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The LCE wants you!

By Robert Wolff
Editor

Dr. Catalina Ramos-Hernandez takes education seriously and she wants to make sure other Latino students have the same attitude.

"Only 20 percent of Latino students that enter college leave with a degree...that's nationwide," she states. Although this statistic may be only part of the driving force to improve the educational standing of Latino students, it's by no means the only reason for Hernandez.

That's why she, along with the help of other staff, has formed the Latino Center for Excellence at Governors State University. The LCE is a project formed in conjunction with Morton College and funded through a federal grant from the Illinois Department of Education.

Morton College, a two-year undergraduate community college, has a heavy Latino population. However, there are specific issues for many Latino students that hinder their education and often prevent them from the junior and senior level and completing their bachelor's degree, said Hernandez. The LCE, working in conjunction with Morton College and Governors State University, aims to fix those problems.

"In many cases, Latino students are isolated," said Hernandez. "They do not become familiar with the services that we have. They get frustrated, don't make use of the services the university provides and drop out." She also claims many Latino students

insulate themselves from the general university community, something the center can help them with. "We don't know why, but it sometimes happens," said Hernandez.

The center offers for both Latino-American and non-native Latin American services such as mentoring for up to one year, tutoring for each course per semester, social events to help them integrate and adjust to the university community, and enrichment seminars throughout the year.

The LCE also offers assistance for school issues such as financial aid, scholarship opportunities and even registration assistance for undocumented students wishing to become American citizens.

Since the center is new, with the grant money received in October of last year and Hernandez herself hired in April of 2006 along with other staff brought on within the past few months, the organization is looking to staff itself with dedicated people.

"Right now we are looking for tutors to help the incoming students adjust and we need mentors to help students find out all they can about the programs and opportunities that are available to them," she said, adding that there also a need for faculty mentors.

For more information on either benefiting from the services the LCE provides, or if you are interested in opportunities that are available to them, you can reach the center via email, at p­ gutierrez@govst.edu.

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Happy, Merry, What?

No Nativity scene in the Hall of Governors complains some, but does it really matter?

Story on page 4

GSU receives $500K to fund new crime fighting program

By Elyse Burke
Contributing Writer

How would you spend $500,000? The Criminal Justice Program at Governor's State is developing a Law Enforcement Technology Center.

The $500,000 is a budgetary item given to GSU by Illinois legislature. The funding is a result of years of planning and development on the part of various GSU faculty members and departments.

"We had been floating the idea and shopping around for proposals. And I guess our delegates in Springfield were interested in what we were doing, they saw promise," said James Coldren of the Criminal Justice Department.

"A key factor was our partnership with local law enforcement, specifically the South Suburban Association of Chiefs of Police," said Coldren.

The official name for the program is the Center for Law Enforcement Technology Collaboration (CLET). It will offer post-baccalaureate certifications, and other education/training opportunities focusing on information security and intrusion detection, digital forensics, forensic science and services science.

The Center will create a framework for GSU to work collaboratively with law enforcement experts to deliver up-to-date curricula and create a research environment.

The Center is designed for students and professionals looking for training in new technical skills that will enhance public safety, promote officers in law enforcement, and pave the way to get more schools.

It will also provide an opportunity for south suburban students and regional law enforcement professionals to build upon their current expertise.

See 'CRIME' on page 2

Dr. Coldren will help set up the new Center for Law Enforcement Technology Collaboration.
A festival for the rest of us:

Why do we celebrate the holidays?

By John Conrad
Contributing writer

Traffic has increased, commerce has gone crazy, and it’s a Wonderful Life has been given excessive television air time. This could only mean that the holidays are upon us once again.

The holiday season is an important time of year for many people. However, few individuals understand the history and traditions of the religious or cultural celebrations of others.

Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration that takes place on the 25th day of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar (generally in late November or December). But how did this 8-day celebration originate?

In 168 B.C.E., the Jewish Temple was seized by the Syrians and dedicated to worshiping the Greek god Zeus, according to the History Channel’s website. The Jews battled the Syrians for three years, eventually regaining control of their Temple.

The Temple was rededicated to Judaism on the 25th day of Kislev. When the time came to light the Temple’s menorah, the Jews found there was only enough oil to last one evening. Miraculously, the flame burned for 8 days, until more oil could be manufactured.

The result is an 8-day festival of lights to commemorate this event. The term Hanukkah is a Hebrew word meaning "dedication."

