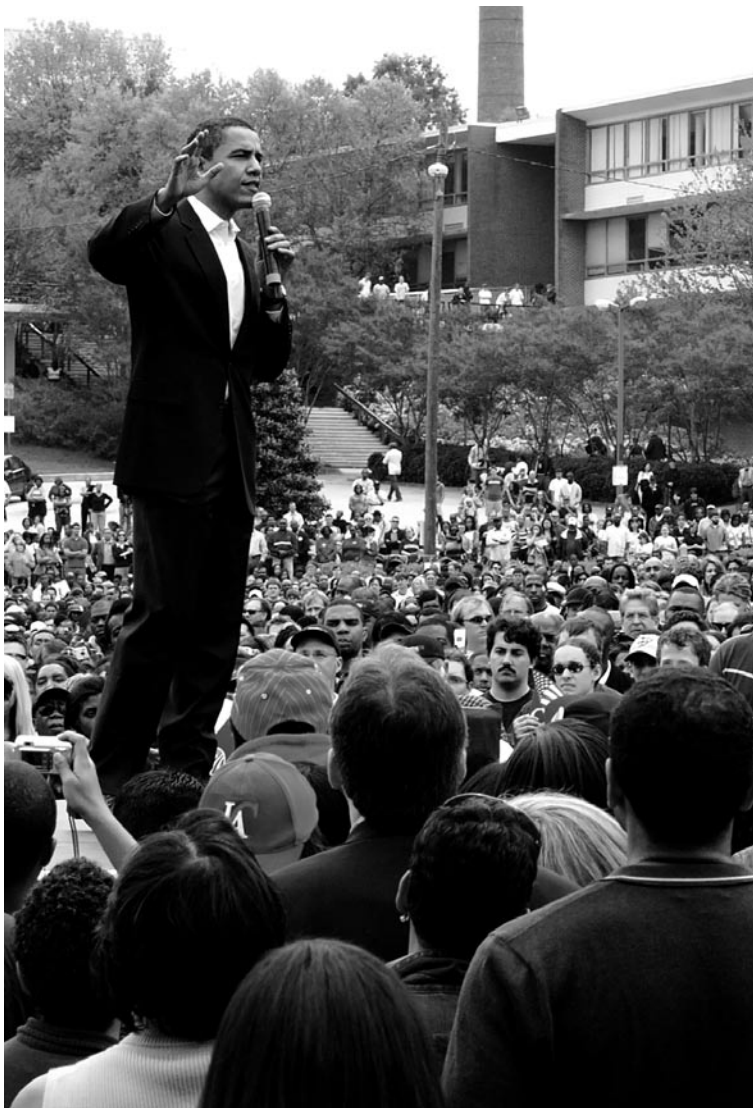
Overall, there was agreement that there is a need for solidarity among clubs. The COC was created specifically for that purpose; hence our clubs should utilize that platform to empower themselves.

## OBAMA VISITS GA TECH

By KEVIN PRATT

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Ciji Fox/The Bent Tree

The crowd surrounding Barack Obama's speech contained a huge mix of shapes and colors. His message of "Turn the page." seemed well received by the crowd, many who had come from out of state.

Senator and presidential hopeful Barack Obama spoke to over 20,000 people at a rally held at Ga Tech on April 14.

Before the speakers arrived, the event was almost indistinguishable from the many outdoor concerts in Atlanta. The music was loud and the crowd was restless while waiting at least an hour for Obama to take the stage after a prayer by civil rights leader, Rev. Joseph Lowery.

He addressed the crowd filled with red and white balloons, flags and signs with a casual manner. Starting the speech with phrases like, "All of us have a stake in a better America." The key phrase of the speech was "Turn the page." He talked about turning the page on Iraq, turning the page on poverty, turning the page on healthier, and turning the page on corruption. He's definitely directing his message to those unsatisfied with the current administration.

When his speech ended, he was surrounded by wave after wave of people wanting to shake his hand, making him seem even more like the rock star he resembles.

However you vote in 2008, this is going to be one interesting race.



# ARISTIDE SAWADOGO: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY

By CARRIE MARTIN

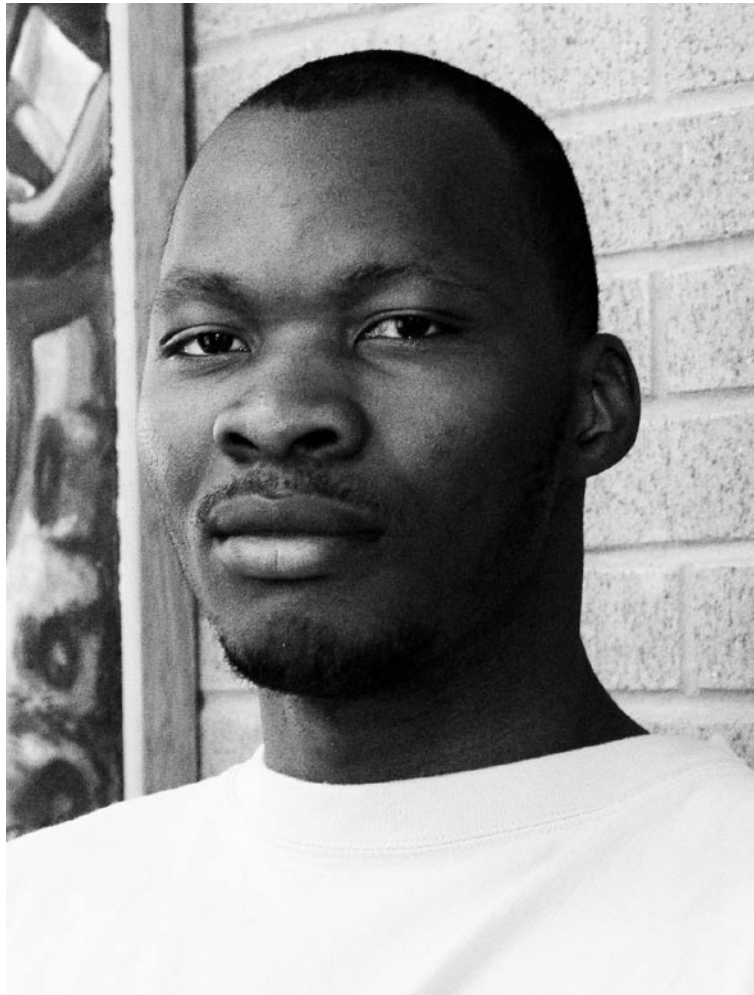
Aristide Sawadogo is tall, very tall. As you approach his seven foot frame, you might ask what we did, "You don't play basketball, do you?" He shot a quick

**"I wish that I could have won a trophy for my team. I know it will happen for them."**

smile and nodded. Not only does he play, he attends Clayton State on a basketball scholarship.

"Stide", as his friends call him, has spent the last four years with the Lakers (since fall 2003), serving as a center for the team. "In sports, you learn a lot about different situations. Many of the players on the team played other sports and brought those lessons with them to the team." Mr. Sawadogo is not only different in stature but he is different in his background as well.

He was born in Burkina Faso in West Africa. This landlocked country is home to about 14.3 million people, and is slightly larger than Colorado. Formerly called the Upper Volta, the country won its independence from France in the early 60's. Sawadogo has not returned



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree

Beyond basketball, Aristide Sawadogo was a member of SAM.

to West Africa since October, 2002. Even though he has not seen his family while at college, he is happy in Atlanta and is planning a reunion trip home sometime in late summer.

While this might seem like an eternity, this is normal for Sawadogo. He attended several boarding schools as a child, and because of this is not only fluent in French, his native

tongue, but also in Italian—having attended an Italian boarding school.

Aristide had English classes back home and was familiar with the language enough to

**"After I get my Master's I want to work for a world organization or represent my country in some way."**

understand it but speaking it was a different story, "They spoke so fast. I really had to learn it on my own. It's really good to step out of where you are from. There are always positive things to learn."

One of his friends, also a native of Burkina Faso, heard that Aristide was interested in coming to school in the states. He put Aristide in touch with Coach Gibbons here at CSU and Aristide began his journey to Clayton State.

After spending four years on the Laker basketball team, Aristide has only one regret, "I wish that I could have won a trophy for my team. I know it will happen for them." As if his stature wasn't impressive enough, Sawadogo's love for his

team and the sport made him an important member of the men's Laker basketball team.

With graduation next month, he is working to figure out what to do now. He has already had several scouts contact him about playing professional basketball, something he wants to pursue.

Sawadogo plans on staying around Atlanta if he doesn't turn pro, saying the "great weather" here as one of his favorite things about the city. He is also planning to get his Master's in Finance. "After I get my Master's I want to work for a world organization or represent my country in some way." Sawadogo's degree is in Accounting, with a minor in Finance; which is different from his original intent of a Law degree. When asked why he decided to change his major, he said, "I found out I really enjoy accounting."

