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Student Life

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GSU adopts Jaguars as new mascot

GSU announced its new mascot, the Jaguars, amid celebration and fanfare in the Hall of Governors at 12 pm Tuesday, May 6, 2014.

The final mascot selection came after a semester-long deliberation and voting process that solicited mascot suggestions from the student body, and received an overwhelming response. Four mascots (Jaguars, Bengals, Prairie Wolves, and Gladiators) contested in an online voting process that received over 30,000 votes, and ruled in favor of the Jaguars.

Continued on page 5

Respond to Violence airs on WTTW

The most recent sexual assault in Park Forest, IL on April 2, 2014 convinced worried residents and commuters in the area that one man was responsible for the past four attacks on girls and women that occurred this March.

A representative from the Park Forest Police Department told CBS News that they, “are warning kids not to walk to school alone.” Two attacks took place very close to Rich East High School and Forest Trail Middle School, mostly in parks and during the morning and afternoon hours.

Officer David Harbecker of the Park Forest Police Department said that “the two major incidents that happened were high school aged girls around 16." Two attacks took place very close to each other near parks and close to Rich East and Forest Trail Middle School.

Park Forest police are still unsure of the suspects identity. "We've been looking," said Harbecker, "and we've started extra patrol guys in unmarked cars, but we haven't gotten him yet. There hasn't been another incident since the first few.”

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Park Forest sex offender unfound despite police, community search

Left to right: Anchor Robert Jordan and RVCC panelists Congresswoman Robin Kelly, Director Marli White, and Attorney Irv Miller.

By Kara Trojan
Contributing Writer

A Richton Park Police sketch of the suspected attacker. He is described as a black male, approximately 5'8” to 5'10”, 160-185 lbs, with close to Rich East High School and Forest Trail Middle School.

The first attack occurred in Winnebago Park when a high school girl was robbed and groped at knifepoint on March 18th around 6 p.m. Another girl was confronted by a man at the intersection of Westgate Street and Westwood Drive, behind Forest Trails School two days later. 40 minutes after the second attack, a 39-year-old woman was nearby Shaabonna Park. As a result, many parents are urging their children to walk in groups, driving them to school, or arranging alternative forms of transportation.

Continued on page 3

GSU hosts MWWHA Conference with Democracy Now!

anchor Juan Gonzalez

By Jonathan Bulthuis

GSU will host the 2014 Midwest World History Association Conference on September 26 and 27. The 5th annual conference will include a panel discussion with keynote speaker, Juan Gonzalez, a co-host of the independent news program Democracy Now! and the author of “Harvest of Empire, a History of Latinos in America.”

“The theme of the conference is Civil Rights and Human History, recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act,” said Marak, “and we’re trying to expand the discussion beyond just black and white themes; to include Latinos, Native Americans, the Gay Rights Movement, and other minorities.”

“When we think of civil rights in the US, we often think in black and white terms,” said Marak, “but it’s much broader than that.”

Continued on page 3

DREAM Club holds disability awareness and advocacy forum

By Jonathan Bulthuis

The GSU DREAM (Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring) Club sponsored a forum April 23 at 3:30 pm in the Cafeteria Annex to raise awareness of challenges faced by disabled students at Governors State University. Featured speakers included Senior University Lecturer Thomas Bierdz and former DREAM Founding President Angelline Schuler.

There are two models of viewing disability,” said Bierdz, a former GSU student and a current faculty member in the Division of Special Education. “The first model, the Disability model, says that people with disabilities have problems because they have disabilities. The second model, the Handicapped model, says that society was designed by people, for other [non-disabled] people; from buildings, to chairs to equipment.”

Continued on page 4
Editorial

GSU Phoenix on summer hiatus

Comrades:
The Phoenix student newspaper will be on hiatus over the summer. We hope you have as much fun as humanly possible. We will do the same.
The Phoenix staff will be in the office for the rest of the month of May.
We will be keeping regular office hours starting on August 15.

The materials deadline for story concepts and advertising requests for the August 26 “Welcome Back” issue is August 18. Our voicemail at (708) - 534 - 4517 will be operational and will be accessed by staff at intervals throughout the summer months, as will the Phoenix email, phoenix@govst.edu.

