



1.

HEROIN 101

Celebrity Deaths Raise New Questions About Heroin and Its Negative Effects

Have you ever wondered about heroin? Philip Seymour Hoffman, 46, passed away Feb. 2 and it took hours before anyone noticed anything was wrong with him. Not only was he found with a needle in his arm, there were at least 50 bags of heroin surrounding him.

Heroin has become stronger over the years, and dealers try to sell it to people, naive of just how dangerous it can be. Elvis Presley, Chris Farley and Judy Garland, were among others that overdosed along with Hoffman. The deaths of such prominent celebrities have led many to question the history of heroin and how it affects the body.

Dr. Eyas Abla practices internal medicine in Nebraska and said, "Heroin is a lot like opium and morphine, in that it is made from the resin of poppy plants. To make heroin, simply remove the milky, sap-like opium from the pod of the poppy flower," Dr. Eyas Abla, a practitioner of internal medicine in Nebraska said. "The opium is then

refined to make morphine, and then further refined into different forms of heroin. Not only is a majority of heroin injected, the user also faces the risk of AIDS or additional infections on top of the pain of the addiction."

According to Abla, a pharmaceutical company in Germany, Bayer, was the first to make heroin, marketing it as treatment for both tuberculosis and morphine addiction.

"During the 1850s, opium addiction was a major problem in the United States. The 'solution' was to provide opium addicts with a less potent and supposedly 'non-addictive' substitute-morphine," Abla said. "Morphine addiction soon became a bigger problem than opium

addiction." Abla states that German scientists developed this new morphine in 1937 in search of a new painkiller. It was then brought to the United States, where it was named Dolophine. After a few years, the new drug was renamed methadone and became widely used as a heroin addiction treatment.

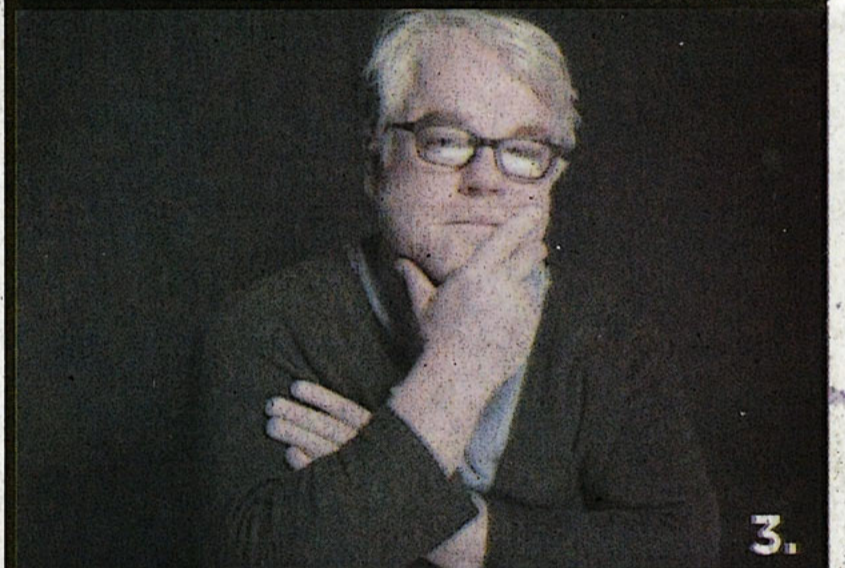
Rachel Brocklehurst
Staff Writer

See Heroin 101 • Page 3

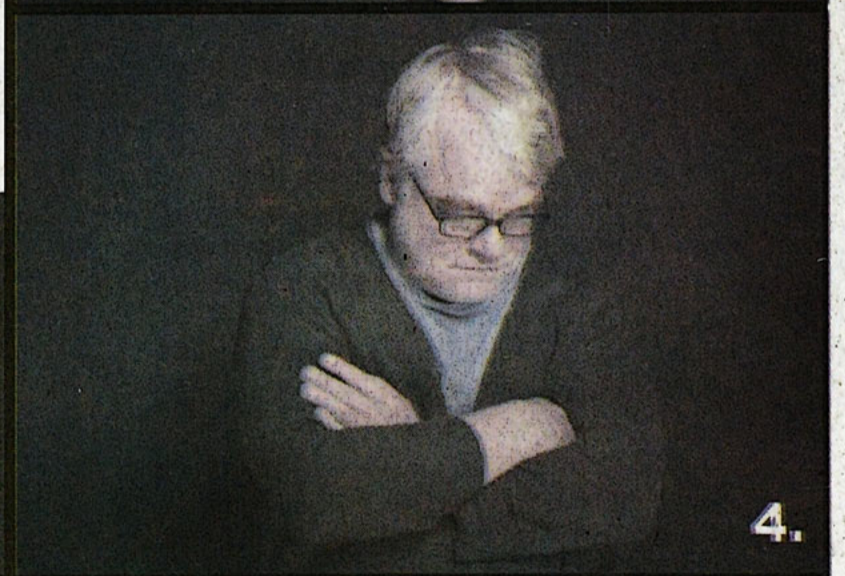
1. FILE - In this Monday, May 6, 2013 file photo, a drug addict prepares a needle to inject himself with heroin in front of a church in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. It's not a rare scene on Skid Row to spot addicts using drugs in the open, even when police patrol the area. Jim Hall, an epidemiologist who studies substance abuse at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. says, the striking thing about heroin's most recent incarnation in the early 21st Century, is that a drug that was once largely confined to major cities is spreading into suburban and rural towns across America, where it is used predominantly by young adults between the ages of 18 and 29. "We haven't really seen something this rapid since probably the spread of cocaine and crack in the mid-1980s," Hall said. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong) 2-4. In this Jan. 19, 2014 photo, Philip Seymour Hoffman poses for a portrait at The Collective and Gibson Lounge Powered by CEG, during the Sundance Film Festival, in Park City, Utah. Hoffman, who won the Oscar for best actor in 2006 for his portrayal of writer Truman Capote in "Capote," was found dead Sunday, Feb. 2, 2014, in his New York apartment. He was 46. (Photo by Victoria Will/Invision/AP)



2.



3.



4.

Exploring Black Mesa



The plateaus of Black Mesa Park and the wide-open skies offer a one-of-a-kind view, showcasing the beauty of the sunrise and night skies in the panhandle of Oklahoma. Photo by Josh Wallace, The Vista.

Continued on Page 5

Fallin's State of the State Address focuses on the positive

Olanrewaju Sulciman

Staff Writer

On Feb. 3, Governor Mary Fallin delivered the annual Oklahoma State of the State Address at the state capitol in Oklahoma



Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin smiles as she introduces her family at the start of her State of the State address in Oklahoma City, Monday, Feb. 3, 2014. Fallin renewed her call for a cut in the state's income tax rate and asked legislators to approve a bond issue to help repair the state Capitol Monday during her fourth State of the State speech. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)

City. In attendance, were school groups, firefighters, police officers and Oklahoma state political

leaders. UCO President Don Betz was present, as well. Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb began with

introductions. He introduced statewide representatives, Native American tribal leaders and various guest speakers.

