

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

UMKC's Independent Student Newspaper

## '127 Hours'

At UMKC, film inspiration Aron Ralston recalls, 'You're going to have to cut your arm off, dude.'

Bradley Hoffman

Staff Writer

**Pain** becomes a very relative term after cutting off your own arm with a dull pocket knife.

Aron Ralston did exactly that, and on Wednesday night at the Student Union Theatre, as part this year's Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy Symposium, he detailed the whole event for some 100 students.

"It was the most glorious, ecstatic, euphoric experience of my life," Ralston said.

In April 2003, Ralston was hiking alone in Blue John Canyon, located in southeastern Utah, when he decided to take a short cut through a narrow passage. It didn't take long before a boulder was jarred free, ensnaring his right arm.

"[My arm] disappears into this impossibly black shadow," Ralston said.

He quickly devised several ways to free himself. The first was by rigging a pulley system using climbing rope. He managed to wrap the boulder and attach the rope's other end to another rock above. Pulling and pulling, he tried to budge the boulder but soon realized that was a hapless endeavor.

His next effort was chipping at the rock with a discount pocket knife. He managed to chip about a golf ball's worth of rock in several hours and, after doing some calculations, factored it would take him several months to chip enough rock to free himself. Again, he was defeated.

"I remember saying to myself out loud, which I never do, you're going to have to cut your arm off, dude," Ralston said.

He detailed the difficulty of doing this. He had to begin by forcing the dull knife through his skin, then muscle.

"The chaos of that moment...and then the pain hit," he said.

Throughout the evening he repeated his message, alluding to life's boulders.

"Consider the boulders in your life," he asked. "Smile at your boulder," and, "I think our boulders are a blessing."

Even with the loss of his right arm in such a uniquely tragic event, Ralston continued to pursue his love of wilderness.

By 2005, he had summited all of Colorado's "fourteeners" mountains. He has gone rafting and rock climbing as well. Despite his audacity to continue, he wants to remind



ABOVE: Aron Ralston as portrayed by James Franco in '127 Hours.' PHOTO // Google

LEFT: Aron Ralston delivers the Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy Symposium address at the Student Union Theatre on Wednesday, March 13. PHOTO // Bradley Hoffman

everyone that, "it's not what you do, it's who you are."

Ralston's story is personal, but it serves as an example others should strive to follow.

"Whatever your boulder is, I wish you that it might be your greatest lesson," he said.

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# Culture, music and leadership highlight second annual ALAS conference

Johanna Poppel Staff Writer

In 90 minutes, one could have witnessed the romance of Tango in Argentina, the art of Capoeira in the jungles of Brazil and experienced Mexican folklore in Veracruz.

These events occurred as part of the Association of Latin American Students' second annual leadership conference, held March 15 and 16 in the Student Union.

College and high school students were invited to the conference. Hispanic student organizations from regional colleges such as University of Missouri - Columbia and Emporia State University attended as well.

The conference opened Friday evening with nationally recognized speaker Mena Badros. Badros, an

executive for CoolSpeak, is a youth motivational speaker and program facilitator. Badros's most important lesson is, "Life is to live."

He spoke of pursuing his second chance at life in the United States after living a disease-stricken life in Africa. His focus was to live with a purpose and to utilize the opportunities America has to offer. The night ended with a fiesta hosted by a local Latin club D.J.

Saturday morning, participants attended workshops focused on leadership, teamwork and professional etiquette. ALAS officers Ivan Figueroa, Brittany Murphy and Angelica Beltran held a workshop that helped inform high school attendees about college.

Saturday afternoon at the cultural show, students and community members took a journey through

various Latin American rituals, dances and music.

Along with local bands and dance academies, UMKC students performed in the cultural show.

UMKC professor Xanath Caraza introduced the cultural show by sharing poems that reflected on her experience of immigrating to the United States from Mexico.

She emphasized that Latin American culture is integrated in many aspects of American culture and is thriving in our local community.

Idaima Calderon and Martice Baskerville danced bachata, and junior Andres Chaurand, and seniors Aniseto Herrera and Anna Jobe danced Mexican folklore.

Afterwards, Adrienne Foster, Mayor of Roeland Park, Kan., shared her story of being the first



Members of the Brazil Academy demonstrate various dances, music and costumes unique to Brazil. PHOTO // Johanna Poppel

of a large hispanic family to go to college. The conference provided students with the skills and inspiration to motivate them to reach their true potential. The conference provided students with the skills and inspiration to motivate them to reach their true potential. [jpoppel@unews.com](mailto:jpoppel@unews.com)

## Faculty Profile



Lora Lacey-Haun. PHOTO // Courtesy of UMKC

# As co-chair of Kansas City Health Commission, Lora Lacey-Haun takes on obesity and junk food

Kate Baxendale Staff Writer

Lora Lacey-Haun, Dean of the UMKC School of Nursing and Health Studies, has been appointed co-chair of the Kansas City Health Commission by Mayor Sly James. She will serve a three-year term as co-chair of the commission.

Its mission is to achieve a citywide collaboration and partnership of organizations and individuals to work together to build a healthier community.

"My first initiative is to see the Kansas City Health Improvement Project implemented," she said. "This program looks at reducing health disparities in our city's most vulnerable populations."

As co-chair, Lacey-Haun's responsibility is to track legislation and health policies that affect Kansas City.

"My job is to see that our citizens understand what is going on health-wise," she said. "I need to make my stance known on our city's health policies, especially with the new health levee approaching."

Lacey-Haun discussed a proposal by Truman Medical Center and the

Hospital Hill Economic Development Corporation to build a grocery store near 27th and Troost Avenue. The site will be home to a 35,000-square-foot grocery store, which is expected to open within 14 to 18 months.

The \$11.5 million project will make fresh produce available to surrounding communities living in a food desert, an area in which there are few grocery stores and even fewer that have healthy food options. The only nearby options for residents, many of whom lack cars, are drive-thru restaurants and convenience stores.

"Truman Medical Center also has a Mobile Market," she said. "They use a donated bus turned into a refrigerated food container to deliver fresh produce to certain drop points in the downtown and east Kansas City areas."

The Healthy Harvest Mobile Market visits nine different locations, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The service offers reasonable prices. Cash, credit, debit and SNAP are all accepted.

Truman Medical Center also has a farmer's market on Hospital Hill every Wednesday from April to October.

Recently, Lacey-Haun was quoted in *The New York Times* for having signed a petition to regulate the amount of sweeteners in sodas and other beverages.

