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UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

Obia adds to his hectic schedule



ALYCIA ROCKEY | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Godson Obia, the newly appointed interim chair of the biology department, appointed Gary A. Bulla, professor of biological sciences, as the interim associate chair of the College of Sciences. Bulla has been working with Marina Marjanovic, who held it prior to help him transition into the position.

Obia is interim chair of biology department

By **STEPHEN DI BENEDETTO**
Staff Reporter

Godson Obia is a busy man. He handles the full-time job of

associate dean of the College of Sciences. Because of that job, Obia is in charge of the college's budget.

He also manages and oversees the workloads of faculty members within the entire college.

On top of that, Obia manages to teach Global Threats and Problems in the Physical Science Building.

Coming into this semester, Obia's busy schedule became hectic after he was named interim chair of the biology department. Obia did not hesitate to explain why he took the position.

"Because I'm crazy," he said, laughing.

Obia said he is crazy because he now has to juggle his associate dean

duties, his interim chair duties and his teaching duties.

Mary Anne Hanner, dean of the College of Sciences, said she chose Obia for interim because he brings expertise in leadership and management.

»» SEE INTERIM, PAGE 5

CITY | GROWTH

City to seek share of stimulus

Funding wanted for new water main, interchange

By **JOE ASTROUSKI**
City Editor

As Congress prepares to debate President Barack Obama's \$825 billion economic stimulus plan, the city of Charleston is already pushing for its share of the money.

The city has requested funding for two projects: a new water main for the water treatment plant and a new interchange north of Charleston to connect Illinois Route 130 to Interstate 57.

State Rep. Chapin Rose endorsed funding the proposed interchange in an open letter to Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Tim Johnson earlier this month.

Rose said the interchange would spur business growth in the industrial park on Charleston's north side.

"This is a critical access point to the interstate for the city of Charleston from an economic development standpoint," Rose said. "Construction is anticipated to create 80 to 120 construction jobs and as many as an additional 100 positions ... (at) the industrial park."

»» SEE STIMULUS, PAGE 5

LOCAL | WEATHER

Few inches of snow predicted

Freezing drizzle, light winds expected

Staff Report

Weather forecasters are calling for 3 to 4 inches of snow in the Charleston-Mattoon area by Tuesday night.

Kirk Huettl, a meteorologist of the National Weather Service in Lincoln, said the expected snowfall Monday night would continue this afternoon with a lull early this morning.

During the lull, light rain is possible.

"We did add some freezing drizzle (into the forecast)," Huettl said. "One good thing is the winds won't be that strong."

This winter has been fairly calm when it comes to snow and ice, but Huettl said temperatures are below normal.

Huettl said today's high temperature is expected to reach 20 degrees, but is normally about 35 degrees.

»» SEE WEATHER, PAGE 5

LOOKING AT OPPRESSION



ERIC HILTNER | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Brittany Staten, a freshman sociology major, sits to read a poster about the holocaust at "Beyond Words: Museum of Oppression" in the Grand Ballroom of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union on Monday night. Among the presentations and posters there was also the "Human Race Machine," which allows people take a picture of themselves to see what they would look like in six different races.

STATE | ISSUES

Pollution levels increase

IEPA report shows good air quality in rural areas

By **JOE ASTROUSKI**
City Editor

After a 10-year decline, air pollution levels in Illinois rose slightly during 2007, according to a report released earlier this month by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Still, air quality remained good for most of the year.

"Air quality during 2007 was either good or moderate more than 93 percent of the time throughout Illinois," the report said. "There were 24 days when air quality in some part of Illinois was considered 'unhealthy for sensitive groups.'"

In 2006, by contrast, only eight days had pollution levels considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. Air pollution at that level increases the risk of breathing problems for people with asthma and other respiratory diseases, according to the IEPA.

»» SEE POLLUTION, PAGE 5

CAMPUS | PHOTO OF THE DAY

Focus for a strike



KAROLINA STRACK | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

After taking a break and cheering on his friends while waiting his turn, 8-year-old Seth Higgins positions a bowling ball before rolling it down the alley Monday afternoon in the Union Bowling Alley in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union. Higgins, along with about 20 other children, bowled and played together as their parents looked on.

DENNEWS.COM | EXTENDED COVERAGE



• **Photo gallery** - Dennews.com will feature a photo gallery from the "Beyond Words: Museum of Oppression" event in the Grand Ballroom of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union. The three-day event continues today from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ENTERTAINMENT | A DAILY LOOK

Jackson's 'Thriller' planned for stage

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — "Thriller" a Broadway musical?

Producer James L. Nederlander says he has acquired the rights for a stage version of Michael Jackson's iconic music-video spoof of horror films.

The show will include songs

from two of the pop king's best-selling albums, "Thriller" and "Off the Wall."

"The Nederlanders and Michael Jackson represent live theater and musical excellence, so let the music begin," Tohme Tohme, a spokesman for Jackson, said Monday in a statement.

"I love the idea of making

'Thriller' a musical.

