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Budget plans take shape

RYAN VOYLES
Daily Egyptian

SIUC can now prepare its own budget knowing how much it will receive in state appropriations as Gov. Pat Quinn has signed the state's budget for next year.

University spokesperson Rod Sievers said the university would receive the same amount of money as it did last year from the state, but without the 7 percent federal stimulus money. He said there were no real surprises for the amount the university would receive.

Chancellor Rita Cheng said she, the deans of the colleges and the vice chancellors were also aware of the possibility that the university would receive the same appropriations as last year from the state and had already done some budget pre-planning with the same amount as last year, minus the stimulus money.

"We knew the state didn't have the resources to supplement the stimulus money that was going away," Cheng said. "So we anticipated that we would have to — and indeed the governor's actions confirmed it — that we would have to work without that \$14 million to the system, and allow us the \$7.5 million towards the Carbondale campus."

SIU is expected to receive more than \$211 million in state appropriations in fiscal year 2011, which started Thursday. More than \$122 million of the \$211 million will go toward the Carbondale campus. Cheng said she has already asked all university units to adjust for a 4 percent cut for next year.

"Those plans are due near the end of July," she said. "We're hoping we can reduce our expenditures, not fill positions and reassess how we will move forward with less funds coming our way."

Cheng said she has prepared a budget planning committee to help create a new budget. The committee includes members of the Undergraduate Student Government, Faculty Senate and deans of several colleges.

Sievers said there are still some uncertainties in regard to creating a budget for next year, such as what to expect from tuition and enrollment in the fall and spring.

Please see BUDGET | 2



TOP: Frank Smith, of Carbondale, watches the Carbondale fireworks display Sunday outside Abe Martin Field. According to the American Pyrotechnics Association, more than 14,000 fireworks shows light up the night sky annually July 4.

DAN DWYER
DAILY EGYPTIAN

LEFT: July 4 celebrations culminate as fireworks explode Sunday over Valley Center, Kan. According the American Pyrotechnics Association, fireworks have never been as popular as they are today with sales of fireworks in the United States skyrocketing from 152.2 million pounds in 2000 to more than 213.2 million pounds in 2008.

JESS VERMEULEN
DAILY EGYPTIAN

Lions Clubs' contributions explode July 4

MICHARA CANTY
Daily Egyptian

Carbondale citizens have the Lions Club and its contributions to thank for the fireworks' boom July 4.

Members from the local Lions Club service organization hosted the 42nd annual firework show for the Carbondale community Sunday at Abe Martin Field near SIU Arena.

Ellis Mitchell, member of the civic organization, facilitated the initial firework show for the city in 1968, with permission from Dwight Morris, former university president.

"We support Independence day and what it stands for. We give our hard work for the people of the community. It's a shame that Carbondale residents had to travel to Murphysboro see a show ... now they no longer have to."

— Tim Mitchell
Lions Club member

Parking shortages were not enough to keep an estimated 400 people from Carbondale and the surrounding area from enjoying the fireworks.

Brieanne Lonergan, of Rock Island, said this was her first Independence Day celebration in Carbondale.

"Not only are fireworks a tradi-

tion, but it's an opportunity for the entire community and all walks of life to come together and enjoy the moment without any worries of what life may bring today," she said.

Thirty members from the Lions Club volunteered to stage the firework setup, Mitchell said. Members of the organization volunteer as a way to contribute

their time to the people.

The show was funded through the club's bi-annual pancake sales, which take place every fall and spring. The fundraiser generates between \$4,000 and \$5,000, said Mitchell.

Please see FIREWORKS | 3

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BUDGET
CONTINUED FROM 1

"In normal times, perhaps, you could go ahead and say this is what we are going to do... this is our funding level," he said. "But because money is so tight right now, we know we need to have all the pieces in place before any decisions are made. I don't know, the work continues on shaping our budget."

SIU President Glenn Poshard said the main concerns he had regarding the upcoming budget was finding a proper way to fund the Monetary Award Pro-

gram grants and for the state to pass the pension bill, which he said would allow the university to receive the rest of the money owed to it for the fiscal year 2010 as early as October.