Continued on Page 4

THE VISTA

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The Vista is published as a newspaper and public forum by UCO students, semiweekly during the academic year except exam and holiday periods, and only on Wednesdays during the summer, at the University of Central Oklahoma. The issue price is free for the first copy and \$1 for each additional copy obtained.

EDITORIALS

Opinion columns, editorial cartoons, reviews and commentaries represent the views of the writer or artist and not necessarily the views of The Vista Editorial Board, the Department of Mass Communication, UCO or the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. The Vista is not an official medium of expression for the Regents or UCO.

LETTERS

The Vista encourages letters to the editor. Letters should address issues and ideas, not personalities. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, with a maximum of 250 words, and must include the author's printed name, title, major, classification and phone number. Letters are subject to editing for libel, clarity and space, or to eliminate statements of questionable taste. The Vista reserves the right not to publish submitted letters.

Address letters to:

Editor, The Vista, 100 N. University Dr., Edmond, OK 73034-5209, or deliver in person to the editor in the Communications Building, Room 131. Letters can be emailed to vistauc@gmail.com.

ADVERTISE WITH THE VISTA

The Vista is published semiweekly during the fall and spring semesters, and once weekly during the summer. In all issues, The Vista has opportunities for both classified, online and print ads.

Email your questions to ucovista.advertising@gmail.com for rates.

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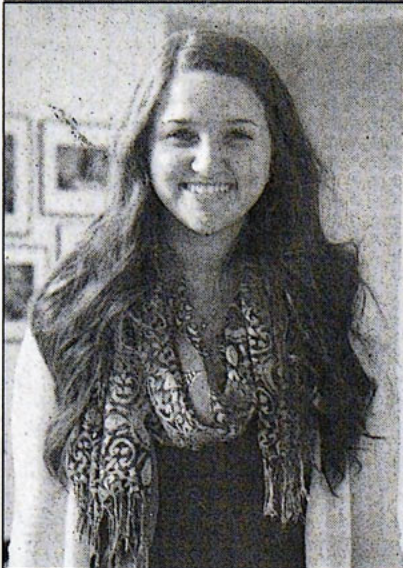
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CAMPUS QUOTES

What is your favorite Winter Olympic sport? Why?

JERRAH CONLEY

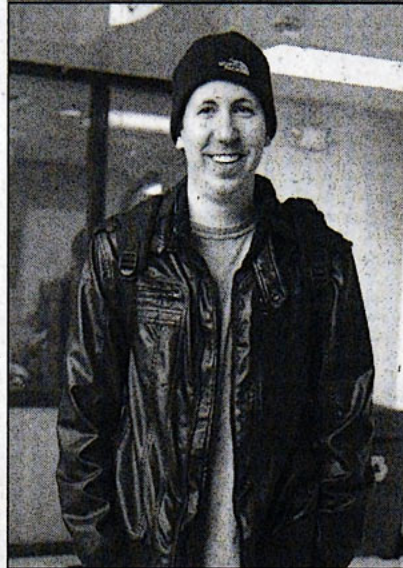
Interpersonal Comm. - Senior



"Ice skating, it is really fun to watch because I can't even walk on ice."

DAVID RICH

Professional Media - Senior



"The snowboarding half-pipe deal because I'm a huge Shawn White fan."

RILEY COLE

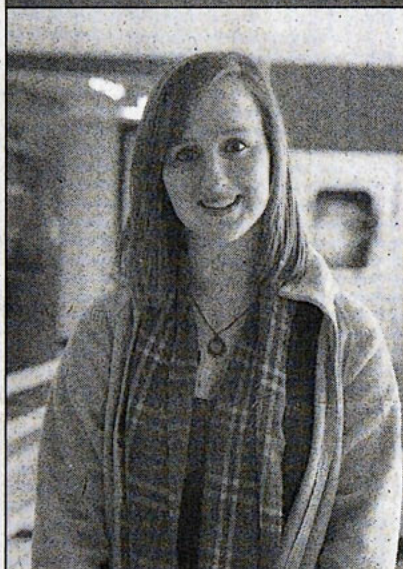
Strategic Communications - Sophomore



"Figure skating because it's really pretty."

LAUREN CAPRARO

Professional Media - Sophomore



"Curling, I just like to watch them brush down the court and they are all on ice and they all look kind of funny."

ASHLEY TRATTNER

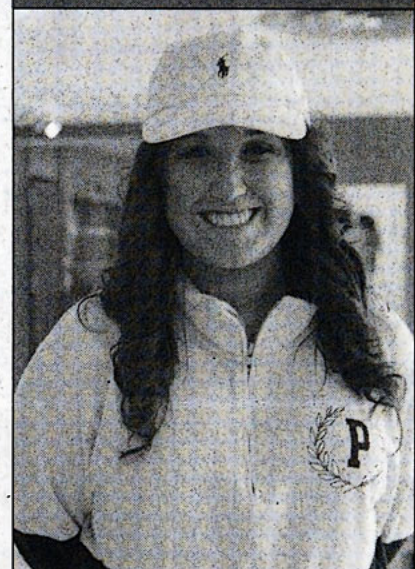
Strategic Communications - Sophomore



"Luge because it is really interesting to watch those people flatten themselves out."

NICOLE NORAT

Public Relations - Senior



"Figure skating, it is a really cool sport."

Winter Worries

Editorial by: Sarah Neese (Editor-in-Chief)

Here's the thing. I have lived in Oklahoma for my whole life. All twenty years of it.

I have witnessed tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, snowstorms, ice storms, blizzards, hail storms, droughts, swarms of locusts and the annual heat wave.

However, it seems with each year, I get less tolerant of the sporadic and dramatic weather conditions in this great state.

In years past, I have sweated through countless 100-degree summers, wishing and waiting for winter to arrive. I'd patiently await the cooler weather and hope each year, usually with eventual disappointment, that I'd get to see a white Christmas.

But, I think this year my mind is finally made up. I don't really like winter or any of its cruel weather shenanigans.

Don't get me wrong; the continuous snow was quite beautiful this past weekend. And then, it got ugly.

Snow made way for sludge, which eventually turned to ice, but that's not even the worst of it.

I can handle the ice. I can handle the snow. But, I just simply cannot handle the icy, freezing, bitter cold.

Temperatures have been in the single digits and wind chills have been in the negative degrees.

In the past, I have always gone with the philosophy that winter is better, because in the summer, you can only take so many clothes off, but in winter, you can add on as many layers as you want.

I still think this theory is relatively sound, however, it doesn't seem to matter how many layers I pile on, the chilling cold seems to find its way into my bones.

Walking across campus feels like an act of torture, as students attempt to avoid slick patches, sludgy puddles and what feels like a frostbite that could take your face right off.