Girl meets boy, they fall in love, boy has big secret, now what?" said Nederlander, head of the company that owns nine Broadway theaters.

No word yet on who will write the book for the show or what songs will be included in the production, or who will direct and choreograph.

WHAT THE... | WEIRD, UNEXPECTED, BIZARRE NEWS

Art found at Tennessee charity sells for \$8,000

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A 100-year-old Ellsworth Woodward painting found in Goodwill's Nashville warehouse has sold for more than \$8,000.

Goodwill of Middle Tennessee spokeswoman Suzanne Kay-Pittman says a Boston bidder

bought the painting for \$8,101 late Sunday on Goodwill's online auction Web site.

Goodwill worker Susan McCullen says she was sifting through the charity's warehouse when she spotted its gold frame sticking out of a bin.

The water color depicts a wooden ship at an Italian port.

An attached letter says it was first bought for \$75 at the San Francisco Fair.

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Contact any of the above staff members you believe your information is relevant to at their provided e-mail address. You may also call 581-7942 or visit the student publications newsroom at 1811 Buzzard Hall.

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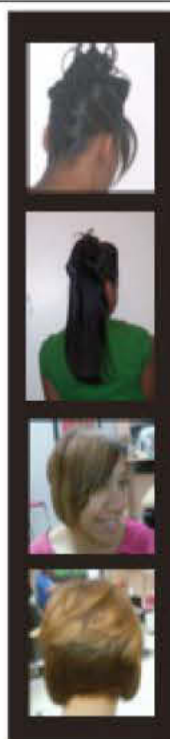
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CAMPUS | VOLUNTEER

Break offers opportunity to help

By JESSICA LEGGIN
Campus Editor

Natalie Gray decided to take an alternative approach to her spring break last year.

Gray took a trip to the L'Arche House in London, Ontario where she volunteered her time along with several other students to work with developmentally disabled people.

Gray, junior communication disorders and sciences major, experienced this trip through the Alternative Spring Break program, which gives students the opportunity to provide a service in different locations throughout the states.

Gray, chair for the program's planning committee, said this program allows students to draw in a different perspective about people and different cultures.

"It is nice to step away for a week and look at someone else's world from a different perspective," she said.

This year, "Be the One!" is the theme for the 17th Annual Alternative Spring Break program sponsored by the Student Volunteer Center. The program is providing 10 sites this spring break for students, faculty and community members to choose from.

Sites included are Nature Conservancy in Bristol, Fla., St. Vincent Family Center in Kansas City, Mo.,



PHOTO COURTESY OF EIU STUDENT VOLUNTEER CENTER

Participants of the Habitat for Humanity Alternative Spring Break pose for a photo while working on a house in Tennessee. It has been coordinated by the Student Volunteer Center in cooperation with the Newman Catholic Center.

Big Oak Boys Ranch in Gasden, Ala. And Big Oak Girls Ranch in Springville, Ala.

These sites give students the opportunity to work with abused and native children, homeless, and developmentally disabled. Gray said the program tries to select sites that have diverse opportunities for everyone.

"This will allow people to have a site to go to where they have some

interest in and get involved," she said.

Some of the sites are filled, but many are still open to be filled.

Before the groups go off to their various destinations, the organization has a send-off dinner that allow students, faculty and community members to receive more information about their trip.

The Newman Catholic Center provides housing for students who live

in the residence halls the night before they go on their trips, and some group leaders offer their apartments.

The program rents vans from Effingham to transport groups to the various locations of their choice.

Gray said during her spring break in Ontario, she worked and lived with autistic women.

"The organization (L'Arche House) sets up houses for the disabled throughout Canada," she said. "Three of us were in one house where we cleaned and interacted with the residents."

Gray said during her stay, one of the women had to be closely watched for fear of her running off.

"We had to keep all the doors locked and our bedroom locked because sometimes she would go through people's things, and we didn't want her to end up with anyone's medication," she said. "When I'm at home, personally, I do not keep my bedroom door closed, so it was just something I never thought of."

Despite being extra careful around her residents, Gray said the trip was still a great experience.

"It's a great experience to view and live in someone else's shoes for a while," she said.

Jessica Leggin can be reached at 581-7942 or at jmleggin@eiu.edu.

CAMPUS BRIEFS

Housing and Dining to award prizes

University Housing and Dining Services will sponsor its annual EIU Housing and Dining Night at Thursday's Eastern vs. Tennessee Tech men's and women's basketball games.

Prizes will be awarded for on-campus residents and will include a 2009-2010 residence hall or Greek Court single room upgrade, a high-definition LCD flat screen color TV and other prizes.

Winter Reading series presents works

Three Midwestern writers will present readings of their recent works for the debut of the Lions in Winter Reading Series.

Lissa McLaughlin starts the series at 7 p.m. Wednesday. McLaughlin, an editor and arts therapist in Madison, Wis.,

Peter O'Leary will present a reading at 4:30 p.m. Thursday. O'Leary is the publisher of the prominent literary journal LVNG.

