

The Almanian

Volume CI

Issue 10

Friday, November 30, 2007

"Serving Alma College Since 1907"

UNDER THE COVER

United States drug policies and attitudes differ quite drastically from many other countries.

SEE FEATURE PG. 4

Cultural exchange leads to greater appreciation of own society.

SEE OPINION PG. 5

A look at the top sports moments of 2007.

SEE SPORTS PG. 8

BY THE NUMBERS

46

The number of turkeys, in millions, consumed in the United States during this year's Thanksgiving.

4

The date in December when Hanukkah begins this year.



8

The number of days Hanukkah is observed. The olive oil left to burn the eternal flame was only expected to burn for one day, but instead lasted eight.

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Colleges Against Cancer raises awareness, hope

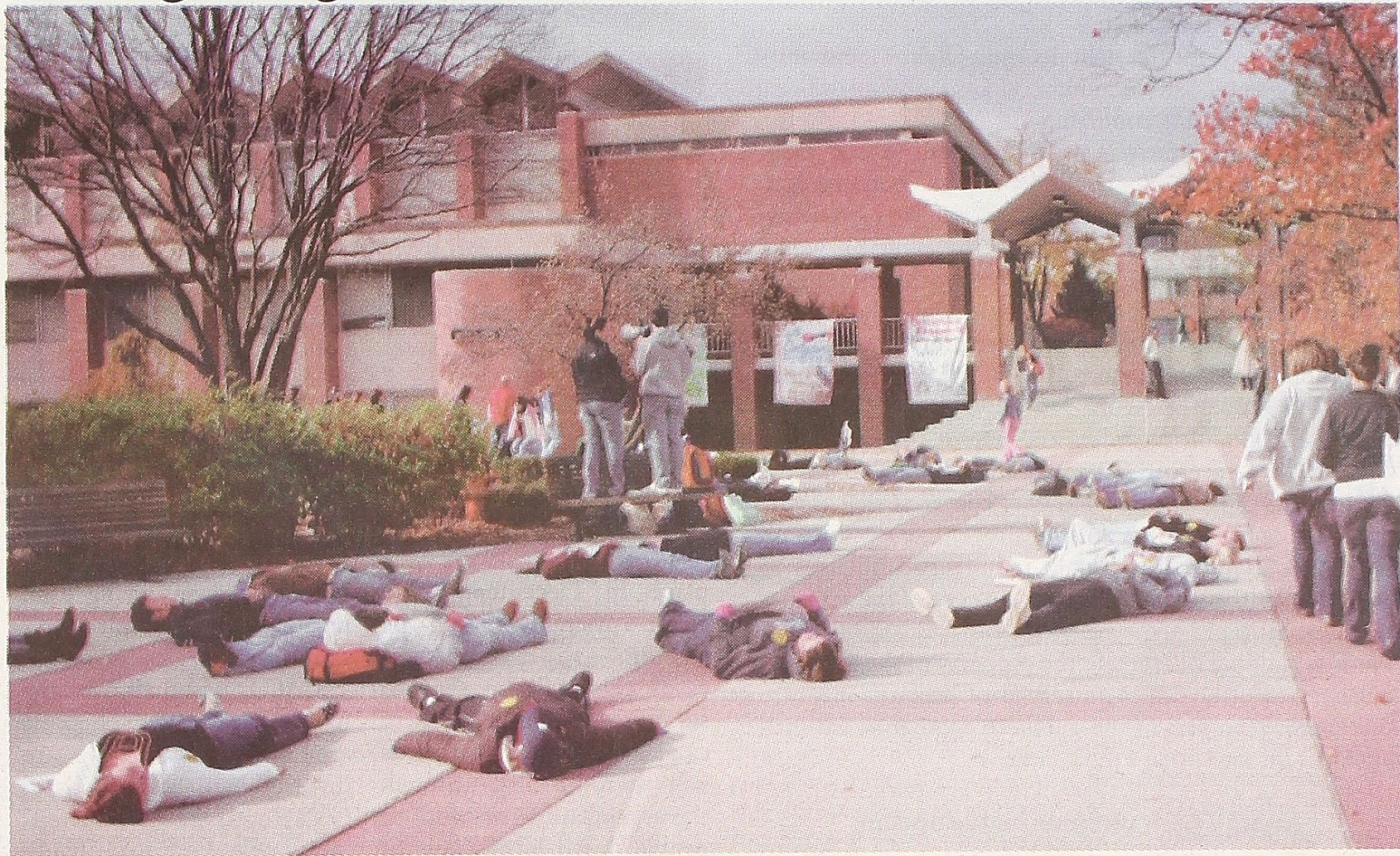


Photo by Anna Zichi

Mark Kraft (09) and Mandi Johnson (10) discuss the risks of smoking as members of CAC lie throughout McIntyre Mall, illustrating the number of people who die from lung cancer. CAC's next major event is Alma's fourth annual Relay for Life.

ANNA ZICHI
NEWS EDITOR

Cancer is a disease that was overlooked for many years, but has recently gained the spotlight of researchers and societies alike.

Colleges Against Cancer (CAC) is an organization on Alma's campus that helps to promote awareness and educate people about cancer.

The CAC chapter at Alma was founded three years ago and has already gained

national recognition.

"We are one of the smallest colleges with a chapter, but have one of the largest memberships," said **Mark Kraft (09)**, president of CAC.

At 80 members, Alma's chapter is larger than Michigan State University's.

Locally they have formed a partnership with the American Cancer Society, and are taking a lead role in Alma College's fourth annual Relay for Life event,

which takes place this February. By joining with the American Cancer Society, an even greater amount of opportunities and resources are available to promote their cause.

Even though CAC is a relatively new organization, it has already become a great presence around the Alma community. Past involvements include placing breast cancer awareness pamphlets in all of the women's bathrooms,

hosting Great American Smoke Out demonstrations, and participating in the Celebration on the Capital this summer in Lansing.

Over the summer Kraft also attended the National Conference in Dallas, Texas. There he learned about different measures being taken to help raise cancer prevention techniques and survivorship.

"Our next event will take

SEE CANCER PG. 2

Local community efforts presented at national conference

HADLEY BOEHM
STAFF WRITER

"St. Louis and Alma have experienced such environmental devastation at the hands of the DDT, PBB and other toxic chemical/pesticide production and mishandling by the Velsicol Chemical Company. Even though the plant has been gone for several decades, we are still feeling the impacts of the extreme pollution. Therefore, a conference addressing these issues [provides] a means for the community to seek further justice," said **Drew Emge (09)**.

Ed Lorenz, Public Affairs Director and Professor

of Political Science, Mike Vickery, Professor of Communications and students Emge and **Rachel Naiukow (08)** traveled to Washington D.C. to present on this topic at the 135th Annual Meeting and Exposition of the American Public Health Association.

On November 5th they presented their paper, *Lessons from a community effort to find institutional support for environmental health research*.

In 1978 the closure of the Velsicol plant in St. Louis emitted large amounts of DDT and other chemicals into the Pine River and surrounding watershed area. Since then chemical exposure has been of significant

worry in St. Louis and the contiguous communities on the Pine River. "For a long time people in the community

here have been asking about health concerns from all past exposures and trying to get a comprehensive health study," said Lorenz.

The paper that was presented at the APHA conference chronicled the efforts that communities along the Pine River in Gratiot County have taken to try to implement a county-wide health study. It also explained some of the difficulties that have arisen in the quest to put the study into action.

In the 1960s Michigan was one of the first states to collect blood spot cards from every newborn in each county. After collection the



File photo

In 1978 a plant in St. Louis dumped DDT and other chemicals into the Pine River.

SEE NATIONAL PG. 2

Outside the 'Bubble'

SIMONE MISHLER
STAFF WRITER

City discusses fate of Community Center

A public hearing was held to consider the future of the Alma Community Center. The Commission decided to cut the heat to the building and winterize it as best as possible for the time being.

"I think we made the right decision on the Community Center for now," said Commission Donald Ayers during the meeting's closing comments.

The Commission was presented with several possibilities on what the city could do with the building. The cost of entirely renovating the building was projected at \$882,000, whereas demolishing the building would cost \$70,000. If the building was renovated community programming would be offered through the center. Demolishing the building would mean that public programming would have to be offered through other venues.

Public opinion regarding the fate of the center was divided at the meeting. Citizens came forward to discuss the benefits of having a community center as well as why the building has become nothing other than a burden on tax payers. Renovations would require two millages to be passed by the public. The average cost of the millages would be \$100 per taxpayer.

The building will remain the property of the city until another resolution can be passed. The Commissioners are looking for members of the public to come forward with any ideas on ways to use the center.

Energy park remains viable option

During the invitation to the public for comments the energy park project that Alma wishes to obtain was discussed with new potential. At the federal level a previously approved project had to be cancelled. The cancellation leaves millions of federal dollars open to new developments. "The energy park is not an Alma project—it's a Michigan project," said Mayor Nyman. The Commission made it very clear that the energy park is not a dead issue. Contacting the Michigan legislature to show support for the project was stressed by all of the Commissioners.

