

Tightening the belt JSU readies for tough financial times

By Jennifer Bacchus
Special to The Chanticleer

Governor Bob Riley's proration announcement on December 15, 2008, effectively chopped about \$4 million from Jacksonville State University's budget for fiscal year 2009. However, the \$1,374,794 proration fund established during the school's budget process is making the necessary cuts a little easier.

"We realize this is affecting everyone," said Dr. William Meehan, president of

JSU. "We're not going to whine about it. We're going to do what's necessary. In my own office, we've already made the decision not to fill a vacancy, which is the vice president for information technology."

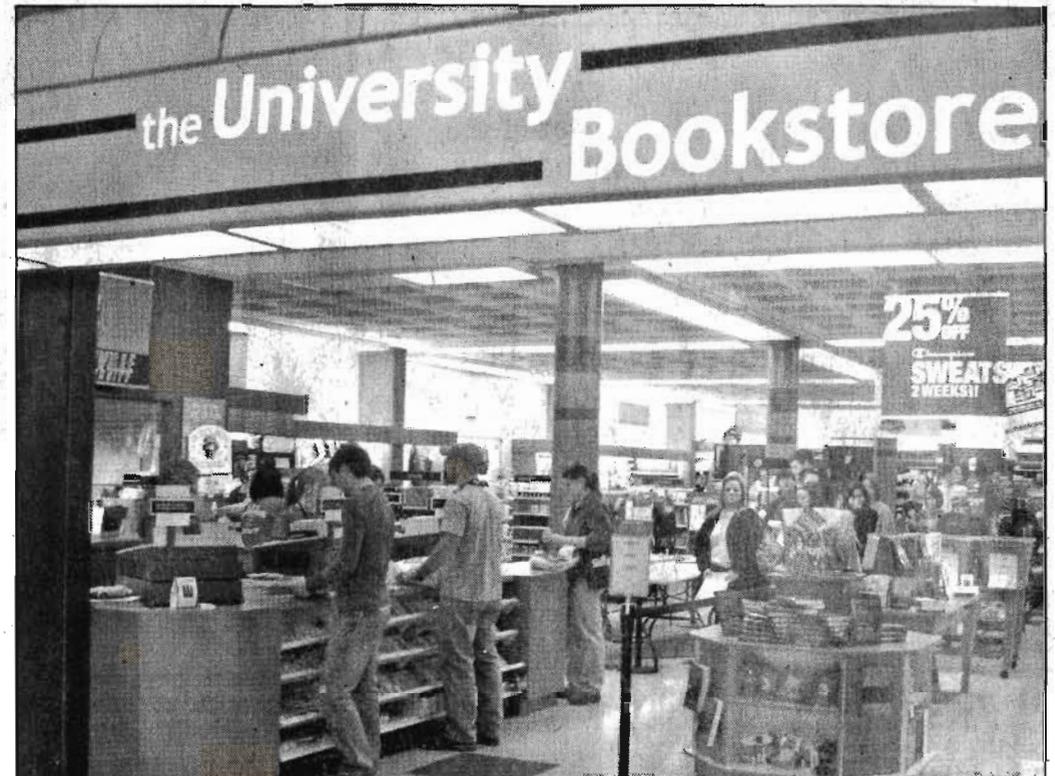
Since school officials know the current economic crisis is affecting everyone, Meehan said there is a plan in the works to allow students to pay off their tuition over the course of an entire semester, instead of having every penny due up front.

"Students have asked if

they can have a payment plan, so they can pay in segments their tuition. That's understandable," Meehan said. "It would be due and payable before the end of the semester and there would be a small charge for that."

In order to address the budgetary shortfalls, the school has frozen hiring of any non-essential personnel, only hiring for positions that are necessary to maintain accreditation. Maintenance that can safely be put off is being delayed and the bus

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Students stand in line at the campus bookstore. Photo by Mandy Pearson / The Chanticleer



Cathy Rose accepts a plaque and a check for \$500 from President Meehan on December 22. Photo by Steve Latham / JSU Newswire

Rose named 2008 Employee of the year

By Doran Smith
Staff Writer

On December 22, Cathy Rose was named the Jacksonville State University 2008 Employee of the Year. Rose, secretary to the associate vice president of academic affairs, received this honor at the annual holiday luncheon at Leon Cole Auditorium.

Rose was in the running for employee of the year along with 11 other employees; each of whom was selected as employee of the month at sometime during 2008.

"I believe that any one of them [the 11 other employees in the running for the award] deserved it as much, if not more, than I did," Rose said. "And I did not expect to win."

Before working with Dr. Joseph Delap, associate vice president of academic affairs, Rose has been employed at the secretarial level at JSU for 16 previous years. In 1987, she started at JSU as a clerical assistant for the College of Communication and Fine Arts. One year later, Rose moved

to being secretary for the Department of Communication. After 11 years in that position, she became the secretary to the dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies. She stayed there until moving to her current accolade attaining position in 2003.

The advisory staff committee chooses employee of the year as well as each individual employee of the month. The selection is made from nominees whom have had letters written to the committee telling of their outstanding dedication to the workplace. The committee selects employee of the month from these nominees, and likewise for employee of the year based upon the letters received. "Dr. Delap, Don Killingsworth, Dr. Turner and other people wrote letters on my behalf nominating me for employee of the month," Rose said.

Other employees vying for employee of the year were: Suzi Donaldson, Joan Ingram, Martha Dingler, Brandon Stewart, Lynn Stewart, Kathy Wilkinson, KaSandra Russaw, Lor Stephenson, Stephanie Hatfield, Alice Wudarczyk and James Rosser.

Cathy Rose accepts a plaque and a check for \$500 from President Meehan on December 22. Photo by Steve Latham / JSU Newswire

Osbourne named Miss JSU 2009

From JSU Newswire

Kristie Osborne, a sophomore marine biology major from Hartselle, was crowned Miss JSU 2009 on Friday, January 9, at the 27th annual Jacksonville State University Scholarship Pageant in Leone Cole Auditorium.

Nine JSU women competed for the title. The winner was crowned by Lauren Moon, Miss JSU 2008. Runners up to the new Miss JSU are Whitney Curtis, a sophomore music education major from Talladega; and Kendal Beverly, a freshman political science/pre-law major from Oxford.

Pageant contestants were judged on evening wear, swimsuit, talent and interview. For her talent, Ms. Osborne performed a jazz dance and tumble routine. Ms. Curtis' talent was classical piano, and Ms. Beverly's talent was contemporary bal-



Kristie Osborne poses for a photo after being crowned Miss JSU 2009.

Photo by Steve Latham / JSU Photo

let en pointe.

The Miss JSU Scholarship Pageant is a preliminary pageant for the Miss Alabama Scholarship Pageant, which will take place in June. The winner of Miss Alabama goes on to the Miss America pageant. The Miss America Organization provides millions of dollars in scholar-

ships each year at the local, state and national levels, according to Mardracus Russell, director of the Miss JSU Scholarship Pageant.

Jacksonville State University has been represented well at the national level. Heather Whitestone McCallum was crowned Miss America in 1995, and Teresa Cheatham Stricklin was first runner-up to Miss America in 1979.

Other Miss Alabamas who hailed from JSU include Ceil Jenkins Snow, 1971; Jane Rice Holloway, 1973; Julie Houston Elmer, 1977; Tammy Little Haynes, 1984; and Jamie Langley, 2007.