If you are interested in advertising with the Phoenix, or if you represent a student organization that is seeking coverage of an activity or event, please contact us as soon as possible to book advertising space or to insure that we have enough time to effectively cover selected stories.

Wanted: Contributing writers of all disciplines

The Phoenix student newspaper is seeking Contributing Writers for the Fall 2014 semester. If you are able to write comprehensively on a topic of your particular expertise, or if you are interested in expanding your reporting skills and serving the GSU community as a journalist, please contact us and stop by the Phoenix Newsroom to give us your contact information, or send us an email at phoenix@govst.edu.

Staff openings for Fall 2014

The Phoenix student newspaper will be hiring for the following staff positions throughout the month of May. Job descriptions will be posted to the Newsroom (E 1500) door after May 10.

The positions currently available for the Fall 2014 semester are:

Staff Writer
Online Editor
Business Manager

Phoenix staff positions require students workers to keep regular, posted office hours. Expected office hours range from 10 - 15 hours a week depending on the position applied for.

Phoenix staff positions are paid student worker positions.

Job Descriptions will be posted on the Phoenix Newsroom door within the next week, and interviews will take place during the month of May.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Correction

Attention where attribution is due! The “GSU Student Senate Elections” article on the cover of our April 15 issue was written by Sean Johnson, not Bob Meyers. Thank you for your patience!

Letter from the Student Trustee

“So long, Aun Wiedersehnan... Goodbye!”

By Kayla Randolph-Clarke
Student Trustee

I can’t believe that I’m actually graduating! I don’t think that I could have had a better college experience anywhere else. At many universities, students tend to be treated as just another number. At GSU, I was able to form a personal relationship with my school from the very start.

Before I graduated from community college, the GSU Dual Degree Program helped me successfully transition into a university atmosphere, and even hired me to help other students through their transfer process (Thanks Ro!). A few weeks after becoming a GSU student, I was hired into one of the best student positions on campus; the Office of International Services. I’ve never had such a fun, supportive, and fulfilling work environment. Jon, Kat, Jackie, Bianca, Anna, and Ava; you all are the best supervisors and co-workers anyone could ask for.

Once I got my feet wet and figured out everything GSU had to offer, I tried to maximize my college experience. The ICO and Student Senate enhanced my leadership abilities; skills I’ll carry with me well into the future. The Student Coalition, TWAG, and the Phoenix enabled me to cultivate my thinking, speaking, and writing skills – all of which I’ll definitely need as a lawyer! To the GSU Administration, Foundation, and Board of Trustees, thank you for the opportunities you have provided me to further my academic and professional development. And of course, I am incredibly grateful to have received such a quality education from the College of Business and Public Administration.

I know without a doubt that at GSU I was more than just a number. Though I am sad to leave the comfort of what has become my second home, I am excited to show the world exactly what a GSU student is made of. I will do my best to make you all proud!

The PHOENIX is published twelve times annually. We welcome articles, suggestions, photos, commentary, cartoons, and letters to the editor on issues that concern you or the greater GSU population. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity, legality, and interest to our GSU readership. All submissions must be signed, and include the student, faculty, or staff member’s ID and phone number.

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Please REUSE this newspaper. If possible, we encourage you to either return this paper to the racks when you are finished reading it, or pass it along to a fellow student or friend.
Yevette Brown speaks out against violence in Respond to Violence, Communities in Crisis

Continued from page 1

“We could tell the story, we could help the community, and we could give victims a voice,” said Brown.

The initial project takes the form of a television program and an interactive website, but Brown hopes to make the project “meaningful and lasting, a legacy project.”

Respond to Violence consists of a panel of community leaders such as Congresswoman Robin Kelly, Democratic Representative for the 2nd Congressional District of Illinois; Attorney Irv Miller Legal Counselor for Channel 2 News Chicago; and Marlita White, Director of the Office For Violence Prevention for the City of Chicago’s Department of Public Health. The panel is officiated by news anchor Robert Jordan.

The Respond to Violence program deals with the devastating emotional toll that gun violence takes on families. The families of victims Hadiya Pendleton and Blair Holt appeared on the program.

