Observer

Central Washington University
Happy house hunting!

Joel Thomas, a Kittitas county resident, has been a landlord in the Ellensburg community for more than 14 years. Thomas owns a number of rental properties and advises students to follow these guidelines when searching for the perfect off-campus residence.

The most important aspect is selecting the proper roommate. "Once a lease is signed, all individuals involved have a legal obligation to fulfill that contract. Boyfriends, girlfriends, friends and strangers are usually not the best choice for a roommate selection.

Students should be fully aware of the process of all paperwork they sign. Know that once a down payment has been submitted to the landlord, legally that house is not available to be kept on the market.

Inspecting the property is an important part of any rental. Students should personally go and view the rental before making a commitment to make sure their personal needs are fulfilled by the property they're scouting. Students should also walk-through the rental to observe all its negative and positive aspects. Make sure that the walk-through is documented. If a walk-through is not done with the landlord, he/she cannot keep the down payment.

Pick an appropriate area for the style of living a student wishes to live in. Generally, students should search for rentals where other students live because they tend to stay up later. However, if a student needs a quiet place, he/she should consider that, too.

Try to stay away from months-to-month leases. They may appear simple, but landlords can raise the rent to whatever they choose on their rentals. As long as a notice is given, raising the rent can be increased legally without breaching a contract.

Keeping costs down

With the arrival of spring quarter, Central students are weighing housing options for next fall

by Chelsea Krotzer
Asst. News editor

The financial quandary of living on or off campus is an ongoing decision for Central Washington University students. Students seeking off-campus apartments are given numerous options varying in price, size and distance from campus.

"Off-campus was a lot cheaper because of being able to make my own food," Rondale West, sophomore psychology major said. "I would weigh the pros and cons first before deciding to live off campus."

Multiple apartment complexes can be found throughout the Ellensburg area, including the independently owned Grove Apartments which are currently under construction.

Students who prefer on-campus apartments have three options: Brooklane Village, Student Village Apartments and Getz/Short Apartments.

"I believe that living on-campus provides better options for students personally, academically and financially," said Richard DeShields, director of university housing and new student programs. "When students compare housing costs with off-campus apartments, they will find that costs are cheaper and that we have a variety of options."

Rates for off-campus apartments are set according to the landlord or corporation's discretion.

"It's whatever the market will bear," Perry Rowe, executive director of the Housing Authority Board of Kittitas County, said. "The off-campus landlords decide whatever profit they'll need on their investment."

On-campus rates are compiled by the cooperation of a committee of 12 students and the housing staff. Their recommendations are based on facility and salary needs and must be approved by the board of trustees.

"Rates have increased at similar rates over the past 20 years with some being higher and some being lower, but very similar," DeShields said. "We attempt to keep our rates as low for the students as possible."

According to the landlord or corporation's discretion.

Award is second since building's construction

by Karena Shellman
Staff reporter

Central Washington University accepted the national award in Excellence in Design for the Student Union Building and Recreational Center (SURC) in Atlanta last week.

The Associate of College Unions International gives out three awards annually and bases their decisions on total budget and overall design.

"Because we were the only student recreational center in the country built at one time, lots of people were interested in that," said John Drinkwater, senior director of campus life and student union, "I think that had a lot to do with winning the award."

Buildings considered for union recognition are judged on overall unique structure and excellence in design, how well the facility operates and overall costs (at least $75 million).

Central spent about $58 million on the project and joined forces with Ambia Architects, a Seattle-based company, who helped with the application process.

"The architecture reflects students' needs and wants," Drinkwater said. "It's such a beautiful building."

"It's truly becoming a place of belonging to the students"

-John Drinkwater
senior director of campus life and student union

Some are still warming up to the SURC and prefer the old Samuelson Union Building's smaller spaces.

"I like its design and its space because it helps me concentrate," Juanita Silva, senior family studies and Spanish major, said. "But it doesn't have the unity that the old [SUB] had, like the pit. It's not as homely."

However, plenty of other students prefer the SURC's central location and wide-open spaces.

"I like the theater and the [building] location," Dawn Sakai, senior information technology major, said. "And I don't see a problem with everything being all together."

Drinkwater said the designers of the SURC aimed for a fusion facility with a bookstore, a recreation facility and theater, all within one central area.

Central has showcased the building by using it as a starting point for tours of the university.

"We've also received a national award for the recreational facility from NIRSA (the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association)," Drinkwater said.

Central will accept the award in May, but for now, Drinkwater said a celebration is in the works.

"We are going to take the NIRSA award and the Excellence in Design award and put them together in one spot," Drinkwater said. "We're pretty happy. It's truly becoming a place of belonging to the students."
Renting: On-campus versus off-campus living cost comparison shows cost are about the same with addition of utilities and services. continued from page 1

An on-campus, one bedroom apartment costs an average of $526.66 per month, including utilities. An off-campus, one-bedroom costs an average of $466 per month, excluding utilities. Off-campus two bedrooms average $621.46, while off-campus two bed rooms average $609 per month, not including utilities.

"Off-campus, I was able to rent a place with a monthly lease," said Lisa Green, sophomore geography and land studies major, who lives in Campus Court. "Off-campus (was less stressful) because I lived in a quiet neighborhood.

Green, who has one roommate, currently pays $262.50 per month for her half of rent, along with approximately $30 for utilities. Despite limited housing options, students on-campus are given other opportunities unavailable to those off-campus.

"We have a large group of students who return to campus each year who report that the proximity to campus, ease of parking and access to campus and community programs makes living on-campus both personally and financially practical," DeShields said.

On average, students who live on-campus academically outperform off-campus students, DeShields said. The average is derived from quarter to quarter student reports accessed via the Safari system. The reports have been compiled over the past 15 years.

"Because of accessibility to resources and the ease of access, (on-campus) students do perform better," DeShields added.

Though on-campus living allows students to be involved with campus activities, conditions of living can raise other problems.

"On-campus living is a little bit less stressful because I don't have to worry about my financial side," Kristina Lofgren, senior communication studies major, said. "It is less enjoyable because it is cramped. The off-campus housing where I lived was spacious and had a washer and dryer included."

Statistics were compiled by Observ er staff who contacted off-campus apartments and averaged rates.