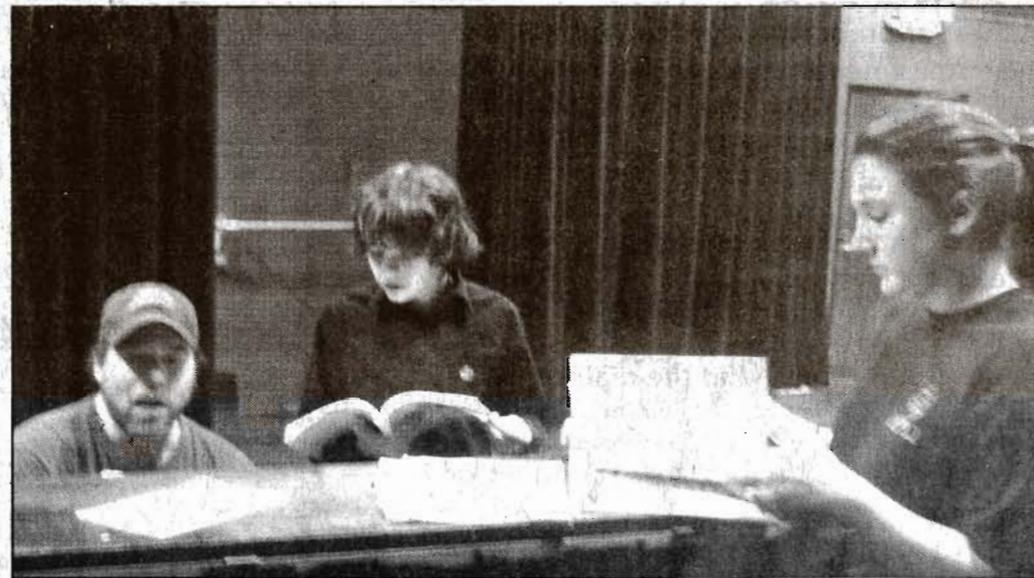
Along with the Miss JSU 2009 crown, Ms. Osborne received a one-year tuition scholarship, \$1,000, and more than 25 additional prizes.

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Director Eric Traynor, Liam Herb and Judy Shealy rehearse a song from Sweeney Todd. Photo by Mandy Pearson / The Chanticleer

Murder and meat pies Sweeney Todd set to open in February

By Matthew Tyson
Staff Writer

This year, Jacksonville State University will take a darker turn with its main stage musical by performing the gruesome production of "Sweeney Todd: Demon Barber of Fleet Street." Due to the success of the Tim Burton adaptation of the musical that hit theatres just over a year ago, "Sweeney" is sure to raise interest in many.

In a recent interview the director of the play, Eric Traynor, said that he has high hopes for the show and has a lot of faith in his cast. When asked about his cast, Traynor mentions that for this production, the players are required to have more than a just strong voice but strong acting ability as well. He feels that he has both in everyone.

"Sweeney Todd" is known notoriously for its main character murdering people and then baking them into meat

pies. When asked about how far he was planning to take the blood and gore, Traynor said he's not going to take it as far as the movie did, with tons of blood being thrown everywhere.

"The material itself should speak for itself," Traynor said. "When you are talking about killing people and putting them into meat pies, you don't really need to show that to make

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A Dog was found on campus, are you it's owner?

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No facebook?

Stanford U. students are going without Facebook.

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Stepping forward

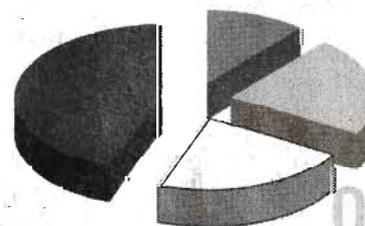
Lady Gamecocks struggle to meet expectations.

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QUESTION of the WEEK

What is your New Year's resolution for 2009?

- Lose weight - 11%
- None - I break my resolutions anyway - 44%
- Quit smoking - 22%
- Make better grades - 22%



Next week's question:

What are you looking forward to this semester?

ONLINE @ thechanticleeronline.com

ON Campus

Briefs

Mozart's "Cosi Fan Tutte," translated as ("All Women Are Like That), will have its one and only performance on Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 p.m.

The opera has only 6 cast members which act around a plot about infidelity. Directed by Dr. Nathan Wright, the opera takes place in 18th Century Naples, Italy. Mason Hall Performance Center will hold the one and only showing.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 256-782-5876. For additional information about "Cosi Fan Tutte," please visit the website at <http://music.jsu.edu/OPERA>.

Campus Crime

December 8

- An unlawful breaking and entering of a vehicle was reported in Stone Center parking lot. Items stolen include an international business book valued at \$150, a consumer behavior book valued at \$170 and an advertising promotions book valued at \$140.
- Domestic violence was reported at Stone Center.

December 9

- Assault was reported at the KA house.

December 15

- A theft of property was reported at Pete Mathews Coliseum. Items stolen include an Aerosmith keychain with dorm and car key.

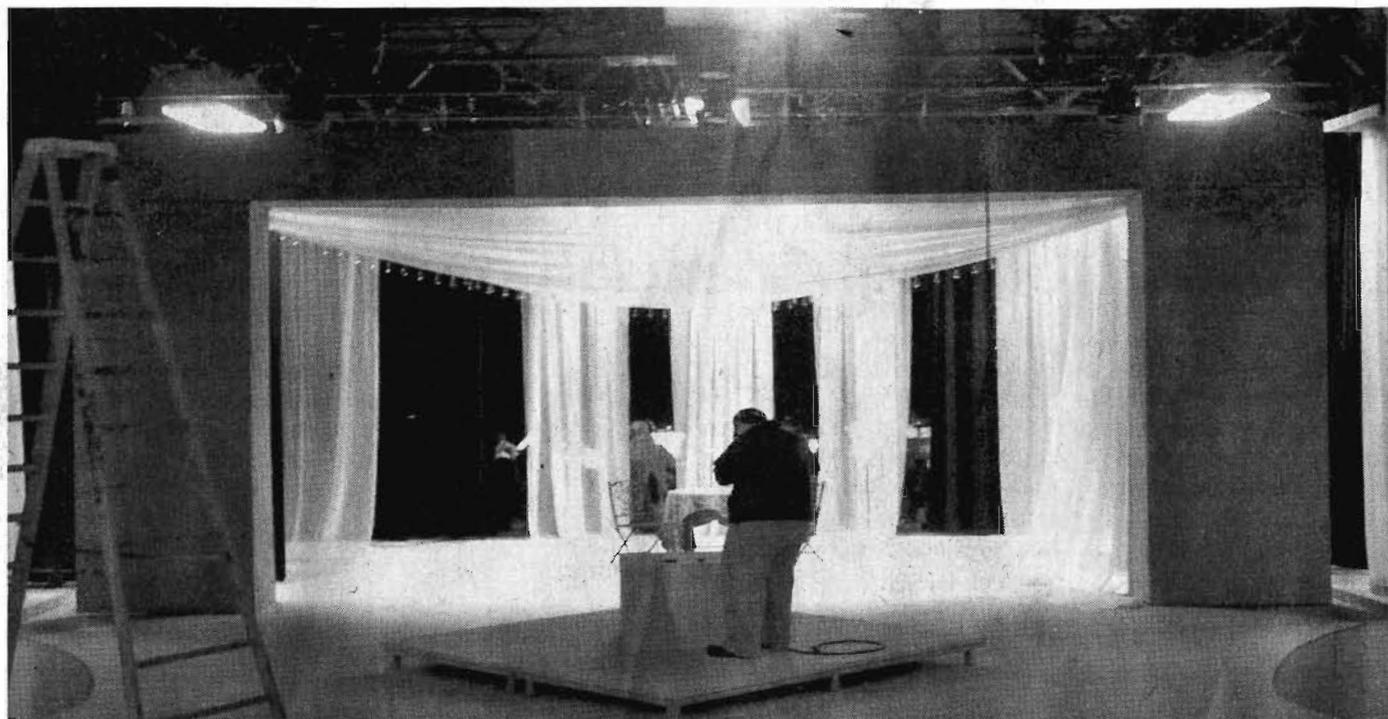
December 16

- Harassing communications was reported at Patterson Hall.