"If that bill is signed, it alleviates some of the funds now," Poshard said. "We could possibly see all of our state appropriations by the end of October. That is the best-case scenario for us right now."

The bill, which is waiting a vote in the Senate after passing in the House, needs two more votes before it can be

sent to Quinn, Poshard said.

Cheng said she hopes everything will go into place now that the amount the university is owed this fiscal year is official.

"The good news is we have been planning for this all spring, so this isn't a surprise," she said. "So we'll be finishing up the planning later in the summer, and go from there."

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About Us

The DAILY EGYPTIAN is published by the students of Southern Illinois University Carbondale 50 weeks per year, with an average daily circulation of 20,000. Fall and spring semester editions run Monday through Friday. Summer editions run Tuesday through Thursday. All intercession editions will run on Wednesdays. Spring break and Thanksgiving editions are distributed on Mondays of the pertaining weeks. Free copies are distributed in the Carbondale, Murphysboro and Carterville communities. The DAILY EGYPTIAN online publication can be found at www.dailyegyptian.com.

Mission Statement

The DAILY EGYPTIAN, the student-run newspaper of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, is committed to being a trusted source of news, information, commentary and public discourse, while helping readers understand the issues affecting their lives.

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Physiology department catches break with grant

LAUREN LEONE
Daily Egyptian

After stretching the physiology department's dollars as far as it could reach, the physiology program caught a break when it was awarded more than \$360,000 in grant money toward a research project, said James MacLean, assistant professor of physiology.

U.S. Congressman Jerry Costello announced Tuesday the SIUC physiology department received the grant from the National Institutes of Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

MacLean said his program was in desperate need for the grant.

"For five of the last six years, (National Institute of Child Health and Development) has been the lowest funded institute," he said.

MacLean said of the 12 grants the National Institutes of Health offers, only about 15 to 16 percent of NICHD grants are funded.

The project grant, titled "Regulation and Function of the Rhox8 Homeobox Gene in Granulosa Cells" was submitted through the National Institute of Health's Academic Research Enhancement Award grant, MacLean said. He said the grant is designed for institutions that are major players in producing undergraduate and graduate scientists, but have been relatively underfunded.

Academic Research Enhancement

Award grants support small research projects in the biomedical and behavioral sciences conducted by faculty and students in health professional schools, and other academic components that have not been major recipients of the group's grant money, according to the National Institute of Health website.

"The government has some programs like AREA because we're a little smaller than University of Illinois so our slice of the pie is a little bit less," MacLean said.

Despite the restriction of universities that typically receive more funding, MacLean said it is still very competitive.

MacLean said he did not work alone on the proposal. Two undergraduate students, Raquel Brown and Matt Davis, were involved in most of the preliminary data.

Both Brown and Davis were undergraduate researchers in MacLean's lab, and will continue to work closely on the project in the fall.

Brown, a graduate student in cellular and systemic molecular from Chicago, said she is happy to know that she and Davis were part of something big from the very beginning.

Dale Hales, chair of the physiology department, said he has worked with MacLean on the research project for the last year, and was pleasantly surprised to hear the university received the grant.

Hales said the project is designed

to find out if — and how — the Rhox8 gene directly regulates the ovulation in its last stages.

"We want to find out the proteins — or master regulators — that control the expression of other genes," he said.

MacLean said the research project would be beneficial for cancer research.

"If I can find out that Rhox8 regulates some gene that is essential for ovulation that no one knew of, of course that would be beneficial to other investigators more clinically inclined to come up with alternative contraceptives or fertility treatments," he said.

The benefits of this project go beyond the lab as the grant money will also help create jobs, MacLean said. He said a technician, graduate student and multiple undergraduate researchers will be able to continue to work on the project and they wouldn't have been able to do without the grant money to cover salaries.

Hales said size of the grant is the whole amount given to the university.

MacLean said the grant has allowed the department to do things it never could have without money.

"By having this new award, I don't have to keep stretching the dollars," he said.

Lauren Leone can be reached at lleone@dailyegyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 256.