She said about 30 percent of Kansas City's population is overweight and another 30 percent is obese.

"I cited this statistic from the Kansas City Health Department annual report," she said. "The Food and Drug Administration regulates sodium and fat intake, but there is still no regulation about sugar intake. High intakes of sugar negatively impact health."

Without FDA sugar intake regulation, health educators' warnings about the negative effects of high sugar intakes will not be taken seriously.

"In order to support healthy eating, we need the FDA's approval in order to do a more effective job in health education," she said.

The Kansas City Health Commission will be working diligently these next few years to keep pace with the Affordable Care Act and changes made in Medicare.

Among many initiatives, one of the commission's goals for 2013 is to add vending machines with healthier options throughout the city.

Lacey-Haun was recently selected as one of nine "2013 Icons of Education" in the January issue of Ingram's magazine.

She will retire from UMKC this year, where she has been dean of the School of Nursing and Health Studies since 2004.

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“The Food and Drug Administration regulates sodium and fat intake, but there is still no regulation about sugar intake. High intakes of sugar negatively impact health.”

**-Lora Lacey-Haun**

# Kansas City streetcar Main Street corridor route set to open in early 2015

## 2-mile starter line could be extended south to UMKC's Volker campus

Nathan Zoschke Editor-in-Chief

planned \$102 million downtown streetcar line is on track to open in early 2015 after a lawsuit challenging the proposal was derailed last Friday by a Jackson County circuit judge.

The suit, filed by two downtown property owners, claimed a special taxing district to fund the streetcar system was unconstitutional.

Last fall, downtown residents overwhelmingly favored a 1-cent sales tax increase in addition to several new property tax assessments to build the streetcar system. Its route will follow the Main Street corridor from 3rd and Grand Avenue in the River Market to Union Station.

Advocates of the downtown streetcar—including Mayor Sly James, the Downtown Council, Kansas City Regional Transit Alliance, Transit Action Network and Streetcar Neighbors—believe it will usher in a new era of construction and development.

Since 2000, downtown Kansas City has experienced an influx of new residents and entertainment venues. Once-vacant buildings in areas like the Crossroads Arts District now boast restaurants, clubs, art galleries and trendy loft-style condominiums.

The new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, Power and Light District and Sprint Center have bolstered Kansas City's civic profile. However, residents and community leaders cite the need for continued investment.

While downtown's population has nearly doubled since the turn of the millennium, its 20,000 residents are a fraction of the same area's pre-World War II peak of more than 100,000.

Then, Kansas City had a streetcar system that encompassed most of the urban core, extending to areas such as Waldo, the Historic Northeast, Swope Park and Kansas City, Kan.

That streetcar system was decommissioned in 1957, when the nascent interstate highway system heralded a new era of suburban development.

Historic buildings were demolished and replaced with parking. Restaurants, department stores and residents left the city for the suburbs. Office jobs were soon to follow.

After years of decline, downtown has seen a turnaround over the past decade with more than \$6 billion in new investment, according to the Downtown Council.

Mass transit has been an ongoing discussion since the late '90s. Various proposals have proven to be unworkable or lost at the polls.

Five of the six Kansas City light rail proposals to fail at the polls were spearheaded by Clay Chastain, a former Kansas City resident who lives in Virginia.

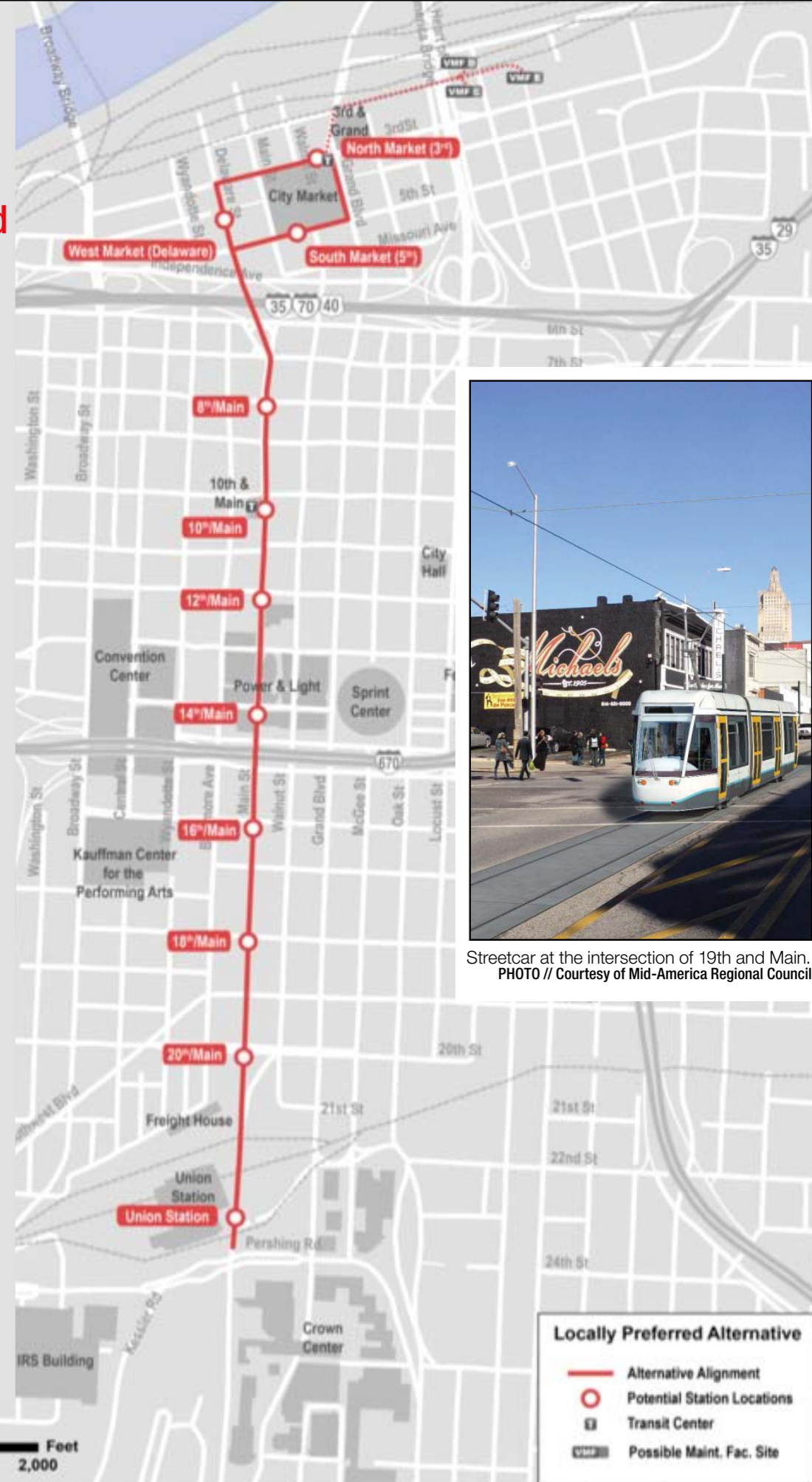
A 2006 Chastain proposal to build a 22-mile light rail line passed with 53 percent of the vote. The \$2.5 billion plan was rejected by the city council because its only funding mechanism—a ¼-cent sales tax—would only generate \$1 billion.