And you and I both know, deep in our guts, that UCO won't find that sweet kindness in their hearts to let us off the hook to cuddle in our beds, warm and safe, free from the worry of the classes, professors and the chilling walk of death.

Let's all take a moment of silence for our faces, hands and toes, which will inevitably be eaten away by the bitter cold of winter.

CAMPUS CARTOON

HELLO, CLASS. I AM PROFESSOR A. WHOLE. WELCOME TO MISERY 101. THIS CLASS IS NOW THE BASIS OF YOUR EXISTENCE. I AM YOUR NEW GOD AND YOU WILL BOW BEFORE MY INFINITE WISDOM. I CARE NOT OF YOUR OTHER CLASSES, YOUR PERSONAL LIVES, OR OF YOUR VERY EXISTENCE. THE ONLY VALID EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE IS DEATH. I WILL ALSO BE MEETING WITH YOUR MOTHERS EVERYDAY AFTER CLASS. ANY QUESTIONS?

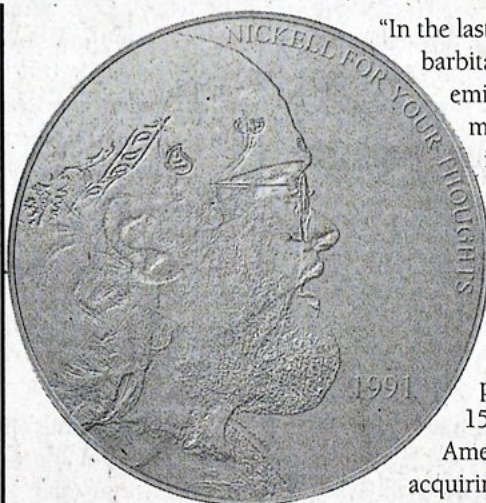


Cartoon by Evan Oldham

Opinion

DRUGGED ON DEATH

By Brooks Nickell



"In the last four years, pentobarbital has been the pre-eminent drug for almost all of the lethal injections in the U.S. But in 2011, Danish drugmaker Lundbeck, uncomfortable with pentobarbital's usage in the prison systems of 15 states, banned American prisons from acquiring it for the purpose of lethal injections."

That's what Grant Clark, journalist with Al Jazeera America said in his Feb. 4 online article.

This means for Louisiana and dozens of other states treating death row like the express lane at Wal-Mart, that the struggle to come up with new drug protocols for lethal injections has just begun.

The problem that arises when searching for new drugs to be used in lethal injections is publicity heavy if nothing else.

Clark goes on to say in his article, "With states' pentobarbital supplies now almost dry, many prisons are turning to compounding pharmacies, which are not regulated by the Federal Drug Administration, to produce lethal drugs for executions. But fearful of negative public attention, a veil

of secrecy surrounds companies that supply prisons with lethal injection drugs."

Some states are even looking into digging up relics of tools from past prison methods of execution, such as the electric chair and hangings.

As illustrated in this excerpt from an article published Jan. 28, 2014 on NewsOk.com, the main focus of the death penalty is humanity.

"This isn't an attempt to time-warp back into the 1850s or the wild, wild West or anything like that," said Missouri state Rep. Rick Brattin, who this month proposed making firing squads an option for executions. "It's just that I foresee a problem, and I'm trying to come up with a solution that will be the most humane, yet most economical for our state."

I am drawn to the tangent that maybe it's time we take a new approach to capitol punishment. How about one that says capitol punishment isn't humane at all? I think reworking our most serious punishment starts with taking a new approach to our prison system in general. If it's so shameful to produce a death drug, then isn't it shameful to produce death at all.

If I was on the throne of thorns, atoning for my bodily sins, and a judge asked me, which I prefer, the death penalty or life in prison... I have to honestly say that I would cry out for the gallows.

In a culture that seemingly feeds off the misery of others, wouldn't it be more satisfying to keep these citizens alive and allow them to spend the rest of their lifetime's in a concrete box thinking about what it all could have been like?

Why not free up some funds by releasing non-violent drug offenders? Take those funds and the cash you save by pulling police units off of non-violent drug offense related issues and create forms of rehabilitation for citizens that are constantly in and out of jail or prison for crack or other drug related problems.

We have to stop viewing everyone who breaks the law as a criminal. Next, we have to reinstate prisons as a place for true criminals and not just a dump for our unwanted societal trash, so to say. And finally we have to agree that death, of any degree outside natural cause robs us of our humanity.

I can't step up on the proverbial soapbox and illustrate a replacement plan for capitol punishment. And I take solace in the simple fact that I've never claimed to have all the answers. Here's what sends a static shock through the hair on my neck.

The death penalty consoles us. We find closure in the death of some, heartache in the death of others and often times a complete lack of empathy for death at all. We are desensitized to death.

It, coupled with violence in general, is perpetually thrown at us from every angle of entertainment. We are truly drugged on death. I cannot sway your opinion on the issue, but I do believe that wisdom often seeps in any crevice it can find, and the brain, the brain is a sponge. So, I'd like to end like I often do, with a quote.

"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind." -Mahatma Gandhi-

Follow me on Twitter @JBrooksNickell

Interior Design Showcase currently taking place

Shaun Hail

Contributing Writer

The University of Central Oklahoma Department of Design began its "Premises: Undergraduate Thesis Projects in Interior Design" exhibit on Jan. 30 and will continue until Feb. 20 in the Donna Nigh Gallery on the Nigh University Center's fourth floor, said Staff Writer for the UCO College of Fine Arts and Design Angela Morris.

The designs featured in this exhibit are based on different situations that could be used in real life, said Assistant Professor of Interior Design Kevin Steiner. The exhibit was formatted to be like a thesis statement, and the students' designs show the final solutions to the research of the thesis statement, said Steiner.

Fourteen interior design students participated in this exhibit, and each has two displays showcasing their designs in detail.

When viewing the displays, viewers will see designs of an office work space that shows what a work place could look like in the future, a cruise liner with designs and features expressing Asian culture, teaching facilities used to help educate children of different age groups, multiple interior designs that could be used for different types of residential living, and much more.

"The experience of exhibiting one's work is a great way for students to practice displaying their concepts and design decisions effectively so that audiences can understand them," said Instructor of Interior Design Valerie Settles.

For more information on this and other College of Fine Arts and Design events, go to the "Events" tab on the UCO College of Fine Arts and Design web page.



The students' designs show the final solutions to the research of the thesis statement. Photo by Shea Hussey, The Vista.

The Tale of St. Laurence

Brittany McMillin

Contributing Writer

Catherine Blair-Dixon, Ph.D., will tell the tale of St. Laurence, Roman martyr, and the patronage given to him by mothers, daughters and sisters of the Roman Emperors in the fourth and fifth century.

Her lecture will be hosted by UCO at 1:30 p.m. on Friday in the Pegasus Theater.

St. Laurence was one of the deacons of Rome and there are many stories of miracles and virtue that surround him, which Blair-Dixon will discuss, but the primary focus will be on the powerful women of the Roman Empire.