Gary Metro, of Carbondale, places metal rods for additional stability on each side of mortar tubes that are used to shoot off fireworks. This is Metro's second year as a volunteer for Carbondale's annual July 4 event, which has been sponsored by the Carbondale Lions' Club for more than 37 years. Volunteers or members of the Lions' Club set up the event earlier in the day and also clean up the following morning.

LAUREN LEONE
DAILY EGYPTIAN

FIREWORKS

CONTINUED FROM 1

The organization shipped in \$8,000 worth of firework equipment from S and N Display Firework Incorporation in Lincoln. They brought more than three dozen of four to six inch shells and explosives, said Tim Mitchell, a Lions Club member.

Local merchants and residents also contributed \$3,000 to the event. The biggest contribution came from the Carbondale Convention and Tourism Bureau. According to the city's fiscal budget, \$1,500 for the event was generated from local sales taxes.

"We support Independence Day and what it stands for. We give our

hard work for the people of the community," Mitchell said. "It's a shame that Carbondale residents had to travel to Murphysboro see a show ... now they no longer have to."

As to ensure the safety of the event attendees, the Lions Club sought out a licensed fire team from the Illinois State Fire Marshal Office to fire the explosives. SIUC police also monitored the crowd for safety precautions and directed parking lot locations.

"The fireworks could have been better, but overall it was a safe and fun-filled environment. I enjoyed it," Loneragan said.

Michaels Canty can be reached at mcanty@dailyegyptian.com or 618-536-3311 ext. 263.

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409 W. College 1
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503 W. College 1, 6
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509 W. College 2, 4, 5
710 W. College 4-6
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207 S. Maple
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309 W. College 3
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407 W. College 1, 4
409 W. College 1
501 W. College 1
503 W. College 1
807 W. College
809 W. College
115 S. Forest
500 S. Hays
503 S. Hays
511 S. Hays

208 W. Hospital 2
409 E. Mill
411 E. Mill
417 W. Monroe
501 W. Oak
507 W. Oak
505 N. Oakland
202 N. Poplar 1
506 S. Poplar 4, 7
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519 S. Rawlings 3-5
404 W. Walnut

809 W. College
113 S. Forest
500 S. Hays
505 S. Hays
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208 W. Hospital 2
417 W. Monroe
506 S. Poplar 3, 4, 7
404 W. Walnut

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514 S. Beveridge 1, 3, 5
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401 W. College 3, 4, 6, 7

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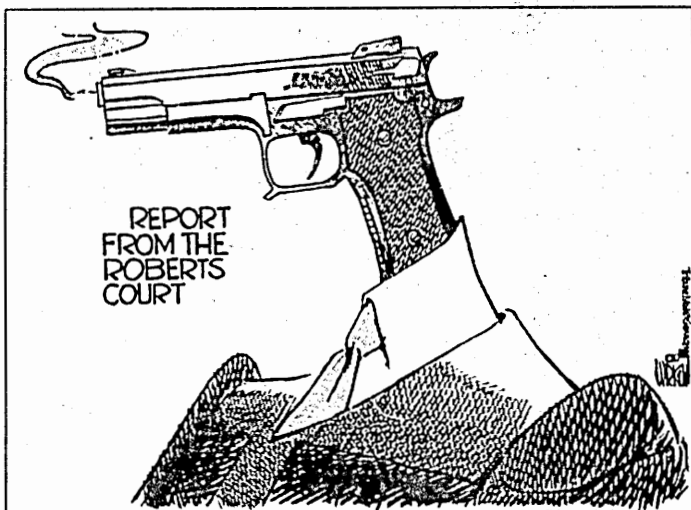
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Our Word is the consensus of the DAILY EGYPTIAN Editorial Board on local, national and global issues affecting the Southern Illinois University community. Viewpoints expressed in columns and letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect those of the DAILY EGYPTIAN.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR:

I really enjoy attending the Sunset Concert Series — the music is usually very good, the crowd is mostly well mannered and the general concert atmosphere is very relaxed and pleasant. I just have one major complaint — besides the dearth of restroom facilities at Shryock — the dogs!