Tax Exemption for a Local Company

Terry Asphalt Materials, Inc was approved to be recommended for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate lasting five years. The Commission held a public hearing regarding the request for tax exempt status. The company wishes to install new equipment necessary for meeting state regulations and with the tax exemption will be able to appropriate funds for the equipment. The resolution will recommend the company to state legislature for approval of the certificate.

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Cancer from pg. 1...

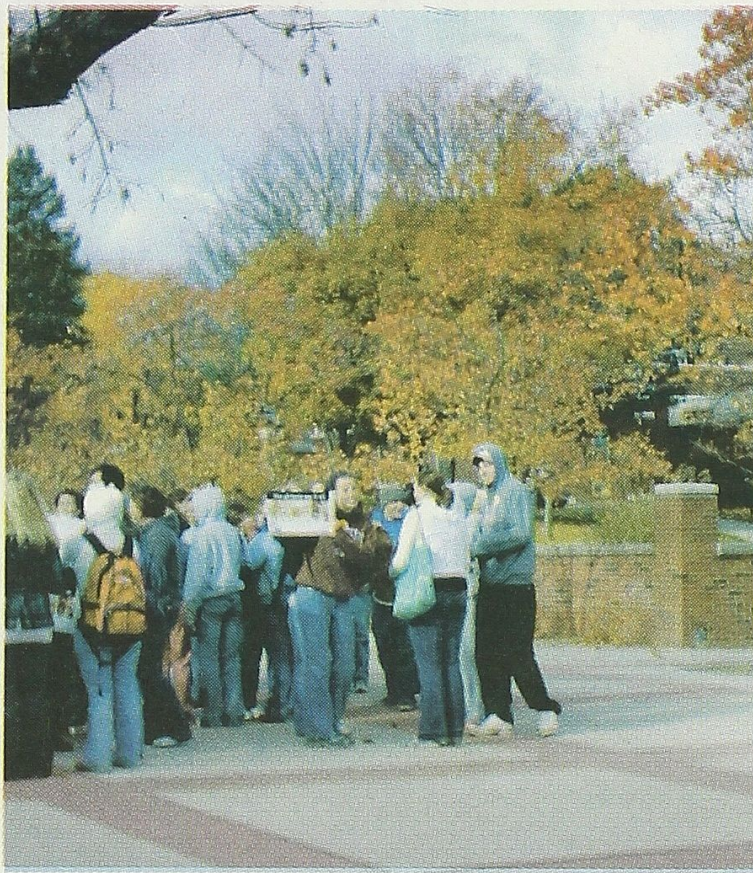


Photo by Anna Zichi
Lisa Glow (10) shows off her sign that explains the risks of smoking and gives helpful hints on how to quit smoking.

place in December," said Kraft. Members will be writing 200 Christmas cards that will be sent to survivors and caregivers of cancer patients. The cards will then be sent through the organizations network to people based locally, out of state, to families of students, to students suffering themselves, and to faculty. "Each card will say 'We are thinking of you during the

Holiday season' giving each person a bit of inspiration," said Kraft.

CAC is based all over the nation and has eight chapters around Michigan. "We are involved with MSU, CMU, GVSU and NMU," said Kraft. "We made a promise that if NMU's chapter attended our Relay for Life that we would bring a group to theirs and show support."

During the Great American

Smoke Out, flags were placed in the ground to signify the number of people that died from cancer. Also a demonstration was held on McIntyre Mall to help raise awareness to cancer. "There was a lot of support not only by the college but also by the community," said **Karin Bruinsma (10)**.

"A student that lives right next door could be effected," said Bruinsma. "By being involved in CAC we can help and raise money for continuing research, help heal, but also be the motivation for a survivor to simply let them know that somebody cares."

There are many ways to prevent some types of cancer, or at least prevent the cancer from reaching a late stage, and CAC has made it their mission to educate students.

Meetings are held almost weekly, though attendance is not required to be a part of the group. For more information please contact Kraft at o9mjkraf@alma.edu.

"Cancer is a powerful disease that needs to be taken seriously," said Kraft. "We feel we are so important because I have yet to meet someone that has not in some way been affected by cancer."

National from pg. 1...

samples were subjected to tests to check for infant health conditions. The sample cards were then stored away.

The proposal suggests that these samples be re-activated and tested for chemical levels. These tests would provide a valuable summary of the chemical exposure experienced at birth by inhabitants of Gratiot County.

The study would also provide a useful comparison for exposure before and after the spill, and it might illustrate the degree to which newborns are exposed to chemicals through their mothers.

The study is being done in partner with the Center for Disease Control, and has consequently experienced some delays. In 1999 and again in 2002 Lorenz and the Pine River Taskforce Group submitted proposals for the health study to the CDC that were rejected. In 2004 the proposal was finally accepted and a Health and Environmental forum was held at the College in 2005.

Since then the CDC

has agreed to perform the necessary tests on 15 randomly selected infant blood spot sample cards. However, Lorenz says that they are still waiting on the outcome of these trial tests to see if the procedure is effective.

If the procedure is a success, then more blood spot samples can be tested, but first a survey and statement of consent will be needed from each individual of the county whose blood is sampled.

The process of getting this public health study has been a long and drawn out one that Lorenz says has succeeded due to the persistence of the community. Now, however, initiation of the study is of even greater urgency because the state has begun to destroy some of its early blood spot records.

Although many important strides have been made, the battle to complete the study is still continuing.

On March 14 of the upcoming year the Pine River Superfund Task Force and others will be sponsoring an International DDT Conference at Alma College that will bring

distinguished speakers and experts to further discuss the impact of DDT at both the community and international levels.

More information can be obtained at www.alma.edu/academic/ddt.

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Opportunities abound for student writers to be published

AARON POOLEY
STAFF WRITER

With the ever-increasing world of online publications and contests, students have greater access to publishing their writing, no matter what the subject or discipline their writing concerns.

When submitting a piece of writing for publication, a query letter is attached to the work. This query letter, in many cases, becomes the end-all reason why someone will keep their writing to themselves rather than take a chance at the world beyond their desk.

The query letter, though the style varies slightly according to the particular reason for it being sent, contains several common articles of information. First, standard headings - as if writing a formal letter, with the publisher/agent's address at the top of the page - begin the letter, followed by the title of the piece, how many words it contains, and to what genre the piece belongs.

The following body paragraphs

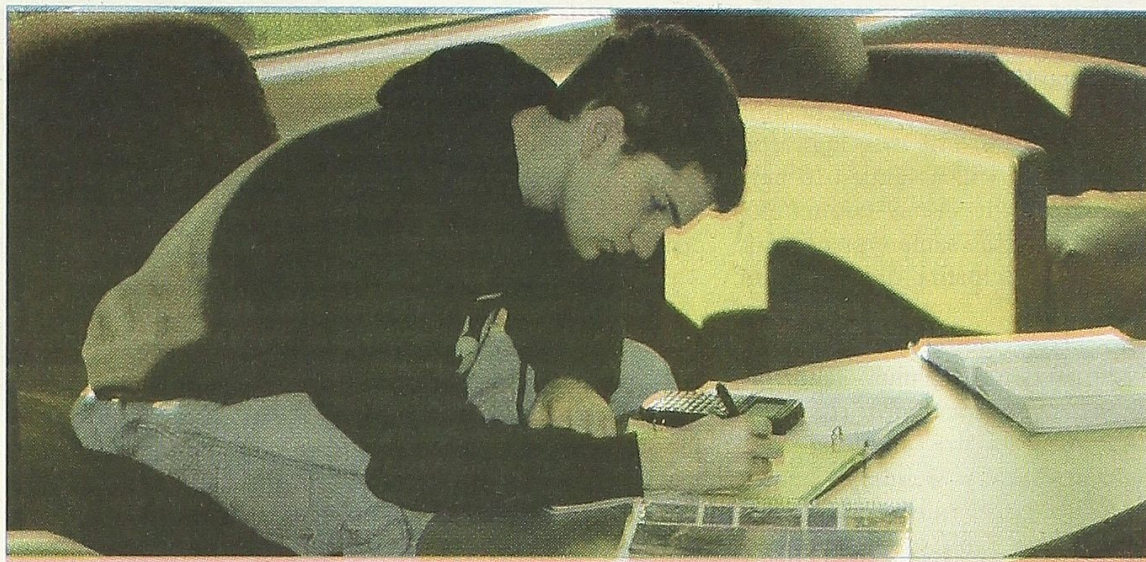


Photo by Anthony Rosenblum

Online venues provide a multitude of opportunities for writers like Brian Larson (10) to be published.

include a brief description of the content of the piece, followed by a concluding paragraph and the writer's contact information. Most online publications will provide the writer with a detailed outline for the query letter, detailing the particular items for which the publisher seeks.

