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Program offers technological approach to education

MATT DARAY
Daily Egyptian

The university is testing a supplemental program for Desire2Learn, one designed to enhance technology across campus.

Many instructors and professors are using Top Hat, a program allowing instructors to ask questions, start discussions, launch demonstrations and display grades, all on a trial basis. The program is accessible on computers, tablets, smartphones and cellphones, allowing students to use their devices for in-class work and instructors to manage larger classes.

J.P. Dunn, specialist for the Center for Teaching Excellence, said Top Hat — accessible at www.tophat.com — is not being used as a replacement for such programs as D2L, the web system students use for online classes and to access class content, but as an enhancement to those programs. He said the program allows a student's device to act as a clicker and is different from D2L in almost every way.

"It's still a completely different system," he said. "It can work in conjunction with D2L or another learning management system."

Dunn said several classes, such as basic mathematics courses, are piloting the program. Top Hat is one of several programs being tested, such as MyLabsPlus, as well as the inclusion of different electronic textbooks to improve the overall quality of classes and make teaching larger groups of students easier for professors, he said.

"There's always new stuff, new technology coming out, and one tool never does everything," Dunn said. "That's why in your toolbox you have some screwdrivers, a hammer, wrenches ... not one product can do everything."

Thara Lowndes, a mathematics lecturer testing Top Hat in her courses, said the program helps her manage classes in a large lecture hall.

"There's 240 students in the class, so it's my way to record attendance and make sure they're paying attention as well," she said.

Lowndes said the program helps students stay interested in the class because most of them are able to answer questions correctly when posted on Top Hat.

Lowndes has discovered a few minor problems with the program, but the issues only affect a few students and do not affect the overall learning experience, she said. One of Lowndes' students cannot use the program because he has a cell phone with poor reception, so he sits in the front of class and answers each question off a piece of paper, she said.

Time will tell if the program has any bugs or other outstanding issues, Lowndes said.

"No major issues so far, but I'm sure there will be," she said. "We've only had three lectures with it, so the first couple (of lectures) are to see if it works."

"It's a way to ensure that students are going to class and that they're participating and things like that and they're getting knowledge, that's something I could do."

— Sheldon Butler
junior studying
civil engineering

Please see EDUCATION | 4

Fans flock to season opener



JON-ERIK BRADFORD | DAILY EGYPTIAN

The Salukis take the field for their home opener Saturday at Saluki Stadium. Festivities during game day included tailgating and welcoming the freshman class to the Saluki family with the annual Saluki Sprint. SIU hosted Eastern Illinois University and lost 40-37 in double overtime. The Salukis are 0-2 and will play the University of Charleston Saturday at Saluki Stadium.

Study claims majors more important than institutions

ELIZABETH ZINCHUK
Daily Egyptian

A new educational study might change the way students view their state's flagship universities.

College Measures, a partnership between the American Institutes for Research and Matrix Knowledge Group, collected information on how much graduates earned their first year out of college.

Mark Schnieder, College Measures president, said the study shows many states focus their financial resources in flagship universities, while community colleges are proving to be just as good in helping students obtain jobs post-graduation.

"The findings challenge some conventional wisdom, showing for example that what you study matters more than where you study," Schnieder said in an email.

The study also shows those who graduate from flagship colleges and enter the job market directly after graduation did not earn more than graduates of regional college campuses.

Schnieder said the study provides the public information they can use to make informed decisions while choosing a college.

"The right choices can lead to good careers and good wages, while the wrong ones can leave graduates with mountains

of debt and poor prospects for ever paying off student loans," the email said.

Michelle Garrett, SIU Career Services recruitment coordinator, said she agreed with the study.

"From my perspective, from working with students, working with employers and then just reading professional journals in my field, major does seem to play a larger role in starting salaries compared to what institution a student goes to," Garrett said.

More than institution, Garrett said employers coming to the university are more concerned with the amount of involvement and the individual.

"(Employers) are more interested in major, GPA and involvement as an undergraduate student," Garrett said. "When it comes down to it, employers are more looking for individual qualities and characteristics."

Garrett mentioned student organizations, campus activities, community service and volunteerism as things employers look at more often than institution attended or GPA. She said an employer is more apt to hire someone with a lower GPA but has been more active in organizations that relate to their major or discipline.

"Going to prestigious colleges like Harvard, Princeton, Yale of course is going to have some more stakes because of the admissions requirements," Garrett said. "But I still believe that

the major is more looked at than the institution."

Students agreed major played a larger role in career earning, but also accredited the specific major program at a particular institution.

Mallory Stulga, a senior from Manteno studying radiologic sciences, said she thinks her program's prestige at SIU will help her look more impressive to employers compared to institution alone.

"I think going into the SIU's radiology program counts more than going to a more prestigious school," Stulga said.

Alex Frick, a senior from Carbondale studying radiologic science, said she agreed majors play a larger role than an institution's reputation.

"The reputation of a major's program has a larger effect than the reputation of a school," Frick said.

Andrew J. Ross, a freshman from Mount Carmel studying computer science, said he had always considered an institution something employers highly considered.

"I would think that employers would look at where you went to school before they looked at the major," Ross said. "As a computer science major going to SIU, I think I will get a job, but have to do some searching first."

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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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Syrian rebels, including al-Qaida fighters, seize Christian village

MITCHELL PROTHERO
Associated Press

A coalition of Syrian rebel groups that includes members of al-Qaida took control of one of the oldest Christian villages in the world on Sunday, raising concern about the potential destruction of ancient shrines and churches.

Rebel commanders vowed to protect the inhabitants of Maaloula and the village's holy sites, but there were worries the town's many churches, monasteries and shrines from Christianity's earliest years could be damaged as the Syrian government attempts to regain control.

Maaloula is about 35 miles northeast of Damascus in the mountains along the border with Lebanon. Its residents, who still speak Aramaic, the language Jesus is thought most likely to have spoken, are loyal to the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Announcements of the town's

capture after five days of fighting were issued by the Nusra Front, a rebel group that has sworn allegiance to al-Qaida; another conservative Islamist rebel group, Ahrar al Sham; and the more mainstream Farouk Brigade.

Witnesses in the town told local media that the government forces withdrew from the center of the village of about 5,000 on Sunday morning but that the regime's artillery and jets had begun to target rebel positions in the center of the town.

It was not immediately clear if the rebels had occupied sensitive religious sites in the village, which has little strategic value but could become a potent symbol if its historic sites fall victim to the violence.

Commanders from the Rebellion of Baba Amr, which is part of the Farouk Brigade, one of the largest rebel formations, could be seen on social media videos announcing the victory from

Maaloula's town square.

"We cleansed Maaloula from all the Assad dogs and all his thugs," said an unidentified Farouk commander to his men in one video, with the shrine to St. Takhla, one of Christianity's oldest sites, in the background.

The Nusra Front released a statement of victory on a Facebook page associated with the group and a number of videos released online by Ahrar al Sham showed that group in several locations also within the village. Both groups follow strict conservative interpretations of Islam that forbid shrines to saints, and many Christians feared they would damage the sites or harass the residents of the ardently pro-Assad town.

A statement from the Syrian Military Council, the group through which the West funnels aid to more moderate rebel groups, vowed to protect both the sites and "religious minorities" residing in the village.

WORLD & NATION

NATO accused of killing Afghan civilians

AMIR SHAH
Associated Press

Afghan officials accused NATO of killing civilians in an airstrike that left at least 10 dead in the country's remote east, while the Taliban on Sunday staged a car bomb and gun attack outside an Afghan intelligence office, killing four soldiers and wounding more than 80 people.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government reacted angrily to a comment by an American envoy who said Afghanistan is already experiencing "a civil war."