The rules at these events, which include prohibiting pets, are clearly displayed and enunciated at the start of the show, yet this rule is blatantly ignored; I counted at least a dozen dogs at the event Thursday. These dogs are in plain view of the authorities; and I have yet to see any dog owners asked to leave the premises.

This may not seem like a serious problem, but I know from personal experience that even the most seemingly docile dogs will attack humans without provocation. Even a small dog can inflict

a painful bite and there were a few rather large dogs at this event.

Furthermore, when dogs attack they often go for the face. There were many young children at the show and a bite to the face (which happens all too often) could cause devastating facial disfigurement that will mar a child for life. In fact, you can read about these types of incidents in the news media on a fairly regular basis.

You may have been fortunate that no serious incidents have occurred thus far, but the odds are that it will happen eventually. Enforcing the rule prohibiting dogs will not reduce the ability of people to enjoy these shows, and it may save a lifetime of suffering for someone, as well as unnecessary lawsuits against the organizers of the events.

Michael Tust'son
Carbondale resident

THEIR WORD

It's time to refund the Superfund

Remember Superfund, the emergency response program created to clean up the most polluted sites in America — places like Love Canal in New York and our very own Times Beach?

It's still around. But for the past 15 years, the pace of its work has slowed to a crawl. Just 19 Superfund sites were worked on last year, down from 89 in 1999.

The problem is especially acute for so-called orphan sites — properties that were polluted by a person or company that since has filed bankruptcy or disappeared, leaving only a toxic mess behind.

The reason? Money. In 1995, a Republican-controlled Congress refused to renew a tax on polluting industries.

Without it, money in a special federal account used to clean up orphan sites slowly dwindled. By 2003, it was gone entirely.

Now, it may be replenished. Last week, the Obama administration asked Congress to re-institute the tax on polluters.

It would seem like a no-brainer. But the polluter tax always has been controversial. Business and industry groups already are lining up against its reinstatement.

Oil companies and refiners, both of which would be required to pay the polluter tax, are facing the prospect of significant hikes in the Oil Spill Liability Fund tax.

Horrified by the massive BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, some in Congress want that tax in-

creased from 8 cents to as much as 49 cents a barrel.

A renewed Superfund polluter tax would be added to that and, no doubt, would be passed to the consumers of petroleum products.

Chemical companies always have complained that the Superfund tax was unfair to them. Renewing the tax, they say, would force them to pick up a disproportionate share of the cleanup costs on orphan sites.

The president of a chemical industry group told the Washington Post last week that imposing a new tax would shift jobs out of the country and threaten the economic recovery at a very vulnerable stage. "It's blatantly inequitable and unfair," he fumed.

The perfect solution, of course, would be for the companies that polluted to pay to clean it up.

But the very nature of orphan sites makes that impossible. The companies that polluted those sites are gone. That's why the federal government is on the hook for the cost of cleaning them up.

Orphan sites now make up nearly half of the 1,279 Superfund sites across the country. That helps explain why progress has been so slow.

A House bill introduced last week by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., would raise about \$19 billion over 10 years. That's exactly the kind of cash needed to completely clean up many of the worst sites.

Blumenauer's bill would im-

pose an excise tax of 9.7 cents per barrel of crude or refined oil. That would add (gasp) 0.023 cents per gallon to the price of oil.

The bill also would impose taxes of between 22 cents and \$4.87 per ton on certain chemicals and hike income taxes on some companies by 0.12 percent. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate.

Think of those extra taxes as an insurance policy against the social costs of pollution. Someone has to pay the cost of cleaning up orphan sites, even if big polluters don't.

For the past 15 years, that someone has been you.

This editorial originally appeared June 30 in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Gus Bode says: Send us more letters! If you can write coherently and would like to share your perspective with the world, please consider lending your voices to our pages.

To submit a letter, please go to www.dailyegyptian.com and click "Submit a Letter" or send it to voices@dailyegyptian.com. Please make your submissions between 300 to 400 words. If you have questions, give us a call at 536-3311 ext. 256.



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Notice

The DAILY EGYPTIAN is a "designated public forum." Student editors have the authority to make all content decisions without censorship or advance approval. We reserve the right to not publish any letter or guest column.