Final SURC repairs near completion

by Kamra Shelman

Walking over the cracked concrete floors in the Student Union and Recreation Center won't break your mother's heart, but they have finally been repaired. Contractors have nearly completed work on the building, which included cracked floors, problems with ventilation, unstable hand rails and improper installation of theater veneer.

"The project had a few items left on the punch list," said Bill Yawood, manager of Major Projects. "It's typical, especially for larger projects and this huge building.

The punch list was expected to be completed by the end of fall quarter, but Drinkwater said, the list has just been completed by the contractors.

"We go through a final completion process with the contractors," Yawood said. "Then we go through a final acceptance process with the Board of Trustees. At this point, we're pretty much in between."

Drinkwater said the building is, at a point of completion, and acceptance from the Board of Trustees should take place sometime this spring.

"The work being done on the building is routine finish work that is in line with the original project design and construction," said Jeff Rosenberry, Associate Students of Central Washington University vice president for student life and facilities. "Because this is a large project, and no different than any other major project like it, there has been some time for the contractor to complete all the items on the punch list."

The building has seen a dramatic increase in usage since its opening last Spring.

Approximately 8,000 people walk through it on a daily basis. Revenue in the bookstore increased by nearly 40 percent and about 1,000 students use the recreational facility daily.

"Too often we are caught up with a crack in the floor and not stopping to think about how great of an impact a building like this has made," Rosenberry said.

In addition to the punch list, the building of a U.S. Bank in one of the empty tenant rooms should be complete by June.

"Everybody is profiting from being here," Drinkwater said. "This is the students' facility and they are paying it off, so that was honored during this building process. It wouldn't have been built if they didn't want it."

"We believe we are at the end of the punch list," Drinkwater said. "And we are at the beginning of a new life with this building."
There was an audience of about 100 people Friday evening in Hertz, a majority of them current or former military personnel. A third of them were dressed in fatigues. While Mattis was there to talk about leadership with character, a majority of the discussion during the question and answer session afterwards was focused on the battle of Falluja and military decisions.

General's visit ignites faculty email frenzy
by Megan Hansen
News editor

When a famed Marine general came to speak at Central Washington University last Friday on the topic of leadership and character, his speech was far from the main focus of conversation on campus.

Instead, dismay and disgust ran rampant through faculty e-mail Friday in response to the press release about Lt. General James N. Mattis, a Central alumnus, on the campus' main Web page.

"It was appalling today to see on the front page of the university Web site the face of a Marine general who thinks [in his own unapologetic words] that it's fun to shoot some people," said Djordje Popovic, program coordinator for the Diversity Education Center, in an e-mail sent out to many faculty.

The words in question referred to an incident in 2005 when Mattis spoke at a conference in San Diego and was reprimanded by superiors for controversial statements and told to speak more carefully.

"Actually, it's a lot of fun to fight... It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right upfront with you, I like brawling," Mattis told the audience in 2005. "You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil. You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

After learning about this incident many faculty responded to Popovic's e-mail with both positive and negative responses to it. However, Popovic stood his ground about his opinion.

"What I did was in the best interest of the university," Popovic said. "I never said I didn't want him to speak. I want the university to think."

Popovic was pleased with the response to his e-mail because it generated conversation on campus and got people thinking.

"What are the five things we want students to know when they leave?"

For Mattis and the battle of Falluja were presented by the university.

"The general's experience with leading Marines was a factor in the choice. The Marines have a strong emphasis on leadership and we were looking for someone with practical leadership experience who would be an authority on the topic," Mattis said. "The Marines have a strong emphasis on leadership and we were looking for someone with practical leadership experience who would be an authority on the topic."
SUB fate still up for debate

by Brian Rowe
Staff reporter

The fate of Central's previous Samuelson Union Building (SUB) has come to a crossroads recently as the South Neighborhood Planning Committee (SNPC) considers possible options for the structure.

The most popular consideration includes removing the building and turning it into a one-stop shop. Students would be able to take care of financial requirements, as well as add and drop classes at an upgraded registrars office.

Katie Underwood, Associate Stu­dents of Central Washington University (ASCUW) vice-president for Academic Affairs, believes this option is the most viable and productive possibility for the future of the building.

"I hope the old SUB turns into a place where students can get issues dealt with without having the confusion of traveling to multiple buildings," Underwood said. "It simplifies the process, is beneficial for students, and will help with the overall image of Central!"

The other two options for the old SUB are relatively simple and straightforward: one proposes tearing down the building and replacing it with a green space, and the other proposes building a parking lot.

Both options offer solutions to viable issues as enrollment grows.

One of the biggest complaints about Central's campus is the lack of available parking spaces. An additional parking lot located in such a central location sounds like a good idea to students.

Nic Miori, junior communications major, thinks the parking lot is the best possible solution.

"I feel that after I coughed up money for a parking pass and still cannot find a spot in the morning without a ten- minute search is ridiculous," Miori said. "The extra parking lot would help the burden on other lots, as well as cut down on walking time, so it would be my first choice."

The SNPC has not set a date for a recommendation, which would then be passed onto President Jerilyn Mcintyre. However, since the university must pay all utilities, the pressure to make a decision is mounting.

While Central students own and are paying for the new SURC, the university now owns the old SUB, which is costly to maintain.

Derrick Peacock, vice-president for Equity and Community Service, acknowledges that other factors should be taken into consideration before making a lasting decision.

"The significance of the names of the Yakama and Chief Obi lunches, as well as the Cesar Chavez Theatre, should be retained," Peacock said. "They were dedicated in an important manner and should not be forgotten."

A time frame for the committee's decision has not yet been set.

Extensive service program gives back

by Brooke Saul
Staff reporter

The Civic Engagement Center administered two AmeriCorps Educa­tional Awards this year: the Bonner Leader Award and the Students in Service Award.

AmeriCorps was established in 1994 after the National Service Act was signed into law by President George H. Bush. They establish national service programs that include tutoring pro­grams and cleaning parks and streams.

The Bonner Leader Program offers an award for students who volunteer 900 community service hours. The recipient receives the $2,362.50 AmeriCorps Education Award.

