



SerMin reaches out

Brooks Service and Ministry Committee volunteers with Mission Waco



Sally Ann
Moyer

*Staff
Writer*

Brooks College is about to begin a new tradition of service in conjunction with Mission Waco. Beginning Saturday, Jan. 29, varying groups of Brooks residents will spend Saturday mornings with some of Waco's underprivileged children, volunteering with Mission Waco's King's Club program.

Brooks College's Service and Ministry Committee (SerMin) co-chairs, Lindsay Putnam (Lindsay_Putnam@baylor.edu) and Seth Oldham (Seth_Oldham@baylor.edu), wanted a service project that would be an outreach from Brooks to the greater Waco community.

"Seth and I had a vision for SerMin that we wanted to integrate Brooks College into the Waco community more," sophomore co-chair Lindsay Putnam said, "We talked to our committee about it and they really wanted to do something with kids."

The King's Club program involves spending a couple

of hours playing with children aged five to eleven and teaching them a brief Bible lesson.

"Anything under the sun that you played in first grade, we play," Oldham said.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Oldham or Putnam at least a week in advance. Each week, the group will meet in the JCR at 10 a.m. to carpool over to the site. They will return to Baylor around 12:30 p.m.

"The way King's Club works, they like stability," Putnam said. This does not mean, however, that participation requires a weekly commitment out of every interested volunteer.

During the Monday night training session, Oldham emphasized the need for a "core group that must go three to four weeks each month."

"On a weekly basis, we need at least ten to 15 people," Putnam said.

Beyond this core group, though, every resident will have a chance to participate. Each hall, led by their community leader, will take turns serving with the program.

"Caleb and the CLs were really interested also in do-

ing some sort of service for the Waco community," Putnam said. After talking with Caleb, Brooks College's hall director, SerMin decided to combine the two into one ongoing service opportunity.

King's Club is a well-established program in the area and many of the parents of the children are already familiar with it, according to McKenzie Miller, Mission Waco's children's director.

"We've done King's Club for the past 15 years in these sites," Miller said during the training session at Monday's SerMin meeting.

SerMin regularly sponsors the Brooks College Prayer Team, Morning and Evening Prayer, Tuesday Night Worship, special liturgical services and Brooks College's World Vision child, currently an Ethiopian boy named Yegashu. It also hosts different events throughout the year.

"It's a service committee with a Christian vision for Brooks College," Putnam said, "It's really just a way to make [service] a part of the community."

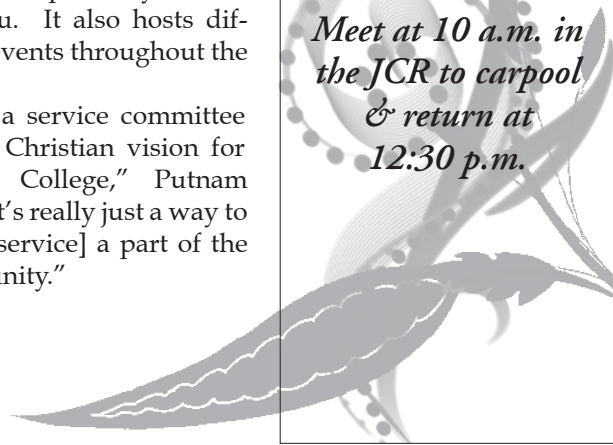
What you can do...

*Take a few hours
from your Saturday
morning to
VOLUNTEER.*

Play with
underprivileged
children, teach them a
Bible lesson.

Sign up at the front desk
or contact Lindsay Putnam
(Lindsay_Putnam@baylor.edu)
or Seth Oldham (Seth_Oldham@baylor.edu)
then...

*Meet at 10 a.m. in
the JCR to carpool
& return at
12:30 p.m.*



UPCOMING events

SerMin @ King's Club JAN. 29
Battle on the Burning Sands Step Show JAN. 29
Women's Basketball @ Texas A&M JAN. 30
Brooks Tour Guide Interest Mtg. JAN. 31
Men's Basketball @ Oklahoma FEB. 1
Women's Basketball vs. Oklahoma FEB. 2
Torch Meeting 8 P.M. FEB. 3
Brooks Tour Guide Training FEB. 3
Men's Basketball @ Texas A&M FEB. 3
Winter Premiere FEB. 5
Men's Basketball @ Texas FEB. 12
Valentine's Day FEB. 14
Women's Basketball vs. Texas A&M FEB. 14
New issue of The Torch FEB. 18



TORCHnews

If you're interested in writing, photography or drawing send an email to

BROOKS.TORCH@GMAIL.COM.