The airstrike and Taliban attack underscored the chronic insecurity in Afghanistan as U.S.-led foreign forces reduce their presence and hand over more responsibilities to Afghan troops. The car bombing occurred in Maidan Shahr, a city in eastern Wardak province just 25 miles from Kabul.

Attaullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said the explosion occurred around 1 p.m. and that many of the wounded were Afghan government employees working in nearby offices. Soldiers guarding the compound managed to kill the militants after the explosion, he said. He said four soldiers and five attackers died, in addition to the car bomber.

Hazrat Janan, a member of the Wardak provincial council, said the explosion wounded more than 80 people and was powerful enough to shatter windows across a wide stretch of the city.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, conflicting reports emerged about the airstrike in the Watapur district of Kunar, a province that lies along the border with Pakistan. The territory is dangerous and difficult to reach. Many Arab and

other foreign insurgents are believed to operate there alongside the Afghan Taliban. Some are suspected to have links to al-Qaida.

Kunar province police chief Abdul Habib Sayed Khaili said the airstrike hit a pickup truck carrying women and children in Qoro village soon after three Arab and three Afghan militants boarded it Saturday evening. He said some residents called it a drone strike, which would not be unusual in that area.

The police official put the total dead at 15, saying four were women, four were children and one was the civilian driver. But Afghan President Hamid Karzai's office later put the death toll at 16, saying only that women and children were among the victims.

As he has in the past, Karzai strongly condemned the killing of civilians and offered condolences to their families.

NATO spokeswoman 1st Lt.

AnnMarie Annicelli said the military alliance carried out a "precision strike" that killed 10 "enemy forces," but that it had received no reports of any civilians dying. Annicelli would not comment on whether a drone was used, but said NATO was still investigating the matter.

"We take all allegations of civilian casualties seriously," NATO said in a statement.

Even as U.S.-led foreign forces draw down their presence in Afghanistan, with a full exit expected by the end of 2014, the air support they provide Afghan troops in many regions is still a crucial part of operations against the Taliban, the resurgent militant movement that wants to topple the U.S.-backed Afghan government.

Past strikes that killed civilians have infuriated Afghans. Karzai even banned Afghan troops from requesting NATO airstrikes during operations in residential areas,

though it's unclear how often that ban is enforced.

Tensions also arose Sunday between the U.S. and Afghan governments over a remark by the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In a recent interview with Voice of America's Deewa news service, James Dobbins said, "Well, there already is, of course, a civil war in Afghanistan." Karzai spokesman Aimal Faizi issued a rebuke, saying that if Dobbins' assertion was true, then the U.S. had been an actor in a civil war instead of fighting a battle against terrorism.

In what it called a "policy clarification" posted on its website, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul said the remarks "were not intended to reflect all of the sources of conflict in Afghanistan and should be clarified as in the context of the need for Afghans to speak to Afghans in order to have a lasting peace."

Strong showing for Navalny in Moscow mayoral race

LAURA MILLS
Associated Press

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny swept up far more votes than expected Sunday while finishing second in Moscow's mayoral election, a pivotal contest that has energized Russia's small opposition in ways that could pose a risk to the Kremlin in the days and years ahead.

Even so, Navalny said he suspected that the vote count was inflated for the Kremlin-backed incumbent and he threatened to call his supporters out onto the street in protest on Monday if the concerns were not addressed.

Nearly complete results released early Monday showed Navalny with more than 27 percent of the vote, while incumbent Sergei Sobyenin held a clear lead with about 51 percent, just enough to avoid a runoff. Exit polls, however, predicted Navalny would get as much as 32 percent.

"We don't recognize the results that are currently being announced, and I would like to say that we won't give up one vote that we received"

— Alexei Navalny
Opposition Leader

As the results began to trickle out only two hours after the polls closed, Navalny said he suspected the vote count was being manipulated.

"We don't recognize the results that are currently being announced, and I would like to say that we won't give up one vote that we received," Navalny told reporters at his campaign headquarters late Sunday. "I call on the Kremlin and the mayor's office to restrain themselves from falsifications."

The election was being watched for what it bodes for the future of the opposition and for Navalny. He faces time in prison after being convicted of embezzlement in a case seen as part of a Kremlin effort to sideline

him, but his strong showing could lead to a shortening of his five-year sentence, if the Kremlin feels this would help defuse discontent.

Sobyenin needs more than 50 percent to win in the first round, but if he is seen as squeaking through unfairly because of vote-rigging, it could set off protests. It was reports of widespread fraud in a national parliamentary election in 2011 that triggered the unprecedented demonstrations against President Vladimir Putin's rule.

Navalny's campaign said its own exit polls showed Sobyenin below 50 percent. A separate vote count by observers also cast doubt on Sobyenin's clear majority.

Navalny said he suspected Sobyenin's results were boosted by falsifying the vote count of those who voted at home rather than at a polling station, a system designed to accommodate the elderly and disabled. He called for these votes to be annulled and for a second round to be held.

"If the mayor's office and Kremlin ignore the people's demands, then we will call everyone out onto the streets of the city," Navalny tweeted.

With ballots from about 90 percent of precincts counted, Sobyenin had about 51 percent and Navalny just over 27. The four other candidates trailed far behind.

Golos, Russia's leading independent

election monitor, said the voting appeared to have gone smoothly, but there were fears that election officials would artificially increase the turnout to allow them to add votes for Sobyenin.

"This is the dilemma: Either they manipulate something somehow, but then they could be caught and won't be able to sleep soundly on Monday," Golos co-chairman Grigory Melkonyants said. "Or they could let it be a real election and allow a second round."

Unusually, election officials had not released a final turnout figure by early Monday. Two hours before the polls closed, turnout was registered at a low 26.5 percent.

Golos observers noted that voter rolls at some polling stations had been padded with people who no longer lived in the neighborhood. They also noted that many people coming to the polls who receive benefits or salaries from the state had been pressured to do so.

Pakistan militants prepare for war in Afghanistan

KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

Militants in Pakistan's most populous province are said to be training for what they expect will be an ethnic-based civil war in neighboring Afghanistan after foreign forces withdraw in 16 months, according to analysts and a senior militant.

In the past two years the number of Punjab-based militants deploying to regions bordering on Afghanistan has tripled and is now in the thousands, says analyst Mansur Mehsud. He runs the FATA Institute, an Islamabad-based think tank studying the mix

of militant groups that operate in Pakistan's tribal belt running along much of the 1,600-mile Afghan-Pakistan border.

Mehsud, himself from South Waziristan where militants also hide out, says more than 150 militant groups operate in the tribal regions, mostly in mountainous, heavily forested North Waziristan. Dotted with hideouts, it is there that Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri is thought by the U.S. to be hiding, and where Afghanistan says many of its enemies have found sanctuary.

While militants from Punjab province have long sought refuge and

training in the tribal regions, they were fewer in number and confined their hostility to Pakistan's neighbor and foe, India.

All that is changing, say analysts. "Before, they were keeping a low profile. But just in the last two or three years hundreds have been coming from Punjab," Mehsud said. "Everyone knows that when NATO and the American troops leave Afghanistan there will be fighting between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns."

And the Punjabi militants will side with the Afghan Taliban, who are mostly Pashtun, Afghanistan's dominant ethnic group and the

majority ethnic group in Pakistan's northwest region that borders Afghanistan. Like many in the Taliban, the Punjabi militants share a radical and regressive interpretation of Islam.

"We will go to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban as we have done in the past," said a senior member of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), a militant Sunni Muslim group, who goes by a nom de guerre, Ahmed Zia Siddiqui.

In an interview with The Associated Press in Pakistan, he said the Taliban haven't yet requested help, but when asked whether Punjab-based militants were preparing for war in Afghanistan

after the foreign withdrawal, he replied: "Absolutely."