The current streetcar plan is modest by comparison.

"I don't think [the Chastain proposal] would have worked," said Dr. Peter Eaton, director of the UMKC Center for Economic Information. "It was put forth without a lot of research."

The streetcar proposal, Eaton said, is a low-risk investment.

David Johnson, co-founder of Streetcar Neighbors, said a light rail



Streetcar at the intersection of 19th and Main. PHOTO // Courtesy of Mid-America Regional Council

CONTINUED // Page 4

Streetcar map. MAP // Streetcar Neighbors

# Police Blotter

**March 9  
6:50 p.m.**  
Assault  
Suitemates assaulted one another over the cleanliness of the kitchen in Oak Place Apartments.

**March 10  
4:05 p.m.**  
Threat  
A student overheard her suitemate and her suitemate's mother threaten to shoot her and hide her body in Oak Place Apartments.

**March 12  
9:00 a.m.**  
Property Damage  
University residents at 53rd and Holmes noticed the screen on the sun porch had been cut.

**3:20 p.m.**  
Property Damage  
A student returned to his vehicle in the School of Education parking lot to find his driver's side mirror had been broken.

**10:32 p.m.**  
Burglary  
The student returned to find electronics and women's underwear missing from a house at 5300 and Charlotte.

**March 14  
2:05 p.m.**  
Violation of Rules and Regulations  
Officers confiscated a parking pass that had been reported lost in the Biological Sciences parking lot.

**4:54 p.m.**  
Violation of Rules and Regulations  
Officers confiscated a parking pass that had been reported lost in the Rockhill Parking Garage.

**7:05 p.m.**  
Traffic Arrest  
A traffic stop resulted in the driver being arrested for driving on a suspended license at 53rd and Charlotte.

**Corrections**  
Issue 23 Riddhiman Das Student Profile  
Galleon Labs was founded in 2012, not 2011.

# Soul Food Friday offers food for thought

Joseph Salazar Staff Writer

Hushpuppies are more than delicious—they're a part of African-American history. "The hush puppy was created during a time of bondage," explained Tiffany Williams, Director of Multi-Cultural Student Affairs.

When slaves, trying to escape to freedom, "heard the slave master's dog, they took that deep-fried, battered treat, threw it out the window and said, 'hush puppy,'" in an effort to quiet the dog's barking, said Williams.

Students, faculty, and staff learned about hushpuppies and more at Soul Food Friday, part of this year's Black History Month events sponsored by Multicultural Student Affairs and the African American Student Union.

The goal of the event was to provide students with a greater appreciation of an integral part of African-American culture: soul food.

Attendees were served buffet-style from a menu that included mashed potatoes and gravy, fried fish, chicken legs, greens, sweet potatoes and corn bread. While participants ate, they listened and took part in a discussion about what makes soul food what it is.

Soul food, like the hushpuppy,



Hushpuppies, like other soul foods, provided slaves with comfort and protection. CREDIT // Google

according to Williams, is more than comfort food. It provided slaves protection and safety.

"When you learn that, you eat a hushpuppy in a totally different mindset than you did before," she said.

Dr. Jacqueline Wood, director of the Black Studies program said soul food is "a perfect example of African American appropriation—they all come out of a period of history in slavery when African-Americans were given the worst aspects of any animal. We took those and turned them

around and made them delicious foods that we would be able to enjoy." Wood discussed how prime cuts of meat, like ribs, were not always considered to be quality meat.

Her comments underscored how influential African-American cuisine has been—ribs are the most expensive dish today at classic Kansas City restaurants like Gates and Fiorella's Jack Stack.

"Oftentimes our students of color have challenges identifying, 'What makes me relevant? What about my history makes me relevant?'" Williams said, in discussing the rationale behind the program.

Learning about how soul food has shaped both American history and cuisine creates an opportunity for students to be more confident that they are an integral part of the American story.

Students of all racial backgrounds turned out for the event, which takes place annually. Several students commented on how delicious the food was.

The spicy greens were a favorite among many, second only to the food for thought.

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# Streetcar: Continued from Page 3

makes infrequent stops and is geared towards commuters. A streetcar, he said, functions as a neighborhood circulator that makes more frequent stops.

Streetcars also share the road with automobile traffic, and thus, move slower. With light rail, the right of way is restricted.

"There's a much greater impact [with a streetcar], even though it carries fewer people," Johnson said. "It would have taken a long time to see a significant impact [with light rail]."

Debate persists about the economic impact of a streetcar. Return on investment can be difficult to measure. Statistics cited by streetcar advocates show a 7,500 percent return on investment in Portland and 2,000 percent in Tampa.

"I don't think those are realistic," Eaton said. "They're taking all of the development that has occurred and attributing it to the streetcar."

"In other cities, there have been changes, but the question is whether you can directly attribute these changes to the streetcar," Eaton said. "There has been a buildup recently in condo-type housing downtown. There is no question that [the streetcar] will contribute to the value of that

property." A \$300,000 condo would pay about \$400 in new taxes.

However, many downtown properties are covered by tax abatements that cover 50-to-100 percent of the property's true value.

Eaton said many downtown residents will still pay lower taxes than other parts of the city. A streetcar could help boost demand for multi-unit housing and entertainment venues.

"There's no question that it connects things and spurs commercial development," he said. "The people who live there [downtown] see this as a boon."

"The way to look at this is as an amenity for people who are interested in walking," said Dr. Jared Carr, director of the Bloch School's L. P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs. "I live downtown, and I don't think about taking the bus to go four-to-six blocks, but I would take the streetcar."

Carr agreed the primary objective is to bolster entertainment districts and housing development.

"This could have a spillover effect for other businesses.