Join us for our next meeting at
8 P.M. THURSDAY, FEB. 3,
in the Brooks College Seminar Room!

When Fly-Swatters Enter the Liturgy



Kyndall
Renfro
Chaplain

Something you may not know about me is that in addition to chaplaincy, I also preach weekly at a small church in West, Texas (if you're thinking kolaches, then yes, you're thinking of the right place) where the age of the average congregant is about 68 years-old. Literally—not a soul in the church was born after the year 1950.

And then there's me, the 25 year-old pastor. They are delightful people, but needless to say, the pace of life there is nursing-home speed compared to Brooks.

Lately at church we have this yellow-jacket problem. For two months now, we worship the Lord on Sundays with yellow-jackets buzzing around our heads like little devils of distrac-

tion. These creatures from hell have nested themselves way up in the bell-tower, which is a good place to hide from elderly folk.

Actually, it is not the yellow-jackets that I mind so much as the reaction to the yellow-jackets. Buzzing I could learn to ignore.

What I cannot ignore is the *swat, swat, swat* of the fly-swatter—right in the middle of my brilliant sermon! Right when I'm on the verge of bringin' people to Jesus—SWAT! And all the holy focus on my inspired words is immediately derailed.

I wish the men in the church would just let the yellow-jackets do their thing and let me do mine! But the men heroically dart around the church (as much as old men can dart), valiantly protecting us women-folk from the onslaught of yellow-jackets. They are trying to be helpful, but they are turning our worship into a circus.

One Sunday, a man showed up with a whole



First United Church in West, Texas.

handful of fly-swatters and starting passing them out among the pews. (Are you kidding me?) The next Sunday, another man trotted proudly into the sanctuary toting an electric bug-zapper which he had ingeniously rigged to a six-foot pole for extended reach. (Lord, please, end the plague of yellow-jackets NOW or this church will never see another reverent moment!)

But one Sunday as I was walking up to the pulpit amidst the sounds of buzzing and swatting, I finally smiled. I quit taking myself so seriously and considered

that perhaps this was the most excitement this little church has seen in a long time, and who was I to spoil their fun with my solemnity?

Sometimes God's gifts come to us in unexpected ways. If we take ourselves too seriously, we are unlikely to see life for the gift it is. If we quit trying so hard to control life, and instead learn to receive life and its adventures with openness and humor, might we begin to see unexpected events—even a plague of yellow-jackets—as something holy?

THIS SPRING WRITE FOR THE TORCH

EDITOR'S *note*



Katy
McDowall
Editor

Welcome back to another semester!

If you're looking to get involved this semester, The Torch is a great way to do so. So don't be afraid. Come to one of our meetings or just send an e-mail to Brooks. Torch@gmail.com.

Join us in at 8 p.m. in the Seminar Room:
THURSDAY, FEB. 3
THURSDAY, FEB. 24
THURSDAY, MARCH 24
& THURSDAY, APRIL 7
to be a part of The Torch this semester.

TORCHSTAFF

| handing out the torch since fall 2007 |

Nathan Fischer *staff writer*
Anson Jablinski *staff writer*
Sally Ann Moyer *staff writer*
Nosse Ovienmhada *staff writer*
Garner Richardson *staff writer*
Jennifer Tran *staff writer*
Katy McDowall *editor*

Governing Board Update



Emilie
Moore
President

Welcome back to the most wonderful residential college in the known world! Here are a few things to look forward to over the next few weeks...

Tour Guide Training!

If you enjoy talking about Brooks or musing on its impact in your life, this may be a great way to express that. Winter Premiere is Feb. 5, and prospective students will want to hear what you have to say! Come to the interest meeting at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 31, and training on Feb. 3, to find out more!

Send a Crush a Crush

A fun way to celebrate Valentine's Day and raise money for our sponsored child!

Back the Bears at a women's basketball game!