Anastasia Royal, a first-time novelist, will present her work at 7 p.m. Thursday. As an artist, Royal has done radio and television voice-over work.

All readings will be held in the Doudna Fine Arts Center's Black Box Theater. Admission is free.

—Compiled by Associate News Editor Emily Zulz

UNIVERSITY | MEETING

Eastern economy at center of senate minds

By KRYSTAL MOYA
Administration Editor

A time-consuming session is anticipated on the status of Eastern's economy at the Faculty Senate meeting.

Interim Budget Director William Weber will speak to the senate about the budget's update since the last Council on University Planning and Budget meeting that was held on Dec. 12.

Faculty Senate will meet at 2 p.m. today in Booth Library Conference Room 4440.

"We basically want to know the decisions as to the economy and how Eastern falls within them," said Faculty

Senate Chair John Pommier. "What is our latest status and what do we know in the way of future expectations?"

Pommier explained that the senate aims to find out what is expected of the faculty in light of any new budget advancements. The senate is also concerned over the loss of any faculty positions, though not chiefly, he said.

"Of course we are concerned as to how the poor economy will affect faculty positions, but we haven't heard any reason to think that they would take layoffs into consideration," he said.

Weber said faculty positions most likely would not be affected by lay-

offs. Instead, the administration will focus attrition by gradually not filling positions left open by retiring faculty members.

Pommier explained that he suspects the majority of the meeting will focus on Weber's presentation.

"Eastern has some tough, challenging calls ahead of it," he said. "The updates should let us know what is expected of us."

In addition to the budget presentation, senators will learn about the new textbook rental facility.

"We want to know how this facility will operate and how it addresses the 'needs of the future,' as we have heard it being described," Pommier said. "We really don't know much

about it at all."

Carol Miller, deputy director of Textbook Rental Services, will enlighten the senate to the many reasons that Pommier has previously said are vague.

Miller will give an in-depth presentation on what is going to be streamlined, and how the facility will operate and function.

"We hope to get a deeper look at this new facility, and we hope to understand the facility's new operation processes before it opens in the spring of '10, which is pretty close," Pommier said.

Krystal Moya can be reached at 581-7942 or at ksmoya@eiu.edu.

BLOTTER

Justin Jasper, 25, of Belleville, was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol after a 1:08 a.m. Saturday arrest near the corner of 10th Street and Lincoln Avenue, said the University Police Department.

Ryan J. Peters, 25, of Charleston, was arrested at 1:30 a.m. Saturday near the corner of 10th Street and Lincoln Avenue on charges of aggravated battery and resisting/obstructing a peace officer, police said.

A possible scam reported may have occurred on Saturday through an online purchase, police said.

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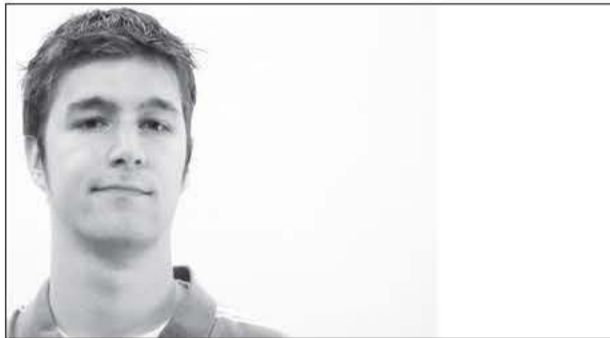
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MATT ZIMMERMAN

Time to elect real leaders

During this election cycle, much has been said about the "past eight years." Well, what about the past 10 years here in Illinois? Now imprisoned, Gov. George Ryan began the process of fiscally ruining the state. Enter Rod Blagojevich, supposed reformer with no record of reform, hailing from the most corrupt place in the country.

I understand his not wanting to raise taxes. That is good politics, especially if he was under the illusion that he was going to run for president.

Unfortunately, he was not able to find a way to cut wasteful spending. Surely, it could not be that difficult to stand up to the horse racing lobby and cut the tens of millions in subsidies the state provides.

The examples of this sort of thing are endless.

He was most certainly aware of the budgetary problems the state could not help avoid when he took office. He chose to ignore them.

The General Assembly was not able to do anything about it, nor did they try.

They were too busy banning smoking in bars than worrying about the budget.

Now, as the budget spirals out of control, schools and universities are suffering, social and health service providers that rely on payments from the state are struggling to pay their own bills and the State's pension systems are in crisis.

Illinois Senate President John Cullerton is currently talking about raising taxes and nothing should be off the table. In his words he is right, nothing should be off the table to save Illinois from fiscal ruin.

But if we are being honest, for our leaders in the General Assembly, fiscal discipline is never an option.

If taxes were raised, it would not help, simply because they will spend every dime they get on more waste. They will overestimate revenue and use fuzzy accounting to "balance" the budget while throwing money away instead of spending it on what should be our priorities.

They do it now, while we are in a recession, when our state is in the worst financial shape in decades.

Why would they do any different in the future?

What is the solution to this problem?

