

TEXT MESSAGING AS A BREAKING NEWS INFORMATION SOURCE  
AND *UNIVERSITY JOURNAL* ACCENT SECTION PORTFOLIO

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of new technologies every day, the information-gathering habits of those seeking breaking news stories evolves at an equally break-neck pace. For this project, I studied those habits within the context of text messaging on mobile phones regarding average daily usage and at the times of the high-profile deaths of actor Heath Ledger and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints President Gordon B. Hinckley. Results were consistent with similar research study findings, such as younger age groups texting more frequently than older age groups, and results also indicate that the use of text messaging as a breaking news information source is on the rise.

In addition to this research, I have included a portfolio of my work as the Accent Editor at the *University Journal*. This comprehensive and in-depth portfolio includes full-page layouts, articles and blogs created during Spring 2008.

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Thank you to Kevin Stein, who talked me into staying.

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So say we all.

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### Text Messaging as a Breaking News Information Source

Although still a relatively new form of communication—originating in Europe in the early 1990s—Americans are snapping up text messaging technologies at exponential rates (Ling & Baron, 2007; Trappey III & Woodside, 2005). Only four years ago, 192 million mobile phones connected people, and 90% of the phones had text messaging, or Short Message Service (SMS), screens as a standard feature (Maney, 2005). As of February 2008, *Communications News* reports that U.S. citizens send approximately 30 billion text messages every month, up from roughly 2.8 billion per month in 2004 and 6.3 billion per month in 2006 (Communications News, 2008; Maney, 2005; Betancourt, 2007). And texting, often used in lieu of spoken conversation, is also being used for increasingly diverse purposes.

In the world of entertainment, country music celebrity Carrie Underwood revealed at a Los Angeles charity event that she ended her romantic relationship with Chace Crawford via text message: “We broke up over text, so ... it’s like ‘peace out’” (as cited in Giantis, 2008, para. 3). Viewers of the television programs *Videos Por Favor* and *Videos a la Cart* on the bilingual network LATV can submit a text message that is displayed as a graphic overlay on the screen to give a “shout out” to friends or other audience members who are watching (Dickson, 2007, p. 43). *American Idol* watchers sent in approximately 64.5 million votes during one season—solely through Cingular wireless carriers—for their favorite singing contestants on the popular reality TV show (Becker, 2006). At U2 concerts, attendees were able to text their names to appear on a screen behind the band and to register as a member of the ONE Campaign, a charity project founded by lead singer Bono, that fights poverty; at the Live 8 rock concert, 26 million text messages worldwide were received to help poverty relief efforts in Africa (Maney, 2005).

In the world of sports, teams such as the Chicago White Sox use texting as a means of bonding with their fans, and at sporting events patrons can send text messages to appear on scoreboards between innings (Maney, 2005). For a nominal monthly fee each month, Major League Baseball's Web site MLB.com offers text messaging packages to fans that include final scores, trivia questions and player injury updates to subscribers (Maney, 2005).

And in the world of love, [www.sms.ac](http://www.sms.ac) provides men with new "pickup" lines daily, and [txt2flrt.com](http://txt2flrt.com) allows users to find dates through its matchmaking service (Maney, 2005). Couples on dates in noisy or large locations, such as dance clubs, use texting to maintain contact with each other, or conversely, to send a "help me" message to a companion in order to escape from unsavory patrons who outstay their welcome (Betancourt, 2007). In the near future, mobile phone providers may also offer, as they already do in Asia, a physical location "finder" for members of one's social network (Betancourt, 2007; Maney, 2005).

Beyond casual personal use, though, text message transcripts are also being used in the legal world. In April last year, four Wisconsin high school students, if convicted, faced serving 90 days in jail and a maximum of \$1,000 in fines for an exchange of text messages about potentially conducting a shooting on their school grounds (Braley, 2008). The teens texted each other with messages such as "we should get guns and get everybody at school" and "Dude, I got some guns and bombs in my locker ... let's kill everybody," and though they claim the threats were simply jokes, they were enough to result in the students' arrests (Braley, 2008, p. 1).

Two Louisiana teachers were also recently arrested for sending inappropriate text messages (Temple, 2008). The first teacher said he questioned a female student via text about her "sexual feelings" toward him, and the second teacher was booked after she sent similar messages to an underage student at her school (Temple, 2008, para. 5).

Similarly, text messages were a component of grand jury hearings for deputies at a Santa Ana jail (Los Angeles Times, 2008). While on duty, guards watched an episode of the television show *Cops* and one exchanged 22 personal text messages over a 50-minute span, despite jail logs indicating the guards checked on activities in the cell block during that timeframe (Los Angeles Times, 2008, para. 4). In the meantime, a 41-year-old inmate was “stomped and beaten to death” near the glass-encased guard station (Los Angeles Times, 2008, para. 4).

Further, because the content of certain text messages could have potentially contradicted testimony in a rape case against NBA star Kobe Bryant, the presiding judge granted the attorneys access to various text conversation transcripts for review, including those of the woman accusing Bryant, which is already an accepted legal practice in criminal proceedings in Europe and Asia (Associated Press, 2004). In a comparable case last year, the records of almost 14,000 text messages exchanged between Kwame Kilpatrick, the mayor of Detroit, and his then-married chief of staff Christine Beatty, were used as proof that the two had lied under oath about not having a romantic relationship (Davey & Bunkley, 2008).

On yet another litigious front, lawsuits are being filed nationwide in regard to the legality of text message contests. Numerous television programs have instituted “text-in” contests, such as NBC’s *Deal or No Deal* Lucky Case Game wherein viewers send a text message selecting the number of the “winning case” to try to win cash prizes (Cuneo & Klaassen, 2007). As of June 2007, over 210 million viewers had paid the \$0.99 entry fee—in addition to standard text messaging fees—to participate in the *Deal* contest, which, according to Davis & Gilbert attorney Joseph Lewczak, violates the Standard Lottery Rule; if a contest requires a “premium fee” and doesn’t provide a “bona fide product or service” in return, the contest may be considered gambling, which is illegal in most states (Cuneo & Klaassen, 2007, p. 16). If, however, contests

do provide something in return for the fee, such as a mobile phone ringtone, wallpaper or special “insider” information about the show, the game providers can circumvent lottery laws and relatively legalize gambling (Cuneo & Klaassen, 2007; Becker, 2006).

While texting is obviously widespread in various social and legal realms, exactly who is utilizing text messaging services with such frequency and for precisely what reasons, though slightly investigated by the media, is still largely undocumented in academia.

### Literature Review

Young adults clearly comprise the bulk of text message users—nearly half of all Americans ages 18 to 24 state they use texting services “all or most of the time,” as opposed to the mere 19% of 25-to-34-year-olds who do so (Vorhaus, 2007, p. 29). Although Europeans exchange approximately four times as many texts daily than Americans, U.S. college students in 2006 still spent roughly 20 minutes each day solely on texting (Fernando, 2007; Harris Interactive, 2006).

College students, consumers and leaders are recognizing that text messaging can provide services for highly specialized uses. For example, text voting and petitioning has been advantageous in many areas worldwide. In October 2005, some residents in Switzerland were asked to vote on local speed limits, and in India an activist group recruited supporters who then sent text messages to their local government in an attempt to reopen a controversial murder case (Fernando, 2007). Also, in Germany, Power, Power and Rehling (2007) conducted a survey of deaf people and found that rather than using email, fax, or traditional telephone typewriter (TTY) services, 96% of their survey respondents used text messaging regularly in order “to be spontaneous and in control of their communication with both deaf and hearing friends, workmates, family, businesses, and services such as pizza delivery and taxis” (p. 294).

Texting is being increasingly used for advertising purposes, as well. In lieu of placing a listing in the classified section of one's local newspaper, individual text message advertisements may cost up to only 10 cents each (Maney, 2005). To promote the television show *Smallville*, the WB network teamed with Verizon Wireless to include brief TV spots that encouraged viewers to opt-in to a text messaging campaign; subscribers were then offered "*Smallville* trivia, pictures, polls and updates," as well as participation in a sweepstakes for a travel destination prize to the show's Vancouver set and for Verizon products (Stanley, 2003, p. 4). Further, Trappey III and Woodside (2005) studied responses from 5,401 households in the United Kingdom regarding a direct marketing campaign conducted via text message. The researchers were attempting to increase awareness of certain television programs through text message advertisements, and, thus, increase viewership of those programs; the campaign proved to be successful, particularly among younger age groups, and was, incidentally, very likely much less expensive to conduct than standard telemarketing or direct mail surveys (pp. 382-383).