As always, we hope that your life is enriched by living in community. J

spring 2011 brooks committee updates

COMMUNITY and TRADITIONS



Meetings: Tuesdays at 9 p.m. Next meeting: Feb. 1

Upcoming events:

- Tour Internest Meeting, Jan. 5
- Brooks Backs the Bears, Feb. 18
- Brookstravaganza, April 1-3
- Diadeloso, Dia Booth, April 14
- May Ball, April 29

Contact: Nosse Oviemhada (*Nosse_Oviemhada@baylor.edu*) or Vanessa Wyns (*Vanessa_Wyns@baylor.edu*)

SERVICE and MINISTRY

Meetings: every Monday at 6 p.m. in the Seminar Room. Next meeting: Jan. 31

Upcoming events:

- Volunteering with King's Club every Saturday. Meet in the JCR Saturday at 10 a.m., play with underprivileged children, return at 12:30 p.m.
- Tuesday night worship, prayer team in Robbins Chapel

Contact: Seth Oldham (*Seth_Oldham@baylor.edu*) or Lindsay Putnam (*Lindsay_Putnam@baylor.edu*)



ARTS and ACADEMICS



Meetings: every other Wednesday at 5 p.m. in the Seminar Room. Next meeting: Feb. 2.

Upcoming events:

- Rock Band Friday every Friday late evening in the JCR
- Oscar Night Watch Party, Sunday Feb. 27

Contact: Anson Jablinski (*Anson_Jablinski@baylor.edu*) or Brooke Bormann (*Brooke_Bormann@baylor.edu*)

introducing NEGASHU DADI

Brooks' New Sponsored Child

From Ethiopia

A boy, born Feb. 14, 1998 (Valentines Day!)

He lives with his parents and five brothers in an AIDS stricken community. His dad is a farmer; his mom is a housewife. He goes to primary school, cares for the animals and home, and enjoys soccer.

Brooks will no longer be sponsoring Victor because World Vision has completed their goals for that area. He will be missed by Brooks. All the letters from SerMin's Meet Victor event last semester have been sent. SerMin also sent pictures from that event to Victor and a "goodbye" letter from the college telling him Brooks will miss him but will continue to pray for him and his family.

11 things to do in 2011

1. Make some new friends. Volunteer at Fuzzy Friends! (6321 Airport Road)
2. Reply to all of those e-mails in your inbox.
3. Go to the SLC.
4. Get involved in your community. Join a Brooks committee.
5. Get organized. Fill out your planner. Clean your room.
6. Head out to King's Club on Saturdays with SerMin.
7. Spend less time on facebook.
8. Meet someone new.
9. Don't drop that class. You can do it.
10. Get some sleep. Head to bed earlier.
11. Write for The Torch.

11 movies to see in 2011

1. Gnomeo & Juliet (Feb. 11)
2. The Adjustment Bureau (March 4)
3. Apollo 18 (April 22)
4. Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (May 20)
5. Green Lantern (June 17)
6. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II (July 15)
7. Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon (July 1)
8. Cowboys and Aliens (July 29)
9. The Smurfs (Aug. 5)
10. Anonymous (Sept. 30)
11. The Three Musketeers (Oct. 14)

Sammy says...



Where is the Brooksmeister?

DISCLAIMER Dr. Samuel Palmer Brooks did not, to our knowledge, actually say the above quote. We also have no record he ever wore this suit.

IN

Natalie Portman
Snow
Coffee in the JCR
Snooki's Book
Tumblr

&

Larry King
iPhone 4 Alarm Fails
Cold weather
Bazillion dollar textbooks

OUT

Anson Goes on the Internets: Text Editors



Anson
Jablinski
*Staff
Writer*

Text, text, text—it's all about text!

Whether you're writing prose or programming, while online or off, here are some great programs and tools for you to check out.

If you're a child of the internet like most people our age are these days, then you may know what it's like to spend half an hour writing an email that's five sentences long. It can be tough to focus on doing one thing while there are YouTube videos to be queued and Facebook notifications to be checked, but fortunately, there's a solution.

There are many programs out there that call themselves "distraction-free text editors." These handy programs blank out everything on your screen except the text you're editing—thus enabling maximum concentration. You can draft your email in peace! Or, if you're composing a Facebook message, draft it in a text editor first to protect yourself from accidentally leaving the page and losing your message. (Regrettably, this has happened to me many a time.) These programs will also autosave your work.