Despite being outlawed in Pakistan, Siddiqui's group is among the most active and violent, providing a cadre of suicide bombers for attacks both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. It has taken responsibility for dozens of attacks that have killed hundreds of minority Shiites in Pakistan.

It has also been implicated in some of the most spectacular attacks in Pakistan, including the 2008 bombing of a five-star hotel in the capital and an assassination attempt on former dictator and U.S. ally Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Popeye proud



ALEXA ROGALS | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Joseph Horn of Chicago entertains the crowd while dressed as Popeye Friday during the 34th-annual Popeye Picnic in Chester. Horn said this is his second year dressing up as Popeye, but he's been to the picnic for several years. "I just think it's fun to dress up and be a part of the town," Horn said.

EDUCATION

CONTINUED FROM 1

And while the university is still in an early testing stage of the program, several students said Top Hat is a modern way to get an education in class and make the learning environment more interesting and accessible.

Sheldon Butler, a junior from Peoria studying civil engineering, said he would like to use the program for his classes if it does help students learn and pay attention.

"If it's a way to ensure that students are going to class and that they're participating and things like

that and they're getting knowledge, that's something I could do," he said.

Calvin Shade, a freshman from Chicago studying criminal justice, said Top Hat would help out new students because they are used to using their phones and tablets for multiple reasons already.

"Especially for the incoming freshmen, because with our tablets, we're more in tune with our tablets anyway," he said.

Matt Daray can be reached at mdaray@dailyegyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 251.

North Korea's Kim Jong Un hosts Dennis Rodman

CAROL J. WILLIAMS
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES - Former NBA star Dennis Rodman was a dinner guest of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday, the reclusive nation's state-run news agency reported. But there was no immediate indication whether the flamboyant sportsman had made a plea for Pyongyang to free a jailed Korean American missionary.

Kenneth Bae, a 44-year-old tour guide and evangelist, was arrested upon entering the North Korean city of Rason in November. He was summarily tried for "hostile acts against the state" and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor.

Rodman, an NBA Hall of Famer and former player with Kim's favorite Chicago Bulls, flew from Beijing to Pyongyang on Tuesday, his second trip to see the eccentric North Korean leader, whom he has referred to as a "friend" and "an awesome kid."

Rodman is the only American known to have met Kim since he inherited the North Korean leadership in December 2011. After visiting in February, Rodman vowed to return to Pyongyang and appealed to Kim via Twitter for the North Korean "to do me a solid and cut Kenneth Bae loose."

News services in Pyongyang reported that the Korean Central News Agency announced Friday that Rodman and Kim had "a cordial

talk" and watched a basketball game together, and that the communist leader had hosted a dinner for Rodman.

There was no indication in the KCNA report of whether Kim and Rodman discussed the Bae case, or whether Rodman was still in North Korea, the FreeDistrict.com independent Asia-Pacific news site reported.

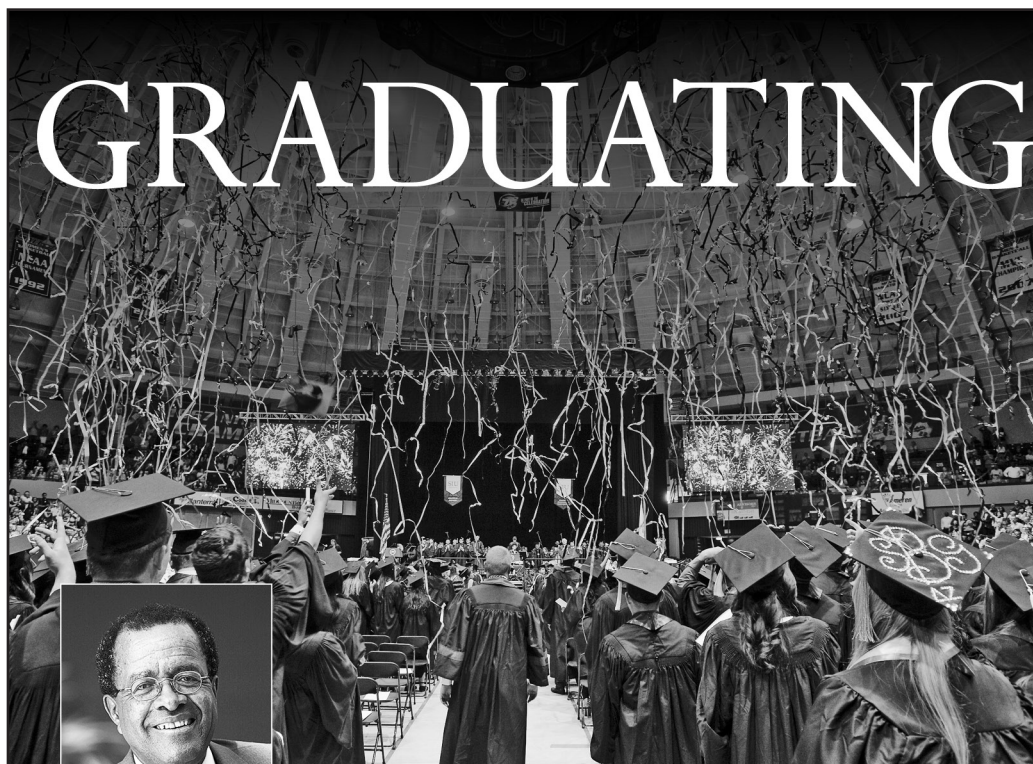
The report said Kim had invited Rodman to visit again "any time."

The Nelson Report, a private emailed newsletter compiled by global security wonks, reported Friday what it called a "hot rumor" that Rodman, upon return to the United States, "may bring with him a special package which goes beyond basketball." It quoted unnamed sources, and might have been purely speculation based on Rodman's unique relationship with Kim.

No other avenue appears to be open for seeking freedom for Bae.

Robert King, the U.S. State Department special envoy for North Korean rights issues, had been expected to visit Pyongyang last week and sound out North Korean officials on the prospects of an early release for Bae, who is in poor health, according to family members in Washington state.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry, however, retracted King's invitation, saying the diplomatic atmosphere had been soured by recent U.S. air maneuvers over South Korea.

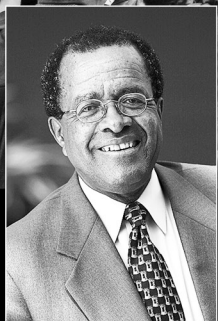


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COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER
James M. Rosser, Ph.D.

Dr. Rosser earned academic degrees in Health Education and Microbiology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale (Ph.D. 1969, M.A. 1963, B.A. 1962), and served as president of California State University, Los Angeles, beginning in 1979. He is recognized for the remarkable breadth of his service, for his early and long-standing commitment to academic excellence, for his championship of the arts and sciences, for participating in landmark changes in state and national education policy and for his dedication to cultural diversity. At the time of his retirement in July, Dr. Rosser was the longest-serving four-year public university president in the nation.

