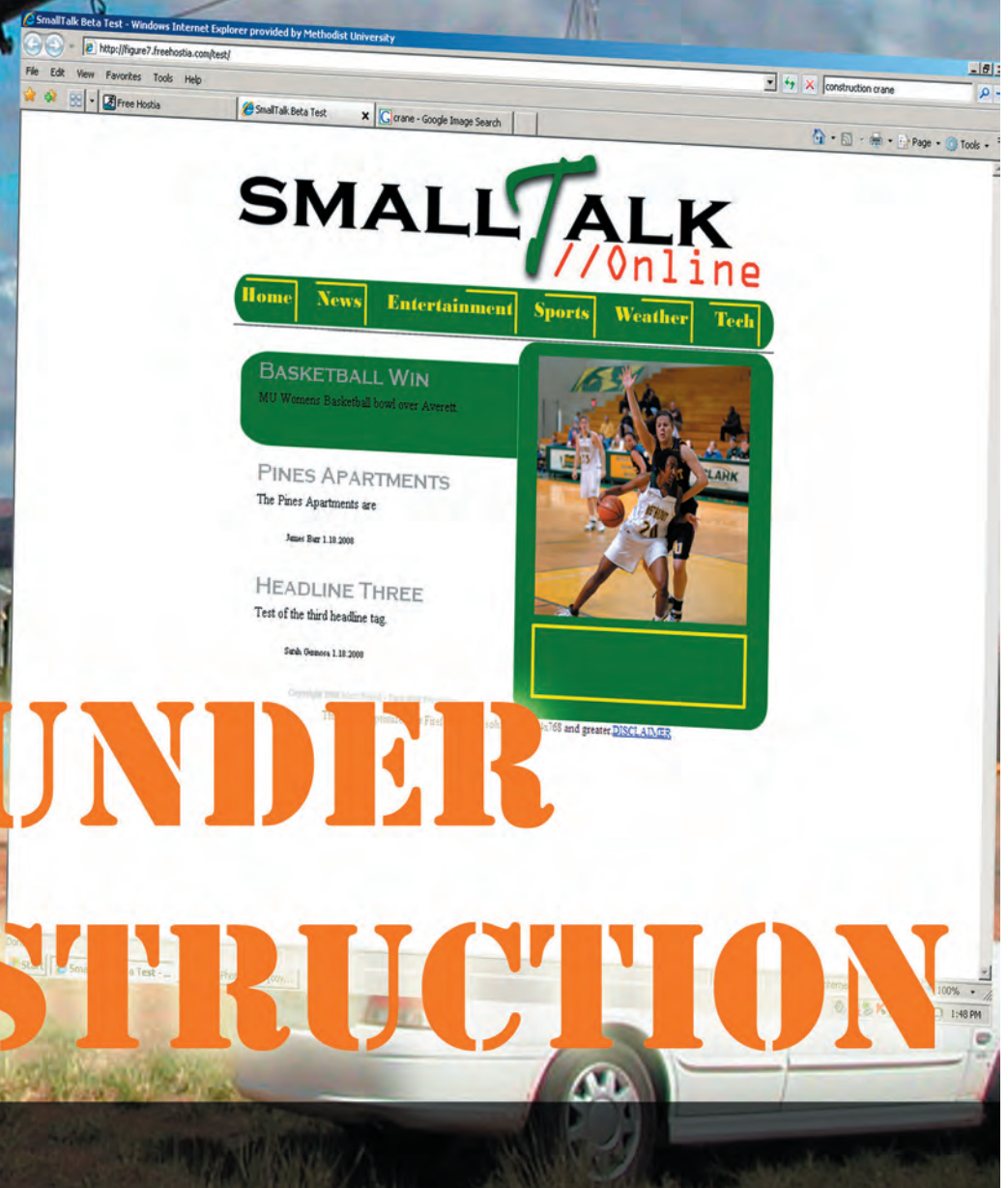


JAN. 28,
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small TALK

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smallTALK is the student-run newspaper of Methodist University. It is published every other week throughout the school year. The newspaper is editorially independent of Methodist University, and any ideas and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the faculty, staff and administration of Methodist University.

smallTALK welcomes Letters to the Editor. All letters should be delivered to the Student Media office on the second floor of Bern's Student Center or sent via e-mail to ashgenova@yahoo.com. Story suggestions should be sent to the same address.

