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Collin Dever /
Valencia Voice

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Official Student Media of Valencia Community College

October marks deadliest month yet in Afghan war

By Hal Bernton & Nancy A. Youssef
McClatchy Newspapers

KABUL — Eight American service members were killed Tuesday in insurgent attacks in southern Afghanistan, a focal point of the U.S. military campaign to combat the resurgent Taliban.

The latest incidents, which came after 14 Americans were killed Monday when three helicopters crashed, brought the number of U.S. personnel killed in Afghanistan in October so far to 55, making it the deadliest month for American service members in the eight-year-old war, and proportionately one of the worst months for U.S. forces in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Seven service members and an Afghan civilian died when their vehicle was attacked with a bomb and enemy fire, said Lt. Col. Todd Vician, a NATO spokesman for the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul. An eighth U.S. service member was killed in a separate roadside bombing.

U.S. military officials in Kabul wouldn't immediately release the names of the dead, their units or the locations of the attacks, pending notification of the next of kin.

A senior military official in Washington, speaking only on the condition of anonym-



Nikki Kahn, Washington Post / LATWP
U.S. Army 1st Lt. Dan Berschinski, 25, of Peach Tree City, Ga., is fitted with a prosthetic by Michael Corcoran, of Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

ity because he isn't authorized to talk publicly about the incident, told McClatchy Newspapers that one of the vehicles hit was a Stryker troop transport in the Arghandab Valley of Kandahar province. Strykers are eight-wheeled armored vehicles that have been used extensively in Iraq and were deployed to Afghanistan for the first time this

summer by the Fort Lewis, Wash.-based 5th Brigade of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division.

The 5th Brigade of more than 3,800 soldiers has been patrolling in the Arghandab Valley and other areas of southern Afghanistan. The brigade's 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, is assigned to the Arghandab

Valley, which has sustained the heaviest losses of any Stryker battalion from roadside bombs, bombs that detonate on foot patrols and small-arms fire in an area of open desert and dense foliage in irrigated farm fields.

Southern Afghanistan is a vast landscape of mountains, deserts and irrigated fields that's home to many conservative Pashtuns, who live in urban centers such as Kandahar and numerous towns and smaller villages.

Also on Tuesday, NATO officials in Afghanistan announced the recovery of the bodies of three civilian crew members who were killed when a U.S. Army C-12 Huron twin-engine turboprop plane crashed Oct. 13 in Nuristan province.

The losses starkly reflect the risks in fighting this ninth year of war of Afghanistan, as insurgents have stepped up roadside bomb attacks. The expansion of U.S. troops here has increased the strains on helicopters used to ferry troops and supplies and attack the enemy.

The 55 service members killed so far this month were among the 66,000 American forces stationed here. The worst month for U.S. forces in Iraq was April 2004, when 135 were killed out of a total deployment of 128,000.

— MCT Campus

Car bomb rocks Pakistan hours into Clinton’s visit

By Saeed Shah
McClatchy Newspapers

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — A devastating bomb ripped through a busy market Wednesday in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar just hours after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in the country.

Officials put the death toll at more than 80, with more than 200 wounded. Many of the victims were thought to be women and children who were shopping in the bazaar. Dozens of people were feared to be buried under the rubble.

The country is reeling from a wave of terrorism that’s accompanied the army’s offensive in South Waziristan, the region on the Afghan border that’s the center for Pakistan’s extremist groups. Bombings and gun attacks have hit cities across the country since the beginning of this month.

The blast in Peshawar flat-

tened rows of shops and ignited a fire that engulfed the area inside the congested old city. Bewildered wounded people were seen stumbling out of the dust and thick smoke in the narrow street. Locals were trying to dig people out of the debris. The explosion came from a powerful car bomb, officials said.

The local head of the bomb disposal squad, Shafqat Malik, said at the site of the blast that more than 330 pounds of high explosives had been used.

The buildings, which included a mosque, were old and collapsed easily. The Peepal Mandi market was known for selling makeup and wedding-related goods, making it a popular destination for women. Shopkeepers previously had received threats from Islamic extremists who objected to women going out shopping.

“The terrorists are trying to demoralize the people and the government,” said senior

provincial Minister Bashir Bilour, who visited the scene. “Even if we have to die, we’ll keep fighting these terrorists till our last breath.”

Clinton began a three-day visit to Pakistan amid extraordinary security measures. She’s seeking to repair the American image in the country, which was badly damaged by a recent row over a U.S. aid bill. Many Pakistanis blame the U.S. presence in the region for the instability that’s struck their country and Afghanistan.

Parallel to the bombing in Peshawar, assailants presumed to be Afghan Taliban militants attacked a U.N. guesthouse in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing at least six U.N. employees.

“I want you to know that this fight is not Pakistan’s alone,” Clinton told a news conference Wednesday in Islamabad. “This is our struggle as well.”

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Obama signs 1st major federal gay-rights law

By Margaret Talev
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Wednesday signed the first major piece of federal gay rights legislation, a milestone that activists compared to the passage of 1960s civil rights legislation empowering blacks.

The new law adds acts of violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people to the list of federal hate crimes. Gay rights activists voiced hope that the Obama administration would advance more issues, including legislation to bar workplace discrimination, allow military service and recognize same-sex marriages.

Congress passed the hate crimes protections as an unlikely amendment to this year's Defense Authorization Act. Obama, speaking at an emotional evening reception with supporters of the legislation, said that more than 12,000 hate crimes had been reported the past decade based on sexual orientation.

He spoke of President Lyndon Johnson signing protections for blacks in the 1960s and said this was an extension of that work. "We must stand against crimes that are meant not only to break bones but to break spirits," Obama said. "No one in America should ever be afraid to walk down the street holding the hands of the person they love."

Legislation barring firms from firing employees on the basis of their sexual



Olivier Douliery, Abaca Press / MCT Campus

President Barack Obama signs into law the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2010 at the White House, in the East Room, Oct. 28 in Washington.

orientation could win passage in the House of Representatives by year's end, gay rights advocates said. More than half of U.S. states currently allow employers such freedom.

Obama has promised to push Congress to repeal the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prohibits being openly gay while serving. A Senate panel is expected to hold a hearing on that issue next month, and legislation could be debated next year.

Gay rights activists also hope for re-

peal next year of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which would give federal legitimacy to gay marriages recorded in states that allow them.

The amendment signed into law Wednesday was named partly for Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming who died after a 1998 beating targeting him because he was gay, and whose parents were instrumental in leading the fight for such legislation. The law also was named for James Byrd Jr., a black Texas

man dragged to his death in a racially motivated killing the same year.

The measure also extends protections to those attacked because of their gender or disability.