Sawadogo had this message for the students, staff and faculty here at CSU, "I had a lot of fun. I owe pretty much everything to this school. I'm happy to have been a part of this growing school. I've had good friends and good teachers. I grew up while I was here. I know I will look back in five years and think 'Wow! This school has grown!'"

# Christian Bowen: CSU'S Media Hyphenate

By KAMAU WAWERU

The man with a camera, a Mac, and a plan, Christian Bowen has developed a reputation on campus as Clayton State's resident videographer. He has directed, produced, and written numerous film projects including the recently completed music video featuring Jah Onu, also a Clayton State student.

He joined Clayton State as a freshman in the fall of 2003 and began searching for his academic niche. He learned about the Communications & Media Studies (CMS) program offered at Clayton State during his academic advisement session. He was referred to CMS program coordinator, Dr. Steven Spence. Since then, he has completed several video producing and editing courses. Christian credits Dr. Spence as a mentor saying, "I've learned a lot from Dr. Spence's classes because he forces you to critically analyze content and form."

Christian also acknowledges Mr. Phillip DePoy, Director of the Theater Program. "Mr. DePoy is the man! I did my first movie for one of his classes. He taught me

how to write screenplays."

Christian's influence on campus began in 2005 when he directed a three minute package for his friend Jesse. Jesse lived in Clayton Place, and at the time, the complex was holding a video

**"He paid me sixty dollars to film it, and he won the competition and saved four thousand dollars in rent."**

contest. The video that best showcased the positive aspects of living at Clayton place would earn its owner a year of free rent. "He paid me sixty dollars to film it, and he won the competition and saved four thousand dollars in rent."

Last year, Christian secured a promising internship with Bovanti Cosmetics and Modeling Agency. "A friend of mine, Crystal Wright, was one of their interns, and brought the company to my attention, so I went to their head office and presented my videography portfolio to Mr. Michael J. Bohannon, the president of the company. He was pleased with my work and assigned me a



Kevin Pratt/The Bent Tree

Christian Bowen was also president of the Art, Film & Video Club.

number of major projects."

Christian's first Bovanti project was to film a model search. The event was hosted at the Georgia International Convention Center. He enlisted four of his fellow

**"The best thing about Clayton state is there are lots of students who support you."**

students to complete the project: Jah Onu, Christopher Plantin, Ciji Fox, and Stephanie Copper. "The best thing about Clayton state is there are lots of students who support you." Since its completion this January, the video has aired on TV and send out to numerous companies.

Christian is currently working on getting his company, Vid Squad Productions, Inc. off the ground. The company offers services in videography, photography, and digital design. His range of skills have earned him hyphenate status. "I'm trying to be true a renaissance man."

Having hit the ground running this early in his career, you can expect to see Christian Bowen in a theater near you.



## Kimberly Gray Has It Together



Ciji Fox/The Bent Tree

Kimberly Gray, cheerleader extraordinaire also writes for the paper.

By **ASHLEY HORN**

Variety Editor

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Kimberly Gray has things together. Graduating with a Bachelors in Communications and Media Studies, she has maintained hope all four years while buying her first home, being captain of the cheerleading squad, and working on the weekends.

When Gray was just 18, she received her real estate license directly out of high school.

"My mom has been in real estate for 18 years and riding in the car with her and being around it for so long it became a part of me too," said Gray, who made her first commission off the sale of a home in November of 2003. That was on top of being enrolled as full time student at Clayton State.

Upon entering college, she and her mother sat down and decided that renting an apartment was a waste of money. After learning about financing options for students, Gray purchased her first home in Stockbridge, just a short drive from campus.

"After staying in my apartment for four years, we would have spent \$48,000 dollars for nothing. We just figured why don't we put that towards something that we could keep," said Gray.

Along with the stress of being a freshman at a new school and

making monthly mortgage payments, Gray decided to be a pioneer for the school's cheerleading squad. As the first Captain, Gray helped to coach the beginnings of the award-winning cheerleading team, since she has cheered since she was four years old.

After long hours of daily practice, the team was a success, winning second place in last year's Cheer Nation competition. "I was the only flyer, the one they throw in the air. I went between two stunt groups because there wasn't another person to go up there with me," said Gray.

After having a big impact on Clayton State's athletics department and keeping her grades above a 3.0, Gray entered her senior year with an internship for GA Magazine, a magazine with a reach of over one million readers a month. "My Christmas was over before it began. We started working on the December issue in October, so I was getting ready for Halloween and they were already through with Christmas," said Gray.

Now, reflecting back on the nearly-four-year run at Clayton State, Gray has learned a lot. "My leadership skills [have improved] and also knowing how to handle different situations," said Gray. "I have learned the importance of communicating with others in a positive way and not a negative way, and of course, time management."

## Shalea Griggs: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

By **TONY J. BERRY JR.**

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Shalea Griggs will soon be graduating with a degree in Integrative Studies with an emphasis on middle grades education. This future 7th grade math teacher was asked if she had any favorite courses while at Clayton State. She responded, "Either Statistics or Teacher Education Math Class. I'm a math freak; things that challenge me get me excited. I like challenges and it [statistics] was a challenge, and the teacher was funny."

"The teacher was funny?" we had to ask.

She confessed that she didn't remember her name and added "[it was] Betsy 'something'...I honestly don't think she teaches here anymore. She was a part-time teacher."

When questioned about what made this professor so much fun she replied, "Teachers close to your age can relate to you better...what was her last name? I'm going to find out. We called her Betsy." Griggs, true to her word, later added, via e-mail, the professor's last name—Caldwell.

She had two other favorite professors. One was "a cute little teacher, Anita Hunt, in the mathematics department. [She was] about 4'11"...had a real southern accent. It was like she was a little toy. She was really, really sweet teacher."

And the other professor "Oh my God...I took him for Critical thinking ...Professor Snellgrove...he came in with his jeans and button down shirt tucked in and that's what he wore everyday. He was like normal dude. I took him a couple of years later and he went motorcycle dude on us." She described Snellgrove's transformation which was complete with a leather biker jacket and chain dangling from his pants.

"What a transformation...it was probably because he had a girlfriend or something." While laughing, Griggs tried (unsuccessfully) to get us to take that comment off the record.

Talking about the friends that she's made at Clayton State, Shalea said, "All of my acquaintances have been memorable. I was the 'go to class, get in the car and go' type of student. After joining Zeta [Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. (ZΦB)], I began to meet all types of super people... How many Facebook™ friends do I have?"

Before continuing, she paused and seeming to think about her Facebook friends. She then appended, "I went to a bigger

school and it wasn't like this. You had your camaraderie in small groups and in class, but once you get out class it's a different story. I have enjoyed my stay here."

When asked about her plans immediately after graduation, Griggs redirected the interview to the day before graduation. She explained, "Day before graduation (we'll have to hope that I graduate), I'll be the first person in my family to graduate from college. I should have graduated in 1999." She continued, "that Friday night [day of graduation] I take off work. That night I'm going to party with my sisters [Zetas], because there is another one of us graduating."

Griggs took more time to vocalize her plans long term following

Education Club. She added that she worked on 2005 Homecoming committee, but left because she "didn't think that it would go well."

To incoming freshman she advised, "Take it seriously from day one...some people get away from their parents and try to wild out [and then] get to junior and senior years and get serious. I tried to wait to my last year to take 18 hours and try to do well." She also suggested that they "get involved on campus. Just enjoy college it's an experience...it's a real experience."

She also had advice for fifth year seniors as well, stating, "It'll happen. Stay around people that encourage and support you." She continued after taking time to



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree

Shalea Griggs is looking forward to teaching middle school.

graduation. After some thought, she said, "I'm still debating where to go to grad school. I wanted to go to UNC in Charlotte. My friends want me to go to Georgia State. I'm taking my teaching certification test in August, but I don't want to go immediately into teaching. I'll keep taking IBM [where she works] for their money."

Griggs has been involved with several organizations on campus. She places one before the rest because of their proximity to her heart. Her list of affiliations include: the Zeta Phi Beta (ZΦB) Sorority, Inc., the Black Cultural Awareness Association (BCAA), the Fraternity-Sorority Council (FSC), and the Teacher

choose her words, "I'm lucky because my sister and my mother supported me no matter what. When I felt like I wasn't going to graduate they encouraged me. I give them a lot of credit, because without them I wouldn't be doing this. Stay positive and keep a good support team around." She also acknowledged the ladies of Zeta Phi Beta again by adding, "Thank you to my sorority sisters; they've been a real support system too. They're some good ladies. I'm going to miss them, but I'll be around. I'll see them around homecoming."