The Bonner Educational Award was established in 1989 by Corella and Bertram F. Bonner to help people who grew up in underprivileged areas.

The program emphasizes leadership and management through community service. Any student is eligible for this award.

"Working with teens at the Youth Center has been a fun and beneficial experience because I know I'm making a positive influence on the kids," said Maggie McKinney, Bonner Leader recipient and freshman undecided.

"It's a great way to earn money and do a good thing!"

The Students in Service Award is a one-year program that consists of 300 community service hours and encourages engaged and active citizenship.

A student who completes the program will receive a $1,000 AmeriCorps Education Award.

"Many of the students are already doing community service," said Jake Stillwell, AmeriCorps Education Award Coordinator and sophomore political science major.

In order to qualify for an award, a student must volunteer at a selected service site, which must be a non-profit organization. A site supervisor will then sign-off on hours logged.

"There are specific requirements for where a student can acquire hours," said Rita Dickmann, who will take Stillwell's position as the new AmeriCorps Education Award Coordinator. "It can't be political, faith based or for credit or pay."

Recipients must also document their service development and log all of their hours.

The money can be used for student loans, tuition, or expenses for participating in a school-to-work program, within seven years.

Dickmann, a junior political sci­ence major, said twenty spots are reserved for the Students in Service Award and five awards are available.

The Civic Engagement Center gives ten Bonner Leader Awards and there are nine left.

Application paperwork must be turned in within two weeks after the recipient meets with the Civic Engagement Center.

Applicants for this award range from freshman to non-traditional and returning students.

Dickmann said that in the past, peo­ple have volunteered at a variety of community based organizations including local schools, Abuse Prevention Education Prevention Now (ASPEN), the Civic Engagement Center and ani­mal shelters.

For more information about the pro­gram contact the Civic Engagement Center at 963-1463.
**City**

News from around the Ellensburg community

**Fire at former Darigold leaves businesses, belongings ruined**

*by Katie Murdoch
Asst. News editor*

"Before the former Darigold building caught fire March 13, due to a portable heater that was left on, it was considered by the fire department to be one of the 10 most dangerous buildings in Ellensburg for firefighters. After the building burned down, their opinion did not change."

"When you walk in, there's no power and it's filled with smoke," Ellensburg Fire Chief John Sinclair said. "Firefighters become disoriented in the puzzle work of the structure, get lost, and that's how they die."

Other contributing factors that made the building a threat to firefighters were the level of the building, multiple ignition projects where old and new materials were combined, and the number of total rooms forcing rescuers to scatter down many hallways.

"I'm sorry the owner lost the building," Sinclair said.

The owner of the building, Ken Fyall, was in Ravensdale without cell reception when the fire occurred. Fyall found out about the fire around 9 a.m. on Tuesday when his son, Trevor, and the fire chief called him.

"It looks like there may have been a faulty heater," Fyall said.

The cause of the fire is certain, but the location of the Vornado heater and the extent of its involvement is unclear.

"The tenant that had that space heater said it definitely wasn't on the couch," Fyall said. "It was on the structure above it.

Investigators are unsure if the heater malfunctioned or if the heater was operating properly and caught nearby combustibles on fire.

According to Sinclair, the heater was up against a couch.

The cost of the damages is still under active fire investigation and forensic investigators are sitting through debris to find heater parts.

The heater was resting on a structural support in a wall opening, Fyall said. "I was told by forensic investigators the heater may have been above the couch and not against it," Fyall said.

"The investigator is not willing, at this point to say it was on the couch."

The Darigold building contained a variety of businesses, including the hair salon Evolution and storage units where local bands kept their equipment.

Evolution owners, Joseph and Gretchen Kingston ran their business at the former Darigold building for more than a year prior to the fire. After the fire, Millennium Sun Tanning and Hair Salon offered to share their space. Kingston was able to file an insurance claim that night.

"I was told by personnel investigators are sifting through debris to locate the Vornado heater and couldn't retrieve equipment due to heavy smoke."

"I thought it was pretty cool they tried to save our gear," Ratchiff said. "Staff had sentimental value, but it can be replaced." An auction of art was held soon after a fire last weekend. Four bands played, including Saracc using borrowed instruments. Proceeds went to the band.

"I was amazed at how many people showed up," Ratchiff said.

In 1959, the owners processed ice cream, cheese and butter. Until the production continued to refrigerate products there until the 1980s.

Before purchasing the building, Ratchiff rented a space to run a custom furniture shop. He aspired to use the building as a microbrewery and planned for his son to join the business.

At approximately 2:25 a.m. on Friday, Trevor Fyall and a friend, Jessica, were sleeping in the building. The two woke to find the Ellensburg Police Department (EPD) inside.

The EPD responded to the EPD alarm with two engines, one local and one from Vantage, and three volunteer engines. Five firefighters arrived on the scene during the first few minutes of the fire. Within an hour, 40 firefighters arrived along with ladder trucks from two truck companies.

"By the time we had the fire stopped, it was around noon," Sinclair said.

Several days after the fire, the former Darigold building was released to the owner by the fire department.

"As we speak, the building is still a part of an active fire investigation," Fyall said.

The property and remnants of the structure are still barricaded.

**Family salvages belongings after fire destroys home**

*by Katie Murdoch
Asst. News editor*

"By chance, we took our file box home for the weekend to do our taxes," Kingston said.

"I can't imagine what they lost," Gerchen said.

Joel Ratchiff, Central freshman paramedic major, lost $21,000 worth of uninsured musical equipment in the fire. His band, Saracc, shared the space with another band and used it as a practice studio. Ratchiff lost a PA system, two Les Paul guitars, paddleboards and a Mesa Boogie amp. Ratchiff's father is the owner of the Darigold furniture company with little success.

"When you walk in, there's no power and it's filled with smoke. She called the fire department when she realized her home was on fire."

The fire spread into the wall space of the mobile home and underneath the structure. It took more than three hours for the two fire trucks and one medic unit at the scene to control the fire.

"The combination of strong wind and warm air from the location of the fire ignited a home to the east," Seemiller said.

"This fire teaches us that any wiring should be done by a licensed electrician."

No residents sustained injuries in one of a few electrical fires this year.
Time to put a stop to abortion in U.S.