Students are free to join smallTALK at any point in the school year. Meetings are every Monday at 4:30 p.m. in the Heritage Dining Room.

SGA president takes staff position

*Daniel Lee
Staff Writer*

J. T. Rimbey, the director of recruiting for the Professional Golf Management Program (PGM program), has resigned and left a familiar face in his place. The former Student Government President Landon Bentham is taking the job.

"I was just recently hired, and my position doesn't officially begin until Jan. 21," Bentham said. "My job is to recruit students into the PGM program and get them through the admis-

sions process. I'm excited to get going and help this university in its enrollment procedure."

Bentham was hired shortly after submitting a résumé and application for the position. He has been a student at Methodist for three and a half years.

Rimbey could not be reached for comment. Bentham stated that all questions regarding Rimbey's resignation should be voiced to Jerry Hogge, Director of Professional Golf Management. Hogge was also unavailable for comment.



Left, J. T. Rimbey celebrates receiving his Master's degree at Winter 2007 graduation. Photo by Roxanna Ross.

Right, Landon Bentham, the new director of PGM recruiting. Photo by Ashley Genova





The Pines Apartments on Methodist's Campus
All Photos By Margina Coccozza

Old as the Pines

*Daniel Lee
Staff Writer*

The Pines Apartments may not be housing students in future years. The administration is beginning to look at demolishing the apartments and building an addition onto the Cape Fear Commons.

"The Pines Apartments complex is the first resident hall built on Methodist University campus," said Clayton. "It was built in the year 1960 and currently houses 33 residents."

"In 1963, newer dorms were constructed and the Pines became faculty apartments. Over the years, enrollment grew, and the Pines became student apartments again," he said.

The Pines are a part of a 22 acre tract known as "College Centre." College Centre is on a 50 year lease by the Methodist College Development Corp.

The Development Corp. intended to develop the tract for commercial and professional use.

According to Clayton, several proposals were made by local businesses to use the land, but nothing ever materialized. Currently, the only commercial property on the College Centre area is the BB&T bank.

Clayton also stated that due to the Pines' age, the facility is in constant need of upgrade and repair.

"We will continue to do deferred maintenance and repairs on the Pines as the students continue to use them, but there are no plans to do any major renovation of the facility," said Clayton.

"In the long term, the Pines, as well as the two computer/security offices will eventually have to be replaced on our campus," Clayton said about the plans for future demolition.

There is no tentative date scheduled for demolition, but that in his opinion, the Pines Apartments would probably be demolished in three to five years.

Clayton mentioned the possibility of constructing a third Cape Fear Commons by 2009.

He also said that Methodist University Business Affairs is talking with an architect about the design of the new facility. They are considering building the new resident hall with four floors, since it

is to be built at a lower elevation than the current Commons.

Despite the need for repair and possible demolition, Clayton said that the Pines Apartments still appear to be a popular choice for students.



To the left and above are bathrooms in the Pines.

Methodist Gets Money for Much Needed Project

*Ashley Young
News Editor*

Methodist will receive \$399,500 for a Methamphetamine Educational Training Project. The project will teach Methodist students, law enforcement officers and other officials how to recognize methamphetamine labs and clean them up with little to no contamination of surrounding environment.

The program will involve training on working with the methamphetamine labs, analyzing the labs and the proper clean up involved with the labs.

"In addition to poisonous gas and threat of fire or explosion, a minimum of five to seven pounds of chemical waste are produced for each pound of methamphetamine manufactured," said Maria Sikoryak-Robins, director of university publications, in a press release.

"Our faculty members are developing this training program in response to the needs of the local community and the State of North Carolina to increase advanced technology used in the field," said Dr. Elton Hendricks, the univer-

sity president. "We can assist law enforcement, the first responder, and environmental personnel utilizing this funding secured by Congressmen Bob Etheridge and Mike McIntyre and Senators Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr." "Methamphetamine labs' by-products of reactions are quite hazardous and could take months or even years to clean up," said Dr. John Fields, Chair of the Chemistry Department.

Dr. Fields also said that the simulator, which will be here at Methodist, "is the first in the nation to have software with virtual reality of different methamphetamine labs."

"I think it's great for both Methodist and law enforcement in general. The better we can equip law enforcement, the better we can decrease problem of methamphetamine labs," said Dr. Fields.

