

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

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*UMKC's independent  
student newspaper  
since 1933*

Vol. 80 // Issue 9// **Oct. 15, 2012**



The McFadden Brothers strut their stuff at the American Jazz Museum on Saturday, Oct. 13.  
Photo by Sai Srikar Kadiyam

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Photo by Mal Hartigan

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

UMKC's Independent Student Newspaper

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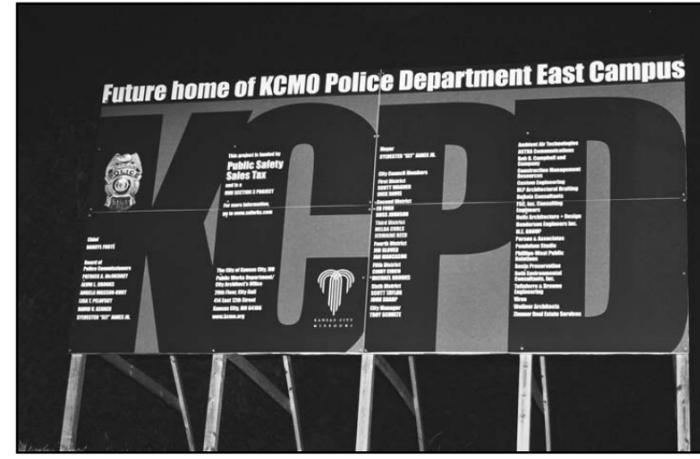
**Mission:** To provide relevant, timely coverage of the UMKC community by seeking truth, fairness and accuracy in reporting while preserving the integrity of *U-News* as an independent student-run publication.

**About us:** The *U-News* is the official independent student newspaper of UMKC, produced each week by a staff consisting entirely of students.

We publish 4,000 copies each week, and distribute to the Volker and Hospital Hill campuses and surrounding neighborhood businesses.

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A proposed four-block campus for the Kansas City Police Department Crime Lab and East Patrol Station would raze residential blocks bounded by 26th, 27th, Brooklyn and Prospect Avenue. Photos by Mal Hartigan

## Proposal to build KCPD campus in blighted residential neighborhood draws opposition from UMKC students

Mal Hartigan Managing Editor

Kansas City plans to construct a four-block campus for the Kansas City Police Department's Crime Lab and East Patrol Division at 27th and Prospect has met opposition from a group of UMKC students.

Constructed in 1949, the current East Patrol Station at 5301 E. 27th St. is outdated and expensive to maintain. The department has also outgrown its current Crime Lab, at 6633 Troost Ave. Police officials have said it lacks adequate climate control.

The new campus will cost \$57 million, funded through the city's 2010 Public Safety Sales Tax Renewal, and is scheduled to break ground in 2013.

The 27-acre site at 27th and Prospect covers four city blocks. According to *The Kansas City Star*, vacant lots or buildings account for half the 128 parcels.

Blight and neglect have led to long-term land value depreciation.

27th and Prospect was selected from among 25 viable locations largely due to the ease of property acquisition and the location near some of the city's highest-crime neighborhoods.

It is also the first KCPD project to directly affect a residential neighborhood.

Three city appraisals were arranged for each property, and owners forced to move were offered the highest appraisal. The city also offered an additional 25 percent for owner-occupied homes and offered to pay 50 percent above the appraised value for properties that have been in the same family for more than 50 years.

Half of the 66 occupied properties are owner-occupied.

Andy Clarke, Brett Shoffner and Chris Fasl have all studied in the Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (AUP+D) program at UMKC.

They expressed agreement with the need for redevelopment, but disagree with the city's decision to construct the new East campus police station within the blighted residential area. Shoffner said he believes the city could have easily chosen a number of vacant parcels on Prospect Avenue, but instead chose to demolish an entire neighborhood.

"Fighting the system is hard," Shoffner said. "Opposing this east side project

resonated with me because it does deal directly with neighborhood stabilization, historic preservation and overall community sustainability for the long term."

The excess of vacant houses leaves the area vulnerable to criminal behavior, including frequent break-ins and use for drug trade. The new police campus intends to redevelop the neighborhood while providing an updated KCPD facility. Clarke and Fasl began working on stabilization plans with the neighborhood residents for an AUP+D undergraduate project in 2008. That was before the new East campus was proposed.

"This area of 27th and Prospect has been our focus for the past few years," Clarke said.

Clarke and Fasl's project suggested feasible solutions to the neighborhood's vacant homes and environmental issues, and emphasized strengthening the

Continued on Page 4

"Fighting the system is hard. Opposing this east side project resonated with me because it does deal directly with neighborhood stabilization, historic preservation and overall community sustainability for the long term."

-Brett Shoffner

## Corrections

Issue 8, Oct. 8

Pg.15: '60 years of Greek life at UMKC'

Fraternity Lambda Theta Phi was misidentified as Lambda Theta Pi.

Spot any mistakes? Email Editor-in-Chief Nathan Zoschke, [nzoschke@unews.com](mailto:nzoschke@unews.com).



## How UMKC stacks up

'U.S. News and World Report'  
No. 179 of 199, with 78 schools unranked or with unpublished rankings

'Forbes'  
No. 572 of 650

'Washington Monthly'  
No. 229 of 281

'Newsweek' and 'The Daily Beast'  
'The Princeton Review'  
'The Wall Street Journal' recruiter ratings  
Not listed

'College Prowler'  
Best Overall Student Experience: No. 1069 of 1194  
Hardest to get in: No. 855 of 1649  
Highest freshmen retention rate: Not listed of 272  
Highest tuition: No. 833 of 1815, at \$20,191  
Highest-ranked applicants: not listed of 428  
If I could do it all over again: No. 1012 of 1213  
Most applicants per year: No. 515 of 1655 (4,938 applicants)  
Most expensive on-campus living: No. 355 of 1688, at \$10,131  
Most freshmen: No. 380 of 1657 (1,146 freshmen)  
Most full-time students: No. 314 of 2132 (6,264 students)  
Most part-time students: No. 108 of 2124 (3,117 students)  
Most transfer students: Not listed of 398  
Most vibrant social scene: No. 1061 of 1176  
Oldest colleges: not listed of 509

## News about YOU-News

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# #The college rankings controversy

Michelle Heiman Copy Editor

Top rankings lists can be enticing, especially for topics that might be overwhelming to research, such as which colleges are the best in the nation.

*U.S. News and World Report*, *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast*, *Forbes* and *The Princeton Review* are just a few of the publications that utilize college rankings. But what are these rankings lists really expressing about colleges?

"The rankings are pretty reliable statistics of such indicators as colleges' financial resources, course sizes and admissions selectivity," said Dr. Nathan Lindsay, assistant vice provost for assessment. "The rankings are not very reliable indicators of educational quality and learning."

The *U.S. News* "Best Colleges" rankings are based on freshman retention, graduation rates and faculty "strength," according to a September *U.S. News* article. The "formula" involves academic quality indicators, as determined by education experts on *U.S. News* staff, and on their views of what matters in education.

*Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast* assessed factors such as affordability, rigor of coursework, campus aesthetics, student morale, stress levels and rowdiness to compile their 10 lists of top-25 schools. UMKC did not make any of these lists.

