



ROUNDING UP CAMPUS NEWS SINCE 1900

THE BAYLOR LARIAT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008

Tuition grant to remain need-based

By Ashley Corinne Killough
Staff writer

In a meeting on Nov. 20, The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board decided not to adopt proposals made by Gov. Rick Perry's office earlier this year to add additional requirements to the Tuition Equalization Grant.

The original recommendations included merging the TEG with two other major aid programs, the TEXAS Grant program for public institutions and the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant for community colleges. The combined grants would form one comprehensive financial aid program based on both financial need and academic merit and would keep the "TEXAS Grant" name.

The TEG, established in 1971, was designed to help bridge the tuition gap between public and private universities and to strengthen diversity in student populations at independent institutions.

Advocates of the TEG highlight the grant's cost-cutting qualities, as the state spends \$7,306 on average to fund a student at a public institution,

compared to \$2,900 on average per TEG student. In 2006-2007, \$212 million was appropriated for approximately 30,000 students at private schools across Texas.

Because the TEG has historically been based on need, adding a merit-based component, as Perry proposed, would have made the grant more competitive, potentially reducing the

number awarded to students.

And with minority students constituting more than 45 percent of TEG recipients, economically disadvantaged students and students of color would likely be affected the most, said Dr. Karla Leeper, Baylor's chief of staff to the president.

"The TEG has become one of, if not, the most important state financial assistance program

for students at private higher education institutions. The TEG helps bring educational diversity to Baylor's campus by bridging the gap between the traditional students and those who are academically qualified but don't have the financial means to attend college," said Rochonda Farmer-Neal,

Please see **GRANT**, page 4



Shanna Taylor/Lariat Staff

Wonderful, Christmas time



Ricardo Chavez, 3, meets Santa and Mrs. Claus in the Baines Room in the Bill Daniel Student Center during the Christmas on 5th Street celebration Thursday night. The night's festivities included a live performance by Steven Curtis Chapman as well as the Robbie Seay Band, a live nativity scene, petting zoo, free carriage rides, pictures with Santa and free hot cocoa.

Waco spreads holiday cheer with events

By Chad Shanks
Staff writer

Waco will welcome the Christmas season this weekend with a slew of holiday events and festivities for the community.

Keep Waco Beautiful will hold its annual Holiday in The Square downtown Saturday. The family themed festival features a variety of seasonal entertainment with opportunities to give back to the community.

"Our goal is to kick off the holiday season and bring the community together. This event is about everyone," Keep Waco Beautiful Director Sherri Street said.

It kicks off at 5 p.m. with the 19th annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis, a 5K or 1-mile run or walk along the Brazos River with all proceeds benefiting the Heart of Texas chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. Registration begins at 4 p.m. at Heritage Square at 3rd Street and Austin Avenue.

The Jingle Bell Run differs from typical charitable runs because its participants are encouraged to wear costumes.

"We have people run in Santa, snowman and elf costumes. Last year we even had someone dress

as a wreath and another as a stocking that lit up. We've even had a lady dressed as a fireplace with a full mantle and her feet as the logs," said Rachel Martinez, special events and programs director for the Heart of Texas Arthritis Foundation.

The 56th annual Waco Jaycee Christmas Parade follows the Jingle Bell run at 7:15 p.m. Locally built floats and marching groups will flow down Austin Avenue starting at 8th Street and ending in Heritage Square.

At the parade's conclusion, Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy will flip the switch to light the 25-foot reusable Christmas tree donated to the city by Keep Waco Beautiful. Local children can then have pictures taken with Santa under the illuminated tree.

Costumed cast members from Waco Civic Theatre's "A Christmas Carol" will mingle with the crowd throughout the night and give spot performances while the Rapoport Academy's school choir and jazz band will provide live entertainment.

Additional downtown festivities during Holiday in The Square include jumping booths, a live nativity scene, holiday card

Please see **CHEER**, page 4

Law professor's blog nationally ranked in top 100

By Amanda Ochoa and Jacqueline Deavenport
Reporters

Baylor Law Professor Mark Osler and a number of other university law professors have received national recognition for their legal blog, Law School Innovation (LSI), by the Ameri-

can Bar Association Journal as one of the top 100 legal blogs by lawyers.

LSI has been up and running for the past two years. The blog covers different trends and innovations that help and change the relationships between the bloggers as law professors and their students,

said Julie Carlson, director of communications and marketing for the Baylor Law School.