Perhaps my favorite function, though, is the ability to change the display colors to green text on a black background to make yourself feel

like a pro hacker.

I sampled many of these programs, and settled on one called "**FocusWriter**" as my favorite. It's free, of course, and available for Mac and Windows at gottcode.org/focuswriter.

If you're interested in an online version, try quietwrite.com.

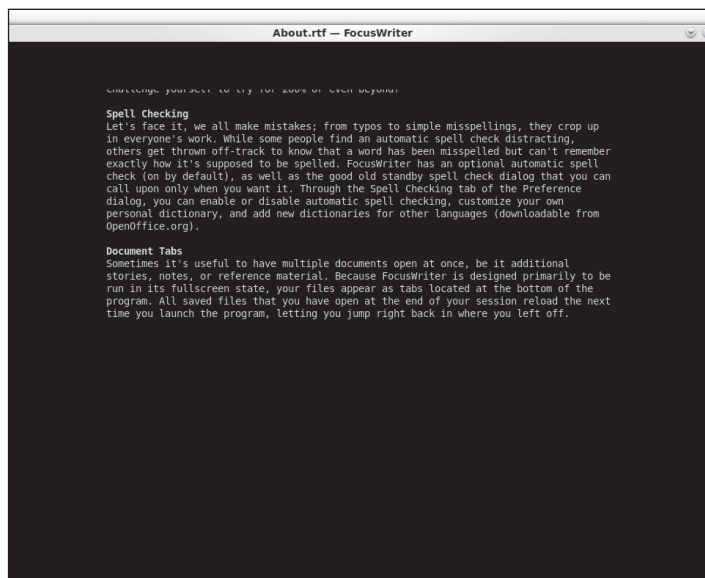
It's autosaving, calm, cloud-based (your email is your username to which all your writing files are saved), and awesome. The site also quietly features the ability to browse what other users are writing, giving it a unique "writing community" feel that I really enjoy.

If you're interested in an online note editor that can sync to other devices, you should check out [simplenote](http://simplenote.com) at simplenoteapp.com.

Simplenote is more of a Web 2.0 application, with the standard features you'd expect—you can tag notes for easy finding, and there are free iPhone and iPad apps. The interface is—well, simple—but it's not marketed as a distraction-free writing tool.

If you need to do some serious offline editing of text or code while you're using other programs on your computer, I happily recommend **Notepad++**.

Think about how much you enjoy tabbed browsing on the internet. Now, imagine tabbed text editing. It's a beautiful thing. Once you try Notepad++, you'll never



FocusWriter (gottcode.org/focuswriter)

go back to Notepad.exe. It's only available for Windows, though, and as I do most of my work on my Windows desktop computer, I have not looked for a Mac equivalent. Notepad++ is available for free at notepad-plus-plus.org.

Here's a summary:

FocusWriter — offline, distraction-free text editing

QuietWrite — online, distraction-free text editing within a creative community

Simplenote — online text editing with many sync options available

Notepad++ — offline text editing, powerful yet streamlined

Last of all, I present to you **Evernote**, an all-in-one "bucket" for storing all those random bits of information that clutter your mind.

I use Evernote to save all those YouTube links that I want to watch "later" and news articles I want to read

"later." I also save various tips, tricks, programs, and resources that may be useful "someday." (Think of it as the garage or junk drawer that never gets full.)

It's also very useful for keeping track of homework, projects, and important things, too! Free users get unlimited storage space with a monthly upload limit of 60 MB—a ceiling you won't reach until you input at least 30,000 short text notes! You can also attach photos and common file types (pdf, doc, etc.) to your notes.

Evernote is available as an online interface, or as free downloadable versions for Windows, Mac, iPhone, and iPad. Free your mind from clutter—vent it all into Evernote!

I hope that you will check out some of these tools and turbo-charge your text editing. A whole new world awaits you—enjoy!