It is likely that consumers prefer to use text messaging for these and other practical reasons instead of more traditional methods of communication, such as landline telephones or e-mail, because of the portability of and perpetual access to mobile phones, and for texting's immediacy (Harris Interactive, 2006; Maney, 2005; Fernando, 2007). Because text messaging services are always available, subscribers to various information providers can conveniently receive updates on breaking news, traffic delays and road closures, flight changes, bank account transactions, local events and entertainment, politics, appointments, sex offender alerts, retail bargains and the weather (Fernando, 2007; Shields, 2007; Betancourt, 2007; Maney, 2005; Frye, 2006). Weather information, second only to wireless e-mail, is the most frequently accessed by mobile phone, and text message alerts for weather and other general news and information tidbits

are already well-established in Europe (Rockwell, 2007; Van Camp, 2004). American companies AT&T Wireless and T-Mobile were some of the early providers for such services in the U.S. less than six years ago, and text message subscription practices like these continue to increase (Van Camp, 2004; Maney 2005). Breaking news updates received instantly via text message are of particular interest in this study.

Especially in emergency situations, breaking information updates are critical. Unfortunately, many U.S. government agencies that would regularly provide those updates are “hampered by emergency communications technology dating to the 1970s” (as cited in Communications News, 2008, p. 7). Those outdated technologies often rely on providing information using television and radio, but having electricity to run such units isn’t always possible in an emergency situation; more often is it the case that only a wireless text message “pushes’ information to citizens wherever they are” (Communications News, 2008, p. 7). Additionally, during the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, countless Americans found themselves unable to contact loved ones when telephone voice lines were jammed by high volumes of calls, but because of smaller band-width requirements than voice-to-voice calls, text messages again allowed people to connect (Betancourt, 2007; Gordon, 2007). Text messages and multimedia messages (MMS) with photo or video evidence of events can also prove highly valuable in documenting emergency situations (Gordon, 2007).

Gordon (2007) conducted potentially endangering research on three high profile crisis events: the Chinese Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, the south-east Asian tsunami in December 2004, and the London bombings in July 2005 (pp. 317, 308). During the SARS outbreak, it was found that even with actual footage and text messages from civilians, some of the information regarding outbreak locations and possible treatments for

SARS were subject to “gatekeeping” editorial processes and much of the information presented to the public was “deliberately inaccurate, misleading or had been removed,” that “the Chinese government was under-reporting SARS cases by about 90 percent” and that “there was some evidence that concealment was deliberate” (pp. 308-310).

In contrast, those involved with the Sumatra-Andaman tsunami fared much more positively with texting. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) sent a mass text message to members of the Tsunami Warning System, alerting surrounding areas of the underwater magnitude 9 earthquake that occurred near Indonesia, and in the aftermath of the tsunami, mobile phone technologies were used to document damage and to locate survivors (pp. 312-313).

Falling between these extremes were the London bombings. In the moments immediately following the terrorist bombings, witnesses were already providing accounts of the events through voice calls, text messages and multimedia messages, which were subsequently used in news broadcasts and would not otherwise have been available (p. 314). However, some of these accounts were considered “more distressful and disturbing than what the media wishe[d] to display,” and many were “subject to the editorial process” and not included in news coverage in the end (p. 314). But despite the government and media censorship shortcomings in these three cases, with eyewitness text and multimedia message evidence, these events were still more properly documented than they would have been solely through official news outlets (p. 307).

As is evidenced through these many varied purposes, text messaging is beginning to firmly root itself into the information-gathering habits of Americans. With this shift comes a need for adaptation on the part of the news providers, as Frye (2006) notes: “News organizations, to survive, must understand these behaviors and be willing to adapt and distribute information in a variety of formats” (p. 14). For example, Jason Bugg, an editor for the *Pocono Record* in

Stroudsburg, Pa., divulges his newspaper's adaptation strategies: e-mail alerts, videos on the paper's online homepage, a MySpace Web site profile page, an online blog, and, of course, a text messaging alert service (Bugg, 2006, p. 43). I have, therefore, developed two research questions regarding the subject for this study:

RQ1: How deeply rooted are text messaging habits in the context of gathering breaking news information?

RQ2: To what extent are text messages replacing the Internet as an instant news source?

### Method

Based on this literature and personal observation, I conducted a small-scale pilot study to determine the validity of these research questions. The sample for this study was drawn from the student body of Southern Utah University (SUU), a rural but mid-size public university.

Following the pilot study, a colleague and I distributed a revised version of the original survey (See Appendix A) to a convenience sample of 70 students enrolled in one of four SUU communication courses.

In the survey distributed to the sample participants, four questions refer to Oscar-nominated actor Heath Ledger and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Gordon B. Hinckley, both of whom were included because their deaths were high-profile news items within the previous three months.

The completed, anonymous surveys were then collected, analyzed and destroyed.

### Results

After reviewing the submitted demographic information, of the 70 participants who completed the survey, 26 were male and 44 were female. 48 participants were ages 18-22 (14 of the males, 34 of the females), and 19 were over the age of 22 (9 of the males, 10 of the females).

Three male respondents did not declare their ages and were excluded from the age-specific tabulations only.

Females scored higher than males for the average number of text messages sent and received—an average of 73% of females sent and received more than 10 text messages per day, whereas approximately 49% of males sent and received more than 10 text messages per day. However, males outscored females with their exchange counts regarding the death of Ledger (24% of males compared to only 2% of females), but females scored higher overall with their text message exchange averages regarding the death of Hinckley with 33% of females exchanging texts as compared to 18% of males (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Number of sampled participants (out of 70) who sent and received text messages for each category for males and females.**

<b>Number of Messages</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Sent</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Received</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Sent</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Received</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Sent</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Received</b>
<b>0-10 Messages</b>	Male: 14 Female: 13	Male: 13 Female: 11	Male: 21 Female: 43	Male: 19 Female: 43	Male: 22 Female: 31	Male: 21 Female: 28
<b>11+ Messages</b>	Male: 12 Female: 31	Male: 13 Female: 33	Male: 5 Female: 1	Male: 7 Female: 1	Male: 4 Female: 13	Male: 5 Female: 16
<b>Totals for 11+ Messages</b>	Male: 47% Female: 70%	Male: 51% Female: 75%	Male: 20% Female: 2%	Male: 27% Female: 2%	Male: 16% Female: 29%	Male: 19% Female: 37%

For the 18- to 22-years-old and the over 22-years-old age groups, the younger group exchanged approximately 65% more text messages than the older group in general. However, the exchange counts regarding the deaths of Ledger and Hinckley split the averages. The older group exchanged an average of 19% more text messages regarding the death of Ledger than the younger group, yet the 18-22-years-old group exchanged an average of 31% more text messages regarding the death of Hinckley. In summation, the younger group exchanged more texts overall, except in the context of Ledger's death (See Table 2).

**Table 2. Number of sampled participants (out of 67) who sent and received text messages for each category for all participants ages 18-22 and over 22.**

<b>Number of Messages</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Sent</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Received</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Sent</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Received</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Sent</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Received</b>
<b>0-10 Messages</b>	18-22: 10 >22: 15	18-22: 8 >22: 14	18-22: 46 >22: 15	18-22: 45 >22: 14	18-22: 33 >22: 18	18-22: 29 >22: 18
<b>11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 38 >22: 4	18-22: 40 >22: 5	18-22: 2 >22: 4	18-22: 3 >22: 5	18-22: 15 >22: 1	18-22: 19 >22: 1
<b>Totals for 11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 79% >22: 21%	18-22: 83% >22: 10%	18-22: 4% >22: 21%	18-22: 6% >22: 26%	18-22: 31% >22: 5%	18-22: 40% >22: 5%

Sampled males ages 18- to 22-years-old exchanged substantially more text messages on average (79% sent and received more than 10 messages per day) than their over 22-years-old counterparts, 95% of whom sent and received approximately 0-10 messages per day. However, for text messages exchanged regarding the death of Heath Ledger, the older group outpaced the younger group at a rate of almost 5 to 1. For the death of Gordon B. Hinckley, though, a full quarter of the 18-22-year-olds exchanged text messages, whereas 0% of the over 22-years-old group did so (See Table 3).