FIREWORKS IN THE RAIN
Rick Hatfield took advantage of the break in rain Sunday to set off some fireworks in his driveway in Valley Center, Ks. "You have to set off fireworks on the 4th of July, who cares if it's raining," Hatfield said. Though the weekend weather was weary, the Kansas skies were still smoking with fireworks set off by community members throughout Valley Center.
JESS VERMEULEN
DAILY EGYPTIAN

TEXAS

Texas official says first known tar balls from Gulf oil spill wash up on state beaches

GALVESTON — A Texas official said Monday that tar balls from the Gulf oil spill have been found on state beaches, becoming the first known evidence that gushing crude from the Deepwater Horizon well has now reached all the Gulf states.

Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said two crews were removing tar balls found on the Bolivar Peninsula and Galveston Island on Sunday.

"We've said since day one that if and when we have an impact from Deepwater Horizon, it would be in the form of tarballs," Patterson said in a news release. "This shows that our modeling is accurate. Any Texas shores impacted by the Deepwater spill will be cleaned up quickly and BP will be picking up the tab."

GEORGIA

Clinton calls on Russia to meet its cease-fire commitments in former Soviet state of Georgia

TBILISI — U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton rebuked Russia on Monday for failing to live up to the cease-fire agreement it signed nearly two years ago to end the fighting in this small former Soviet state.

She asserted that Russia is occupying parts of Georgia and building permanent military bases in contravention of the truce.

"We're calling on the Russians to enforce the agreement they signed," she told a news conference with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili at her side. She said that includes pulling its troops back to the positions they held before the invasion.

Several times she pointedly referred to Russian troops as occupiers of the breakaway Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. She said the U.S. was "appalled and totally rejected" Russia's rationale for the invasion, which temporarily put U.S.-Russian relations in a deep freeze and prompted NATO to suspend cooperation with Moscow.

ISRAELI

Israel eases Gaza closure, but restrictions remain

KEREM SHALOM CROSSING — Israel is easing its blockade of Hamas-ruled Gaza to allow in virtually all consumer goods, but the new rules are unlikely to restore the territory's devastated economy or allow rebuilding of all that was destroyed in last year's war.

The White House welcomed the changes that were announced Monday as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to Washington for a meeting with President Barack Obama. International Mideast envoy Tony Blair said Israel's measures "should have a dramatic influence on the daily lives of the people of Gaza and on the private sector."

The new blockade rules come in response to an outcry following a deadly Israeli raid on a blockade-busting flotilla at the end of May.

The changes will improve Gazans' access to goods from household cleaners to timber, but Israel will continue to ban most travel and exports from Gaza and restrict the import of desperately needed construction materials.

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Saluki Insider

With the NHL free agency underway, the Chicago Blackhawks have dropped several players and made several trades. What do you think about the Blackhawks moves?

As a Red Wings fan, I'm pretty supportive of these moves. It will be nice to see the Blackhawks without Dustin Byfugien, Adam Burish and Kris Versteeg, but as long as they have Toews, Kane, Sealrock, Keith and Hossa they will be tough. But I'm not too worried. I heard the Red Wings were set to offer LeBron James a max contract.



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The Blackhawks were destined to lose their championship team because of the salary cap. Plus, they are in Chicago where there is no such thing as more than one championship a decade unless your team has Michael Jordan. They will become the White Sox of the NHL. They won a championship and next year will be at the bottom of the league.

GOLF

CONTINUED FROM B

He said he has golfed everyday for hours this summer to prepare for the fall. Miller said his goal for the summer is to get better so he can play every tournament in the fall.

"Right now I am working on not having that big miss where I have no chance of making par," Miller said. "I am trying to hit the ball solid and more consistently."

Last year, Harp finished in first

place at the Benton Gold Cup and Miller followed up with a second-place finish. Harp said he is looking forward to defending his title in his hometown against his new teammate.

"Jeff is great competition and we'll have fun out there," Harp said. "Win or lose there will be no hard feelings."

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DRAFT

CONTINUED FROM B

These signings are more comparable to picking the winning numbers of the lottery. Darko Milicic, second overall pick in the 2003 draft, was offered a four-year deal worth \$20 million. Besides Kwame Brown, Milicic is the face that fits the term draft bust.