Federal hate crimes law already covers race, religion and national origin. The new law strengthened it substantially, however, by removing a requirement that a victim must have been participating at the time of the assault in some federally protected activity, such as voting, for it to apply.

Matthew Shepard's parents joined Obama for the ceremony, as did the family of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, who until his death in August was deeply involved in pushing the legislation.

The Shepards' fight took a decade. With recent elections adding more lawmakers who are supportive of gay rights, by 2007 the Congress had sufficient votes to pass the legislation, but then-President George W. Bush indicated that he'd veto it.

Obama, campaigning last year, promised to sign it.

Judy Shepard issued a statement saying that she and her husband, Dennis, "are incredibly grateful to Congress and the president for taking this step forward on behalf of hate crime victims and their families, especially given the continuing attacks on people simply for living their lives openly and honestly."

She also called on Americans to look beyond legislation and work in their own lives to advance acceptance of gays.

Critics of the legislation, including several Republican congressional leaders, argued that an attack against another person is an attack, regardless of motivation, and that no special categories are appropriate.

Many also voiced concerns about "thought police" and fears that the new legal protections could curb free speech if those who oppose gay rights fear they could somehow be prosecuted for publicly voicing their thoughts. But the law punishes acts — not thoughts.

Gay rights advocates said that the legislation will enable the Justice Department to step in when states can't or won't, and will make extra federal money and resources available to local law enforcement officials who need help preventing or prosecuting such attacks.

They also predicted that it would affect American society in a meaningful way.

"It sends a number of messages across America: that hate will not be tolerated, that this Congress and administration value all Americans," said Joe Solmonese, the president of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay rights advocacy group.

— MCT Campus

Talented students ‘wow’ the crowd

By Nikki Namdar
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‘Showcase 1’ of Talent Tuesday took place on Oct. 27 on the Student Services Building patio. Talent Tuesdays are held every Tuesday between 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Hosting the event is Courtney Wilson of student government, who attends the college for event management.

Wilson, 21, has been enrolled in Valencia and has been a part of Talent Tuesday since 2007. “Talent Tuesday is a legacy,” said Wilson. “I won second place and was rewarded \$150.” Anthony Stephens, attended in the audience. Although not a contestant, during the show would voluntarily dance on stage. “I love to give a shout out,” said Stephens, 19, an anesthesiology student. “I’m a very energetic person. I take any challenge that comes to me, like this is a challenge.”

The three finalists were Raymond Surness, Yves “King Yves” Jeanfils, and Wilbur Bermudez. All contestants and trivia winners receive tickets to Joe’s Krab Shack restaurant.

Bermudez has been sing-

ing and dancing for two years, he attends Valencia to obtain a degree in dental hygiene. On being a finalist, Bermudez, 23, said: “I feel great. I was really nervous, but now I feel great.”

Fellow student, Janet Randolph who was a singer in last year’s challenge, but didn’t make it to the next round, said this time was “very entertaining” and “better than last year’s.” Randolph, 19, a political science student, said she preferred this year’s judges. “I like how they actually had a decent amount of judges who chose the right talent,” said Randolph. “Last year, they just chose friends and that’s what the main thing I had to say about that.”

This year’s judges is West Campus’ very own SGA president, Robert Stio, along with Jamar Bibbs and Shayna-Kay Gibbs. Wilson said when choosing the judges, she was looking for “diversity and a variety, whether it was ethnicity or sex.”

Wilson said she felt as though it was a “great outcome” and described how she felt when she said: “I’m very happy with the entertainment that was pro-



Nikki Namdar / Valencia Voice
Wilbur Bermudez was one of the finalists to come out of the first fall 2009 installment of Talent Tuesday.

vided and I’m astound with the students that even went out to aim for their goals. They aimed for a goal and they accomplished it. I feel like they accomplished their goals by performing.”

Jeanfils, 20, is enrolled in Valencia for music and sound technology and has been dancing for nearly 8 years. “This was just the appetizer,” said Jeanfils, “The final draft is next.”

‘Showcase 2’ for Talent Tuesday is Nov. 3 and the grand finale will take place Nov. 10 between the hours of 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

East Campus rings in fall

By Roxy Smith
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Valencia held its annual Fall Festival and canned food drive Oct. 30. The evening was a fun filled children’s event that took place in the mall area of the east campus.

Although the event was mostly geared towards children, all were welcome. The festival was a free event for parents to bring their children to; the only request was that visitors please bring canned goods.

Yary Garcia coordinates the event every year.

Kids and parents alike came dressed up in Halloween costumes. Children fled the mall area dressed as fairies and princesses while some came as superhero’s, vampires and pirates.

Children were able to fill their trick or treating goodie bags at each activity they participated in. Games ranged from a mini obstacle course to basketball and ring tosses, to jumping in a bounce house or sliding down a giant inflatable slide.

There were activities for kids of all ages including an arts and crafts table where parents could design their own trick or

treating bags with their children.

“The event is nice,” said Damaris Guadalupe, “my kids love the bounce house and crafts the most.”

If guests wanted to sit down and relax they were able to enjoy popcorn while watching Disney’s, “The Haunted Mansion.” The movie is a family orientated film that everyone could enjoy.

The fall festival gets more popular every year. “It is really nice that the college would put on a free event for the community,” said Michelle Griffin.



Roxy Smith / Valencia Voice
Families and students from Valencia came out to East Campus to enjoy games and candy in a safe environment.

OUR VOICE

Degree inflation degrades graduates' collegiate credentials

The growing cost of higher-level education coupled with the dangerous drop in the value of college level degrees is causing a phenomenon known as degree inflation.

In the past few decades, an influx of people, those who would not normally attend college, have decided to pursue bachelor's degrees.

One would assume this would lower the costs of education and allow for a more professional work environment, however, what has happened is a decline in the amount of professionals being selected for a work and some are forced to pursue higher-level degrees to compensate.

This offers a whole other set of problems as doctoral and professional degrees drop in value. Just a few decades ago the job environment was very different.

Individuals were hired by employers straight out of high school and those who lacked the ability to get into college learned a trade and continued on straight into the job market.

But with the growing demand of professional jobs, the technological revolution that replaced many of those workers with machines and good old outsourcing many were forced out of their jobs and into the classroom.

People are being forced to acquire four-year degrees and the worst part; those degrees are becoming worthless.

A cheaper and easier alternative ushered in by the Internet was the emergence of online schools that made it cheaper and easier to get the degree of your choice.

This poses more problems as these schools offer degree du jour programs like interior design, digital media production and others that can lead to rewarding careers but rarely do.

There is no easy way to put a stop to the decline in a degree's worthiness only ways to circumvent the rising tide.