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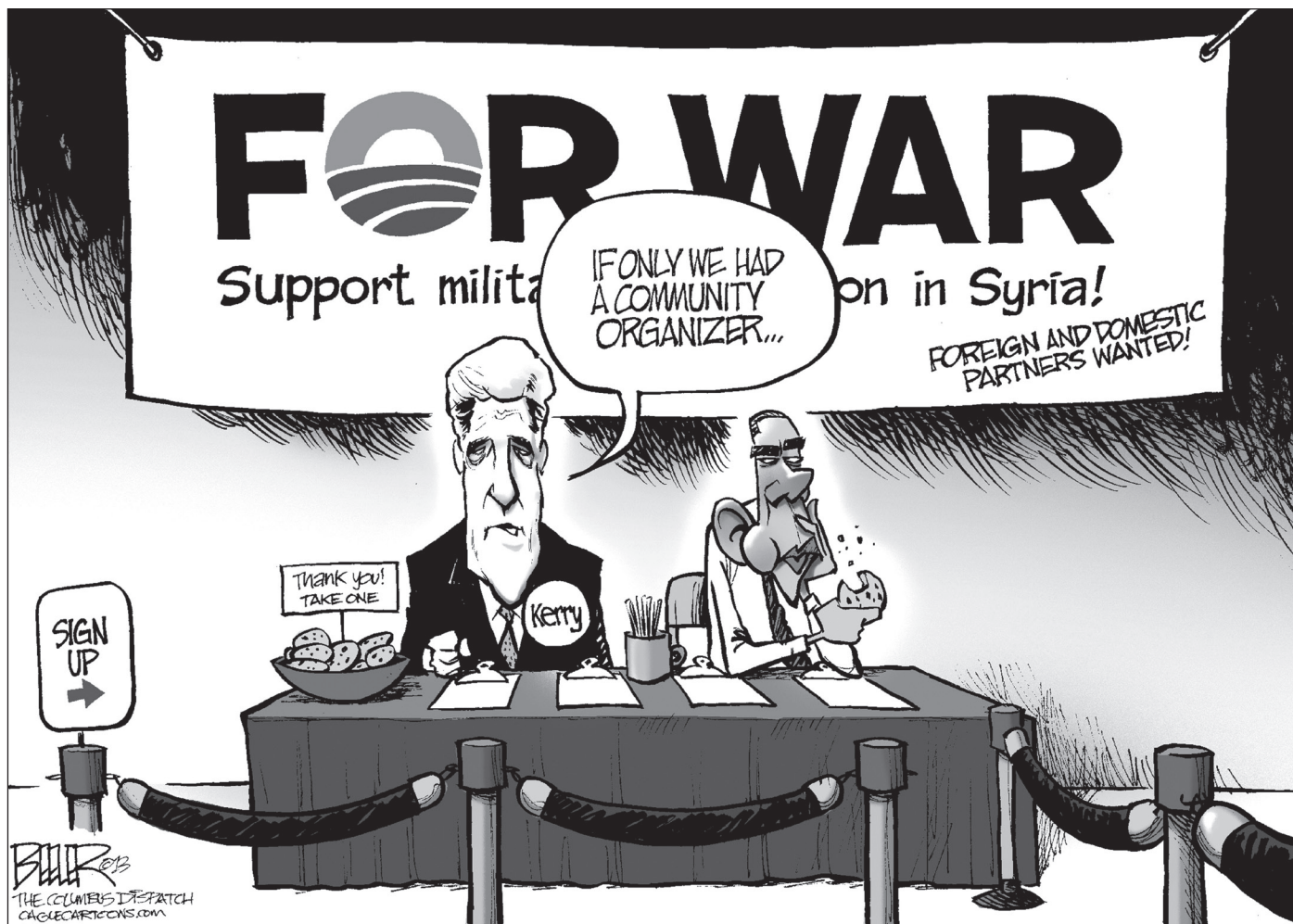
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THEIR WORD

To support or not to support: the case for Syria

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

President Barack Obama asks members of Congress to fulfill his threat that Bashar Assad's regime would suffer "enormous consequences" if the Syrian leader used, or even transported, his stores of chemical weapons.

Any presidential call to arms deserves scrutiny and, if it's deemed justified, citizens' deference: The first duty of the person we elect as commander in chief is to defend the U.S. and its interests as he or she sees fit. Obama's backers say congressional refusal to heed this call to arms would, because of his numerous and globally broadcast threats, savage the credibility of the U.S. government in capitals worldwide.

Yes, the credibility of a president, and a Congress, does matter around the globe. But for this republic to command the perpetual respect and cooperation of its citizens, that cred needs to be most fundamental, most solid, here at home. Yet at this juncture, proponents of an attack have not established the necessity that such a grave request demands.

Until the president builds that credibility, a congressional vote authorizing an attack risks alienating and inflaming an American populace that neither understands the need for military action nor trusts Washington to avoid an ensuing debacle.

The administration makes a compelling case for a harsh response against Syria, but

not for why that task falls to a Coalition of One, or even a Coalition of Not Very Many. The point here is not that public opinion polls find strong opposition among Americans: We elect members of Congress to vote from their consciences and special knowledge, not merely to do whatever a majority of their constituents want. But going to war — and however narrowly "tailored" the mission, that is what we as a nation are debating — needs to be demonstrably in this country's interest.

President Obama has not yet established that case to anything approaching the satisfaction of his fellow Americans.

He may do so in the days and weeks ahead — time he also can exploit to insist on United Nations involvement in avenging, and ending, the horror show in Syria. If Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to veto U.N. action, and make slaughter in Syria his wholly owned subsidiary, at least he'll have done so in public.

If and when Obama does amass domestic and global support, we may join him in advocating that our senators and representatives authorize military action.

At this point, though, we cannot ask members of Congress to support his call for a use-of-force resolution.

We say this acknowledging that the United States and other governments cannot permit the use of sarin or similar toxins to go unavenged. Granted, several hundred

people slain by poison gas are no deader than the 100,000 slain by bullets, bombs or other conventional arms. But we've written in recent days about the practical reasons why these horrific weapons of mass destruction were banned after World War I by the 1925 Geneva Protocol: The lethality of chemical agents, as of nuclear arms, cannot be finely targeted. Such weapons can kill vast swaths of noncombatants in a matter of seconds or minutes — much too quickly for innocents to flee.

By extension, then, we comprehend why, on Aug. 20, 2012, the president told White House reporters that even the movement of Syria's chemical weapons — which would risk having them fall into the wrong hands — would be answered with force.

The president's statement that day often is reduced, too facilely, to two code words, "red line," but this was his broader message: "We have communicated in no uncertain terms with every player in the region that that's a red line for us, and that there would be enormous consequences if we start seeing movement on the chemical weapons front or the use of chemical weapons."

But while the president also assured the journalists that the U.S. had contingency plans if Syria did move, or use, such weapons, the administration's flailing responses of recent days suggest that the White House didn't see Assad flouting Obama's mandate.

When Assad did, as we believe, deploy toxic gas, he was calling Obama's bluff not recklessly, but shrewdly: Assad knew the administration had prepared neither America's allies nor its own citizens for the punishment Obama urges Congress to impose.

There's no sugar-coating these unintended consequences for the White House. But by taking his case to the American people and to the world, the president has a chance to reverse them. He has to explain why he didn't ask Congress to approve action in Libya but now asks Congress to approve action in Syria.

He has to explain whether the ultimate goal of such attacks is, as he artlessly said, to send a "shot across the bow," or to precipitate the downfall of Assad; many Americans are wary of what sounds like a half-hearted presidential commitment.

He needs to explain why so much of what he and Secretary of State John Kerry are saying focuses almost obsessively on what this mission would not be, rather than on what it would.

Most important, Obama has to explain what he expects after missiles devastate Syrian targets: Would U.S. assaults shorten this civil war and its suffering? Or would strikes risk regional warfare and new waves of refugees?

President Obama, we await your explanations. For now, though, we urge that members of Congress reject authorization for the use of force against Syria.

Submissions

Letters and guest columns must be submitted with author's contact information, preferably via email. Phone numbers are required to verify authorship, but will not be published. Letters are limited to 400 words and columns to 500 words. Students must include year and major. Faculty must include rank and department. Others include hometown. Submissions should be sent to opinion@dailyegyptian.com.