One of America's perennial "hot-button" issues crept up once again while Central Washington University students were too busy getting drunk in Cancun to notice. About a week after Texas legislator Dan Patrick proposed that his state pay women $500 to not have abortions, the film "I Had an Abortion" was screened on Central's campus. I don't really care how these two events managed to coincide, but their presence conjured up a question I've not have abortions, the film "I Had an Abortion" was screened on Central's campus.

First of all, full disclosure: I have a girlfriend who is 22-years-old because her birth parents chose to put her up for adoption instead of opting for abortion. I'd like to appeal my question to two groups on campus that might be able to settle the two aspects of the abortion issue that confused me the most.

For starters, perhaps someone in Central's women's studies program can answer me this: how is aborting a child not cold-blooded murder? I can understand that if a woman was raped or if pregnancy threatens her life, exceptions would have to be made on behalf of that woman's well-being. But to say that a woman who "accidentally" gets pregnant has the "right" to kill an unborn child is absolutely ludicrous. Furthermore, why is it only a woman's right to choose? What if my girlfriend stops taking her birth control pills without telling me? Does that give me the right to punch her in the stomach when I find out she's pregnant? No! I'm obligated by law to own up and take responsibility, either by raising the kid or paying child support. As long as liberal women's groups are arguing for equality among the sexes, they should apply these standards to both sexes.

My second call for clarification goes out to law and justice or political science majors who would be willing to explain Roe v. Wade to me. I don't need to be told that it's the most harebrained decision in Supreme Court history, but I would like to know how the decision wasn't relegated back to the state of Texas. After all, as my pocket-sized Tenth Amendment tells me, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." I defy anyone—constituent Court justices included—to find a passage in the U.S. Constitution that says anything about abortion.

More than anything, I want someone to tell me why adoption isn't an acceptable substitute to abortion. A 1995 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that more than 2 million American couples were infertile. A 2004 U.S. Census Bureau report found more than 600,000 homosexual couples living in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

Surely among these 2.6 million couples, several thousand would have gladly adopted one of the 488,163 children who the CDC reported were legally aborted in the U.S. in 2003. This country has abolished slavery, embraced women's suffrage and began to extend civil rights to homosexuals. It's time we realized that outlawing abortion is just as progressive as any of those accomplishments.

Modern rockers clueless on issue of political statements

Over spring break, I attended a concert headlined by the "politically aware" punk group Anti-Flag. The band would stop playing every two or three songs to talk politics with the crowd.

Listening to their thoughts on the war in Iraq, last year's immigration protests and various other political hot topics, it dawned on me that anyone could have made similar statements by watching the news for a hour.

Anti-Flag voiced opinions throughout their set, which basically consisted of "Bush sucks, the people rule, fight the power and don't forget to buy our new CD at the merchandise table in the back."

So, to all musicians out there wanting to hop on the political debate bandwagon, do me a favor and bring two things along with you: common knowledge and your own opinion. I left the concert in the middle of Anti-Flag's song, "I Love Being Outside, Walking, Riding My Horse, Surfing, Hiking, Floating the River... The List Goes On." But I won't be able to enjoy all the earth offers me if people continue to trash it.

People who litter annoy me more than anything else. By no means am I a "go-green" advocate who has never made the mistake of littering or abusing the earth. I still use aerosol hair spray, take hot 20-minute-long showers and drive an SUV. But I certainly realize the impact of my actions. There is no excuse for littering; it's sheer laziness.

In 2001, the Washington State Department of Transportation collected 1,400 tons of litter along side our state highways; the Department of Ecology estimates another 8,000 tons were removed from other parts of Washington. These figures don't take into account the amount of garbage that washes up on our beaches, or the number of animals killed every year in forests and rivers because of litter. Not to mention that Washington state spends $1.25 million annually to pick up and dispose of trash. There are certainly better things to be spending tax dollars on.

It disgusts me to think that people are lazy enough to throw garbage out windows and not care where it ends up after it leaves their hands. The Washington State立法 issued 3,316 litter violations in 2005 alone. And how about smokers who don't believe cig­arettes are made of lead? Why should we let them? If there is no more. If cigarette butts and filters make up 31.4 percent of the garbage removed from U.S. shorelines and waterways. Cigarettes are the most common litter item in the world. They pose a fire threat and filters can take up to 15 years to decom­pose. This is why ashtrays were invented—use them.

While polls show most of the population only litter occasionally or never, every time someone does litter, it accumulates. Littering is not just an eyesore on roadsides, beaches, streams, and recre­ational areas; it has major environmental repercus­sions. People who toss fast food wrappers out the window, leave trash at campsite, or sink empty cans into a river cause more damage to the earth than they could ever imagine.

People shouldn't assume it's someone else's job to clean up after them. We all share this world and we need to start acting like we give a damn by considering it an official views of Central Washington University.

The Artist's Eye

"The luxury of off-campus living"

I love being outside, walking, riding my horse, surfing, hiking, floating the river... the list goes on. But I won't be able to enjoy all the earth offers me if people continue to trash it.

People who litter annoy me more than anything else. By no means am I a "go-green" advocate who has never made the mistake of littering or abusing the earth. I still use aerosol hair spray, take hot 20-minute-long showers and drive an SUV. But I certainly realize the impact of my actions. There is no excuse for littering; it's sheer laziness.

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Littering not just a bad habit—it's disrespectful

Andrea Rust Ass't. Scene editor

"The luxury of off-campus living"
Unique vandalism in Stephens-Whit

You would think that by the time people get to college, they would have enough sense to use a bathroom when relieving themselves. Earlier this week, the janitorial staff had a rude awakening when feces was discovered inside one of the dryers in Stephens-Whitney hall. What exactly possesses someone to take a crap in a dryer?

"why?" Rather, I'm curious about the "who?" Did the culprit crap in the dryer? Or did they really take the time to stick their rear-end inside and do their business? I assume that they had an accomplice on the lookout. If so, what was the plan if somebody happened to pass by? Being told, "Sorry, you can't go in there. My friend is taking a crap in the dryer," would be nothing short of awkward.