For years, *Writer's Market* has been the standard resource for already published writers, or

writers seeking publication. Editor of the 2007 *Writer's Market*, Robert Lee Brewer, said, "Ten years ago, I thumbed through my first *Writer's Market*, not as an editor but as a writer. At that time, it was like a rite of passage for me as a wordsmith. It helped me feel a little more professional and assertive - kind of like my own special pass into The Writer's Clubhouse."

This publication, which lists both agents and publishing houses, from the well-known to the never-even-heard-of variety, has, in recent years, released separate listings for those who write poetry, another for short story writers, and yet another for novel writers. A deluxe print

edition led to the introduction of a website, which acts as a database for all listings.

The *Writer's Market* website is updated daily with new listings for all writing styles in the publishing world, and well as a searchable contest database.

It is not necessary to purchase a subscription in order to find avenues for publishing written work. Many literary journals are now using an electronic format to present their publications. The query letter and writing itself can be sent directly to the publisher of the online journal, and in many cases a faster response will be returned to the writer from the publication's editor.

Writer Laura Hird began a website to simplify the search for writers seeking a home for their writing. <http://www.laurahird.com/litmagcentral.html> contains a detailed page of links to exclusively online publications. The editors of these publications can all be contacted via email. Hird hosts her own online literary publication, but this separate website of listings is intended provide the writer with a broader database than her particular guidelines.

Other free online resources are available, such as a guide written by bestselling author Dan Brown. On his website, <http://www.danbrown.com/tips>, Brown writes how to appeal to the potential publisher and agent. He said, "Write your foundation with a single brick. A good way test your own manuscript is to synopsise your plot in a single sentence. Can you do it?"

Writer Keri Smith (Wreck this Journal, *Living Out Loud*) provides some advice through her experience in publishing. She said, "If you are rejected... keep moving forward. It is OK to feel bummed periodically (have a good cry about it! Yes, it feels like you don't know what you're doing sometimes). Just pick yourself up again, dust yourself off, and start moving again."

Musical Mementos

Contemporary music branches out, loses value

LAUREN SYPNIEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

During the '60s and '70s, the world had big bands that many enjoyed: The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, The Who, and Pink Floyd. One hippie could turn to another hippie and both would understand the music that the other listened to.

With the rise of varied types of music, this familiarity has fallen apart. No longer does everyone love and know the same music. When mainstream radio stations get flicked on, many do not want to hear it; they want to hear their own music - the music they have come to enjoy and call their own. The only thing is, many other people have never heard of it.

"I think that there are way too many genres of music," said **Emily Zilke (11)**. "[H]ow can you keep track of all the different types of music? And people begin to judge you on the type of music you listen to."

The feeling of togetherness no longer binds music lovers, and "frankly, half the bands out there sound the same and aren't that good," said **Adam Sypniewski (09)**.

However, the other side of the issue speaks as well. While the bands of the '60s and '70s were known and loved by all, time changes the world. Even though many say that the feeling of unity is waning, the music of today promotes something different, and perhaps something better.

"I think that it's good to have all these different genres of music. Without them, people couldn't have their own individual styles," said **Corie Barrett (11)**.

Josh Pugh (11), offers a different outlook on the issue. He believes that the music industry of today is beneficial, because it allows not only for people to listen to new sounds of music, but it is also easier for artists to have their own sound and get it out to millions - especially through methods like MySpace and iTunes.

"It is arguable that this is hurting the industry by homogenizing sound to produce mass appeal," said Pugh. "But I think, in the end, everyone benefits. With a different sound and a creative message, any band or artist can make it in the music world."

"I think that music is like people - every person is different, so their taste in music will be just as unique as they are," said **Bri Huyck (11)**.

Lauren Marvin (11) believes that the change in music is good. "You can get a stronger connection with someone who likes the same music because it is more varied than before. Now music is more a definition of someone's personality, because there are more genres to choose from."

Alma College art program hosts twenty-seventh Annual Statewide Print Competition

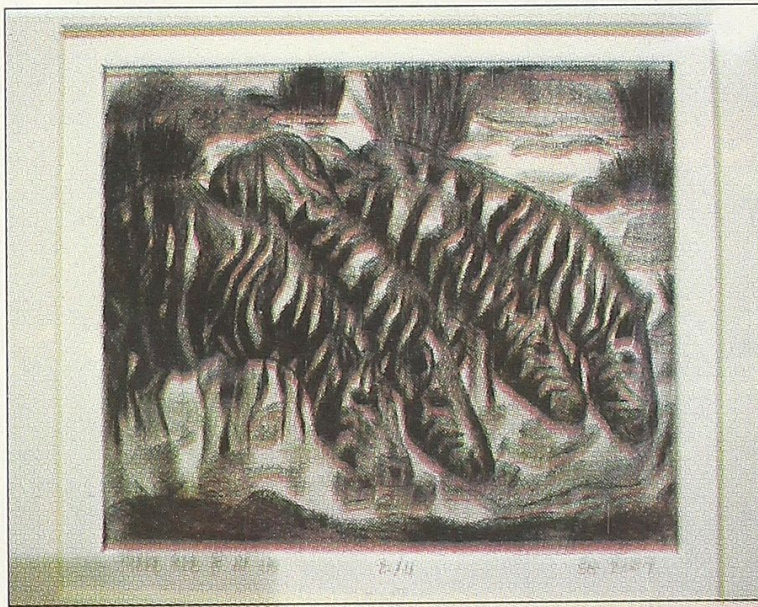


Photo by Chelsea Clark

Junior Sarah Garrity's *There Are Five of Us* was just one of the many artistic displays at this year's print competition.

BRITTANY LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

Every year, Alma College hosts the Annual Statewide Print Competition. This year marks year number 27.

The print competition consists of artists from around the state who enter artwork for display and judging. The top pieces are displayed, from which a judge selects five for awards.

This year's judge was Carmon Colangelo, dean of the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis.

"I wasn't looking for any particular kind of style," said Colangelo. "[I was] definitely

looking for work that spoke clearly [and was] well executed. It's sometimes hard to say looking at different works. There's a certain level of sophistication."

Colangelo has juried about 20 print shows over the years in different states, and is also a well known print artist himself.

The top prize winner from this year's print competition was Anne McCauley's piece, *Buoy*, which Colangelo described as a "beautifully executed wood cut with such intricate lines. There's an image of content with skills - that's more sublime." The print won Best of Show and the Kent Kirby Memorial Purchase Award - worth \$1000.

Bruce Thayer also won with his piece *Campaign Promise*, receiving the Louis Norberto Lopez Isnardi Memorial Award, worth \$500. "In contrast to [Buoy], this is hard hitting and political - obviously more of a satirical piece. It's more expressionistic and the deep embossment is very effective," said Colangelo.

The President and Friends of Alma College Purchase Award, worth \$500, went to John Bergmeier with *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. "[It is] sort of an ironic piece, but beautifully executed with nice touches to it," said Colangelo.

Carl Butler won the Leo J. Rozier Purchase Award of \$500 with an untitled piece. "[It is] a nice foundation of surrealistic rendering of the house and next to it is more abstract ground."

Benjamin Bigelow won with *Lowe's Mercer* receiving the Alumni Award worth \$400. "[Lowe's Mercer is] very minimal print with siluetted figures and subtle nuances - a very whimsical piece," said Colangelo.

One of the student pieces that did not win an award, but is displayed, is *Monte Carlo Memories*, by Sue Wright.

The print show is a way for Alma to show off different forms of art on several types of medium. All of the winner's prints will be bought by the college and hung throughout in several buildings.

Alternative spring breaks provide unique, rewarding experience

BRITTANY LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

What do you do for spring break? Most people go on vacation - some to exotic places, others back home with family. Alma offers other choices.

How would you like to spend your spring break helping other people in places like Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, or Mississippi? This is your chance to do it.

The trips available are Hab-itat for Humanity, Georgetown, SC., and Brunswick, GA.; United Cerebral Palsy of Middle Tennessee; Disney Wilderness Preserve in Kissimmee, FL.; Presbytery of Mississippi in Gulfport, MS.; Duvall Presbyterian Home in Glenwood, FL.; Heartland Hospice in both Gratiot County, MI and Atlanta, GA.; The Children's Place and Vital Bridges in Chicago, IL.; and Family Heritage Foundation based in Atlanta GA.

For years, Alma has done small alternative break trips, but they didn't start doing multiple trips until 2003.

The group of volunteers will

meet regularly before and after the trips to learn about the things they will be doing and the community they will be helping to improve. The meetings after the trips will be aimed to help around the Alma community by doing the same type of work the participants did while on the trip.

The Habitat for Humanity projects use manual labor as the main focus for the trip. It will involve anything that contributes to building a house. The South Carolina and Georgia trips can hold 10 people each and cost \$150 per student.

For the United Cerebral Palsy trip to Tennessee, students will learn how to use power tools and will be building wheel chair ramps at private homes. The limit is nine students, and the cost is \$100.

The Disney Wilderness Preserve in Florida gives students a chance to help restore the environment by planting seeds and monitoring the wildlife. This trip has a limit of nine students, and the cost is \$150.