*Forbes Magazine* rankings, compiled by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, focus on quality of teaching, career prospects, graduation rates and graduation debt levels. These "Top Colleges," calculated in July 2012, placed UMKC at 572 out of 650 schools.

*The Princeton Review* uses student surveys to compile its data for 62 categories worth of top-20 schools. The surveys contain four sections and have over 80 questions. While 38 categories are the positive "Best Athletic Facilities" and "Best Career Services" type, the other 24 are negative aspects like "Is It Food?" and "Least Happy Students." UMKC did not rank in any of these lists.

*The Wall Street Journal* lists the top 25 schools whose graduates were top-rated by recruiters. UMKC did not make this list.

*The Washington Monthly* ranks colleges in four categories - Baccalaureate Colleges, Master's

Universities, Liberal Arts Colleges and National Universities.

Schools are rated based on their contributions to the "public good" in three categories: Social Mobility, Research and Service. UMKC ranked 229 of 281 in the National Universities category, with an overall score of 33. The bottom-ranked and top-ranked schools had overall scores between 0 and 100, respectively.

College Prowler has by far the most comprehensive list of categories, each of which has its own criteria. UMKC received an "A-" in the "Local Atmosphere" category, which incorporates the safety of the surrounding area, nearby attractions, proximity to other schools and the town's attitude toward students.

However, UMKC received a "C" grade in multiple categories as well, and was not numerically ranked superior in any category.

Lindsay said he would like to see rankings based on opportunities for service learning, study abroad, undergraduate research and internships.

"Rankings are about prestige and reputation, and the schools that are at the top don't want to see any changes in how the rankings are calculated," he said. "In addition, parents and students probably wouldn't believe rankings that didn't put Ivy League schools at the top, even if they were based on more valid measures of quality."

Dr. Larry Bunce, director of Institutional Research, said senior leadership at UMKC pays attention to various ranking systems, such as *U.S. News*.

"The information from various rankings are put together for UMKC and several of our peer institutions and then shared with the senior leadership on campus," he said. "This enables the senior leadership to discuss the various data elements and to identify potential areas to study in further depth, and if necessary, to develop action plans to facilitate improvement."

Bunce said UMKC focuses on improving within the individual metrics in order to benefit students.

"We may explore ways to help students become more successful at UMKC and ultimately graduate from the university, but this is done for the students, not to increase our ranking in *U.S. News* or another type of ranking," he said.

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### Police station: Continued from Page 2

community's development. "Andy's class was trying to generate an action plan for these neighborhoods to begin addressing what is an epidemic on the east side of Troost – the incredible amount of abandoned lots, abandoned houses and the stigma of being crime-ridden," Fasl said. "These neighborhoods have been forgotten for the past 50 years, and now the property values are really low."

Clarke, Shoffner and Fasl researched the city's plan for the new east campus, and disagreed with its architectural design and the city's planning. "It's got these huge surface parking lots," Fasl said. "It's clearing out houses and invading the streets. It's breaking up the grid all around it to put this giant complex here."

Fasl and Clarke said a parking garage would occupy less space and ultimately decrease the amount of houses scheduled for deconstruction.

Clarke said there were also inconsistencies with the city's method of planning the facility's construction. "In 2011, the city released an area plan. It's a guide for future development," Clarke said. "The city is supposed to follow what the neighborhood wants. In that plan, there was not one mention of this nearly \$60 million public tax dollar project. That's what triggered us to say, 'Wait.' We're planners and we're trying to make plans for these neighborhoods – what's the point of making plans if the city doesn't even follow its own plans?"

The trio attended city meetings and discussions to protest the planning and the facility's design. "We started a campaign getting together UMKC friends and other people who were concerned," Clarke said. "We

had to show up to City Hall in numbers. We're helping the neighborhoods make their voices stronger."

But the city, especially Mayor Sly James, who grew up on the east side, has advertised the project as providing a win-win outcome. According to *saferkc.com*, 1,140 new jobs will emerge from the project's construction. It also claims the new facility will renovate surrounding neighborhoods and that an increased police presence will improve the area's security.

Criminal Justice and Criminology Professor Tasha Fox said both sides of the debate regarding the crime rate should be considered. "Building a police station in that area is a really sensitive topic," she said. "It's an area of higher crime and the city is responding by putting a police station there, but there is also the issue of stigmatizing the neighborhood. It might upset a lot of people in the community, and they might see the police as an invading force. At the heart of it, I think it's really an issue of police and minority relations."

Associate Professor and Chair of Criminal Justice and Criminology Ken Novak said there is no definitive answer to whether increased police presence will influence the crime rate surrounding 27th and Prospect.

"It's not just presence of police or where a structure is – it's what they do to interact and partner with the community," he said. Residents have historically viewed police with skepticism, Novak said, but added that the location is suitable because it fits the geographic requirements for the proposed campus and eliminates property vacancies, and the consequent crime.

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Only 66 of the 128 properties in the four blocks between 26, 27th, Brooklyn and Prospect Avenue are occupied. However, some feel that deconstructing these houses is a short-term fix that won't solve the neighborhood's long-term problems. Photo by Mal Hartigan



# Men's soccer rebounds Team 3-1 in Summit League play

The men's soccer team discusses the upcoming game against Oakland after practice on Friday, Oct. 12. Photo by Dan Moreno

**Dan Moreno** Staff Writer

performance to teammate Kevin Corby. "He [Corby] is a great keeper," Sparrow said. "I have learned a lot from him. Before every game, he pulls me aside and tells me to stay relaxed. He's been like a mentor to me."

Michael Oakley's strong and aggressive style of play has helped the defense remain solid, and his personal goals are to, "Keep providing leadership from the back and bring good energy to the team."

The Summit League Finals is the team's goal. Oakley said he is optimistic, and from his perspective, it is not just an objective, but an obligation. "We have shown that we can get results and we are prepared for what's coming," Oakley said. "It's in our future."

The Roos will head to Omaha, Neb. on Tuesday to face Creighton in a non-conference game before they host Omaha University next Saturday at Durwood Soccer Stadium in conference play.

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## financial corner Going from under-employed to fully and happily employed

# \$IFE

**Brad New** Contributing Writer

The economy is not as well as it should be and finding a job remains to be a difficult journey. The recent unemployment rate shows the country at about 7.8 percent unemployment, which is the lowest it has been since January 2009.

Even though the numbers can be discouraging, that shouldn't stop students from pursuing their dream careers. There are many different ways to find jobs and internship opportunities. The Career Services Center here at UMKC has a main office in the Student Success Center and a satellite office in the Bloch School. Both help with practicing for interviews, critiquing résumés and workshops to help look for a job or career. Don't ignore these opportunities to meet different employers and to practice communications skills, which are used in all types of professions.

Lana Viron, a manager at DST Systems, has a pet peeve when looking at résumés: when people don't take the time to look over the little things in their résumés. It only takes 30-60 seconds for a recruiter to look over a résumé, so make sure to pay attention to grammar, spelling and the length, which should be one page maximum. Depending on the job, you could include in the résumé a website you built for a client, your LinkedIn account or a personal blog. Recruiters understand it's hard for people to explain who they are in one page, so having other websites or places to show who you are and what you like show effort and drive.