Methamphetamine is commonly used for the drug, speed, and can be prescribed as a stimulant. Methamphetamine is extremely dangerous, due to the risks of contamination it causes, and the labs cause health risks.

Mr. Methodist Pageant Cancelled

Staff Report

The Mr. Methodist Pageant of 2008 has been cancelled due to a lack of contestants. The theme of the show was supposed to be country/western.

The plans for the pageant fell through when only a few male students picked up applications. On the Jan. 18 deadline, no appli-

cations or entry fees were turned in.

The \$25 entry fee would have benefited the Child Advocacy Center, an organization that helps abused children.

Nothing is known about next year's Mr. Methodist Pageant, but the time of the show may change from its usual late January time spot to another time.



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Study Abroad Programs Under Investigation



Kevin Zhou
(UWire)

Harvard officials confirmed Tuesday that they received a subpoena from the New York Attorney General's Office regarding an investigation into how the University approves contracts for its study abroad program.

General Andrew Cuomo's investigation will examine how contracts with study abroad

General Attorney Andrew Cuomo is in charge of the investigation.

program providers are awarded and whether universities have received benefits in exchange for providing contracts to a study abroad program, according to The New York Times.

Questions have been raised in the past year over how some providers offer colleges rebates, stipends, junkets, and other perks, arrangements that critics say are questionable when not disclosed.

Other universities that are being investigated include Columbia, Brown, and Northwestern.

Harvard spokesman John D. Longbrake said that the University received the subpoena late last week, and that it is still under evaluation. He declined to comment on what information the attorney general was seeking or what practices were under investigation.

The investigation into Harvard and the other universities centers on questions about the relationships between the program providers and the universities, and the manner in which students are billed for study abroad programs, according to The Times.

It remains unclear how seriously Harvard's study abroad program will be affected by the probe, according to James E. Tierney, a former Maine Attorney General who is now the director of the National State Attorneys General Program at Columbia Law School, because it appears as though the investigation is still in the fact-gathering stage.

"It depends on what he finds out," said Tierney, referring to Cuomo. "The question is what kind of resolution there would be."

Tierney, who stressed that he was unfamiliar with the details of the case, added that it is not

uncommon for attorneys general to investigate institutions in states other than their own.

"He has the ability to investigate unfair and deceptive practices that have been used against New York residents," he said. "The basis of his jurisdiction is whether or not New York residents have been deceived or harmed in some way."

Recent months have seen increased scrutiny regarding the financial practices of study abroad programs.

A report issued last month by the D.C.-based NAFSA: Association of International Educators said that there existed "potentially questionable financial arrangements between institutions and program providers and questionable credit-transfer policies," and brought to light issues regarding "the challenge of integrating study abroad into all aspects of an institution, and the unique risk-management and quality-control issues inherent in study abroad."

"All institutions of higher education should have general conflict-of-interest policies, which typically include prohibiting arrangements that result in personal benefit," the report stated. "Contracts with study abroad programs should be sufficiently clear regarding the details of expected services and payments, and any other additional arrangements between the provider and the university."

In the past six years, Harvard's study abroad program has undergone dramatic expansion. Last academic year, 659 students participated in the study abroad program, over a 300 percent increase since 2001, according to the Office of International Programs.

Cuomo, whose office did not respond to repeated requests for comment, previously led an extensive investigation of the student loan industry that forced policy changes both at universities and within the lending industry.

New smallTALK Website On the Way

A Staff Report

smallTALK's website has been neglected in the past months... but no longer.

With the talents of Matt Bietzel and Austin Bordeaux, the website has a new look and

an easy-to-navigate setup.

Only a few stories are posted on www.smalltalkmu.com, but the website will have complete issues online in the upcoming weeks. Stay posted for weekly website updates and new stories.

Congratulations to the Winter Graduates of 2007!



The Class of Winter 2007 climbs the stairs as they prepare to graduate. Photos by Roxanna



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Opinions

New fad of 'almost dating' causes confusion

Marissa D'Orazio
(UWire)

Has anyone heard about that fire in Newcomb that almost burnt all of U.Va. to a crisp? Did I tell you about how my friend almost dumped her fiancé, but now they are happily married with three children? Perhaps you could assume that I almost decided to turn over a new leaf, leave my bitter ways behind me and not exploit past romantic interests in a Cav Daily column?

As you might have guessed, "almost" is the key word in all of these sentences.