Best Online Bargains



Nosse
Ovienmhada
*Staff
Writer*

I recently became addicted to online shopping thanks to a friend of mine. Fortunately, the things that I purchase online are very well-priced. Over the past few months I have scored a brand new cellphone for 100 (originally priced 250) and Bose noise-cancelling headphones for 65\$ (originally priced 200). Hopefully, these sites do not become an

addiction for you, but more of a go-to place for random things you may need here and there.

Just like Oprah, These are Nosse's favorite things!!!

EBay.com

Whatever IT is, you can get it on eBay. I have purchased the most random things on eBay, from a laptop cover, to a vuvuzela. Reader reviews are helpful and the eBay user protection always keeps me optimistic that I will get what I have paid for. I find most students just use eBay for books but I advise you to take a chance and buy that beanie baby you don't have yet.

Woot.com

One Day, One Deal. Every midnight (central) Woot launches an event: one sale that lives until it sells out, or the next midnight. On Woot you will find an array of electronics on sale for blowout prices. One Day you may find a laptop on the front page and the next day an iPod. Bookmark the website because everything is by chance. One day you might find what you are looking for!!

Overstock.com

We have all seen the lame commercials but have you ever checked out the website? It's actually a great

place to find deals. Especially on specialty items, check it out you just may find your new pea-coat on the site.

*Fun but Pricey

Etsy.com

Before I lead you on, I just want to warn you that this site can be a hit and miss with bargains. Mostly I creep on the site for nifty hand-made products. I consider the items priceless and one of a kind. If you can imagine and make it, it's probably on Etsy. Etsy will help you discover all the paintings, knitwear, steam punk outfits, boots you ever imagined. Go on and discover you won't regret it.

Classroom Funnies



Nathan
Fischer
*Staff
Writer*

Naptime

Falling asleep in class presents many problems. Sometimes the urge to get your monies worth by staying awake just can't manage to keep you from dozing off during a PowerPoint. Usually this is okay, nothing goes wrong and you get up and leave when the class is over, but there are those few times when you wish you hadn't fallen asleep.

Now for my story: it was a 9 a.m. class, so of course it makes it even more difficult to stay awake. As I was sitting there with my friends (we all sat in the same row) we were trying to make it

through a lengthy lecture on the process of Glycolysis. To our left and further down the row there was always a guy that would be on Facebook the entire class, never really took notes and fell asleep all of the time.

This time, during his nap he had his computer open. As he fell asleep he started to lean back in his seat and hit the edge of the computer. It proceeded to fall off of his desk and into the head of the person in the row in front of him.

At this, he started up really quickly and began to gather the computer from the floor inspecting it for damage. Now let me tell you, it was a fairly large class (around 250), and the professor stopped and everybody turned and looked.

I don't think the person in front of him was even hurt, just stunned, but I feel as

though he won't be taking many naps anymore; at least not with his computer open.

Trouble

Getting called out in class is not something I wish on anybody, especially not in large sciences classes.

Just last semester though there was a time when Nosse (a good friend and Brooks member) and I were stilling in a Psychology class. If you were too loud, our Professor did this thing where she would stop the lecture and stare at you until you stopped interrupting the class.

So we were both taking notes during the lecture and the Professor stopped mid-sentence. We both looked up and there she was staring at us. We were both like, is she mad that we are taking notes; we both couldn't figure it out. She just kept staring for a good thirty seconds or so. Eventually the lecture continued, but Nosse and I were determined to

find out if we had done something wrong.

After class we went up and asked the Professor if we were making too much noise, with which she laughed and said that she was actually staring at somebody behind us. Crisis averted! We both felt a sigh of relief as we walked out of the BSB, laughing it off.

Anson's Funny

I took Christian Heritage with Dr. Weaver a few years ago. I sat front and center, and a few seats over on the row behind me sat the primary antagonist of the class. When Dr. Weaver said anything interesting, Scott rarely hesitated to add his own opinion or protests. His contributions were as relevant as they were restrained, and eventually Dr. Weaver reached the tipping point. On that day, defeated, he addressed his graduate assistant at the back of Bennett Auditorium:

"Brandon," called Dr. Weaver, "I think it's time."

Brandon knew exactly what to do. In a loud voice, he replied, "And God said: Scott, shut up!"

Dear Jennifer,



Jennifer
Tran

Staff
Writer

Having trouble with your significant other? Need another opinion on a life-changing question? Interested in a new perspective?