Finally, "Good luck to all the graduates, I wish them all the happiness in the world," she concluded.



# David Matthew Hutcherson: Not all sh\*t\*s and giggles

By EVA JONES  
Variety Editor

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David Matthew Hutcherson will walk with the other graduates this spring, but it's been tough for him to get there. Having to

deal with the stresses of family, sexuality, and self-improvement issues is difficult on anyone that is trying to work their way through school as well.

Being gay in at Clayton State (not the most gay-friendly campus) has not been easy for David. Not only has he sometimes been ridiculed, he can't even express himself freely. "I learned that not talking about it or being open about it helps with tension. People may not be anti-gay, but there are just some things people don't want to hear."

Looking for love in Atlanta was a lot harder. Many gay men are bitter due to their past, picky, or confused about what they want. "It's easier to let love and friends find you. If you search for the person, they won't be easily found," said Hutcherson. Being gay causes problems for David when he's looking for male friends as well, because so many are homophobic.

Hutcherson's family life was full of conflict, but he tries to take a positive view. "My family drama has helped me to mature and analyze how I act. I tend to analyze other people's actions and figure out what I would do in the situation, not only to help myself, but

the other person as well," he said. His friends have also helped him get through his hard times, shaping who he is. "It helps to maintain an emotional balance by being able to talk to friends with similar social problems. A friend of mine helped me out by being available whenever I needed to talk to her. She was available day or night to talk about family or guy problems," he said.

His time at Clayton State has had some high points. Earlier this semester, Hutcherson created a C# tutorial presentation for other students, explaining, "I wanted to increase interest in the programming division and create a way for people to learn C# easier. I also wanted to get more people interested in the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) in order to get more activities going." Even though the turnout for this event was not amazing, he hopes the tutorials will continue after he is gone, "C# is tough for some people."

"My main challenge in school was English," said Hutcherson. "I never made a grade higher than a C." Once a week he would have a report due, even for his IT classes. He would have to analyze technical devices and software.

"Maintaining my GPA was the hardest," said Hutcherson. "I finally learned that the easiest way to prepare to write was to just write and let the thoughts flow."

Even though Hutcherson works three jobs, it can still be hard to get the bills paid. He does IT work at Georgia Provisions Inc.; construction and repair work at the family business, DL Hutcherson; and makes pizzas at Pizza Hut. "Working at Georgia Provisions has helped me see what I could look into for the IT field, working with my father at DL Hutcherson has helped me learn how to deal with my father a little better, which I'm still working on, and working at Pizza Hut has taught me how to deal with customers and always to keep a smiling face," he said.

Hutcherson finds it easy to be creative when writing programs. "I'd like to work at a company and try to make my way up, or create my own MMORPG [Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game] server and make my own business." He says his life goals are simple. "I want to do something great and try to help out as many people as he can along the way. I want to make a difference in life," said Hutcherson.



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree

David Hutcherson struggled against a homophobic campus.

## Dana Staves: Writer Who Would Be

By KEVIN PRATT  
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With Additional Reporting

By KEISHA JENNINGS

Dana Staves is a writer. And, from being the first president of Clayton State's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international honor society for collegiate students of English, to having her play "A Little Girl In Green Shoes" produced, she has the portfolio to back it up.

As a Georgia native, Staves chose Clayton State for its small classes. "You have a better opportunity to do a lot of cool things. I had my play produced and be published and I don't think I would have had that at another college."

"A Little Girl In Green Shoes" was produced as a part of Clayton State Theater's series of one-act plays, Murder! Sex! & Tragedy!. It centered around a girl, Bridget, who is working to overcome being abused as a child. Though she has known people who have been through this experience, the play is not autobiographical. According to Staves, it was "100 percent fiction" though several small details did come from her own life.

The script was created as part of Dr. Phillip DePoy's play writing

class. She first tried to write a funny play but couldn't come up with anything but "dumb physical humor." When coming up with the character of Bridget, she realized that the character would be split between her self-identity before the abuse and after it. After thinking about the "tenancy for people to remember a younger version of themselves," she ended up literally splitting the characters in two—having a young girl play the part of eight-year-old Bridget. Clayton State's Brittany Loffert played the part of older Bridget and is now starring in Crooked, a major production at Theater in the Square. When she found out her play was selected by the faculty to be produced she was "very very excited." "I jumped around my room for about 30 minutes," she said. It was a surprise because she had never taken a theater course before. The play was further honored by being critiqued live on opening night by three major figures in Atlanta theater.

Stave's love of writing also lead her to become involved in The Cygnet, Clayton State's arts and literature magazine. She started two years ago helping with the poetry editing where she got her first taste of being on the other side of the pile. After taking a

year off, she returned to the Cygnet to become the Creative Non-Fiction Editor along with Kelly Foresman. Two of her works are featured in the magazine, one fiction and one non-fiction. Her advice for submitting your work to The Cygnet (accepting submissions until December 1, 2007) and other publications is to not be afraid of rejection, she's gotten her fair share of it. She explains that even if you are rejected, it's okay because at least "someone has taken the time to read it."

She's proud of Clayton State's fledgling chapter of Sigma Tau Delta and says the highlight of the experience was going to the international convention for the society twice in Portland, Ore. and Pittsburgh, Pa.. She loved Portland for it's great weather and scenery, but what she really loved was the huge bookstore there, Powell's Books. She explained that as one of the largest bookstores in the world, it has "entire wings of it that are dedicated to different types of fiction."

All of this almost didn't happen. As a freshman, Staves wanted to become a pastry chef but a literature professor persuaded her to pursue her talent for writing. But she attacked it and now she has been accepted to the M.F.A. program in Fiction at Old Dominion



Kevin Pratt/The Bent Tree

Dana Staves continues to refine her play "A Little Girl In Green Shoes" in hopes that it will be produced again.

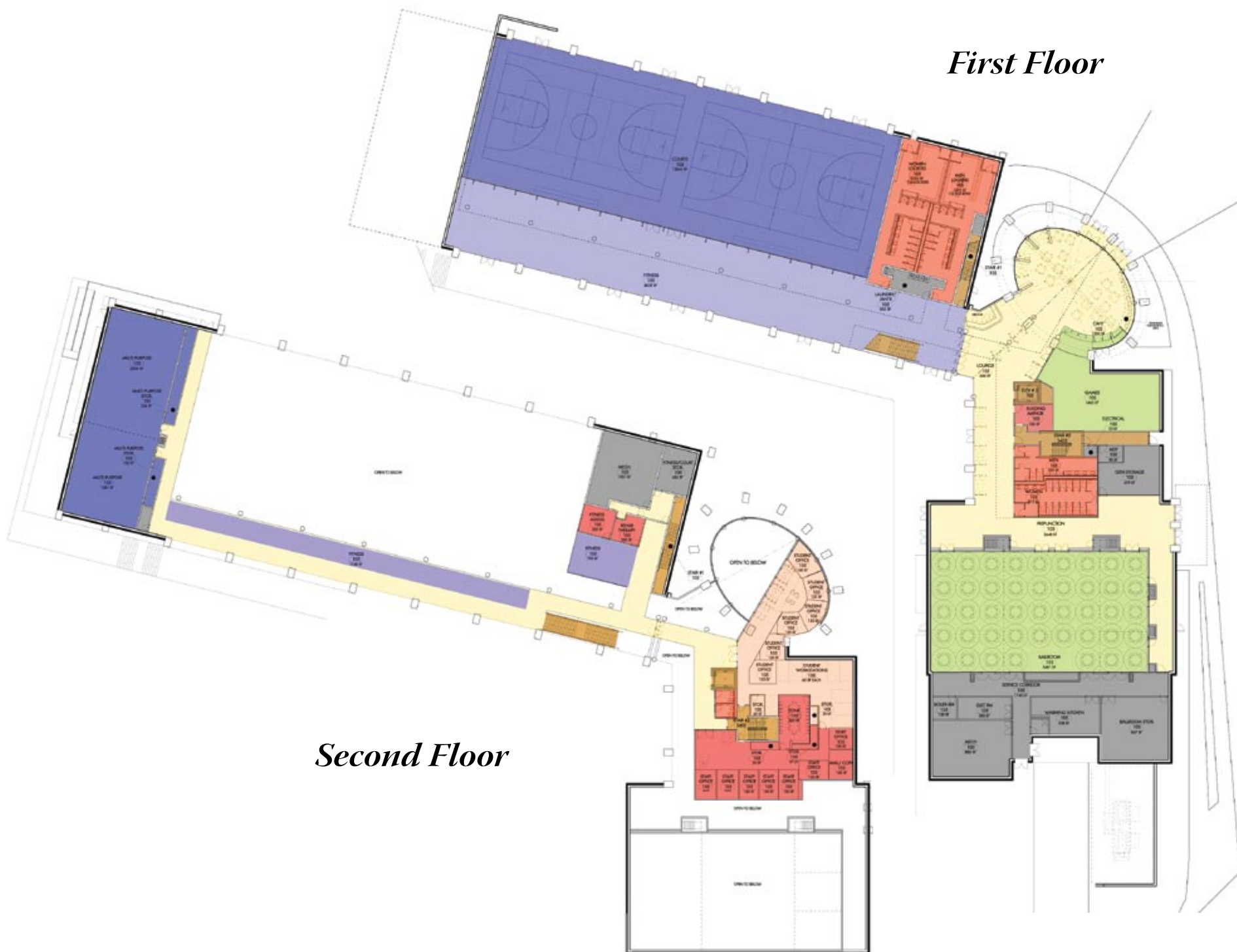
University in Norfolk, Virginia. This university was recently named one of the best colleges in the Southeast by The Princeton Review. According to Staves, "It was a big deal because it was

such a struggle to get there." For up coming freshmen, she gives this advice, "Decide what you want and go after it full force because if you want it bad enough you can get it."