**Table 3. Number of sampled participants (out of 23) who sent and received text messages for each category by age for males only.**

<b>Number of Messages</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Sent</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Received</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Sent</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Received</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Sent</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Received</b>
<b>0-10 Messages</b>	18-22: 3 >22: 9	18-22: 3 >22: 8	18-22: 13 >22: 5	18-22: 12 >22: 4	18-22: 11 >22: 9	18-22: 10 >22: 9
<b>11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 11 >22: 0	18-22: 11 >22: 1	18-22: 1 >22: 4	18-22: 2 >22: 5	18-22: 3 >22: 0	18-22: 4 >22: 0
<b>Totals for 11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 79% >22: 0%	18-22: 79% >22: 11%	18-22: 7% >22: 44%	18-22: 14% >22: 56%	18-22: 21% >22: 0%	18-22: 29% >22: 0%

Sampled females ages 18- to 22-years-old exchanged approximately twice as many text messages on average than females over 22-years-old. While both age groups exchanged very few text messages about the death of Ledger (18-22-year-olds at 3% and over-22-year-olds at 0%), the younger group did exchange more text messages on average regarding the death of Hinckley than did the older group—approximately 40% of the younger group compared to 10% of the older group (See Table 4).

**Table 4. Number of sampled participants (out of 44) who sent and received text messages for each category by age for females only.**

<b>Number of Messages</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Sent</b>	<b>Average Text Messages Received</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Sent</b>	<b>Heath Ledger Messages Received</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Sent</b>	<b>Gordon B. Hinckley Messages Received</b>
<b>0-10 Messages</b>	18-22: 7 >22: 6	18-22: 5 >22: 6	18-22: 33 >22: 10	18-22: 33 >22: 10	18-22: 22 >22: 9	18-22: 19 >22: 9
<b>11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 27 >22: 4	18-22: 29 >22: 4	18-22: 1 >22: 0	18-22: 1 >22: 0	18-22: 12 >22: 1	18-22: 15 >22: 1
<b>Totals for 11+ Messages</b>	18-22: 79% >22: 40%	18-22: 85% >22: 40%	18-22: 3% >22: 0%	18-22: 3% >22: 0%	18-22: 35% >22: 10%	18-22: 44% >22: 10%

Other findings in this study relate to an ordered ranking question on the survey that asked participants to rank their sources of breaking news information, such as the deaths of prominent people like Ledger and Hinckley, on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the first information source they access and 5 being the last information source they access. The information sources to rank were television, print (newspapers, magazines), Internet, text messaging and radio.

Of the 70 responses to the survey, one was excluded from the ranking tabulations because it was incomplete. For participants overall, preferences for breaking news information sources were listed as: television (first source—30 votes), Internet (second source—26 votes), text

messaging (third source—7 votes), radio (fourth source—4 votes), and print (fifth source—2 votes), for a total of 69 voted rankings.

### Discussion

Upon review, the demographics of the participants were fairly representative of the SUU student body with more females than males and more students ages 18-22 years old than students over 22 years old overall. The general findings of this study also support previous findings that younger age groups—and college students in particular—are regularly using text messaging as a means to communicate.

With the variety of results in this study, there are several areas that merit a closer look. For instance, females on average exchanged approximately 25% more text messages than males overall. While this could be an indication that females simply communicate more often and more regularly than males in general, it is also possible that females use text messaging as a springboard for dialogue. For example, such conversation-starters could be indicated by the higher percentage of sent texts than received texts regarding the deaths of Heath Ledger and Gordon B. Hinckley, and then these women may be continuing with deeper conversations through other more traditional means of communication instead, such as voice-to-voice phone calls or e-mail.

Females in particular, too, appear to find the death of Gordon B. Hinckley more newsworthy than that of Heath Ledger: Hinckley's death generated approximately 32% more sent messages than Ledger's. But perhaps this is less a commentary on the perceived value of the lives of these men and more an indication of these women's deeply held personal beliefs—while Ledger was a high-profile actor and likable celebrity, Hinckley was a prominent religious

leader for many decades in the predominant religious culture in Utah. The significance of religious priority over entertainment and pop culture may actually be what is indicated here.

Males, however, may be indicating just the opposite with their average number of exchanges. While Ledger's death merited approximately 30% of the males' attentions, Hinckley's death scored less than 13%. While this could be an indication that males' religious beliefs are less deeply rooted than females' beliefs, it could also be that the males are either more entertainment-savvy than females, or that they don't care to discuss the death of a religious leader via text message, if at all.

Interestingly, though, the older males also exchanged text messages about the death of Ledger at a frequency of roughly five to one compared to the rates of the younger group. This may be an indication that males, again, are more entertainment-oriented than religion-oriented, or this may simply be a demonstration of the older group's willingness to pass along information regarding a young celebrity's death than that of an elderly religious figure, which behavior they may perceive as more "politically correct."

Similarly, the overall younger groups—male and female—exchanged text messages about the death of Hinckley an average of 5% more frequently than that of Ledger. This could be an extension of the notion that the younger groups are more comfortable talking about the death of an aged person, it could be that the younger groups are more religion-oriented than their older counterparts, or it could simply be a measurement of the numbers within the margin of error and, thus, insignificant.

The younger age groups for males and females combined also text messaged more in general on average than the older age groups: 81% of respondents in the younger group exchanged more than 10 text messages on average per day, as opposed to 16% of respondents in

the older group. This may likely be because the younger group has more exposure to, and thus more familiarity with, the technologies of mobile phones and of texting itself than older age groups. This may also be a factor in why the younger participants exchanged more text messages about the deaths of Ledger and Hinckley (41% of the younger group exchanged more than 10 messages and 29% of the older group exchanged more than 10 messages); however, that may simply be a result of increased familiarity with Ledger and Hinckley themselves, or again, because of their personal priorities.

As for the rankings for primary news sources (television, followed by the Internet, text messages, radio and print, respectively), technological comfort and accessibility may be playing a role. Or ahead of that, perhaps it's simply about trust—those respondents who favor televised or printed sources may just be more skeptical of the truthiness of text message senders, who literally could be someone on a street corner, but seeing actual visual images and transcripts of entire stories from a “real” news source on the screen or on the page renders the content more trustworthy.

On a smaller scale, I also find it interesting that while television and the Internet are ranked the first and second sources for breaking news, respectively—likely because of their instant natures—radio is not considered in the same “immediate” vein. Maybe this is because even though radio can provide instant information as easily and thoroughly as the Internet or television, respondents may not have “easy access” to an actual radio. For example, the Internet is accessible in a significantly large number of workplaces, and televisions are accessible basically everywhere else in America, but many people likely only listen to their radios in their vehicles during commutes, leading to less exposure to the medium.

Overall in the rankings, television and the Internet are clearly still the primary sources for breaking news information, but text messaging on average is now outranking radio and print (newspapers, magazines) as initial information sources. Although there was some support, such as with these rankings, documenting the increased use of text messaging as a breaking news information source, there was no strong support found for either of my research questions based on the evidence. However, the big rise in the rankings for text messaging may be an indication that, like the Internet not many years ago, text messages may eventually surpass traditional news providers as a primary source for breaking news information.

#### Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While convenience samples do have certain limitations, particularly that of generalizing findings to the larger population, at times convenience samples are still deemed an acceptable surveying technique. In *Analyzing Media Messages* (2005), Riffe, Lacy and Fico list three conditions for such justification, the third of which applies to this research: “The third condition ... is when a researcher is exploring some underresearched but important area. When little is known about a research topic, even a convenience sample becomes worthwhile in generating hypotheses for additional studies” (pp. 99-100). Because there has been so little research conducted on text messaging habits thus far, use of a convenience sample here is justified.

In addition, the findings in this study present several opportunities for further, deeper investigation. A full-scale, longitudinal study of text messaging and breaking news information-gathering habits could track the frequency with which respondents turn to text messages as a primary news source as the practice becomes more accepted, since more familiarity over time with mobile phones and their features can lead to more acceptance.

Further, future studies could examine specific text message content to determine some of the general uses and gratifications of text messaging. For example, one could determine how many respondents use texting strictly for conversation and how many have subscriptions to various information providers, or one could determine how many respondents use only written-word text messages and how many use multimedia messages.

As for possible future gender and age group studies, more research could focus on the comfort or apprehension levels of males and females when adopting new communication technologies such as texting. Or one could focus, for instance, on the increased adoption of text messaging as a means of communication by older groups over time as they become more familiar with and more accepting of such interactions.

And for any study dealing with the distribution of news from one source to another, or to multiple destinations, a study dealing with the Two-Step Flow of information is essential. Determining who is acting as an opinion leader and initiating these messages, whether they be official news organizations or personal contacts, as well as who is listening to these leaders—especially to what extent—and continuing the spread of the data, can be highly valuable to all involved parties.