December 30

- A burglary was reported a Penn House Apartments. Items stolen include a Compaq laptop computer valued at \$600, a pair of mid top Jordan shoes size 7 valued at \$150, a pair of Nike shoes valued at \$70, other clothes valued at \$250 and a black laptop carrying bag.

Picture of the week



The orchestra rehearses as the set construction continues for "Cosi Fan Tutte," which opens Thursday. If you would like to see your photo as 'Photo of the week', email it to chantyeditor@gmail.com. Photo by Zach Childree/ The Chanticleer

Stanford U. Students choosing not to have Facebook accounts

By Vineet Singal
Uwire

Perhaps nothing exemplifies the life of a college student better than Facebook. The popular, free social networking — and usually procrastination-aiding — Web site developed by Mark Zuckerberg currently has over 140 million users worldwide.

But while Facebook's popularity at Stanford University — one of the first campuses to start using it in 2004 — is undeniable, a small but significant number of people on campus still haven't jumped on the bandwagon.

Caitlin Tharp '12, for example, does not have a Facebook, explaining that Facebook "takes up too much time." "I am just not willing to commit to it," she said. "There are other things I'd rather do with my time."

Pondering the consequences of an online profile doesn't seem to be one of them.

"At the end of the day, I think I would just think myself to death about the implications of a virtual self if I possessed Facebook," said David Keeler '10. "I would find no power in an edit function — only self-consum-

my exclusion from its benefits doesn't keep me up at night. It is just something that I don't desire to participate in."

Frank also believes that Facebook is a philosophically flawed concept since "it would feel like selective voyeurism to create a profile" and "degrade any scant sense of self that I claim to possess."

"I feel that it is just another layer that we use to avoid the possibility of actually connecting with somebody," he said. "Facebook is just a modern expression of the same process of alienation and self-loathing that has been the status quo for quite some time."

Indeed, the principal objection against Facebook seems to be the absence of true human interaction.

For Keeler, "Facebook cheapens the value our society gives to direct human interaction. It also enables us to have social lives without actually developing social skills, which I believe is detrimental."

Surprisingly, the fact that Facebook could be a distraction from schoolwork does not seem to be the issue.

"My academic life wouldn't suffer if I had a Facebook ac-

Yet he did note that Facebook seems to be a preferable way to waste time over sites like YouTube because "it at least engages you in the imagined campus community that surrounds us."

By the same token, students who choose not to use Facebook are still willing to admit that there are certain advantages to using it. Keeler explained that with Facebook, it is "easy to keep in touch and organize events with friends and share pictures."

While Frank agreed that there might be some benefit to having an at-your-fingertips ability to keep in touch with friends, he feared "that 'keeping in touch with old friends' on Facebook may be trumped by the desire to have as many 'Facebook' friends as possible."

"A computer has to remind you how many friends you have," Keeler said.

As such, this alleged emphasis on quantity over quality can turn off some people from Facebook. The Web site contains a counter of how many friends one has and, until recently, listed the number of one's wall posts — friends' comments on a user's profiles.

And when it comes to social

fers an alternate method of communication: the cell phone.

"Using the phone seems like a more personal means of communication, and I like that better," she said.

"[I have] long conversations with friends every couple of months and definitely make sure I see them when I'm in town," Frank said.

Some, however, just prefer to see old friends face to face.

"When individuals communicate over the phone, for instance, all of the body language cues are lost, and over instant message-style communication, even vocal inflections are lost," Keeler said. "Whenever my friends and I are in the same town, we'll usually arrange to meet up and hang out."

Not using Facebook can also have other advantages, such as making for an all-the-more special get-together with a friend after a long separation.

"It makes reunions much more sweet and much more for the moment since we both don't have expectations based what we perceive the other's life to be like through their Facebook albums and such," Frank said.

Furthermore, even though Facebook has nifty tools and ap-

- A burglary was reported at Penn House Apartments. Items stolen include a Compaq laptop computer valued at \$600, a pair of mid top Jordan shoes size 7 valued at \$150, a pair of Nike shoes valued at \$70, other clothes valued at \$250 and a black laptop carrying bag.

- A theft of property was reported at Penn House Apartments. Items stolen include a Dell laptop computer valued at \$600 and an MP3 player valued at \$80.

January 7

- A minor in possession of alcohol was reported.

January 8

- Forgery was reported at the mail center.

January 9

- Assault was reported in the parking lot of Brewer Hall.

What's Happening

Thursday, January 15

- Table for Community Service, 2nd floor TMB, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Monday, January 19

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No Class.

Tuesday, January 20

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No Class.
- SGA Organizational Council Meeting TMB Auditorium, 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 21

- Remembering Dr. King Jr. TMB Auditorium, 6:00 p.m.
- STAT Publicity Week, 2nd floor TMB 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The Chanticleer

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...pondering the consequences of an online profile doesn't seem to be one of them.

"At the end of the day, I think I would just think myself to death about the implications of a virtual self if I possessed Facebook," said David Keeler '10. "I would find no power in an edit function — only self-consuming conflict."

And Scott Frank '11 feels that Facebook is quite overrated in college life.

"I don't find it to be a necessary tool for survival within our current social environment," he explained. "I don't think about Facebook much, and certainly

also enables us to have social lives without actually developing social skills, which I believe is detrimental."

Surprisingly, the fact that Facebook could be a distraction from schoolwork does not seem to be the issue.

"My academic life wouldn't suffer if I had a Facebook account," Keeler said. "And anyway, I can distract myself from work without Facebook."

Frank agreed.

"There are enough distractions on the Internet to be a placeholder for Facebook's ability to devour time and energy," he claimed.

Sweeney: Actors must also have strong voices

it more effective. There will be some blood, but it won't be gruesome. You have to keep an eye on your audience."

Traynor also talked about his opinion on whether or not the audience was ready for the controversial subject matter of "Sweeney."

"I guess we will have to see how they take it," Traynor said. "If I do my job well enough there will be enough laughter and tender moments to counter balance the gruesome story, and allow them to hopefully sympathize with the characters even with these awful things they are doing."

Traynor says he hopes that people who might be afraid of "Sweeney" will give it a chance.

"It's one of those things where you hear just the story and you think 'Oh my god, how can I enjoy this,'" Traynor said. "But it's actually very moving at times, very funny at times and even very wrenching at times."

With "Sweeney's" music known for being difficult, it's not

As such, this alleged emphasis on quantity over quality can turn off some people from Facebook. The Web site contains a counter of how many friends one has and, until recently, listed the number of one's wall posts — friends' comments on a user's profiles.

And when it comes to social networking, Facebook-less individuals don't generally use alternative sites. While that might seem to create some obstacles in terms of catching up with old friends, there are other options.

Tharp admitted that while there may be some practical benefits to Facebook, she pre-

"It makes reunions much more sweet and much more for the moment since we both don't have expectations based what we perceive the other's life to be like through their Facebook albums and such," Frank said.

Furthermore, even though Facebook has nifty tools and applications, such as the ability to cyber poke or high-five a friend, these seem to be frivolous distractions for non-Facebook users. "Poking someone just doesn't make me feel like I am actually taking a vested interest in the lives of people that are important to me," Frank said.

surprising that at the first rehearsal, the cast struggled a bit in learning the opening song. However, they were able to quickly come together and produce a sound that was both beautiful and haunting. It was easy to see why Traynor has so much faith in his actors.

A couple of cast members were also interviewed and asked about their expectations for the show. Ellie Mellen, who is playing the part of Johanna, and Matthew Headly, who holds the title role as Sweeney Todd, both feel that the show is going to turn out wonderfully and they are excited to be working with such a strong cast. Both believe that the controversy of the show might be a problem for a few, but also hold faith in their audience that they can see past the blood and murder and enjoy the entire show and appreciate the story in full.