Choosing degrees that correspond with in demand industries like information systems and software engineering can help, however, it will not solve the problem that comes with degree inflation.

It should be the goal of all institutions to control the amount of students graduating. Raising the

Rob Navaille



minimum GPA is one way to combat that. Another is to change the way degrees are earned.

Some degrees may require more training than others, in which case more credit hours need to be assigned to obtain a certain degree.

It should also be a pressing goal for schools to limit, or end entirely, their online programs. It should also fall on the government to regulate more harshly how all online institutes operate and limit their ability to give out degrees, after all it they are not the same as degrees from Universities.

Plus, a lot of state money goes to said Universities, to protect tax-payers investment in the system it is imperative they become more active in the practices of these institutions.

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POLL

Do we tend to depend too much on technology and the Internet?

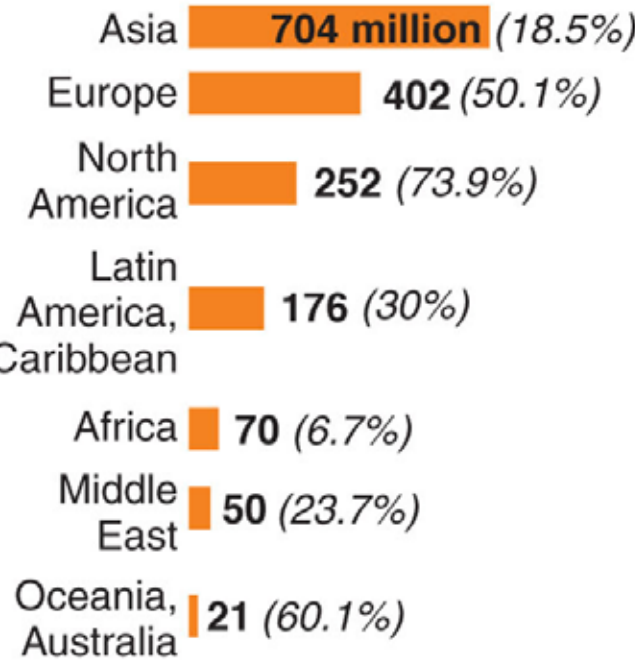
Photos by Kenny Wagner

Internet users

Worldwide, almost 1.7 billion people use the Internet.

By world regions

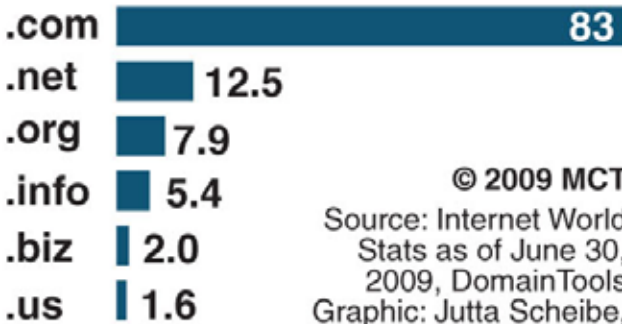
In millions, all figures rounded up (% of population)



Top domains

Active as of Oct.30

(In millions)



© 2009 MCT
Source: Internet World Stats as of June 30, 2009, DomainTools
Graphic: Jutta Scheibe, Eeli Polli



>> It's a good thing for society and our country is behind the curve.

— Jonathan Muszynski



>> It makes us really lazy, we don't try as hard as we use to.

— Jessica Matthews



>> Book research is important but the Internet is a big part of our research, we need it.

— Alejandro Hernandez



>> I think it's a good thing, computers are making our lives easier.

— Mariane Jean



>> We're definitely too dependant on technology, some things we need to start focusing on otherwise if we lose it all we'll lose our minds.

— Emerson McClain



>> For a student, Internet is essential to stay abreast on current events.

— Yolette Waldroup



>> It's necessary, as you develop technology instead of taking away jobs. It will end up creating more.

— Ali Chehab



>> I definitely think it's a good thing, without technology we wouldn't have evolved properly.

— Chantel Grant

YOUR VOICE

'Technophobes'

How those afraid to use new technologies will fall by the wayside

By Manny Colon
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Technophobes are people who don't like new technology. Some see these people as the keepers of old fashioned methods, others as conservative nuts.

It's in our nature as humans to try to make life as comfortable as possible. Technology should provide us with that comfort.

But, some people find it ironic because new technology is actually more complicated to use.

So they resort to whining, and telling everyone that it was better back in the day, and that computers will take over the world.

On the other hand, many of us move on. While newer technology may become complex, we easily adapt by simply learning how to use them.

My mother is 47 years old, she has cancer and had six strokes, and with a little bit of patience

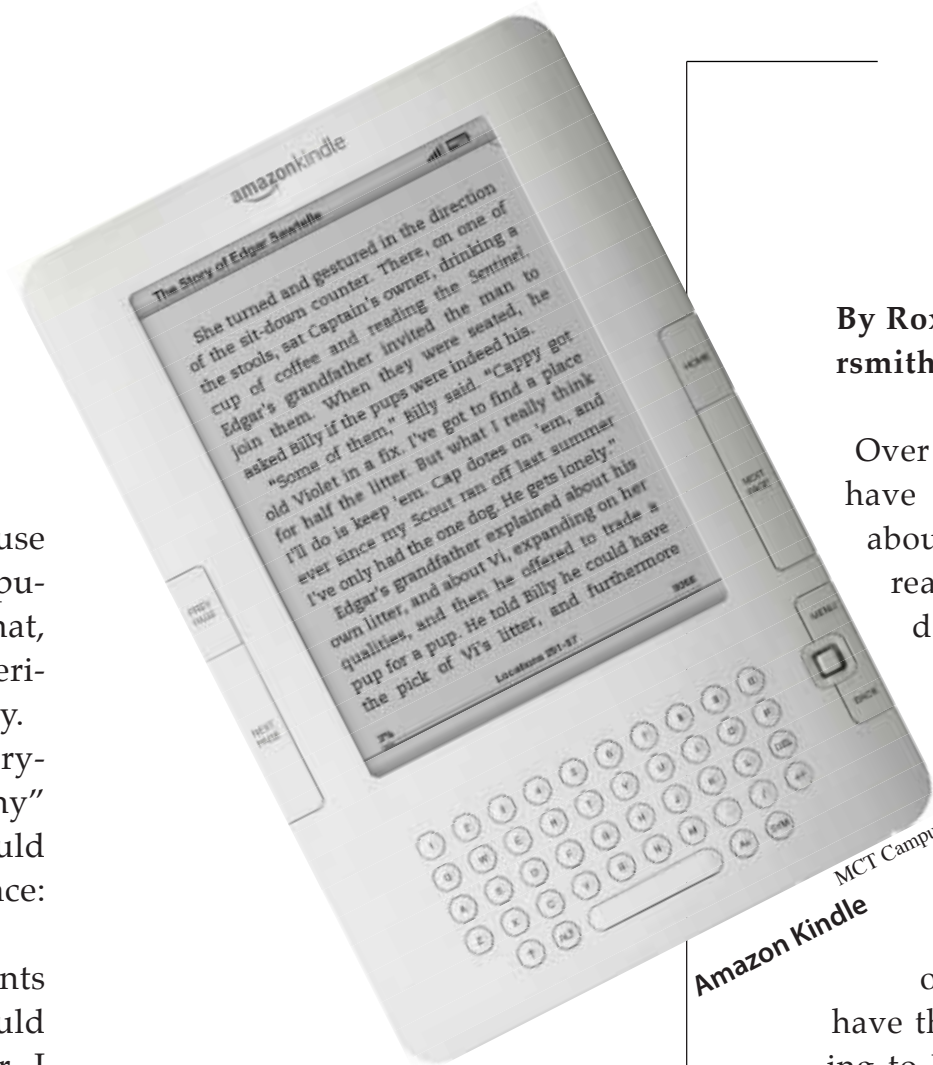
and guidance, she can now use the basic functions of a computer and the internet. Before that, she didn't have much experience with modern technology.