The Presbytery of Mississippi trip deals with home repair from Hurricane Katrina and, like the Duvall Presbyterian home,

there are specific times set aside for worship and prayer. Duvall in Florida deals with inhabitants of a home for developmentally challenged teens and adults. Both trips cost \$150 and can accept ten people each.

Heartland Hospice, in Georgia, includes on-campus training by hospice and volunteering during the year. There is a limit of ten students and the cost is \$150.

Chicago, Illinois' The Children's Place and Vital Bridges will be working with children affected by HIV/AIDS. Activities may include coloring, reading, and teaching vocabulary. The limit is ten students, and the cost is \$100.

Family Heritage Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia will have students assisting care to children and maintenance of the building, along with a one-day simulation of life as a refugee. The limit is ten students, and the cost is \$150.

Applications are due today with a \$25 deposit, but will still be accepted until trips are filled.



Photos courtesy of Alma Website

Examining the issue of drug control from an international perspective

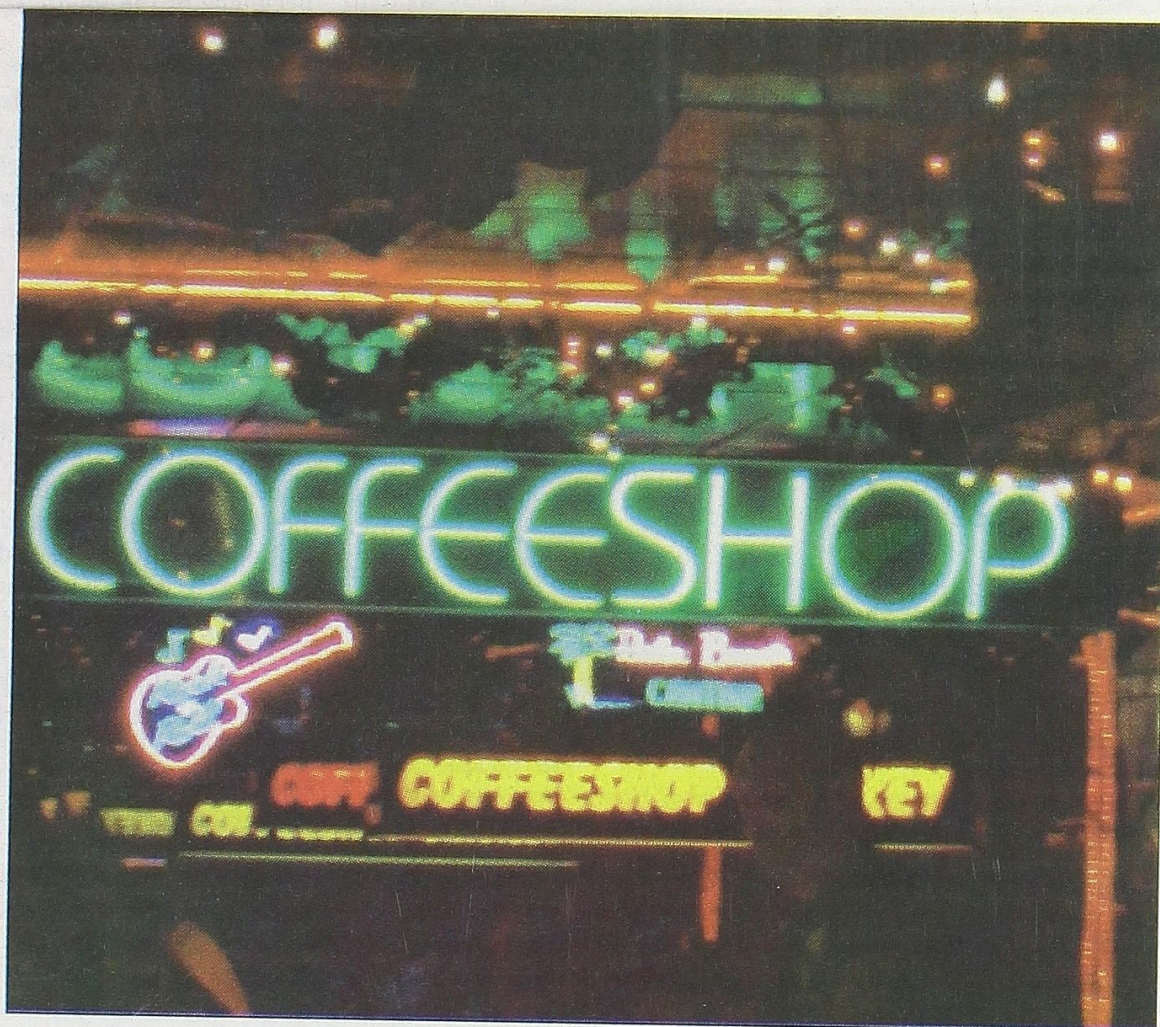


Photo courtesy of Aaron Pooley

AARON POOLEY
STAFF WRITER

Decisions on drug control policy in the United States are made through an evaluation of medical, sociological, and humanitarian factors that determine whether laws for citizens of the states follow a harm reduction or criminalization approach.

Because of the confusion in how the media presents information of human drug effects, especially when concerning debates over the legal status of cannabis, governmental and non-governmental bodies seek to access the best approach to the drug debate without compromising the safety of citizens.

According to the Coalition on Harm Reduction, harm

reduction is defined as "a set of practical strategies that reduce negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use to abstinence."

Examples of harm reduction strategies can include needle exchange programs, regulation of drugs, and user-rooms.

Criminalization refers to

making a certain action illegal under the law and, in terms of drugs, it prohibits them. When a drug is deemed illegal under the criminalization approach, prison sentences and/or heavy fines are given not only to those who use or sell illicit drugs but also to those who are possession of an illicit substance.

Dr. Fredrick Polak of the Dutch Drug Policy Foundation is a psychiatrist and writer in Amsterdam who has brought international attention to the "Clinician's Illusion." The Clinician's Illusion is a part of epidemiology that assesses how medical doctors respond to the conditions of their patients when these conditions are drawn out and for which the mortality is low. According to Polak, doctors do not typically see patients with lighter cases of addiction.

"When doctors are asked about drug users as patients, they tell horror stories because the patterns of abuse are inconsistent," said Polak. "In most cases, however, they have only seen a few of these patients — not many."

Policy makers, in order to assess research studies and adjust laws on narcotics, regularly consult medical doctors. Dr. Polak said, "Doctors are in a key position to give better, more well-thought out advice. If society decides to prohibit drugs, fine — but it is not on medical grounds.

Doctor's statements should be clear — not that it is necessary to legalize or advocate drug use, but that they do not have the medical evidence to support prohibition."

Dr. Polak expressed his confusion by the disparity between research on repressive and liberal policy. He said, "Doctors say that health risks are a reason for prohibition. As doctors, we should say that it is the other way around. If there are health risks, the drug should be regulated, not banned. Only if prohibition proved to work — which means people stop using drugs, which is not at all true — should such policies be implemented."

Countries must also take into consideration the international drug conventions of the United Nations, which began in 1961 and have been added upon and updated in 1971, 1972, and 1988.

Professor of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Dr. Craig Reinerman said, "The international conventions of the United Nations are structured in a way that it is nearly impossible to have a more relaxed policy and very easy to have more repressive policies. This is largely because it is simply too dangerous for a politician's career to be progressive on the international level because more tolerant policies can be political suicide."

Cultural exchange leads to greater appreciation

MARTIN KUUSTIK
FEATURED WRITER

Ever since I came to Alma College I have been looking for ways to build cultural awareness on this campus. Being the only Estonian here is not easy, but it is definitely a great way to give back to the college community. I am trying to give people insight about my home country and through that I hope to succeed in broadening their understanding of a different culture. This raises a big question. Should anyone go study abroad?

Absolutely everyone. "Studying abroad allows for unique insight and first hand experiences," said Alex Montoye (10). The reasons for going outside of the United States may vary, but the growth exhibited in every single individual is enormous.

Some of this growth will become a part of your morals and ethics, but on greater scale

you will have newfound respect for where and how you live. Traveling abroad is a strenuous task and emits certain fear into individuals. This is normal and should really make you curious.

What awaits you in a world of unknown? There are hundreds of countries, thousands of languages and vast range of cultures that are looking for someone to come learn from them. This should be you.

Languages are intimidating—especially when you are unable to speak them, but you can see and hear a lot even without knowing the language. "I went over to South-America and that experience taught me their language, their family structure, the way they eat and how they live," said Jesse Ramirez (09). Expectations of life challenge us to go outside of our comfort zone and show us the abyss between cultures.

A culture is more than just a different language; it holds institutions, history, tradition, achievements, and a way of life. It is how unlike we all are. The

world is diverse beyond most imaginations and deserves to be explored.

All of this is possible through modern travel and the simplicity of the process. Most countries no longer require visas thus making it easier to travel. Plane tickets are much more reasonable priced and air travel has become predominant. This all sounds easy and it is. Accomplishments of life can serve as defining moments, but if you do not allow those instances to take place then a bit is taken away from you. Learning about other countries can open up your eyes to the world, and the shades of stereotypes will start to fade. "Going abroad and being submerged in another culture can serve as a humbling experience," said Brandt Ayoub (11).