"Sweeney Todd" opens February 19th at 7:00 p.m., and will play the 20th, 21st, 26th, 27th and 28th at 7:00 p.m., as well as Feb 22nd and March 1st at 2:00 p.m.

Tightening: Turner: "We're looking at everything"

system JSU had planned may be put off as well.

"We know that is something that will help students, but we're going to take a hard look at that and see if it's something we need to expend at this time. We may delay that," said Meehan.

Though tough decisions are being made on where funds can be spent, school officials are adamant that cuts should not affect the quality of their programs.

"We're looking at everything. Nothing's off the table at this point, but cer-

tainly we do not want the services to our students to decline and we don't want our academic programs to decline in quality," said Dr. Rebecca Turner, JSU's vice president of academic and student affairs.

Turner was one of many university officials from throughout the state who made a trip to Montgomery this past week to discuss proration's impact on higher education institutions with Governor Riley.

The school is also focusing on completing projects begun before the proration announcement.

A fence shrouded in green lines Mountain Street where the new dorm and stadium expansion project is underway. A few new blue lights can be seen glowing on campus at night from the latest emergency phones added to campus and new lights are going in near Rowe Hall.

"You've got to continue to have those plans. That's why we're continuing with the dormitory project and the stadium project, because those are going to bring in revenue," Meehan said. "You've got to continue to make plans and grow."

Lost puppy may belong to JSU college student

It was brought to the Chanticleer's attention that a stray dog was found on New Year's Day.

She is a small dog with short hair that is light brown and white. She was wearing a pink collar when found, and was said to be well groomed,

but scared and hungry.

Due to the quality of the picture we received, we are unable to print a photo of the dog. But, we do have one available at the Chanticleer office.

The people who currently have her took her to Groom-

ingdales, where they recognized her, and suggested that she may belong to a male college student.

If you have recently lost your dog, or know of a person who has, please come by the Chanticleer office (Self Hall Room 180) to view the

picture. Or, you may email the editor at chantyeditor@gmail.com.

Also, you can call the people who found and currently have the dog. Jim or Pat Hurtle at 256-435-6020.

Dating/Love: Perhaps the past should stay out of the present

By Julie Skinner

By college, many people have either previously been in what they would call a serious relationship, or are currently in one. Something changes once the transition occurs from high school to college. Relationships tend to become more mature, and some even find themselves engaged before graduating. No matter how long you have been with a person or how well you think you know them, a subject will arise that often causes tension between you and your significant other depending on how you handle it. The past.

I met my boyfriend while on a summer internship in Memphis. We've been dating long-distance for a little over 6 months. We drive 5 hours to see each other at least once a week, often meet up halfway on weekends and spend spare time out of school together. We're a dedicated couple. We drove that far when gas prices spiked to \$3.99 per gallon and drove the 5 hours back the very next day in order to catch our classes. But this weekend, while having one of our infamous 3-hour phone conversations, I asked him about the girls he had dated in his past. Oh boy. Here's where the turbulence started.

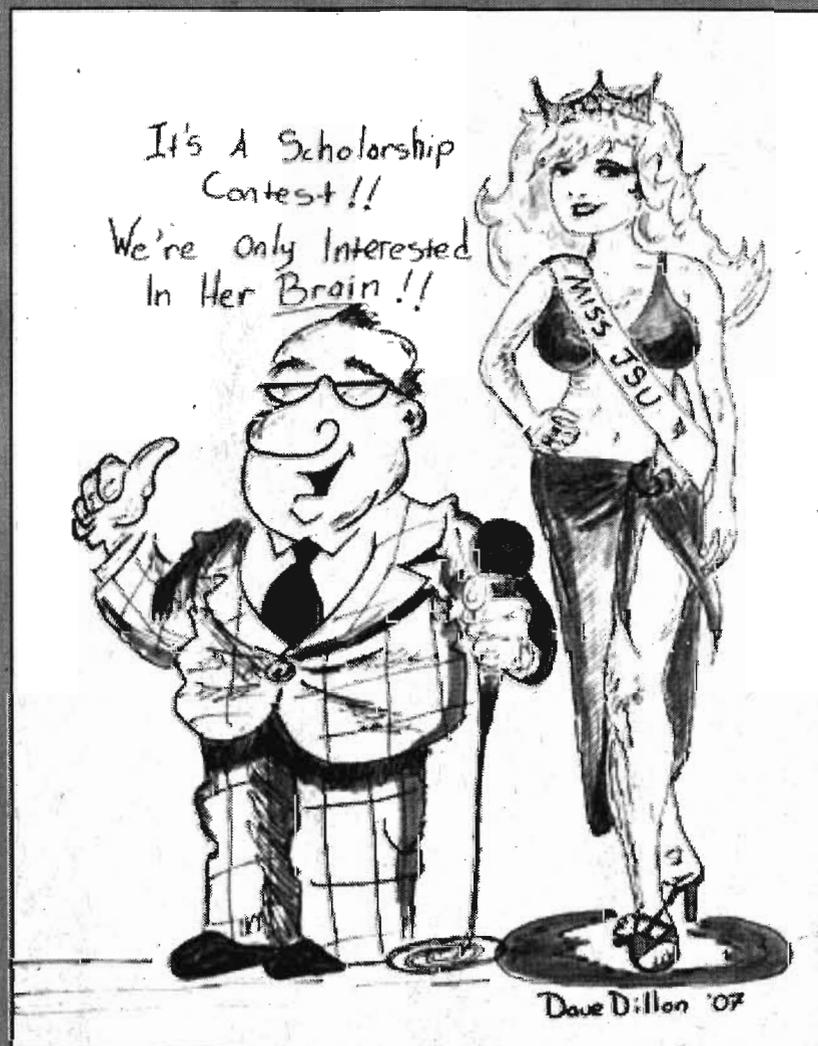
He instantly clammed up and his voice grew tense. We had a completely different perspective on the idea of knowing about each other's pasts. I felt like it came with the territory of a serious relationship, going right along with being completely open and honest with each other. I was more than willing to share mine. He felt like it was in the past, so why even bring it up? "It will only cause an argument," he said.

"You're already causing one by making such a big deal out of this," I said.

I know tons of couples that have had this very issue. We somehow talk ourselves into believing that we should know every single detail about every single relationship in our honey's past.

So, as I sat staring at my television on mute, with the phone pressed to my ear that might as well been on mute;

DAVE DILLON
Editorial Cartoonist



Joe The Plumber goes down the drain

By Zach Childree

The media is the reason that people die in war.

Newspapers, television and the Internet should only be able to report what the Military thinks they should.

Sound crazy?

These gems are brought to you by the ever spotlight seeking Samuel Wurzelbacher, otherwise known as "Joe the Plumber".

Sam (or Joe, I'm still not sure which is his real name) was



Zach Childree

Students must come up with a moniker that conveys how average and regular they are. Perhaps "Ted the Tree Topper," or "Norma the Nurse" would be available.

2. Students will then hide the facts of their actual situation and the fact that they owe taxes.

3. Students will then join the camp of the opposing presidential candidate and travel around the country as a "spokesman"

covering a major military action in a highly unstable region in the middle-east (Not anywhere near Middle-America, or Middle Earth)

It's that simple! No need for a college degree or even a basic reporting class. Just follow these 4 steps, like Sam/Joe Wurzelbacher, and you'll start your career in journalism in no time.

The whole story is a like a bad used car commercial: No Credit Check! No Experience Needed!

I know tons of couples that have had this very issue. We somehow talk ourselves into believing that we should know every single detail about every single relationship in our honey's past.

So, as I sat staring at my television on mute, with the phone pressed to my ear that might as well been on mute; I began to wonder why this was even worth the time, the energy and the uncomfortable tension brewing between us. It wasn't.