Above all else, Viron suggests remembering that a recruiter doesn't want to know how giving you the job can help your career. A recruiter needs to know what skills, talents and knowledge you can bring to enhance their company.

The bottom line is it's tough now to seek the type of job people think they deserve. Actively seeking internships, tailoring your résumé, going to job fairs, networking and researching on the Internet are a few steps toward landing that perfect career. The next chances for UMKC students to practice their networking skills are Oct. 26 at the Criminal Justice & Criminology Career Expo or Oct. 30 at the Career Services Etiquette Dinner.

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player profile  
**Double trouble**  
Twin sisters dominate the field and school together

Riley Mortensen Senior Staff Writer

Twins Hannah and Ellie Chadick, transfers from Ball State University in Indiana, prove two is better than one on and off the soccer field. The sophomores from Overland Park came to UMKC after hearing great things about the women's soccer program, and are enjoying their move.

"We heard good things about the program," Ellie said.

"And good things about the coach," Hannah added about Head Coach Chris Cissell.

The identical twins have been playing soccer since they were only three feet tall, and both agree this was around age 5 or 6.

Hannah said her favorite move in soccer is acceleration, while Ellie said hers is change of speed.

The twins were born only 8 minutes apart, and said they still do everything together.

"You never have to go anywhere alone," Hannah said.

"We do basically do everything together," Ellie said.

The Chadicks have all of their classes together. Both Hannah and Ellie are majoring in health sciences and hope to become anesthesiologists.



The identical Chadick twins have enjoyed their transfer to UMKC and playing on the soccer team.

Photo by Riley Mortensen

They even enjoy almost all of the same things. The twins attribute this partly to the way they were raised, and the fact that they were around each all of the time while growing up.

"It has a lot to do with how we were raised. I like football because my dad watched it," Hannah said.

The girls aren't the only children in their family. They also have two brothers, one older and one younger.

"They come to all the games. It's their favorite part," the girls agreed.

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**Cross Country**  
Ayabei still shines in current season

Mal Hartigan Managing Editor

Senior Cosmas Ayabei became the first runner in UMKC history to qualify for the 2011 NCAA Cross Country Championships, and hasn't slowed down since.

Ayabei finished 2nd in the 8k race at the NCAA Pre-Nationals Invitational on Saturday in Louisville, Ky.

Ayabei's time, 24:08, was his fastest of the season and the 2nd-best 8k time in team history. He now holds six of the top 10 times for the 8k in school history.

He finished behind Joseph Chebet of Western Kentucky, who finished in 23:56.7.

Overall, the men finished 16th of 24 teams with 391 points while the women finished 23rd of 26 teams with 577 points. In the women's race, senior Sarah Meiners led the Roos by finishing 20th with a time of 21:51.6.

Ayabei's success has been consistent this season. He finished 2nd in the Sept. 28 Notre Dame Invitational in South Bend, Ind., in the 8k. Ayabei's 2nd-place finish among 143 runners earned him the Summit League Male Cross Country Athlete of the Week Award, the third of his career.

Ayabei also finished 1st in the 8k Richard Clark Invitational on Sept. 15, with a time of 25:18.

The male Roos have achieved strong team finishes with Ayabei's contributions, placing 2nd

overall in each of the first two meets and 6th at the Notre Dame Invitational.

The team's Midwest Region Ranking increased to 14th on Oct. 1, up from the Sept. 1 ranking of 15th.

The Roos will next travel to Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. to compete in The Summit League Championships on Saturday, Oct. 27.

**How cross country works**

Cross country is an individual and a team sport. Each team may enter a maximum of seven runners in each competition, but most competitions only score the top five runners' results.

A runner's final placement generates points: 1st place receives one point, 2nd place receives two points and so on. The top five runners' rankings are added together to determine the team's overall score. Fewer points result in a better team score.

Men typically race an 8k (five mile) or 10k (6.2 mile) course, while women may run a 5k (3.1 mile) or 6k (3.7 mile) course. The course's terrain varies with each competition, but runners may encounter several hills and cross through wooded areas.

The courses are clearly marked, usually with colored flags, to guide runners so they do not get lost or make an incorrect turn.

An official indicates when the race begins, and runners can be disqualified for crossing the starting line too early.

Continued on page 7

**From Jayhawk to Roo:** Coach Posey follows her passion

Kate Baxendale Senior Staff Writer

Head volleyball Coach Christi Posey is in the middle of her second season with UMKC. After serving as a top assistant and recruiting coordinator for 11 years with the University of Kansas volleyball program, Posey was offered the head coaching position at UMKC. While she will always have high regards for Kansas as an alumna and former athlete, Posey says UMKC is the right fit.

Her team stands 14-8, including 7-3 in the Summit League, after Sunday's 3-1 victory over IUPUI. "[UMKC] was a place that I knew had great possibilities," Posey said. "I'm from the Kansas City community. I coached club volleyball here for a number of years and I always thought [UMKC] had a great chance of being successful."

Posey explained how she came to UMKC in 2011.

"I had the right resources in place and I was fortunate enough to get an interview and visit with our Athletics Director Tim Hall," she said. "Ron Aulet, who is my sports supervisor and assistant athletics director, knew me because he also worked at the University of Kansas in the athletic department, so we had a connection that way. Then I was lucky enough to land the position [as head coach] and I was really excited about it. I think we have some good things in place and now we just have to follow up on our vision that we told our players about and obviously administration about."

Posey saw differences between the volleyball program at KU and the program at UMKC.

"It's a different budget, so obviously not having football to generate that kind of revenue makes a big difference," she

said. "I love the community. I love the support that we have from our other student athletes, administration and coaches."

Posey said she did not experience the close-knit family atmosphere as much at KU because of the difference in the university's size.

"I think it's a small but mighty community here," she said. "I think we all have similar challenges. We may have challenges unique to our sport, but similar challenges in what we would consider a mid-major level athletic department. But everyone works their tail off and wants other programs to be successful. I think there's a really close-knit family atmosphere here."

Despite Posey's switch, UMKC fell to KU in three straight sets on Sept. 4 in Lawrence.

"It was tough [playing KU]. I didn't want to make it anything other than just UMKC playing KU," she said. "It was a factor that I had a hand in recruiting the players that are still there and that will change over time obviously. I have invested a lot of time and energy into that program and they will always be very special to me. I think it was a bit more than what I thought our players were used to. I think the physicality that the Big 12 typically has and that KU has a big team [were factors in how we performed]. So we hadn't seen that as often as they do."

Posey is hopeful, and said she thinks it will be different the next time UMKC faces KU.

Posey also has 18 years of experience coaching at the high school level. She served as head volleyball coach at Blue Valley Northwest High School in Overland Park from 1993 to 2000. She led the team to two state championships and to the state tournament each of the eight years she coached.



Posey's approach has her team sitting second in the Summit League  
Photo courtesy of UMKC Athletics

Posey also served as the head girls' basketball coach and assistant softball coach at Blue Valley Northwest.

Posey was named a member of the inaugural Husky Hall of Fame class. She also received numerous "Coach of the Year" awards from *The Kansas City Star*, the Kansas Volleyball Association and Kansas Sport Magazine.

Before becoming head coach at Blue Valley Northwest, Posey served in the same position at Halstead High School in Kansas from 1983 to 1990.