In two years, Illinois will have a chance to elect new leaders. Each statewide office will be up for election. We have a chance to change the dynamic within the General Assembly.

However, given our track record lately, it seems unlikely that we will make a good choice. Somehow, for the past three gubernatorial elections we have elected obvious crooks.

While we cannot turn on Fox News or CNN and get the latest coverage about our state and local elections, with the Internet, it is not hard to find news and analyses about the elections.

More people need to take greater interest and involve themselves in the political process if we every want to change this state, if we want to elect real leaders.

Matt Zimmerman is a senior political science major. He can be reached at 581-7942 or at DENopinions@gmail.com.

Drawn from the News | Yotam Zohar



"Oh my god... like, did you SEE Michelle Obama's dress last week?!"

2009

STAFF EDITORIAL

Volunteer program urges students to make a difference

When the phrase "spring break" comes to students' minds, several different images come to mind.

For many, the thought of debauchery in Miami or any other subtropical climate – fueled by sex and booze courtesy of whichever VJ is hot on MTV at the time – comes to mind.

For some, the phrase means a long road trip with friends or family, be it impulsive or planned.

For some, even lying on the couch watching reruns and gorging on junk food is enough of a vacation to get away from the stressful perils thrown at students throughout the semester.

But for a few, the phrase brings to mind the opportunity to travel with friends to a predetermined destination for the pleasure of helping others, sacrificing free time that could be had at home.

Alternative Spring Break, sponsored locally by the Newman Catholic Center Student Volunteer Center, is a chance for all students to volunteer themselves for the betterment of someone else's life.

Doris Nordin, coordinator for the event, said the event gives a chance for people to give to others who don't have the same opportunities as we might.

The event consists of several projects spanning all over North America, from Canada to Mexico.

At these sites, volunteers may work with children or in nursing homes, or may volunteer at Habitat for Humanity job sites, building and renovating houses for the less fortunate.

It's the perfect chance to do real work for a real cause.

Nordin said the most rewarding part of Alternative Spring Break is the experience one may take away from the event.

It's different to just talk about these sorts of events, but to

"Alternative Spring Break is an excellent opportunity for students to get in touch with fellow human beings who weren't given the same chances as the rest of us."

actually participate and share the same experiences and troubles with the people you came to help is an extremely rewarding feeling, she said.

All the event asks of students is one week out of their lives to dedicate to those in need.

A relatively small fee of \$150 is required to pay for transportation, accommodations, on-site meals and a T-shirt, although Nordin said students may receive a \$25 rebate if they sign up before Feb. 1.

Alternative Spring Break is an excellent opportunity for students to get in touch with fellow human beings who weren't given the same chances as the rest of us.

Rather than just talking about it and commending other students for participating, why not participate yourself?

If you want something rewarding out of Spring Break 2009, throw down a few dollars and help a good cause.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editorial is the majority opinion of *The DEN* editorial board. Reach the opinions editor at: DENopinions@gmail.com.

OTHER VIEWS ON THE NEWS

THE TRUTH ABOUT CONFLICT

BROWN U. — When Israel and its neighbors plummeted into violence in the summer of 2006, a group of friends and I discussed how strange it was that the sight of bleeding little children being rushed to hospitals failed to move the people responsible for the aggression on either side. How was it possible for anyone to watch their own people suffer death and damage? How was it possible for them to allow it to continue?

Needless to say, this outlook was slightly simplistic. It could only belong to people who have not witnessed a war.

My simplistic outlook was changed when the Brown student group M'kol haKivunim invited an insider from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to come to Brown last November to speak about his experiences. The speaker, former Israeli soldier Oded Na'aman, served during the Second Intifada in 2000 and now attends Harvard Graduate School.

Na'aman told a wide-eyed group of students about how he, like most other Israelis, served in the army not only because he was required to by the state but also because he believed in his country's right to exist and wanted to defend it.

He thought he would be fighting terrorists who annihilated the peace of everyone he loved.

However, he soon realized that most of the people he dealt with and pointed a gun at were innocent and poor Palestinian civilians. Along with his fellow soldiers, he found himself being harsh towards guiltless parents in front of their children. Eventually, the war changed the people the soldiers were as well. An innocent child's face no longer moved them, just as watching someone die no longer horrified them.

*Fatima Aqeel
Brown Daily Herald*

Letters to the editor can be submitted at any time on any topic to the Opinions Editor to be published in *The Daily Eastern News*.

The DEN's policy is to run all letters that are not libelous or potentially harmful. They must be less than 250 words.

Letters to the editor can be brought in with identification to *The DEN* at 1811 Buzzard Hall.

Letters may also be submitted electronically from the author's EIU e-mail address to DENopinions@gmail.com.

Interim

FROM PAGE 1

He will also bring experience in college administration to the position, she said.

Obia has served as associate dean for the past eight years.

Andy Methven, former biology department chair, requested a leave from administrative duties during the fall semester, Hanner said.

She said Methven would be working with colleagues on a research project this semester.

Methven's last day as chair was Dec. 31. Phone and e-mail inquiries to Methven were not returned.