Well, you're in for a treat! A new addition to The Torch has arrived for the semester! "Dear Jennifer" is answered by your friendly neighborhood, Jennifer Tran. Questions ranging from school, relationships, philosophy, art, YOU NAME IT, SHE'LL ANSWER IT. All questions are kept confidential and are discarded after answered. Questions may be submitted in the red box at the Front Desk. No real names will be published and pseudonyms are requested, just for fun.

Jennifer is willing to answer a variety of question. Her openness and comfortableness with everything is close to infinite. Although this is true, depending on the subject of questions, some question may be rejected for publication for safety and censorship reasons.

When do social habits become self destructive?

(A Social Butterfly)

It becomes self destructive when you fail to balance the graces with other factors of your life. Imbalance in life is the result of a person with lack of self-control.

Do you have to cross boundaries to know where your boundaries are?

(A Dotted Line)

Well, how can you set boundaries for yourself if you don't know what they are?

Living life through boundaries that you are told or that you are surrounded by with society creates a predetermined boxed lifestyle and it leaves you in a state of dependence on the things around you rather than allowing you to discover and figure out what you are okay with and what you are not.

In reference to the question, "Where do you draw the line?" ... The line is only drawn by you. There wouldn't be a purposeful line to draw if you didn't know what that line was truly for.

What's the best way to cook celery?

(A Happy Acorn)

I personally like to throw in some chopped celery into my soup. We're so used to eating it raw with peanut butter/ranch that it's nice to try something different.

How many times does the average person wander around in a circle in the woods before he or she realizes that he or she is wandering in a circle?

(A Lost Wanderer)

I think that the average person would wander around endlessly before he or she would realize that

they're wandering in circles. Unless they spot that they have passed a certain marker in their trail, the optimist will believe that he/she will get out and the pessimist will believe the opposite. The idea might cross their minds but, being stuck in the woods is almost as bad as being stuck in a complex maze. Unless there's something significant to signal their futility, there wouldn't be anything for them to "realize" the truth of the "idea".

What's worse, not knowing what you want or wanting the wrong things?

(G-Daddy, The)

Both. Why would either be worse than the other when they both result in nothing productive or conducive to your well-being?

The thing about wanting the wrong things is when you make this statement you have already accepted that you indeed "want" the "wrong" things.

I think that these two options tie together and that when you say that you want the wrong things you are also saying you don't really know what you want because, why would you choose something that you have decided is wrong for you?

In the event that we're referring to something wrong in an objective manner, I believe that not knowing what you want is worse. And this is because, if you want the wrong things, say, you want to marry a serial-killer; you

can always ask yourself, why do I want to do that?

You can always question your reasoning and your choices with the decisions you make and your desires. With these decisions there is an internal drive that is making you desire something albeit bad.

But, if you are in a state of mind where you don't know what you want, the roads are endless and the paths are infinite in what you could choose and decide.

What do you do when the person sitting next to you in class has no concept of personal space bubbles?

(A popped bubble)

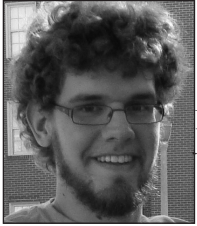
This is a traditional question because there's no real good answer to it. The first thought that comes to mind to resolve a situation like this is just to ask that person, "Do you mind stepping back a little?"...but, people always pine for a different approach as to not make things awkward or seem rude and impolite.

My advice is, if you're not willing to say something to that person about it then it wouldn't be too hard to personally step yourself away from that person. Or in a friendly way, put your hand on their shoulder while you're talking to them and move back...that way there is an arm-length distance between you two.

Submit questions to Jennifer in the RED BOX at the FRONT DESK.

No real names will be published.
Pseudonyms are requested.

FINE ARTS forecast



Anson
Jablinski
Staff
Writer

Well, there goes another semester... that was quick. If this is your last semester, be sure to make it a good one. If it's not your last semester, make it a good one anyway.

Fortunately, this should be easy to do, because this semester is jam-packed with tons of awesome music. There are several events that I'm seriously super-duper-excited about coming up — check some of them out below, and stay tuned to the Forecast in the future!

Write me if you have an upcoming event you want to see listed in the Forecast!