Posey lettered in volleyball and softball during her freshman and sophomore years at Wichita State. She transferred to KU for her final two years, where she played softball for the Jayhawks. She graduated from Kansas in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in physical education and a minor

in health education. Despite having experience with a number of sports, Posey chose to pursue volleyball because she feels most passionate about it.

"Volleyball was just that sport that I couldn't get enough of," she said. "To me, it's the ultimate team sport. There is no other sport that depends so much on a previous contact quite as much as volleyball. It just lit me up. I loved playing it and I loved coaching it."

Posey said she enjoys the team chemistry in volleyball.

"I liked the strategy. I'm a big believer in team chemistry and how important that is and building leaders and team dynamics," she said. "So for me, this was a perfect fit."

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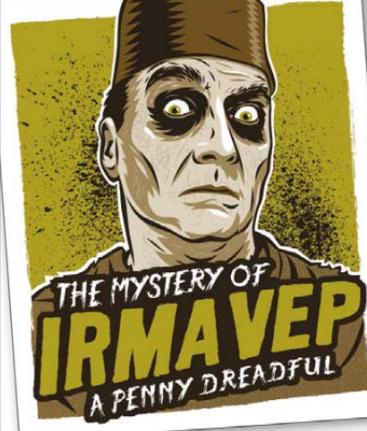
**Ayabei:** continued from page 6

The course pathway is narrowed several feet before the finish line to keep runners in a single-file line in the order they finish. This assures accurate scoring. Officials also disclose the runner's personal finish time.

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## satire

*Soda, an antidote for socialism*

Debbie Littles Satirist

My trip to New York City last week provided a needed escape from my tribulations back home.

It's difficult to be an activist in Kansas City without enduring ridicule from those who try to silence me by having different political views.

The world would be a better place if people just went along with everything I said. They would see this if they just listened to me for once.

Despite its numerous merits, my campaign to remove nude statues from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art failed miserably this past summer.

It was inspired by the petition drive to remove the notorious sexting statue from the Overland Park Arboretum. Why must I view art that I find personally offensive?

Beauty is a relative standard, and as a native Texan, I think big is beautiful. Unfortunately, there isn't much size representation among nude statues. Impressionable youth are going to get the wrong idea.

What if they decide sexting or posing naked in public is cool because they see a statue doing it?

And don't get me wrong - I love going to Missie B's and Hamburger Mary's with my gay boys - but what if young males see a granite phallus and begin to experience same-sex attraction?

Some people don't care, and that's because they're socialists. I don't really know what that word means, but the blonde lady on Fox News said it was a bad thing.

My political views run the gamut, and I enjoy being both bipartisan and nonpartisan. I guess that makes me a libertarian, another word I don't quite understand, but it sounds hip and anti-establishment.

I took my libertarian size acceptance activism to the next level in the Big Apple.

Like Kansas City, there are a lot of socialists in New York, but instead of being nude statue-loving socialists, they're soda-hating socialists.

Because New York City has limited the size of soda bottles and other sugary drinks to 16 ounces,



Cartoon by Aaron Cecil

I had to make a lot of unnecessary trips to get refills.

I've never had to do so much walking around in a restaurant before in my life.

Despite this, I spent the first four days of my five day trip on a culinary adventure, eating every hoagie and slice of New York-style pizza in sight.

On the fifth day, I sprang into action.

I shared 40 different Coca-Cola and Pepsi commercials on YouTube, and posted several different Facebook memes of Michael Bloomberg being doused in Mountain Dew from a 7-Eleven Big Gulp cup (the soda regulations don't apply to convenience or grocery stores).

Altogether, my social media activism netted 100 likes, 20 shares and 15 comments, from a grand total of seven people!

Most importantly, the right people listened. A group of soda makers and restaurateurs, led by the American Beverage Association and National Restaurant Association, has banded together to sue the city.

I can say with confidence that it's all because of me, because their lawsuit - a direct result of my social media awareness campaign - will bring New York City's socialists to a grinding halt.

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**Editor's Note:** The author and events depicted in this column are a work of satirical fiction. Any resemblance to real-life persons or events is a coincidence. The satire column is written by Nathan Zoschke.

## 'Fathers &amp; Sons'

## UMKC English lecturer tells personal story in recently released EP

Roze Brooks  
Copy Editor

Ben Moats has found a balance between his job as an English lecturer at UMKC and his passion for music.

In his recently released acoustic EP album, "Fathers & Sons," Moats sings about the life experiences of a war veteran living in Weeping Water, Neb.

His father is a retired Vietnam War veteran who has called Nebraska home all of his life, without any signs of musical inclination.

These two could not be more different in their anxieties and ambitions, but Moats took advantage of his father's endeavors.

"I think he's absolutely legitimate when he says that he would get more anxiety from playing music in front of people than what he got when he was in Vietnam," Moats said, referring to his father's aversion to performing music.

Moats' father was surprised and somewhat alarmed when he found his son had used photos from his days in the military for a website promoting the album and performance dates. His mom listens to the album a lot, but he doesn't know how often his dad does, hinting it may be more than he's leading on.

"He was excited about it," Moats said. "I keep waiting for him [to] say something, being worried about *The Pitch* article or something being written in there that he wouldn't like. I think he likes it, I think he's okay with it."

Moats had always been drawn to the idea of a concept album with his father serving as a centralized theme throughout.

"I never thought I would go that route," Moats said. "I always thought songs should be organically written, that they shouldn't be forced. But then I thought I know a lot about my father. There isn't a reason why I couldn't focus my songs around something that is more personal to me that would still potentially be able to come organically."

Moats admitted that the current EP reflects his own interpretation of his father's life, but he feels the anticipated full-length album will shift into introspection about his



UMKC professor Ben Moats performs an acoustic set.

Photo courtesy of Ben Moats

own life as well.

"Though the concept of this album may not be very clear to anyone but me," he said.

Growing up in a small town, Moats contrasted Weeping Water to the stigma of close-mindedness and resistance to change that other rural areas sometimes have.

"They sort of embrace things

hand to stretch into certain chord positions, but eventually he learned to overcome it.

It wasn't until he was 17 when he started writing his own songs, and another year before his parents and family heard him sing and play guitar on his own.

He moved to Kansas City for

“I always thought songs should be organically written, that they shouldn't be forced. But then I thought I know a lot about my father. There isn't a reason why I couldn't focus my songs around something that is more personal to me that would still potentially be able to come organically.”

-Ben Moats

that are unique to their experience, as opposed to recoil from it, which often times seem to be the more human instinct," he said.

Moats didn't hail from a musical family, and he didn't delve heavily into vocal and instrumental musings until his late teens.

The most experience he gained during his high school years was from musicals after the choir teacher approached him to perform. However, Moats believed this was due to his ability to memorize the lines, not his talent.

He received his first guitar when he was 15, picking up the instrument himself and searching for song chords online. The toughest part about his self-taught method was getting his

Continued on Page 9

## Ben Moats: Continued from Page 8

matter."

Moats believed that his music edged towards the country music genre, but learned through his time in Nashville at the start of the tour that his sound was unlike that of other aspiring musicians with guitars in hand.