Prior to the end of the fall semester, a search committee was formed to look for a replacement to Methven.

He was originally going to continue as chair until June 30, with the new chair taking control on July 1.

In February 2008, he announced his intention to step down as chair to the biology faculty.

The announcement came during a time of heated disputes between faculty and administrators of the department, most nota-

bly with a disagreement about the use of graduate assistants teaching classes.

Obia said he would now serve as interim chair until June 30, unless the person hired to the permanent position wanted to start working before July 1.

He said Methven intends to stay with the department as a professor.

Obia said he was the easiest person to make the transition to interim because the responsibilities are similar to his associate dean responsibilities.

"At that time, it would have been very difficult to get another faculty member to step in because that person was going to study the budget, workloads and faculty assignments," he said.

With his hectic schedule, Obia said he spends Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Life Science Building and spends Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in Old Main handling his associate dean position.

He has already held two faculty meetings where everyone not teaching class at that time attended.

In the past, groups of faculty would not attend meetings because of disagreements.

"They have been very receptive to what's going on," Obia said.

"They are responding very well."

He said he is talking to faculty members on both sides of issues that divided the department. Each individual has given him advice, he said.

"I don't believe that you make enemies," Obia said. "I believe you look at both sides of an issue."

He said he is not aware of any complaints about him being appointed as interim chair. He said he believes that it is OK to agree to disagree sometimes; however, Obia said he has to allow a person to speak his or her grievances.

"After all, this is not an authoritarian position," he said. "You are working with colleagues, and you have to show them that respect."

Obia said, while serving as interim chair, he has a variety of goals he wants the department to achieve.

The review to be a first choice program in the Graduate School will take place in April. Obia said he has been working with that department committee to prepare for the review.

"I know the department has quality, but because of negative publicity, some people don't know that," he said. "(The review) will be a chance to show what we can do."

The university is also expecting

budget reductions in state appropriations for the fiscal year.

Obia said he is working with others to figure out ways to make staff reductions in the department without diminishing the quality of instruction to students.

He said he is responsible for evaluating biology faculty members for tenure, promotion and merit.

As associate dean, he will then have to evaluate the 50-plus annually contracted faculty of the college.

"It will be difficult, but I think I'm up to the task," Obia said.

In addition to Methven leaving as chair, the interim associate chair of the biology department will also step down.

Marina Marjanovic will leave the position later this week after she requested for a leave without salary.

Obia said a colleague wanted her for a position at a new center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The leave will allow her to test out the position for six months. Marjanovic started as interim associate chair after Robert "Bud" Fischer decided to take a job at the University of Alabama-Birmingham this past summer.

"That complicated things even

more," Obia said of Marjanovic leaving.

With that, Obia appointed biology professor Gary Bulla to the interim associate chair position.

Obia said Bulla has been working with Marjanovic to help him transition to the position.

"He is a very well liked person there, and the faculty approved his appointment," he said.

Obia said his overall goal, as interim, is to showcase the strengths of the department. He said the faculty is talented, with diverse backgrounds.

"This is a high quality department," Obia said. "It is one of the best departments in the university. My job is to make sure people know and understand that."

He said his job is to operate transparently.

He said he needs to make sure what he says to a person's face is the same thing he says behind the person's back.

But with juggling all his duties, one matter is assured: Obia will get plenty of exercise this semester.

"It keeps me thin," he said, laughing.

Stephen Di Benedetto can be reached at 581-7942 or at sdbenedetto@eiu.edu.

Stimulus

FROM PAGE 1

The city is asking for stimulus money to also fund the replacement of the 125-year-old water main that connects the water treatment plant near McKinley Avenue to Lincoln Avenue.

Though the present water main still works, it needs to be replaced, said Curt Buescher, Charleston Public Works director.

"The current (main) is fine ... we haven't had any leaks or anything like that, but the bottom line is that it's very old and needs to be replaced," Buescher said.

Buescher also said the city needs to lay the new water main before the

"The driving force behind that is that we still want to resurface 20th Street."

— Curt Buescher, Charleston Public Works director

city can begin a planned roadwork project.

"The driving force behind that is that we still want to resurface 20th Street," Buescher said, adding that traffic for stores like Wal-Mart has worn the street's surface. "We have to have all the subsurface work done before we do any resurfacing."

Joe Astrouski can be reached at 581-7942 or at jmastrouski@eiu.edu.

Pollution

FROM PAGE 1

Pollution also reached a level considered "unhealthy" for the general population once during 2007, a level never reached during 2006.

But while pollution levels rose in other parts of the state, air in the Charleston area remained relatively clean.

In the Decatur study-area, which includes Charleston, 74.8 percent of days in 2007 had "good" air quality, while the other 25.2 percent had "moderate" air quality. There are more than 80 study areas in the state.

Belayet Khan, an associate pro-

fessor who teaches climatology, said rural communities such as Charleston often have good air quality.

"Here in Charleston — in a rural area — we really don't have anything that would ... degrade air quality," Khan said. "The air quality here is much better than that in a big city."