"Through research on the saints' lives and the politics of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries and grew more and more interested in St. Laurence because of his ties to localized debates about the role of lay patronage in church policy," said Blair-Dixon.

The lecture entitled Patronage and Persuasion: Gesta Martyrum and the Theodosian Emperors will focus on these women who gave patronage to St. Laurence.

"These women promoted themselves as impresarios of the cult of saints through powerful images and building commissions, allowing them access to a political voice traditionally reserved for the male-dominated oratorical sphere," said Blair-Dixon.

Blair-Dixon studied at several universities, one being Harvard University, where she primarily focused on religious studies and theology.

"I began researching the cult of St. Laurence in the 1990s when I worked with a group of scholars associated with the Center for Late Antiquity at the University of Manchester," said Blair-Dixon.

Blair-Dixon has published three books and has presented many papers in America and in Great Britain based in religion, St. Laurence and theology.

Heroin 101: Celebrity Deaths Raise New Questions About Heroin, Its Negative Effects and Its History

Continued from Page 1

"Unfortunately, it proved to be even more addictive than the heroin," Abba said. "By the late 1990s, the mortality rate of heroin addicts was estimated to be as high as 20 times greater than the rest of the population."

In most cases, heroin is found in powder form. Heroin also varies in color, available in gray, yellow, brown and white. Brown is the most common color of heroin and is sold on the street for \$20 to \$30 for one .10 gram bag. Users can liquefy and inject heroin, as well as smoke or snort it.

"Heroin can be grown anywhere from China, Mexico, or the mountains around the borders of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan," Abba said. "It is best grown in warm, dry climates. Often times, the farmers have small plots of land. After being collected by a farmer, the sap is bought by a merchant or broker who takes the opium to

be refined." The side effects of heroin are heart disease and lung disorders. Abscesses, gangrene and collapsed veins can also stem from the drug. These are because heroin enters the bloodstream at a fast rate. If more than one person shares a needle, the risk of infection is high, as well.

"There are two main reasons why people overdose on heroin," Abba said. "They either take a break from the usage (as in a holiday), or they get too strong a batch off the street and they're not used to it."

According to Dr. Karen Drexler, in an interview with CNN.com, when a person overdoses on heroin there are a number of physiological responses that cause the body to shutdown.

"Heroin makes someone calm and a little bit sleepy, but if you take too much then you can

fall asleep, and when you are asleep, your respiratory drive shuts down. Usually when you are sleeping, your body naturally remembers to breathe. In the case of a heroin overdose, you fall asleep and essentially your body forgets," Dr. Drexler said.

Heroin can also cause arrhythmia, a problem with the rhythm of the heart; pulmonary edema, which causes poor blood pumping and flow in the heart; and a sharp decrease in blood pressure. All of these factors can cause the heart to stop.

Hoffman's death, which is speculated to have been instantaneous, according to CNN.com, only occurs in 14 percent of heroin-related deaths.

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Fallin's State of the State

Olanrewaju Suleiman

Staff Writer



Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin greets legislators as she enters the Oklahoma House to present her State of the State address in Oklahoma City, Monday, Feb. 3, 2014. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)

At his conclusion, Lamb welcomed Governor Fallin to the podium.

"Let me begin by thanking you for the honor of serving as your governor and delivering this address," began Fallin. "It is a great pleasure to be here with you today."

Her first talking point was about the 'Oklahoma family,' and how Oklahoma is a better place to live, work, and raise a family. She also spoke on the resilience of the people of Oklahoma throughout the past year.

"Because of our hardworking, innovative and resilient people, the State of this State is strong," Fallin said. "Everyone here today should be proud of what we have accomplished."

Fallin plans to reform non-violent offenders in the prison system.

"For non-violent offenders in our prison population, we are working hard to offer treatment and rehabilitation," she said.

Fallin plans to be both smart and tough on crime in Oklahoma.

During her speech, Fallin gave recognition to police officers, firefighters, and first responders who aided the people of Oklahoma during the devastating tornadoes in May of 2013.

"I'm proud of the way Oklahomans have responded to unexpected challenges, sometimes even hardships," she said. "There was no greater challenge or hardship than the one we experienced last May, when a series of tornadoes swept across central Oklahoma."

She invited all in attendance to stand and give a round of applause to the brave men and women who helped Moore and other cities in their time of need.

"Some of those first responders are here and I want to recognize them for their work, their bravery and their service to the state," Fallin said.

After the May tornadoes, many citizens in Oklahoma adopted the slogan of "Oklahoma Strong," Fallin mentioned the slogan, as well.

Fallin spoke on how she planned to reform the public school system in the state. She will do this by implementing an A-F rating for schools, as well as encouraging high school seniors to attend college or technical schools upon graduation.

"A high school diploma is no longer enough," she said.

Fallin mentioned her appreciation of schools of higher education and their dedication to the education of Oklahoma students.

One of the main parts of Fallin's address was her proposed spending cuts and how they will impact the state.

Her proposed bonds and tax

cuts, as well as wanting the budgets of state agencies to be cut by five percent, received a mixed response from the audience.

Fallin ended her address to the state of Oklahoma by thanking the citizens for their dedication to the state.

Oklahoma Senator AJ Griffins was at the State of the State Address. She feels that things in Oklahoma are positive and that the state is moving in a positive direction.

"We certainly have a lot to be proud of and a lot to work on," Griffins said.

The people in attendance were dismissed and the address was officially concluded.

The State of the State Address was broadcast statewide on televisions. It was also viewable online at www.oeta.tv.

The Office of the Governor's prepared transcript of her address can be viewed by visiting www.ok.gov/governor.

Black History Month Aims to U.P.L.I.F.T.

Xavier Jackson

Staff Writer

J'lecia Jones Black History Month Committee Chair for the Black Student Association is more than ready to start the reflective month.

Jones, a sophomore music major, has been a driving force in this year's Black History Month observance.

How did you get involved with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion?

"My first semester of freshman year I attended the multicultural student orientation held by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

I instantly fell in love with the idea of diversity. That's when I became involved.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is just like a candy store. You can't just choose one. You have to try them all.

That is why I am involved in the umbrella organization Diversity Round Table, the Black Student Association, and Women of Many Ethnic Nationalities."

Black History Month has a lot of events. What were the thoughts behind this year's programs?

"We feel as society changes, we tend to lose knowledge that Black History Month is a part of our culture.

We try not to limit ourselves on

ideas and have diverse activities and events.

Also this year, just like previous ones, we have leaders that are passionate about spreading our culture throughout the month."

What are some of the events you are most excited for and why?

"I am most excited about the trip to Greenwood Cultural Center in Tulsa.

If you are familiar with Oklahoma history, you know that this is where the Tulsa Race Riot was held."

What went into the planning for this month? Were there any themes or ideas that the Black Student Association wanted to share?

"We have decided to call it Upholding a Past of Leadership Integrity Fortitude and Talent U.P.L.I.F.T.