Any of these future studies would broaden the surprisingly small amount of research that actually has been conducted thus far. Though I didn't reach a point of saturation with my quest for prior text messaging research, I thoroughly reviewed every study available to me, and of the 26 total sources I accessed, only 15 came from academic journals. For communication technology that has been available for 15 years and is so thoroughly penetrating the world market, more academic research on text messaging is absolutely essential.

Whether consumers of text messaging use it for entertainment purposes, such as giving shout-outs to friends on television, to communicate with loved ones during a crisis, such as the Virginia Tech school shootings, for legal evidence, such as a corroboration of under-oath testimony, or for breaking news information, such as the deaths of Heath Ledger and Gordon B. Hinckley, it is clear that, as Fernando (2007) notes, “it’s safe to say that text will change our world” (Dickson, 2007; Betancourt, 2007; Davey & Bunkley, 2008).

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## Appendix 1

## Survey

My name is Angela Smith, and I am an SUU Master of Professional Communication candidate. This research is designed to study text messaging habits in regard to breaking news stories. Participants will be asked to fill out the following closed-ended survey questions, which should take approximately two minutes. All questions should be directed to me at grad10@suu.edu.

**Participation is voluntary. You may discontinue the study at any time for any reason without penalty. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer. You may ask questions at any time.**

Please answer the following questions:

1. Approximately how many text messages do you usually send in a 24-hour period?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+
2. Approximately how many text messages do you usually receive in a 24-hour period?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+
3. Approximately how many text messages did you send about the death of Heath Ledger?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+
4. Approximately how many text messages did you receive about the death of Heath Ledger?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+
5. Approximately how many text messages did you send about the death of Gordon B. Hinckley?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+
6. Approximately how many text messages did you receive about the death of Gordon B. Hinckley?  
a) 0-10   b) 11-20   c) 21-30   d) 31-40   e) 41+

Please answer the following questions:

7. What is your first source of information for breaking news events?  
a) Internet   b) text messages   c) radio   d) television   e) print (newspapers, magazines)
8. What is your second source of information for breaking news events?  
a) Internet   b) text messages   c) radio   d) television   e) print (newspapers, magazines)

9. What is your third source of information for breaking news events?

a) Internet   b) text messages   c) radio   d) television   e) print (newspapers, magazines)

Please rank the following sources 1-5, with 1 being the first source from which you hear important news and 5 being the last source from which you hear important news:

\_\_\_\_\_ Television

\_\_\_\_\_ Print (newspapers, magazines)

\_\_\_\_\_ Internet

\_\_\_\_\_ Text messaging

\_\_\_\_\_ Radio

Please provide the following information:

\_\_\_\_\_ Male   \_\_\_\_\_ Female   Age \_\_\_\_\_   Major \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 2

Portfolio

## Gladiators fills gap in NBC lineup



Siren, Valerie Waugaman, on the set of the new American Gladiators. The show airs on NBC Mondays at 8 p.m.

Television viewers who pine for an occasional healthy dose of hand-to-hand combat between spandex-clad warriors are in luck with the return of just such a show to prime time. American Gladiators made its triumphant return into the living rooms of America on Sunday night with a premiere featuring 12 new gladiators and hosted by Hulk Hogan and Laila Ali. A famed professional wrestler, Hogan most recently appeared in a VH1 series, Hogan Knows Best. His co-host, Ali, is a professional female boxer who is coming off a successful stint on Dancing With The Stars. From my own observations, the gist of American Gladiators is that hopeful muscle-pumped contestants sign up to get the smot beat out of them by the show's cast of gladiators.

The show began in 1989 and lasted for seven mind-melting seasons of madness and mayhem before going off the air in 1996. Because the current writers' strike is placing multiple popular series on hold, modern shows are moving aside in favor of the resurrection of old favorites. Thankfully, the image of the 2008 crew is nostalgically reminiscent of the same style of the original gladiators: huge muscles, intimidating stares and overall appearance akin to Mr. T. And what would a gladiator be without a menacing moniker that skirts that fine line between X-Men and pro wrestlers?

The original cast included gladiators such as Malibu, Zap and Nitro. Along the same lines, new cast members include Hellga, Siren and Hammer. SUU President Michael T. Benson said if he was going to be a contestant on American Gladiators, his selected alias would be "Bring the Pain." I don't know about you, but for me this conjures up a whole slew of stellar ideas for entertaining halftime shows at SUU basketball games. Competition on the new season of American Gladiators will follow the same format as the original episodes, including events such as wJoust, Assault and Gauntlet.

I think an entertaining Welcome Back Week activity would be to stage a version of this show on the SUU campus. Events could include scaling the Carter Carrillon or picking up the ever-spirited rock-of-many-colors with one hand. And while we're at it, I think a worthwhile challenge would be requiring the contestants to successfully navigate the stairways in the Electronic Learning Center. I mean, let's be honest, who hasn't wiggled lost in the ELC? But until such a contest takes place, SUU students can satisfy their cravings for combat by tuning into NBC on Mondays at 8 p.m. to catch Hogan, Ali and the newest American gladiators.



KATIE HAWKES

Katie Hawkes is the University Journal Copy Chief. She can be contacted at khawkes@suujournal.com.



John Pribyl as Marc, Elijah Alexander as Serge, 'Art' Theatre conference visitors, students and community members can attend performances of 'Art' Thursday through Saturday.

## 'Art' returns

### International theatre groups to attend USF conference; play reopens for event

By DANA BELL  
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The Utah Shakespearean Festival will sponsor the 17th annual Shakespeare Theatre Association of America conference this Wednesday through Saturday. This is the second time the Utah Shakespearean Festival will host the conference, said R. Scott Phillips, Utah Shakespearean Festival executive director. "To my knowledge we are the only company to ever host it twice," Phillips said. Amanda Caraway, Utah Shakespearean Festival media and public relations director, said representatives from all over the United States and countries such as Britain, South Africa and Canada will attend the conference. "Theatres from all over the world that perform Shakespeare will be coming here," Caraway said. "It is an exciting opportunity to meet really influential people from all over the world." During the conference, the companies will discuss "issues that are relevant to us staging Shakespeare," Phillips said. Phillips also said an example of a discussion topic would be how to make a Shakespeare play more contemporary for modern audiences. "Hopefully, (the conference) gives them some practical knowledge and some tools of how to go back and address particular issues that their



John Pribyl as Marc and Elijah Alexander as Serge perform in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2007 production of 'Art'.

company might be facing," Phillips said. The conference this year is going to be one of the largest attended conferences, said Jyl L. Shuler, USF associate development director and coordinator for the conference. "So far right now we have about 150 guests representing around 50 companies," she said. Shuler said this is the

great networking possibilities for ways to improve the companies," he said. Along with the conference, the Festival will be reopening the production 'Art' Thursday through Saturday in the Randall L. Jones Theatre, Phillips said. Tickets are available for \$28 and \$32. "This is the first time that we have ever brought back a production in the same year that we produced it," he said. Phillips said it will be beneficial for the representatives to see this production. "I thought it was very important for our colleagues around the country to see the level of professional work that we do," Phillips said. "I was very proud of the artistic quality of this production." Since 'Art' only involves three actors, it is a show the Festival can financially afford to bring back, Phillips said. Phillips said he also encourages SUU students who did not have the chance to see 'Art' to take advantage of this opportunity. "It is a very clever, funny and thought-provoking show," he said. Overall, Phillips said he thinks this conference will be "tremendous." "We are just trying to let them know that the Utah Shakespearean Festival is one of the treasures of the state," Phillips said. "I am really looking forward to showing them what we can do."