While I, the one in school for journalism, am so eager to know the present, past and future of every interesting person I meet, my boyfriend is the opposite. He's a "right now" kind of guy, one who looks to the future and doesn't feel the need to relive what made him become the person he is today. He never looks back, while I periodically glance over my shoulder and nod at old memories.

We ended up having the conversation. Not because he caved, but because we compromised. He could live with telling me about his past if I could live with not pressing for details about what color shirt he wore to his 8th grade dance, (hey, I like to be thorough).

When you truly love a person, you want to know all about them. You want to hear the stories of their youth and of their adolescence. We may not always like what our significant other has lurking in their pasts, but when you agree to love someone, you're accepting their past, their present and if you agree to it, their future. You agree to love them when they're happy, sad, rich, poor, strong and broken. To truly love a person, you also have to realize that you can't possibly know every thing about them. If you did, there would be nothing left to discover. Besides, why does it even matter where who they've dated? It's the journey you are taking together now that matters.

Sound crazy?

These gems are brought to you by the ever spotlight seeking Samuel Wurzelbacher, otherwise known as "Joe the Plumber".

Sam (or Joe, I'm still not sure which is his real name) was hired by an Internet news site to do reporting on the current hostilities between Israel and Palestine. Sam/Joe gets to run around spouting off about how horrible the media is and telling everyone his opinion about opinions in the news, and someone pays him for it. Sam/Joe has no journalism experience and still managed to wrangle a job as a reporter.



Zach Childree

chantyeditor@gmail.com

So I've decided to come up with a new curriculum plan for the JSU Department of Communication. Here it is:

1. Students will create a YouTube video of them confronting a presidential candidate using a made up situation. (i.e. "your tax plan raises my taxes!") Also

facts of their actual situation and the fact that they owe taxes.

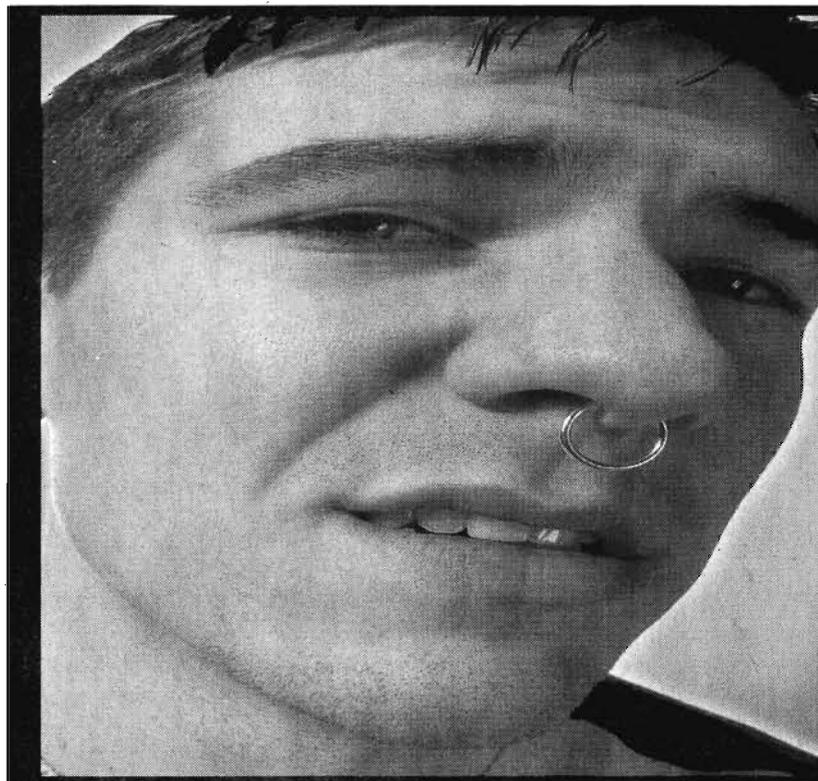
3. Students will then join the camp of the opposing presidential candidate and travel around the country as a "spokesman", read talking points and allow themselves to be used as a bad metaphor for middle-America (which is different from Middle Earth, apparently).

4. After people stop caring about you or even remember who you are, the Student will go back to the internet and be hired as a war correspondent

reporting class. Just follow these 4 steps, like Sam/Joe Wurzelbacher, and you'll start your career in journalism in no time.

The whole story is a like a bad used car commercial: No Credit Check! No Experience Needed!

The truth is this: Joe the Plumber is not a reporter; he's not even a plumber. He's another person seeking their fifteen minutes. He is just like the thousands of would-be American Idol contestants who swarm auditoriums hoping to be discovered. Frankly Joe, your notes are sour, and we would prefer that you not to sing at all.



We've Got A Nose For News.

The Chanticleer

The Chanticleer

Student newspaper of JSU since 1934

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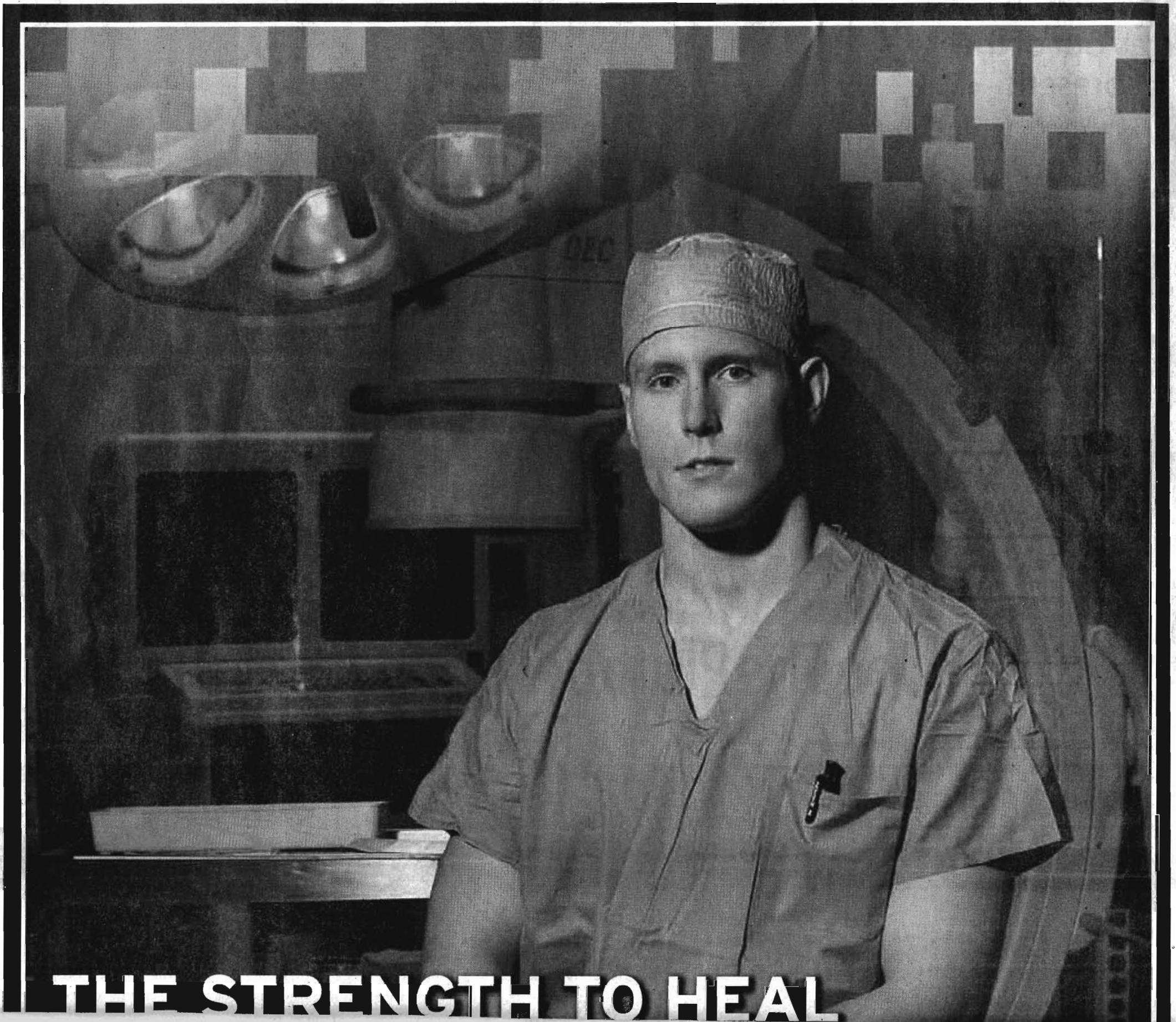
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Letters Policy:

The Chanticleer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters for publication must be limited to 300 words and must be typed. Letters may be hand-delivered or sent through campus mail to our offices in **Room 180, Self Hall**, or to the mailing address to the left. Letters may also be e-mailed to chantyeditor@gmail.com.