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Star vehicle 'Riddick' too reliant on Diesel



KARSTEN BURGSTAHLER
Daily Egyptian



PROVIDED PHOTO

It's been nine years since the last film featuring Vin Diesel as escaped prisoner Riddick hit theaters.

In that time, the "Fast and the Furious" franchise has reignited. Each new Furious installment has been more popular than the last, beginning with the fourth installment in 2009. The series is now a global phenomenon, so one could imagine Universal was desperate to keep Diesel in the fold.

That's the only logical reason Universal would greenlight "Riddick" (Rated R; 119 minutes), Vin Diesel's passion project and a new installment in the dormant series. Certainly it can't be because anyone involved thought this movie would have anything new to add to the sci-fi genre.

But this movie did make it through production, so now we have a tangled mess of a film. "Riddick" concerns the title character, who is stranded on an abandoned planet, left to fend for himself after a series of events that are explained to the audience via the gravelliest voiceover you'll ever hear. Riddick finds an outpost with an emergency beacon and sends for help. This alerts two groups of bounty hunters who will profit greatly from bringing back Riddick's lifeless body. Of course, Riddick is smarter than them. Everyone in the audience is smarter than them, actually.

"Riddick" lunges from act to act, starting with a rather boring set-up where Riddick walks around and kills monsters. You'd think this would be neat. But no, there's not really anything interesting here. Things pick up when the bounty hunters arrive, but of the eight to nine new characters, only two are given any personality. The others are simply for Riddick to hunt.

One of the others, Dahl (Katee Sackhoff), has to deal with one of the most sexist scripts that have come down the Hollywood pipeline this year. She doesn't get to save anyone — rather, the writers give her a gun to give the impression that she's cunning. Nope, she's simply here for men to come on to her and for other men to make jokes about coming on to her.

Eventually Riddick and the surviving bounty hunters have to team up to get off the planet because

of plot contrivances audience members have likely blocked out anyhow. When we finally get to the tense scenes, the movie unleashes a wrath of CGI that might have been cool in 2002 but is now barely above Syfy Channel quality.

Some of the action is mildly interesting, and Riddick sets up a few traps for the hunters that are clever enough to prove that the writers weren't completely asleep at the wheel. But somehow the movie feels bloated and empty at the same time; the nearly two-hour running time stuffs the movie to the gills with action scenes without actually accomplishing anything of artistic value. It's all flash and no bang.

Was it wrong for me to ask more of this movie? Probably. The September release date was a warning sign. I'm actually surprised that Universal avoided the urge to convert the movie to 3D. But when their movie is clearly nothing more than a bribe to keep the star happy, maybe it's time to reconsider motivations.

*Karsten Burgstahler can be reached at
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David Shribman was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1995 for his coverage of Washington and American politics. A former Washington Bureau Chief of the Boston Globe, Shribman became executive editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in 2003. His column, "My Point," is syndicated nationally. Previously, he served as the national political correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, covered Congress and national politics for The New York Times and was a member of the national staff of The Washington Star. A native of Massachusetts, Shribman began his career at The Buffalo Evening News, where he worked on the city staff before being assigned to the paper's Washington bureau. Shribman was a regular panelist on the PBS show "Washington Week" and a frequent analyst for the BBC and CBC.

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ALLISON LAMPE | DAILY EGYPTIAN

The Southern Illinois Roller Girls take on the Confluence Crush Saturday during a doubleheader at The Pavilion in Marion. The So Ill Rolling Blackouts beat the Confluence Crush Smitten Kittens 209-52, and So Ill's Power SIRG beat the Confluence Crush's Heartbreakers 191-66. The So Ill Roller Girls will return to The Pavilion Oct. 12 to face the St. Chux Derby Chix.

Bruno Mars expected to headline Super Bowl XLVIII halftime show

JOE FLINT
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES - Bruno Mars may have been locked out of heaven, but it's looking like he'll have a ticket to the Super Bowl.

The crooner is expected to be tapped to perform at the halftime show at Super Bowl XLVIII in February, according to two officials. An announcement could come as early as this Sunday.

Neither the NFL, which produces the Pepsi-sponsored halftime show, or Fox, which is carrying the Super Bowl this season, would comment. An NFL spokesman would only jokingly say that Janet Jackson and Miley

Cyrus have been ruled out as performers.

If he gets the gig, Mars better bring his winter coat or at least a warm sweater. This year's game is being played in the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

The New Jersey locale would seem to require a homegrown act. However, Bruce Springsteen has already played the Super Bowl and Bon Jovi is in disarray after the exit of guitarist Richie Sambora from the band.

Mars might not be at the megastar status of recent headliners like Beyonce and Madonna, but he's solidified himself as a scene-stealing performer - as indicated by his recent performances at MTV's Video Music

Awards, the Grammys and Billboard Music Awards.

A consummate performer, the singer-songwriter effortlessly harnesses the old-school pizzazz of James Brown, Prince and Elvis, who he cut his teeth impersonating as a kid, with a shimmering pop lilt that makes him an undeniable live force.

His current Moonshine Jungle tour, which packed Staples Center for two sold-out nights this summer, showcased Mars at the top of his game. It was arena-worthy thrills without some of the go-to frills that his peers rely on to fill seats (forget backup dancers and acrobatics, Mars and his spectacularly charming eight-piece band do all of the heavy lifting onstage).

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Wrestling claims spot in 2020, 2024 Summer Games; other cut sports still have hope

PHILIP HERSH
Associated Press

Wrestling stayed alive.

"This is the most important day in the 3,000-year history of our sport," International Wrestling Federation President Nenad Lalovic of Serbia said. "Remaining on the Olympic program is crucial to wrestling's survival."

But baseball/softball and squash, the two bidders wrestling soundly defeated Sunday to claim the one open spot on the 2020 and 2024 Summer Games program, may not be dead yet.

One or both could be included in the 2020 Olympics, awarded Saturday to Tokyo. There already are proposals to cut events from some sports on the Summer Games program, reducing the number of athletes capped at 10,500 and making room for a new sport.

"There are all kinds of events that are irrelevant," said International Olympic Committee member Dick Pound of Canada, citing race walking as an example because "it is hard to organize, and everyone runs."

Pound vainly tried to have the IOC postpone Sunday's sports vote,

analyze what trimming could be done and wait until its next general meeting just five months away to define the program for 2020.

"Baseball/softball for Tokyo would be nothing because they have the facilities," Pound said. "Squash basically costs nothing. You could have both if you wanted, but you have to act quickly."

Squash would seem to have the better chance, since it proposes just 64 athletes at the Olympics. Baseball/softball would have 296.

The refusal of Major League Baseball to guarantee its top players would compete at the Olympics remains a deal-killer in the minds of many IOC members. While baseball and softball are popular in Japan, host cities after 2020 may be loath to include them.

To Pound, Sunday's decisions were meaningless because they did not address the issue of keeping the Olympic program dynamic, a stated goal of the program review that led to expensive campaigns by all three bidding sports.

"Here we have the same old program, and the whole point of the exercise was moot," he said.

Wrestling saved its place by

"Baseball/softball for Tokyo would be nothing because they have the facilities," Pound said. "Squash basically costs nothing. You could have both if you wanted, but you have to act quickly."

— Nenad Lalovic
International Wrestling Federation President

making a solid case for its modernity despite being a core sport of the ancient Olympics.

It took just one round of IOC voting for wrestling to get the needed majority, with 49 votes to 24 for baseball/softball and 22 for squash.

Wrestling's Olympic future had been in jeopardy since the IOC executive board recommended in February it be dropped from the 25 "core sports" in the Summer Games. That forced wrestling to make radical changes in its governance and rules to address concerns underlying the executive board decision.