# Student Activities Center



be separated by gender, Milner explained that the committee had not made any final decisions. We asked if they were considering the issue of gay, lesbian and transgendered students in the plan, she replied that they had not and that she would raise the issue in the next meeting. She said she understood the issue, but it is largely the parents of freshmen that want the dorms to be segregated. They are worried that if they do not, the parents will not send their children to the school.

### FUNDING

The new residence hall will receive its initial funding through the Clayton State University's Foundation with the sale of bonds. And after it is built, it will be a self-supported facility operating through generated revenue—housing fees.

### FUTURE HOUSING

The administration is considering offering other housing options to upper classmen after the completion of the residence hall. Future options were discussed, but at the request the Department of Student

Affairs, *The Bent Tree* has decided not to release these plans until a later date.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY CENTER

There has been much speculation among students about the planned Student Activities Center since last semester. Assistant Director for Campus Life and Services Eric Simon answered many of these questions. Coinciding with the residence hall, the projected ground breaking set to start July or August of 2007 and open during Fall of 2008. The Student Activities Center is projected to be approximately 65,000 square feet consisting of two wings split into a student union and fitness recreation center. While the floor plan is nearly complete, exactly how the spaces will be used is still being decided.

### STUDENT UNION

For now, the student union will consist of the following:

- Student organization offices and work-spaces
- Grand ballroom (can be divided into smaller rooms)

- Conference rooms
- Cyber-café
- Commuter student lounge
- Game room with billiards, foosball, air hockey and video games
- TV lounge
- General student lounge.

### FITNESS RECREATION CENTER

The fitness recreation center will include the following:

- Two multipurpose courts for basketball, volleyball, and badminton
- Cardiovascular training area
- Strength training area
- Group exercise studios
- Men's and Women's locker rooms
- Intramurals program offices

This building will become the heartbeat of students' participation and involvement on campus.

### FUNDING

The initial funding for this facility will also be through the Clayton State University's Foundation with the sale of bonds.

## First Floor

The student fee of \$75 per semester is set to assist in paying for the building. If approved, the fee will added to student tuitions beginning Fall 2007. Those who graduate before the center is built, will be allowed use of the building after they graduate for a set period.

### SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

A new building for the School of Business is the preparation stages. The building will be annexed to the Technology Building, and is projected to add 16,000 sq. ft. of new space for classrooms and faculty offices in two stories—more than enough room to grow the department. This project is not spearheaded by the Student Affairs department, but they did reveal its anticipated cost at \$4 million and that it is to be funded through the state.

### PENDING APPROVAL

All of the plans included in this report are subject to Board of Regents approval and are subject to change. However, students here in the Fall of 2008 should be in for a treat.



## California Dreaming

Clayton Hopeful Sits Down With *CSI* Writer David Rambo

By SHANA LATIMER

In March, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit the set of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* for the second time. For a Communications and Media Studies major who has big dreams about a successful writing career, the opportunity to pick the brain of an accomplished writer on the set of one of television's most compelling dramas, makes the disparity between dreaming and reality seem a little less daunting.

David Rambo, co-executive producer and a writer for the hit show now in its seventh season, graciously welcomed me back to the set despite being hard at work on the script for an episode titled "Leaping Lizards," scheduled to air May 3.

As I sat down on the couch in his office he lamented his busy schedule, and picked up a stack of notes off his desk. "Who has notes for 'Hank's stomach contents' on their desk?" he joked. Rambo, who is also a successful playwright, and whose play *God's Man in Texas* appeared at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, wrote his first episode for *CSI* in Season Four. Since then, he has penned several note-worthy episodes, including this season's two-part premiere which introduced the now season long arc about a serial killer who builds and leaves behind one-inch scale miniature models of his crime scenes. We don't know much about the "miniature killer" but the crime scenes deliver big time on the creepy factor despite their small size. The inability of the crime scene investigators to solve the case has haunted graveyard supervisor Gil Grissom (William Petersen).

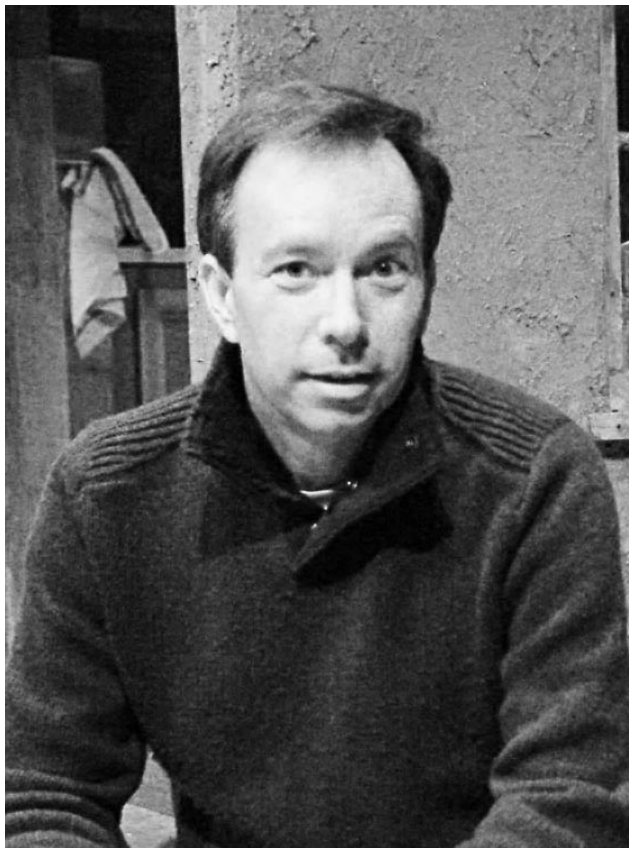
The miniature case, however, isn't the only thing keeping Gil Grissom up at night. In last season's finale it was revealed that he and subordinate Sara Sidle (Jorja Fox) are intimately involved. It's a very subtle romance for a prime time show but nonetheless compelling. When I asked Rambo what exactly was going on between the two, he stated, "The ambigu-

ousness of the relationship is on purpose so that it can be what it needs to be for people," and in that way the show stays true to its procedural drama roots as well. Arguably Sara Sidle has revealed a softer, almost tender side of her otherwise emotionally reserved boss, but Gil Grissom remains largely an enigma to the audience.

The intricacy of human relationships fascinates David Rambo. His newest play *The Ice-Breaker*

**"Who has notes for 'Hank's stomach contents' on their desk?"**

which premiered at The Magic Theatre in San Francisco, and just finished a run at The Laguna Playhouse in Laguna Beach, California, explores the relationship between Sonia, a young graduate student, and Lawrence, the world renowned, although disgraced, climatologist she idolizes. Rambo claims an article about ice core drilling in *The New Yorker* as his inspiration. "I knew nothing about that," he admitted, "but I was really intrigued by it particularly as a metaphor for what's it's like in a relationship, as they drill through the



Courtesy of The Laguna Playhouse

David Rambo is a successful playwright and writes for *CSI*.

ice core and find out more layer by layer, some things cold some things hot. It's what it's like to get to know someone." The technical, scientific angle of the play does indeed work well against the complexity of human relationships. Lawrence is broody and jaded, tortured by the death

By SHAVAUN R. BREWER

Rated 3 out of 5



She's back folks! Macy Gray is back after a few years of musical hiatus with her new album, *Big*. When Macy came jumping out of the gate after her 1999 debut album, *On How Life Is*, she became an instant gem of a talent and darling to critics everywhere. Her signature throwback vocal rasp put her at the head of the R&B class, and for the most part, that same stamp sticks to every track on *Big*.