This goes back to the purpose of the month, which is to celebrate and recognize our history and honor the ones that came before us."

What do you feel has been the most challenging part of planning these events?

"Since we have over 20 events this month, the most difficult part has been making sure that every event has what it needs to be successful.

I must say that I have a well-equipped committee behind me that is ready to take on any chal-

lenges that are thrown."

The Black Student Association has been doing a lot on campus this year. How does Black History Month reflect that?

"Well, being a member of this organization, we strive to never stop encouraging the knowledge of our culture.

There is always a lot to learn and Black History Month is an opportunity to introduce others to our history."

What is it you are hoping people take away from this year's Black History Month celebration?

"I want people to take away knowledge that my ancestors were amazing people. They fought for change and equality and I believe that everyone should have knowledge about African American history."

Why do you feel that it is important that Central celebrates Black History?

"I feel like the university is becoming so diverse that everyone is starting to be open-minded about the cultures that the ODI houses.

I feel having Black History Month at Central will be another opportunity to open the minds of my peers about my culture."

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"Black History means everything to me.

We are because they did."



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is helping UCO to participate in Black History Month, including the U.P.L.I.F.T. campaign. Photo by Quang Pho, The Vista.

UCO to be honored for healthy campus



UCO will receive the Certified Healthy Campus award from the Oklahoma Department of Health on Feb. 13. Photo by Alikei Dyer, The Vista.

Kanasha Brown

Staff Writer

UCO will be honored on Feb. 13, for receiving the Certified Healthy Campus award for the 3rd consecutive year.

There are three levels of the award: basic, merit and excellence. UCO received excellence; the highest level of certification, said UCO Wellness Communications Specialist Whitt Carter.

"Shape Your Future" is a campaign developed by the Oklahoma Department of Health to push Oklahomans to eat better, be more active and live tobacco free, according to the website, www.shapeyourfutureok.com

The website states that program recognizes campuses for actively creating safe and healthy environments for faculty, staff, students and visitors.

"We've made health, wellness and recreation a vital part of our university. Through healthy living programs, a focus on being active and employee wellness involvement, we've been able to accomplish these things," said Carter.

The eight categories listed on www.okturningpoint.org that determined eligibility for the awards were:

- Standard 1: Integration with the Learning Mission of Higher Education
- Standard 2: Collaborative Practice
- Standard 3: Cultural Competence

- Standard 4 & 5: Tobacco
- Standard 6: Drug, Alcohol, and Mental Health Issues
- Standard 7: Health, Wellness, Safety
- Standard 8: Professional Development/Continuing Education

The UCO website states that health and wellness is a part of Transformative Learning mission, the Central Six.

On the UCO Wellness website, the mission states that the purpose of UCO Healthy Campus is to promote a campus environment supportive of the development and maintenance of a healthy body, mind and spirit for all members of the University of Central Oklahoma community.

"We offer free Group Fitness classes, Employee Wellness programs, Be Broncho Fit!, Student Affairs GET EM!, etc. all programs that focus on students, faculty and staff living a healthy life," said Carter.

UCO will be participating in the Sochi Challenge, which is an effort to collectively log 6,333 miles before March 16. The distance is equivalent to the distance from Edmond to Sochi, Russia.

Students, faculty and staff can all participate; anything that can be measured in distance can be logged, said Carter.

According to www.ok.gov/health, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Oklahoma Academy, the Oklahoma Turning Point Council and the State Chamber sponsor the Certified Healthy Oklahoma program.

Black HISTORY Month

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.
- Frederick Douglass

Character, not circumstances, makes the man.
- Booker T. Washington

Get to Know the Heroes

Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Travel

Black Mesa, Speed Zones, and the Fading Sun



Black Mesa, in the western panhandle of Oklahoma, is the highest point in the state of Oklahoma. This photo, taken during sunrise on Jan. 26, 2014, shows the flat plateaus and red dirt that western Oklahoma is notorious for. Photo by Josh Wallace, The Vista.

Josh Wallace

Staff Writer

It was 5:30 a.m., I had gotten around three hours of sleep, had just bought firewood and finished pumping gas in my car. As I climbed in and glanced over the hastily scribbled driving directions I had just jotted down 10 minutes prior, a sense of doubt and anxiety washed over me. It's January, and I'm about to drive 400 miles to go camping in the middle of nowhere; what am I doing?

The plan was to go to the farthest reaches of western Oklahoma, as far as you can go in the panhandle or No Man's Land as it is otherwise referred to, a trip to the Black Mesa.

So along I went, cruising down I-40 in the dark and eventually merging on to U.S. 281. Not too far along I came to the small town of Geary, where the highway runs through the heart of the town.

Having never been through Geary, and it being still rather dark outside, I crept slowly through the speed zones all the while reaching for my notebook to try to find the next junction. I started to notice the few cars that were around me slowing down rather quickly as we approached intersections, and it dawned on me that I might have just ran every stop sign in the town.

Luckily, the highway soon opened back up and I was once again cruising along at around 65 mph, headed northwest and not far from Watonga. I passed Watonga, and continued going northwest, up U.S. 270 through Woodward, and eventually onto U.S. 412, which would be the long road that would take me deep into the panhandle. As I drove along, I had become oblivious to how much gas I had left.

In the metro area this wouldn't have been a problem, gas stations are abundant and you're almost always within driving distance of one even when you've gotten to the point where you're driving on fumes. Out here though, towns become further and further from each other, and you're left driving long distances without any sense of civilization.

By the time I had realized I was below a quarter of a tank, I was already in the eastern part of the panhandle. I'd see signs for towns coming up and the all too familiar reduced speed zones, but for a while, every small town I passed through ended up basically abandoned.

These towns, which I thought would be

my saving grace, were ghosts of their former selves. One in particular I found quite cruel as it had no stores or other businesses, just two gas stations aligned perfectly with each other on either side of the highway, and clearly they had been shut down for ages.

It was then that I started to notice more ominous signs around me, hawks, which I assume to be along the top of the food chain predators of the area, were lying dead along the roadside. Old, dilapidated houses became more frequent, and one I had noticed somewhere along the trip had been boarded up, the words "Hanta Virus" spray painted in bright orange on a large section of plywood where a door had once been.

The last marker I had seen for Guymon indicated that it was over 90 miles away, and I was beginning to wonder how much further I would make it. Luckily, I made it to the town of Slapout, gassed up, and was on my way again.

A short while later I had made it to Guymon, with just another hundred or so miles

cemeteries throughout the panhandle then there were towns. Driving along through the flat open area, I was caught off guard several times as huge tumbleweeds seemed to launch themselves at my car, a few hitting me and then back they went, pushed through the flatland by the wind.

I passed through Boise City, the last bit of civilization along my route, and within an hour I had finally reached my destination, Black Mesa State Park. Once off the highway and going down the long road to reach the park's campgrounds, the flatlands seem to disappear and you start to see giant rock formations all around.