As a resident of Stephens-Whitney, I don't even know whether to be disgusted, ticked off, or amused. It's disturbing to know that there are people on this campus that have enough intelligence to be admitted into college, but are immature enough to crap in a dryer. The laundry facilities will probably be taken away if this happens again.

Now that we're all in college, here's a concept: grow up, do what mom and dad taught us, and use a bathroom.

Editor's note: This letter was received March 16 in response to the editorial, "If there's a God, he doesn't live in Saudi Arabia," from The Observer's March 8, 2007 edition.

I recently came across [Editor-in-Chief Paula] Balcerak's article about a 19-year-old Saudi Arabian woman's unfortunate story.

Although I'm hesitant to criticize the article, which at least is supportive of women's rights, I'm nonetheless appalled by Mr. Balcerak's reasoning, his inaccurate terminology and poor word choice.

I am a citizen of Turkey, a secular country with a 99 percent Muslim population. For many years now, the Turkish people have upheld secular and democratic traditions. Our laws are based on a secular constitution and a rich history of secular jurisprudence.

Mr. Balcerak's labeling of Saudi laws as "Islamic" is ignorant and harmful. It ignores many other Muslim countries and traditions that are equally "Islamic" but have very little in common with the Saudi circumstances he describes.

His generalization of Islamic laws is as absurd as if I were to claim that recent cases of torture and prisoner abuse are a consequence of Christian law. Sure, some people in Saudi Arabia (and in the United States) will attempt to justify their abuse of human rights by referencing religious traditions. However, both Mr. Balcerak and I know our own religious and cultural heritage, and can easily see that the abusers are part of neither, right?

Mr. Balcerak also speaks of the "ancient tests" from which "archaic and outdated laws" are drawn. I assume he's referring to the Quran, which he should have attempted to read first since there isn't a single passage in the Quran addressing a punishment like this or anything close to that kind of brutality. Millions of other Muslims and I believe in the absolute equality of men and women.

We are sick of generalizations—carefully screened and politically framed pictures of twisted fanatics and their actions in the name of our religion.

Perhaps doing some research prior to publishing his ill-informed article would have helped Mr. Balcerak realize that Christianity is not a "Western" religion as he claims. It's an old Aryan religion just like its two sister religions, Judaism and Islam.

Not to mention that the first uniform Christian doctrine and the first Christian state were declared in present-day Turkey, not too far from where I grew up in the "Islamic" East.

Using words carefully, knowing history, and understanding the extended subject of religions and cultures are all necessary if one wishes to make sweeping generalizations about a large portion of the human race.

So Mr. Balcerak, you are not really "superior" my friend, I am sorry. 

-Burak Kayzum
Senior Art Major

Observer editor wins regional award

Sports editor Patrick Lewis was awarded first place in the category of sports writing at the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Region 10 conference on March 27.

The story, "Andrews will be missed," ran in The Observer's Oct. 27, 2006 issue. It will now be considered for the national awards which are announced in mid-May.

Observer — Opinion — April 5, 2007
by Paul Balcerak
Editor-in-Chief

On one of the biggest sports weekends of the year, the Qwest Field Exhibition Center—wedged between Qwest and Safeco Fields—was overtaken by geeks.

While sports fanatics across the Northwest packed into bars to watch the Final Four and MLB Opening Day, fans of a different type descended upon the Exhibition Center for the fifth annual Emerald City Comicon (ECCC).

The con—short for convention—is one huge event for comic book fans, creators and dealers to get together and talk, sell and buy comics.

Sports editor Pat Lewis and I immersed ourselves in geek culture for the two-day event on March 31 and April 1 and kept a running diary of some of the more interesting things we saw.

Quick disclaimer: I’m a huge comic book fan, Pat pretends not to be.

Saturday, 10:45 a.m.

We make a quick walk around just to see what we’re dealing with and quickly realize that the place looks like a costume party that only five people took seriously.

There’s a whole pack of Star Wars characters dressed to the nines—storm troopers, Darth Vader, Chewbacca and more—but everyone else pretty much showed up wearing a t-shirt with the Superman “S” on it.

Oh, and the guy/girl ratio is about 10-1.

11:35 a.m.

As we walked amongst the labyrinth of bookshelves and display cases that local comic book retailers had set up, we ran into Aaron Baker, owner of Odyssey Comics in Vancouver, Wash. Baker was a perfect example of why cons like the ECCC are able to happen in the first place—money.

“Typically we can do in a day what we’d do in a week—even with discounts,” Baker said of the money made during the weekend.

That amount shakes out to about $1,600 per day after travel and lodging costs, but it can easily be more.

Baker’s big sellers were zombie books and movie-related books (Marvel’s “Spider-man” and Dark Horse’s “300,” in particular) but he had plenty of copies flying off his shelves and lining his pockets.

“They knew [the convention] was going to be pretty big with the amount of people here,” he said.

1:50 p.m.

In a sea of people from all over the Northwest, Pat and I ran into Central Washington University student Corey Hough. Hough, senior philosophy major, was doing his best to keep within his budgetary constraints, which can be a hard thing to do with so much merchandise available.

“You run around, you get pretty good deals here,” Hough said. “That’s pretty much why any of us go [to the con].”

It wouldn’t be hard to find a deal, either. In some cases a “deal” can run about $3,000, such as the case with a copy of Amazing Fantasy #15 (the first Spider-Man comic) that Pat and I spotted.

The same book has gone for upwards of $100,000 in the past.

Hough is keeping his costs under $100, but admits he’d like to spend more.

“If I could, I’d drop about $200,” he said.

2:05 p.m.

We found a surprisingly short line in front of Ed Brubaker’s table. Brubaker is the Marvel Comics writer who recently killed off Captain America in last month’s Captain America #25.

“Scary,” said Brubaker, “They’re just over here and I’ve got to do it.”

Such is the price of success. Brubaker is still doing a comic book for the line, “men of the world, if you wish to live long, do not read this book.”

“We knew they were going to be pretty big with the amount of people here,” he said.

Leaving the ECCC was a little less exciting than entering it. After running around for two days, we were tired and ready for a break.

But we will be back. Because the next ECCC is on display March 12-13, 2008.
Local kids give a kick to butts everywhere

by Bryant Phillips
Asst. Scene editor

Balloons were floating all over the Central Washington School of Karate as students, all under 13 years old, kicked at them in a flurry of giggles.