"It creates a buzz," he said. "On some level, what benefits downtown



Streetcar Neighbors logo. CREDIT // Streetcar Neighbors

is also a benefit for large downtown employers."

Johnson stressed the potential to expand the streetcar line to other areas. The city has already issued a request to study extensions.

"The biggest bang for the buck is connecting a business district with a university campus," he said.

The streetcar line is included on site analysis maps for the proposed UMKC Downtown Arts Campus.

"There is an air of inevitability of expanding the streetcar south to the main campus," Johnson said. "I have talked to people from the Northeast and West Bottoms, and they all say, 'That would be great, but why don't you go to UMKC first?'"

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# Engineer's Week



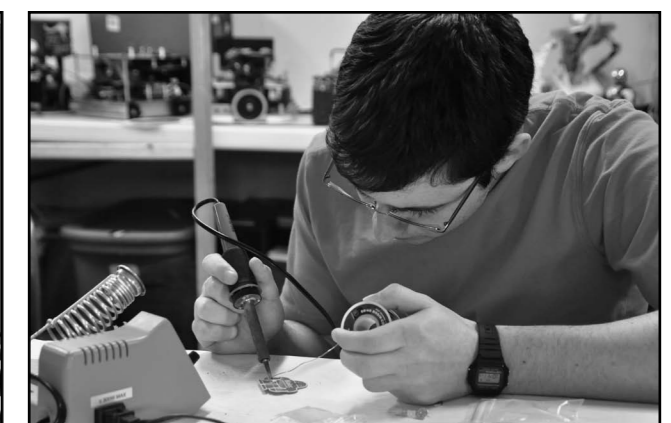
Civil engineering students used concrete bowling balls they designed to knock down pins outside of Flarheim Hall on March 6. PHOTO // Sai Srikar Kadiyam



A parachute is designed to prevent an egg from breaking as it is dropped two stories from the third floor of Flarshiem Hall by Audrey Barnard. PHOTO // Sai Srikar Kadiyam



IBM engineer Dr. Pradeep Natarajan talks to students at UMKC. PHOTO // Sai Srikar Kadiyam



Engineering student hard at work on an electrical circuit. PHOTO // Sai Srikar Kadiyam

# Geeking out

## Learning and fun unite STEM students at UMKC

Sai Srikar Kadiyam Staff Writer

Concrete bowling balls, a two-story egg drop and a lecture from an IBM engineer marked this year's Engineer's Week at UMKC.

While E-Week was celebrated nationwide Feb. 17-23, several events were postponed until the week of March 4 due to inclement weather.

The events focused on promoting STEM — the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. E-week brought out a new way of learning and interacting among engineering students at UMKC.

E-week kicked off on Feb. 17 with a lecture by Dr. Pradeep Natarajan, an IBM engineer who specializes in database management software.

He explained how IBM's Informix Timeseries software benefits utilities companies, which use the centralized database to track utility consumption over time.

Two events were organized by the UMKC Robotics team: the Tesla 500 Race and a soldering tutorial.

Named after Nikola Tesla, who pioneered the use of alternating electrical current, students who participated in the race developed electric cars running on the power created by hand-cranked generators.

The soldering tutorial taught students how to put together a small LED (light emitting diode) circuit that alternately emits flashing light.

In contrast with the Tesla 500, another race employed mechanical energy through human-powered vehicles (HPVs).

In this event, students competed with a human-powered vehicle designed by the UMKC HPV team. Human-powered vehicles, like conventional bicycles, run the power generated by the human muscle.

In each race, students took turns racing the HPV.

The concrete bowling event was conducted by several engineering organizations on campus. In this event, concrete bowling balls designed by civil engineering students were used to knock down pins outside Flarshiem Hall.

In the egg drop competition, organized by the (HKN) Eta Kappa Nu Honor society, students designed a small protective case to insulate their eggs, which were dropped from the third floor of Flarshiem Hall.

The students were judged based on the safety, accuracy and size the packaging design. Students received bonus points if their egg could be dropped from higher floors.

Most of the nearly 20 participants' eggs survived the drop, but several could not withstand the initial two-story fall.

Other events focused on career development and socialization.

A STEM career fair held Feb. 20 in Pierson Auditorium gave students looking for internships and full time opportunities

to interact with the employers and gain industry exposure.

A Mr. Engineer Contest, organized by Student Council/Society of Women Engineers (SWE), was held at Californos in Westport. Seven students from different engineering departments dressed like nerds to compete for the Mr. Engineer title, which was claimed by Justin Daugherty, senior Civil Engineering major.

"We've had a pretty good response considering that several of our activities had to be rescheduled due to snow," said Whitney Molloy, Director of Student Affairs for the school of Computing and Engineering

Eric Gonzalez, senior Computer Science major, said he enjoyed E-Week because "it gives the students a chance to take a quick break from studies and do something fun with an engineering twist."

Grant Meyer, a senior mechanical engineering major and president of the SCE Student Council, said he enjoyed the collaboration between several student organizations.

"Everyone is always creative, and the participants win prizes so some events can get really competitive, which is really fun to watch," he said.

Meyer said he particularly enjoyed the Mr. Engineer contest.

"We get a group of engineering guys to dress up as nerds, play trivia and perform a talent," he said. "It's an opportunity for them to embarrass themselves and make everyone laugh. It's a really fun event, and everyone had a good time."

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“Everyone is always creative, and the participants win prizes so some events can get really competitive.”  
-Grant Meyer

**Art Sounds**  
 Performance provides poetic reflection on Occupy Wall Street Movement



Performers recite the words of poet Dina Von Dweck. PHOTO // Joey Hill

**Joey Hill** Staff Writer

The Kansas City Art Institute, in collaboration with UMKC, hosted the fifth operatic reading of poet of late Dina Von Zweck's "A Day In The Park," with musical accompaniment of the season on Tuesday March 12.

Before passing away last December, Zweck wrote the poem during the wake of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, primarily writing on the experience of walking through Zuccotti Park. In the poem she describes the park, neighborhood and protestors with meticulous detail, while simultaneously falling into moments of extreme literary surrealism and symbolic writing.

Her descriptions are physical as well as emotional, since she also described the feeling that the walk exuded. She addressed the CBS newsbreaks that were being presented during the protest and concluded with the eventual moment of police intervention.