Apart from the desire to see the unique terrain, the main reason for coming all the way to the edge of the state was for the pitch-black night sky.

Black Mesa is known in some circles not only for its natural beauty, but also for how utterly dark it gets once the sun sets. The area is so isolated from large cities that there is no light pollution, making it one of the

finally left, giving me free run of the park. Having everything ready to go for the night, I sat around the fire eagerly awaiting the sun to fade.

As the sun set and it began getting darker, I gazed upward in anticipation of the spectacular view I had been counting on, only to be disappointed for a while. At first, the sky looked no different than if I were in Oklahoma City, with just a few stars shining, but within minutes the few stars I could see were soon joined by hundreds of others.

I went over and started to get my camera prepped to shoot continuously over the next few hours, a process that I thought would take only a matter of a few minutes turned into a 30-minute torture session as I tried to focus my lens. Eventually I gave up hope of fine-tuning any further, set the camera to start shooting and retired to my tent to get out of the cold.

A few hours later, the camera's battery had drained, and I went to check out the results in the comfort of my car. After glancing through the photos, I had intended to get back in the tent to catch some sleep but ended up in the car for several hours, peering up through the windshield as countless stars floated past.

It's hard to describe, but the notion of time seemed skewed while in the park, it was as though hours were mere minutes, and the minutes only seconds, whether it was day or night.

The next morning I set out for Black Mesa, roughly 12 miles from the park, before the sunrise. While I wasn't going to hike to the highest point in Oklahoma, I at least figured I'd go see it as the morning light hit it.

The area has its beauty during normal daylight, but seeing the land slowly painted in fiery reds and brilliant golden tones proved to be the highlight of my excursion. Having packed, I set off from the quiet serenity of the edge of western Oklahoma, back to noise and chaos of the city, and already planning my return to the mesa.

"By the time I had realized I was below a quarter of a tank, I was already in the eastern part of the panhandle. I'd see signs for towns coming up and the all too familiar reduced speed zones, but for a while, every small town I passed through ended up basically abandoned."

to my destination. Not far from Guymon you can see the terrain shift dramatically, going from hills to complete flatland the closer you get to the far western edge of the state.

I knew very little of the area aside from what I'd learned over the years of the Dust Bowl, and now I was in one of the areas hardest hit during that bit of history. It's easy to imagine the sense of dread that people felt as they watched the huge walls of sand and dust come billowing closer and closer until it turned day into night.

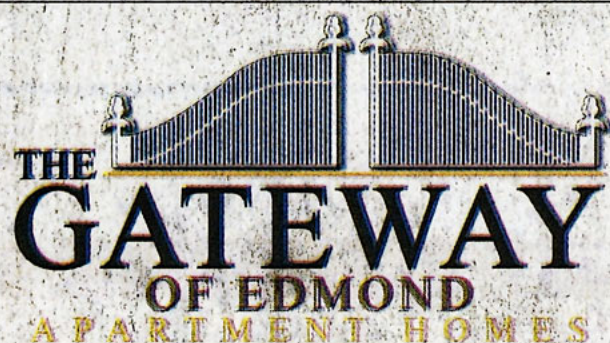
One aspect of the area that struck me as being odd were the number of signs indicating cemeteries, there seemed to be more

ultimate destinations for watching or, in my case, photographing the star-filled night sky.

Coming into the park area, I was under the assumption that more than likely I would be the only soul on the grounds, thinking that most would think it crazy to come out to the middle of nowhere near the end of January. That wasn't the case as I drove through and spotted children running around playing, and a dozen or so people fishing along the banks of Lake Carl Etling.

After finding the most secluded campsite in the area and setting up, I could soon hear people leaving steadily. The few remaining people I had seen earlier in the day had

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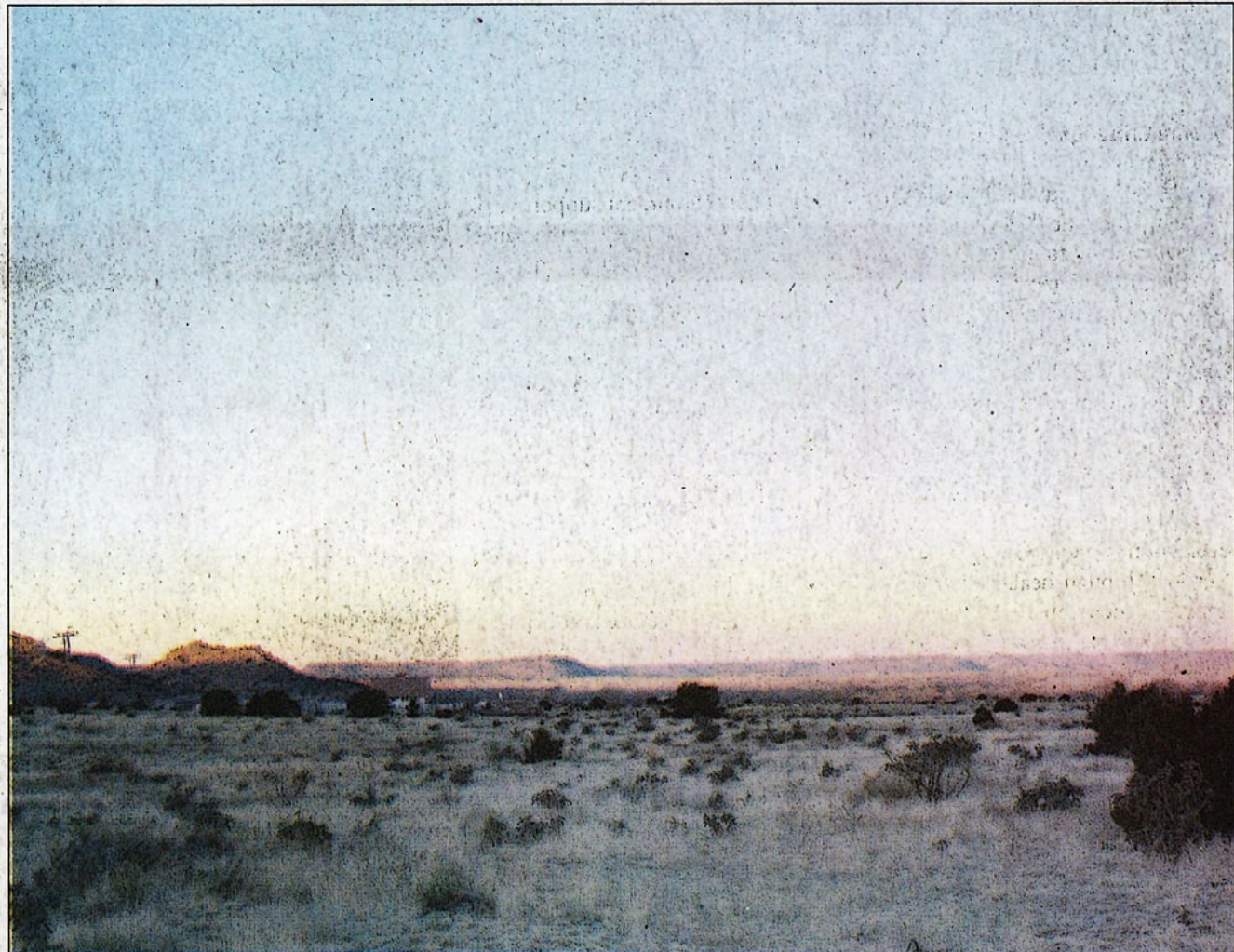
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The lands surrounding Black Mesa in Black Mesa Park, located in the panhandle in western Oklahoma, are flat and plateaued. This photo, taken at sunrise on Jan. 26, 2014, showcases the natural wonders that Oklahoma has to offer. Photo by Josh Wallace, The Vista.