LSI is written and edited by law professors including Anupam Chander, University of California, Douglas A. Berman, Ohio State University, Gene Koo, Harvard Law School and Mark W. Osler, Baylor Law

School.

"Speaking for the LSI team, I feel comfortable saying we are all grateful and honored that the fold at the ABA put this blog on its Top 100 list," said Berman "We are in some impressive company as one of 15 blogs nominated in the professor's category of the ABA Journal

Blawg 100."

Osler considers LSI as a big role in the evolving debate over key legal questions and allows a higher level of interaction between practitioners and academics.

"Finding out about the ABA 100 was a nice surprise. I think it really shows the value of col-

laboration by people at different universities, who bring different viewpoints. The Internet has made that possible in new and exciting ways," Osler said.

Osler was asked to join the LSI blog team by the national leader of the evolution of legal

Please see **BLOG**, page 4

Athletics complex to open Dec. 13

By Christina Kruse
Reporter

The Alvin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletic Complex will have a dedication ceremony Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. Tours of the complex will be open to the public. The 96,300-square-foot complex includes a football locker



Joos

room, weight room, training facility, athletic administration offices and an academic learning center for student athletes. An indoor practice field is also in the process of construction and will be completed in July 2009. The facility cost \$34.1 million and was funded entirely through private donations.

Senior Associate Athletic Director of External Affairs, Nick Joos, met with The Lariat to answer questions about the recently completed facility.

Q: When was the idea of the new sports complex first proposed?

A: We broke ground on the



Christina Kruse/Lariat Staff

The 96,300-square-foot Alvin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletics Complex will hold a dedication ceremony on Dec. 3. The facility features a football locker room, weight room, training facility and academic center.

building a couple years ago. Obviously it's going to be a tremendous benefit to our student athletes because in some way, shape, or form, they will all use this facility, whether its for academics, sports medicine, or for strength and conditioning.

Basically, we've taken all of our operations at Floyd Casey moved them to campus. It is the first time that we have been on campus as an athletic department entirely in over 40 years,

Please see **COMPLEX**, page 4

New news in works for campus delivery

Kate Williams
Reporter

In an attempt to broaden students' horizons beyond the campus, student government and USA Today are exploring a partnership to offer students a new range of daily newspapers.

The collegiate readership program first began in 1997 to try to expand student's view of local, state and national news. Kate Almanza, manager for higher education for USA Today, worked with Penn State in creating the first collegiate program.

"The President of Penn State came to us because he

wanted to fight the campus bubble and encourage students' national perspectives," she said.

Today, Penn State has the number one readership rate out of the 450 colleges participating in the program.

The program, if approved by student government and the administration, would place newspaper stands equipped with student identification card readers in high traffic areas around campus.

Baylor would be the first school in the Big 12 south to participate in the program. Currently, the University of Nebraska and Kansas State

Please see **SENATE**, page 4

The Baylor Lariat

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Opinion policy

The Baylor Lariat welcomes reader viewpoints through letters to the editor and guest columns.

Opinions expressed in the Lariat are not necessarily those of the Baylor administration, the Baylor Board of Regents or the Student Publications Board.

Letters to the editor should include the writer's name, major, graduation year, phone number and student identification number. Non-student writers should include their address. Letters that focus on an issue affecting students or faculty may be considered for a guest column at the editor's discretion.