People complain that everything is becoming too "techy" and that some things should remain the same, for instance: books.

People who are tech savants knew that e-readers would emerge one way or another. I find that e-readers are much more comfortable for my eyes, and it motivates me to read more simply because it's on an LCD screen

Human beings are like that. They won't read the book, but they will read the same story on the e-reader, because people like the new stuff, and get bored of the old stuff.

I'm not saying that technophobes are wrong for wanting for things to remain the same way, but most of the time, we have to move on with the ages, or else we'll stay behind.



Amazon Kindle

E-nough

Why technology is useless

By Roxy Smith
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Over the past few weeks there have been many discussions about the new options for e-readers coming out this holiday season.

Amazon has the Kindle E-Reader, which is already available for purchase, but other companies like Sony, Samsung and Fujitsu will be launching their own versions or already have them on the market, according to James Stewart, a columnist for SmartMoney magazine.

Barnes & Noble even has its own brand of digital book now.

I think it's absolutely ridiculous how something that is as simple as a book has now become technologically advanced, and is trying to become the next best thing.

I feel great joy when I walk into a bookstore and browse the shelves, scanning titles to see what jumps out at me.

Grazing the aisles of a bookstore, I discover more authors than I would just randomly look at

books to purchase over the internet.

For me, there is nothing better than walking into a library and the second the door opens you are wrapped in the smell of old, aged paper that is filtering in the air.

My favorite is when you stumble upon a book that is so old the pages have turned the color of coffee.

I just wonder has society become that lazy that there just isn't time to stop at a bookstore or library to browse, or are books just not "cool" anymore.

It is quite baffling how everything has to become electronic.

The Kindle E-Reader already has competition waiting around the corner, as other companies advertise their version of e-readers, which are presumed to be better and more efficient.

A book will never go out of style because a book can only be one thing; a book, complete with paper and text.

I for one will not be in line this holiday season to purchase an e-reader.

But, I will have a long list of good classic, plain and simple books on my list to Santa Claus.

YOUR VOICE

Humanist agenda takes a hard hit

By Daniel Sandoval
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Throughout the country, billboards are popping up in an attempt to connect with secular humanists, atheists, agnostics, and freethinkers who seek to care for other humans simply because it's the right thing to do.

For decades, these non-believers have been oppressed and silenced due to the delicate subject. There have been cases in which people have been harassed at funerals and even denied job positions because of their non-beliefs.

Now groups around the nation, such as the Chicago Coalition of Reason, are banding together to send their messages openly, just as other religious organizations have been doing for so many years.

Still, a message like "Millions are good without God" shows what little a communal organization like the American Humanist Association has to do to offend someone. In Moscow, Idaho such a billboard was defaced with the word "without" blacked out with spray-paint. "If we replace the billboard, our next slogan might read 'Being good without God clearly not for everybody,'" Executive Director of the AHA, Roy Speckhardt joked.

With the right message, no parts of these controversial billboards are anti-God. The billboards say nothing about



Michael Bryant, Philadelphia Inquirer / MCT Campus
Steve Rade is the businessman who paid for the atheist billboard on I-95 that reads, "Don't Believe in God? You are not alone."

trying to convert others, they are not hostile, they are not belligerent, and they don't degrade any beliefs.

This behavior is opposite to Christians who, at the 2009 Academy Awards, protested Heath Ledger's nomination with hateful signs declaring that he was "now in Hell." Various religions have TV stations, highway advertisements, and churches on every street corner, yet a few non-religious billboards seeking merely to connect with people are being venomously attacked.

There is no need to single out a certain group, when on the flip side, the same thing is being done on a much greater scale.

Previously, there were bus ads in Indiana with the statement "In the Beginning, Man created God," which caused quite the stir.

A less confrontational approach was taken this time to send the message in the right and constructive direction, seeking to end the stereotype that atheists are wicked and wish to do away with religion in the world. In truth, a vast majority of non-religious Americans believe that the bases of all religions, without the fluff, are spectacular things to follow.

Many non-religious Americans work hard on a daily basis for their right to "not believe." The discrimination is certainly there, but with the struggle comes the hope of eventual acceptance.

At the core, regardless of religions, we are all the same holding almost identical moral and ethical values. Throughout history, everyone in the world has fought against intolerance. Why fall back and become an example for upcoming generations on how inconsiderate and prejudiced we were?

When positively observing and sometimes accepting ideas from both spectrums, we can truly look into one another's minds in considering the significance of human existence.

Religious rights require mutual respect

By Tiffany Janiczek
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Why can't we all just get along? Why is there such intolerance amongst religious and non-religious groups? It's just a billboard for Pete's sake.

Hey Athiests, I hate to break it to you but no matter what you think, God is still there, whether you believe in Him or not. And that great parking space you wished for, or the A you hoped for and got on the test you thought you bombed, that was Him.

I no longer attend church of any kind, and while my moral compass may not always point north, my religious past does hold some weight in the decisions I make, although it is not the reason for my choices. That being said, I have plenty of friends and even family members who profess that they are not religious or, by biblical standards, live a life that will send them straight to hell.

Take my best friend Justin. He is gay. I was very nervous when he met my super religious parents. While they don't understand or agree with his lifestyle, at a recent family wedding, my dad was overheard saying to Justin, 'you are part of the family,' which to me is a huge step. They accept him for who he is. That tolerance and understanding is paramount, and helps make my life a heck of a lot easier.