An interactive website associated with the program, www.respond-toviolence.com, provides forums for education on violence and crime through a variety of different mediums and user generated content. The Respond to Violence initiative is open to everyone to get involved. Brown hopes to unite students and community members from a variety of fields and backgrounds in order to keep Chicagoland safe. Violence is felt by every member of the community, and in Brown’s own words, “If one child is not safe, no child is safe.”

For more information, including how to get involved and how to submit your own content, visit www.respondtoviolence.com. Any member of the campus community is invited to use their talents to respond to violence. “Everyone who lives in the community, the society, the city, and the Chicagoland area are impacted by this crisis,” said Brown. “It’s not just one person’s problem.”

GSU hosts Midwest World History Association Conference with guest speaker Juan Gonzalez

Continued from page 1

“This is the first time the MWWHA Conference is being held at GSU,” said Dr. Andre Marak, GSU Division Chair of the Humanities and Social Sciences and GSU’s representative on the MWWHA executive committee. About a hundred people working in history or global studies from around the Midwest will attend the conference, including K-12 teachers, college students, and members of the public.

The conference will feature presentations by students from the Alpha Phi Theta History Honors Society, and will be the subject of a class by University Lecturer Tamara Winn. Attendees may also attend a tour of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and an Art Exhibit entitled “I’m American,” curated by Sergio Gomez.

A major theme of the conference is how bi-cultural people understood and experienced the African American experience in the United States. “One of the most important claims [Gonzales] makes,” said Marak, “is that one of the major causes of undocumented immigration is US imperialism in those sending countries.”

“For example, the US invaded Cuba and took it over,” said Marak. “The US also invaded Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Mexico a number of times. These are countries that the US has either invaded repeatedly, or overthrown governments there; Guatemala, for example.”

One of the biggest injustices facing Latino immigrants is the paradox of resources they lack but they can’t access those things,” said Marak. “History never repeats itself, but it sometimes provides a mirror for other times,” said Marak. “Latino immigration is the same thing that the Irish did. Latino immigrants now will be part of the next white middle class in the 2050’s.”

Professor Tamara Winn’s Interdisciplinary Studies program class will focus on Gonzales’ book. IDSS students will attend the conference for two days, attend various panels and the keynote speech, and then meet together at the end of the conference to create a final project online. Students are not required to be enrolled in the IDSS program to participate, and non-paying students can attend the conference without receiving education credits. The MWWHA Conference will begin at 8am on Friday, September 26, and will adjourn on Saturday, September 27, at 4pm.

Journalism Majors

English Majors

Communications Majors

and anyone else who likes to write:

The Phoenix

requires your assistance in content. Help us make your student newspaper awesome.

Our avenues of communication will be open all summer long.

phoenix@govst.edu

Mr. R. Moran

Site Administrator of
dsholisticpremeds.org

Former GSU Student and
Student Senate President,
would like to recognize
the exemplary performance of
Tramel Jones

in the completion of a website
for her business.

Tramel will graduate from
GSU this year with a Bachelors Degree in Computer Science.

Orbis

Park Forest offender responsible for attacks remains at large

Continued from page 1

Park Forest police believe that the two previously mentioned instances were by a single attacker because both victims described the same man to the police sketch artist. Also, the attacker in both instances threatened the girls while wielding a knife.

“We are pretty sure it’s the same attacker,” said Harbecke, “but obviously we’re not ruling out two different people. In the past, similar things have happened and everyone thought it was one guy when it ended up being two.”

GSU recognized Sexual Assault Awareness Month this April by raising public awareness about sexual violence and educating the community about sexual violence prevention.

This year’s SAAM theme was “It’s time to talk about it!” and “Our voice. Our future. Prevent sexual violence.” For more information, visit the SAAM website at: http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/sexual-assault-awareness-month-home.

If you or someone you know is being sexually, emotionally, or sexually abused, you can refer them to the Crisis Center for South Suburria at https://crisisct.org.

The Crisis Center is “a non-profit community organization that provides emergency shelter and other essential services for individuals and families victimized by domestic violence, while addressing the societal issues that contribute to domestic violence.”