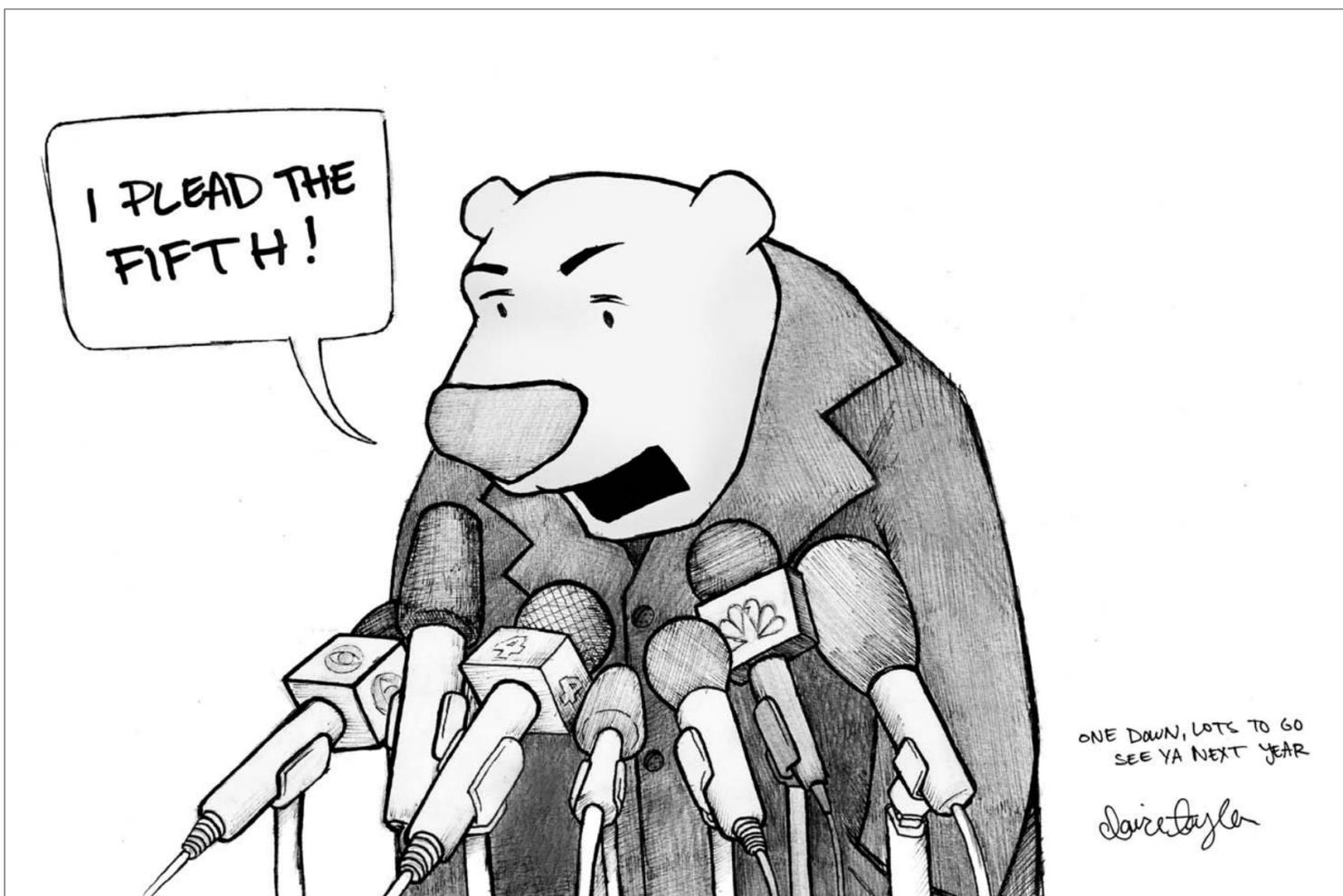
All submissions become the property of The Baylor Lariat. The Lariat reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, length, libel and style.

Letters should be e-mailed to Lariat_Letters@baylor.edu or mailed to The Baylor Lariat, One Bear Place #97330, Waco, TX 76798-7330.

Corrections

Thursday's editorial "Pay cuts praisable in time of recession" incorrectly stated that Elson S. Floyd made \$725 million and took a \$100 million pay cut when his pay is actually \$725,000 and his pay cut was \$100,000.

A subscription to the Lariat costs \$45 for two semesters. Send check or money order to One Bear Place #97330, Waco, TX, 76798-7330 or e-mail Lariat_ads@baylor.edu. Visa, Discover and MasterCard payments may be phoned to 254-710-2662.



Editorial

Lack of financial clarity leaves student, alumni in dark

A lack of transparency in the governance of Baylor University has been apparent again this semester. The secrecy that looms over university workings has been at least partially responsible for the regrettable negative media attention Baylor gathered this semester.

The most recent example of an administrative failure to reveal information occurred earlier this week, when The Lariat attempted gain clarity on the financial state of the university.

Dr. Reagan Ramsower, vice president for finance and administration, sent an e-mail to faculty and staff Nov. 25, saying the university endowment dipped below \$1 billion, but is "well positioned to benefit from a recovery." The e-mail stated that overall, Baylor remains economically sound.

But requests for more information were stonewalled. In an e-mail sent to The Lariat, a media communications spokesperson called Ramsower's correspondence an "employee communication intended to inform faculty and staff about the relationship between the current economic climate and Baylor

University's current financial position." The spokesperson continued to say that the financial state of the university had been adequately explained to everyone that needed explanation.