With the new rules, which reward aggressiveness, "things will be decided on the mat instead of by referees," said Alexander Karelin of Russia, a three-time Olympic Greco-Roman champion and one of the sport's legendary athletes.

Among the general changes were adding two women's freestyle weight classes to wrestling's Olympic events and cutting one each in men's freestyle and men's-only Greco-Roman. Beginning in 2016, there will be six of each.

Jim Scherr, a 1988 Olympic wrestler and former U.S. Olympic Committee chief executive officer, said wrestling's continued presence on the program is "critically important to interest and participation at the grass-roots level" and will have considerable positive impact on collegiate programs.

"There is a symbiotic relationship between international and collegiate programs," he said. "Each would be significantly weakened without the other. At the collegiate level, because of economic pressures, it's a sport potentially at risk."

Keeping wrestling is among the rare battles in which the U.S., Russia and Iran were on the same side.

"We gave a good example," Lalovic said.

Baseball had been in the Olympics from 1992 through 2008, softball from 1996 through 2008. Both were voted off the program in 2005, with softball losing its place by one vote.

Each made a failed independent effort to return before following bad advice from some IOC members that they had a better chance with a joint bid. Their merged international federation was approved Sunday, making it impossible in the foreseeable future for softball to rid itself of the baseball albatross.

"I'm not sure this is the end (for baseball and softball)," said Don Porter, president of the former International Softball Federation, who has spent half his 82 years making softball's case as an Olympic sport. Porter intimated Sunday it may soon be the end of his involvement.

"We knew we had an uphill battle," Porter said. "It was inevitable wrestling would get back. I just wish we could have made a better showing."

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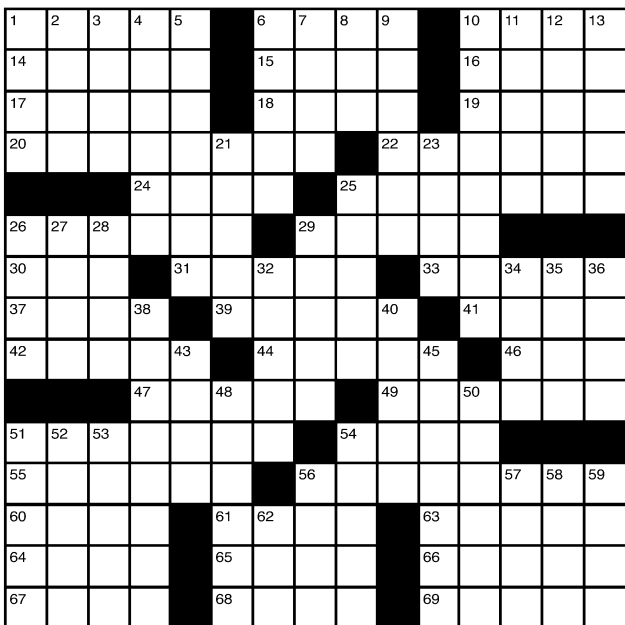
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THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Jacqueline E. Mathews

- ACROSS**
- Loathed
 - Grand ___; bridge play
 - Inquires
 - Licorice-flavored herb
 - Musical sound
 - Fellow
 - Liquefies
 - Black ___; semiprecious banded gem
 - Refer to
 - Using a broom
 - Spain and Portugal's peninsula
 - Simple
 - Royal staff
 - Layer of skin
 - Brown ermine
 - Cold cubes
 - Russia's dollar
 - End of life
 - Former Iranian leader's title
 - Burst forth
 - Urgent
 - Green or blue
 - Valuable item
 - Actor Majors
 - Third month
 - Wiped away
 - Game official
 - Make a tiny cut
 - Banished
 - Blow it in a school bee
 - Remedy
 - ___ up; spent
 - Spine-chilling
 - Four-star naval officers: abbr.
 - Apple's center
 - Hamster homes
 - Small veggies
 - Open-___; alert
 - Rainbow ___; fisher's catch
- DOWN**
- Pork products
 - Once more
 - Scrabble piece
 - Regard highly
 - Hopelessness
 - Emotionless
 - Yearn
 - ___ day now; pretty soon
 - Guadalajara's nation
 - Took willingly
 - Blouse
 - TV's ___ Couric
 - Piece of asparagus
 - Magazine edition
 - Drop of sweat
 - Staircase parts
 - Compact ___; CD
 - Resound
 - Genuine
 - Partially melted snow
 - ___ oneself; grab something for support
 - Feels sick
 - Maple or cedar
 - Pay attention to
 - Living on the street
 - Adolescents
 - Unusual
 - Cut into 3 parts
 - Lessen
 - Come into view
 - Summarize
 - Ooze out
 - Terra ___; dry land
 - ___ with; supported
 - French mama
 - Therefore
 - In ___ of; as a substitute for
 - In case
 - Thin brown sauce



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 09/09/13

Thursday's Puzzle Solved



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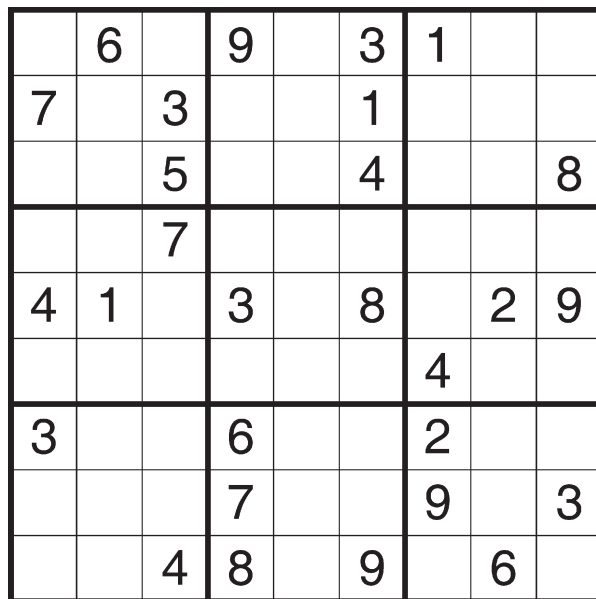
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Level: **1** 2 3 4

Thursday's Answers:

1	4	5	3	9	6	7	8	2
7	3	9	2	8	5	4	6	1
8	2	6	7	1	4	9	5	3
2	1	7	9	5	3	8	4	6
6	8	4	1	7	2	5	3	9
9	5	3	4	6	8	1	2	7
3	7	8	5	2	9	6	1	4
4	6	1	8	3	7	2	9	5
5	9	2	6	4	1	3	7	8

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contain every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer:

Thursday's Answers: TRACK AMUSE LEEWAY UNPAID
 The guests at the lion's birthday celebration were — PARTY ANIMALS

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By Nancy Black and Stephanie Clement

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Aries — Today is a 5 — Mercury enters Libra, and for almost a month, expert assistance provides ease. Build your partnerships. Set long-term goals, scheduling with discipline. Explore a long-distance opportunity.

Taurus — Today is a 6 — Prepare to compromise and streamline your routine. Show that you know what you're doing. You're in line for a bonus, despite an awkward moment. Fall back on tradition.

Gemini — Today is a 7 — Get practical work done. Your intelligence is attractive. You're gaining valuable experience. Reducing power works better. Keep track of the money you're considering spending.

Cancer — Today is a 6 — Romance grows. It's getting easier to communicate at home. Don't ask for favors. Slow down to avoid accidents. If controversy arises, get the family to help.

Leo — Today is a 6 — For about three weeks, you learn with ease. Review the basics. Choose what's best for all. It's not a good time to travel or make a big purchase. Plan a luxurious evening at home.

Virgo — Today is a 5 — A solution to an old problem is becoming obvious. Creative work profits for the next month. Your team takes the prize. Keep your tone respectful. Mistakes may occur.