How does this apply to today? Well, re-

cently in Idaho, a billboard which spoke of a godless existence was defaced, and a sign that said "Millions are good without God" had "without" removed. I think it's funny because obviously someone was trying to convey that you can't be good with a lack of God, but apparently, as is shown by these people's actions, having God makes you no better.

It seems that the fundamental Christian groups that protest things like Gay Days, and Heath Ledger's winning a 2009 Academy Award, seem to forget that in the Bible it says that while God hates the sin, He loves the sinner. He loves them in spite of their choices. He doesn't judge them. Show me one place in the Bible where it says that God hates man? Or it condones protesting and spewing words of hate toward someone?

I am not saying I think that such billboards as the one in Idaho should or should not exist. But, I do think that if Christian groups can have their signs, then so should Atheist groups. Well forget even what I think, the First Amendment says they can. This is something I think many people seem to overlook.

One thing is for sure, whether you believe in God, some other higher power, or if you're an Atheist, Agnostic or just a non-believer, God does exist. He must, otherwise Atheists would have nothing to not believe in. Hate to break it down this way for you, but it's true.

Jackson's concert film is box-office smash

By Rafer Guzmán
Newsday

When the weekend's box-office grosses are revealed in Monday's papers, we will know, as if there were any doubt, whether "Michael Jackson's This Is It" will hit No. 1.

There isn't much competition. The Sony/Columbia film, which was released Oct. 28 and shows the King of Pop rehearsing in Los Angeles for a series of comeback concerts shortly before his death, scared away most other studios from releasing their own products. Once again, Jackson has the field to himself.

At a pre-release screening in Manhattan, however, the audience initially seemed unsure how to react. "This Is It," directed by Kenny Ortega, ("High School Musical") Jackson's concert director and creative collaborator, is not a polished fi-



Photo by Kevin Mazur, / MCT Campus

Michael Jackson onstage practicing for his new concert.

nal product. While rehearsing, Jackson often runs at low gear to conserve his energy. Songs stop and start without the usual smooth segues. And one sound is noticeably absent: the roar of an excited crowd.

But as the film progresses, it becomes clear that these raw images of Jackson would never have been made public had the concerts come to pass. "This Is It" shows how rigorously and tirelessly the entertainer worked to create the facade he presented to the public. Though not entirely free of music-industry puffery, Jackson's death is never explicitly mentioned, "This Is It" makes the man seem human for the first time in a long while.

Sony/Columbia has promised a limited, two-week run, perhaps hoping to create the kind of see-him-now urgency that would have surrounded the actual concerts. Whether the film gets held

over for a while, "This Is It" probably will be watched by music fans for years to come.

— MCT Campus



Illustration by Rick Nease, Detroit Free Press / MCT Campus

An illustration of the late singer.

OTHER VIEWS

"It also reminds us, sadly, that he was ready to reclaim his spot as the world's greatest entertainer."

— Timothy Finn, Kansas City Star

"It's a portrait of Michael Jackson that belies all the rumors that he would have been too weak to tour. That shows not the slightest trace of a spoiled prima donna."

— Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

"The glimpses 'This Is It' allows into Jackson's professionalism and the long stretches it devotes to his magical stage presence do not feel like exploitation. They feel like gifts."

—Carla Meyer, The Sacramento Bee



Photo by Kevin Mazur, / MCT Campus

Michael Jackson rehearsing for his concert tour, "This Is It."

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'Astro' action sequences entice viewers

By Niurka Jorin
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Astro Boy is a phenomenal work of art. Mastered in 3-D animation, it 's almost as if your wearing glasses in the theater.

The movie takes place in Metro City, a city hovering above the earth, with technology of everyday robots.

Toby Tenma, a brilliant student, finishes his 'rocket science test' quickly and is granted permission to leave school early.

On the way home, he's greeted by his father through a hologram, informing Toby of his work at Ministry of Science and forewarning him to stay away.

Toby disobediently goes against his father's wishes and interrupt's his father's presentation.

Dr. Tenma and Dr. Elefun construct two core stones, one blue and the other red, under the instructions of President Stone. The red stone has a negative affect, while the blue is positive.



Summit Entertainment / MCT Campus

Toby Tenma is "Astro Boy."



Summit Entertainment / MCT Campus

Toby Tenma, voiced by Freddie Highmore, in the remake of the 1960's television show.

Toby is encouraged to join in by President Stone.

He is then taken away to be watched by 'robot nannies' that he reprograms and enters his father's project.

Stone has the Peacekeeper, a large piece of machinery, activated with the red stone, which becomes very destructive blows up everything, even Toby.

Dr. Tenma grieves and spends days, creating a clone of Toby.

He finishes his masterpiece of his son by injecting the final piece of art, the blue core.

In minutes, Toby comes to life as if he never left.

He does everything almost the same, except he's just not Toby.

Toby runs away and finds out he is a robot. He is then chased by President Stone and his crew, after the blue core stone.

Toby is taken in by a new family. Here, on the

ground below Metro city, he adapts the name 'Astro Boy' and finds other orphans like himself. He finds out his new dad's interest in robots is something, he also enjoys.

Toby gives life to a 1,000-year-old robot that he and his siblings name ZOG and take home to their dad.

Toby finds out the hard way, that his new dad has wrong intentions of robots.

In the end, Toby and his dad must touch bases, by Dr. Tenma learning that Astro Boy is not Toby, but he is still his son.

Being of a younger generation, I've never seen the older version, but if they were made like this one I'd be a fan.

The story has a great theme that children should always do as they're told and all parents have feeling. I believe this is a great movie and should be viewed by all families with children ages 2- 10.

OTHER VIEWS

"I'd certainly recommend bringing your kids to this one, or giving your inner child a chance to come out and play."

— Eugene Myers, Tor Books

"There's a lot going on, but none of it ever really grabs you."

— Christy Lemire, The Aspen Times

"Animation is topnotch yet stylistically inconsistent, veering from bubbly and Wii-like to photorealistic from scene to scene."

— Andrew Barker, Variety

"Though some scenes may be too intense for children, the action is slick, with robot clashes and airborne chases leaving the strongest impression."

— Claudia Puig, USA Today

"Then again, there's very little that the filmmakers haven't borrowed here, making 'Astro Boy' feel as copied as its title character."

—Glenn Whipp, Los Angeles Times

"Yet the new 'Astro Boy' is a marvelously designed piece of cartoon kinetics, with the pleasing soft colors and rounded-metal tactility of an atomic- age daydream."

—Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

"As 'Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs' proved, the animation bar has been raised, and not just by Pixar. Poor little 'Astro Boy' hasn't a prayer of clearing it."

—Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel

Cast duo tempts readers with new novel

By Ashley McBride
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Fans of Phèdre nó Delaunay (of the "Kushiel's Legacy" trilogy), Sookie Stackhouse, (books from which HBO's "True Blood" is based), and Ever Bloom (from Alyson Noël's "Evermore") may find the House of Night series by the mother-daughter team of P.C. and Kristin Cast highly inventive and nail-biting.

"Tempted," the sixth installment in the House of Night series, picks up immediately where the fifth book, "Hunted" left off. (This had me racing back to my bookshelf to re-read the ending of "Hunted.")

In the aftermath of banishing Kalona, (the fallen immortal) and Neferet (the ex-High Priestess of Tulsa's House of Night), Zoey Redbird and her friends rest up in the Benedictine Abbey. Zoey managed to save Stark's life by deflecting the arrow bound for his heart by using the elemental affinities given to her by her Goddess, Nyx.

The story seemed to move slowly only encompassing a few days. In this novel, the Casts do

something that previously had not happened in their series. Zoey tells the majority of the story like usual in first person, however, this books gives you a peek at what is going on with other characters, though it is done in third person point of view.

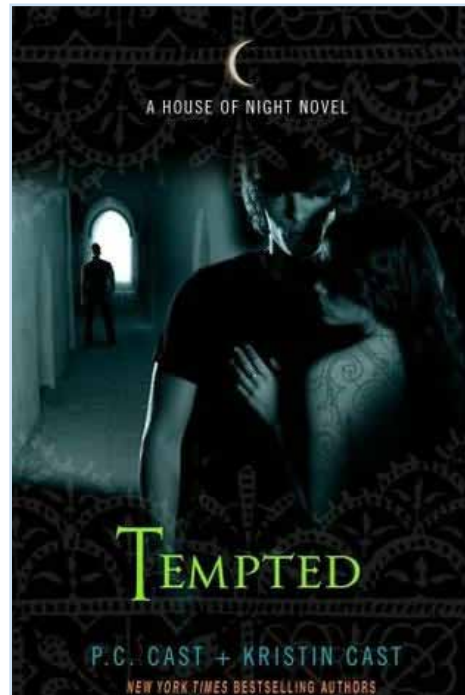
Stevie Rae, Aphrodite, Stark, Heath, and Rephaim all offer a third person peek at the story.

It's understandable why the authors chose to do that but it seems almost like they took an easy way out.

Zoey and her group inevitably head back to the House of Night which is their home and find that the Raven Mockers who attacked the school have all been killed.

The battle with Kalona and Neferet is far from over as Kalona plagues Zoey's dreams, calling her A-ya. Aphrodite, though human, still receives visions and she admits that the vision in which Zoey dies from drowning, Stark is there.

Stark is clearly upset by this turn of events. The worst thing in the world for a Warrior is to not be able to save his High Priestess.



St. Martin's Press

The Casts' "Tempted" is the sixth in the series of novels.

This book feels the way "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" felt. In 'Prince', when it was over it was leading up to the end, and readers could envision where it was headed. "Tempted" feels the same way in that sense, like the end is looming nearby.

Vampires are currently the "it" thing, but this series, though it centers on vampyres-to-be (fledglings), feels more like witchcraft with the magical circle casting and elemental affinities.

"Tempted" was a fun, quick, and exciting read, but it left me dangling off the cliff waiting anxiously for the seventh installment, "Burned" to appear.

'Dragons' brimming with plot twists

By Jimmy Tater
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Michael Connelly's work of crime-fiction, "Nine Dragons" drags the reader through Chinese culture and the homicide investigation of John Li, the owner of Fortune Liquor Store.

Detective Harry Bosch, the lead detective for the Los Angeles Police Department's homicide unit, is dispatched to a simple robbery which is immediately upgraded to a homicide, that seems to be connected to international asian gang: The Triad.

In addition to belonging to a dangerous line of work, Bosch is a divorcee of Eleanor Wish, and father of their teenage daughter, Madeline.

He maintains a good relationship with both, although they live in Hong Kong, through the use of technology. The book embraces technology since many of the conversations are transcribed from phone calls, text messages, voice mail, and e-mails.

Bosch is removed from his territory in Los Angeles and travels to Hong Kong to save her daughter from kidnappers

he believes to be The Triad.

There are many aspects of crime scene investigation that are explored in this book.

The victim swallowed a bullet casing after being shot in the chest and to lift the prints from the person who loaded the gun, they use a new procedure not approved by the court system to be used as evidence.

They handle the store's surveillance equipment and use advance computer lab techniques to improve picture quality and audio in some situations.

Also, there are many professional and personal relationships that Bosch balances and deals with on a daily basis.

His partner, Ignacio Ferras, was shot before the story begins, and is resistant to return to the field, and Bosch's patience is growing thin.

His daughter attends the Happy Valley School in Hong Kong and to compensate for the distance he bought them matching smartphones so they could call, text, e-mail, and video message daily and are very close.

He is still fond of his ex-wife, Eleanor, and believes



Lionel Hahn / MCT Campus

Author Michael Connelly.

they will eventually remarry because they still have a good recollection of each other, despite being divorced.

He believes that there is a leak in the case and he doesn't trust David Chu of the Asian Gang Unit because The Triad always seem to be a step ahead of them.

But, his partner, Ferras, is no help in the field so he gradually embraces Chu as his partner and is able to find him very helpful.

For those that like action and crime stories, you will enjoy Connelly's latest because it contains many surprises and tough situations for Bosch to overcome.

Tuskers clinch spot in championship

By Neil Tredray
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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — A scoreless first quarter gave way to an offensive slugfest that nearly resulted in the first overtime game in United Football League history, but the Florida Tuskers held on to win 27-24 over the Las Vegas Locomotives at Tropicana Field in front of an announced crowd of 11,354 Friday night, moving to 4-0 on the season and clinching a spot in the UFL championship game.

“When you lose the turnover battle and they outrush you by a massive yardage and you play probably your worst game out of the four games and you still win the game, it says you have a little bit of character in your room,” said Tuskers head coach Jim Haslett.

Locomotives quarterback J.P. Losman had a chance at leading a final scoring drive late in the fourth, but after an 8-yard run on first down, the Florida defense forced a sack of six yards and two incomplete passes to turn the ball over on downs. Tuskers quarterback Brooks Bollinger came out and took a knee with 13 seconds left in the game to seal the victory.

“As far as being the first of the two teams to go to the UFL championship, it’s great. It’s exciting,” said Tuskers receiver Marcus Maxwell, who had two touchdown catches in the game.

Florida had two turnovers in the first quarter, a Jermaine Wiggins fumble forced by Las Vegas linebacker Brandon Moore and a Brooks Bollinger interception in the end zone by defensive back Trey Young.