The Illinois EPA report emphasized that air quality throughout the state improved between 1998 and 2007.

According to the report, carbon monoxide levels dropped 48 percent, sulfur dioxide levels fell 29 percent and lead levels fell 20 percent.

Joe Astrouski can be reached at 581-7945 or at jmastrouski@eiu.edu.

Weather

FROM PAGE 1

Gary Reed, director of Facilities, Planning and Management, said the grounds department monitors weather forecasts so they are ready for a large snowfall.

"We do what we can to work with Mother Nature's mood swings," Reed said.

Mark Hudson, director of Housing and Dining Services, said building service workers made sure there was enough ice melt by the doors and that shovels were ready to clear the snow.

"If the forecast looked more ominous, we might also stock up on food to cover a potential missed or delayed delivery due to weather," he said.

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Whitchurch

FROM PAGE 8

Additionally, the Panthers currently sit with the sixth longest active home-winning streak in the nation with 15 consecutive wins in Lantz Arena, a school record.

Morehead State and Murray State are tied with a handful of teams in eighth with 13 consecutive wins at home.

The longest in the nation is No. 1 Connecticut, currently riding a 33-game home-winning streak.

So it is obvious that home-court advantage is critical, and whichever of those teams does not slip up is likely the team that will come out as conference champions.

Which is why the Panthers' upcoming four-game home stand is so critical.

They take on three conference foes during the home stand (the fourth being a non-conference battle with Illinois-Chicago on Feb. 4).

Included in the stretch is Tennessee Tech and Jacksonville State, two of the three teams the Panthers beat on the road this year, but the third is the most intriguing.

The Panthers will take on Southeast Missouri on Feb. 7. The Red-

hawks handed Eastern one of its two OVC losses this season by coming from behind on Jan. 10 in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

If the Panthers win the three OVC games during this stretch, only last-place UT Martin and first-place Murray State loom on their home schedule for the rest of the season.

Of course, the Murray State battle, being on Senior Night against the team ahead of the Panthers in the schedule, could be huge.

If both teams win out up to that point, the game would essentially be played for the conference championship, with only two games remaining after that.

Of course, taking care of business at home has almost been a given for the Panthers this year.

The real struggle will be pulling off road wins, as they are only 3-7 away from Lantz Arena this year.

So while the home schedule looms large, the key will be pulling off a few road wins as well, and hoping that Murray State, Tennessee State and Morehead State all falter at some point down the line.

But if recent history is any indicator, a sweep at home is likely.

Collin Whitchurch can be reached at 581-7944 or cwhitchurch@eiu.edu.

PANTHER BRIEFS

Walters selected for All-Star game

Former Eastern defensive end Pierre Walters was selected to participate in Saturday's Texas vs. The Nation Collegiate All-Star game at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas.

Walters ranks third all-time at Eastern in tackles for loss.

The game will be televised nationally on CBS College Sports.

Women's tennis picks up first win of season over SIUE

The Eastern women's tennis team won its first match of the season on Saturday against Southern Illinois Edwardsville, 4-3.

Eastern junior Hayley Homburg won at No. 3 singles in three sets, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. Sophomore Abby All-

gire won 7-6 (5), 6-1 at No. 4 singles. Freshman Juliana Frey won at No. 5 singles, 6-1, 6-3. Freshman Annie Egan won at No. 6 singles, 6-0, 6-2.

—Compiled by Sports Editor Kevin Murphy. He can be reached at 581-7944 or at kjmurphy@eiu.edu

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE | BY STEPHAN PASTIS



GET FUZZY | BY DARBY CONLEY



Start

FROM PAGE 8

Laser said this contributes to the low shooting percentage to the combination of the team's zone defense and the ability to rebound defensively, which limits opponents to only one shot per possession.

Junior guard Romain Martin said he had high expectations coming into the season and the team is where he expected at the midway point.

Martin said defense is the strength of the team.

"We have done a good job stopping people," Martin said. "That has been how we have won games. Our strong point has been post play. (Junior center Ousmane) Cisse has been doing a good job with the boards."

Cisse has improved considerably in almost every major category for the Panthers so far in conference play.

Last year the center averaged 6.4 points per game along with 6.4 rebounds per game. This season the big man is scoring 11.2 points to go along with 8.3 boards.

Martin said the team needs to work on shot selection and taking better shots in the second half of OVC play.

Laser said the key for the Panthers in the second half would be to improve the team's transition offense

and to limit turnovers.

Eastern is negative in turnover margin with a minus-1.44 per game which is seventh of 10 teams and have committed 128 turnovers in conference play.

The Panthers (8-11) began the season with eight new players, four junior college transfers and four freshmen. Laser said even through the halfway point, they continue to get better.

"They are meshing well. It's just a learning experience playing at the Division I level," Laser said. "It's about learning the game and learning the system and they are starting to pick that up well."

Junior guard T.J. Marion, a Southeastern Illinois College transfer, has made the biggest difference for the Panthers earning his way into the starting lineup and carrying the Panthers in a number of games down the stretch.