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Looking for and energetic teacher for our one year old class room. If you are interested in this position please apply at Ms. Felicia's Blessed Ones Childcare 1130 Chowning Avenue Edmond, OK. No phone calls please.

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"2006 Nissan Sentra, 91,000 miles", "sales price: \$5,900", "phone contact: 214-717-7074"

RANDOM FACTS

Ohio State offers a course called "Sports for the Spectator." Students are taught how to be "an informed and appreciative sports spectator."

Cheddar cheese that has been ripened for six months is considered "mild." Seven months to a year of ripening makes "sharp" cheddar, and two years worth of aging yields an "extra sharp" product.

RANDOM QUOTE

People who ask our advice almost never take it. Yet we should never refuse to give it, upon request, for it often helps us to see our own way more clearly. - Brendan Francis

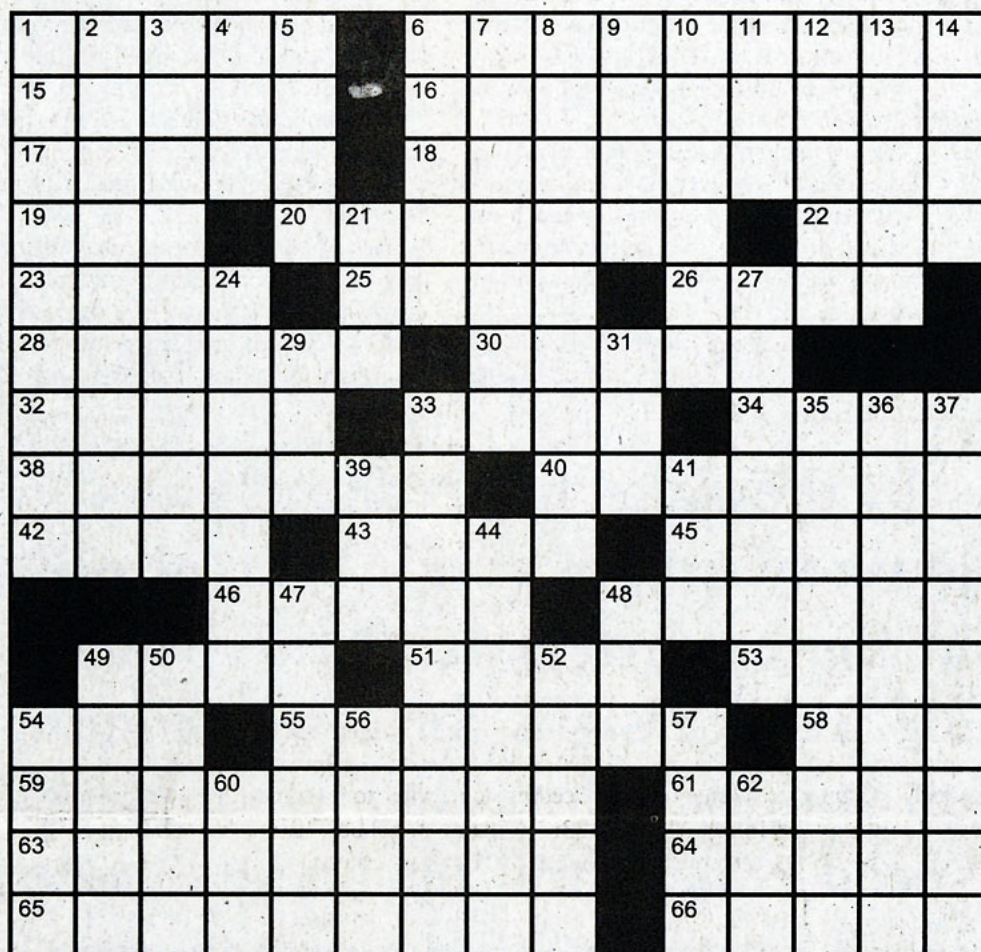
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CROSSWORD

Across

1. Intestines' terminal section (pl.)
6. Comprehensible
15. Erasable programmable read-only memory (acronym)
16. Rash-causing shrub (2 wds)
17. Like saltwater taffy
18. Vehement accusation
19. "If only ___ listened ..." (contraction)
20. Generous bestowal of gifts
22. Blue
23. Give off, as light
25. Equal
26. Bad day for Caesar
28. Comeback
30. Black
32. Sidekick
33. "I had no ___!"
34. Auto parts giant
38. Parachute straps
40. Causing fear
42. "... or ___!"
43. "My bad!"
45. White, oblong, ecclesiastical vestment
46. Big name in computers



48. Foil (2 wds)
49. Bummed out
51. Bow
53. Stallion, once
54. "Comprende?"
55. Skin art (pl.)
58. ___ Clemente
59. Collective body of bishops
61. A-list
63. Lowest
64. Mechanical routines
65. Those who live in a place
66. Bottomless pit

Down

1. Lavishly elegant
2. Fleeting
3. Those to whom money is owed
4. Haul
5. ___ nitrate
6. Cathedral topper
7. Bowed ceremoniously
8. Channel bottoms
9. A Swiss army knife has lots of them
10. Alarm bell
11. Amazon, e.g.
12. Idaho's capital
13. They go with the flow
14. Barely managed, with "out"
21. Appropriate
24. Vintage auto rear seating compartment
27. Forceful
29. "The Catcher in the ___"
31. Move forward by rowing
33. Quarantine
35. Fattiness
36. Embezzles
37. Skillful performance
39. Absorb, with "up"
41. Ring bearer, maybe
44. Most cheeky
47. Small bell-shaped bomb
48. Even if, briefly
49. Switzerland's capital
50. City on the Aire
52. Charges
54. Cowboy boot attachment
56. #1 spot
57. "Buona ___" (Italian greeting)
60. "Fantasy Island" prop
62. Court ploy