Why were students intentionally excluded from this pertinent communication? What's even more concerning is that when The Lariat sought information in effort to write a story on the financial status of the university, requests for information were denied. During the 2007 academic year, tuition accounted for 75 percent of total revenue at Baylor.

To suggest that faculty and staff have a right to be informed on the financial condition of the university but students do not is unfounded and appalling. It's like a household breadwinner being excluded from conversation about the family's cash flow.

What about alumni? For many families, a Baylor education is a rite of passage spanning back several generations. They, too, care deeply about this university and deserve information on Baylor's financial well-being.

And although the media communications spokesperson said Ramsower's e-mail sufficiently stands alone, there is still confusion about university finances. The e-mail does not provide all the answers to questions and concerns that faculty, staff, students and parents may have. To say that any e-mail or announcement to a substantial number of people, who are invested in some fashion financially to this university, would not elicit any response is absolutely preposterous. The administration should have been well prepared to answer any questions that pertained to the e-mail and the university's financial status.

Ramsower's ambiguous phrasing doesn't do much to clarify the situation. In the e-mail, he said the university had made quality investments that leaves the endowment in a position that will enable it to recovery. What does this really boil down to?

This lack of openness about university assets is only the most recent example. Perhaps the university would not have offered freshmen cash incen-

tives for retaking the SAT if the prospect of a retesting gathered negative feedback when discussed by students, faculty and staff. Instead, these groups were never given the chance to weigh the pros and cons of a retest before the fact.

But the university hasn't fouled every chance to share information with students.

Administrators properly disclosed racial tensions on election night, fueled in part by the sighting of a perceived noose on campus. E-mail updates from Interim President David Garland were sent directly to students, faculty and staff as soon as new information was revealed. Baylor seemed to be on the right track with its careful but open handling of this sensitive topic, only to retreat back to secrecy later in the semester.

What seemed like a positive story about the university's financial health was marred by a lack of transparency and degenerated into another sour reminder of the university's insistence on covert operations.

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

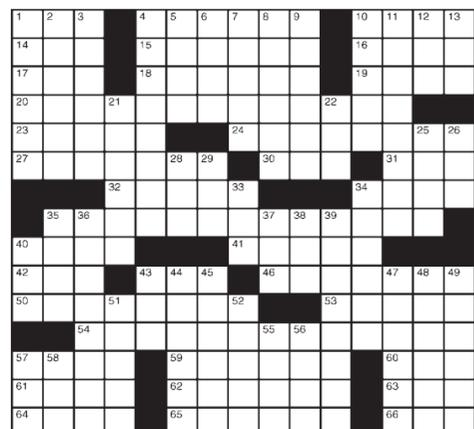
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3X3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats.

For today's crossword and sudoku answers, visit www.baylor.edu/Lariat

		3				7	9	
			2		8	4		
	6		7					
	3	1	4					
	6				8			3
						9	6	8
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		8	1		7			
	7	6				8		

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

12/5/08

ACROSS

- 1 IBM offerings
- 4 Evil org. in Bond novels
- 10 GameCube competitor
- 14 Grown acorn
- 15 Kiribati's capital
- 16 Top choice, slangily
- 17 Break down
- 18 Movie category
- 19 Footnote wd.
- 20 Hit by singer who died 12/6/88
- 23 Gullible
- 24 Jordan/Bunny film
- 27 Entree that serves eight?
- 30 HBO rival
- 31 Top pilot
- 32 Peter and a Wolfe
- 34 Nabokov novel
- 35 See 20A
- 40 Refine, as a skill
- 41 Ballteam skipper Joe
- 42 Hobbit ally
- 43 Gibson or Brooks
- 46 Twisted wool
- 50 Enzo's automobiles
- 53 Hokkaido port
- 54 See 20A
- 57 Osbourne of rock
- 59 Arctic attire
- 60 Pose questions
- 61 Wordsworth work
- 62 Notably the '72 Dolphin defense
- 63 Peggy or Pinky
- 64 Cornmeal bread