Marion is the team's second leading scorer in conference play with 11.3 points per game.

The Panthers have not finished with a winning record in league play since the 2002-2003 season when they went 9-7.

In their 13 years of OVC competition, the Panthers have only had four seasons where they finished with a .500 or better record in league play.

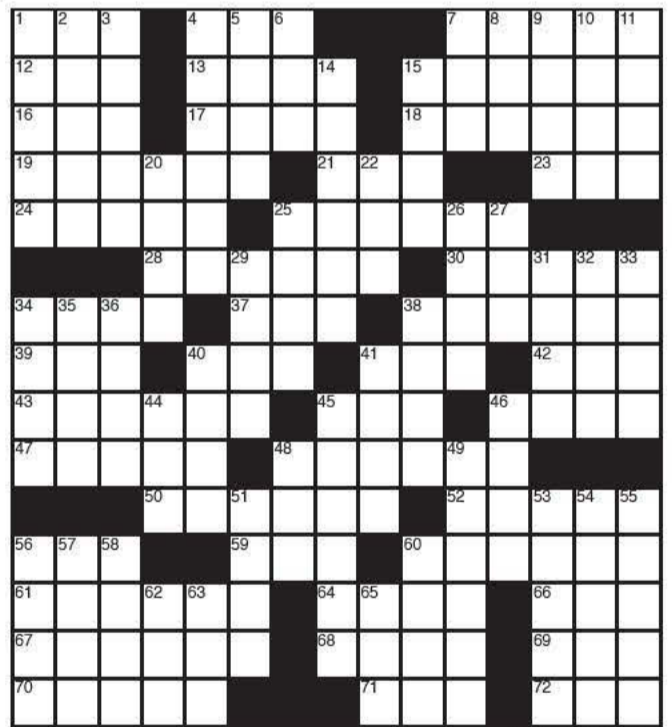
Dan Cusack can be reached at 581-7944 or dscusack@eiu.edu.

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 1223

- ACROSS**
- 1 A Turner
 - 4 Plopped (down)
 - 7 Critic, at times
 - 12 Seine sight
 - 13 Oklahoma city
 - 15 "Boom" precursor, in song
 - 16 Unit of cell phone usage: Abbr.
 - 17 Actress Conn
 - 18 Snare again
 - 19 The Wizard of Menlo Park
 - 21 Start of a Latin 101 conjugation
 - 23 Liquid meas.
 - 24 Staff again
 - 25 Show utter disrespect for
 - 28 Went smoothly
 - 30 Three trios
 - 34 City of 100,000+ or the lake it's on
 - 37 Patriotic org.
 - 38 Thin layer
 - 39 Parisian possessive
 - 40 Thanksgiving time: Abbr.
 - 41 Rocket scientist Wernher _____
 - 42 Firm up
 - 43 One with absolutely no manners
 - 45 "Awesome!"
 - 46 Limerick land
 - 47 Part of some joints
 - 48 Screenwriter Ephron and others
 - 50 Policy of many hotel shuttles
 - 52 Title giver
 - 56 Engine additive
 - 59 Medical suffix
 - 60 Main course only
 - 61 Moses vis-à-vis the Red Sea
 - 64 "Look what ____!"
 - 66 Game with matchsticks
 - 67 Biblical landing site
 - 68 Eat by candlelight, say
 - 69 Whitney after whom Whitneyville, Conn., is named
 - 70 Pave over
 - 71 Univ. aides
 - 72 Badge flasher: Abbr.
- DOWN**
- 1 Stove feature
 - 2 Skip over
 - 3 Shade of blue
 - 4 Arizona locale famous for its red rocks
 - 5 Have ____ with (know well)
 - 6 Prescription abbr.
 - 7 "Norma ____"
 - 8 Technique
 - 9 Rain check?
 - 10 Part of Q.E.D.
 - 11 Criticizes
 - 14 It's a wrap
 - 15 Easy pace
 - 20 MS. enclosure
 - 22 Season opener?
 - 25 Balkan native
 - 26 ____ even keel
 - 27 Monique ou Dominique
 - 29 Object of many screams
 - 31 Not final, at law
 - 32 Cabinet dept.
 - 33 Gallery on the Thames
 - 34 Coup d' ____
 - 35 Descartes who thought "I think ____"
 - 36 Hasn't left
 - 38 City in California or New Jersey
 - 40 iPod type
 - 41 Actor Kilmer and others
 - 44 "____ Dieu!"
 - 45 Made good on, as a loan
 - 46 Those, in Madrid
 - 48 Unfavorable
 - 49 Battery poles
 - 51 Libel, e.g.
 - 53 Dug
 - 54 Ancient Roman magistrate
 - 55 "Please ____" (invoice request)
 - 56 Fight, but not all-out
 - 57 Weight allowance
 - 58 Backside, slangily
 - 60 Jazz singer Simone
 - 62 La preceder
 - 63 Ring setting
 - 65 Dah's counterpart



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Boston College at Maryland |
6:30 p.m. on ESPN2

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Nebraska at No. 14 Kansas State |
7 p.m. on FSN

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
No. 16 Purdue at Wisconsin |

SCOREBOARD

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
No. 8 Marquette 71, Notre Dame 64

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
No. 19 Virginia 75, Clemson 67

NBA

Phoenix 03, Wash gton 87

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COLLIN WHITCHURCH

Home
court
critical

Home-court advantage has always been a critical part of college basketball.