The poem was performed with musical accompaniment composed by Jorge Sosa, a friend of Zweck who arranged a fascinating and off-kilter soundtrack consisting of a clarinet, a cello and a trumpet. Also included were ambient noise and subtle, quiet, jungle-like beats from a computer. This inclusion of sound helped envelop the audience in

the idea of the poetic journey through the park. During her days walking through the park, Zweck took a number of photos which were to be presented in a slideshow with the performance, through her passing prevented the photos from being shown.

Even without the addition of the photographs, Zweck's poetic descriptions of the park still resonate powerfully, working with the music to paint a furious and surreal New York. The usage of cello with clarinet created a sorrowful, weighted feeling, bringing to mind a tragic visage of squalor. Simultaneously, the listener can feel a sense of happiness. At times Zweck employs descriptions of the beauty of the protest, and stands as a reminder of the very gorgeousness of the efforts made by the protesters.

Sosa's composition may appear ambient though it aids in the communication of the poems' themes, both uplifting and otherwise. The poem is read in an elegant style, like an opera using a soprano and a baritone singer. In certain moments the singing is abandoned for cold, monotone readings of statements from occupiers as well as excerpts from *The Occupy Wall Street Journal*.

What this collaboration between Sosa and Zweck is a literary and musical portrait of a radical moment in history.

"A Day In The Park" is considered a "multimedia

**CONTINUED // Page 12**

**Students shine in their performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'**

**Joey Hill** Staff Writer

The UMKC Conservatory opened a rendition of Benjamin Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," an operatic adaptation of William Shakespeare's classic comedy, on Thursday, March 14.

The story's overlapping plotlines finally connect in the conclusion. The play centers around three parties: four young lovers, a troupe of six actors and the mystical fairies of the forest.

The plot revolves largely around the four young lovers, Hermia, Demetrius, Lysander, and Helena, who are manipulated with a love potion by the fairies. Most of the play takes place in a mystical forest. The setting is accented by a minimalistic set, which consists of a large tree and a sheet backdrop with the image of a forest projection onto it, making a large amount of attention directed toward the performers.

Shakespeare's lines were not altered for Britten's rendition, and

at times, their power is intensified by the shift from speech to song.

The dancers were a hallmark of the performance. Acting as purveyors of the world, a group of fairy dancers appeared after each scene to silently announce the transition. Their movements are profound and speak to their identities as forest fairies, both graceful and beautiful. They move weightlessly as they float over the stage and dance in unison. They exude a pure feeling of the nature's bounty and beauty, swaying like tall blades of grass being gently pushed by the winds

The Queen of the Fairies, Titania's subjects especially exudes this classical elation. Garbed in loose dresses with vined greenery wrapped around them, they flirtatiously channel the happiness of an eternal youth and beauty. The fairies are mystical and visually decadent in both their movements and appearance. The human actors expertly play off comedy and, at times, frailty, amid the confusion



Students dance to a Shakespeare classic. PHOTO // Joey Hill

beset upon them.

What solidifies the dream-like atmosphere is the orchestra. Expertly conducted by UMKC's Robert Bode, the soundtrack is

alive as it softly breathes. The rising and falling volume intensifies extreme feelings of fantasy. It is with all these elements working together that "A Midsummer

Night's Dream" feels impossibly beautiful and infinitely incredible.

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*More bands to be announced. Lineup subject to change*

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# Movie Review

## 'Silver Linings Playbook' delves into loss, mental anguish and healing

Elizabeth Golden Movie Review

Yes, "Silver Linings Playbook" is phenomenal by every definition of the word. With an all-star cast, hilarious-yet-serious moments and a touching storyline, this undersold film is the year's top Oscar-nominated films still playing in theatres.

Although it was released several months ago, this film still hasn't received the recognition it deserves. The only buzz it received was during Oscar season, and still, the moviegoers have overlooked this phenomenal film.

Life has rough moments, some worse than others, and Pat (Bradley Cooper) is dealing with the worst of it. He lost everything including his house, his job and his wife after nearly beating her lover to death. He is forced to spend eight months in a mental institution where he is diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

After striking a plea bargain, he is able to live with his dysfunctional mother and father

(Robert De Niro and Jacki Weaver) and is forced to stay away from his wife. When Pat meets widowed Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence), who has her own set of problems, his life begins to change.

Tiffany promises to help Pat reconnect with his wife in exchange for an odd request. An unexpected bond begins to form and silver linings appear in both of their lives.

The chemistry between Cooper and Lawrence is very unlikely, but it is undeniable. They play up each other's craziness as they delve deep into their own character. Rarely do two insane personalities equal a perfect combination of sanity.

The performances in "Silver Linings Playbook" are all outstanding and all deserved to be Oscar nominated. Unfortunately, Lawrence was the only one to win due to harsh competition, but she definitely had the best performance of her career.

Her character reeks of quirkiness with a little bit of insanity thrown in, and it's

obvious she is having a blast in the role. She brings an unusual sarcastic humor that is sure to make cynics smile.

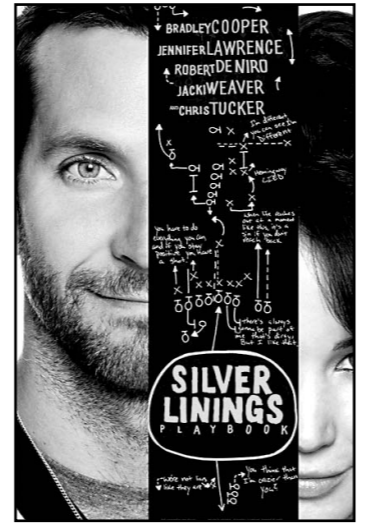
Cooper's character can be annoying at times, but that is intentional. He does an excellent job playing such a harsh but realistic personality, proving that despite his mental health, he is not the dictionary definition of insane.

Every aspect of the film is multi-faceted with realistic characters, uncomfortable moments and a harsh realism.

Director David Russell does a wonderful job of bringing dysfunction to life. Unlike many directors, he does not shy away from painful conversations and awkward characters.

"Silver Linings Playbook" cannot be summed into a single genre. It is a romantic comedy, a family drama and a heart-warming dramedy all in one.

It would be impossible to not smile at least occasionally while the dynamic duo of Pat



'Silver Linings Playbook'. CREDIT // Google

and Tiffany forms character and the story truly comes to life.

The story is adorable and awkward. No other words could truly sum up this unusual quasi love story.

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## Men's Basketball



Men's basketball head coach Matt Brown was dismissed last week with one year left on his contract. PHOTO // Courtesy of UMKC Athletics

# New coach, new court, new conference

## Team looks to rebound after conference tournament loss

Dan Moreno Staff Writer

The UMKC basketball season ended last week after a 69-58 conference tournament loss to North Dakota State on March 10.