**"This is the first time that we have ever brought back a production in the same year ..."**  
— R. Scott Phillips

## Gift upgrades bring 'prime' holiday haul

Sometimes a Christmas present just isn't what it should be. Unwrapping a less-than-stellar gift creates a serious moral dilemma: Stash it in the back of the closet? Take it back to the store for the money? Re-gift it to an unfortunate soul with a birthday on Dec. 26? Or make the more politically-correct move and covertly exchange it for something better? Fruitycake, for example, is a bad Christmas present — unless it's for my stepmother, who, for baffling reasons, absolutely loves the stuff. Perhaps it's my penchant for films like *Waitress* and television shows like *Pushing Daisies*, but I say upgrade the edibles by ditching the fruitycake and diving into a pie instead. CDs are a little easier to stomach, unless it's a Soujia Boy album or something equally appalling. In this case, don't re-gift — no one else wants to listen to it either. Rather, dispose of the offending disc and track down Amy Winehouse's *Frank* as a replacement — your stereo will thank you. Although food, music and movies are ordinarily jackpot gold, DVD gifts may also go sadly astray in the holiday season. My apologies to all of the well-meaning mothers and ill-informed little brothers who thought distributing copies of *Evan Almighty* and *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, respectively, was a good idea. Victims of such misguided gift-receiving should swap these sins for the best present the college elite can hope for: the special edition *Transformers* DVD that comes shrouded in the world's first hardcover case with the ability to morph into a 15-inch-tall Optimus Prime figure — now that will spawn some Christmas cheer (thanks again, Mom). Unloading unwanted swag can be tricky, but trust me: it's better to have received and exchanged than to have ever stuffed the closet in the hall.

### ANGIE'S ADVICE



ANGIE SMITH

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Angie Smith, University Journal Accent editor, displays her *Transformers* DVD case. It morphs into an Optimus Prime figure. Her mother, Linda Rabines, gave her the gift for Christmas.

## New Year's resolutions inspire fresh focus on past priorities

This year I am making a commitment to make better New Year's resolutions. The beginning of a new year always brings along with it a series of broken promises. Going to the gym. Eating healthier. Spending time with the family. Getting better grades. Yeah, right. It's easy to forget something so mundane as grabbing an apple instead of a bag of your favorite cookies at lunch, and it's even easier to make excuses to avoid torturing yourself at the gym. That is why I decided this year to break from the usual tradition and make resolutions not about trying to solve problems when given to an audience, but to focus instead on being a better me. A life lived without direction and passion is a life wasted, and so is a New Year's resolution. What is the point of simply making a promise that sounds good when given to an audience? Those are the easiest to break because they lack the fervent commitment that comes with loving something. This is why I have decided on forgetting the gym and eating whatever I like because I am going to do that any way. Instead of worrying about it, I am going to find something I want to do. At first I had no idea where I was even supposed to start, and then I uttered the words "one of these days I am going to ...". That was when it hit me. For four, perhaps even five years I have been writing a book. Month after month I've told my friends I was going to finish it, and as of yet I only have twenty pages or so that I really like. Admittedly, there is something very wrong with that. I love that book. I love the thought of being a published author. Why haven't I ever done something about making it a reality? In the spirit of my new resolution to make better New Year's resolutions, I have decided that this is the year: I am finally going to finish my book and get it published. And I couldn't be happier. Who knows? Maybe next year I will resolve to live in the moment instead of always fretting about the future. Or perhaps I will get up the nerve to tell that certain someone just how much I care. The future is full of all kinds of possibilities, and there is no better time than now to begin making that brand new year work for you, too. Kirstin Bone is a freshman theatre arts major from Sugarhouse. She can be reached at kbone@suujournal.com.

### BECAUSE I SAID SO



KIRSTIN BONE

# ACCENT



RICHARD PAYSON / UNIVERSITY JOURNAL



PHOTOS COURTESY OF UTAH SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL

Left: Area students file out of the Randall L. Jones Theatre and into their buses after seeing a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. The students came to see the play Thursday morning. The production will continue its tour from January to April across four states and will perform for roughly 70,000 students. Right: Cristina Panfillo portrays Juliet and Timothy Pyles portrays Romeo in scenes from the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2008 Shakespeare-in-the-Schools production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

## Star-crossed

### USF sponsors *Romeo and Juliet* tour

By SEAN MILES  
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A modern adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* began a nationwide tour, starting with Cedar City on Wednesday. Utah Shakespearean Festival media and public relations director Amanda Caraway and director Ann Tully said they hope that students learn that new generations can make a change in the attitudes of today. "Parents are still teaching children to hate," Caraway said. "A new generation can change the hate and learn to grow." Tully agreed. "We have to teach people to look beyond the hate," Tully said. "We are all human beings." *Romeo and Juliet* don't blindly hate each other because they are a Montague and a Capulet, and children need to be taught to have the same principles, Tully said. The subject matter of this touring production is reliable to high school



RICHARD PAYSON / UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

Audience members participate in a talk-back in the Randall L. Jones Theatre on Thursday.

Like *Romeo and Juliet*, many of them are experiencing that "first kiss and first

love," Caraway said. The first performance was Wednesday at Foothill High School, an alternative educational facility in Cedar City, she said. "The students were very appreciative ... since assemblies are hardly there," Caraway said. "It was a very touching experience for the cast." Additional performances were Thursday and Friday in the Randall L. Jones Theatre. The theatre was packed and chairs had to be brought in to make space for the extra students, Caraway said. The audience was "on fire," Caraway said. Immediately following the performances there were talk-backs wherein students could ask questions and make comments. This allows the actors to receive an immediate See **ROMEO**, Page B2

## Thorley recital features variety of musical skills

By ANNA COLE  
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The SUU Music Department sponsored a student recital Friday, in which 10 SUU students performed either vocally or instrumentally. The students performed at the recital as part of a class, and to help them get used to performing onstage. "This is part of our grade to do this once a semester," said Kim Padilla, a junior music major from Las Vegas. "It just prepares us to get more out in the open, to sing in front of people." Padilla sang "O mio babbino caro" by Giacomo Puccini. Theora Hansen, a junior music major from Highland, sang "Una donna a quindici anni" from *Così*

fan *Tutte* by Mozart in Friday's recital. "It's just an experience of getting out there and performing your song," she said. "I'm preparing for a recital so it was kind of to get the song out and work on it." Thad Jackson, a freshman music major from Enoch, sang "O Mistress Mine" by Roger Quilter. Jackson said he enjoyed the experience, but was also nervous about performing onstage. "I was scared to death," he said. Of the instrumental performers, one student played a piece on the oboe, and another student played the French horn. All of the students were accompanied on piano by adjunct faculty member Rachel Roulet.



RICHARD PAYSON / UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

Johnny Gallis, a sophomore math major from Cedar City, plays his French horn during a student recital. The recital took place Friday afternoon at 2 p.m.

## Hermie's nostalgia adds unique flavor

Walking into Hermie's Drive In on Main Street is like taking a step into one of the old drive-ins from the 1950s. All along the walls are pictures of older cars taken in front of Hermie's, antique license plates, and faded Coca-Cola wallpaper in the tradition of a vintage diner. The menu features a variety of familiar burger joint favorites such as onion rings and hamburgers, but there are quite a few Hermie's originals, such as the deep-fried mushrooms and fry bread. In most cases one can get in and out of Hermie's for \$6 or less, but if you decide that

getting an ice cream cone with your dinner is an absolute must it will make it closer to \$8. When I went on Tuesday, I ordered the chicken dinner (\$5.99) that included fries and homemade fry bread, and I sat down in one of the red booths to wait for my food. During the 10 minutes I waited I was able to watch the staff as they goofed around in the back, and I was even able to watch as one of the girls tossed my fry bread with her bare hands from one basket to the one that came to my table. See **FOOD**, Page B2

### FOOD IN REVIEW



KIRSTIN BONE

## Sundance fan scopes celebrities

As I drove up Parley's Canyon from Salt Lake City to Park City, I could feel the change taking place. Was it the altitude change? Maybe the excessive amount of snow falling? No. I was experiencing the feeling one gets when they are approaching something great. The 10 days known as the Sundance Film Festival are, hands down, the craziest days allowed in Utah. There is no way to fully describe the scene on Historic Main Street. I decided to start at the bottom of the street and work my way up, trudging through the snow and fighting the crowds so I might find my place in the mess. What I found taught me a very valuable lesson: Sundance brings everyone out of the wood work — celebrities, the normal people and the crazies — so there are many "sub-scenes" that call out to passersby. At the bottom of the street I found what I would label as the "chic" scene. Keira Knightley, Tom Cruise and a martini bar became a Fred Segal schwaig spot.