The copies of the album were ready after his travels in Nashville, allowing him to promote himself at his next stop in San Antonio, Tex.

Many of Moats' colleagues and students were unaware of his side project.

"I have five classes, and I told one," he said.

The class first received the news shortly after Moats interviewed with *The Pitch* for another article. Moats walked into class, excited about the potential of the upcoming article and one student randomly asked, "What's the best thing that happened to you today?"

Moats let his class in on the news after the daily quiz. He no longer holds as high an inhibition about allowing students to know about his music endeavors.

"I'm just more secure as a teacher now about what it is I am doing," he said. "There's not really a way to fit that into daily class analysis 'Oh by the way, this line of Shakespeare reminds me of a song I wrote.'

## the great outdoors

## Memorial Garden

## Kauffman Memorial Garden offers excellent relaxation space close to campus

Joey Hill

Staff Writer

The Ewing and Muriel Kauffman Memorial Garden is recognized as the oasis down the street. Just past the Rockhill Road bridge lies a lone, stone complex, and its contents can only be observed by passing through a small side doorway leading from the parking lot.

The Memorial Garden opened in 2000 and has become the resting place of the Kauffmans. Ewing Kauffman received extensive recognition in the Kansas City area due to donating millions of dollars to the city and founding the Kansas City Royals.

While less than half an acre large, the Memorial Garden fosters an extensive variety of both native and foreign plants and feels more personal than other botanical parks like Powell Gardens. The distinct architectural elements, as well as the overall composition and design of the space, add to the inclusive warmth of the garden.

Upon entering the garden, the soft trickle of fountains overpowers all extraneous sounds. A stone path leads through the lush and rich landscape. Suddenly one will feel part of the jewel-filled haven.

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## TATTOO

of the week

## St. Onge's tattoos represent politics, rebellion and love of literature



Photos by Kynslie Otte

Kynslie Otte

Senior Staff Writer

Junior Alan St. Onge's tattoos are symbolic of his political perspective, teenage rebellion and cultural views. St. Onge was first inked at age 16 in a local artist's kitchen. The tattoo displays the year 1977 numerically on his middle finger, which he chose to promote his "rebellious teenage worldview." St. Onge currently has four tattoos.

St. Onge's most significant tattoo is a hammer and sickle on his forearm, which is commonly recognized as a symbol of communism.

"Beyond its political significance, it represents a kind of optimistic ideal for which to aspire," he said. "It has also been the source of scorn from the right [wing] and curiosity to those unfamiliar [with communistic ideas]."

Though his hammer and sickle tattoo receives the most attention, St. Onge has other notable tattoos, which he said are inspired by his view of the world.

"All of my tattoos are in some way political, or at least culture based, and cryptic with regard to their personal significance," he said.

St. Onge, an English major, also draws tattoo inspiration from literature.

"The whiskey bottle [tattoo] has the insignia 'All the effects of intoxication,' which is an abbreviation of an Oscar Wilde quote," St. Onge said. "I find that alcohol, when taken in sufficient quantities, produces all the effects of intoxication. The bottle is also wrapped in a laurel wreath, which was, in the past, made into a crown

and decorated upon poets of the highest esteem (figuratively): Virgil, Dante, etc. So the tattoo overall infuses the dichotomy of rebellion: the esoteric and the base."

St. Onge suggests the pain of getting inked is an integral part of the process.

"It's an intimate experience," he said. "You're trusting a stranger with needles to pierce your flesh thousands of times and splatter ink underneath the epidermis. You're trusting them creatively and with health and safety standards."

St. Onge has received neutral feedback about his tattoos from both friends and family. He said his mother most likely doesn't approve, despite the fact that she also has a tattoo.

In regards to his friends, St. Onge said, "My friends all like them, I suppose. I've never really asked. I describe them [tattoos] as my war paint. They're both an inclusive and exclusive gesture."

St. Onge plans to get more tattoos in the future, and has considered getting a Russian prison-style moth tattoo on his chest.

"It represents a willingness to do anything necessary to escape from the prison, up to and including cannibalism," he said.

Many argue that people will someday regret their tattoos. In response, St. Onge said, "I admire and regret them every day."

If you or someone you know has a tattoo of significance and would like to be featured in the "Tattoo of the Week" column, please contact me at kphod7@mail.umkc.edu.

kotte@unews.com

bartender's corner

# Waldo's bar scene offers great drink specials, entertainment

**Kynslie Otte** Senior Staff Writer

The Waldo neighborhood offers a combination of high-profile bars and restaurants and local hole-in-the wall dives.

The heart of Waldo is at a strip of historic buildings at 75th and Wornall Road, but the neighborhood's unofficial boundaries extend from Gregory Boulevard to 85th Street along the Wornall corridor.

Its location close to campus makes it a popular destination with students, who can ride the Main Street MAX to and from Waldo for free using their student IDs.

The Piano Room features fantastic live music. Swagger Fine Spirits & Food offers an expansive draft beer and whiskey list, and The Well impresses with its spacious roof patio and daily food and drink specials.

## The Well

7421 Broadway  
The Well is a multi-level bar and grill with fantastic specials almost every day of the week.

The Well's interior ambiance feels more like a slightly upscale restaurant rather than a bar, but the rooftop patio is a fantastic place to enjoy the weather and a reasonably-priced cocktail.

The atmosphere is laid back and inviting for

patrons of all ages.

The Well features happy hour specials 3 -6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 9 p.m. to midnight on Sunday.

On Mondays, pints and bottles are half price. Tuesday offers half-price bottles of wine and specialty drinks and Wednesday features discounted 16 oz. aluminum bottles, whiskey and scotch drinks and bomb shots.

On Thursdays, import bottles, Crown Royal cocktails and "Gatorade shots" are discounted.

Saturday offers discounted Bud Light pints, Corona buckets and Hendricks or Stolli martinis. Appetizers are half price daily.

Sunday is the most exciting day of the week at The Well because there are specials almost all day long, and the brunch buffet is a treat.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., brunch is accompanied by a "Build your own Bloody Mary" bar, bomb shots are half price from 6 p.m. to close and "Late Night" happy hour begins at 9 p.m.

The Well is open 365 days a year. Hours are 11 a.m. - 1:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to midnight on Sunday.

## The Piano Room

8410 Wornall Road  
The Piano Room is curiously tucked into the

continued on page 11



The Well's rooftop patio is perfect for enjoying a drink and pleasant weather.

Photo by Sai Srikar Kadiyam

## music review

### Local reggae band 77 Jefferson brings beachy vibe to KC

**Kate Baxendale**

Senior Staff Writer

Local band 77 Jefferson combines reggae and rock to create its own signature sound.

Members Joel Castillo, Miles Brown, Justin Howard, Kyle Crouse and Richard Faught have spent the past five years touring the country, playing nearly 1,000 shows. The band has also collaborated with big reggae names such as Jah Roots and Fortunate Youth.

The band's fourth album, "Truth and Love," is a compilation of heartwarming love songs and mellow harmonies. The track "Keep on Movin'" is reminiscent of an uplifting Bob Marley song. The lyrics say, "Don't you give up, no never give in, you got to keep on movin'." "Keep on Movin'" is the only track with an essence of rock. A mild guitar interlude toward the end keeps in stride with the steady tempo.