- 65 Stylish
- 66 Byrnes or Hall
- DOWN
- 1 Mount __, PA
- 2 Carson character
- 3 With natural illumination
- 4 Big house
- 5 Austrian physicist Ernst
- 6 Art Deco artist
- 7 Train tracks
- 8 Dives like an eagle
- 9 __ and Her Sisters"
- 10 Case for Scully and Mulder
- 11 Bette's title character of '62
- 12 Egg: pref.
- 13 Signed, kind of
- 21 Ms. de Carlo
- 22 Author Umberto
- 25 Part of DNA
- 26 Game pieces
- 28 Swiss canton
- 29 Male heir
- 33 E. Bilko's rank
- 34 Magic word
- 35 Actor's part
- 36 Thawed out
- 37 Boar's mate
- 38 __-Magnon
- 39 Cursor relocater
- 40 Playboy's founder, fondly
- 43 Traveler's guide
- 44 Thing to do
- 45 Certain claim holder
- 47 Hacienda hot meal
- 48 Wiped out
- 49 Immersed
- 51 Poetic match
- 52 Boulder
- 55 Refrain syllables
- 56 Sweet tubers
- 57 Antithesis, briefly
- 58 Menagerie

point of view

Christmas can still be abundant as ever

For Americans, money and the holidays go hand in hand; for the retail industry, it is the most important time of the year. However, this year, major retailers like Saks Fifth Avenue, Home Depot, Lowe's and Target are already showing profit loss as consumers tighten their purse strings.

But we don't have to act like Ebenezer Scrooge this Christmas. Perhaps this holiday season we should take the opportunity to re-examine what it means to give. A gift should come more from the heart than from the wallet.

How bizarre that Christmas has become an excessive exchange of hydrocarbons. I'm not talking about the drive to Grandma's house; I mean gift cards. When it comes to giving gift cards, I am as guilty as charged.

Past Christmases, I have given a myriad of gifts in shapes of a colorful plastic, with endearing notes such as, "To: Mom and Dad. From: Santa." At least they will be reassured their exist-

tence was acknowledged by me for one brief moment.

Then on Dec. 26, after standing in line for hours, I took the colorful pieces of plastic that were given to me, and transformed them into precious booty: the Frye boots I'd had my eye on the whole year, a copy of Annie Leibovitz's new book, and numerous indulgences of latte. I wish I could say I spent as much time writing thank you notes as I did shopping for myself.

I think this holiday season will be different. While trying to conserve, I will be more discretionary and creative with my gift giving. This isn't a bad thing. What good is giving if there is no thought and no meaning behind it?

My grandmother has a 60-year-old tradition: every Christmas she sneaks a can of Welch's grape juice in the stockings of close friends and family members. During the 1950's, she was a mother of modest means with 6 children. At Christmas time, a little had to go a long way.

Even though money isn't as tight for my grandmother as it used to be, she still gives the same gift every year. I can't imagine receiving anything I'd appreciate more than that little can of Welch's grape juice. It has become

a symbol in our family, representing humility and love.

Oddly enough, gift giving at Christmas didn't become a big tradition until the 1880s, according to a New York Times article by William B. Waits. During the 1880s, rural Americans would fashion gifts for their family and friends during free time after harvest. As more people moved to the city to work in factories, the tradition of gift giving remained. However, gifts were purchased rather than handmade. Unlike agricultural life, there was no off-season to fashion gifts, the article said.

Somewhere in the mix time became money, money became fancy gifts, and fancy gifts became how much someone cares about someone else. For some families, caring means being in debt until June or July paying off thousands of dollars in Christmas gifts from the previous year.

In the coming months money may be harder to come by, but if we keep in mind the people we love, and in small ways — a can of Welch's grape juice — show we care, Christmas can be as abundant as ever.

Jacqueline Deavenport is a senior journalism and philosophy major from The Woodlands.



BY JACQUELINE DEAVENPORT

Baylor Forum

The Lariat wants to provide our readers a medium for discussion. So send us any burning questions that you'd like to pose for the Baylor community, and you might see them on this page.

Lariat_letters@baylor.edu

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Burrress shows NFL's worst

By Justin Baer
Reporter

In the recent line of professional sports crimes, another NFL star has succumbed to the combination of guns and nightclubs.

SPORTSCOLUMN

New York Giants wide receiver and Pro Bowler Plaxico Burrress is the latest professional football player to jeopardize his career by crossing the thin line that some athletes don't understand — the law.

According to reports, Burrress accidentally shot himself Friday night in a Manhattan nightclub. Although the sustained injuries weren't life-threatening, the scar scratched across the NFL's image is just another reminder to league commissioner Roger Goodell that his players are arrogant to authorities.

The new and overwhelming "Play60" advertising campaign, in which athletes encourage children to become active, occupied my television over the weekend and is a sign Goodell is yearning to improve the league's reputation.