Yes, I'm happy for her recent return to the musical world, but something isn't quite right. I don't know what exactly, but something is missing. The Canton, Ohio native tried to comeback big with her fourth album, but just hasn't quit hit the mark. The production of the album is filled with big names such as Nas, Fergie, Justin Timberlake and Natalie Cole, and

of his infant daughter, and Sonia is an idealistic girl on the cusp of womanhood, wanting to save the world and perhaps she and Lawrence with it. At the end of the play you are left feeling hopeful about the possibility of both.

When I asked David Rambo what he wanted to do after *CSI* ends its

run, he laughed and then said seriously, "I want to continue to write plays and work in the theatre. I might like to create a television show some day. I would like to do it all. I just want to keep writing. I love it."

For the foreseeable future he will continue writing for *CSI*. The seventh season's finale promises to be a roller-coaster. The identity of the miniature killer is revealed, and the buzz is that the next victim is someone with whom the audience is familiar.

A call to CBS public relations about the contract status of the cast resulted in the unsurprising, "We don't comment about or negotiations." My guess is that Gil Grissom is about to be haunted anew by a miniature crime scene in which one of his coworkers takes center stage. The season finale of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* is scheduled to air on May 17 at 9:00 p.m. EST on CBS.

## Lyrical Lounge

### Macy Gray's *Big* Misses Mark

*Big* was the first collaboration between will.i.am Music Group and Geffen Records.

Gray has had a willingness to experiment with the conventions of neo-soul, rock, and R&B all at the same time on past albums. Yet *Big* is mainly comprised of unmemorable R&B ballads that lack the unrestrained/wild emotions and head-banging hooks of her break-through hit "I Try." This album exudes an unashamed yet mature sexuality unlike her sophomore effort, *The Id*. Too much of the record settles into a mid-tempo haze that would be unremarkable if not for her vocal performance—but Gray's funky presence alone is not enough to elevate the mediocre song writing.



Macy Gray

BIG

Courtesy of Geffen Records

Macy Gray's newest album is disappointing. "Get Out" with Justin Timberlake not bad.

My favorite on the song on the album, the upbeat funk-rock "Get Out," with Justin Timberlake stands apart. Though he only cheers Gray on at the start and sings the relatively modest chorus, his pop 'mojo' is in full effect—the track is sexy, and easy to groove to.

## A Delicious Bonus for Students

By EVA JONES

Variety Editor

EvaJones@BTreeNews.com

Antonio Ray and his business partner, Jerry Thompson, have opened a new Smoothie King at 6681 Jonesboro Road (Suite 1085). This Jonesboro location is offering ten percent off to all Clayton State (and county) students and faculty that have a valid school ID.

Obviously, they have a wide-variety of smoothies, but they also sell items such as vitamins, cookies, and healthy snacks. Kith Dammann, a CSU student and Smoothie King employee, stated, "I believe that Smoothie King provides a large variety of healthy smoothie products. Just about anybody should be able to find something they like."

According to the company, the smoothies contain no preservatives, are all-natural, and are created with a care for purity. They double purify their water and triple purify the ice they use to make the smoothies. They also wear gloves, but still never touch the product. For example, they slice the peel of the bananas on the side and squeeze it out, so that they don't have to actually touch the product.

Smoothie King's motto is to "Relentlessly influence and help more and more people achieve a healthier lifestyle." They pro-

vide information on their products to help you make decisions on what fits you best; and you have the option of adding enhancers to your smoothie for stress-relief, extra protein, female enhancement, energy, and more. They also make low-fat, low-carb, low-sugar, low-calorie, and high-protein smoothies.

For those of you that need energy like many college students, The Pep Upper is a very good

**This Jonesboro location is offering ten percent off to all Clayton State (and county) students and faculty that have a valid school ID**

choice. It contains papaya, strawberries, passion fruit, and an energy enhancer, which is comprised of Ginkgo Biloba and Siberian Ginseng. Unlike many energy drinks, it actually tastes good, especially if you add a banana.

Smoothie King is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 10pm, Saturday from 8am to 10pm, and Sunday from 10am to 8pm. If you're in a rush and really want a smoothie, then call it in and they'll make it while you're on your way, so you don't have to wait.



## Turtle Power! TMNT A New Direction



Courtesy of Warner Brothers Pictures

TMNT's foray into CGI creates a surprising look for the franchise. This movie focuses on the team dealing with the loss of their leader, Leonardo to a secret mission.

### By BONNIE DAVIES

While it has been several years since their last appearance on the big screen, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have finally kicked back into the movie business with their new film *TMNT* released March 22nd.

The movie takes place a few years after the previous films (though if *TMNT* acknowledges *TMNT III: Turtles in Time* is questionable),

and the reptilian brotherhood has been strained when Splinter sends Leonardo off on a training mission, leaving the other turtles to their own devices. However, when a new threat hits New York City, it's up to the four heroes to push aside their differences and team-up with a couple of old friends (and even enemies) to put a stop to it.

Unlike the other Turtle movies, *TMNT* drops the animatronic

puppets and goes completely CGI (think *Finding Nemo*). While this does allow for smoother action sequences (some fight scenes that couldn't have been done), it is somewhat saddening to not see the trademark puppets that have been a classic favorite of the TMNT fandom. The animation is beautiful though, with only a couple of minor errors (there is a scene where it appears that April's foot is standing on the fire), and

it's easy to get sucked into the world of the movie.

In addition, the cast was completely redone, with none of the original voice actors returning to play their characters (which would have been a nice touch). However, the actors they did cast proved to do a good job (though Splinter's voice took a little getting used to for me). Video game fans may recognize the voice of Leonardo—he (James Arnold Taylor) is the actor who voiced for Tidus in *Final Fantasy X*; and fans of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Hero* will be glad to know that the voice of Kurai is in fact Ziyi Zhang (the first time I believe she has ever spoken English only in a film), and also *X-Men* fans will be glad to hear the familiar Professor Xavier (played by Patrick Stewart) voices Winters. Also, fans of the Turtles and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* may be surprised to know that Sarah Michelle Gellar voices April O'Neal (I couldn't even tell it was her until I saw the credits at the end).

As far as the story goes, the plot is great. While some minor details aren't fully explained, the story moves along at a good pace. The turtles are completely in character, and it is nice to see the further

development of their emotions. Fans will be happy to know that Leo and Ralph do have one of the infamous confrontations and settle issues between them in a plausible manner. The writers did change April's character and background, but she still has the same personality and is still enjoyable. Plus, the writers left in a perfect cliffhanger in the movie (listen to Kurai's last line—pay attention, it's short!), which hopefully means that there will be a sequel in the future.

All in all, this was a great movie and actually worth the \$9.25 (or \$7.25 if you have your school ID). Fans of the original movies or cartoon series (even the new cartoon series) will enjoy this movie, and I think there is enough background information presented in the movie that even people who are not fans can sit down, watch it, and enjoy it as well. In addition, any students or faculty members with children or younger siblings, this is a good family movie that they will love too!

So, eat some pizza, pull out that old TMNT shirt you have in your closet, and run over to the nearest movie theater and watch the great heroes-in-a-half-shell in all their splendid ninja glory! Cowabunga!

## Spring Cleaning

### By KIMBERLY GRAY

Everyone loves spring, but they hate spring cleaning and getting organized. I am here to guide you through this rut and tell you what to use to make your house spick and span. First of all, open your windows and let all of the stagnant air out. Then turn on the radio to your favorite station. Start by taking out the 409, Kaboom,

and the vacuum cleaner. Hit the kitchen and bathroom with 409 and Kaboom. Once you have tamed those, move on to the living room and pull out the Glade Melon Burst carpet deodorizer. Sprinkle this on the carpet and vacuum. After vacuuming pull out the Febreze Spring and Renewal Air Effects. This spray will attack all of the odor causing bacteria in the air of your home. Once

the main rooms in your home are clean you can start to organize everything else by throwing away things you know you will never use again. This is a great way to get organized quickly. Yard sales are a good way to get rid of unwanted objects and make a profit so you can party once more. Organization is necessary in almost everything you do. Why not start this spring and make your house look and smell better than something on MTV Cribs?

## Tanning Time!

### By KELLEY ATKINSON

The days of fair skin being seen as beautiful and tan bodies seen as a reflection of the working class are gone. Many people want darker skin before beginning to wear shorts yet do not have time to spend in the sun. Many people are turning to tanning beds as an alternative answer. Often people lie in tanning beds because it's relaxing and fun. But, however popular the tan, UV rays emitted by both the sun and tanning beds have been proven to harm one's skin.

Your skin turns darker in the sun as a self-defense mechanism. Melanin, the pigment that turns the skin darker, is produced when skin is exposed to ultraviolet radiation. This pigment is produced to protect your skin from burning. According to the University of Iowa's Hospitals and Clinics, research shows that most tanning bed users think that darker skin looks healthy. In actuality, the act of tanning skin means it is being damaged.