The Chanticleer will not print letters which are libelous or defamatory. Letters may be edited for style, brevity or clarity. *The Chanticleer* reserves the right to refuse publication of any submission. Letters must be received by noon on the Monday prior to desired publication date. There will be at least two weeks between publication of letters from the same person. Rebuttals will be published no later than two weeks after publication of the article, editorial or letter in question.



THE STRENGTH TO HEAL

THE STRENGTH TO HEAL *and learn lessons in courage.*

The pride you'll feel in being a doctor increases dramatically when you care for our Soldiers and their Families. Courage is contagious. Our Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) helps you reach your goal by providing full tuition, money towards books and lab fees, a \$20,000 sign-on bonus, plus a monthly stipend of more than \$1,900.

To learn more about the U.S. Army Health Care Team, call Maj. Katherine Murdock at 877-351-6753, email katherine.murdock@usarec.army.mil, or visit healthcare.goarmy.com/info/mchpsp1.



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Jered Staubs

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'Better' is overrated

After the national championship game, I received the following text message.

"That sucks pal, OU was obviously the better team."

(For those who are unaware, I am an Oklahoma fan.)

Was Oklahoma the better team? Probably. Was either team playing in that game the best team in the nation? No. Southern Cal was.

But "better" is overrated.

When you're heartbroken, you always hear, "Don't worry, you can do better than her."

Well yeah, that may be. But you don't want to have something better, you want what you had.

No one in their right mind thinks Utah is better than USC, Texas or Oklahoma. But the Utes finished 2nd in the nation — ahead of all those teams — and I don't think anyone can have too many complaints about that.

(For what it's worth, I would have voted them 5th, behind all those teams and just ahead of Ole Miss, the one team that was robbed by the pollsters all season long.)

More reasons "better" is overrated

I guess I would say the Steelers are the best team in the NFL. But it's not a stretch, at least in my mind, to think the Patriots were the second best team in the league this year.

But the Patriots went 11-5 and the Chargers went 8-8, but the Chargers make

A long December

"A long December and there's reason to believe Maybe this year will be better than the last" — Counting Crows

A strong month of play by JSU's men's basketball team has given fans hope that the James Green era will be something special

Road success

The two words in this sub-headline haven't been included in the same sentence in regards to JSU basketball the last few years.

It took just short of five years, and it took two overtime periods, but the Gamecocks finally won a non-conference road game on November 22. The win came 80-73 at Georgia State, not the most impressive team in the world, but still, it was enough to give James Green's new team some confidence.

Two days later, the Gamecocks had to make an 1,100 mile trip to Amherst, Massachusetts to play one of the four strong non-conference teams on its schedule this season. UMass was installed as a 17.5-point favorite, and there was no rational reason to think JSU could compete.

Somehow, some way, JSU competed, kept it close throughout, and gave itself a chance to win at the end. Still, with under 30 seconds to play, the Minutemen led



Dominant defense

Virginia Military Institute is currently leading the nation in scoring at 96.7 points per game. On their way to a 14-2 start, the Keydets have scored at least 88 points in 13 of 16 games.

VMI defeated Kentucky 111-103 at Rupp Arena and was averaging 111.2 points per game before coming to Jacksonville to take on the Gamecocks.

Well, evidently, Pete Mathews Coliseum was a tougher trip than Rupp Arena.

JSU locked down the Keydets in the first half, holding them to 20 points. A point a minute for a team scoring almost three points a minute.

Building an early lead didn't hurt matters, as Jeremy Bynum scored 15 points in the first five and a half minutes of the game to lead JSU to a lead that would never seriously be in doubt.

As JSU built a 47-20 lead at halftime, the natural response would be to loosen up with the game virtually secured. And there were stretches when the game got sloppy and VMI's pressure led to some easy baskets.

But the Gamecocks' defensive intensity never wavered, and they were able to hold the Keydets to 30 points below their previous

...ers are the best team in the NFL. But it's not a stretch, at least in my mind, to think the Patriots were the second best team in the league this year.

But the Patriots went 11-5 and the Chargers went 8-8, but the Chargers make the playoffs, and if they had caught a couple breaks against Pittsburgh, would today be considered the favorites to win the Super Bowl.

That's why "better" is pointless without timing and taking advantage of your situation.

Going back to Florida: I don't think anyone would dispute that both Alabama and Oklahoma outplayed the Gators for the first three quarters. But Florida — without its best player against Bama and with him in obvious discomfort against OU — did enough to stay in the title game while being outplayed.

Then when Florida finally played at a higher level than its opponent — because it's virtually impossible to outplay a team of similar ability for 60 minutes — the Gators maximized their opportunities and emerged victorious.

So was Florida the best team this season? Nah. If SC or OU played Florida on a true neutral field tomorrow (I do love that Oklahoma always gets to play a pseudo-road game for the national title), I would personally fancy those teams' chances of beating the Gators.

But Florida was the most deserving team this season.

That's why the BCS works

The BCS isn't supposed to give us the best two teams. Obviously SC would be in the national title game every season — three of the past four years the Trojans have had the number one recruiting class in the nation, they have more draft picks than anyone and there is no denying the ability of Pete Carroll to mold a team.

So why did Oklahoma and Florida play for the national title? They were more deserving than the Trojans.

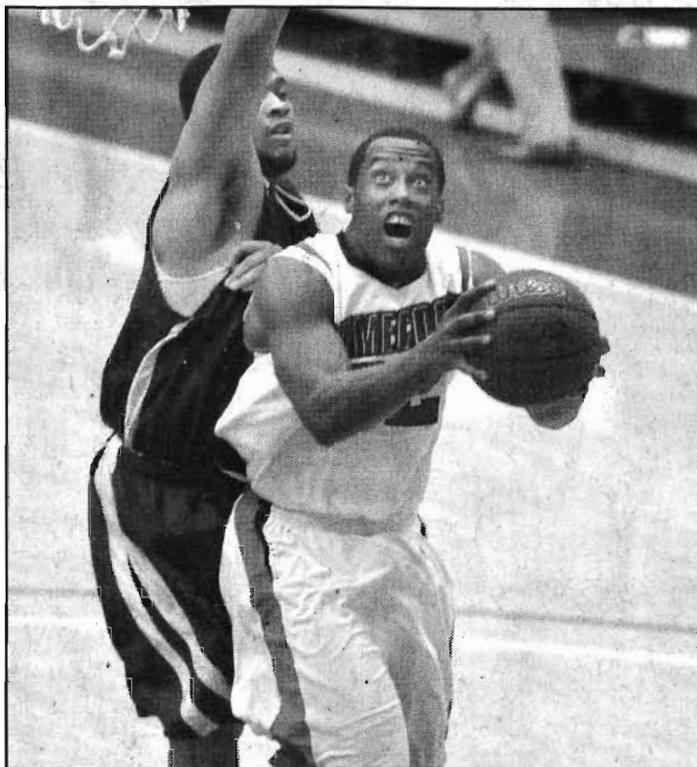
They went 12-1, won the two premier conferences in college football and their only losses came to the second best team in those conferences in games they led for most of the game.