Moving along, I found the "New York meets San Francisco" scene, where GLAAD was hosting the Queer Lounge with free vodka from 4 to 7 p.m., and with drag queens galore promoting the movie *Faguant*. Outside of the Alaskan Fur Company was the "hippie" scene, and I found myself part of a "Fur War," where I saw Jack Black and the Olsen twins coming out of a secret tunnel. Near the top of the street was the "music festival" scene. The famous Harry O's hosted 50 Cent, LL Cool J, The Black Eyed Peas, The Bravery, Maroon 5 and Velvet Revolver featuring Slash (who invited himself to every party and jumped onstage whenever possible). A little more my style, I found my niche at the top of Main Street. "Green" seemed to be the buzzword as the Main Street Mall housed the Synchronized Green Initiative Concert Series, many eco-friendly films and a fashion show launch party for a new eco-friendly clothing company. The concert series brought out



DENISE PORTER



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENISE PORTER

Celebrities and citizens fill Historic Main Street in Park City for the Sundance Film Festival. The festival wrapped up Sunday night. many of the great bands, like The Sneakies, Tub Ring, Floater and the legendary Peter Dinklage from the early Jane's Addiction and Porno for Pyros lineups. In the "green" scene I found a celebrity at every turn: Scott from the Gin Blossoms, the pioneers of MySpace and Facebook, Danny Masterson, Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, Tom Arnold and my personal favorite, Quentin Tarantino (whose new movie *Hell Riders* premiered across the street from the mall at the famous Egyptian Theatre). I have reasonably deduced that Sundance is no longer the festival of films that are looking to be discovered, but a festival of booze, bands and See **FESTIVAL**, Page B2

## Tuesday releases

By ANGIE SMITH  
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- On DVD**  
*Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Volume Five* — Bordertown  
*Charm School* — *Curb Your Enthusiasm: Season Six*  
*Daddy Day Camp* — *Grounding Day: 15th Anniversary Edition*  
*Monty Python's Life of Brian: The Immaculate Edition*  
*Mr. Unsublatable*  
*The Invasion*  
*The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters*  
*The Nines*
- Music Releases**  
27 *Dresses (Original Score)*  
8 *Diagrams* — Wu-Tang Clan  
*A Closer Look* — Babyface  
*Be Kind Rewind Motion Picture Soundtrack*  
*Bulletproof Wallets* — Ghostface Killah  
*Fantastic!* — Wham!
- Funkdafied* — Da Brat  
*Growing Pains* — Mary J. Blige  
*High Mileage* — Alan Jackson  
*I Stand* — Idina Menzel  
*IV* — Veruca Salt  
*Jigsaw Falling into Place* — Radiohead  
*Keichup/Hijas del Tomate* — Las Ketchup  
*Sleep Through the Static System* — Seal  
*Thanks for the Ether* — Rasputina

Source: www.billboard.com  
www.darkhorizons.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIFFEN RECORDS

Mary J. Blige's album *Growing Pains* releases on Tuesday.

# ACCENT

## MARDI GRAS



Party-goers dance around the statue of Sharwan Smith in the rotunda during Mardi Gras. Attendees could participate in activities like face painting, casino games and getting airbrushed tattoos. Proceeds from the event will be used to buy a dental chair for the Cedar City Clinic at Valley View Medical Center.

# Fat Friday

### Mardi Gras event entertains, fundraises

**By DANA BELL**  
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Students crowded into the Sharwan Smith Center on Friday for SUUSA's annual Mardi Gras celebration.

Tyson Pulsipher, SUUSA activities vice president, was pleased with the turnout and said Mardi Gras went well.

"I think people (enjoyed) themselves," he said.

Pulsipher said he was impressed with the talent show and said it went well.

"We (just) used SUU students and it seemed a lot of their peers are interested in their talents," he said.

Pulsipher said two popular activities were the airbrushed tattoos and the caricatures.

Jessica Brooks, Mardi Gras coordinator, also said the event was a success.

"I think it went really well," Brooks said.

Brooks said the goal for Mardi

Gras was to have a variety of activities to attract a lot of students.

Brooks said Mardi Gras and Power 91 helped to raise \$1,000 for a dental chair for the Cedar City Clinic at Valley View Medical Center.

Danny White, a sophomore marketing major from Las Vegas, said Mardi Gras was "monumental."

White said he came to another Mardi Gras sponsored by SUU two years ago.

He said the primary difference between the two was he thought the entertainment was better at the one two years ago.

Briana Bush, a sophomore undeclared major from Sandy, said she liked Mardi Gras.

"I really (liked) the festivities

and activities going on," she said. "It (was) really memorable."

Nick Leibhardt, a sophomore chemistry major from Cedar City, said Mardi Gras was great.

"I (was) glad there was food. I had fun playing blackjack and somebody grabbed my bum," he said. "So, it has been great."

Leibhardt said he went to Mardi Gras a bit early and at

## Journeys concert combines dance, technology forms

**By DANA BELL**  
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*Journeys* Faculty Dance Concert featured a variety of dance numbers including ballet, tap, folk and modern styles.

Alicia Hoggan, a senior dance major from Salt Lake City, said she thinks the dance concert went well.

She said she enjoyed all of the dance numbers in the concert, because she thought there was a lot of variety.

Hoggan said she enjoyed performing in "Why Not?" because it was fun to do.

Shani Worthen, a sophomore

responded well to the first movement in "Why Not?" choreographed by SUU assistant professor of dance Paul Ocampo.

"Why Not?" consisted of six songs by Queen and in the first movement several SUU male students danced to "I Want to Break Free."

Hoggan said she performed in the fourth movement of the "Why Not?" piece entitled "Crazy Little Thing Called Love."

Hoggan said she enjoyed performing in "Why Not?" because it was fun to do.

Shani Worthen, a sophomore



Students perform in the Faculty Dance Concert, *Journeys*, in the SUU Auditorium. The dance concert took place on Wednesday night.

## Delayed production to take stage Tuesday

**By SEAN MILES**  
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After several delays, the Stage 2 theatre production *No Way to Treat a Lady* will take the stage Tuesday and Thursday.

Director Wade Arave, a senior theatre arts major from Fairfield, Calif., said the show has been delayed for about three weeks because of licensing problems.

The original opening was supposed to be Feb. 21, Arave said.

The delay was because Stage 2 Productions could not get licensing for the music in the show, Arave said.

After receiving permission

to use the music, the show was again delayed so the cast could rehearse again with the music, he said.

"(We) have been able to piece (it) together really well," Arave said.

The extra time also allowed the cast to work on deeper character development.

The script for *No Way to Treat a Lady* is adapted from the novel by William Goldman, who also wrote *The Princess Bride*. Douglas Cohen wrote the script, music and lyrics for the theatre version, Arave said.

As of right now the production runs for approximately



Rhett Guter, a senior theatre arts major from St. George, moves to strangle Kristen Henley, a freshman communication major from Las Vegas, during rehearsals.

Wendy Penrod, a senior theatre arts major from Lehi, performs in the 2007 production of *The Vagina Monologues*. This year the event will take place March 10 and 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Starlight Room. Admission is \$5. All proceeds go to the Center for Women and Families and the Canyon Creek Women's Crisis Center.



## Vagina Monologues returns to SUU

**By ANGIE SMITH**  
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With its focus on womanhood and strong stance against violence toward women, *The Vagina Monologues* returns to SUU for performances March 10 and 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Starlight Room of the Sharwan Smith Center.

The production features stories collected in interview sessions by author Eve Ensler, as well as true experiences from women in Cedar City.

The show includes humorous and tragic pieces and is designed for mature audiences.

*The Vagina Monologues*, also referred to as V-Day, is a non-profit worldwide production that is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, according to the Web site [vday.org](http://vday.org).

According to the Web site, each year the production raises awareness for certain causes, such as the need for peace and an

end to armed conflict, which was the topic for 2007. This year the focus is on the reconstruction of New Orleans.

Since its beginning, global V-Day events have raised more than \$50 million in more than 120 countries, and in 2008 there will be at least 3,700 events, including the production in Cedar City, according to the Web site.

Cedar City has played host to *The Vagina Monologues* since Wendy Penrod, a senior theatre arts major from Lehi, brought the production to SUU in 2002.

"This show really, truly celebrates women and everything that they are," Penrod said. "Every woman and man should see it."

V-Day also spotlights "Vagina Warriors," men and women who have made a positive contribution to women's causes.

Past Vagina Warriors have included Carmen Alldredge, Student Disabilities Services coordinator, and Jordan Bull, a Parowan resident who attended SUU from 1999 to 2005.

Nick Yamashita, a masters of forensic science graduate student from Overton, Nev., also received the Vagina Warrior award for regularly offering women's self-defense courses through the Team T-Bird Karate club.

"The whole reason behind (having the defense classes) is simple," Yamashita said. "It's to teach people about rape (risks)."

Yamashita said people in Cedar City have the "unsettling" idea that since the town is small, there aren't crimes like rape.