Another health risk is the possibility of becoming addicted to tanning. According to livescience.com, an online science magazine, feel-good endorphins are released in your brain after exposure to UV rays. The mood enhancement created can become a necessary part of the experience. When tanners try to stop, they may ex-

perience withdrawals. Even after learning about the increased risk of developing skin cancer and the fact that UV rays make skin look leathery and wrinkled, some still want to make the trip to tan just to feel happier. For those with a family history of cancer, the choice to tan is even riskier because the chance to develop cancer is greater.

Not only are tanning beds bad for your skin, but for your eyes as well. Many people do not like wearing the protective goggles provided when lying in the tanning bed. Closing your eyes is not enough. The ultraviolet radiation that makes it tough your eye-lids can cause corneal burns, cataracts, and retinal damage.

However, there is a healthier alternative to tanning. Some dermatologists recommend self tanning lotions. The lotions come in different shades as well as varying prices. Many brands like Banana Boat and Coppertone can be found at your local grocery store. Pricier, designer self tanning lotions can be found on the make-up counter of your nearest department store.

If you still choose to use tanning beds, do so in moderation. If you choose to sun bathe outdoors, use a sun screen with a high SPF number. Be smart when it comes to tanning. The price to be beautiful is not worth the risk your health.



Michelle Melton/The Bent Tree

Actors, bottom from left, Yolanda Grier, Chandra Walker, Heather Hale, Kadiatu Jalloh, Erica Jones, Jessica Baskerville, top from left, Brionna Brown, Susan Maddox, and Krystina Lucas (not pictured) performed in a production of *The Vagina Monologues* which opened on April 12th and ended on April 20th. The production was directed by Dr. Shondrika Moss-Bouldin. The play drew huge crowds and people were turned away at the door on its most popular nights. A play that began in controversy ended in undeniable success.


 EDITORIAL

# Virginia Tech and Columbine: What Tragedy in Our Schools is Telling Us

By **CHRISTINA SEMPLE**

With the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech and the somehow still fresh wounds from Columbine High School, we have learned what happened and how it was done. But, what could have caused these tragedies?

Every generation throughout human history has been able to lay claim to at least one catastrophic event. An event so life-altering that almost everyone can recall without fail where they were "when." Whether through war, a wrathful Mother Nature, or widespread genocide, every generation has been able to experience a profound shift in how they see the world and ultimately how they define themselves.

We are no different. And today, media and technological advances make it even easier for us to define ourselves, to change ourselves, or, if we choose, to remain the same. We have more control over our tomorrow than any of our ancestors could ever have claimed. I think it is fair to say that modern man has at his disposal weapons that can annihilate an entire country or an entire people. We can undo mankind.

But I think our generation is different in another way. We are consciously creating a generation of children who are incapable of empathy, who have no respect for human life in all of its beautiful shades and beliefs. We are consciously creating the Cho Seung-Hi's (Va. Tech) and Eric Harris's (Columbine High School) of our generation. I do not think it a mere coincidence that we are increasingly seeing more school violence throughout the country and the world.

Whether it is a lack of adequate schools in Africa or inadequate teachers in America, I think we must look at the significance of these violent acts occurring in our education systems and why they are occurring there. I think the significance is three-fold: First, our generation has thousands of years of history to review and learn from. Secondly, due to vast increases in technological advances, including the widespread use of media, we are the most adaptable generation of all. Lastly, we have the power in the 21st century to be a great catalyst for change.

We have the luxury of having thousands of years of mistakes in human history to learn from; and what better place to learn something than school. We have at our fingertips a plethora of examples of political strife and the horrors it can cause such as

Hitler's regime and the Holocaust. From the transportation and exploitation of African slaves brought here against their will we have learned about the effects of one human selfishly and violently taking control over another and the shame that comes with it. We have learned the destruction irreverence can cause.

Conversely, we have also learned how religious conviction can heal the wounds created by such horrid acts. Mother Theresa and Mahatma Gandhi both selflessly lived so that we can learn how to love each other, how to be kind to each other, and that we all count. I think the individuals responsible for events such as those at Columbine and Virginia Tech never learned these things which I believe are crucial to learning empathy and therefore, having respect for and honoring another human life.

Also, the media today is incomparable to that of previous generations. Today, we can communicate instantly with someone literally on the opposite side of the world, with as much ease as if they were standing next to us. In school, we learn not only how to utilize, and in some cases manipulate, such media, but school provides us with the information to navigate an ever-changing society.

We must learn how to navigate a Web page, talk on the phone, read, and walk to class with as much simultaneity as walking and chewing bubble gum. And most of us in the education system have mastered this feat. And this ability to multi-task has made us the most adaptable generation yet. We are able to juggle work and home, three tasks at once without error, and still find time to be entertained. We can handle change.

Further, being the most adaptable, we learn in school how to channel this adaptability. We learn that this generation is a catalyst for change. How will we use the media to create change? How will we communicate this need for change? These pertinent questions I believe are answered to a certain extent in school and the fact that these tragedies are occurring where we should be consistently uplifted and illuminated gives me pause. I also believe that we are here to learn different life lessons and until we do, we will keep being bombarded with, and placed in situations, that force us to learn them. For example, we keep getting in the same relationships, winding up in the same dead-end jobs or just can't seem to get over a certain hump.

All in my opinion mean 'someone' is telling us that we aren't paying attention. You may call this 'someone' God, Allah, goddess, or the Universe, or you may call it all a simple coincidence.

But I ask you, suspend your disbelief and humor me for a moment. Is it possible that we are finding ourselves in the midst of one of those great shifts of consciousness, of mass human thinking, that will change the course of the world that our children's children will one day read about in their history textbooks in their schools? I'm simply asking, do you think perhaps we should

be learning that we need to be kinder, gentler and more humane to each other? That maybe it's time we actually sit in our classrooms and learn from our ancestor's mistakes so as to avoid repeating them?

I think that if we do not learn the art of being compassionate towards each other, we will find that we are committing the same crimes against humanity our ancestors did, only now it will be shown as a You Tube clip or attached to an e-mail. I think what this generation does with its education will ultimately define who we are, where we go, and what legacy we leave behind.

## *How dirty tactics won the SGA election and why they'll get away with it.*

By **KEVIN PRATT**

*Editor-in-Chief*

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Last Friday, April 27, Williams Azubike will be sworn in as President of SGA. In the election, he failed to win the majority of votes with 352 students voting for other candidates. Azubike is widely known as the candidate supported by many current SGA members, such as Vice-President Jessica Charles.

While insisting they weren't, they pushed Azubike in an attempt to maintain the status quo of SGA as a social club. The other candidates threatened to upset the balance and bring in new blood to revitalize SGA. New blood that wasn't them.

Many of them pushed the boundaries of election regulations, hanging around the SGA voting booth, wearing promotional materials while working that same booth, and the worst part, walking around with a computer getting people to vote on the spot.

One student, Princess Threat, told how she was asked to go into the SGA office, offered a computer and told to vote for Williams. The best part though was the candy she got as a reward when she was sent on her way.

This last practice violates the concept of elections free of coercion. When peer-pressure is used to force votes, people will often give over their votes with the candidate patiently watching. This is like a candidate going to your house, asking you if you'd vote for them and when you say yes, driving you to the polls, putting the pencil in your hand, and watching

you fill out the ballot.

The candidates and SGA Advisor Jeff Jacobs tried to spin the whole thing, directing attention to the fact that they increased voter participation. Hell, anyone can increase voter turnout using these kinds of tactics. Maybe next year they'll get them to vote at gunpoint and marvel at the increase.

When asked why he thought the campaign did this, VP winner Brandon Johnson reluctantly replied, "You do what you have to do to win." While there is no evidence of Johnson doing this himself, he benefited from the practice by his association with Azubike.

Students and other candidates who wanted to complain about the irregularities felt powerless to act as the SGA advisor was on vacation during election week. He defended himself saying he was available by e-mail, but that wasn't widely known.

Ultimately, this whole debacle can be traced back to the SGA constitution and election regulations. The constitution only addresses the election process in a superficial way. It talks about terms, qualifications, freshman, and senators; but when it comes time to explain how the election happens, it comes up empty.

Also, because of the election regulations' vagueness, they fail to deal with how, when an election is online, every computer becomes a polling place.

From ambiguous documents, to having only two days to campaign before polls open (who's here on the weekend?), this election stinks and doesn't bode well for the future of Clayton State University.