Professor, teachers and advisors help us develop and move outside of our comfort zones—into the world of unknown. They might guide us toward foreign languages, wonderful S-spring terms or

semesters abroad, but what they really want to see is our growth from small to substantial.

In the words of Margaret Mead, "as the traveler who has once been from home is wiser

than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own."

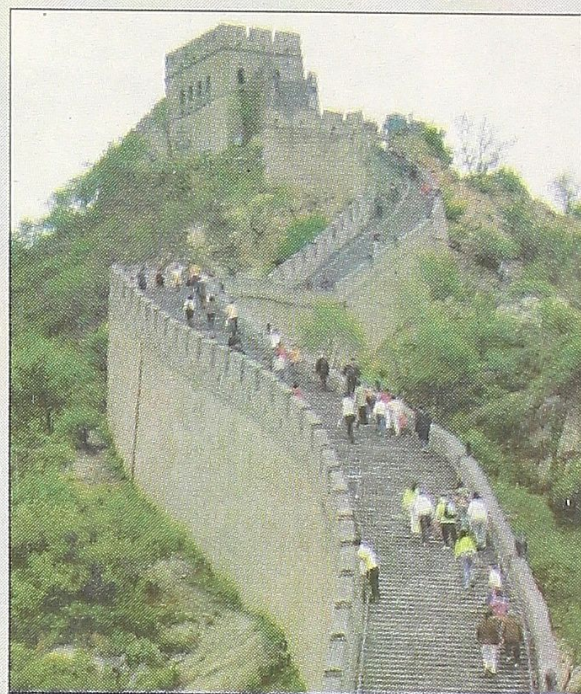


Photo by Kevin Bilbrey

The Great Wall of China at Badaling. The History of China spring term class travelled around China learning about its past and present cultures, providing an unforgettable experience to all involved.

Shopping on 'Black Friday' a crazy, exhilarating affair

KATE LOVE
STAFF WRITER

Madness and mayhem...

Coffee and drive-through breakfast...

Sales, sales, sales...

Have you ever been up at 3:50 am on Black Friday, standing in line to ensure you get exactly what you have circled in an ad from a store? Then enter the store with more than 100 other people and start walking frantically about trying to find what you want? And once you find the big yellow sign that promotes the product your eyes dart down to where the product once stood; now in the arms of those 100 people that entered the store before you? Well then you know exactly how I feel

every time I try to go shopping on Black Friday. What's the point? I ask myself. Why do people go through that?

Well first, let's question WHY it's called Black Friday. Personally for me, I think the reason is because you have to get up and drive while it's still black outside. Or maybe it's because Black Friday usually brings out the dark side of people because they become greedy for everything they can get their hands on. Well, whatever the real reasoning is for the name Black Friday, I find that it fits the day to a tee.

Now, I've been going shopping on the day that marks the beginning of Christmas for only a few years, which means that I've certainly seen my fair share

of pushing and yelling. Let me describe a few circumstances for those of you who have never been.

Usually the pushing occurs when the doors finally open and everyone lunges towards the same doorway to guarantee they get what they want. Or the pushing arises at the spot where the hottest product is being sold.

And the yelling, well the yelling can transpire in various ways. One approach is when friends split up in the store to get coverage faster, and when the product is finally found they yell for their friend.

Another is the silly mom who brings her children because no one else will watch them for the morning. Now, no child

wants to get up at the crack of dawn to go shopping with hundreds of other crazy people, so naturally they are cranky and hungry and just don't want to be there. Either the mom yells at her children, or the children are yelling - either way there is LOTS of yelling.

Now, to try and describe why people go shopping on the day after Thanksgiving. In today's society, the economy is definitely not the greatest, so stores are trying to get the most consumers as possible, thus leading to great deals and tons of extreme shoppers.

For some, Black Friday marks the beginning of the Christmas season, which means lots of shopping. You've probably been in the position before where

there are only a few weeks left until Christmas and you haven't yet started buying gifts for those loved ones. Well, the beginning of the frantic search usually begins the day after Thanksgiving.

And for other people, they just seem to find the adrenaline rush fun. They love the idea of sales and a certain competitiveness, getting a product that the store has only stocked ten in.

Well, in the end, I still believe that people are crazy for getting up at dawn and shopping all morning on Black Friday. But unfortunately, I am one of those crazy people who love the idea of sales and getting her shopping done in advance... I still don't understand why we have to get up so early though...

The Almanian

"Alma College's student run newspaper serving the campus community since 1907."

Statement of Purpose

The Almanian is a newspaper published not only for the students at this institution, not just for the faculty on campus, and not solely for the administrators who work for Alma, but for all people interested in Alma College and the lives it touches. The writers, editors, publishers, and distributors of this newspaper are dedicated to producing an interesting accurate, timely, fun, and error free newspaper on a weekly basis in order to inform and educate the people for whom it is intended about the culture and nature of Alma College.

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Songfest provides entertainment, rocks Alma chapel

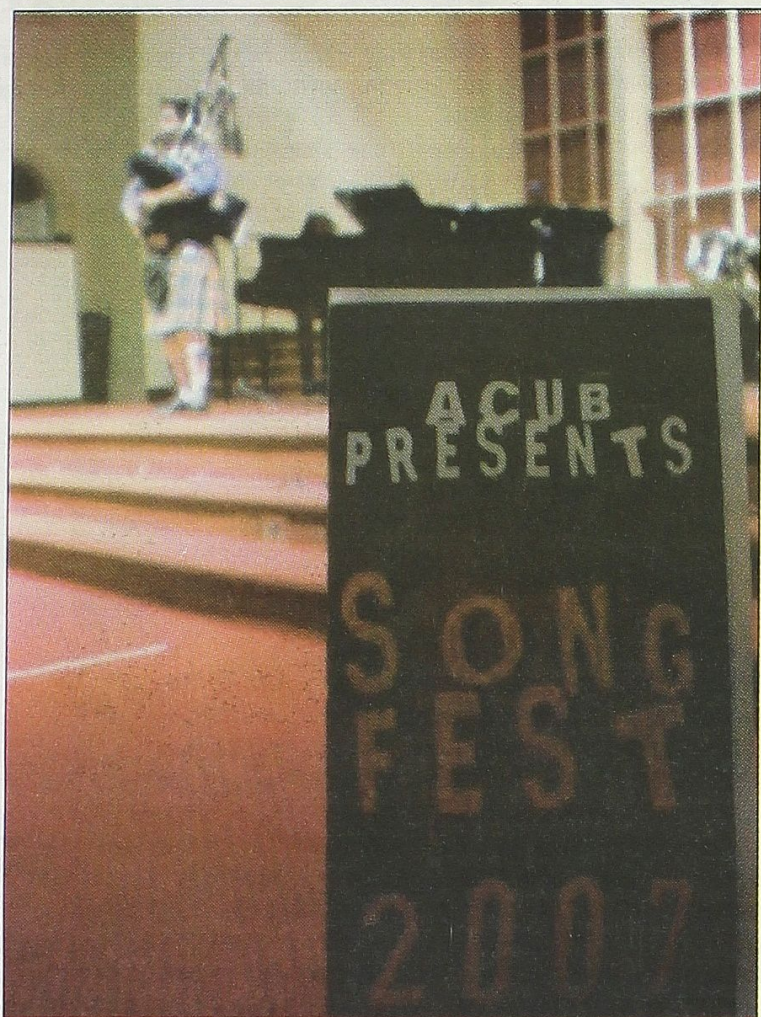


Photo courtesy of Danielle Swinehart

Eli Ross (08) plays bagpipes at ACUB's annual Songfest--one of the largest and most popular events put on by the Union Board.

KATE LOVE STAFF WRITER

Like a Battle of the Bands, Songfest rocked the Chapel on Friday, November 16. If you weren't there to participate or support, you certainly missed out.

For a week prior to Songfest I had been hearing what some of artists would be singing/playing, but no one informed me how the Chapel fills with music and people... to capacity. Never in my church-going life have I encountered a chapel so jam-packed with energy.

As I walked into the Chapel with my friends, I was in shock by the masses of people who had turned up to listen to the event. I grabbed a program and quickly found a seat.

For a few minutes, all I could do was look around and feel happy that all of these people had come to Songfest - it seemed like most of campus had shown up.

I rifled through my program and was happily surprised to see a lot of entertainment ahead of me throughout the next few

hours.

When I saw a few artists I was looking forward to hearing -- Annie Jennings and the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity -- I began to get eager for the event to begin.

There were six solo acts, all of which I found to be absolutely amazing. The first act of the night was Jeff Duncan playing "Lenny" by Stevie Ray Vaughan on his electric guitar, a song that I really enjoyed hearing, having tried to play the electric guitar myself.

The night went smoothly with lots of fun and comical acts, including the act by Chris Schneider accompanied by Will Allen. Chris sang his own version of "Baby Got Back" that took the win in the solo competition.