Trinity Hall led the team with 14 points, and Brad Reid led with seven rebounds.

The 'Roos also suffered a 71-34 away game loss to North Dakota State on Jan. 31 and a 63-44 home loss on Jan. 5.

The Bison lost against conference champion South Dakota State on March 12.

For the 'Roos, a new era awaits the men's basketball team in the 2014 season. The team will play on a new court with a new coach in a new conference.

Tim Hall, UMKC Athletics Director, announced last Tuesday that Head Coach Matt Brown, who led the 'Roos for six seasons, was dismissed with a year remaining in his contract.

Despite his losing record, Hall said Brown "ran the men's basketball team

with dignity" and contended that student-athlete welfare and academics were on of Brown's priorities.

As the championship dream ended, UMKC also said goodbye to the Summit League as it prepares to join the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) next fall. The main purpose of this change is to "improve community engagement and financial strength," Morton said.

Television is thought to be one of the advantages UMKC will enjoy, as networks like ESPN will broadcast most of the games.

In order to have a larger seating capacity and better coverage, the team's home games will be played downtown at Municipal Auditorium, instead of Swinney Recreation Center.

The "Muni" has a capacity of 7,316 seats available and has hosted the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association tournament since 2003.

It also hosts the women's games of the "Big 12" when Kansas City hosts this tournament.

dmoreno@unews.com



David Brown and UMKC student Sean Ewing in the 2011 Guadalajara Paralympics. PHOTO // Courtesy of Sean Ewing

# Sean Ewing's passion for running leads to fourth-place Paralympics finish

Kate Baxendale Staff Writer

Senior Sean Ewing went for the gold at the 2012 Paralympics in London.

Ewing is a guide runner for track and field athlete David Brown, whom he met through his church in St. Louis.

Brown attended the Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis, where Ewing said he developed his athleticism.

"He has always been a tough competitor," he said.

Ewing started doing track and field for St. Louis Express when he was eight years old. He ran track for Hazelwood Central High School, and he continued to run at Highland Community College in St. Joseph, Mo.

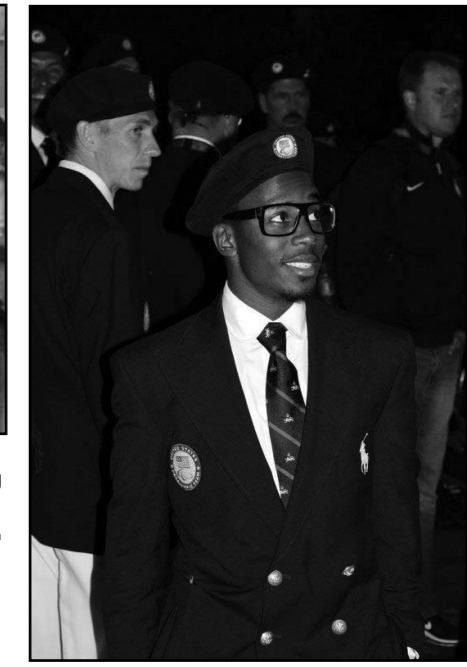
At first, Ewing was unable to accept scholarships from Division One universities because of his low ACT score, so he decided to run at the junior college level. Ewing is a two-time All Jayhawk Conference champion in the 60 meter dash, a two-time National Junior College Athletic Association qualifier in the 4x100 meter relay and an All-Jayhawk Conference champion in the 4x100 meter dash.

After earning his associate's degree in 2009, Ewing transferred to UMKC. However, Ewing said he is ineligible to run track and field for UMKC because he is a paid member of the Paralympics. "At that point, I had already achieved everything I wanted to achieve as an athlete," he said. "I wanted to help with the success of others. I really want to coach someday."

Ewing decided he would help others in the sport instead of furthering his personal career. In 2010, Ewing partnered with Brown at the 2011 World Youth Games in Colorado.

Cathy Sellers, the track and field high-performance director for the Paralympics, scouted Brown and Ewing and invited them to compete in the 2011 Paralympics World Championship in Guadalajara, Mexico. Brown placed fifth overall at the age of 18.

"David was so young then, and he was already doing so well," he said. "I could see his potential to do even better. He was a world class wrestler



Sean Ewing. PHOTO // Courtesy of Sean Ewing

before he completely lost his sight."

The Paralympics has a classification process, which ensures that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for able bodied athletes, according to the organization's website.

Brown is in sport class T11, meaning he competes in track events and he is in class 11 of 13, the class that has athletes with the lowest vision.

Athletes in this sport class are required to be tethered to a guide runner with a non-stretch band attached to their wrists. Because each athlete in this class requires a guide runner, only four athletes can compete in a track event at one time.

"In London, the lanes were really tight so it was a challenge to stay inside the lines," he said.

Brown got fourth overall at the London Paralympic Games, just missing the podium.

"The Parade of Nations was the number one experience of my life," he said. "When we entered the stadium, I immediately started crying from excitement. It is the ultimate goal in any sport [to represent your country]."

Ewing and the other Team USA athletes wore \$1,200 worth of Ralph Lauren clothes.

"An athlete from another country kept pointing to my beret," he said. "I couldn't understand what he was saying, but I just gave it [the beret] to him."

Ewing commented on Oscar Pistorius, the South African Paralympic sprinter whose legs were amputated below the knee. Pistorius wears lightweight fiber prosthetics when he competes.

"I don't think it's unfair for him to compete with able-bodied athletes," he said. "It takes him a long time to build up speed on those things. His form is everything of an able-bodied athlete. He is not at any advantage."

The Paralympic Games began in Rome in 1960. The first games included just 10 countries and 31 athletes, with 25 medal events. At

CONTINUED // Page 12

# Fashion

## Decked out apartments

### Students talk style

Andreina Byrne Staff Writer



Lorraine Sands and McKayla Smith with their cats, Roosevelt and Henry. PHOTO // Andreina Byrne

Adding a personal decorative flair to any apartment is possible with as little as \$10.

Style, fads and decorative themes may change, but four UMKC students are living proof that while trends change, they will always be a step ahead of common societal interest.

#### Where do you get most of your items?

Junior Psychology major Mimi Haddix: "I usually get most of my items from my parents' house or from my friends. I like to collect bones, childhood photos and other things that have sentimental value."

#### What is your favorite item?

Freshman Spanish major Lorraine Sands: "My favorite item is probably the photo of my past cat, Patrick."