"Waitin' On" is an endearing love song with simple, beautiful harmonies in its

repetitive chorus. The track is a personal favorite because of its beachy vibe. The mellow accompaniment, with its simple loop, makes it one of the more memorable songs on the album.

Lead singer Castillo has spent a lot of time in Hawaii. According to the group website, this "is probably a contributing reason why 77 [Jefferson] captures smooth, laid-back beach vibes while hailing from the heart of America."

"The Sound" features Eddie Blunt of High Tide, and its uplifting beat makes it perfect for a Friday night party. The track begins with the line, "This is the sound of a new beginning."

It proceeds with catchy repetition of the line, "Girl, move your body so we know you get down." "The Sound" is a track that entices the listener to dance to the rhythm of reggae music.

"On the Run" has a funky reggae beat, featuring Dan Kelly of Fortunate Youth. This song's sound is comparable to American rock artist Citizen Cope. "On The Run" sounds

more like a rap as Castillo and Kelly alternately spit sharp verses.

"Lovely" is a short and sweet track about an unnamed love interest that ends with a stylish saxophone solo as the album fades into the drastically opposite "On the Run."

"Call Me Up" is a simple and relatable song, ideal for jamming in the car. The catchy chorus and happy melody are sure to brighten an otherwise mundane commute to campus.

"Compare to Nothing" is a romantic date-night song, with lyrics that confess, "I'd do anything to be part of your world."

The album concludes with the title track "Truth and Love." The song is a beautiful ending to a smooth and mellow collection of songs. The acoustic guitar complements Castillo's raw vocals and the lyrics reiterate the album's message.

Up next: 77 Jefferson is scheduled to perform at 8 p.m. on Oct. 18 at The Riot Room.

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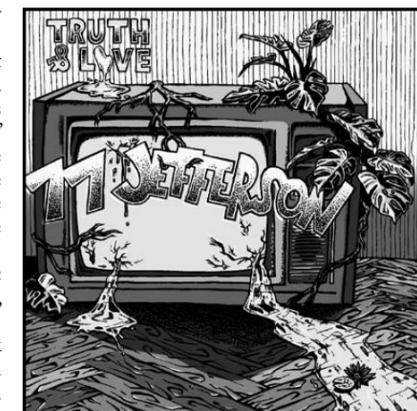


Photo courtesy of Google

## Waldo: Continued from Page 10

corner of a strip mall next to a Price Chopper, but despite its peculiar location, it is a bar worth visiting.

The Piano Room was established in 1978, and continues to offer an authentic piano bar experience.

Dave McCubbin, Kansas City Jazz Hall of Fame pianist, appears every Friday and Saturday to perform his extensive repertoire of jazz, blues, pop and rock. He is also an accomplished vocalist.

The bartenders are friendly, and the drinks are reasonably priced.

Wednesday night is open mic night. The atmosphere is casual and the patrons are welcoming. The bar's interior is vintage and cozy, and complements the traditional feel of a truly authentic piano bar.

The bar does not serve food, but it is a short walk across the street to Swagger Fine Spirits & Food. The Piano Room is open daily from 10 a.m.-1:30 a.m.

## Swagger Fine Spirits & Food

8432 Wornall Road  
Across from The Piano Room, Swagger Fine Spirits & Food offers great food and an impressive draft beer and whiskey list.

Unlike most pubs, Swagger also serves breakfast on Fridays and Saturdays, and the breakfast burritos are a popular selection.

The atmosphere is casual, and the interior has a rustic feel. Though the bar may not have the aesthetic swagger its name would imply, it is a fantastic place to have dinner and to sample new beer.

The food is slightly expensive for a bar, but patrons get their money's worth.

Swagger's food has been praised by locals and visitors alike, and was featured on an episode of the Food Network's

program, "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives," with chef Guy Fieri.

Swagger offers happy hour specials on food and drinks from 3-7 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On Mondays, buffalo wings are 50 cents each, and Flying Monkey pints are \$2.

Tuesdays feature \$1 crispy tacos and \$2 street tacos, along with the evening "Geeks Who Drink" trivia.

Wednesdays offer live music and crab leg specials, and Thursday is steak night.

Whether patrons are visiting for food or drinks, Swagger's subtle charm is sure to satisfy.

Hours are 11 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Saturday, and 9 a.m. to midnight on Sunday.

The kitchen is open 11 a.m. -11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to midnight Friday, 8 a.m. to midnight Saturday and 8 a.m.-10 p.m. on Sunday.

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Swagger Fine Spirits & Food offers fantastic happy hour specials.



The Piano Room features music by Dave McCubbin, a member of the Kansas City Jazz Hall of Fame.

Photos by Sai Srikar Kadiyam

**All Around Kansas City**  
**Rhythm & Ribs**  
 festival preserves  
 Kansas City's cultural  
 legacy

Tyren Rushing Staff Writer



The festival was produced by Steve Baker Productions. “[Despite] some unexpected but heavy rain, we’re going forward with all the music,” Steve Baker said. “We’re having a great time, there is beautiful music in the Blue Room, the Atrium stage and the outdoor stage has been moved to the Gem Theater. The talent is ready to deliver great shows.”

The three performance stages featured a variety of acts, from platinum record selling R&B sensation Brian McKnight to Kansas City’s own salsa and Latin jazz pioneer Miguel “Mambo” DeLeon.

Chris Hazelton played his Hammond B3 Organ on the

Trumpets, alto saxophones and drums were key elements in many of the festival’s performances.

Atrium stage, offering a dynamic dueling show with Everette DeVan.

“This is my third time [performing at Rhythm & Ribs],” Hazelton said. “It’s exciting. This is the largest jazz festival that we have here in Kansas City. And on a personal note, DeVan taught me everything I know about playing this

Photo by Sai Srikr Kadiyam

Continued on Page 13

**film review**  
**‘The Perks of Being a Wallflower’**  
 “We accept the love we think we deserve”

Elizabeth Golden Managing Editor

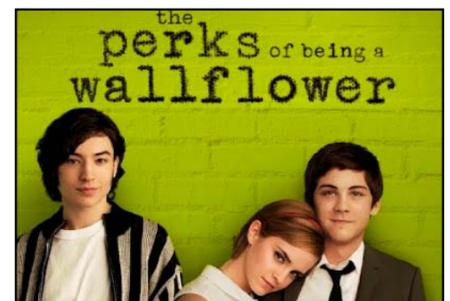


Photo courtesy of Google

“The Perks of Being a Wallflower” centers on the complicated aspects of life. Sex, drugs and violence make this average high school film into a heart-wrenching story of pain, emotions and struggle focused in the mind of a teenage boy.

Based on the best-selling book, “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” tells the narrative of Charlie (Logan Lerman), who is just starting his first year of high school. He has counted down the days until it begins and is not looking forward to the pain and torment he has dreaded for years. His friends were not around and his sister wouldn’t talk to him, leaving him with no support other than his English teacher, who noticed his literary genius from the first day.

In fact, Charlie dreams of being an author but claims he has nothing to write about. That is, until he meets a couple of misfit seniors who quickly merge him into their eccentric group.