In our attempts to cope with the temporary nature of college, we have created a convenient institution I would like to dub "Almost Dating."

Almost Dating (noun) -- A condition that falls somewhere between the "It's Complicated" and "In a Relationship" designa-

tions on the Facebook availability spectrum, often characterized by engaging in lack-of-commitment activities such as "hanging out," or "grabbing lunch" so often that your other friends see you together and assume you are dating. When your friends make this fatal error, you must explain to them (in private) that no, although you both appear to be mature individuals in a healthy relationship, you are in fact both self-conscious dweebs too afraid of rejection to DTR.

Face it, we live in an age so detached by technology that the thought of having a real conversation with our (kinda) significant others sends us into a panic attack. So we keep our precious cell phones close to us in our pockets, hoping that it will vibrate alive with messages of nonchalant invitations to chill casually. When that message comes through (which nine times out of 10, it won't) you will be sure to dress down for the

occasion. And if your hang-out session turns into a make-out session (which 99 times out of a 100, it won't), don't get your hopes up. Just because some dude kisses you, that doesn't make him your boyfriend. What do you think this is, "High School Musical Three?" Grow up.

Almost Dating is confusing, but it significantly reduces the number of awkward conversations you have to have. If you're cool with not being official, you don't have to ask that age-old lame question, "What are we?" or utter the declaration we can no longer use thanks to Avril Lavigne: "I want to be your girlfriend." Instead, both parties can tread the grey blurry lines in melodramatic peace.

You don't have to call them on a regular basis ... but you should call them at least once a week or so to let them know that this "thing" you have is still on ... sorta. Until someone decides it isn't. In which

case, you shouldn't feel obligated to let the other one know it's off. You can't break up with someone if you were never going out in the first place. I mean, if it isn't on Facebook, then no one has to create that humiliating broken heart JPEG on the newsfeeds of friends and loved ones, am I right?

Maybe it is the modern trade-up mentality that has led us to these flimsy semi-relationships. As much as I love my iPod, I haven't gotten too attached to it because I know that in a few years, I'll be able to trade it up for a fancier model. While Almost Dating, a boy can simply go to the Apple Store and trade their lame iPod right then and there for one with bigger breasts, err ... more gigs of memory. He doesn't have to mail it in and then sit around and wait iPodless.

I know it is wrong to be obsessed with labels. But labels really are necessary. If my sugar and

my flour weren't clearly labeled, how would I know which would make my coffee sweet and which would make my coffee lumpy? It is common courtesy to let your special friend know where he or she stands, even if your voice cracks 26 times in the process. If you refuse to have this conversation, you will attend parties together where your mutual friends see you two any where from holding hands to all over each other. They will ask in their obtrusive drunken bravado, "So, you guys goin' out?" At which point one of you will shrug and the other will vehemently shake their head.

The Almost Dating Elephant is one that will never leave the room. One of you has got to man (or woman) up and ask the other one out for real. Otherwise, you could be wasting your time uploading all of your favorite songs onto an iPod that isn't even yours.

Do you have what it takes to be a smallTALK columnist?

smallTALK needs a bright and interesting new column to replace Remille's Rhetoric. Are you up to the job? Come up with an idea and show us your stuff!



Send a 250-300 sample of your column along with three ideas for future columns to smalltalkmu@yahoo.com with "columnist" as the subject. Please include your cell phone number. The smallTALK staff will select a winner from the entries. The winner's column will appear in smallTALK on a regular basis and receive a secret prize!

Entries are due Feb. 15.

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Entertainment

Carmen Electra, Sean Maguire and Kevin Sorbo in 20th Century Fox's *Meet the Spartans*. Photo courtesy of www.celebritywonder.com



Dennis Mersmann
(UWire)

I don't know much about the upcoming movie "Meet the Spartans" other than it exists, and that is enough to make my soul hurt.

I saw a commercial for it and assumed that it was promoting "Epic Movie 2."

I was half right.

What's wrong with these movies is that they don't stay faithful to the genre they claim to be mocking. Instead of focusing on epic movies, any pop culture reference imaginable is crammed in.

The creative team (if you can call it that) behind "Meet the Spartans" is the same duo behind "Epic Movie," so in a way they are ripping themselves off. Kind of like

John Fogerty but with less ... well, talent.

The writing/directing team of Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer is the same that also brought us "Date Movie," the "Scary Movie" series and "Spy Hard." These two have based their entire careers on doing nothing but lazy parodies.