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...there was no rational reason to think JSU could compete.

Somehow, some way, JSU competed, kept it close throughout, and gave itself a chance to win at the end. Still, with under 30 seconds to play, the Minutemen led by five. With 23 seconds remaining, freshman Brandon Crawford came up with one of the rarest plays in basketball, a four-point play that put the pressure squarely on the home team and setting up the stage for Jonathan Toles.

Toles, who prides himself on being a defensive specialist, made a running jumper with nine seconds left for the highly improbable 75-74 win.



Freshman Geddes Robinson has stepped up as an inside presence for the Gamecocks this season.

Um, this is a home game, right?

Due to a bizarre scheduling decision, virtually nobody saw JSU's thrashing of VMI.

For reasons that will have to remain unclear, the Gamecocks' most important and interesting non-conference home game was played during the Iron Bowl.

The Anniston Star's Al Muskiewitz, a Philadelphia native, and I weren't interested in watching the Iron Bowl. That put us in an exclusive group to which maybe two percent of the state belongs.

Al joked before the game that the only drama was to see which



JSU's best athlete, true freshman Brandon Crawford, dunks over VMI's Michael Sparks while Allen Gilbert looks on by himself. Gilbert evidently was not interested in the Iron Bowl either.



Above: Nick Murphy shoots a jumper earlier this year. The sophomore struggled with injuries early in the season, but is currently one of five Gamecocks averaging over 10 points per game.

All photos courtesy of James Harkins / JSUFan.com

All stories by Sports Editor Jered Staubs

total would be higher, VMI's points or the number of people in attendance.

Unfortunately, all the people who stayed home and watched a horrible football game missed out on an impressive display on both ends of the court from JSU.

"Man, this was like a road game," Brandon Crawford said. "There were more VMI fans here than JSU fans."

Actually the 147 fans in attendance were split pretty evenly, but there is no disputing that the VMI fans made more noise. Kind of sad regardless, but especially con-

sidering the Keydets were getting blown out for most of the game.

Crawford did thrill the dozens of Gamecocks supporters with several highlight reel dunks as JSU started to open the lead.

The freshman said he was pleased with the team's performance, but that the crowd was underwhelming.

"You know, it would have been nice to play in front of more people, but we've been playing a bunch of road games lately. We treated this like just another road game."

Yikes.

RPI rising ... but early OVC struggles

No one in their right mind would say JSU is capable of defeating the defending national champion Kansas Jayhawks.

But the Gamecocks won at UMass on November 24, and 19 days later, the Minutemen defeated Kansas in Kansas City.

That's probably one of those things that sounds a lot cooler than it is. It's fun to think about, interesting to write about, but does it really accomplish anything?

Well, yeah, kind of.

After spending the entirety of last season among the dregs of the NCAA — and spending more than a few days considered the worst team in the country by RPI rating (before ultimately finishing 339th out of 341 teams) — the Gamecocks broke into the top 100 in this season's RPI ratings.

After a few recent losses, JSU currently sits 162nd. Not bad by any means, especially consider-

...halftime, the natural response would be to loosen up with the game virtually secured. And there were stretches when the game got sloppy and VMI's pressure led to some easy baskets.

But the Gamecocks' defensive intensity never wavered, and they were able to hold the Keydets to 30 points below their previous low-scoring output.

After the game, Geddes Robinson wasn't talking about his 20 points, Brandon Crawford wasn't talking about his 18 points and Jonathan Toles wasn't talking about his 10 assists. They all came in talking about the defensive effort and praising the new coaching staff's commitment to that end of the floor.

The performance wasn't a flash in the pan, as the Gamecocks have shown by only allowing 80 points once — in their opener at South Carolina.

ing Georgia Tech is currently 161st and Indiana is currently 167th.

That ranking is third among OVC teams, though obviously there is a lot to be determined before measuring the true ability of the conference teams.

Despite already matching last year's win total, it's not all positive news for the Gamecocks.

Coming into a home game with Eastern Illinois, JSU was flying high and ready to show the nation — or at least those who get ESPN-U — that this was a much improved Gamecock team.

Whether it was nerves, bad play or EIU being better than people think, JSU stumbled out of the gate and trailed by 14 at halftime. A furious rally gave the Gamecocks the lead, but ultimately the Panthers pulled out a close win to dent JSU's record and confidence.

JSU has lost two conference games in a row, though both were on the road. Currently 2-3 in conference play, the next two games will go a long way to determining where JSU finishes in the Ohio Valley Conference.

And they don't figure to be easy.

Murray State visits Pete Mathews Coliseum tonight. The Racers also sit at 2-3 in conference play, a departure from recent years in which they have been among the conference elite.

Equally important, and perhaps more interesting, is the Saturday afternoon game, in which preseason All-American and Conference Player of the Year Lester Hudson will lead his UT-Martin Skyhawks to Jacksonville.

One step forward, but two steps back

One year removed from making the conference tournament, Becky Geyer and the Lady Gamecocks have struggled to meet expectations early in the 2008-09 season

By Jared Gravette
Assistant Sports Editor

After squeaking into the Ohio Valley Conference tournament with one of the youngest teams in the country last year, the Jacksonville State women's basketball team opened the 2008-09 season with high hopes of competing for an OVC championship.

But the Gamecocks (3-12, 0-5 OVC) sputtered out of the gates and now find themselves near the bottom of the conference standings in early January.

JSU began the season in impressive fashion, dropping 102 points in an exhibition win over Miles College. Since then, the Gamecocks have struggled on the offensive side of the floor, scoring 70 points in only one contest while shooting 34.5% from the field.

JSU ranks next to last in both scoring offense and field goal percentage within the OVC.

The Gamecocks opened the season with a six-game losing streak before picking up their first win of the season against West Georgia.

JSU's biggest success of the season came in Jacksonville, Fla., where the Gamecocks went 2-0 in the Lady Osprey Holiday Classic, defeating both Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Longwood University.

Unfortunately for JSU, that success didn't help turn things around. The Gamecocks opened OVC play with a devastating 84-60 loss at Tennessee Tech and



Charlease Williams (left), Parris Hollingsworth (center) and Jolie Efezokhae (right) walk off the court after another loss to Eastern Illinois earlier this month. JSU is 0-5 in conference play this season. Photo courtesy of James Harkins / JSUFan.com

have yet to win a conference game this season.

Jolie Efezokhae has lived up to the hype of being named to the Preseason All-OVC squad, ranking in the top 10 in points per game with 13.9 and rebounds per game at 7.7. However, the junior forward from Buford, Ga., isn't

receiving much help, as no other Gamecock is even averaging double figures.

JSU has been without the services of arguably its best player, Cierra Duhart, for the entirety of the 2008-09 season. As a freshman, Duhart was a huge threat in the post, leading the

conference with a .578 field goal percentage and ranking sixth in rebounds with an average of 7.9 per contest. Those numbers were good enough to earn a spot on the OVC All-Newcomer team.

The Gamecocks still have a chance to turn things around with 13 conference games still

remaining on the schedule, but coach Becky Geyer will likely need someone to step up and start making some shots.

JSU plays tonight against Murray State inside Pete Mathews Coliseum and again on Saturday against UT-Martin.

Men's basketball schedule

Women's basketball schedule

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Mathews Coliseum and again on Saturday against UT-Martin.