Patrick (Ezra Miller) is an outgoing, gay class clown with an inner string of depression, left unnoticed by many. Charlie is introduced to Sam (Emma Watson), who quickly becomes the love of his life, but she is otherwise occupied.

Writer-director Stephen Chbosky adapted this film from his own novel, showcasing heart from start to finish. This is clearly a work of love for Chbosky as he carefully intertwines each frame to create a meaningful film based on the momentous book.

Not a single aspect of this film is worthy of criticism.

Chbosky does an excellent job of allowing the audience entrance into the inner mind of Charlie, complete with flashbacks and intriguing camera effects. This ingenious directing style is rare for such a newcomer, but Chbosky pulls off every journey, every smile and every tear.

All of the actors perform flawlessly. Lerman brilliantly showcases the struggle within Charlie as he acts awkwardly, which the part requires. It’s easy to get wrapped into his mind and experience every bit of drama at his side.

Relatively new to the acting scene, Miller also wonderfully portrays the hardships of high school as he experiences the struggle of being misunderstood due to his sexuality. Even his football-playing, closeted boyfriend torments him in front of the entire school and the pain is clearly seen in Miller’s beautiful performance.

Watson is no stranger to the limelight, but it’s strange to see her in a performance like this. She rocketed to stardom in the “Harry Potter” series and she will always be known as Hermione, no matter how she attempts to escape the title. She abandons her British accent to play Sam, full of her own share of pain and drama. It’s unusual to hear her sound “American,” since audiences typically don’t picture the English-to-American transition. Despite the initial moments of strangeness, Watson also portrays her character flawlessly.

“The Perks of Being a Wallflower” is a heart-felt portrayal of contemporary high school society, mixed in with a little bit of “The Breakfast Club” as Charlie’s childhood drama unravels in a cinematic way.

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Todd Wilkinson, on saxophone, leads his combo Photo by Sai Srikr Kadiyam

**Rhythm & Ribs: Continued from Page 12**

instrument. That’s a real honor.”

While the rain drove some vendors off, others just moved indoors to the visitor’s center. Frederick Preston, president of WordPlay Multimedia out of Jacksonville, Fla., was one of the vendors who stuck around. His company publishes books, makes documentaries, does graphic design work and sells T-shirts.

“I travel the country doing a lot of jazz festivals,” Preston said. “I found out about this one. I had actually been to Kansas City before, and they screened my documentary film, ‘Ain’t Nothing Funny,’ for about a week. Kansas City was good to me then, so I came back. My expectations for this are very high. Even with rain I expect a good turnout.”

Turnout at the festival was as diverse as the musical genres represented. Local jazz hounds, Japanese tourists and an entire family reunion seemed eager to enjoy some good eats and listen to music provided by more than 20 separate acts.

John and Annette Talbot said they were eagerly awaiting the band Elderstatesmen of Jazz on the Blue Room stage.

“We regularly go to a lot of the jazz performances around town, stuff here and the Majestic,” John Talbot said. “A long time ago, we used to go the Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival. We hadn’t been to this, but we always wanted to. We expect to hear a lot of good music.”

Gates BBQ, Fiorella’s Jack Stack BBQ and Jimmy D’s BBQ provided the ribs that accompanied the rhythm, and North Coast Brewing provided a great selection of beer for \$5 per 16-oz. cup.

This year’s festival also strove to be family-friendly. Children 12 and under enjoyed free admission and a variety of educational workshops, such as Jazz Storytelling, Brave New Voices youth jazz poetry, a Woman in Jazz Film Talk and The Art of Jazz Creation Station.

trushing@unews.com



Guitars are part of the jazz mix Photo by Sai Srikr Kadiyam

*Ask Phoenix*

Phoenix Rishon Columnist

Dear Phoenix, I cannot stand my roommate! What should I do?

Dear Frustrated Tenant,

Roommates can often be the cause of several problems. Due to the general nature of your inquiry, I must handle the answer holistically. I assume you are not in an intimate relationship with this roommate, and therefore, I divide roommates into three categories dependent on your relationship with him or her prior to the living arrangement: complete stranger, acquaintance or good friends.

When arranging to live with someone unfamiliar, beware of a potentially horrific clash of personalities. Some people were just not meant to live together. Pair me with a stubborn, narrow-minded homophobe and there will be bloodshed before I can even hang up my sequined dress. On the other hand, living with a compatible roommate may make you a new friend and provide a pleasant living situation.

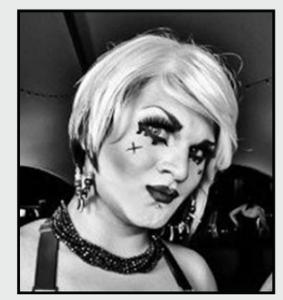
I warn against living with one of your best friends. Being roommates damages or ruins many friendships. Conflicts inevitably arise, and some friendships are strong enough to persevere, while others may crumble. Living with someone may reveal his or her true nature behind closed doors during the good and bad times. As I say to my best friends, “May we remain best friends, and never, ever shall we live together.”

Living with an acquaintance may have the best outcome, but it can also have the same consequences as the other two categories. Living with an acquaintance removes the pressure of maintaining the quality of a strong friendship.

In order to be compatible roommates, both parties need to be understanding and flexible. Your roommate may do things that get on your nerves, but similarly, you may also be annoying your roommate. Communication is essential for maintaining peace.

If the situation allows no escape, set reasonable, yet strict, boundaries and rules. Cordially establish the rules of privacy and property. Some people are comfortable with sharing their belongings, while others fingerprint at the slightest suspicion of foul play. Most are able to come to an understanding.

Living with someone can be stressful and difficult, but it is manageable. Conflicts will arise, but be sure to maintain maturity and respect. If you do not respect your roommate, he or she will most likely not respect you. Whether in a dormitory, apartment or house, demand respect and return it.



Dear Phoenix, is there a stigma against drag queens in the gay community?

Yes. Drag queens are usually seen as obnoxious, egotistical, female canines. A common misconception is that drag queens want to be women, but in reality, it usually serves as an enjoyable source of income.

Some look up to us, while others look down. We can be role models for those in the closet. We are occasionally seen as the epitome of coming out and not conforming to society. Gender-bending takes a great amount of courage, which is seen by those who are constantly silenced.

However, many others in the gay community see femininity as inferior and want men to be masculine. Not all drag queens are feminine. We create a character and perform femininely. Some queens out of drag are more masculine than many others in the community.

As it is, those who do not understand the art of drag carry a negative misconception and stigma against drag queens. Those who understand and enjoy the art respect us, and occasionally view us as celebrities.

Hope this helps!  
Toodles for now,

Phoenix Rishon

Questions can be submitted by email to [prishon@unews.com](mailto:prishon@unews.com).

‘Ask Phoenix’ does not substitute for a professional psychologist or psychiatrist. If you need psychological support: Contact the UMKC Counseling Center at 816-235-1635. If you are in crisis or thinking about suicide you deserve immediate support contact the Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386 -or- Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. If you are in immediate danger or in crisis, please call 911.

### Ben Moats: Continued from Page 9

One of his frequented covers is "Tomorrow's a Long Time," a less popular track by Bob Dylan. He found that his musical influences for his own work varied from old '60s country to Merle Haggard to '90s rap music.

However, Moats' intentions are to create his own sound, not mimic his favorite artists.