"Research has proven that even small college towns have ... these problems, too," Yamashita said.

Yamashita said he appreciates *The Vagina Monologues*, its promotion of awareness and celebration of women.

"It's a good cause," Yamashita said. "I can't complain. It's a good thing."

Although *The Vagina Monologues* is meant to be a positive experience, people who are a part of the production are

See V-DAY, Page B2

BLOG: Movie Maven, The Birds  
Angie Smith

Whenever I'm ill, all I want to do is snuggle up in my cozy blue-striped pajamas with my green velour blanket and watch dozens of movies from my living room couch until my medicine knocks me out, which is precisely what I've been doing the past three days.

What I didn't expect, though, was to completely disregard all of the handsome new releases and instead fall in love again with Alfred Hitchcock.

I first saw *The Birds* when I was a wee lass and visiting my dad one Saturday night. I was concurrently terrified, disturbed and fascinated with Hitchcock's creation and have regularly screened the flick ever since.

My most recent viewing of the fowl-fest was over the weekend with my wingman Skott, who hadn't seen *The Birds* since the 20th Century.

And, on a sidenote, Skott graciously humored me when I rewound and rewatched (laughing hysterically the entire time) my favorite scene — the part near the beginning when Melanie Daniels is in the motorboat trying to look cute for Mitch as she approaches shore and she's unceremoniously dive-bombed in the head by a wayward seagull. Classic.

Everything about *The Birds* is perfect. The dialogue. The costumes. The tension. The attack sequences. The sound effects. The running children who look genuinely horrified as they bounce stuffed crows on their shoulders. Sheer Hitchcockian brilliance.

But somehow, in all of my adoration for all of these years, I had never noticed something rather significant about *The Birds*. It has no soundtrack.

And here I thought *No Country for Old Men* was innovative!

For a film to stand on its own, with no Danny Elfman or Hans Zimmer/Lisa Gerrard masterpiece to back its emotional states, is unheard of. And for me to go decades before noticing a lack of music in a movie is equally unheard of.

In fact, I even recently wrote a paper about how essential music is in movies, television and video games.

Yet there I was, nestled under my fuzzy blanket for one hour and 49 minutes before realizing that there was, in fact, only the screeching of birds and screaming of bloodied victims filling my ears.

Wow. That is some serious skill.

Suffice it to say that the next time I fall ill, I will most definitely host another date night with the filmmaking prowess of Mr. Hitchcock.

# ACCENT



Clockwise, from top left: The SUU Ballroom Dance Company Intermediate Ensemble performs a foxtrot; Daryl Brown, a freshman undeclared major from Salt Lake City, performs a traditional fire-knife dance; the SUU Ballroom Dance Company performs its finale; Algernon Brown, a Salt Lake City resident, performs a traditional Siva Afi; members of the Polynesian Club dance at the luau; the Touring Ensemble performs to "I'm Too Sexy"; Rachel Ku'upio Loo, a freshman information systems major from St. George and member of the Polynesian Club, dances; the Touring Ensemble performs a tango routine.

HEIDI EYSSER, LAURA WATKIN / UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

# Sizzling

## Firedancers, roasted meats prominent in cultural luau

By ANNA COLE  
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The Polynesian Club sponsored a luau Saturday evening, entertaining guests with plenty of food and traditional dances from several different Polynesian islands. The evening's menu was representative of what one would find at a Hawaiian luau, said Jared Ursua, a sophomore undeclared major from Kauai, Hawaii, and a member of the Polynesian Club. "Basically, this is what you would see if you went to a Hawaiian barbecue, if you went to some sort of get-together, whatever the situation might be, this is what you're going to get," he said. Guests were served their choices of potato salad, ribs, chicken, pork, rice and cake. Ursua said luaus often have plenty of meat dishes. "You're going to eat a lot of meat," he said. "That's why we have the highest obesity rate in the nation. It's fun. We love it." Pete Aiken, a Cedar City resident, said he

enjoyed the food and the atmosphere. "The atmosphere is good," he said. "Very friendly. A lot of the folks from the club have stopped by and said 'hi,' and asked us how we were doing." Guests ate their dinners to a background of Polynesian music. Shelly Callison, a sophomore management major from Cedar City, said she enjoyed the music and it added to the atmosphere. "The music right now, it's hip and pop," she said. "Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves." Aiken said he came to see the dancers and was excited to watch the show. "Some of the dancers attend our church, so they invited us to come," he said. Dancers performed a variety of traditional dances from Hawaii, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa and Tokelau. The evening concluded with a performance of a fire dance by Algernon Brown, a Salt Lake City resident, and Daryl Brown, a freshman undeclared major from Salt Lake City. In the interludes between dances, the

**"You're going to eat a lot of meat. That's why we have the highest obesity rate in the nation. It's fun. We love it."**

— Jared Ursua

See LUAU, Page B2

## Hot American, Latin dances in 'Swing'

By SEAN MILES  
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The Ballroom Dance Company performed a variety of swing routines and other dances in their spring concert, "Swing, Swing, Swing," Saturday in the Centrum Arena. Katie Robinson, a sophomore music major from Pleasant Grove, said the performance was entertaining. "They looked like they were having a good time," Robinson said. Ali Sekkat, a freshman criminal justice major from Las Vegas, said he thought the performance was "amazing, of course." Sekkat has been performing in dance companies or hip hop "crews" for 14 years, he said. Sekkat said the west coast swing was his favorite dance, which was performed to Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel." "Michael Jackson is an idol to me," he said. "I enjoyed dancing to his music." Mark Baker, an adjunct ballroom dance instructor and director of the company, said he is proud of the students' performances. "The performance went really

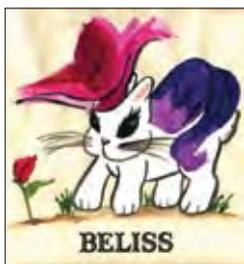


HEIDI EYSSER / UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

**Members of the Ballroom Dance Company perform a tango to "Ole Guapa."**

well," Baker said. "They had a lot of energy." The company has been preparing for this performance the entire semester, Sekkat said. Stephen Workman, a freshman biology major from Houston, said the performance of "You're the One That I Want" from the movie *Grease* was his favorite. The concert was marked by PowerPoint slides between most of the pieces that gave histories of the dance to be performed. Swing was the first dance that was an entirely American creation, according to one of the slides. Baker said he would have

changed the font of the slides if he had to change something in the performance. Sekkat said the finale, in which all three of the separate teams perform together in a group of about 60 students, was by far the most challenging piece to perform. The final piece was Baker's favorite because the whole company was involved, he said. "Seeing everyone dance together cohesively ... was rewarding," Baker said. The Ballroom Dance Company has been performing in and around Cedar City over the course of the semester. Several of the dances performed Saturday have also been performed for competitions during the semester. Baker said the intermediate team will tour California in the next couple of weeks. In addition, the tour team will travel to New York this summer to perform on the East Coast. According to a Ballroom Dance Company press release, the company typically does more than 100 performances each year in approximately 75 cities worldwide.



BELISS

PHOTO COURTESY OF BELISS  
Sister duo Beliss will perform music from their self-titled album at The Grind Coffee House today at 7 p.m.

## Beliss generates bliss

Beliss, a bizarrely eponymous sister duo comprising Belinda and Melissa Underwood, perform a gentle sort of indie pop in the vein of harpist Joanna Newsom and the tradition-honed art song. More than a simply relaxing band, Beliss takes simple instrumentation and simple vocal melody, meshing the two into a beautifully engaging amalgam. It's no surprise the two are from Portland, Ore., the home of any number of well-crafted indie-pop meta-hits. The two exercise an instrumental skill, with the tools of the trade involved ranging from the ubiquitous guitar and bass to ukulele,

violins, flutes and more. While it may be tempting to create a Phil Spector-style "Wall of Sound" with their classically trained skill, they instead opt to take an approach more fitting of the late Elliott Smith than The Ronettes. It's not terribly often music with a sense of calm such as this lands gracefully on listeners' ears, let alone hits them in more substantive ways. Beliss, though, manages to step from the path of any potential musical pitfalls: Each track is as strong as the last, and though much variety is not to be found from song to song, See BELISS, Page B2

MUSIC GEEK



MATTHEW MONTGOMERY

## Senior English majors present writing awards to composition students

By KIRSTIN BONE  
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Six students received SUU Writing Center Scriberian Awards in four different categories Friday after a reading of their winning works in the Artichoke Lounge. Amanda Utzman, a contest panel member and senior English major from Los Angeles, said the turnout for the award ceremony was amazing. "I have never seen it be standing-room only," she said. "The night

went really, really well." Utzman said the Scriberian Awards are all about the students. "The Scriberian is an essay contest for the composition classes — that's (English) 1010 and 2010," she said. "It's hosted by English majors for the students, so it's by the students for the students." The contest gives awards in four different categories, Utzman said. "We collect for four categories: 1010 - Argumentative, 1010 Expressive, 2010 Argumentative See ENGLISH, Page B2



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Heath Ledger as The Joker and Christian Bale as Batman star in *The Dark Knight*.