Duke has the "Cameron Cra-zies," Illinois has the "Orange Krush," Michigan State has the "Izzone." All student sections that have become well-known for making their home arenas insufferable for opposing teams.

While the arenas in the Ohio Valley Conference are not quite on par with that of Duke, Illinois, or Michigan State, home-court advantage has become just as critical.

Currently, the top four teams in the OVC for women's basketball, Murray State, Eastern Illinois, Tennessee State and Morehead State, are a combined 35-0 in their home arenas.

Conversely, all four of those teams have losing records away from their home.

>> SEE WHITCHURCH, PAGE 7

MEN'S BASKETBALL | MID-SEASON ANALYSIS

Team not surprised by start

Players confident their strong play will continue in second half

By DAN CUSACK
Staff Reporter

Eastern men's basketball sophomore guard Tyler Laser is not surprised by the first half of the team's Ohio Valley Conference schedule, even though the rest of the OVC is probably in shock.

"We had high hopes for this season," Laser said. "I think our talent is there, I don't think our record shows how good we really are. I think we lost some games we should have won. We are right in the chase in this league, so I think we are somewhere where we thought we would be."

The Panthers were picked to finish ninth in the conference in the preseason polls, but through nine games with nine remaining, Eastern sits in a tie for fourth place with Murray State at 5-4. Eastern has sported only a 23-63 record overall in the past three seasons and a 17-43 record in the league in three seasons.

The last season the Panthers won more than six OVC games was during the 2004-05 season when they went 7-9 in the league, and they have not been to the conference tourney since then.

How have the Panthers done it? Lantz Arena has been good to head coach Mike Miller's team as they are 3-1, including a 67-61 win against the conference's second place team - Morehead State.

Defensively the Panthers have been one of the toughest teams in the league, only allowing 63.7 points per game and are plus-1.6 in scoring margin. Eastern has been able to get the tough stops down the stretch and have wreaked havoc, holding teams to a league-low 40 percent field goals.

They also have held teams to the second-lowest in 3-point percentage at 31.3 percent.

>> SEE START, PAGE 7



KARLA BROWNING | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Junior guard T.J. Marion holds on to the ball as two Morehead State players come in from both sides to block his shot during the game on Jan. 17 in Lantz Arena. The Panthers beat Morehead State 67-61.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL | MID-SEASON ANALYSIS

Panthers in thick of race for championship

Team takes pride in not looking ahead to key scheduled games

By COLLIN WHITCHURCH
Assistant Sports Editor

From the beginning of the season it was clear that the goal of the Eastern women's basketball team was nothing less than an Ohio Valley Conference Championship and a trip to the NCAA Tournament.

Couple that with the OVC coaches predicting that the Panthers would win the conference in their preseason poll, it was obvious that high expectations were in order for this year's team.

So with the OVC season half-over, it is no surprise that Eastern

(13-7, 7-2 OVC) is sitting just one game out of first place in the conference, right in the thick of the battle for a conference championship.

Murray State (13-6, 8-1) leads the conference, and Tennessee State (11-9, 7-2) is tied with the Panthers for second.

The Panthers have re-iterated time and time again about not looking ahead and taking it one game at a time, and despite a recent slip-up at Murray State and a less-than-stellar showing in a win at Tennessee Martin, they have been able to stay focused against each opponent as the season progressed.

"We just take it one game at a time and get ready for each opponent when they're next up," senior guard Megan Edwards said after the team defeated Morehead State on

Jan. 17.

The biggest problem for a top-level team like the Panthers is often the "trap game," a game right before or after an important game that teams often overlook.

While the close win against last-place UT Martin resembled that of a "trap game" considering it came two days after the team's loss at first-place Murray State, head coach Brady Sallee said he did not think that was the case.

"I really don't think we had a hangover," Sallee said after the win. "The team did a good job of getting over (the Murray State game). We were prepared and they played hard so I think it didn't have much to do with it."

The Panthers lost only one player from last year's squad and have

been lead by most of the same players from a year ago. Senior forward Rachel Galligan, currently with the fourth most points in Panther history, leads the team averaging 15.9 points per game and is also the leading rebounder at 6.7 per game.

Senior guard Ellen Canale is second to Galligan in both categories with 10.3 points per game and 5.8 rebounds per game.

With nine OVC games remaining and a rematch against Murray State looming on Senior Day on Feb. 21, the prospects of the Panthers looking ahead to that rematch are there, but based on the team's production throughout the season, it would not be expected.

Collin Whitchurch can be reached at 581-7944 or cfwwhitchurch@eiu.edu.

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