"When I write songs, I try not to consciously sound like anybody else. If I find myself saying 'Oh this kinda sounds like that part in a Radiohead song,' usually

that's a bad sign," he said.

The album was recorded on Moats' own makeshift home studio equipment and later remastered by Joel Nanos of Element Recording.

His friend Patrick Guinness is credited as the producer of the album, having helped Moats decide which songs would end up on the finished album.

"He was my biggest critic," Moats said. "I'm pleased with the way the album turned out though."

*rbrooks@unews.com*

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UMKC'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

# AYN RAND'S EPIC NOVEL OF A WORLD ON THE BRINK

## ATLAS SHRUGGED

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**Disclaimer:** The views of individual writers expressed below in this section do not represent the official stance of U-News. U-News welcomes participation from all UMKC students. Letters to the editor may be submitted to Editor-in-Chief Nathan Zoschke, [nzoschke@unews.com](mailto:nzoschke@unews.com).

## College ranking studies are flawed and arbitrary

**Roze Brooks**  
Senior Staff Writer

College rankings look enticing in print, but looking deeper into the arbitrary nature of media outlets and website criteria for prioritizing colleges is bleak and inconsistent.

The methodology of placing colleges in a Best of \_\_\_\_\_ list is confusing.

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, "16 key measures of quality" determine the merit of

each college.

Things get technical with complicated math and phrases like "category weight" and "sub-factor weight."

The charts on *usnews.com* list numerous ranking categories: undergraduate academic reputation, graduation and retention rates and financial resources, along with several others. Each category is broken into sub-factors such as acceptance rates, ACT scores and graduation rate performance.

Those categories are further

broken down into National Universities/National Liberal Arts Colleges and Regional Universities/Regional Colleges.

Somewhere in this frenzy of numbers-crunching, a best colleges list is produced each year. Anyone reading these charts in an attempt to understand why their college wasn't listed would likely not get an answer.

Criteria vary from study to study, confusing prospective students who may use rankings to decide where to attend college.

Further, it's hard to label a college as the best of anything without visiting the campus.

Universities surrounded by neighborhoods with high crime rates tend to drop in rank based on a criteria completely unrelated to the educational value of the school. Many of these campuses are also perfectly safe and do not reflect the crime rates of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The inclusion of student surveys in compiling research and opinions is a better way to generate a list of



Roze Brooks

tuition-worthy colleges.

No one knows how awesome or awful a school is better than the students.

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## Will Romney turn Big Bird into 'Sesame' chicken?

**Kynslie Otte**  
Senior Staff Writer

Governor Mitt Romney pledged to cut funding for PBS during the first presidential debate on Oct. 3, and in the same breath made the (now) famous statement "I love Big Bird!"

This outburst caught many Americans off guard, though likely none more than debate moderator Jim Lehrer, who has worked as a news anchor for PBS since 1973.

While Romney stands behind his stance that PBS should not receive government support, his insinuation that the cut would

noticeably reduce the national deficit is "malarkey," as Joe Biden might say.

Romney was ill-informed when he targeted PBS specifically.

The federal subsidy is not direct funding for PBS. It goes to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, non-profit organization that distributes the subsidy to PBS and other public TV and radio broadcast stations.

According to radio host and astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, CPB only received \$444.1 million for the 2012 fiscal year, which is approximately .012 percent of the

federal budget as a whole. PBS is largely privately funded, and only receives about 15 percent of its funding from CPB.

PBS provides essential educational programming in the U.S., especially for children in low-income households.

PBS programs such as "Sesame Street," "The Magic School Bus," "Bill Nye the Science Guy" and "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" have been teaching children (myself included) nationwide about science, numbers, spelling and morality for years.

Public broadcasting is effective, and according to a national survey

conducted by Hart Research and *American Viewpoint* in 2011, 69 percent of voters opposed proposals to eliminate federal funding of public broadcasts. It seems Romney missed the memo.

The irony of Romney's "Big Bird" statement is that "Sesame Street" would remain largely unaffected. "Sesame Street" makes enough money to survive without the federal subsidy, but many small rural PBS affiliates would go dark without the small amount of funding received from the subsidy.

This would cut off a significant source of learning for children across the country - more



Kynslie Otte

specifically children included in Romney's "47 percent" category.

If the governor truly does "love great schools," as he also stated during the debate, cutting the budget for an educational broadcast organization that teaches millions makes very little sense.

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### Letter to the Editor:

In response to the Oct. 8 satire column, 'Mascot Troubles'

To whom it may concern,

This week, student Caleb Files is being woefully bullied by a *U-News* writer using the pseudonym "Debbie Littles".

In light of the fact that it is national Anti-Bullying month, might we refrain from publishing articles which insult others? We as students want to know what is happening around UMKC, not who dislikes who.

-Amy G. Johnson  
Student Representative to the University of Missouri Board of Curators

**Editor's note:** Both Amy Johnson and Caleb-Michael Files are former *University News* employees.

### Reader's Response

**Editor's note:** The UMKC College Democrats' press release has been published verbatim. The correct spelling of the UMKC College Democrats Communications Director's last name is Gruber.

\* \* \* \* \*

Over the past year there have been a growing number of articles published from UMKC's own *University News (U-News)* that have made personal attacks on our own students.

While one of these attacks was on a named subject, who instead of being attacked for her role in policy decisions as a Student Curator was attacked for her character and other things not relating to how she carried out the duties of her job, two articles that followed were written from anonymous pen names as "first-person narratives" seething with degrading sarcasm and personal attacks that vaguely

reference incidents that may or may not have occurred in real life.

While we at the College Democrats find these attacks to probably point to a few local, particular students, what we find more disturbing than who [sic] the attacks are on is what these attacks represent.

Our students deserve to go to a university where they know they can be politically active, socially active and active in public policy without fear of having their opinions made to seem silly or worth less than those of others by the very organization on campus that is supposed to provide the backbone of our First Amendment rights.

In the passive-aggressive, spineless way the *University News* is choosing to make attacks on students or types of students (political activists) through anonymous pen names, they are

proving that they are no news organization. In fact, they are proving that they are the opposite: a farce designed only for personal revenge on people who have only tried help make our campus better.

There is no integrity in writing a column in a "newspaper" without attributing to the author, especially when there is no threat of violence or physical retaliation hanging over the head of the author.

The fact that these unnamed "journalists" are too afraid to say who they are when the only consequence is that they might be forced to answer for making unjournalistic, unprofessional attacks on members of the student body shows that they have no principle or search for journalistic truth, only a personal score to settle.

As political activists ourselves, it is disconcerting to see those around us anonymously called

out because they are not socially "liked" by the authors of a local, university newspaper. Our campus expects, and deserves, better.

- Andrew Miller**  
Chairman  
*UMKC College Democrats*
- Sophie White**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
*UMKC College Democrats*
- Kyle Gruber [sic]**  
Communications Director  
*UMKC College Democrats*
- Leanna Sloan**  
Campaigns & Philanthropy [sic]  
*UMKC College Democrats*
- Harsh Desai**  
Managing Director & Comptroller  
*UMKC College Democrats*



Mitt Romney hands pink slips to PBS cartoon characters.

Cartoon by Aaron Cecil

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