Christmas is the Christian holiday celebrated on December 25th, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. However, the birth of Christ is believed to actually be closer to spring, according to HowStuffWorks.com.

In the 4th century, the Catholic Church wanted to upstage a Roman celebration of the sun god, Mithras, which took place in late December. The date of December 25th was chosen to compete with this rival pagan religion.

The celebration of Christmas spread quickly throughout Europe, but took time to be assimilated into early American culture. The colonists considered Christmas a pagan ritual and it was even banned by law in Colonial Massachusetts.

Kwanzaa is a cultural festival celebrated by African-Americans between December 26th and January 1st. Derived from a Swahili word meaning "fruits of the harvest," Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, according to the official Kwanzaa website. Kwanzaa was created as a celebration of African culture, values, and tradition in order to preserve and promote African-American culture.

This 7-day celebration is based on the seven principles of Kwanzaa, with each day representing one of the principles.

Crime:

Continued from page 1

They will be given the opportunity to develop technological skills that will enhance their effectiveness and professional status, and prepare them for new career directions in science, law enforcement, business and technology fields, according to a GSU press release.

"We just want to fill the needs of local law enforcement. There is not enough technical training available to meet the advanced needs of law enforcement. We just want to help," said Coldren.

What does this mean for GSU students?

Curriculum development is one of the expansion goals for the Center. Areas such as Digital Forensics, Forensic Science and Services Science will be added.

"There will be more advanced courses focusing on a very up and coming field. Security is a fast growing industry, and the Center is a great pathway to an ever-widening job market," said Coldren.

After completing a five course sequence students will be halfway to a Master’s degree.

"I want the Center to be seen as a valuable educational entity in the South Suburbs. I want it to be viewed as a visible and strong part of the academic community here at GSU and the local community," said Coldren.

The new classes will be taught by instructors in both the Criminal Justice and Computer Science departments, with the possibility of adding adjunct professors.

The South Suburban Association of Chiefs of Police (SSACP) is very involved in the development of the Center. They have a training committee that is helping with the progress and curriculum development to ensure that the needs of local law enforcement will be met.

The CLET is in the process of forming an advisory board, and four or five positions on the board will be filled by members of the SSACP.
New BSU president promises to take organization to higher levels

By Katrina Adams

October marks a successful month for Larry Bledsoe, the new Black Student Union (BSU) president. His desire for the position arose because he felt the voices of BSU were not being heard.

Bledsoe knows that in order to have a proactive organization, a strong membership is key. This year, to gain support and increase membership, BSU intends to have more student-relevant activities and events, hoping these events will lead to new members, because there is strength in numbers.

"One of my priorities is to increase membership, because there is strength in numbers," he stated.

Recognizing the average BSU students is constantly on the go, often going different ways, the new president believes there are common issues that many of the organization's students face at Governor's State University.

Bledsoe says he wants to rebuild the unity within the BSU. Part of the effort in this includes updating programs and events to attract younger students.

Bledsoe says he sees potential in the younger generation of students attending GSU and wants the BSU to be able to address their needs and wants so they can feel embraced by the whole campus.

"When the younger generation enrols at Governors State, I want them to feel happy about walking through the door, so they don't walk out," he said.

Bledsoe feels he posses the power to structure a positive, proactive, and successful student organization for everyone, seeking to make the BSU a supportive and embracing organization.

"I want members of BSU to feel a sense of pride dignity when they join," Bledsoe says, "I want to bridge the gap between BSU and the university." Bledsoe sees potential in the younger generation enrolling to be able to learn more about the BSU and its purpose.

Bledsoe says he is motivated in helping BSU members learn leadership skills, while utilizing their talents as well.

"BSU wants to give its members the opportunity to find their purpose in life," said Bledsoe.

Larry Bledsoe is currently seeking a B.A. in the Business Administration/Management program. He is also a student of A.C.E.S.S., and accredits A.C.E.S.S. extra students support services to much of his success.

A.C.E.S.S. is a federal funded program that is dedicated to helping first generation students succeed in graduating from college.

"I don't want my hard work to be in vain. I want to bridge the BSU communication gap, because in any organization, lack of communication leads to division, and without unity nothing we do can be successful," he added.

The BSU meets every third Wednesday of the month at 2:30 in the cafeteria annex.

Festivus: Continued from page 2

The principles are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujamaa (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith).

Children are often given Kwanzaa gifts, which must include a book and heritage symbol. The book represents the African value of learning, and the heritage symbol reinforces commitment to African history and tradition.

But what happens to those of us who are neither cultural nor religious? If only there was a festival for the rest of us.