Unless otherwise noted, all events listed here are at 7:30 pm in Jones Concert Hall (in the McCrary Music Building) and totally free of charge.

Baylor Symphony Orchestra
Presents "An Evening of R&B" — meaning Rachmaninoff and Beethoven — on *Tuesday, February 1*. The Rachmaninoff symphony that we're playing (his 2nd) is fantastic. You'll love it! Come check it out!

Baylor Theatre
Presents *The Skin of Our Teeth* by Thornton Wilder, *February 1 through February 6 (Tuesday-Sunday)* in the Mabee Theater. See [baylor.edu/theatre] for showtimes and ticket information.

St. Olaf College Choir
A world-famous choir, visiting from Minnesota, performing on Thursday, February 3. See the School of Music website [baylor.edu/music] for ticket information, or stay tuned to your email — Brooks will be taking a small group!

Symphonic Band
Friday, February 4

Baylor's 10th Annual Sacred Harp Sing

On Saturday, February 5, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in Truett Seminary, dive into the Sacred Harp, a book of hymns originally published in 1844. The Southern tradition of Sacred Harp singing invites anyone with a voice to sing praises to God in a community of friends. Look up "Sacred Harp" on Wikipedia and

listen to the sample recording. If the Spirit is moved within you, you need to be here! I've been looking forward to this event for months. Come at 9:30 if you'd like a brief "Singing School" introductory lesson. Lunch is provided!

Wind Ensemble
Monday, February 7

Emanuel Ax, Guest Pianist
One of the most famous pianists alive today visits Baylor on *Tuesday, February 8* to play in Roxy Grove Hall (inside Waco Hall) at 7:30 pm. Student tickets are \$10 on the School of Music website. I'll be there!

Midwinter Organ Conference
Sunday, February 13 – Tuesday, February 15. Do you like the organ? This is your week! Choose from six organ recitals in three days! I recommend (and will be attending) the recital of Baylor's own legendary Dr. Joyce Jones on Tuesday, February 15.

Concert Jazz Ensemble
Thursday, February 17

Martin Museum of Art
Presenting ceramics by Phillips Ahnen and prints by DeCaen, Olsen, and Rush. On display through *Saturday, February 26*. See [www.baylor.edu/martinmuseum] for museum hours and other information.

Like a Little: The anonymous flirting experience



Nosse
Oviemhada
Staff
Writer

Have you ever seen a hot girl or guy on campus and wanted to say something but missed your chance?

Well Like a Little is a fun way to anonymously flirt with the object of your affection. The website has recently become quite popular on

campuses nationwide.

"The site's purpose is to allow you to compliment and chat about your crushes around you or otherwise bemoan your missed encounters from the safety of your trusty screen...In hope, that you'll put yourself out there once in a while to make a real connection!"

Some people go on the site in attempt to reach a person they ran into earlier in the day. Others like me go online for laughs. The website contains some of the funni-

est submissions. For example this week's favorite was in response to last campus lockdown.

"At Baylor campus Monday night: Male, Black hair. You and your friend are dark skinned and I saw you running though campus with guns. I heard you robbed a couple cash stores, but it's cool I like a man who could provide for me. Call me in 3-5 years."

This is an example of what you will find on the website most of the time:

"Male, Blonde. You're at the register wearing a leather jacket and carrying a helmet. You are super attractive. I wish you would just come say hi to me..."

Like a little's Baylor forum was started by student Jennifer Gueldner, the site is monitored to keep the likes safe and fun.

So next time you're procrastinating on class reading check it out for some laughs or even to post your likealittle at <http://likealittle.com/baylor/>.

A Conversation in Film: Blecch Swan?



Garner
Richardson
*Staff
Writer*

Aronofsky Brings to Surface the Dark Waters of "Swan Lake," But Is This Disquieting Psychological Storm Worth Seeing?

Darren Aronofsky is a fearlessly individualistic filmmaker whose works are either revered or feared (or a combination of the two) among serious film communities and vaguely tolerated everywhere else. His films are usually portrayed as being edgy with a subversive (and perverse) panache, and this can be seen in his latest brainchild, *Black Swan*.

Although there is much that inspires admiration and some even awe, the film proves to be the antithesis of anything earth-shattering or mind-blowing by which almost the entire base of Aronofsky believers seems to have been transfixed.