“I heisted, threw late to [Pittman]. If I’d thrown it early it would have been a touchdown. As a

quarterback you can’t have turnovers in the red zone,” Bollinger said.

The Tuskers defense held Las Vegas scoreless in the first as well, forcing two punts. Defensive back Jerome Carter intercepted Losman as well, returning the ball 83 yards before being tackled by Locomotives wide receiver Samie Parker.

Florida had possession at the start of the second quarter and continued an eventual 10 play, 80 yard scoring drive capped off with a Bollinger pass to Maxwell from 9 yards out.

Las Vegas kicker Graham Gano missed a 41 yard field goal attempt on the next possession, and the Locos defense forced a Tuskers three-and-out.

The Locos’ next play was a flea-flicker trick play. Losman tossed the ball to his running back, who tossed the ball back to Losman. Losman then fired a 60-yard bomb to a wide open Tab Perry for six, and Gano’s extra point tied the game at 7 all.

Florida’s next possession ended in a turnover as tight end Keith Heinrich coughed the ball up after a hit by Las Vegas defensive back Joe Porter. Nick Turnbull scooped up the loose ball and scampered 43 yards to the Florida 22.

The fumble was especially frustrating because the Tuskers had successfully converted a 4th-and-6 with a fake punt run by running back Shaud Williams, who gained 29 yards on the play.

“We run that once in a while,” Haslett said of his own trick play. “We’ve been working on it for about a month, so I told ‘em ‘We’re gonna run this thing come hell or high water.’ The opportunity arose today and we ran it.”

The next Locomotives play was a hand-off to running back DeDe Dorsey, who ran the 22 yards into the end zone, giving Las Vegas the lead and marking the first time the Tuskers trailed in a

game in two games.

Florida’s next score came on their second possession of the third quarter as Bollinger and Maxwell hooked up again, this time for 46 yards. Matt Bryant’s extra point tied the game at 14 with 11:56 left in the third.

Florida and Las Vegas traded field goals.

Gano scored first for Las Vegas from 40 yards out with 9:01 left in the third, followed soon after by a Bryant kick from 31 with 4:51 left in the third.

Florida running back Tatum Bell scored the go-ahead touchdown with a 1-yard run to make it 24-17, capping a 7 play, 86 yard drive with 8:08 left in the game.

Las Vegas needed just three plays to tie the game again, including a 71-yard run from Dorsey, setting up the scoring 2-yard pass from Losman to tight end John Madsen.

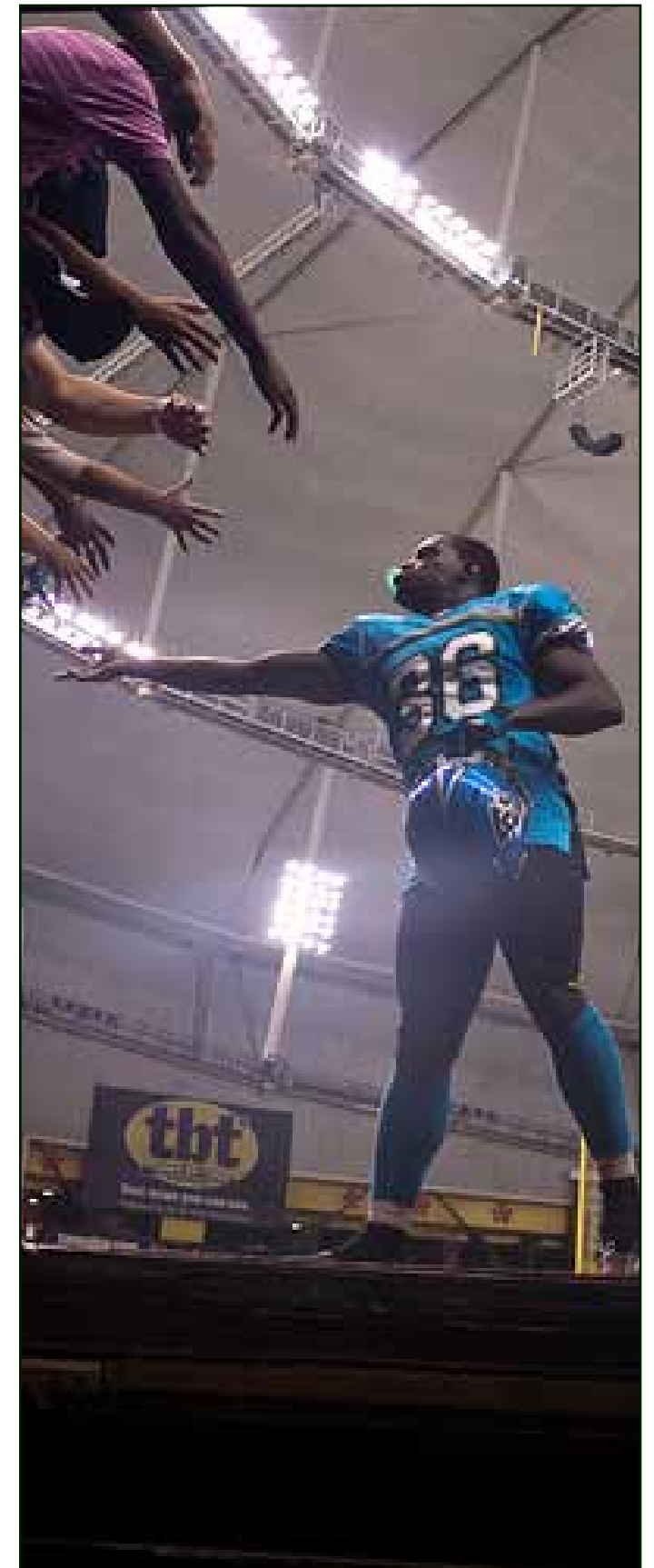
Florida’s next drive was capped off with a 40 yard Bryant field goal to give the Tuskers their slimmest margin of victory in four games.

Bollinger finished the night with 22 completions in 35 attempts (62.8%) for 321 yards and two touchdowns and one interception.

The Tuskers are on the road for their next three games, two regular season contests against the New York Sentinels on Nov. 12 and against the California Redwoods Nov. 19 and the championship game in Las Vegas.

“I told ‘em I’d be disappointed if we don’t go undefeated. If we go 5-1 going to the championship, you know what? You’re good enough that you should win ‘em all,” Haslett said.

The Tuskers have previously beaten both of their upcoming opponents, 35-13 over New York Oct. 10 and 34-7 over California Oct. 22.



Collin Dever / Valencia Voice

Michael Grant of the Florida Tuskers recognizes fans after clinching a spot in the UFL Championship.