Trying to logically explain why this movie and most of the parody genre exist in a cultural black hole poses one major problem.

Every time I think about this movie, my brain hurts. I go cross-eyed a little bit. Fear not, I'll soldier on.

I have not seen any footage (leaked or otherwise) besides what is in the commercial. I am totally uninformed, and that doesn't matter, because someone with a partial college education is still informed enough to analyze "Meet

the Spartans" based on a 30-second TV spot.

What's wrong with these movies is that they don't stay faithful to the genre they claim to be mocking. Instead of focusing on epic movies, any pop culture reference imaginable is crammed in.

The commercial shows a Sanjaya look-a-like (ZING!), a Paris Hilton look-a-like (ZOWEE!), a Britney Spears look-a-like (BOFFO!) and a Donald Trump look-a-like (um...what?) What is epic about "The Apprentice?"

It's like they hock loogies at "Us Weekly" to choose their plot points.

The worst part is that these movies openly lie to the audience. By calling the movies Epic, Date, Space, Robot, Old-Person Love Story or whatever Movie, there is a promise made that it will be

about the word in the title. If I pay to see "Epic Movie," why would I want a "Deal or No Deal" scene? These things are not epic.

Britney Spears shaving her head and Paris Hilton's stay in the clink get too much attention anyway, and it only validates them by implying that they are worthy of satire. They are worthy of just ire.

What Friedberg and Seltzer don't realize, or just don't care about, is that even zany comedies still have rules to follow. If anything and everything is fair game, then it isn't zany — it's mind-numbing anarchy.

When I was in high school, I saw "Scary Movie" and thought it was funny. Maybe it's the 14- to 17-year-old market that keeps these movies afloat. Are our younger siblings so desperate for quality entertainment that they are

forced to see Friedberg/Seltzer productions?

A friend of mine told me that you can't force people to have good taste.

That may be true, but "Meet the Spartans" is still going to suck.

Bad parodies are hurting American culture, and maybe someone will be moved by my plea.

If no one goes to this movie, then others like it won't get made.

If you're bored the weekend of Jan. 25 and feel like catching a movie, catch something else.

Anything.

Mos Def and Jack Black have a movie opening that weekend, you like Mos Def, right? And just to be safe, if you do want to see "Meet the Spartans," buy a ticket to a different movie and go into the wrong theater.

“Robber Bridegroom” coming soon to Methodist

Ashley Young
News Editor

Lots of excitement, action and folk music will lead the way for the Theatre Department's upcoming play, “The Robber Bridegroom,” a musical based on Eudora Welty's novel.

“The Robber Bridegroom” is one of Welty's earlier works and is based on a fairy tale written by the Brother's Grim.

In “The Robber Bridegroom,” a robber, Jamie Lockhart, is a dashing, young gentleman who is seeking to rob upperclassmen. Lockhart tries to steal from a planter by befriending him, and then plans to rob him when the planter least expects it. But the planter ends up liking Lockhart so much, that he wants to marry his daughter, Rosamund, off to Lockhart.



Left, Erin Yarborough plays the female lead, Rosamund.

Right, David Merrill plays the male lead, Jamie.

Photos by Ashley Young



the music, B.J. Mines, a dance choreographer, and is going to instruct the clogging for the play, Sharon McNair will be the voice instructor, along with Shana Hammett, and the costumes will be provided by Sujung Weaver.

Dr. Paul Wilson, Chair of the Theatre Department, said the stage will be made up of,

“whatever you'd find in a barn,” including, boxes, barrels, hay bales, and Antique quilts.

The play will begin with, “Once upon a time,” said Dr. Wilson, and will go from there with other characters interrupting to tell what part they remember, of the story.

The play will be held in Reeve's Auditorium, on Feb. 21-23 at 8 p.m. and the 24 at 2 p.m.

Meanwhile, Lockhart is hiding out in the woods, and along the way, meets a young woman (reallym Roamund), who he strips naked, and then runs off with her clothes. Lockhart does not hurt the woman, but instead leaves her intrigued as to his intentions.

The father of the Rosamund tells her of the dashing gentleman, from New Orleans, who he wants her to marry. All the while, the gentleman of whom the father speaks is Lockhart.

Both Lockhart and Rosamund long for what they had in the woods, when Lockhart stole the woman's clothes, and neither realizes that they are engaged to the same person, with which the original encounter occurred.