Men's basketball schedule

Current Record

Overall	Pct.	Conf	Pct.	Streak	Home	Away	Neutral
8 - 6	.571	2 - 3	.400	L2	4 - 1	4 - 5	0 - 0

DATE	OVC	OPPONENT	HOME / AWAY	LOCATION	TIME/RESULT
11/5/2008		West Georgia (Exhibition)	H	Jacksonville	W 83-76
11/14/2008		South Carolina	A	Columbia, SC	L 76-89
11/18/2008		West Alabama	H	Jacksonville	W 89-48
11/22/2008		Georgia State	A	Atlanta, Ga.	W 89-73 (2OT)
11/24/2008		Massachusetts	A	Amherst, Mass.	W 75-74
11/29/2008		Virginia Military Institute	H	Jacksonville	W 95-87
12/2/2008		Norfolk State	A	Norfolk, Va.	W 80-61
12/6/2008		Tennessee Tech	A	Cookville, Tenn.	W 82-66
12/13/2008		Reinhardt (Exhibition)	H	Jacksonville	W 88-56
12/17/2008		UAB	A	Birmingham, Ala.	L 48-75
12/20/2008		Iowa State	A	Ames, Iowa	L 60-66
12/30/2008		Berry College	H	Jacksonville	W 96-49
1/3/2009		Eastern Illinois	H	Jacksonville	L 69-78
1/5/2009		Southeast Missouri State	H	Jacksonville	W 71-66
1/8/2009		Eastern Kentucky	A	Richmond, Ky.	L 67-76
1/10/2009		Morehead State	A	Morehead, Ky.	L 81-76
1/15/2009		Murray State	H	Jacksonville	7:30 p.m.
1/17/2009		Tennessee-Martin	H	Jacksonville	4 p.m.
1/22/2009		Tennessee State	A	Nashville, Tenn.	7:30 p.m.
1/24/2009		Austin Peay	A	Clarksville, Tenn.	7:30 p.m.
1/29/2009		Southeast Missouri State	A	Cape Girardeau, Mo.	7:45 p.m.
1/31/2009		Eastern Illinois	A	Charleston, Ill.	7:15 p.m.
2/5/2009		Morehead State	H	Jacksonville	7:30 p.m.
2/7/2009		Eastern Kentucky	H	Jacksonville	4 p.m.
2/9/2009		Tennessee State	H	Jacksonville	7 p.m.
2/12/2009		Tennessee-Martin	A	Martin, Tenn.	7:30 p.m.
2/14/2009		Murray State	A	Murray, Ky.	7:30 p.m.
2/17/2009		Austin Peay	H	Jacksonville	7 p.m.
2/21/2009		ESPNU BracketBusters	A	TBA	TBA
2/28/2009		Tennessee Tech	H	Jacksonville	4 p.m.

Women's basketball schedule

DATE	OVC MATCH	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME/RESULT
11/3/2008		Miles College (Exhibition)	JACKSONVILLE	W 102-62
11/14/2008		Samford University	JACKSONVILLE	L 65-68
11/16/2008		Georgetown University	JACKSONVILLE	L 63-74
11/22/2008		AAMI Alabama A&M University	Huntsville, Alabama	L 68-89
11/25/2008		Troy University	Troy, AL	L 56-59
University of Memphis Tournament				
11/28/2008		Stephen F. Austin	Memphis, Tenn.	L 51-61
11/29/2008		UM Memphis Tournament	Memphis, Tenn.	L 45-65
12/2/2008		West Georgia	JACKSONVILLE	W 71-82
12/6/2008		Tennessee Tech University	Cookville, Tenn.	L 60-84
UNF Tournament				
12/17/2008		Texas A&M - Corpus Christi	Jacksonville, Fla.	W 48-46
12/18/2008		Lanwood University	Jacksonville, Fla.	W 50-42
12/29/2008		North Carolina State	Raleigh, N.C.	L 38-78
1/3/2009		Eastern Illinois (ESPNU)	JACKSONVILLE, Ala.	L 58-71
1/5/2009		Southeast Missouri State University	JACKSONVILLE	L 62-60
1/8/2009		Eastern Kentucky University	Richmond, Ky.	L 62-67
1/10/2009		Morehead State University	Morehead, Ky.	L 56-71
1/15/2009		Murray State University	JACKSONVILLE	5:30 p.m.
1/17/2009		UT-Martin	JACKSONVILLE	2:00 p.m.
1/22/2009		Tennessee State	Nashville, Tenn.	5:30 p.m.
1/24/2009		Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	5:15 p.m.
1/29/2009		Southeast Missouri State University	Cape Girardeau, MS	5:30 p.m.
1/31/2009		Eastern Illinois University	Charleston, Ill.	3:00 p.m.
2/5/2009		Morehead Morehead State University	JACKSONVILLE, Ala.	5:30 p.m.
2/7/2009		Eastern Kentucky University	JACKSONVILLE	2:00 p.m.
2/12/2009		UT-Martin	Martin, Tenn.	5:30 p.m.
2/14/2009		Murray State University	Murray, KY	5:15 p.m.
2/19/2009		Austin Peay	JACKSONVILLE, Ala.	7:00 p.m.
2/21/2009		Tennessee State	JACKSONVILLE	7:00 p.m.
2/23/2009		Kennesaw State	JACKSONVILLE	7:00 p.m.
2/28/2009		Tennessee Tech University	JACKSONVILLE	2:00 p.m.
3/3/2009		OVC OVC Tournament - 1st Round	Nashville, Tenn.	TBA
3/5-7/2009		OVC OVC Tournament	Nashville, Tenn.	TBA

Staub: Decided to write an actual column like a real journalist would do for once

Unfortunately, the byproduct of the system is some horrible bowl games.

Most of my friends are into sports, and outside a couple Virginia Tech fans I know, none watched the Orange Bowl.

SC was always going to crush Penn State, Alabama was obviously not interested in its bowl game, etc.

But that's a small price to pay for legitimately having a reason to watch college football for three months.

I would never bother watching SC play if there was a playoff. Never. It would be pointless. The Trojans go 10-2 or 11-1, so what? They still qualify for a playoff, and no matter if they are the six seed or the one seed, they are the favorite.

The way the current system is set up, fans from around the country have reason to watch

when SC plays one of the elite (I use that term very loosely) Pac-10 schools, especially on the road.

I'm in the minority, but I like that better than the NFL's system. The national champion may not always be the best team, but it is at least going to be a team that has proved its worth throughout the season. That's not always the case in the NFL.

Playoffs aren't the answer

We've seen it several years in a row now. A rash of wildcard champions, an 18-0 team losing the Super Bowl to a five seed, a grand total of one win from the top six overall seeds in the playoffs this season ... that's a perfect system?

No, that makes the regular season largely irrelevant (other than staying healthy) and makes for

horrible matchups in the playoffs.

Speaking of which, how hard are the NFL and FOX praying for a Pittsburgh/Philadelphia Super Bowl? If the Cardinals or Ravens make it, that's a horrible rating.

If, God forbid, both those teams win this weekend ... well, the nicest thing I can say is that that is unwatchable.

What the NCAA should tweak

The real issue with the NCAA football championship system is the ridiculously long layoff between the end of the regular season and the national title game.

As great as it is to give all the small bowl games their individual day to be in primetime TV ... oh wait, that's not great at all, it's pointless. Anyone wanting to watch Troy play South-

ern Miss is going to watch that even if Northern Illinois/UL-Lafayette is on at the same time.

Get these ridiculous games out of the way and have the national title game by January 2.

As great as everyone says the national title game was, the quality of play was mediocre at best.

Oklahoma had the best red zone offense all year (touchdowns on 69 of 76 opportunities), but failed to score at all on two of its three red zone possessions. Tebow threw two interceptions all season and then threw two in the first half against OU.

I guess you can give some credit to the defenses, but that second interception was putrid. It's a product of rust, and that was the real shame.

Well, that and Oklahoma losing.