The holiday of Festivus was popularized by a 1997 episode of "Seinfeld." However, according to Allen Salkin, author of "Festivus: The Holiday for the Rest of Us," Festivus was celebrated as far back as ancient Roman times.


Whether Festivus is real or originated on "Seinfeld," it is still highly debated. However, many people celebrate Festivus according to a 2004 New York Times article. In fact, according to Google Trends, in 2004 and 2005, the term Festivus had half as many hits as Hanukkah and twice as many as Kwanzaa in 2004 (The two were about equal in 2005).

Festivus is traditionally celebrated on December 23rd and consists of four basic traditions. The Festivus Pole is a plain aluminum pole (available online) set up similarly to a Christmas tree. Second, a family dinner, where according to Salkin "drinking is encouraged with hearty beer, rum, bourbon, or wine."

The third tradition is the Airing of Grievances, where each individual tells those around the table the instances they've disappointed him or herself through the year. Finally, the Feats of Strength, where the head of the household challenges one person in attendance to a wrestling match. Traditionally Festivus is not over until the head of the house has been pinned to the ground.

Whatever the celebration, these holiday festivities seem to be bound by a common thread. They all represent tradition, family, and general togetherness. So regardless of what your celebrating this season, wish your fellow man a "happy holidays," and be sure to have one yourself.

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Call The Phoenix office at 708-534-4517 and ask for the editor to schedule an interview or pick up an application located in the office mailbox outside room E-1500. You can also email us at phoenix@govst.edu.
Is there a controversy over Holiday symbols at GSU?

By Robert Wolff

Editor

The weather may not be saying it, but it really is Christmas time. You might otherwise notice it through our surroundings by seeing wreaths popping up, the occasional Christmas tree in home windows being decorated and the mad dash of crazed shoppers rushing to stores after Thanksgiving to save money on gifts or things they don’t need.

But religion in public areas and commercial centers has caused a debate in recent years over what is and isn’t acceptable to say or display.

Workers at some stores are now allowing their employees to say “Merry Christmas,” instead of the perceived neutral “Happy Holidays.” Other places are staying away from controversy by sticking with a general holiday reference. Public displays of religious items are still debated.

The holidays are about more than celebrating religions,” stated another. “They’re about being thankful for what you have and helping the poor. There are more important things to worry about.”

GSU’s official policy, according to Charles Connolly, a public relations officer for the university, is that “we basically try to be inclusive, recognizing the traditions of all the students.”

Connolly added that it was not the policy of the university to exclude any Nativity or Christian themes, stating he simply could not ever remember one being up in the first place.

As for the Physical Plant workers putting up the decorations, Scott Smith and Shawn Jones, they haven’t heard many complaints over the years about the religious affects surrounding the trees.

“This came from the (GSU) president’s office,” stated Smith. “We haven’t really heard any complaints (about religions not being represented).”

“We’d be happy to put up more,” said Jones.

Future Faculty Members Wanted

The Diversifying Illinois Faculty (DFI) Project provides financial and professional development support to students whose career goal is to be a faculty member at an Illinois college or university.

If you would like to learn more about the DFI Project and the application process, please attend one of the information sessions with Dean Poole, the GSU DFI representative.

The information sessions will be held on Tuesday, December 5, 2006, 12:00 noon – 1:00 in Room D1497 and Wednesday, December 6, 2006, 4:00-5:00, Hall of Honors.

If you are interested in learning more about the Diversifying Illinois Faculty Project but are unable to attend either of these meetings, please call Dean Poole (708-235-7594) or send her an email to s-poole@govst.edu.
Tenacious D: The Pick of Destiny
Director: Liam Lynch
Writers: Jack Black & Kyle Gass

Jack Black and Kyle Gass play themselves in the retelling of the origin of the D. However, this movie has a hard time finding its home and ends up thinner than Kyle Gass’ hair.

The movie starts with a young JB moving to Hollywood in the hopes to make it as a rock star. Quickly he finds Kyle Gass playing for change and they form the band Tenacious D. However, this movie has a downfall it was going to be akin to the South Park movie being half comedy and even the ending doesn’t rectify it as a rock star.

Tenacious D is now on the downfall it was going to be akin to the South Park movie being half musical. However, the strong beginning tails off quickly and never regains speed. The plot is shallow and even the ending doesn’t rectify the problem of the movie even though everything seems to come together.