“The Robber Bridegroom” will star David Merrill, a former

student, as “Jamie Lockhart;” Erin Yarborough, a senior, as “Rosamund;” Bill Watts,

Professor of Communications as “the father;” and Elysa Lencyk, as the wicked step-mother. The play will also have members from The Gilbert Theatre, in Fayetteville, performing in it.

Helping coordinate the play will be Jon Parsons who is going to come to Methodist to help perform

‘Cloverfield’ a reminder of 9/11 attacks

Chris Kellerman
(UWire)

Apparently producer J.J. Abrams thought the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, would have been way cooler if al-Qaida had been a giant sea monster. Don't believe the hype. “Cloverfield” is nothing more than a stupid monster movie that cashes in on post-9/11 fears, “Blair Witch”-style.

“Cloverfield” begins with camcorder shots of a party for Rob, everybody's favorite guy. We learn Rob, who soon will depart for Japan, slept with his best friend, Beth, who is dating another man. We never get to know the characters, though, because all they do is offer lame testimonials to our dorky cameraman, Hud, and spread gossip worthy of deleted scenes from “The Hills.”

After 10 minutes of the boring introduction, I asked my friend, “When are they going to start blowing up crap?” Thankfully, Rob and his friends soon are interrupted by a series of explosions and the head of Lady Liberty rolling down the street. Hud decides to document the chaos as the group of friends try to evacuate Manhattan while saving Beth. Meanwhile, the scary monster sheds lice that bite people and cause the victims to have Ebola-like symptoms.

Hud, perhaps the only 20-something at the party who doesn't look like he jumped out of a Gap ad, is supposed to be an idiot. Unfortunately, more annoying than his stupidity is his filming style, which is reminiscent of my middle school cousin taking pictures for her MySpace page.

The handheld camcorder effect is distractingly unrealistic. So many moments provoke questions which beg to be answered: if Hud claims he's filming everything to document the destruction, why won't he keep the camera on the monster for more than a second at a time? Why does he, at least a dozen times, find it more appropriate to film his friends being killed rather than try to keep them from being killed? And most importantly, what kind of a jackass would film his best friend weeping over the death of his brother?

Sure, there are some scenes with spectacular special effects, though none of them are original. I already saw the Statue of Liberty

get pulverized in “The Day after Tomorrow,” which somehow managed to be a better film than “Cloverfield.”

Writer Drew Goddard must have taken the director's advice and also visited my cousin's MySpace. The lines are so stupid they're hilarious. I would not have been shocked if Rob had sent Beth a text message which read, “omg this monster is sooo scary r u ok l8r <3.” Why am I supposed to care about any of these characters, Goddard? Because they dress well?

If this movie were meant to be harmless fun, I'd have had no problem with it. Unfortunately, it takes itself way too seriously, and it's quite offensive. The film constantly reminds us of 9/11. Smoke floods the streets; people confusedly stumble around covered in ash; one character cries, “Maybe it's another terrorist attack!”

A helicopter crash is filmed identically to the last scene in “United 93,” but in this crash, they survive. Did I mention Rob and Beth run around and make-out after Beth gets impaled by a metal rod?

This isn't “Snakes on a Plane,” which gently poked fun at society's post-9/11 fears. “Cloverfield” exploits them. It attempts to remind us of a real tragedy while its stronger-than-life hotties run through the devastation making jokes about Superman and Garfield.

I'd have walked out of the theater if I didn't have to review the film. Admittedly, I hoped the end would contain some final, exciting twist. Big surprise: it sucked. It's the first time I've been to a movie in quite a while where the audience actually booed during the closing credits.

If J.J. Abrams had written and directed this movie, it would have succeeded. His other projects have been much better. Perhaps Abrams should delegate responsibility no longer, as “Cloverfield” slightly was more ludicrous than the presidential campaign of Ron Paul.

Go ahead, see “Cloverfield,” but don't blame me if you leave the theater saying, “We should have stayed home and watched that movie where Sinbad pretends to be a dentist.” Then again, I think 84 minutes of watching your clothes dry would have been more entertaining than this over-hyped kitsch.





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Women's Basketball (8-4 Overall, 4-1 USA South)
Latest Result - W 59-48 Averett

Right, Dezzire Gilliard slips past another player.
Below, Zan Messer dribbles to the hoop. Photos by Matt Bietzel.



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