We are especially especially should always be aware of their surroundings and who is around them,” said Harbecke. “Keep off the cell phone and pay attention, and report anything that looks suspicious. Always trust your instincts. If something doesn’t feel right or seem right, then it probably isn’t right.”

Park Forest Police Department has posted a $500 reward for any information that leads to an arrest and charges against the person(s) involved in the incidents. The attacker is described as being a black male, approximately 5’8” to 5’10”, 160-185 lbs, and between 25-35 years old. The offender may have misaligned and or yellow teeth. If you see someone matching the police sketch on the front page, please call 911 immediately. If you have any additional information about the incidents and or know the identity of the offender, please contact Detective DeCeaut or Detective Morache at the Park Forest Police Department.

InVESTIGATIONS Division, at (708) 748-1309.
The second model, the Handicapped model, says that society was designed by people, for other [non-disabled] people; from buildings, to chairs to equipment. This second model is flawed, according to Bierdz. “People are born a lot of different ways,” said Bierdz. “Normal is a statistical fantasy.”

Bierdz drew a distinction between visible disabilities and hidden disabilities: disabilities that present internal challenges that are hidden to others. “I look normal”, said Bierdz, “but I’m legally blind. You wouldn’t recognize that, it’s hidden from you. You also wouldn’t recognize that I have ADHD, an Auditory Processing Disorder, or high-functioning Autism.”

People with hidden disabilities face enormous social challenges in achieving the fair treatment that they are entitled to under the law. The biggest challenge, according to Bierdz, is often self-advocacy: the necessity of informing others of one’s disability and considerations or changes that must be made to meet that student’s needs.

“I don’t want to be different,” said Bierdz, “but [in order to self-advocate] I have to expose myself, and I have to be willing to say that I am not normal.”

Disabled students also need to be knowledgeable about their disabilities and the conditions necessary to create a fair learning environment, according to Bierdz. “It becomes your job to educate [others] well, and to be aware of the resources that are needed to achieve equality, and how to respond if a person is resistant to this,” said Bierdz.

DREAM Club former Founding President Angelline Schuler took the floor after Bierdz to discuss the challenges she has faced as a disabled student. “People don’t look at me like I have a disability,” said Schuler. “I found out when I was 20 that I had Dyslexia and ADHD. I went to Santa Rosa Junior college in California, and participated in a special tutoring lab, for students with disabilities. It was wonderful because it create a subculture [for disabled students],” said Schuler.

When Schuler enrolled at GSU, she saw a need for disabled students and was instrumental in founding the DREAM Club: “I wanted to create a community,” said Bierdz. “Even people who don’t have disabilities are in our club.”

Schuler stressed the importance of educating disabled students about the resources available to them at GSU. “Only 33 percent of students with disabilities will graduate successfully from college,” said Schuler. “If it wasn’t for the accommodations I have here, I wouldn’t have the 4.0 GPA that I have now.”

“As we head into having freshmen, it’s very important that we have services in place,” said Schuler. “[GSU] has classes on how to use Dragon Naturally Speaking. These are things that professors need to know. They need to have the knowledge and the training. We do have that here, but I think that we could do that a little more.” Schuler also identified the need for stricter confidentiality between disabled students and their instructors.

Director of Student Disability Services Robin Sweeney was present at the meeting and spoke briefly during the session. “We want to do our best to address people who have both permanent and temporary disabilities,” said Sweeney, “and we’re excited about people coming here, so that they can see me as a contact. I can teach you how to communicate with an instructor.” Director Sweeney is GSU’s Disability Services Liaison, and can be reached at (708) 235-3968, rsweeney@govst.edu, or at her offices in the Academic Resource Center, B1209.

The GSU DREAM Club meets on Wednesdays from 3 – 4:30 pm, and can be contacted through their Facebook DREAM Club page.

Members of the DREAM Club kick their heels after the April 23 forum.
GSU Mascot Unveiling  Continued from page 1

GSU students showed their support for the new mascot on May 6 with an outstanding crowd that filled the Hall of Governors with applause.

Operation Mascot Winner Paula Franklin receives the prize check for her winning submission from President Maimon and Chairman Mitchell.