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# Take My Advice

By CHRISTINA SEMPLE

*I am having a baby. I told the soon-to-be grandmothers but how do I tell the soon-to-be grandfathers?*

—Baby in the Belly

Well, it depends on why you haven't told them. At the risk of being presumptive, I'll give you a few scenarios to answer your question. First, if you are fearful that they may disapprove, at this juncture it won't matter since you're already pregnant and nothing they say will change that.

Also, you need to prepare for them having gotten wind of the situation from other sources. Word travels fast, especially within families, so tell them as soon as possible. Delaying the news will only add insult to injury.

If you have not told them because you have had negative experiences with them, then again the delayed announcement will just give them justification for disliking you.

There's really no way to go about telling someone you're pregnant other than just saying it.

But no matter what, I can't stress enough, tell them yourself, don't wait until they see you and observe your belly is a little more round than usual.

*What would you do if you caught your best friend and your boyfriend kissing. I love both of them, but someone has to pay for this. Should I cut them both off? Help me,*

—Kissing Fools

Why limit yourself to just punishing one of them, hell there's two potential prisoners!

But, vengeful spirit aside, after the dust settles, you will see that neither one is more responsible or guilty than the other, so whatever punishment you do enact, it seems fitting that they both 'suffer'.

Okay, now for the real response. Let's take each one separately. If you get rid of your boyfriend, will you be comfortable in the future introducing your kept friend to your new beau? If you get rid of your best friend, will you be able to trust your kept boyfriend around other women in general or your other female friends?

No matter who you decide to keep around or cut off, you will still have to go through the healing process, sweetie. And though



Got a problem? Need advice? Ask me about it at [Advice@BTreeNews.com](mailto:Advice@BTreeNews.com).

it may seem unreasonable to mention this now and even more unfathomable to actually do, you at some point will need to try and forgive them both. Forgiving them is not saying that what they did is okay, it is however saying that you are not going to bear the burden of their mistake. (And for all of those who are cringing at the fact that this sounds eerily like a Dr.Phil-ism, you are right. The guy isn't all bad you know). Now back to your question, dear. Do you really want a best friend who would betray you like that? And do you really want a boyfriend who would betray you like that? Take their labels out of the picture for a moment. Look at them as two people whom you clearly care about and who, I'm sure, claim to care about you. That alone should have made the act unthinkable, but such was not the case.

I am not saying that they cannot be trusted again in the future, I am not saying that you shouldn't be mad and wonder how much pain you can legally put them through without risking jail time, but what I am saying is that it may be best to remove both of them from your life, for now. It is often times difficult to analyze and evaluate a situation objectively when you are in the middle of it.

In other words, how can you think about getting over your boyfriend while he is still calling and coming over? How can you evaluate your best friend's ability to gain your trust when you are still listening to her "I'm sorry"s? So, take a week (or a year if you choose) without them in your life and only then will you be clear-minded enough to make an informed, logical, and healthy decision. Best of luck and I wish your heart a speedy recovery!

# SENIOR SUPERLATIVES

## *A Letter to the Graduating Class of Spring 2007*

By KEISHA JENNINGS

As the semester creeps up on the graduating class of spring 2007, one has to wonder were they go from here? I sit and ponder about this all the time, and what does a stranger do this predicament? They put their words in a letter.

Dear Graduating Class of Spring 2007:

Where do I begin? You have come so far in life and there are no words to say besides, I am proud of you. I watch you walk through the halls and go from one building to another while carrying your daily struggles on your shoulders in a book bag: one strap for pain and struggles, the other for determination and pride.

Once again, I am proud of you and I do not know you. However, you leave a legacy, a monument of perfection, and an unforgettable friend.

I share with you a quote that one of my mentors told me by W. E. B. Du Bois, "The function of the university is not simply to teach bread winning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools or to be a centre of polite society; it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization."

Stand up and dance, or better yet, yell to the top of your lungs and say, "I made it and with your help mom and/or dad, I made because I believe in myself, I made because someone did not believe in me, I made it because I had faith in someone or something, and I made because I thirst knowledge. So, if no one else is proud of you I am. Congratulations!"

RHONDA M. DILLON

I would like to thank all of my friends and faculty for the support and encouragement that you've given me in my endeavors to complete my bachelors in Information Technology. I'd like to especially thank Dr. Byron Jeff for nominating me for the Catherine Aust Award and for being the best professor and mentor that any one could ever have. I will miss everyone here at CSU, but it is time to move on to other adventures in life. I particularly would like to thank my loving and supportive husband Don Dillon, I could

not have finished without his help. He has been my role model, my baby sitter, my "you can do it" cheerleader throughout all of my college years.

I'd like to also thank my three boys for putting up with their mommy leaving them several nights per week for over four years. You're finally going to get your momma back at night.

Most of all, I'd like to say to all of you who are still plugging away at getting your degree, and it has been rough at times, you can too!

Thank you CSU for giving me another Associates degree and finally, my Bachelors. Amen! I'm outta Here!

GINA FINOCCHIARO

I can't tell you what a blessing in disguise Clayton State University, and especially the Communications and Media Studies department, has been in my studies here. Working full-time (sometimes at two jobs) and going to school full-time has been difficult, but the faculty has been wonderful in helping me to get to where I am now. Thank you, CMS!

I also want to thank University Relations for giving me experience, praise and hugs over the last few years. I truly appreciate their support, in addition to my family and friends.

Finally, my graduation cap goes to mom and my brother, who although they cannot be in the stands on May 12, will be watching me from a much more comfortable seat. Thank you.

GIA M. GILLIES

It was my beginning of college career and I was working on something for a class when my grandmother walked in the room and said, "I am so proud of you for going back to school!" She said, "even if I do not see you get the degree finish for me Gita..." I turned and said, "Grammy you will be right there waiting for me to exit the stage, so what are you talking about?" She shared that she only finished the 3rd grade, but pushed to go back school at night to complete high school requirements of St. Thomas USVI.

My grandmother was the oldest in her family, so she had to go to work to help my great grandmother make ends meet. Gladys left us years ago now and it still feels as though she left yesterday. Yes, by all means there had been many times

when I wanted to quit, but those words rang in my ear, "Finish for me Gita." Even as she went home to glory August 2004...I did not give up until I completed the request for my Grammy: Gladys L. George. May 12, 2007 is for you Grammy!

For all my fellow colleagues congratulations from my family to yours! Continued success in your future endeavors.

*The Ordinary Negroes hadn't heard of the Negro Renaissance. If they had, it hadn't raised their wages very much.*

~Langston Hughes

XIOMARA E. POLOCHE

It was 1989 when I first registered at Clayton State Community College.

It has been a long road and I'm glad I never gave up. I knew this day would come; there has never been a doubt in my mind.

I will always be grateful to my partner for life and husband, for supporting my thirst for knowledge and putting up with many nights without a hot dinner on the table.

To my three children who didn't always have a mother at home to tucked them into bed. I hope I'm making you proud today!

To special teachers, like Dr. McCarty, Dr. Miller and Dr. Norman, your indelible lessons will follow me for the rest of my life.

And to God, my Lord and maker, I give Him all the glory today and for ever. May I be useful in any way He may see deem.

CSU, I will miss you and thank you for opening your doors to a foreigner whose primary language is not English.

KATHLEEN QUINCEY

Hi, my name is Kathleen Quincey, I am graduating with a degree in psychology and human services with a background in pre-med. I am a part of the Honors Association and the Psi Chi organization. I am currently senior representative of the Honors Association, and in the past have been freshman representative, and activities committee chairperson.

VERONICA WALKER

I'd like to thank the following instructors who help me reach my final destination to obtain my degree. Those instructors are Dr. Eric Bridges, Dr. Kitty Deering, Dr. Erica Gannon, Dr. Donna McCarty, and Dr. David Marshall.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send yours to [Letters@BTreeNews.com](mailto:Letters@BTreeNews.com).



Crystal Wright/The Bent Tree

On Thursday, March 22, Roland Benoit, Jr. (left) presented "Hip-Hop...Poison or Art" as part of the Real Talk with the Greeks series. Benoit asked if Hip-Hop was helping or hurting our community after showing a short clip on the subject. The response was lively and several people entered the discussion. In this photo, Dalen Robinson (right) is sharing his thoughts about the way the medium portrays women

## Sudoku

Complete the grid so that every row, column, and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive

### Puzzle 1 (Medium)

7			3				5	
9				2	6	3		4
1		2						
8				3		6		
3		4				8		5
			1		4			3
						5		7
6		5	2	8				1
	8				5			6

### Puzzle 2 (Very Hard)

			3	8	9	5			
	8								5
1		5			2				
6				3	1	5			
5	9							1	6
			1	5	8				2
				6			7		1
4								6	
				7	1	9	8		

# Diversions

## Fiction

### Life According to Jayden S. Edwards

#### EPISODE THREE: "PARIS, FRANCE"

By KEISHA REAVES

Love. What is the meaning of the word? It translates in many ways, but the heart of the definition remains the same. I can remember when I was a younger boy listening to my mother babble on and on about how her and my father had met each other. She was a junior in college and he was a senior. He was a chemistry major and she was business. They'd bumped into each other in the library. The bump had actually been so hard that it knocked all of her books out of her hand. Before she could kneel over and pick them up, he'd scooped them off of the ground handing them to her immediately. What was a friendly thank you turned into a cup of latte at the coffee house. Two months later they ended up being hand locked on campus daily and it would take a chisel to break the two apart.