# Batman

Continued from Back Page

shallowness of the '90s. Really, since the invention of Batman in May of 1939, the Caped Crusader and his various friends and foes have been a mirror of our culture.

In the early '40s, Batman was a hardboiled detective-noir type. After World War II, Americans were weary of war and darkness and Batman became a paternal figure. In the '50s, Batman joined up with Superman, flew to outer space to fight aliens, and was criticized by many as a dangerous homosexual deviant. In the '60s, Batman became a campy, dancing creature while his villains became bungling robbers rather than ruthless killers.

Ah, Adam West. What would the world have done without you?

After the disastrous *Batman & Robin*, I was sure the Batman movie business was dead. Indeed, it was eight years before we were graced by *Batman Begins*, directed by Christopher Nolan. This movie not only resurrected Batman, but set it firmly in the stratosphere. With a focus on realism, and by utilizing some of the best actors alive, *Batman Begins* was most exciting because it brought with it the possibility of a modern series of Batman movies.

Nolan, who is responsible for other great films such as *The Prestige* and *Memento*, has also directed the next installment of the Batman franchise, *The Dark Knight*, set to release on July 18, caught my attention because it's bringing back

my old evil hero, The Joker.

After the ending of *Batman Begins* suggested The Joker would show up in the next movie, everyone played the "Who's it gonna be?" game, but I couldn't picture anyone but Jack Nicholson. When it was announced that Heath Ledger had the part, a collective cold chill ran down the movie-going public's back.

While Ledger made his name as a good-looking leading man, his talent was obvious. As the first images of him in full makeup came out, things became very exciting, very quickly. Here was a different Joker, one that seems perfect in today's society. As such, Ledger became part of the Batman legend.

Tales of Ledger's intense preparation for the part, which included long periods of isolation and insomnia (which possibly led to the accidental overdose of sleeping pills that killed him), forms a mythos around this new Joker that makes it irresistible.

I can't watch the trailer for *The Dark Knight* without getting goose bumps as The Joker says, "You see, to them you're just a freak... like me!" I thought it would be impossible for someone to play The Joker better than Nicholson, but I think we may have it here.

*The Dark Knight* will open July 18, and in a summer full of some of the most promising movies in years, this one has forced itself into my mind and demands to be seen. See it for the action, the story, The Joker — but don't forget that it is a mirror of our culture and what happened when The Joker looked in a mirror back in '89.

Josh Huntsman is a senior English major from Enterprise. He can be reached at [thejoshualee@hotmail.com](mailto:thejoshualee@hotmail.com).



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UTAH VALLEY HANDBELL CHOIR

Members of the Utah Valley Handbell Choir display their handbells. The choir will perform at 4 p.m. Saturday in the Thorley Recital Hall.

# Bells

Continued from Back Page

directing a handbell choir at his high school, he said.

Wyllie said getting members for a handbell choir takes effort. "It has taken years to get to where we are," he said.

Wyllie said most people only want to join something once it has been well established, so it was difficult at first to recruit and keep ringers.

"We may actually have extra ringers for the first time ever," Wyllie said.

The choir now loses only one or two ringers in a season compared to about five per season in years past, Wyllie said.

Wyllie said when she first started the choir she placed an advertisement in the BYU newspaper in order to recruit ringers.

"Most people came through word of mouth," Wyllie said.

# Green

Continued from Back Page

Buying recycled products can save money. Making a ton of paper from recycled material can save as many as 17 trees and will use 50 percent less water than making paper from virgin fiber, says the EPA. So the next time you purchase white office paper, look for the recycled brand. But beware of false labels. The EPA has guidelines on the content of all types of recycled products at [epa.gov/cpg/products.htm](http://epa.gov/cpg/products.htm).

Paper is the country's No. 1

disposable material. For every 100 pounds of household trash, 35 pounds are paper. Separate old newspapers and office paper for recycling in your community's trash collection.

Paper may also be used as mulch. Shredded white paper and newspaper can be used in gardens and plant beds. Place shredded material around plants as you'd use wood mulch. To cover the white, place a thin layer of wood mulch over the recycled brand. And don't worry about ink: most ink used in newspapers and white paper is soy-based and nontoxic.

Lawns and gardens can benefit from seaweed-based fertilizers.

Instead of spreading synthetic fertilizers, often made from petroleum and sewage sludge, go organic. Organic lawn fertilizers made from kelp and bone meal are high in nitrogen. Seaweed-based products provide "vitamins" and nutrients to lawns and plants.

Bone meal is high in phosphorus. Corn meal gluten naturally prevents weeds and crabgrass. Most of these products are available at landscape supplies in various forms. Ask around. Make some calls.

And mowing the lawn taller reduces the need for water during dry periods and prevents the growth of crab grass.



GARDEN SPLENDOR / THE WASHINGTON POST

Hydrangeas bloom in a garden. Organic mulch is an inexpensive green alternative.

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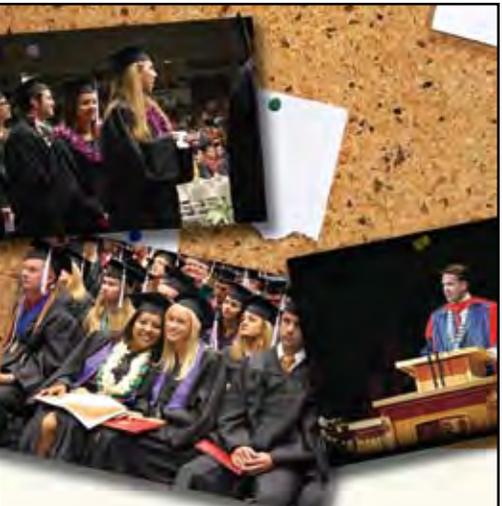
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BLOG: Movie Maven, Firefly Serenity  
Angie Smith

While sifting through ideas the past week for what I would write in my final Movie Maven blog entry, I considered chronicling the high points of the classic *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, the low points of the ridiculous *One Missed Call* and the rom-com points of the sublime *Roman Holiday*, but, admittedly, I wanted to write about something more endearing and bittersweet: the fated Fox series *Firefly* and its companion film *Serenity*.

In my few months in the newsroom I've picked up a few non-journalistic habits: quoting shows from MTV, testing my geographic knowledge with online games and watching lots and lots of movie trailers on my beautiful, giant iMac, to name a few.

I also gained a love for Joss Whedon.

For years I've meant to watch *Firefly*, and it's been sitting in my Netflix queue for months, but I finally watched it and loved it.

I never thought I'd be one for western sci-fi, but the balance of a low budget, tremendously clever wit, heartfelt tragedy and brilliant music were a perfect fit for me.

For weeks I watched and re-watched every episode of *Firefly*, plus the commentaries and bonus features, and I didn't want it to end. The crew of the ship was the perfect dysfunctional family and my parasocial partners-in-crime, and I had just learned all of the words to the theme song ("... take me out to the black, tell 'em I ain't comin' back ...").

Luckily, Marc and Rachel also loaned me *Serenity* (yay, thanks!).

The film picks up shortly after the series storyline ended and takes it to new levels of coldness, darkness and genuine heroism. And Jayne was back with lots of guns and muscles and attitude. Exactly what I had hoped for.

I look at *Firefly* and *Serenity* much like I do the *Lord of the Rings* films. They focus on a mismatched group of people on a quest — simple on the surface, but so well-written in their mannerisms and dialogue and interactions that they become essential cogs in the gears of fantasy, and if any part is missing the machine suffers horribly. Even casual fans recognized this.

How many freshly cancelled, very short-lived television shows are resurrected by the dedicated public to become a motion picture and subsequently increase in popularity? Now that is a mark of true quality.

Fortunately for Mr. Whedon, the cast and crew of *Firefly* and everyone who "gets it," *Serenity* granted the closure we previously lacked.

And to the executives at Fox: "I don't care, I'm still free. You can't take the sky from me ..."