GSU student Paula Franklin, who suggested the winning mascot selection, was presented with a cash prize by President Elaine Maimon and Board of Trustees Chairman Brian D. Mitchell.

“The university is growing and having a mascot is an important component of a rich experience for our students,” said Courtney Sanders, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing, in a press release Tuesday.

“A mascot is an identifying symbol for a university,” said Sanders, “an important tool for building a tradition. We are thrilled to start building long-lasting traditions as the GSU Jaguars.”

20th Annual GSU Research Conference

Co-written by Bob Meyers, Sean Johnson, and Jonathan Bulthuis.

Governors State University’s 20th Annual Student Research Conference was held on April 29, and gave GSU undergraduate students from a variety of disciplines the opportunity to present and discuss the research they have conducted over the course of the last academic year. Student oral presentations took place in Sherman Hall from 9am to 12pm, and poster presentations were displayed and discussed in E Lounge after a noon luncheon.

Jonathan Bulthuis and Kyle Horn (College of Arts and Sciences) discussed human resources, photography, censorship, libel, and freedom of the press in college university newspapers, and identified the differences and similarities between heavily censored, private university newspapers, and their secular state university counterparts.

Tremayne Battle (College of Education) discussed a number of hypothesis dealing with emotional regulation through texting (Text Coping). “Texting can be used to cope and distract,” said Battle, “and excessive texting equals benefits to depression. Texting is comforting, [it] regulates emotions such as loneliness and anxiety.” Battle suggested a qualitative approach to further research on the subject.

Continued on page 6

Satisfaction survey results of non-traditional students over 30 at Governors State University

Q: How would you describe your satisfaction with the quality of education at GSU?

Percentages shown were derived from an anonymous Phoenix poll of 50 Governors State University students over the age of 30, in April 2014.

Q: Do you feel as if the interests of nontraditional students are important at GSU?

Q: Do you feel comfortable with the age diversity of GSU students?

Q: Do you feel intellectually stimulated by your peers here at GSU?

Q: Do you feel accepted at GSU?

Q: Would you recommend GSU to other nontraditional students?

Poll conducted and compiled by Jonathan Bulthuis, Phoenix EIC
GSU Arts and Literary Journal Reconstructed

By Adam Ebert
Associate Editor

Reconstructed, GSU’s art and literary journal, is on the verge of publishing their latest issue. “I’m excited about the release for this issue since we received a plethora of genres, styles, and themes that truly illustrate the diversity of creativity at Governors State University,” said Kara Trojan, the Editor-in-Chief of Reconstructed. The publication will feature a variety of art from different genres including poetry, short fiction, non-fiction, photography, and for the first time in the journal’s history, a play. “I was excited to see that someone had actually sent in a script for a play -- I wasn’t expecting that, but I was definitely pleased to see it when I read it.”

The new issue’s release will also re-establish a former precedent of a GSU art and literary publication: a printed edition. “The idea about a print issue was a whirlwind discussion that occurred during our last meeting. My staff was very adamant about producing a physical issue in conjunction with a digital one, so I felt confident about it,” said Trojan of the decision to release the issue in two separate formats. In fact, GSU has not had a printed literary journal since 1999, when the journal was The Pond. The staff is currently finishing the design and setup of the print journal, which will feature the literary works and visual arts of the new issue.

Trojan also stressed the importance of on-campus events to both build awareness about the journal and to provide a creative outlet for students. Events such as art showcases, workshops, and other creative events are currently being discussed and planned by the staff, to be held at various GSU locations, including the Prairie Place student residence complex.

“We know that Prairie Place will be a great place to find students to build awareness about Reconstructed, visit the website at www.govst.edu/reconstructed; or, if you would like to submit any work, please email the journal at reconstructed@govst.edu.

C2E2: Graphic Novels in the Classroom

By Adam Alvarado
Contributing Writer

McCormick Place recently hosted the fifth annual Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo known as C2E2. The event is essentially a pop culture extravaganza where well known artists draw five minute sketches, vinyl Stay Puft Marshmallow Men sit on shelves waiting to be purchased, and men or women strap themselves into ten feet tall Bumblebee (the Transformer not the insect) costumes. However, C2E2 is not all comic books and celebrity sightings (either real or costumed). C2E2 also has some of the most interesting and creative panel discussions for an expo of its kind, with panels this year like “Teaching Characterization and Inference with Graphic Novels.”