Still, there are players like Adam "Pacman" Jones causing problems, what seems to be the entire Bengals roster which had players combine for nine offenses in 13 months, and who can forget Michael Vick?

New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg spoke his frustrations of the event, stating, "I think it would be an outrage if we didn't prosecute to the fullest extent of the law, particularly people who live in the public domain ... If we didn't prosecute to the fullest extent, then I don't know who on earth you would."

One would think Bloomberg should have more important things to do, his views should set a standard for Goodell.

Possession of a weapon is a Class C felony in New York, meaning if convicted, Burrress will be in jail for a minimum of three and a half years and for a maximum of 15 years.

Burrress' lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, represented Sean "Diddy" Combs in a similar case in 1999, but because of Brafman's ability to find a loophole, Combs was found innocent, as he had no intent to use the weapon. However, the laws have changed, and any possession whether intended for use, is illegal.

Even if he is found not guilty, which celebrities and athletes appear to be capable of, Goodell's punishment should send a clear message to the rest of Burrress' peers. It's time to clear the criminals out of the league. I can't pinpoint all professional athletes stupid "mistakes" in the NFL. Major League Baseball is amid a steroids era, and the Tim Donaghey's "crooked referee-ing" has some skeptical about the National Basketball Association.

When Goodell took the position, he was inheriting a league with the most intense spotlight. That spotlight has yielded non-stop coverage of handcuffed players and trading jerseys for prison uniforms.

If a strict policy isn't set, these distorted "role models" will continue to embarrass themselves, their teams and the league.



Alex Song/ Lariat Staff

Baylor head coach Art Briles directs plays to players from the sideline against the Oklahoma Sooners on Oct. 4, 2008 at Floyd Casey Stadium.

Letters to the editor

"Art Briles was not the right choice for the Bears' football team. We should have aimed higher and gone after Houston Nutt. He would have whipped a soft Baylor team into prime fighting condition thanks to his experience gained from many years in the harsh SEC.

Now we have to be happy with an underachieved 4-8 record while the Ole Miss Rebels are flying high with an 8-4 (record) and will probably go to the Cotton Bowl."

-Christopher Rose '09

Editor's response:

Houston Nutt would have been a great catch for the Bears, however, there was much more talent — and a weaker schedule — waiting for Nutt in Oxford, Miss.

Nutt inherited Jevan Snead, a four-star signal-caller that was Colt McCoy's backup at Texas. He is the main reason the Rebels were able to post an 8-4 record in a weak Southeastern Conference.

Kaz Kazadi, the Baylor strength and conditioning coach, has done a good job with this squad. There aren't any team-wide cramping issues like they had in 2005, but any defensive improvement in the offensive-minded Big 12 would have helped Baylor this year. Briles gave the Bears points, but not the ability to stop the opposition from putting up more.

"Art Briles could not have been a better pick. He installed a winning attitude and we were a drive away from beating both Missouri and Tech."

- Jack Beauchamp '10

Editor's response:

Art Briles has definitely changed the character of the Bears. No longer is this a group that accepts moral victories.

Briles does have history on his side, but fans should remember that Robert Griffin's talent is overshadowing Briles' coaching abilities.

"Art Briles is the right man for Baylor. With his savvy and collected attitude on the field, he has earned the respect of the players and the general student body. From appearing at the freshman rally as well and even the making of the Homecoming bonfire, you can tell that Briles cares to be involved on campus.

The question is how will recruiting take shape for the 2009 season?"

- Doug Kimball '12

Editor's response:

What has been reported on several recruiting Web sites looks to be on par with Guy Morriss' classes. Glasco Martin of Round Rock, if he commits to Baylor, will be an immediate addition.

Back at home, Lady Bears look to avenge road loss

By Joe Holloway
Sports writer

No. 10 Baylor will take on St. John's University at 7 p.m. Saturday in the Ferrell Center.

The game will be the Lady Bears' first since suffering their first loss of the season to unranked Wisconsin in the title game of the Paradise Jam tournament.

Head coach Kim Mulkey said a lack of focus contributed to offensive woes that resulted in the team's one-point defeat.

"That starts with me as a coach but then it sometimes has to trickle down to your captains and your seniors," she said. "We didn't execute the last four and a half minutes of the basketball game. We didn't have confidence in what we were doing out there. Whatever we're running offensively, we've got to do a better job of executing."