There was a feeling of barely controlled chaos, but each student was alert and focused on defeating their balloon combatants.

"So what are you guys doing?" shouted Sue Young, owner of the karate school.

"Kicking!" her students shouted back.

"That's right, kicking the habit before you even start it!"

Young and her students held a Kick-a-Thon as part of Kick Butts Day on Wednesday, March 28, where children nationwide participated in activities designed to raise awareness about the effects of cigarettes and tobacco.

The karate school raised more than $200 from local residents who pledged donations. All proceeds collected for the event will go to the After School Safe Place, a non-profit organization that provides a safe environment for students, said Sarah Bednour, a health promotions educator who helped organize the event.

"It's important [for children] to have a community service project," Young said. "It teaches kids to get donations, and they're aware it's going toward fighting cigarettes."

The Kick-a-Thon included an activity in which students lined up kicking bags and pretended each was a cigarette, seeing how many times the students could kick them.

"I think the earlier you get the message to children [to fight cigarette addiction] the better," said Jared Thomas, a junior mechanical engineering technology major and an instructor at the karate school.

The Ellensburg Youth and Community Center also participated in Kick Butts Day. This was the karate school's first time, while this was the fourth year the karate school participated.

Bride LaPlatney, a Central Washington University alum and program coordinator for the youth center, said she is always on the lookout for alcohol and drug prevention activities to do with kids, and Kick Butts Day seemed like a fun event.

"We talk with kids a lot about smoking, but we don't judge them," LaPlatney said. "Some of our activities [for Kick Butts Day] were inspired by the 'No Stank You' anti-tobacco ads on TV. They illicit a reaction ... they show gross stuff, and kids love gross stuff."

Kids at the youth center participated in several anti-tobacco activities during the event, such as drawing chalk outlines of people on the sidewalk to represent those who have died from tobacco-related causes.

Stu Spence, the youth program coordinator with the Ellensburg Youth and Community Center, also filmed a movie to send to tobacco companies, with many of the kids telling the camera what they thought of cigarettes and the companies that sell them.

More than 2,000 events were held during Kick Butts Day nationwide to help discourage kids from smoking and educate those who do smoke about the harmful chemicals in cigarettes.

Tobacco use kills more than 440,000 people every year, including 8,000 in Washington, according to statistics from the US Department of Health and Washington State Department of Health.
First Friday spotlights Central alumni

by Tim Kukes
Staff reporter

The First Friday of each month is a special time for art lovers. It's a time when Ellensburg holds the First Friday Art Walk, which displays the talents of local and national artists in downtown galleries and businesses.

Venues include the Clymer Museum of Art, D&M Coffee downtown, Gallery One Visual Arts Center, Kittitas County Historical Museum, Sarah Spurgeon Gallery, and The Frame Express.

Connie Bix, chair of the Ellensburg Arts Commission, said that Jade Moon, a downtown wine and gift shop, will also exhibit art.

The centerpiece for this month's Art Walk is the Central Washington University Art Alumni Exhibition, "Crossroads and Connections 2007." The exhibit features work from nine Central alumni who attended Central prior to 1980.

Catherine Scarlett, development officer for the College of Arts and Humanities, said the idea was conceived by the alumni themselves. Featured artists are Carol Wild-Delano, Bill Ritchie, Candace Bookwalter, Merly Tompkins, Chris Hinichis, Linda Grobben, Susan Cinisella, Masakata, Nancy Wroden, and Richard Elliott.

The exhibit will consist of a variety of media including painting, sculpture, glass, ceramic and 3-D displays.

There will be more than 60 participating artists, some of whom will be in attendance, said Heather Horn, director of the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery.

"We could turn this into an exhibition series," Horn said.

The Central Washington University Foundation's Carrico Endowment, Central's College of Arts and Humanities, and the Central Art Department will sponsor the exhibit.

Following the Art Walk, the First Friday Dance Club will host a night of live music.

Music group Manazma Sheen will open for Flowmotion, a Seattle-based funk band.

Flowmotion is known for its lively performances.

The members of Flowmotion consist of lead vocalist Josh Clauson, Sabu Miyata on bass, Zack Stewart on guitar and vocals, Scott Goodwin on drums, and Bob Rees on percussion.

Weller Edson, a member of the First Friday Dance Club, said Flowmotion has played at previous First Friday Dances before and is well worth coming to see.

The First Friday Dance Club started five years ago when 15 Ellensburg residents decided they wanted to dance to live music.

Edson said she hopes to get the word out to as many people as possible.

"Success depends on students coming and enjoying themselves," Edson said.

The dance is open to all ages and starts at 8:30 p.m. at the Ellensburg Moose Lodge, located at 208 N. Main Street. The club charges $10 for admission with all proceeds paying for the bands.

The First Friday Art Walk downtown venues are open 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The alumni art exhibition venues run from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery located on the Central campus in Randall Hall off 14th Avenue, and Gallery One Visual Arts Center, located at 408 N. Pearl Street.

For further information contact Catherine Scarlett, development officer, at scarlett@cwu.edu or call 963-3083.

Local artist to showcase work

by ila Dickenson
Staff reporter

Richard Elliott is one of 61 artists who will be spotlighted at the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery's "Crossroads and Connections" alumni exhibition beginning this Friday.

Elliott graduated from Central Washington University in 1971 and soon after began working on an art piece he calls "Dick and Jane's Spot," which is the now-famous house that he and his wife live in on Pearl street.

Elliott will be displaying two pieces at the upcoming exhibition. "White Light," the largest and most minimal in a reflector series, will be on display.

"White Light" is an 8 foot by 8 foot piece composed of two layers of reflectors.

"The scale gives it an opportunity to do what it does," Elliott said of the piece. The idea is that the piece is constantly changing and allowing optimal viewer interaction.

Elliott is also displaying a large painting entitled "Primal Op" which is inspired from a drawing he created 20 years ago.

The "Crossroads and Connections" exhibit is designed to connect Central art graduates from before 1980 with their alma mater.

Heather Horn, Sarah Spurgeon Gallery manager, said that the exhibit is about fundraising, but also about bringing people back and getting artists involved.