"I can't go back to my room. I just can't," the mysterious girl said angrily in her slurred voice as we tried to tote her up the stairs of Brunswick Hall.

My mom would tell me that story over and over again whenever I would complain to her how hard it was for me to approach a girl. I took her story at first as a suggestion to bump into girls randomly at the public library. That tactic soon turned bad and the head librarian got the security to escort me off of the premises saying that I was harassing the young ladies. Who has security at a public library?

"If we were in any other dorm we would get in trouble with having her in our room," Seth said as we slowly carried her up the stairs.

So, after mom had told me her side of love I'd taken some advice from my grandmother. She said that her and Gramps met at a soda shop. Gramps was a rebel without a cause back then. He rode a Harley and had greased up hair. He was an original James Dean. She was attracted to him at first glance. She was that good girl wanting to live badly for once. She'd made out with him behind the soda shop that night, odd hearing this from your grandmother, and by the end of the week

they were boyfriend and girlfriend. She didn't think that he would be worthy to introduce to her parents. She felt like he would be just another guy that wouldn't last until he bought her a promise ring. She said she showed it off to all of her girlfriends and even pumped her parents up to meet him. Of course, she knew she had to break him of his bad boy image first or she would lose all of her parents respect and trust. He cleaned up just for her and even pulled up in her drive way in a clean Plymouth. Her parents loved him and from then on, he was the one.

"I don't even know you guys and I'm asking if I can crash at your place. How bad you must think of me, but I can't go home. I just can't," the girl continued to talk mumbling here and there. She was wasted and we knew it was best to take her back to our house rather than have her drive being under the influence. We also didn't even know who to leave her with. Seth seemed to be unaware of who she was even though he claimed to know the "who's who" of the college campus.

So after listening to my grandmother's story, I went out and bought a promise ring. I was going to give this to whomever girl that paid me any attention. Note that I was a freshmen in high school at this time and it had boiled down to drastic measures. There was a girl named Bethany that I took geography with. Her locker was next to mine and all I remember her saying to me was that my shoes were untied and that I needed to tie them before I tripped and fell. Before she could give me the list of health hazards that could happen from falling on a dirty, tile, school hallway floor, I'd knelt down on one knee and proposed the promise ring to her. My heart pounded out of my chest and all I could think of was, please be my girlfriend. Please! She freaked out making a disgusted face and ran away. By three o'clock, I was known for being the weirdo that liked to rush into things with people I barely even knew. Loser for life, I tell you.

"I don't know why I've never seen her before," Seth had said as we reached our

floor and struggled down the hallway. I felt like he said that because this girl was unbelievably beautiful. She was drunk and drunk is never attractive, but she seemed to pull it off well. She had this naturally curly light brown hair. Her caramel skin was silky covering her toned arms. She had these beautiful, big, green eyes and full glossed lips. She looked model material for sure. She resembled one of those Somaliland super models that would strut across the runway confidently.

"My ex-boyfriend's fooling around with one of my sorority sisters. I saw them leave tonight together. I was so jealous. I know that their going back to the house together and I can't bare to see it," she whimpered as we carried her into our room.

"She lives in a sorority house. Ask her what sorority she lives in and we can take her back to her house," I said to Seth.

"No way, man. Carrying her all the way back down? It's not like she's heavy or anything, but carrying someone not cooperating with you is beyond difficult," Seth said as we plopped her down on my bed.

"Him and I just broke up last week. Can you believe that? Last week and Rachel tells me yesterday that he's fooling around with Candace. With Candace Smith! Do you know how bad her love handles are? Oh, my, God. I don't think that that girl has ever seen a gym in her life. She has those huge thighs and her hair. It's fried, guys. FRIED!" she shouted.

"I've gotta call my girlfriend. I don't want her to weird out on me when popping up in the morning here and finding a girl in our room," Seth said dialing his girlfriend's number quickly and walking over to his side of the room. I just stood over her watching as she rolled from left to right talking complete nonsense.

"He's hurt me so many times. So many.... so many times he has hurt me. He has heart my broken times a dozen," she said sounding like a confused, old drunk. She even laughed at herself holding her stomach with her hand.

"I didn't want to bring her, Kate! This new guy whom I just met today told me too! He said he didn't want to just leave her in the streets!....Yes!.... I'm not lying! He says she just fell into his arms or something if you can believe that!" Seth tried to claim his case with his girlfriend.

I pulled out one of the chairs from under my desk and just sat there continuing to watch this remarkably beautiful girl roll around in my bed. Had my train found its destination? Perhaps the set up for heart-break is the pre planned expectations. Could I be just as cool of a person without somebody? Then again, how cool would I know I could be with a girl if I never could get a girl?

"Hurt me. Hurt me. Hurt me. That's all her ever does. I tell him....why, I tell him all the time that he doesn't know what love is. He doesn't. He doesn't know the first syllable of the word," she said.

"Well, if you feel as if you could trust me better with you here while she's in the room, then fine. Come over, but what does that say about our relationship, Kate? Do you not trust me? And no, I'm not saying this so I can have some alone time with the stranger," Seth paced back and forth. You could hear his girlfriend on the line loud and clear.

Love to me was something precious. It was something that I would never, ever take for granted. I would hold it dear to my heart because it was something I'd never had, but watched. My prom date in high school was a girl I adored, but she only looked at me as a friend. She liked the popular guy named Jake that scored a seven hundred on his SATs. The girl I bought flowers for on Valentine's Day didn't like me like that. She even explained why in a detailed e-mail. She'd said that I was too good for her and that I always made her feel bad. She wanted to be wild, but the fact that I was such a goody-goody, it held her from that.

If I ever had the opportunity of being with someone, I would love them with all my heart. I'd seen the famous romance movies. I cried when watching Notting Hill. Yeah, it totally pissed me off to see how mean Julia Roberts could be to Hugh Grant, but it was all in the fact that she came back to him in the end. I remember my dad saying that if they come back then it's meant to be. Todd, my best buddy in high school, thought that that saying was a bunch of crap. His girlfriend Anna had dumped him for another guy. That relationship lasted....well, never ended. Todd was really messed up over that too. He felt like I was the lucky guy because I'd never experienced heartbreak. I never cried over a chick. I never felt jealousy or pain.

I did cry. I cried because my self-esteem was non-existent. Getting a girl was a challenge to me and no matter what I did, I couldn't seem to get one. It seemed impossible. I wanted to love. If I'd lose it, I didn't care because I still had the opportunity to feel what it felt like to be cared for.

"She's asleep, Kate. She's turned over in Jayden's bed knocked out," Seth explained still talking on his phone.

Her curls fell over her closed eyes as she slept. I watched her until Seth assured his girlfriend that nothing was going to happen and finally fell asleep himself. I watched her toss and turn until my eye lids grew too heavy.

I hadn't noticed that it was morning time until I felt Seth hitting me on my shoulder over and over again. My eyes squinted as the sun blinded me. I sat up feeling the tight crock in my neck. I looked over at the bed and noticed that it was empty.

"Here," Seth shoved a sheet of paper in my face. I took it and read it. It said, thanks for everything, guys. I really appreciate it. I know I must've been a wasted pain for you guys to not know me. See you around campus. Paris.

"Paris is her name," I said while looking at her beautiful handwriting in lipstick.

"She left it on the bed. You might want to clean your sheets because you have no idea what kind of scent strangers can bring. I've already Lysol the place down," he always made these crazy comments out of the blue.

"What if I never see her again?" I said realizing that I might've missed my chance of having a real conversation with her.

"Oh, you probably will. Once I saw that her name was Paris, it all came back to me. Her whole name is Paris Foley. She's a cheerleader here and the sorority she's in is Delta phi beta. She's pretty popular too. Oh, the guy she kept babbling about was Jonathan Sanders, MSU's starting wide receiver. He's nick named the Incredible Hulk," Seth said.

"You tell me all of this now?" I ask hating his delay.

"Well, she's on high ground. Me knowing a lot of people around here couldn't even get me a date with her, not that I would want one with Kate and all. But you're a freshmen and she's a junior. Did you even see how freakin' gorgeous she is?" he said. Challenge engraved.