The panel promoted utilizing graphic novels in the classroom by explaining the benefits that come from such utilization. “The panel was made up of Ronell Whitaker and Eric Kallenborn, two practicing teachers explaining the benefits that come from teaching comics in the classroom,” saidKennon of his nonprofit organization.

“We’re not here to convince you comics are awesome,” said Kallenborn as the panel wrapped up. “You’re at this convention, so I think you know.”

“We’re here to show how effective [comics] can be in a classroom,” said Kallenborn.

And show they did.
Letter to Graduates  By Katrina Koltz

Congratulations graduates!
You have completed four years of rigorous undergraduate study, and gone above and beyond to achieve graduate level success. Your sleep deprived eyes and weary mind can begin to rest easy - for a moment anyways, in the current job market, graduate level employment is both exciting or intimidating.

Some students graduate with the sense of entitlement to a job, and perceive their education as a special credential for automatic employment. This sentiment is often carried into the interview and leaves employers with a distasteful opinion of the candidate. It is important to recognize that while you have earned a high education, you must also earn the respect of your employer, prove your work ethic, and demonstrate your skills and expertise.

Go to each interview with an open mind and a positive attitude, even if you are not serious about the position or decide during the interview that this is not the place for you.

An attitude of humility and humanity during interviews will be essential. Prove to each potential employer that you are the right fit for his or her company. This will require some preparation, but is well worth it in the end. Check out www.glassdoor.com to get the inside scoop on company salaries, reviews, interview questions, and more.

If you are looking for automatic entry into a position, internships or clinical experiences may be just what you are looking for. This is the time and place to prove to an employer that you are the perfect fit for their company. If you do not get a position with the company where you completed your internship, inquire about other companies in the area and see if your supervisor will write you a recommendation.

If an internship is out of the question for you, then networking should be your focus. Now is the time to get your C.V. out to past employers, pros in your field, and networking sites such as LinkedIn.

Take responsibility for your successes and - more importantly - your failures. Taking responsibility is another key to refraining from self-entitled behaviors, words, and attitudes. Overall, remember to "stay human and humble". If you can remember to integrate this phrase into your perspective, you will have the right frame of mind to approach new opportunities and accept disappointment.

Watch out for MERS  By Snehal Chavda

With summer approaching, many of us are planning some sort of getaway: within the US or abroad.

International travelers to the Mid-East this year should be mindful of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

MERS is a coronavirus: a form of common virus that many people are exposed to. The first recorded case of MERS was in June of 2012 in Saudi Arabia. The World Health Organization has identified Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as affected Middle Eastern countries. Non-human animals, namely camels, are responsible for the initial transmission to humans.

Countries such as France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, North Africa and now the United States have all had cases of MERS imported from the Middle East.

MERS belongs to the same family of viruses as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and the common cold, which it mimics by attacking the respiratory system. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and severe cases can lead to pneumonia, kidney failure, and gastrointestinal symptoms. The virus has caused deaths in 30% of the population it infects.

Studies show that transmission usually occurs from infected patients to healthcare personnel and caretakers. Experts' believe that the virus is unlike to become a pandemic due to its inability to spread easily; but that could change.

There is no available treatment or vaccine for MERS. The CDC recommends that people take hygienic precautions to reduce the risk of infection; like frequent hand-washing, avoiding close contact with infected people, avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and disinfecting surfaces that are frequently touched.

The current CDC travel notice to countries in the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries is at Level 2, which warns travelers to use caution, especially health care workers travelling to infected countries. No recommendations have been made to urge travelers to change plans yet.

In the event that you develop a fever or respiratory illness within two weeks of traveling from countries in the Arabian Peninsula or surrounding countries, you should contact your healthcare provider immediately and inform them of your recent travel.
TAPS delivers theatre performance of Still Life

By Kyle Horn
Staff Photographer

Still Life, a documentary by Emily Mann - made multi-format theater by Professor of Theater and Performing Arts Dr. Patrick Santoro - delivered a haunting view into the lives of war veterans and the lives of those they love on April 17 and 18 in Sherman Hall.