Annie Jennings and Katie Curtis won the small group category with the well-known song "Irreplaceable" by Beyonce. Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia took second place cash prize in the large group category, with Scots on the Rocks taking first.

Although James Kruse was feeling under the weather and

so unable to perform, we were graced with the presence of Eli Ross, the World Famous Bagpiper. "Wow!" is all I have to say. Let me tell you, I would have been passed out on the ground if I were to try playing the bagpipes.

My favorite act of the night had to have been Chris' version of "Baby Got Back". Everyone knows that song, and to rework it to fit into a classical melody was genius. He was definitely a fun entertainer for everyone in attendance.

From his or her own writings, to well-known pop songs, to some rock, I'm sure everyone was pleased with the selection of music performed.

In between acts there was even music played. At one point, I remember sitting in a pew surrounded by people standing on the pews and in the aisles dancing to some classic rock. It was really entertaining.

The 2007 Songfest, presented by the Alma College Union Board, was definitely an event that made a huge splash on campus. Well done to all the participants!

Extremism versus apathy: striking a balance in modern times

LAUREN SYPNIEWSKI STAFF WRITER

Which is better: an extremist, or a person with no opinions at all?

I pondered this very question just the other day as I conversed with a friend of mine. My friend believed in the holding of extremes, while I believed it may be better to see both sides of an issue and perhaps create a compromise.

He argued his point by saying mediocrity has brought the world to what he believes to be its horrible present state.

I know he had a point to be made; nonetheless, I still disagree. For, without compromises and without the possibility of seeing both

approaches to a question or problem, I believe it can only make things worse.

However, problems can arise, not in those without extremist views, but at least people with views that are not very strong. For instance, a compromise prohibits one from taking a side in an issue - a stance which can be more than useful at times.

My friend went as far as quoting the Bible, which is unusual only in the fact that he does not particularly agree with the Bible. He quoted Revelations 3:15-16, "I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."

I, being a believing Christian, found this fascinating that my friend, of undisclosed faith, would use something I believe

in against me.

After some conversing and debating, my friend and I reached the conclusion that, while we may not believe the same things, we agreed with the same concept - That extremes or strong opinions are necessary to form religious, political, and many other stances.

Without strong opinions, it will be difficult to work at certain jobs.

For example, a police officer who is apathetic to underage drinking, or even goes as far as encouraging it or selling to minors, will be far more unlikely to enforce the laws than a police officer who was strongly against underage drinking.

The same goes for religious and political views.

Someone will not care as much about their morals if they

do not agree with the morals they "supposedly" have. In these cases, it is better to have a strong opinion, whether that be for or against, than no opinion at all.

On the other hand, my friend and I also agreed with the fact that, while extremes are necessary, compromising (or flexible opinion) is necessary for humanity to reach resolution.

Without compromise, there would never be peace, respect, or understanding. It is vital to have the ability to understand another person's view while holding firm to one's own opinion. This brings me to another point: the mid-point stance.

This mid-point is when compromises can come about, even through people who have extreme opinions. In other

words, there are extremes, compromises, and no opinions. Yet, there is also a point of having extremes but understanding as well - something very different than compromise.

Compromising forces two or more parties to alter what they want to reach a conclusion, whereas, with understanding, alteration does not necessarily take place.

All in all, I find it necessary for people to hold strong opinions, especially with certain cases of work, religion, and politics. However, while holding strong opinions, it is necessary to still see the viewpoints of those who hold different opinions and, at times, compromise with their situation.

Writer's Guild strike depresses television industry's creativity

SIMONE MISHLER STAFF WRITER

Ever since the Writer's Guild of America (WGA) went on strike, I have been suffering. The wit of Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert are no longer available to keep me abreast of current events. It seems that the wit and humor I once attributed to these men really belongs to someone else... their writing staff.

The writers left their laptops for picket signs, leaving all of the entertainment industry wondering: are we doomed to a season of reality television? While some shudder at the

thought of having to live without Grey's Anatomy, other consumers have nothing to worry about - The Hills is not scripted, right?

The last time that the Writer's Guild went on strike was 1988. I cannot offer much information as to how things happened back then, seeing as how I was only a few months old and mastering the use of my hands was a big problem. It can be said that the world has changed quite a bit since the late 80s. My hands are now quite dexterous and technology branches far beyond the television.

The demands of the writers seems simple enough to me.

They want to be paid for their work, now distributed through forms of new media.

All of the episodes of Lost you watch on your computer, trying to figure out what the heck is going on, are the creative work of several screenwriters who aren't getting paid for the streaming of their work. To add insult to injury, they do not get paid when someone purchases an episode of their show through iTunes or similar distribution companies.

Despite simple demands, negotiations between the writers and their production companies have not produced any results. The major entertainment

industries have called the new media outlets "promotions" rather than episodes. And that makes sense - nothing promotes watching a program like allowing you to see it whenever you wish.

I will admit that I have been one to watch my favorite shows via the internet to keep up. It is convenient to be able to watch a show on my time rather than the line-up's. I never thought about the writers who made the show possible or whether they were being paid for their efforts; I thought about how cool it was to be able to use my computer as a television!

Now that the WGA strike has

gotten my attention, I agree that they should be paid for their work - from every outlet that the company chooses to distribute it through. Because, as much as I love to watch Heidi and Spencer debate whether they will really get married, I need my comically written infotainment back.

But writers, I understand you have taken a vow not to write while on strike, can you please come up with some better picket line slogans? "We write the storia for Eva Longoria." Seriously? Remind us why we miss you. Use some of that creativity you are begging to be paid for.

Close games lead to 1-3 opening of season

Basketball's Meagan Hoblet named MIAA Player of the Week

IAN FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The Alma College women's basketball team suffered another loss this past Tuesday to bring their season record to 1-3. Concordia University fought hard against the Scots and forced them to make small, but costly, mistakes.

Concordia displayed a tough performance, with 16 of their 22 field goals three-pointers. However, Alma seemed to be able to keep up with Concordia the entire game, not falling behind more than four or five points at a time.

Ashley Matuzak (08) played an excellent game, putting up 22 points, five boards, and four assists, while **Meagan Hoblet (10)** recorded 14 points and 10 boards, giving her a double-double for the game.

Hoblet was named MIAA Player of the week for week 1. During that week Hoblet helped the Scots gain their first win at the Anderson Tournament.

In the tournament Hoblet

scored 12 points and nine rebounds in the win against Marion. She played all but a minute of that game in order to lead her team to a 62-59 victory.

Earlier in the tournament the Maroon and cream lost another tension filled game to Baldwin-

The defense of Concordia was too efficient and did not allow the Scots to take a shot close to the basket

Walace in double overtime. The final score ended with 60-52.

Hoblet earned her first double-double of the season recording 29 points and 16 rebounds.

Alma's top three-point shooter for the Concordia game, **Danielle Large (10)**, was four-for-four from behind the three-point line and ended the game with 12 points, four rebounds, two assists, and two steals.

The Scots had a chance to gather a win near the end of

the game, but the defense of Concordia was too efficient and did not allow the Scots to take a shot close to the basket.

A last second shot by the Scots hit the rim, adding to the tension near the end, but, in the end, Concordia returned home with another win for the season. Alma lost the game 62-64.

The Scots season opener at home was against Aquinas on November 20. The game was challenging for the Scots who had trouble dealing with the Saints fifty percent shooting average for the night.

In the Aquinas game Alma was again led by Hoblet with 13 points in the first half. Matuzak also contributed her part with 12 points for the game.

Despite these efforts the saints out rebounded the Scots 33-20 and won the game 75-56.

Their next game is this Saturday (at home) against Rochester College.

Rochester has currently also one one game. The Warriors are under the direction of a first time coach, Coach Joel Schroeder.