Black Swan's story is about an uptight and obsessive ballerina who is determined to land the leading role in "Swan Lake." As the young and talented Nina, Natalie Portman makes a riveting show of dedication and desperation on the dance floor. Nina is possessed by an almost demonic drive to become and eclipse Beth (Winona Ryder) the dance company's famous starlet. To achieve her ambitions, Nina will have to impress a tough and exploitative director named Thomas Leroy, played by Vincent Cas-

sel. Furthermore, She must cope with her mercurial and manipulative mother (Barbara Hershey), who fuels Nina's selfish goals even as she snarls with barely suppressed jealousy. We become progressively entrenched inside Nina's warped psyche as she begins to view everyone around her as either an advantage or an obstacle, tangling herself so tight in the ropes of her own ambition that her skin starts to split open. It's a role whose demands for Portman must have been the most taxing of her career, and she hits all of her marks perfectly.

In addition to the impressive acting, the colors and textures of the elaborate costumes – costumes that morph into frightful new forms as dark forces begin to take hold of Nina's imagination – are fantastic spectacle. And when the black-feathered phantasm of the title is fully revealed, striking a triumphant pose mid-stage, well... what can we do but surrender? Aronofsky is one of the few American directors I can think of who is still capable of painting enduring, and that is the most stunning image I've seen in any new film in a long time.

Unfortunately, however, as the crowd cheers Nina off into oblivion, all of this grandiosity seems like Aronofsky is here to show off and have a good time first, then tell a compelling story with precision and an eye for internal beauty after the fact. Aronofsky's defining weakness is that, in his roaring confidence, he lets his giddy enthusiasm for intensity get the better of him, and he fails to give enough

attention to story. Nowhere is this more clear than in the film's most talked about scene, and I'm sure many of you are familiar with what I mean. As Nina feels threatened by a newcomer, a bold, uninhibited dancer named Lily (played by Mila Kunis in a scintillatingly double-edged spirit), she becomes haunted with outdoing her. Both Portman and Kunis are equally commanding onscreen, but apparently they're also both so sexy that Aronofsky can't help but give into temptation, and the film contrives a scene in which these two lovely-looking women partake in some honest, soft-core, damsel-on-damsel action. In this scene, one of the gravest storytelling sins is committed as we are sucked out from in between the narrative and spit out onto the gloriously glistening backs of Portman and Kunis. We stop thinking about these two characters, Lily and Nina, and all that they've been through and all of the choices that they've made that have led them to this point, and start thinking about the actresses themselves. We start thinking, "Wow, OMG, Mila Kunis and Natalie Portman are both undeniably fine, and they're really going at it hard right now. Whoa. I wonder if Mila Kunis's tattoo is real..." Utterly sundered from any empathetic association we might have shared with these two odd characters, we're left with nothing more than splendidly shot porn as the culminating moment in the most critical relationship of the film, and that's not what I paid for.

Myths like "Swan Lake"

can serve as warnings. They question widespread American ethic of following your passion no matter the cost. If we pursue all of our aspirations and pay any price, but have not love, then we are just clashing cymbals. *Black Swan* could have been that sort of cautionary tale.

But I don't think it is, as many will no doubt defend the film for being. It is indeed a cautionary tale, then why does it seem so triumphant and celebratory in the end? As the crowd cheers Nina off into oblivion, it is almost as if she is immortalized. "Look at Nina," sings Aronofsky, "isn't her misery grand? Isn't her disintegration glorious?" The film seems to insinuate that it's better to rise above yourself by embracing both the innocent and the depraved side, even if it means that you burn out like a supernova. But the burden we bear everyday borne out of our time in the Garden should have us know better.

Seeing *Black Swan*, I think Darren Aronofsky has the talents of a great artist, but he's also, as cultural critic Jeffrey Overstreet penetratingly observes, an "adrenaline junkie," and that keeps his art from ascending into greatness. He aims to electrify, and in this all-consuming eagerness he strives for violent energy over poetry, manipulation over truth, and exotic emotion over human transcendence. I pray fervently for his aesthetic maturation. For when he escapes the self-centered trappings of artistic pubescence, Aronofsky will become an arresting storyteller indeed.