Haddix: "My roommate's framed photo of Stamos is one of my favorite items. I also really like the pictures that I have of my brothers and me."

Junior Nursing major Joey Waldenmeyer: "I love all of my street signs, flags, jerseys, old license plates, and posters. Pretty much anything that can be thumb-tacked to the wall."

#### How would you describe your style?

Waldenmeyer: "My roommate and I have a lot of team support for Sporting KC and the [Kansas] Jayhawks, so we like displaying their flags and jerseys around our place."

McKayla Smith, junior Philosophy major: "Roosevelt and Henry [her cats] kind of dictate how we decorate our apartment because if we leave anything too close to the ground, they will tear it to shreds."



Mimi Haddix with her prized possessions. PHOTO // Andreina Byrne

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Joey Waldenmeyer shows off his favorite items. PHOTO // Andreina Byrne

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# Death in Spandex

## Death dances the streets of 1980s Kansas City in 'Slashdance'

Joey Hill

Staff Writer

It's easy to say the walking un-dead have infested almost every corner of the present culture.

Zombies are proving to appear as a full blown cultural force, finding a place for themselves in any setting, any genre and any decade. Thus, it's no surprise they would find a comfortable spot in the 1980s.

"Slashdance" which premiered on March 7, is a musical horror-comedy performed at the Coterie Theatre. It meets '80s dance classic "Flashdance" with a hostile, zombie-infested Kansas City as survivors struggle to make their dreams come true.

The original "Flashdance" was released in 1983 and starred actress Jennifer Beals as Alexandra Owens, a welder who dreams of becoming a professional dancer.

The film has since gained a cult following. It should be noted that

"Slashdance" is not simply "Flashdance" with zombies. When one walks into the theater and searches for a seat, they are greeted with a smoky set illuminated with bright fluorescent blue, red, yellow and green lights. There's a large towering wall of debris covered with scaffolding and hazard signs all the while loud '80s pop music blares from every corner.

This is the barricade, a wall made to keep the cannibals, as they are referred to in the play, from the few remaining survivors. The barricade is kept up by a group of welders, one of which is the beautiful Alexis Bowers, a fighter who dreams of one day going to the prestigious Kansas City School of Classical Ballet and Pole Dancing. The road to fame is hard, and as the body count rises, she beings to understand what really drives her passion.

The play is performed so expertly, it can actually stand on its own as a fantastic story without any real knowledge of the original film. Much of the comedy is

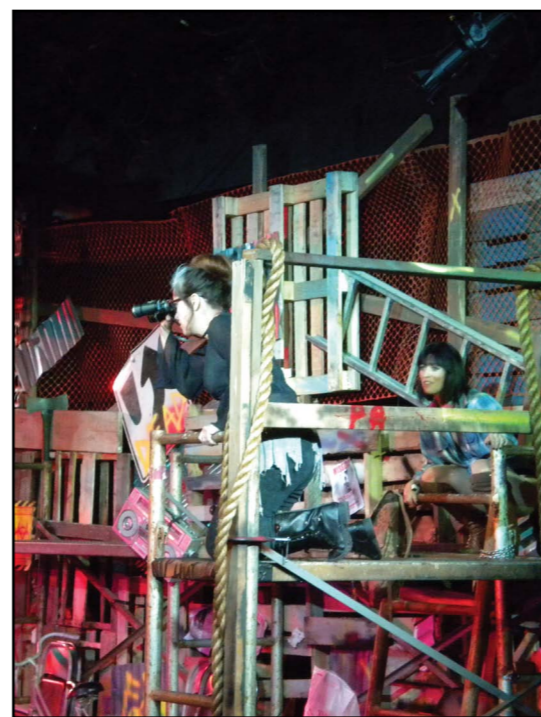
lighthearted though rather mature in some moments. The moments of violent eradication of hoards of cannibals rushing the stage help make it clear why audience members much be at least 13.

The choreography is fantastic not deviating from the source material and expertly incorporating the hack and slash moments of cannibal killing with pulsating lighting and the unforgettable '80s-based soundtrack. The action never lets up and even if it appears as though it has, the blood-curdling screams of the cannibal hoards are not far behind.

"Slashdance" feels like a campy '80s horror film when it needs to, and it can also be absolutely hilarious. It's a triumph of musical comedy theater never taking itself too seriously and an all-around fantastic show.

"Slashdance" will run through March 24.

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'Slashdance' at the Coterie Theatre. PHOTO // Joey Hill

**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).

# Kenyan elections underscore the importance of voting

Peter Makori

Contributing Writer

The day preceding America's presidential elections last fall, Communication Studies instructor Peter Morello asked students in his Media Ethics class to raise their hands if they were interested in participating in the electoral process. A handful did.

Morello then asked why students were not keen on participating in the election of their president.

One student said, "I'll consult with my girlfriend to see if there is any need to go and vote. At the moment, I do not think this is a priority."

As a native of Kenya, a country on the East Coast of Africa, where elections for the president are a life-and-death event, this ambivalent attitude by an American student toward participating in electing his country's president was baffling to me.

Kenya recently concluded the election of the country's president and, just like in 2007, when a dispute over a questionable vote tally led to bloodletting, the country is again tottering on the brink of yet another round of instability.

The Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, has refused to concede. He believes the elections were rigged in favor of his opponent, Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta.

Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto are facing international crimes and crimes-against-humanity charges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands. They are accused of sponsoring the 2007-2008 ethnic violence in which close to 1,200 people died and about 700,000 were displaced.

The international community, led by America, warned Kenyans not to elect people facing such serious international crimes.

Although there is again a dispute, this time Kenyans did not

carry machetes or bows and arrows to kill each other, partly because of fear and the trust in the judiciary. The aggrieved sought to reverse the election results through the Supreme Court under a brutally independent-minded, Canadian-educated Chief Justice Dr. Willy Mutunga.

Perhaps there is a lot UMKC students can learn from the uncertainty that grips transitioning democracies every time elections come calling.

We should never take for granted the peace and stability prevailing in this country. People should take part in elections, and choose leaders who will effectively represent them. During last year's U.S. presidential elections, no business closed down because of fear of violence. There were few claims of ballot stuffing and manipulation of numbers to disadvantage the other candidate.