Like I stated earlier, the movie never found its home. I say that because if you were a fan of the D then you already know the story of the movie and how it ends, and if this is your first encounter with the band than I can see very little that could be enjoyed. Even with more than a handful of cameos I can’t imagine a non Tenacious D fan liking this movie. It wasn’t all bad. The songs were for the most part clever and funny and some parts were genuinely amusing. So, if you have never seen or heard the D before take a whole star off the rating.

2 ½ out of 5 - Mike Kurmat

Bobby is a triumph. A tale of fictitious characters occupying the real-world struggles and emotions of the period without constantly reminding the audience that its 2006. It was also interesting that issues presented in the film seem comparable to many issues still faced by America today.

The film’s only downside is that it is almost too pro-RFK. Not one character disagrees with RFK’s platform or doesn’t want him to get elected. An RFK dissenter would have been a nice embodiment of juxtaposition in Estevez’s “shine to Bobby.”

3 ½ out of 4 stars - John Conrad

What is your name? Chip Goldren

What do you do at GSU? I teach Criminal Justice and head up the Criminal Justice program.

How long have you been at GSU? About a year and a half.

Why did you choose to study....? I chose to study criminal justice because as a young child, I got into a fair amount of trouble. I had some contact with the system and I became curious about how the system worked. Then, in college, I got a chance to study criminal justice overseas and I chose to study community corrections. That really sparked my interest.

Best movie ever? It’s a mad, mad, mad, mad world.

Favorite color? Blue.

What do you like most about being a professor? Student interaction.

What do you like least about it? Bureaucracy.

Do you have any programs coming up? Yes, this coming Tuesday, Dec. 5th (6:30 – 8 p.m. E Lounge), we are sponsoring Judge (Tenacious) Sharkey to come talk about juvenile justice in Cook County.

What would we find in your music collection? Bagpipes.


Roasting over 20 characters portrayed by some of Hollywood’s finest, Bobby is a surprisingly smooth and powerful tale of hope and loss.

Bobby, written and directed by Emilio Estevez, takes audiences on an emotional journey as it follows the lives and struggles of its 20-plus protagonists. The story centers on the lives of these individuals on an ill-fated day at L.A.'s Ambassador Hotel in 1968.

Estevez skillfully interweaves these tales together, not creating a film about Robert F. Kennedy, but rather a film about what RFK represented in the minds of many Americans. During the turmoil of 1968, including the war in Vietnam, racism, sexism and a growing drug-culture, RFK represented hope to the idealists of a past generation.

Although it is inconceivable that this election of RFK in 1968 would have alleviated the problems of the past (particularly), the film succeeded in making me think, “What if...? ”

The film features many great performances, some expected and some surprising. Anthony Hopkins and Harry Belafonte have excellent chemistry as a pair of Ambassador retirees, frequently returning to the hotel to reminisce about their past.

Estevez chose not to cast anyone in the role of RFK. Instead, he spliced old footage and audio of RFK and his speeches into the film. This helped give the movie a feeling of authenticity and gives younger audiences an opportunity to see Bobby in action.

Bobby is a triumph. A tale of fictitious characters occupying the real-world struggles and emotions of the period without constantly reminding the audience that its 2006. It was also interesting that issues presented in the film seem comparable to many issues still faced by America today.

The film’s only downside is that it is almost too pro-RFK. Not one character disagrees with RFK’s platform or doesn’t want him to get elected. An RFK dissenter would have been a nice embodiment of juxtaposition in Estevez’s “shine to Bobby.”

3 ½ out of 4 stars - John Conrad

What would you do with a million dollars? I would give half of it away, and I would fix my basement, and uh, put my children through college.

Best advice someone ever gave you? Tell the truth.

Worst advice someone ever gave you? Wow...uh, snowboarding off the coast of Africa. I’m not a good swimmer and I got myself in a bind.

What is your favorite food? I’d have to say seafood.

If you weren’t a professor, what would you be? I’d be a researcher, full time.

The key to happiness is what? Honest relationships.

If you could do it all over again, what would you change? If I could do it all over again, I would probably spend more time working in a direct service capacity.

On the GSU website, your name says James. Why do they call you “Chip”? There is a German expression that translates into English literally as ‘a piece of the old wood’. So, the first born male of a German child (you’re a piece of the old wood), you’re a piece of the old man. I’m the first born male in my family. A chip off the old block...