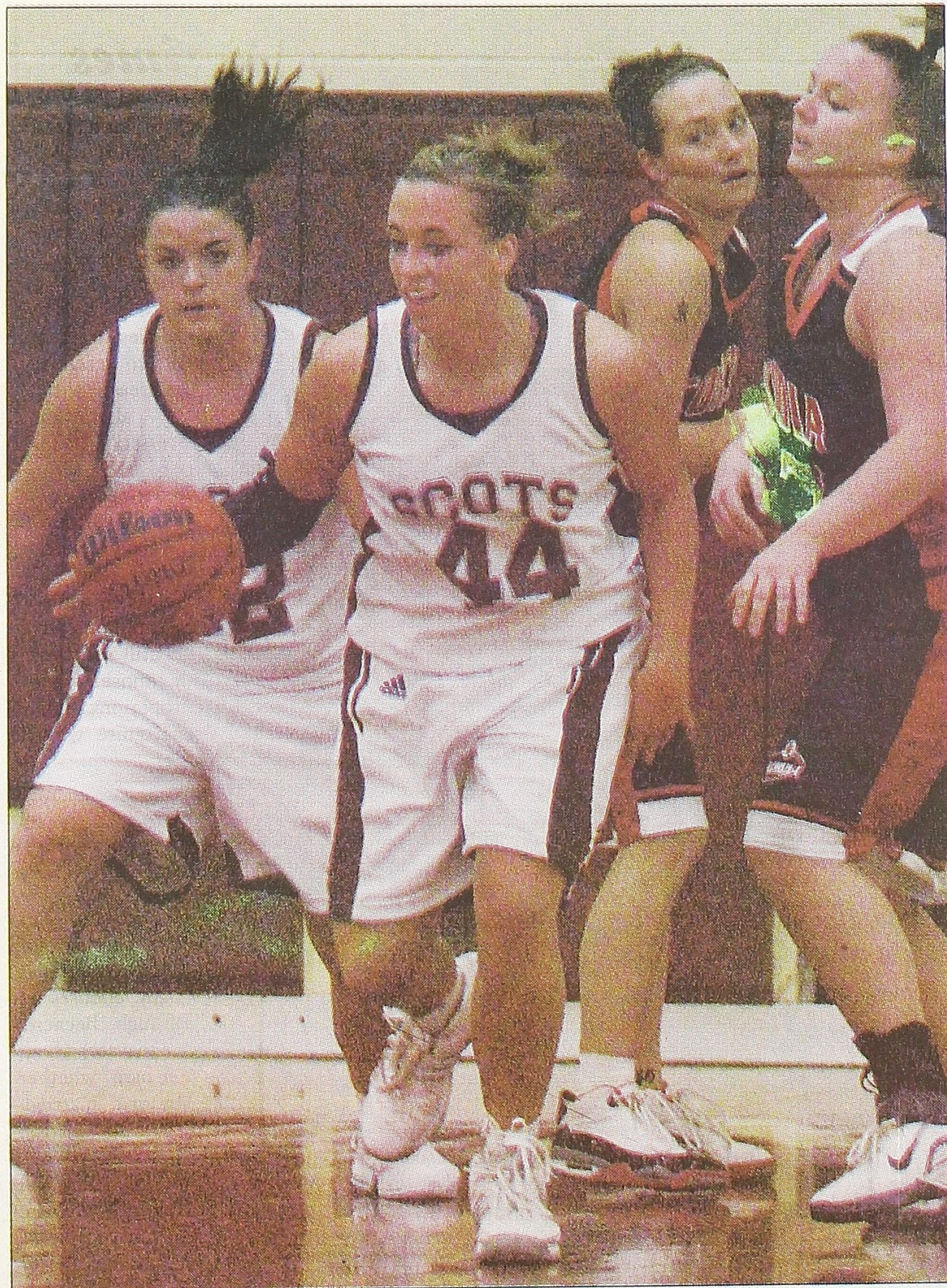


Photo by Skip Traynor

Sophomore Megan Hoblet (44) and Senior Ashley Matuzak break for the basket after Hoblet grabbed a loose ball during action against Concordia Tuesday. Matuzak lead the Scots with 22 points, five boards and four assists and Hoblet had a double-double with 14 points and 10 boards while recording five steals.

Lions provide family traditions with 68th annual Thanksgiving game

CHELSEA CLARK
SPORTS EDITOR



Thanksgiving is a time for family to get together, over-eat on food, and be thankful for the things that are most important to them. Every family has their unique traditions and, for my family, it always includes driving ten hours to West Virginia to watch the football games with my grandpa, uncle, and brother.

This is really the only day of the year that I watch football on television. Sure, I love going to my teams games in person, but, being raised by a Michigan State graduate and a Lions fan, I tend to pass through most of the football season unaware of the standings or specific games that were played. None the less, the Thursday of Thanksgiving we always gather around to watch the Detroit Lions before we are allowed to start our dinner.

This Thanksgiving was different. My parents decided that, with a new college student in the house, it was no longer plausible to make the trip to West Virginia. Instead, we stayed home and created new traditions. Traditions that will affect my children, as my mother said. The one thing that stuck was football and the Lions.

This Thanksgiving held the 68th annual Detroit Thanksgiving game. The game was held at Ford Field in Detroit.

In my living room you could hear the ups and downs of the game without actually watching it. You could hear the roars as the Lions found their running game and the groans when they got stopped on the third down and had to attempt a long field goal. Following, I heard cheers again when Jason Hanson made another field goal.

Hanson has played the most Thanksgiving games in the

"We stayed home and created new traditions. The one thing that stuck was football and the Lions"

history of the NFL, with 16. His experience seemed to help keep Detroit in the game. He scored 14 of the Lions' 26 points with his kicks on Thursday. The longest was recorded at 52 yards - his third kick over the fifty yard line this season.

"There are always times when you stall out, but I think it takes away momentum when you miss [the field goals]," Hanson said. "But, you can only do that so many times against a good team like Green Bay. Eventually, you have to punch it in or make a big play on defense like an interception, but we couldn't do any of that today."

The Lions started out great with a 6-0 lead in the first quarter. In the second quarter, however, Brett Favre got hot and the Lions were unable to stop his record setting performance of 20 straight completed passes. The game ended quietly, without the major comeback that my dad kept promising, ending at 37-26, Green Bay.

The Lions are now facing a three game losing streak with five games left in the regular season. The last game is against the Green Bay Packers in a rematch.

Detroit lost and their bid for the post season seems to be quickly demishing, but Thanksgiving was still there. My cousins still surrounded me cheering and groaning with every play waiting for the turkey to finish cooking so that we could go and eat. The Lions have been there every year for us and most likely will continue to be there for Thanksgivings to come.

Young team, new coach struggle to find first win

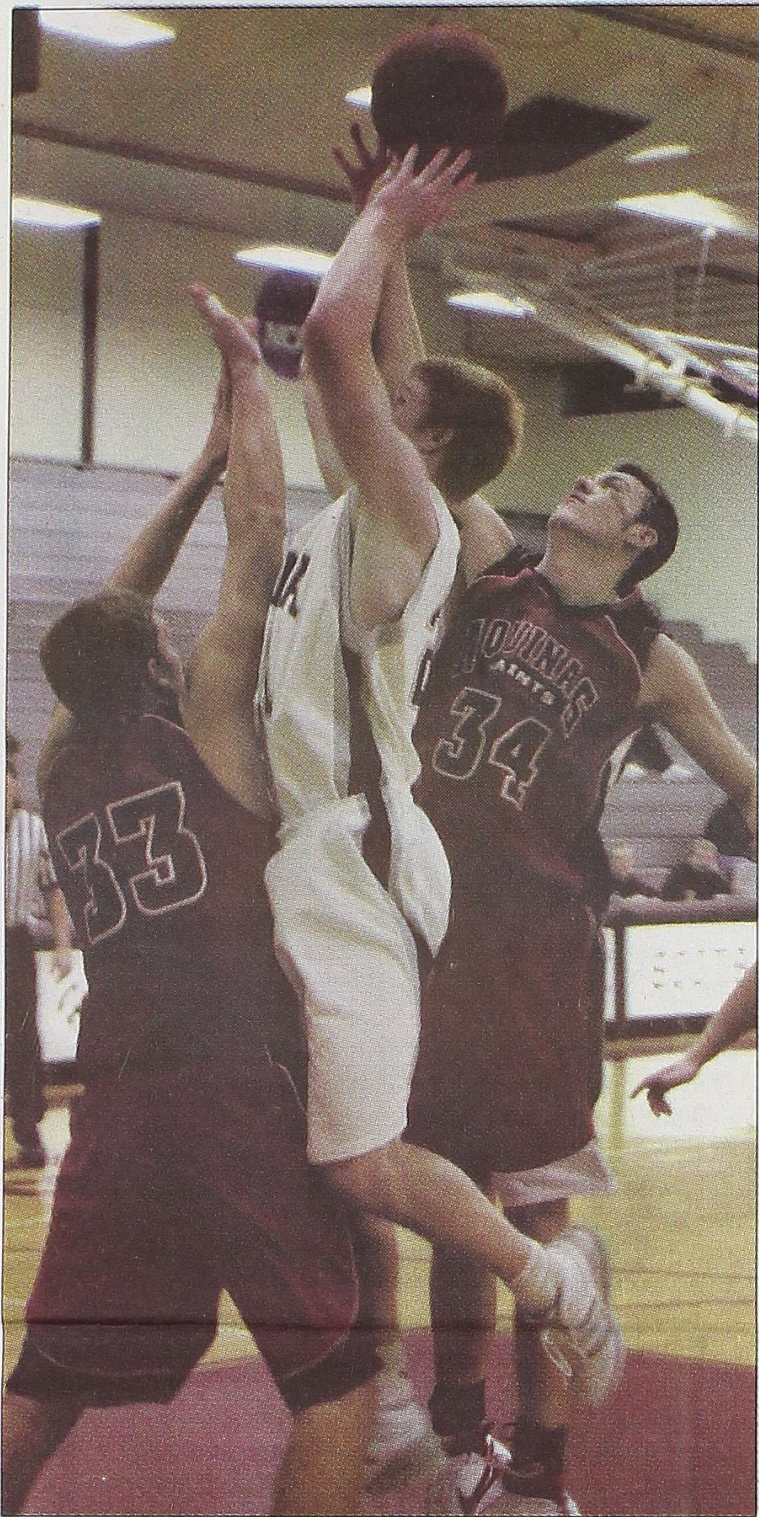


Photo by Tony Rosenblum
Junior Forward Matt Brown fights his way through two Aquinas defenders in order to score a basket. Brown finished the night with 13 points and 8 rebounds.