Knights quiet Thundering Herd

By Neil Tredray
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ORLANDO, Fla. — The University of Central Florida Knights eked out a literal last-minute 21-20 victory against the Marshall Thundering Herd in front of an announced crowd of 35,676 at Bright House Networks Stadium in a crucial Conference USA match-up Sunday night.

"It wasn't pretty but it's a good win, a good team win. It's a 60-minute game for a reason," said UCF head coach George O'Leary. "Anytime you get a win against a 5-3 football team, I think it's a good win. It's a good conference win."

The Knights struggled offensively through three quarters of play and trailed 20-7 going into the fourth quarter, but a late Brynn Harvey rushing touchdown and a touchdown pass from Brett Hodges to Rocky Ross with just 23 seconds left in the game propelled UCF to victory over their division rival.

The fourth quarter rally began when UCF took possession with 10:16 left in the game on Marshall's 43. Hodges connected with Ricky Kay for 16 yards and a Harvey run for three yards brought UCF to the 24.

Two incomplete passes later and the Knights were looking at 4th and 7. Hodges threw a 21-yard pass to Ross, putting UCF on Marshall's 3. Two plays later, Harvey's run and a Nick Cattoi extra point brought the Knights to within six of Marshall with 7:45 left to play.

The Knights' defense forced a Marshall three-and-out and, following a Kase Whitehead punt for 50 yards, UCF took over on their own 33.

UCF again faced a fourth down situation seven plays later, this time from Marshall's 18. Hodges' pass to receiver A.J. Guyton fell incomplete, however, and Marshall took over on downs.

Darius Marshall ran for four yards and an offside penalty against UCF moved Marshall to second and 1. Marshall quarterback Brian Anderson called his own number and rushed for two yards, but UCF defensive end Bruce Miller ripped the ball from Anderson's hands and cornerback Josh Robinson fell on it, giving UCF a first and 10 on Marshall's 30.

Miller also recorded 2.5 sacks in the game and earned C-USA defensive player of the week.

"He's like every good pass rusher: they're always great sec-

ond effort players," O'Leary said about Miller. "He was on the sideline saying 'Just hold him up, I'll get it out,' and he did."

"Somebody just had to make a play and fortunately I was in a position where I could get the ball out, and that is what happened," Miller said.

From third and 10 on Marshall's 20, Hodges completed a 19-yard pass to Kamar Aiken. The next play was Ross' one yard reception to tie the game at 20. Cattoi's extra point was the go-ahead score.

"I was worried about running [the ball], not making it, and then clock, clock, clock. We had no timeouts left. You say we should have time to run another play, but it would have been hurried. They didn't even cover [Ross]. There was no one on him," O'Leary said.

"It was a little play action sprint play," Hodges said. "I walked up to the line at first and nobody was guarding [Ross]. It confused me a little bit and I was wondering if they were tricking me. We sent A.J. [Guyton] in motion and [Ross] was still open so I just put a nice little touch pass out there for him."

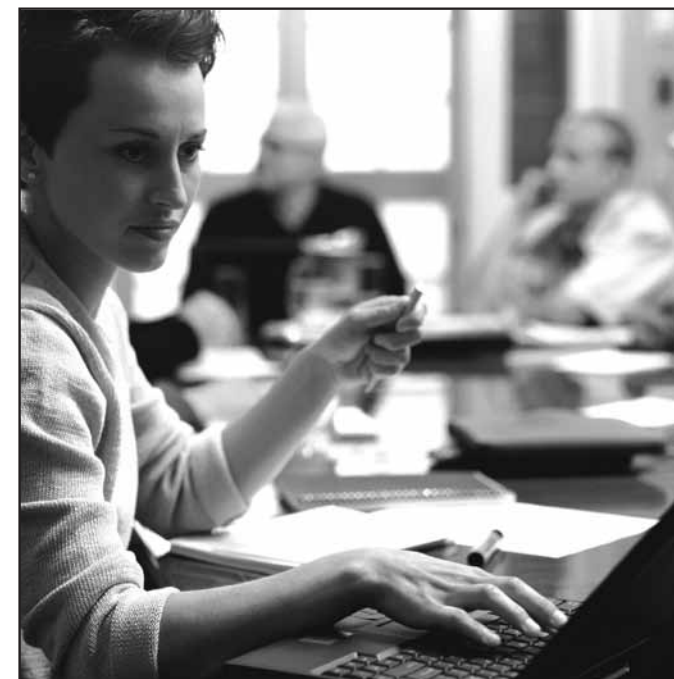
UCF's (5-3, 3-2 C-USA) next game is Nov. 7 when the Knights travel to No. 2 Texas (8-0, 5-0 Big 12).



Collin Dever / Valencia Voice

Rocky Ross celebrates the game winning touchdown reception.

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(Picks are winners, they do not take odds into account.)

LAST WEEK

BAL @ CIN			
ARZ @ CHI			
WAS @ ATL			
GB @ TB			
MIA @ NE			
KC @ JAX			
HOU @ IND			
CAR @ NO			
DET @ SEA			
TEN @ SF			
SD @ NYG			
DAL @ PHI			
MONDAY NIGHT PIT @ DEN			

Preview: The Steelers run into a stiff test on Monday against the Denver Broncos, who are coming off tasting defeat for the first time this year. Denver still looked solid last week as they let the Ravens run all over them, but they won't have luck on their side

again this week if they let 'Big' Ben Roethlisberger's pass attack put up too many yards. The Steelers can control this game and notch a victory with a solid defensive effort, but the Broncos are going to have a chip on the proverbial shoulder to avenge their loss.



Alex Barrett

89-25
12-1



Reese Wallace

68-46
8-5



Manny Colon

67-47
7-6

Big things come in small packages

By Alex Barrett
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There were a lot of teams in the NFL that didn't want any part of Maurice Jones-Drew when he was drafted in 2006.

It wasn't because of his work ethic, his talent, or his off field composure.

It was his size.

At 5 feet 6 inches tall, and a mere 208 pounds (of condensed steel, it would appear,) 'Mo-Jo' was passed over 59 times in the draft because no team thought his body would be able to handle the rigors of the league. What they should have been thinking was if he was so small and yet so strong, wouldn't it be tough for people to tackle him?

Not to be outdone by Chris Johnson's inhuman performance in last week's loss to Tennessee, Jones-Drew has made opposing defenses lose their minds as he slips out of their grasps. Just ask the Titans - on two separate occasions, Tennessee thought they had Jones-Drew bottled up, just to watch him break tackle after tackle on two scoring-scampers of 80 and 79 yards en route to 177 total yards; on just eight carries.

Gary W. Green / Orlando Sentinel / MCT
Maurice Jones-Drew makes it cool to have a hyphenated last name.