The Toronto Raptors and Amir Johnson have unofficially agreed to a five-year contract worth \$34 million. During his legendary five-year career,

four years with the Detroit Pistons and one with the Raptors, he has averaged 47 points and 42 rebounds a game. He may be an all-star in the future, but the Raptors are not going to win a pick-up game in the National Basketball Development League if they make contracts off potential.

The big-name free agents have been reported by ESPN to be in meetings with teams that are proposing contracts. Wade visited with the Chicago Bulls twice while James spent three hours discussing his future with Bulls owner

Jerry Reinsdorf. Bosh, Lee and Boozer all met with the Bulls Saturday.

The Los Angeles Clippers, Miami Heat and the New Jersey Nets have also been involved in talks with these players.

Hopefully by next week James, Wade, Bosh and the boys will have a new city to call home or the NBA will start to lose the massive amount of attention it has commanded the last two weeks.

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Do you agree with the Blackhawks' offseason moves?

SALUKI ATHLETICS

Super conferences create mid-major concerns

“Players are just going to play. They're looking for a school that plays a similar style as they do.”

— Justin Bocot
senior basketball player

BRANDON LACHANCE
Daily Egyptian

Mid-major conferences could become a little more mid and a little less major.

With the addition of the University of Nebraska to the Big Ten and the University of Utah and University of Colorado to the Pac-10, SIU Athletic Director Mario Moccia said there were concerns about negative consequences with potential “super conferences.”

Moccia said schools with larger student enrollment and big bank accounts would make even more money with television deals and media coverage while smaller schools would get pushed away if big schools continued to congregate in larger conferences.

“Four super conferences) would have been a further line of demarcation between the haves and have nots,” Moccia said.

The potential for super conferences started to become a reality with the additions to the Pac-10 and Big Ten and substantial amounts of money being offered for more schools to follow suit, Moccia said.

The Atlantic reported the Big Ten Network was a crucial part in Nebraska's move as the network is expected to pay out more than \$7 million to each of the conference's 11 schools. Nebraska will be the 12th school in the conference when it officially begins play in 2011.

The report also said University of Texas, Oklahoma University, Oklahoma State University and Baylor could leave the Big 12.

Other conferences such as the Big East and Atlantic Coastal Conference were in the discussion of obliteration as well.

Moccia said he is glad there has only been minimal movement between conferences so far. He said schools at the mid-major level such as SIU are getting less and less opportunities to play in the NCAA basketball tournament every year.

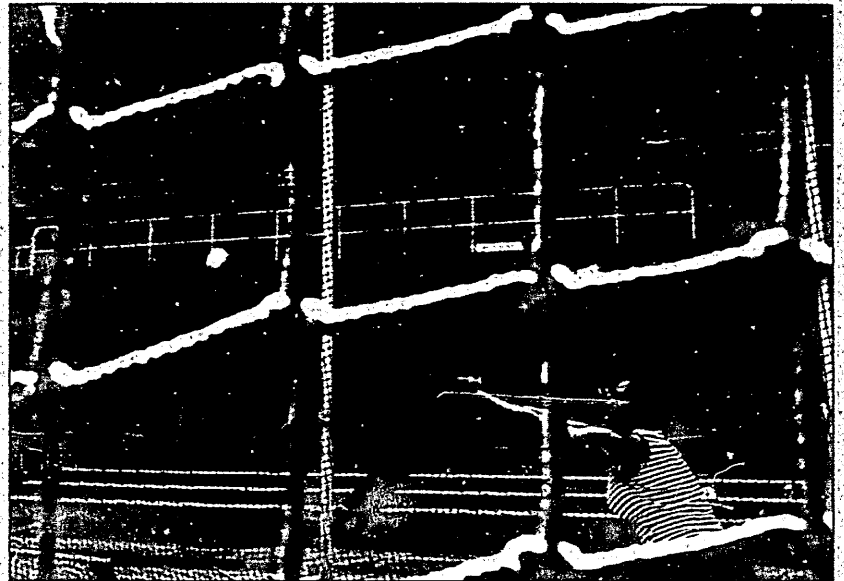
“It seems like the trend is to keep everything for themselves,” Moccia said. “I think it would give some of the super conferences the invitation to cut us out even further — us being the ones with modest budgets, like \$15 million instead of \$50 to \$100 million.”