Senior guard Jhasmin Player said the tournament, held in the Virgin Islands, would have been more enjoyable had the team taken care of business while they were there.

"It starts with leadership," she said. "As a collective unit we need to get better. We saw on film that we should have given a lot more effort. There was so much we did to ourselves. We just have to be more disciplined."

The Lady Bears will try to get back on track against St. John's. Junior post Danielle Wilson, from Bay Shore, N.Y., was recruited by the team before she decided to come to Baylor and played in last year's road game against the Red Storm in Queens, N.Y.

"I remember their post players," she said. "The point guard is a tough match-up. Each game there's going to be tough guards."

Player said that Baylor will have to play with "grit and grind" if they want to beat St.



Alex Song/ Lariat Staff

Baylor senior forward Rachel Allison, 14 shoots during the first half of the game against then-No. 2 Stanford on Nov. 16 in Ferrell Center. The Lady Bears are coming off a one-point loss in the Paradise Jam Tournament.

John's.

"We just have to compete," she said. "That's what we lacked in the Virgin Islands."

The match is Baylor's first at home since they beat Stephen F. Austin 77-42 on Nov. 21.

"This is my favorite place to play," Player said, adding that she thought the Lady Bears' fans were the best in the nation. "There's something about being at home that we all just love."

After they take on the Red Storm, the Lady Bears will have another quick turnaround and play Lamar University the fol-

lowing Monday, leaving only a day to rest and prepare for that game.

"You can't do too much in between the games," Mulkey said. "But you've got to do enough that you're focused and understand what to do against Lamar on Monday."

She added, however, that the team cannot look past St. John's.

"We've got to focus on the task at hand," Mulkey said. "I don't care who they've played. We better match their excitement."

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TWILIGHT (PG-13) 12:30 1:10 3:15 4:10 6:00 7:05 9:15 10:05	TRANSPORTER 3 (PG-13) 12:40 2:35 5:10 7:25 9:40
MADAGASCAR ESCAPE 2 AFRICA (PG) 12:25 2:30 3:25 4:30 5:25 6:55 7:30 9:05	ROLE MODELS (R) 12:55 3:05 5:20 7:35 10:10
QUANTUM OF SOLACE (PG-13) 12:15 1:00 2:40 5:05 7:30 9:30 10:00	BOLT 3D (\$2 surcharge) (PG) 12:15 12:50 2:50 3:15 5:15 5:45 7:25 8:55 9:45 10:15
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Classical pianist talks of Baylor, new album

By Ashley Erikson
Reporter

Pianist Joseph Fuller recently launched his first album, "Release," which covers recognizable hymns that reflect his faith and church music ministries.

Fuller has worked with several opera companies and choirs such as Berkshire Opera Company in Massachusetts and Indianapolis Children's Choir in Indiana. What makes this Baylor alumnus unique is his musical talent, which began at the age of five.

Fuller currently resides in Houston, working for the Houston Grand Opera as an accompanist and performing often at The Woodlands United Methodist Church as a music associate to the church's music ministry. Fuller said he is most passionate about performing. As to where he got the piano skills, he said it's all a "God-given talent."

Q: What peaked your interest in the piano at such an early age?

Fuller: My family is not a musical family. I just had an interest in the piano that was at my house, pulled myself up on it and was able to find a teacher at the age of five who was willing to take me in as a student. I say it's a God-given talent because nobody plays in my family and there was no one there to expose me to it. It's a little bit of a unique situation.

Q: Did you just go to your mom and say "I want to learn to play piano?"

Fuller: My mother noticed I had interest in it. She found a teacher who was willing to take me on (as a student) because it was really difficult to find



Courtesy Photo

someone who wanted to teach a 5-year-old - I mean, you barely have your motor skills. It just took off from there. Just a talent I was fortunate enough to work with and fortunate enough to have teachers there to guide me.

Q: What kind of music did you grow up listening to?

Fuller: I grew up listening to just about anything. You know, the funny thing about my classical music is I really didn't start to develop a love for it until later. I was a teenager when I started to develop a love for classical music. But I grew up listening to pop, rock, R&B, obviously church music and different Christian music.

Q: What year did you graduate from Baylor?

Fuller: In 2004, but I cannot believe that four and a half years have gone by. My undergraduate is from Sam Houston State University in piano performance. My master's degree is in vocal accompanying and instrumental accompanying. When I came to Baylor I accompanied a lot of the choir concerts there, a lot

of voice students and all of the opera productions during my time there.