"It's like a big class reunion," Horn said.

The exhibition will run from April 7 through April 28 at both the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery in Randall Hall and at Gallery One Visual Arts Center located on Pearl street in Downtown Ellensburg.

A free public opening reception will begin at 5 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. on April 6 at both locations with a free shuttle running between venues.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Central Department of Art, the Central College of Arts and Humanities, and the Central Foundation's Carrico Endowment.

US Air Force Winds teach, perform for Central students

The USAF Golden West Winds performed for Central students, faculty and community members last Tuesday, March 7th, in the music building Concert Hall. The group is part of the USAF Band of the Golden West, the only remaining active Air Force band west of the Rocky Mountains.
Two operas, one night of music

by Taishi Kanamaru
Asst. Scene editor

Central Washington University's Music Department will feature alternate ways to enjoy classical art: tragic and comedic opera.

One-act operas "Dido and Aeneas" and "Meanwhile, Back at Cinderella" will be performed by Central music students and faculty at 7 p.m. on April 6 and 7 in the Music Building Concert Hall.

"Dido and Aeneas" is a Baroque opera piece written by English composer Henry Purcell in the 17th century. The opera tells the story of Dido's affair with her political enemy and her eventual death.

"Meanwhile, Back at Cinderella" is the traditional Cinderella story told from the stepstoons' humorous point of view.

Director Diane Reich said Central features a full production opera with orchestra every other year. Her job as a director involves everything from choosing the opera to getting permission to perform it to casting it.

"We want our productions to be accessible and enjoyable to the audience," Reich said. "Especially if you've never seen opera... you should come because our shows are a lot of fun."

Rehearsals for both of the operas began in January.

Laura Thorenson, vocal performance senior, will play Dido. This will be her first time playing a main character although she has been involved in opera for the last four years.

The difficulty of performing opera is the need to balance both acting and singing. Sometimes the actors focus more on the singing, but they still have to pay attention to their posture and other structural points, Thorenson said.

COMICS: Day two with a dead hero, cheap art, and a comic legend

continued from page 8

I was nervous in some ways 'cause I thought I'd get death threats," Brubaker said of the storyline that killed Cap.

"When [Marvel writer Brian] Michael] Bendis killed off Hawkeye a couple years ago he got a threat from fans, but Bendis was by far one of the most candid and entertaining.

"It comes in waves," Bendis said of doing nothing."

"I packed apples in a warehouse. I was the youngest person there." Bendis said.

Tony Dela Cruz, Jazel Riley and Levi Skeen were madly sketching away at a table called "The $5 Sketch." A white threat threatened to kill him yet and in fact, will be performed by Central music students and faculty at 7 p.m., on April 6 and 7 in the Music Building Concert Hall.

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During rehearsals, the director of orchestral activities, Nikolae Case, has coached the solo chorus singers at the piano, as well as on language.

Besides coaching, Case will also play the harpsichord in the small chamber orchestra for "Dido and Aeneas" and conduct the full orchestra for "Cinderella." This will be his first time conducting at Central.

"It's just entertaining," Case said of the events. "Everyone should come because they can learn a lot from the show.

Ticket prices are $5 for Central students and $10 for general admission.

12:45 p.m.
We headed over to the World of Warcraft card game tournament under the stairs at the Exhibition Center. About 20 people were competing for prizes that included...more cards.

I started talking with a guy who had organized the game, who was quickly confounded by his Warcraft versatility.

In all honesty, once we got to the point where even I-a seasoned comic book nerd-didn't know what was going on, we knew it was time to call it a weekend.
Wildcats live and die by the longball

by Marqise Allen
Asst. Sports editor

Even with two blasts to deep right field from Jamie Nilsen, the Wildcats were unable to hang on in the first game of Sunday's double header against Saint Martin's University.

"Jamie Nilsen is a tough out," said Dominiak, Saints head baseball coach. "He's a catalyst for that team; he's the best lead-off hitter I've seen in a while."

Nilsen, junior shortstop, kicked the game off with his fifth home run of the season, a solo shot to right field in the bottom of the first to give Central Washington University the lead, 1-0. In his next at bat, he hit a three-run home run to right center to give the Wildcats a 4-0 advantage in the bottom of the second inning.

"I got to face a lefty, the wind was blowing out the opposite way," Nilsen said. "I got lucky and ran into a couple."

Being down did not faze the Saints as they continued to pick at the Wildcat lead and eventually took it in the top of the fourth with a three-run home run of their own from Adam Siler, senior first baseman.

"We didn't press and tried to stay within our game, and bunting and stealing was part of that approach," Dominiak said. "We haven't got those [hits], and now they're starting to come."

The Saints hung on to the lead, after several attempts by the Wildcats to claw their way back into the game, winning 10-14.

Wildcats coach Desi Storey attributed the loss to a breakdown in pitching.

Track and field springs into outdoor season

by Mindy Jafek
Staff reporter

The Central Washington University track and field team competed at the Whitworth Invitational in Spokane last Saturday. Both the men and women finished strong, placing second in the tournament overall.

Sophomore jumper Adrian Elmo won the triple jump with a 44'-3.5" and placed second in the long jump.

"I jumped through the pain and turned it on in triple and long jumps," Elmo said.

Along with Central, Whitworth University, Gonzaga University, Northwest Nazarene University, Lewis and Clark University, University of Puget Sound, and Community Colleges of Spokane were in attendance.

"The main goal of this first week was to get a great week of practice and place well in the tournament," head Coach Kevin Adkisson said.

With spring break just past, Adkisson was concerned if the players would be ready.

Having extra time off, he said, sometimes leads athletes to slack on their athletic duties.

"You don't quite know how people will [perform] coming off a break."

Adkisson said, "It was really nice to get impressive performances."

Four Wildcat men won. Junior Scott McCoy placed first in the pole vault with 14'-5.25". Michael Ingman was impressive with a javelin throw of 194'-11", and freshman Tyler Fischer won the discus with 142'-6".

The Wildcat women also looked sharp, with several outstanding performances. Sophomore Rachel Kaercher took the 400 meter dash with a time of 59.51 seconds, senior Anjuli Spears dominated the long jump with 16'-4.5", and standout freshman Shaina Afoa won the discus with 142'-6".