For the past several years, the U.S. Congress has been reduced

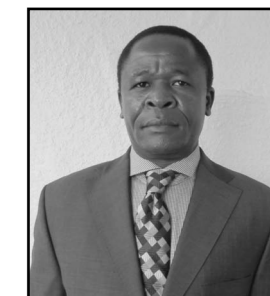
to an arena of grandstanding and extremism. Good men and women should take part in elections and chose level-headed leaders, in order to end the gridlock that has become the epitome of U.S. Congress.

Americans should thank their Founding Fathers for formulating firm constitutional policies and institutions, which have guaranteed the country long-lasting peace and stability in election years.

However, the situation in Kenya is worrying. The sultans of status quo have in the recent past targeted the popular Chief Justice with threats of extra-judicial execution if his court ruled against the ruling elite.

National security has become the justification to suppress freedom of expression, and the country's media has joined hands with the forces of evil to perpetuate injustice.

No one is sure if the Supreme Court ruling would be honored because the ruling class wants to keep power by hook or by



Peter Makori

crook.

The same situation is playing out in Zimbabwe, where 89-year-old tyrant Robert Mugabe, in power since 1980, has refused to fade away from the political scene.

Of course, I am aware of the 2000 election fiasco in which Al Gore was widely believed to have been cheated of the presidency, thanks to alleged manipulation of votes in Florida. The 2000 debacle tainted America's image as a beacon of hope and democracy.

Yet, the nation moved on peacefully. It is hoped Kenya can do the same.

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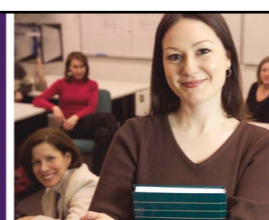
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# Sports unite us all

Dan Moreno

Staff Writer

There is no such feeling as the one experienced with a game-winning goal in the last minute, a three-pointer basket with seconds on the clock or an interception that led to a touchdown.

Sports can paralyze a whole town, state or even country. But why? When two teams clash in a pitch, field or court, thousands, and sometimes millions, of people are involved.

This is probably is the reason why the World Cup, Super Bowl and World Series find themselves at the very top of television ratings.

When I moved to this country less than two years ago, I encountered many things that made me like America even more, especially the love of sports.

Kansas City's passion and

love for the Chiefs and Royals really surprised me, mainly because of the terrible seasons they have had.

On the other hand, Sporting KC, our professional soccer team has put Kansas City on the map by winning the MLS Open Cup last year and being conference champions two years in a row. But they still don't seem to get enough coverage and support.

That was not all, though. I also encountered something that really caught my eye: college sports. I believe this is one of the few countries - if not the only one - that believes college sports are as important as professional sports.

Personally, I'd rather see talented athletes playing with passion for their schools than players in it only for the millions of dollars they make.

Nevertheless, I believe that, in part, the greatness of our



Dan Moreno

national identity comes from sports. Some people may agree with me and some might think I am crazy.

Can you remember the time your father taught you how to throw a football, or that time when your mom wouldn't let you play soccer with your neighbors until you finished eating? Sports are an intrinsic part of our lives, whether we play them, view them or are simply surrounded by them on a daily basis.

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# 'Bent' tells untold love story of the Holocaust

Riley Mortensen

Staff Writer

Talk of the Holocaust has been prominent in my family from the time I was old enough to read a book of substance to the present day. My grandparents were young adults growing up in Denmark during World War II.

My grandfather fought first with the Danish Army and later worked with the underground to help smuggle Jews into Sweden. He was caught twice by the Nazis and put into a POW camp both times.

He never spoke of what they did to him, I think because he didn't want to bring the pain and suffering onto anyone else, especially my grandma. The inhumanity of it all is just unreal. No one knows exactly how he escaped, but he risked his life because he knew what was going on was wrong.

He was lucky not to have been killed on more than one occasion, and after being caught the second time, he went off to Jutland to safely await the arrival of the war's end.

My grandpa did his part, that's for



Riley Mortensen

certain. He always spoke modestly of his actions saying he was just doing what needed to be done but, for the rest of my family and me, he breathes new life into the word courage.

I'm familiar with WWII up-close, but it's hard to be familiar when there were so many sides to this unbelievably tragic event in history. Tragic doesn't even begin to describe it.

Miller Nichols Library is currently showcasing the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's

CONTINUED // Page 12

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## Sports

### Ewing: Continued from Page 9

London's games in 2012, more than 120 countries and 1,100 athletes competed, and there were 170 medal events.

Ewing attributed the exponential growth of the program to Paralympic athletes like Pistorius, April Holmes and Jerome Singleton.

"Singleton is the only man ever to defeat Pistorius," he said. "These athletes are sponsored by Nike. They are huge names for the sport. They have made the stage bigger than ever."

Ewing and Brown are training to compete in Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Paralympics. Ewing trains three hours per day, five days per week. He works with Brown to ensure they are in sync, particularly at the start-off.

"We work a lot on the drive phase and we make sure we finish strong," he said.

Brown was ranked fifth in the world in 2012 for the 100 meter dash in his sport class.

"Never think that first [place] is enough," he said. "Always train like you're in second [place] and the results will come."

## A&E

### Art Sounds: Continued from Page 6

musical drama," and it fits the description. It pulls the listener in and only tightens its grip as it descends down into a feverish and shrieking masterwork of a piece. Zweck went closer to the frontlines of the protests than any journalist ever did, and in her words, coupled with Sosa's music, this is the most

real account.

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## Opinion

### 'Bent': Continued from Page 11

traveling exhibit on Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals.

I had never thought specifically about the treatment of homosexuals during the war, but it's truly horrifying, as is the treatment of all living beings who were held in the concentration camps.

On March 6, the library had a showing of the film, "Bent," a 1997 film about the impact of the war on homosexual prisoners. Max and Horst, the film's main characters try their hardest not to let the physical and emotional trauma of being prisoners weigh them down.

Deprived of all love, compassion and free will, the two become friends and ultimately fall in love as they do their best to tread through the blatant torture and mistreatment all inhabitants of the camp received.

This movie is not easy to watch. I sat mostly in shock for the greater part of the film, trying

to wrap my mind around how something like this could happen.

Although the credibility of the film in certain parts is questionable, the abuse shown is realistic. For example, Max receives a letter from a family containing money, and I find it hard to believe the Nazis would allow such a thing. But for the most part, the film is credible.

The film begins with a set up of wild parties night after night and friends sharing cigarettes, laughs, drinks and a good night in the sack, but in the finale of it all, all audience members will find themselves with a broken heart. The emotional connection Max and Horst share is undeniable, and all they have is to try and make it through to the next bland and torturous idea of a day.

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