CHELSEA CLARK SPORTS EDITOR

The Scots' men's basketball team is young this year with only two seniors and two juniors. A new head coach, Terry Smith, also heads the team. The opening season has been hard on the team, with the current record of 0-4.

The record, though, does not depict the complete story. On November 21, the maroon and cream took on Smith's old team: the Division II Bulldogs of Ferris State University. Alma lead most of the game and went into half time winning 28-16. Ferris, however, was able to rebound in the last minutes, to win by four points, 47-43.

The Scots were helped not only by their upper classmen but also by freshmen and sophomores. **David McNally (09)** and **Sam Machuta (10)** both led the team in scoring with 11 points while **Jordan Reditt (11)** led the team with 8 rebounds.

This past Tuesday, the Scots took on another tough team at home: Aquinas. The Saints have been on a winning streak, beating two MIAA conference rivals: the Flying Dutchmen of Hope and the Knights of Calvin in the past week.

Aquinas did not let up the entire night, winning 72-49. This game, however, the team was led by **Matt Brown (09)** in scoring (with 13 points) and rebounds (with 8).

Coach Smith comes to Alma from Hart High School where he was assistant principal and head coach of the varsity men's basketball team. Before then he also coached at Cedar

Springs High school, Ferris State, Lake Superior State, and Grand Valley State Universities.

In Coach Smith's time as coach he has led three different schools to the GLIAC League Championships and one to the quarter finals of the Division II NCAA Tournament.

Alma's next home game is December 14 against Oberlin College. Right now, Oberlin is 0-5 and is under new leadership

with new Head Coach Isaiah Cavaco. They are also led on the court by junior Mike Loll, who averages nearly 16 points a game, and senior Jordan Beard, who has an 89 percent free throw average.

Tomorrow the team faces off against the Elmhurst College Blue jays in Illinois looking to put the first win of the season into the record books. Elmhurst is 3-0 on the season so far.

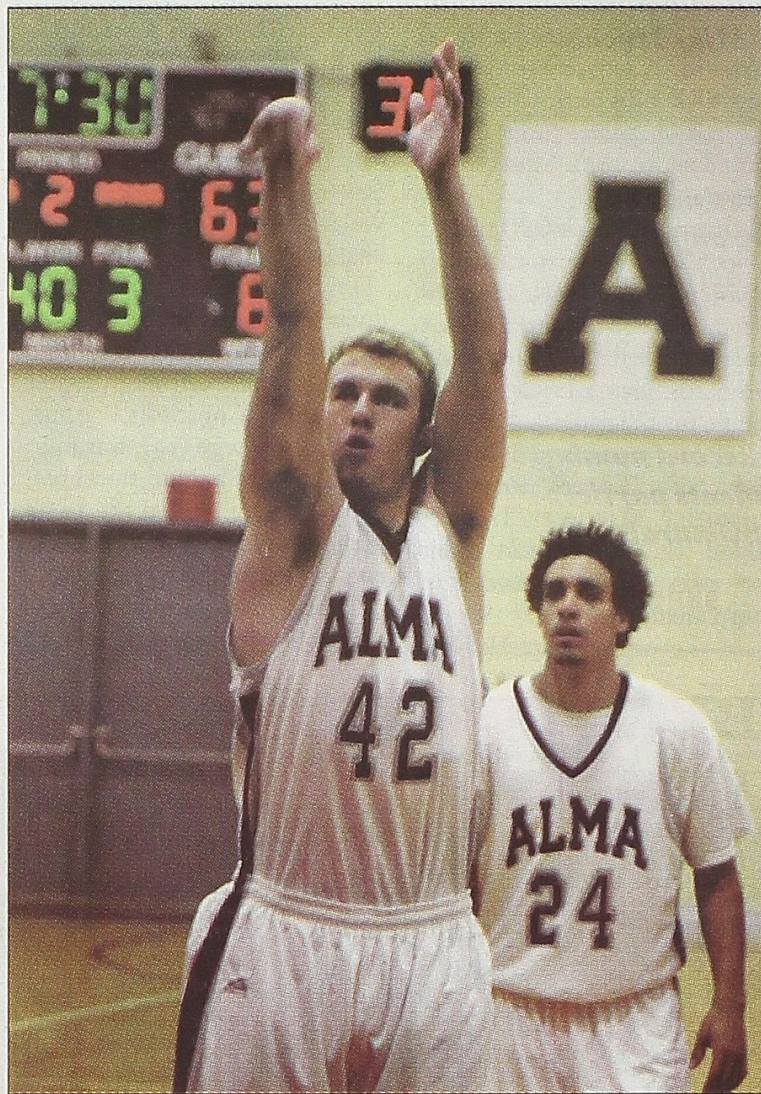


Photo by Tony Rosenblum
Freshman Forward James Hawkins is shooting one of his four free throw attempts of the night. Hawkins made three of them contributing to the teams overall percentage of Sixty-eight.

2007 in review: Beckham, Bonds, Vick draw most coverage

THOMAS MCGUIRE STAFF WRITER

As the year draws to a close, many fans across the country can look back and reflect on how big this year was for many major sports. Here are some of the biggest stories 2007.

For the first time since the United States' national team made the World Cup's quarterfinals in 2002, America welcomed the arrival of English soccer superstar David Beckham to Major League Soccer (MLS).

Beckham, lured away from the Spanish League Champions Real Madrid in January, finally made his long-awaited debut with the Los Angeles Galaxy on July 21 against Chelsea.

The event was a media spectacle, as a sold-out Home Depot Center in Los Angeles and millions of Americans on television watched Beckham limp around the pitch during the Galaxy's 1-0 loss.

Much of Beckham's first season in Major League Soccer was more fanfare than actual results, as the Galaxy continued

to flounder in the MLS standings before making a late-season charge for the playoffs that came up just short.

The free-kick wizard fought off several nagging ankle and knee injuries throughout the summer, causing him to miss nearly six weeks of action between late August and early October.

The former English captain did provide some exciting moments in his limited time with the Galaxy, including his first MLS goal in a patented "bend-it-like-Beckham" moment on a free kick against D.C. United on August 15.

Despite Beckham's limited impact on the Galaxy's play this season, his move from the European glamour leagues to the United States' top soccer tier has caused other major footballers to consider making similar moves in the future. One such superstar, Frenchman Thierry Henry of Barcelona, has indicated that he wishes to finish his career with the MLS' New York Red Bulls. This move, however, may not occur until 2011, when Henry's contract

with Barcelona expires.

Moving north from Los Angeles to San Francisco and changing sports from soccer

"Controversy, however, has overshadowed Bonds' achievement"

"Much of Beckham's first season was more fanfare than actual results"

to baseball, many sports fans had their eyes fixated on Barry Bonds' chase of one of baseball's most revered records: Hank Aaron's all-time home-run record of 755, which Aaron set in 1976.

Bonds, who began the season with 734 long-bombs, finally surpassed Aaron on August 7 with a 435-foot blast into the

center-field in the Washington Nationals.

Controversy, however, has overshadowed Bonds' achievement, as he has been the subject of numerous allegations of steroid use dating back to 2003.

Although Bonds has repeatedly denied using performance-enhancing drugs, a federal grand jury formally indicted him on November 15 on four counts of perjury for allegedly lying about his steroid use and one count of obstruction of justice.

Bonds' trial is scheduled to begin on December 7, at which point many expect him to enter a plea of not guilty.

This indictment may very well spell the end for the 43 year-old's baseball career, as the Giants declined to pick up his contract option following the season, making Bonds a free agent.

The steroid controversy has also touched the ball that Bonds hit to break the home-run record, as fashion designer Marc Ecko allowed it to be branded with an asterisk and sent to Cooperstown after Ecko

paid nearly \$800,000 for it in an auction.

Legal troubles also caught up to another major sports star in July, as federal authorities brought felony charges against Atlanta Falcons' star quarterback Michael Vick for operating a dog-fighting ring out of Vick's Virginia home.

Vick, despite initially denying the allegations, pled guilty on August 24 and turned himself over to authorities on Monday, November 19 to begin serving his impending sentence. The former Falcon faces up to five years in prison, but prosecutors in the case are asking only for the minimum 12 to 18 month sentence.

Vick will learn of his actual sentence on December 10.

Many other stories made big news in 2007, including several huge upsets in college football (Appalachian State and Michigan, Stanford and U.S.C.) and Lloyd Carr's recent retirement, but the three stories concerning some of sports' biggest stars are certain to remain in the headlines during 2008.