Putting the conference's bank books aside, players' recruitment could also be affected. Justin Bocot, senior Saluki basketball player, said a conference realignment would do little to change the decisions of potential players.

“Players are just going to play. They're looking for a school that plays a similar style as they do,” Bocot said. “In our conference, you have to play defense.”

He said the process would be the same as it is now, except teams would face different competition.

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DAN DWYER | DAILY EGYPTIAN

SALUKI STRENGTH BRINGS SUCCESS: Jeneva McCall launches a 16-pound hammer Monday during practice behind McCAndrew Stadium. McCall, along with teammate Gwen Berry will represent SIU at the North American, Central American and Caribbean Under 23 Track and Field Championships July 9 to 11 in Miramar, Fla.

MEN'S GOLF

Salukis stay in swing during summer

RYAN SIMONIN
Daily Egyptian

The SIU men's golf team will sharpen its skills this summer in preparation for the fall season.

Though the team does not play together during the summer, head coach Leroy Newton said it is important for team members to play in tournaments individually in the summer to prepare for the fall.

“They have to play competitively over the summer,” Newton said. “It makes a tremendous amount of difference because if they come back in the fall and they haven't played, they will be behind from the start and they will not catch up.”

The team will have lofty expectations to meet as it finished second in the Missouri

Valley Conference last season.

Sophomore Jake Erickson is one of the golfers who knows what it will take to repeat as a top-10 finisher in the conference as he looks to build off his sixth-place finish from last season. Erickson got off to a good start as he took first place in the 2010 Country Youth Classic June 30 at the Weibring Golf Club in Normal. Erickson shot 71 in two rounds to beat out Alex Burge, who has verbally committed to University of Illinois.

“It was exciting to beat somebody from a Big Ten school,” Erickson said. “It was good for me to know that I can handle that kind of pressure and it was great for my confidence.”

Erickson said the first-place finish is good momentum as he heads into the Illinois State Amateur Qualifier, which will be

held Thursday at the Panther Creek Country Club in Springfield.

Sophomore Jeff Miller and transferring junior Jared Harp of the SIU golf team will compete against each other July 17 in the Southern Illinois Golf Association Championship and July 24 in the Benton Gold Cup.

Miller said he has been practicing for the summer tournaments and hopes to get out of his funk.

“I have been in a bit of a slump lately but I have been turning it around,” Miller said. “I have fixed my swing and now I just got to work on my putting a little bit to be ready for the tournaments,” Miller said.

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STAFF COLUMN

Lackluster sales in free agency market



Team LeBron has dominated on the court but it has been no match for the teams of Edward and Jacob.

While the newest Twilight Saga film has become the biggest blockbuster of the summer, the NBA free agency saga is quickly becoming the biggest bust. After a year of speculation as to where LeBron James and Co. would sign, anticipation has started to turn to annoyance.

Blame for the lack of a big move could be placed on the NBA. Negotiations can start

the first day of July but free agents can't sign until Thursday. This means seven days of gossip. The hype should be addressed toward signing day, not lip service. Most would call this the Terrell Owens or Brett Favre factor — everyone over examines the hearsay, and by the time any real news happens, no one cares.

James, Dwayne Wade, Chris Bosh, Ray Allen, David Lee, Carlos Boozer and Amare Stoudemire are still unsigned. To no one's surprise, Paul Pierce and Dirk Nowitzki will re-sign with the Boston Celtics and the Dallas Mavericks respectively, offering little excitement.

Stoudemire has been the only tease of a major move as he is the lone player to receive a solid contract offer from a new team. ESPN reported the New York Knicks formally offered the five-time all-star a five-year deal worth \$100 million. Maybe he will sign, maybe he won't — we will have to wait two more days.

The signings that have occurred have been the opposite of exciting and highly questionable.

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