Track conditions were less than favorable over the weekend.

"The track was really hard and if you have never had shin splints you probably do now," sophomore runner Brittany Hood said.

There are several different places the teams will be traveling to. This weekend there is the Willamette Invitational in Salem, Oreg. and the Spring Forward Multi Event and Ralph Vernacchia in Bellingham, Wash.

"I am looking forward for this week's because it will be the first time the 4x100 'A' squad will compete together," Brittany Hood said.
Freshman righthander Katy Jones works to perfect her pitches with freshman outfielder Ashley Fix at practice.

Softball strikes again, flames out in Tournament of Champions

by Michael Petterson
Staff reporter

Wildcat softball seemed to be headed in the right direction this season, but the team has recently hit a rough spot in their season after the trip to California.

"The season has been up and down," said Gary Fredrick, head coach. "Before we went to California we were doing really well. We hit the ball well, but we did not play defense very well."

However the team did not perform well at the Tournament of Champions with two losses on Friday and one on Saturday.

The Cardinals and Redkinks are set at running back, and Peterson would be a great pick up for the Vikings. I could see them keeping this pick, or trading for a established wide receiver, or quarterback.

For teams that faced out last season we're looking at you, Oakland, the NFL draft is one of the crucial places to acquire new talent and bring one's team out of the dumpster.

Kareen Black/Observer

Michael Johnson
Staff reporter

Freshman righthander Katy Jones works to perfect her pitches with freshman outfielder Ashley Fix at practice.

Softball strikes again, flames out in Tournament of Champions

by Michael Petterson

Wildcat softball seemed to be headed in the right direction this season, but the team has recently hit a rough spot in their season after the trip to California.

"There was a major Johnson being touted as the best player in the draft. The Bucs finished 29th in the NFL last year in total offense, Johnson would give the Bucs another fast receiver alongside Joey Galloway. They also have a young talented running back in Cadillac Williams, and adding Johnson to the team will help stretch the field even more."

Fredrick said. "We hit the ball well, but we did not play defense very well."

However the team did not perform well at the Tournament of Champions with two losses on Friday and one on Saturday.

The team has recently hit a rough spot in their season after the trip to California.

toward a prospective winning season. He just wants to try and focus on defense. "It's the type of thing we need to keep working on," Fredrick said. "We've played good defense before so it's there, we just have to work on it more.""

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Fredrick said. "We've played good defense before so it's there, we just have to work on it more.""Obviously we'd like to be sitting better after the California trip," Fredrick said. "We have the potential to win conference if we play up to it, and that's our main goal."
The last three weeks have been, by far, the worst of my life. My cousin, Shane Wyrsch, is a Central Washington University graduate, Shane Wyrsch co-captained the Wildcats with Jon Kitna in the early 90's. When spring comes the National Collegiate Athletic Association baseball tournaments, the National Football League draft and a new Major League Baseball season. At Central, however, comes the highly anticipated intramural softball season, which remains the most popular intramural sport. There are 16 teams, each with at least ten players strong, and the field is full of promise.

"I think we're going in the right direction. We've done some positive things on the baseball field."

It's just hard to deal with knowing that a three-time fellow couldn't stay off the road that night despite being intoxicated and having a suspended license. His lack of judgment caused the death of the best man I have ever known. Marcus and Kye have to grow up without their father and our holiday gatherings will be missing the most beloved member of our family.

"I love you, Shane, and miss you. Rest in peace, my brother.

Shane graduated from Central with a bachelor's degree in law and justice and worked for the Forest Service until the accident just over two weeks ago.

He would have loved to have kept us together. Shane was someone I had looked up to all of my life. He always had a positive outlook on every situation and as my mother would always say, "he could fall into a bucket of crap and come out smelling like a rose."

In fact, he's probably the leading reason I chose Central myself.

The last couple weeks have been filled with old places in an attempt to make the memories of those in the past, something that has happened maybe his death won't be completely in vain. I would like to think that my cousin's gesture made me realize just how much of an impact Shane had on the people in his life.

It was a team captain his final two seasons at Central, and was co-captain with Jon Kitna in the early 90's. He chose Central after being told he was "too small" to play at UW. Wyrsch was killed by an alleged drunk driver in March. He was a team captain his final two seasons at Central, and was co-captain with Jon Kitna in the early 90's. He chose Central after being told he was "too small" to play at UW. Wyrsch was killed by an alleged drunk driver in March.

Out of Bounds:

"Out of bounds: Losing a member of the Central family"

Baseball:

Early deficits gave way to strong pitching as the Wildcats prevailed over the weekend continued from page 12

“Our pitching lost focus, that’s the bottom line,” Storey said. “We got into some live situations and we didn’t do too well.”

“I think we’re going in the right direction. We’ve done some positive things on the baseball field."

It just is’t hard to deal with knowing that a three-time fellow couldn’t stay off the road that night despite being intoxicated and having a suspended license. His lack of judgment caused the death of the best man I have ever known. Marcus and Kye have to grow up without their father and our holiday gatherings will be missing the most beloved member of our family.

“I love you, Shane, and miss you. Rest in peace, my brother.

Shane Wyrsch was killed by an alleged drunk driver in March. Shane’s funeral at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Enumclaw. The funeral procession took six on a five-mile trek through the city toward Evergreen Memorial Park. As we drove through the city, people stood outside their homes with their hands over their hearts, and cars pulled to the side of the road to wait with their headliners on. Even as the front of our procession reached the cemetery, there was still a line of cars waiting to leave the church.

The whole funeral process was incredibly impressive with all of the city’s police and the people, it was just so hard to get over how wrong the whole situation was. There should be no reason at all why we were burying Shane at 35 years of age.

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Spring activities bloom in sunshine

Central faculty and students taking advantage of warm weather activities from various locations around campus. From playing football on Barto lawn to biking around campus. Weather is expected to reach the 70s this weekend, giving students the opportunity to enjoy the sun.

The intramural sports deadlines are approaching, but there is still time to get a team together! The final deadline is April 11, and sports begin on April 15.

Pregnant?
You have options. 1-800-395-HELP or in Ellensburg 925-2273 Free Test. Caring. Confidential.

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