Three words that best describe you? Romantic, enthusiastic, overextended.
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All You Can Eat Fish Fry
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Stepper Set
(South Suburbs Largest)
$5 cover at the door (free with fish fry receipt)
9:30 p.m. - 2 a.m.
Goodbye tuition, Hello mortgage

By Derrick Lilly
Associate Editor

For as long as I can remember now, I have been wishing for school to be over. I want to pay to say this is page 12 or so, so I have probably been complaining daily about having to go to school, mumbling about how much I hate it and how it is a waste of time. Well, finally, about ten years later, my school days are coming to an end.

With the end of the semester quickly approaching, the stress has been growing. All the rushing to get last minute assignments together, being forced to find in other responsibilities, and still finding time for friends and family has been quite the task. On top of all that, Christmas is just around the corner, which in itself brings a whirlwind of tasks and errands. But soon enough, the homework will be gone, along with those dreadful tests, midterms, finals, and research papers.

Yes, finally, school is going to be over, and all I will have to worry about is making money. Now that’s the kind of paper I like.

Then again, the market is rough; companies aren’t exactly throwing money at their employees. Will my education pay off? Will I find the kind of job I am looking for? Will I be able to afford the lifestyle I want to live? These are just some of the questions now plaguing my mind.

The funny thing is, this is what I have been wishing for: I have wanted to grow up, and now, when it is time to make the next step, all I want is to be a kid again.

Seriously, things are pretty sweet when you are 12. You don’t have to worry about jobs, bills, or supporting a family; all you think about is running around having fun with your friends, and at that time, school is the only thing in the way.

So, all of these years I have been wishing for school to be over, and all of these years I have been dreaming about how great it will be to be an adult on my own just worrying about money and what kind of luxury vehicle I am going to drive. But right about now, I would do just about anything to the 12 again trying to decide what brand skateboard I want my new to buy me, because growing up isn’t as great as I thought it would be.

Looking back, homework and research papers are much more appealing than a car payment and a mortgage.

At least graduate school is an option. But let’s be honest, eventually we all have to leave school, and eventually we all need to grow up. While school may have felt like a burden for so long, once it is over there are even more responsibilities to undertake.

I think the best advice I can give is to not rush through life, it goes by fast enough on its own. Enjoy school, but more importantly just enjoy living. Learn as much as you can, travel every chance you get, meet people, make friends, find love and happiness, embrace your family and just try to make the most out of each day and every experience, because once this time is gone, there is no going back.

Good luck to this semester’s graduates, and good luck to all the students at GSU. I hope you all go on to live happy and prosperous lives.

***

Since I will be leaving GSU at the end of the semester, this is the last "editorial" I will be contributing. I would just like to thank everyone who read my few writings, and I appreciate the warm responses.

Crossword Answers

Sudoku #6

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Crossword Answers from puzzle on page 8

The Phoenix welcomes letters to the editor and/or editorials. Letters can be submitted to phoenix@govst.edu.

Letters may be edited for space or content and must include your name and a contact number or email address by with you can be reached.
Salt Creek Ballet in
The Nutcracker
Saturday, Dec. 9 at 1 and 5 p.m.
Center for Performing Arts
Salt Creek Ballet returns to the Center for this holiday favorite filled with dancing flowers, a sugar plum fairy and more, all set to Tchaikovsky's classic score performed live by the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Tickets range from $27 to $36 for adults and $22 to $31 for those 16 and under. Tickets for the Sugar Plum Party are $10. Call 708-235-2222 or order tickets online at www.centertickets.net.

The Jim Brickman Holiday Concert
Sunday, Dec. 10 at 4 p.m.
Center for Performing Arts
Back by popular demand, the Grammy-nominated romantic pianist returns for a heartfelt, holiday performance. Best known for his chart-topping hits “Valentine,” “The Gift” and “Peace,” Brickman has delighted audiences worldwide. The perfect holiday gift for that special someone. Tickets range from $43 to $52. Call 708-235-2222 or order tickets online at www.centertickets.net.

GSU Education Fair
Thompson Center, Chicago
Thursday, Dec. 7, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
For more information, contact the School of Extended Learning at 708-534-4099.

Alternative Teacher Certification Information Session
GSU's Alternative Teacher Certification program will host an information session on Thursday, December 14, at 7 p.m., in the E Lounge. The Alternative Certification programs makes it possible for individuals from a variety of backgrounds and careers to enter the teaching profession.

For more information, visit the program website or call 708.534.4399.

Master of Social Work Information Session
Join faculty and staff from the College of Health Professions to learn about the Master of Social Work Program. The information session will be held on Saturday, December 16, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the E-Lounge.

Call 708.235.2178 for information.

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