The protagonist, Mark, is a veteran of the Vietnam War played by Blake Labriola, who delivered a startling performance filled with angst, rage, internal conflict, grief, and instability. His wife Cheryl (Holly Britton), personifies the lack of understanding and empathy many troops return home to, while Marks’ mistress Nadine, played by Keisha T. Dyson, acts as Marks’ outlet for comfort and relief in a world that misunderstands his state of mind and his past.

The curtain opened to the three actors seated at the front of the stage in Sherman Hall. Behind them stood three flat screen TV’s displaying scenes from the Vietnam War, photographs from times past, or images of mainland USA during the time of the war. When the screens were not showing the pain of an era, the actors narrated a story of tragedy, disconnect and apathy.

The actors delivered their performances in an interview format, each of them answering questions that seemed to be begged by a silent, invisible interviewer. Often, the characters stories and answers overlapped, which only inflamed the plays sense of internal struggle. Labriola’s protagonist Mark is burdened with his return to civilian society, with the open wounds of his past nothing more than a point of denial for the people closest to him.

Britton’s Cheryl is incapable of understanding what her husband has been through and makes no attempt to understand, constantly blaming him for his inability to cope; and Dyson’s Nadine enables Mark’s behavior in many respects, understanding and accepting his behaviors, which include lashing out and beating his wife, along with neglect, alcoholism, and apathy.

Mark ultimately divulges the demons of his past; atrocities he committed during Vietnam that disturb and harass him. The play ends with a broken man saluting a screen displaying the names of his fallen brethren across the Vietnam Memorial.

In the moment when the lights go dark on Nadine and Cheryl, while Mark ends his salute, the gravity and relevance of the entire show hits, leaving the audience feeling deeply disturbed and haunted.

The intent behind Still Life was to show the state of a nation and how it treats its veterans. From the veterans of an older era to veterans of war in the Middle East, Still Life leaves no excuse for inaction as it shows, very clearly, the pain and torment a war veteran endures.

Still Life was hauntingly, skillfully and tastefully executed and served the purpose of telling a veterans story.

Honors Program Day of Service

GSU students, faculty, and staff volunteered their time and efforts on April 26 to help restore the home of Riverdale, Il resident. The effort was a collaborative operation between GSU’s Center for Civic Engagement and Honor Program, and a local non-profit organization, Rebuilding Together. Volunteers repainted two bedrooms, installed smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, replaced and weatherized windows, installed safety bars in the bathroom, replaced door handles and installed energy efficient lightbulbs in the resident’s home.

Birds of a feather paint together

Husband and wife team Ron and Jeannetta Brown display portions of Jeannetta’s work. The artistic duo are enrolled together in Javier Chavira’s Advanced Painting and Multimedia course. Jeannetta’s collage of puzzle piece paintings depicting their four sons includes dozens of individual, interlocking works. For a closer look at Jeannetta’s exceptional work, visit her Facebook page at www.facebook.com/jeannetta.brown.94

Horoscope

Aries (21 March-20 April) Mercury is moving into your communication house. Action!

Taurus (21 April-21 May) This week will provide you with a positive outlook or wealth.

Gemini (22 May-22 June) Be more forthcoming and confident this week.

Cancer (23 June-23 July) Take time to be more reflective.

Leo (24 July-23 Aug) Now is a good time to mix business with pleasure.

Virgo (24 Aug-23 Sept) Make creative changes to your environment this week.

Libra (24 Sept-23 Oct) This week, try something new.

Scorpio (24 Oct-22 Nov) Now is the time for forceful communication.

Sagittarius (23 Nov-22 Dec) Look before you leap, especially with relationships.

Capricorn (23 Dec-19 Jan) Seek advice from your peers regarding a difficult issue.

Aquarius (20 Jan-19 Feb) You will learn how to communicate with others unlike yourself.

Pisces (20 Feb-20 March) Let yourself feel nostalgic.