Libra — Today is a 7 — Figure out finances. This coming month, you're extra-intellectual. Excite your partner with a challenge. Check the rules. Do the research. Cut entertainment spending, even as you win a new assignment.

Scorpio — Today is a 7 — You're immensely confident, with the Moon in your sign. Organization gets easier, and projects move forward. Keep your word. Stand for yourself and others.

Sagittarius — Today is a 5 — Traveling isn't as easy. Look at a breakdown as a challenge, and stick to your budget. For the next month, let the group decide. They're laughing with you, not at you. Relax.

Capricorn — Today is a 5 — Pass along what you've learned. For the next month, talk about what works (with Mercury in Libra). Do your part as well. It takes patience with breakdowns, especially today. Take it easy.

Aquarius — Today is a 5 — Assume more responsibility. For the next month, keep legal issues in mind. Distant goals are attainable. Fine-tune and edit your work. Provide facts. A new technique doesn't work. Take care.

Pisces — Today is a 6 — Venture farther. For the next month, develop logical plans for sharing resources. Consider traditions. Imagine perfection, and forgive mistakes. Be methodical in the face of frustration.

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball drops two in 'little apple'

TYLER DIXON
Daily Egyptian

The Salukis started off hot Friday morning with a sweep at the K-State Invitational in Manhattan, Kan., but faltered as the competition continued.

After dropping a thrilling five-set match to Middle Tennessee State Tuesday, the team regrouped as it took down Siena Friday in match one, before falling to Big 12-power Kansas State in its second match and rival Southeast Missouri State Saturday in the final match of the tournament.

SIU didn't have its best game offensively in the first game, with a .156 hitting percentage; however, the Salukis' 10 team blocks helped propel them to a three-set sweep of Siena: 25-17, 25-18, 25-22.

The Salukis were led in their first match by senior Elly Braaten who racked up eight kills, along with freshman Meg Viggars who finished with 18 assists.

This was the first win for the Salukis since facing University of Connecticut Aug. 30. Braaten said she liked picking up another win.

"It felt good," Braaten said. "That was our first sweep of the season. Our previous win against UConn went five, so it was nice to get a three-set win."

Kansas State entered the second match against SIU with a 4-0 record on the season. Senior Jessica Whitehead had a match-high 14 kills in the team's 3-0 loss, while junior Alex Rivera led both teams with seven digs.

Senior Emily Less said she knew it would be a difficult match against

Kansas State, and even in losing, they learned a lot.

"We knew going into it that they were a really good and consistent team," Less said.

Despite a bumpy start losing 25-13 in the first set, the team had 12 kills and only four errors. It didn't help that Kansas State finished the first set with 18 kills and only one error.

"I know our hitters had really high hitting efficiency and even though we lost, we still improved on a lot of things," Braaten said.

The Wildcats continued the match with a very good kill to error ratio as they finished the match with 44 kills and only six errors.

Braaten said it was a great experience playing at Ahearn Field House, the home of K-State volleyball, which seats 5,000.

"They had about 3,000 fans in there," Braaten said. "It was a really cool environment."

In the final match of the tournament, the Salukis played rival Southeast Missouri State. Braaten said it felt different playing SEMO because of the history with their head coach, Julie Yankus.

Yankus was SIU's assistant head coach from 2006 to 2010.

"It was interesting playing SEMO, especially for me and the other two seniors," Braaten said. "Their head coach is the person who recruited us to come to SIU; we have a history with this team."

SIU had a two-to-one lead after taking the first and third sets but couldn't close out the match and fell in five sets for the second time this week. SEMO took the fifth set 15-10.



JON-ERIK BRADFORD | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Senior outside hitter Emily Less, right, goes up for the kill Tuesday during the Salukis' 3-2 loss to Middle Tennessee University at Davies Gym. SIU competed in the K-State Invitational over the weekend, defeating Siena University and losing to Kansas State University and Southeast Missouri State University. The Salukis are 2-5 on the season and will face Saint Louis University Tuesday at Davies Gym.

Four Salukis finished the match with double-digit kills and the team totaled 69 kills to the Redhawks' 54. Whitehead led all players with 28, while sophomore Taylor Pippen had 13, Less had 12 and Braaten tallied 11.

SIU will face St. Louis Tuesday in its second home match of the season. SLU enters the game with a 3-3 record and comes off two wins from Friday and Saturday's Comfort Inn and Suites Invitational in Morehead, Ky.

Braaten said the team has experience with SLU and hopes they can come away with the win.

"We've played St. Louis before and we've done well against them," she said. "Hopefully it'll go our way."

FOOTBALL

CONTINUED FROM 12

Despite the intensity, Lennon said he isn't concerned about how exciting the game was.

"I'm mad!" Lennon said. "I'm upset we lost the ball game. We had a chance to win. This is nothing about a feel-good loss. It has nothing to do with what it ranks up with anything—I'm not happy about it."

Although the game was dominated by both team's offenses, EIU coach Dino Babers praised the Saluki defense.

"They are very, very good in the defensive line," Babers said. "It was a physical game. This is a good football team. We'll probably see them in the playoffs."

The Salukis will remain home and face Division II University of Charleston Saturday at Saluki Stadium.

CROSS COUNTRY

CONTINUED FROM 12

Heffernan sustained injuries last season, and Sparks said it has been a big step for him to get through and finish the race.

"We are looking for T.J. to step up and run more competitively now that he has two successful races under his belt," Sparks said. "He won the race last week and finished his first 8K race in a

year, and that is a very big deal for us."

Heffernan finished the race with a time of 26:33.45. His injury has affected him, but he said he is working hard to stay healthy.

"I think I did all right, but there is obviously room for improvement," Heffernan said. "Today I realized that I can run way better than I did, and I am happy with the way I competed."

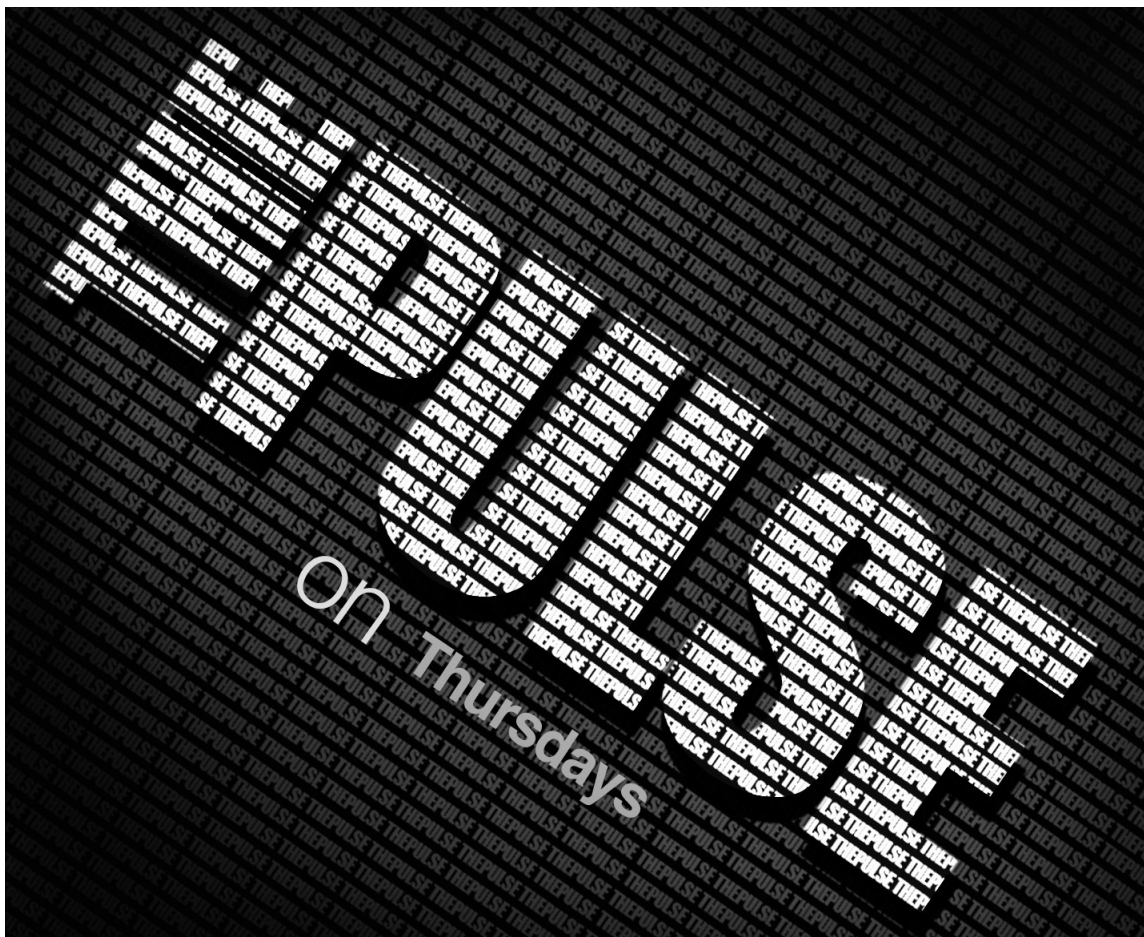
Heffernan said he followed Ehrenheim up until the 5K point