Q: How did Baylor prepare you for your musical career?

Fuller: I kind of say that I'm indebted to Baylor and the teachers there. I came to Baylor with a little bit of a hand injury and knew that we were going to have to work on fixing it. You know, things happen sometimes as a pianist - you have to take very, very good care of your hands. But (my professors) were fantastic. The school of music guided me and in just a few months they kind of retrained me in how to play so I could have longevity in my career. More importantly, they were supportive of everything that we did. It's such a nurturing atmosphere there, so I call Baylor my school.

Q: What inspires you to play on a daily basis?

Fuller: Just the overall ability I have, I know is unique and I know that I've been blessed with it. I love to play for people and hope that the music touches them in some way that they need at that moment. In everybody's life there's a turning point, I think whether it be traumatic or just a moment where you realize things have turned and you need to change. In 2006, I was involved in a very bad car wreck and that took away my playing for a year. I was in extensive rehab for many, many months and then had to retrain my body - I got a new body, so to speak - so, I had to retrain my body to play like I used to. To know that it was almost taken away from me, I just thank God it wasn't. So that's what inspires me to get up and play everyday. I know I almost lost it that day and I never want to be in that

position again.

Q: You just released your first album. What does the album mean to you? What's it about?

Fuller: The reason I called it "Release" was through the process of choosing the tracks and choosing what I wanted to play and have on CD, I really struggled with what word or with what phrase to name it. I even almost didn't give it a title. But I changed my mind when I came up with a thought about one word that would describe what the entire project meant to me.

When I was sitting in the studio, working, it was just me sitting there. People were there, doing their jobs in the booth, but I didn't have to worry about them - it was just me. So it was really a true sense of release for me to be so exposed but to play and to let it be what it was.

Each song means something unique to each person, so I wanted that to be portrayed in the music and be able to have everyone find that "release" they are looking for when they listen to it. I've been a live performer all my career, with various opera companies and things, so this is definitely a new chapter in my life to be doing studio work. And I absolutely love it. It's a unique experience to be able to hit play and then go back and hit it again, and listen to the same track.

Q: What do you like about performing?

Fuller: There's always a great thrill that comes with performing. No matter what venue, it is such an experience and such an adrenaline rush to be on stage and know that people are there listening to what you have to offer. Once upon a time it would have been a joy to have so many people hear what I do. Now it's that, but with my music

and the choice of music that I have, it's important for what I'm playing to touch people in some way. I want that to be what I do, regardless of whether I'm playing for 50 people or 50,000 people. And the other thing that I really enjoy about performing is that a CD is just a moment in time that's been captured when you're in a studio and that's how (a song) was played in that moment. The really beautiful thing about performing is every time that I get to play that song, I get to do it differently. There's always something changing and evolving with (my) music, so it is special each time I get to play.

Q: What can we expect from you in the future?

Fuller: I found myself, even this morning, having something I had to play for. As I was playing, my wheels were already turning about what I'm doing next. Obviously I want to continue to do my studio work and continue to have more CDs done. But what I want for the future is to be able to have my music exposed to as many people as possible and to be able to inspire them and touch them in some way.

Q: Do you plan on coming to Baylor to play anytime soon?

Fuller: I would love to come to Baylor and play if the opportunity were to come about. I would love it, considering that what I played there at Baylor was different than what I am featuring on my CD. It would be really special and unique.



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Klaatu's (Keanu Reeves) arrival on earth, via a giant sphere, triggers a global upheaval in "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

Sad The Lariat won't print over the holidays? Have no fear.

On Dec. 12 The Lariat online will feature a question and answer article with Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly and Jon Hamm, the stars of the film "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

That's not all!

On Jan. 9 The Lariat online will feature a question and answer article with Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway, stars of the film "Bride Wars."

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Ringing in the Christmas spirit



Alex Song/ Lariat Staff

(above) Camels lounge outside the Bill Daniel Student Center. Camels were a part of the live nativity scene and a petting zoo for Christmas on 5th Street.

(left) Beaumont senior Winnefred Jackson wraps a Christmas present for children of the Waco community during the festivities in the Baines Room of the Bill Daniel Student Center.

(far left) The Celebration Ringers from Columbus Avenue Baptist Church play handbell carols in the Vera Martin Daniel Plaza during Christmas on 5th Street. Baylor rang in the holiday season by holding the annual celebration for the Baylor and Waco communities Thursday night.

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