of the race.

"He has been doing a lot of mileage, so I followed him," he said. "But I am hoping throughout the next few weeks that I start getting some endurance so I can make a contributing factor toward the team."

The cross-country team will compete Sept. 21 at the Saluki Invitational, where both men's and women's teams will debut.

"We are expecting to win both sides; we are running to win," Sparks said.





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FOOTBALL

Salukis lose thriller in double overtime

TERRANCE PEACOCK
Daily Egyptian

The SIU Football Team played host to Eastern Illinois Saturday in its home opener and fell against its intrastate foe 40-37 in a game for the ages.

The two teams combined to miss five field goals, but Eastern Illinois hit its most important one in double overtime to give the Panthers the nail-biting victory.

With a crowd of more than 10,000 at Saluki Stadium, the matchup gave the fans everything they could ask for—a lot of offense and a lot of suspense.

After the two teams shared touchdowns in the first overtime to tie the game at 37, the Salukis were forced to try a field goal in the second overtime to regain the lead. Junior place kicker Thomas Kinney missed a 37-yard field goal attempt, his third failed attempt of the night.

The Panthers regained possession, and, after failing three times to make it into the end zone, EIU place kicker Cameron Berra kicked the game winner from 36 yards.

Senior linebacker Bryan Presume had one word to describe the feeling after the Salukis came up just short of a victory.

“Heartbreaking,” Presume said. “All of the guys put their hearts into the game, and we just fought to the end, but we couldn’t get it done.”

After SIU scored a touchdown in the first overtime, Coach Dale Lennon said he considered going for the two-point conversion with a fake extra-point attempt to give the Salukis the win, but reconsidered.

“I had a call, and then I called a timeout,” Lennon said. “I thought too much about it. Maybe I should have went with my gut instinct, but that’s hindsight. I wanted to give our team a chance. That was the thing I was trying to figure more than anything.”

The Salukis then settled for the extra point to tie the game.

Down 30-23 with 3:40 left in the game, the Salukis drove the field and on fourth down with the

game at stake, senior quarterback Kory Faulkner threw to senior wide receiver John Lantz, who slid into the end zone for the 17-yard Saluki touchdown to tie the game.

With 2:13 on the clock, the Panthers started their drive on their 11-yard line and drove down the field to set up a potential game-winning 20-yard field goal with 0:02 left in the game.

With Saluki fans gritting their teeth, Berra stepped into the kick and junior linebacker Tyler Williamson blocked the attempt, sending the game into overtime.

“The (blocked field goal) allowed us to stay alive,” Lennon said. “We talked defensively about fight, bite, scratch, claw or do whatever you have to do to make a play. You can’t fault the effort.”

EIU quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 440 yards and four touchdowns. Three of his touchdowns came in the first half en route to the Panthers 21-10 halftime lead.

Presume said it was difficult playing against the Panthers’ no-huddle offense.

“It’s a struggle keeping up with their offense,” Presume said. “They are so up-tempo, the chains weren’t even set sometime when they were running the next play. We did better than most teams usually do against them. We just didn’t do enough to get the W.”

Faulkner completed 28 out of 50 passes for 294 yards and four touchdowns. This was Faulkner’s second consecutive game throwing for at least 250 yards and three touchdowns.

Despite Faulkner’s individual performance, he said he didn’t do enough for his team to win.

“I have to play better if we’re going to win,” Faulkner said. “It’s on me as the leader, the captain, and the quarterback of this team. I have to elevate my play or else maybe we’ll just keep coming up short every time and that’s not what I’m about.”

Please see FOOTBALL | 11



CHRIS ZOELLER | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Senior wide receiver John Lantz slides under Eastern Illinois University senior defensive back Alex McNulty for a touchdown Saturday at Saluki Stadium. Senior quarterback Kory Faulkner connected with Lantz for the 17-yard pass on fourth-and-10 to tie Eastern with 2:19 remaining. SIU lost 40-37 in double overtime.

CROSS COUNTRY

Saluki women dominate season opener

SYMONE WOOLRIDGE
Daily Egyptian

The women’s Saluki cross-country team successfully defeated the competition at the Eastern Illinois University Walt Crawford Open Friday, finishing with six runners in the top 10 and eight in the top 25.

Junior Sadie Darnell was a first-place finisher with a personal-best time of 17:37.52. Darnell said she is very excited about her performance, as being the first of 128 competitors was a big accomplishment.

“I think I did really well. It’s a good start to the season and I am really happy with how the race went,” she said.

Darnell completed the race beating the 2012 Walt Crawford winner and All-Conference runner Kelby Jenkins of Evansville.

Head coach Matt Sparks said he was extremely happy with Darnell’s performance.

“For Sadie to beat Jenkins was a big step for her in the right direction as she works toward being all-conference this year,” Sparks said.

The Salukis prepared for the Walt

Crawford meet differently than usual. Instead of running individually, the runners decided to run together as a group during the first half of the race.

“It was really awesome that my teammates were right there with me,” Darnell said. “We just kept passing the competition when finally Kristen and I pushed to the front and finished strong.”

Sophomore Kristen Levi finished third with a personal-best time of 17:44.64.

“All of our teammates did pretty well,” Levi said. “By the end of the race,

we were all pretty close to each other still, then Sadie eventually broke away and came out with the win.”

Levi said the team was very excited about its first meet of the year, and said she and her teammates were fairly confident before the meet began.

“Us as a team all came into the meet with a very positive attitude and we knew exactly what we wanted to accomplish here,” Levi said. “Then we went out and took it for the team.”

Sparks said Levi has shown great dedication and commitment to the sport, as well as Darnell, who has made

a big impact throughout her time at SIU.

“Sadie and Kristen have been very vocal leaders in the past few years, and they have started the season off very well together leading the pack,” Sparks said.

Meanwhile, the Saluki men’s cross-country team completed an 8K race at the Walt Crawford Open. Only three men competed in the meet, which included junior Evan Ehrenheim, who finished 14th, and senior T.J. Heffernan, who completed the race in 16th place.

Please see CROSSCOUNTRY | 11