WORD SEARCH

Advertisement	U	I	M	A	G	E	O	A	A	U	D	I	E	N	C	E
Audience	N	N	O	Y	C	E	L	E	B	R	I	T	Y	G	V	R
Celebrity	R	O	O	S	P	E	C	I	A	L	O	F	F	E	R	M
Features	V	O	P	T	M	T	L	S	N	O	O	Y	N	G	S	A
Image	A	T	E	R	E	P	A	P	S	W	E	N	T	O	I	G
Incentive	E	S	Z	I	I	Y	B	I	O	L	V	Z	D	S	N	A
Jingle	E	P	A	G	H	S	S	L	O	G	A	N	N	A	C	Z
Logo	A	D	V	E	R	T	I	S	E	M	E	N	T	T	E	I
Magazine	P	Z	W	I	R	O	L	A	S	A	I	Y	E	O	N	N
Media	E	W	I	U	E	L	Y	O	R	E	Y	G	I	H	T	E
Newspaper	F	Y	J	I	N	G	L	E	T	O	R	R	E	A	I	I
Product	U	T	I	K	E	T	E	I	G	A	A	U	A	G	V	I
Special Offer	O	G	O	D	U	T	I	O	T	V	B	T	T	E	E	B
Target	E	Y	A	N	A	A	L	A	G	E	R	R	O	A	R	A
	A	L	H	Y	O	E	Z	N	M	E	D	I	A	D	E	N
	A	T	R	E	R	N	O	P	R	O	D	U	C	T	C	F

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Opinion

Litterell-y Sports: Commercial disappointment



Austin Litterell

Sports Reporter

The NFL season is officially over and now it's that time where I have to avoid all of the

Wrestling

ESPN talk about the Super Bowl. It was a thoroughly disappointing performance from the Broncos on Sunday, one of the worst I have seen in a Super Bowl in my lifetime.

I, a Broncos fan of 16 years, was feeling pretty confident about the game all Sunday, until the first play actually happened.

For those of you who don't know, the first play was a bad snap that ended up in a safety just 12 seconds into the game. No, this play was not Peyton's fault but the center's. Manning audibled on basically every single play, so why he thought this one would be different, I do not know. Nerves are the best guess. It was an ominous sign at the beginning of the game that would only get worse, much worse, from there on.

Denver's D held as strong as they possibly could in the first half. The offense's hope of a comeback was lost when Percy Harvin took a kickoff to the house in the second half. Twelve seconds into each half, the Seahawks scored.

The Broncos just looked unprepared for the Seahawks the entire game. Look at what Percy Harvin was able to. He thrashed the defense and special teams. It is like they had no idea he was going to play in this game. Newsflash, he did and he dominated. Denver looked like they had one day to prepare for this team, not two weeks.

There just wasn't much fight from them from the start. You have to be able to come out and not let Seattle punch you in the

mouth and the Seahawks came out with all uppercuts and Denver could not counter attack.

This Super Bowl Sunday overall was a complete disappointment. The game was a blowout and the commercials were not good at all. As much as I hate to say it, Bruno Mars stole the show this weekend. He gave a surprisingly strong and exciting performance. Only thing he needed was more Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Seattle was just the better team that night and they deserved to win the whole thing, and say what you want about Pete Carroll, but he gets the best out of his players. Despite though, I cannot help but feel like Denver just gave it away.

Central Oklahoma hosts last home dual of 2014

Bronchosports.com

No. 5-ranked Central Oklahoma puts a pair of winning streaks on the line Thursday when the Bronchos host Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association rival Newman in the home finale.

Match-time is 7 p.m. at Hamilton Field House.

UCO is 12-4 on the year and 4-1 in the league, while the Jets from Wichita, Kan. are 0-10 overall and 0-4 in the conference.

The Bronchos have won seven straight duals and are also riding a 20-match home winning streak that dates back to 2010.

UCO follow's Thursday's match with a trip to Arkadelphia, Ark. to take on No. 20 Ouachita Baptist in the final dual of the season.

UCO LINEUP: A look at UCO's probable lineup.

125 – Josh Breece, Fr. (5-4) or Andrew Schmauch, Sr. (1-10); 133 – Casy Rowell, Sr (24-3); 141 – Dustin Reed, Jr. (7-9); 149 – Jordan Basks, Sr. (31-2); 157 – Cory Dauphin, Sr. (24-0); 165 – Chris Watson, Jr. (27-1); 174 – Zach Aylor, Sr. (7-13) or Kasey Wilcox, Sr. (5-9); 184 – Znick Ferrell, Sr. (8-5); 197 – Garrett Henshaw, RS Fr. (18-20); Hvy – Cody Dauphin, Sr. (13-9).

BRONCHO NOTES

• Senior 157 Cory Dauphin is a perfect 24-0 on the season with 12 bonus-point wins and is riding a 42-match winning streak that ranks as the fourth-longest in school history. He has a 102-21 career record, ranking 19th on UCO's all-time win list.

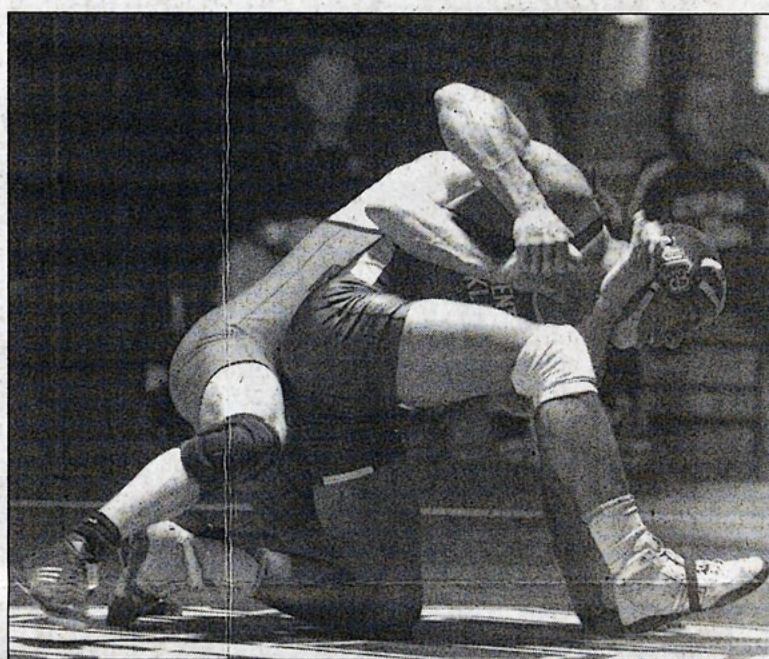
• Senior 133 Casy Rowell is 24-3

with 16 bonus-point wins and has moved into a tie for ninth on the school's career win list with a 122-30 record. He has career bonus-point wins, ranking third in major decisions with 30.

• Senior 149 Jordan Basks is 31-2 with 21 bonus-point wins, including a team-high 15 falls. He's 62-8 with 28 falls in his two-year UCO career.

• Junior 165 Chris Watson is 27-1 with 12 bonus-point wins. He's 77-26 for his career with 37 bonus wins.

• Senior heavyweight Cody Dauphin has a 96-46 career record, needing four wins to become the 23rd wrestler in school history to reach the 100-win plateau.



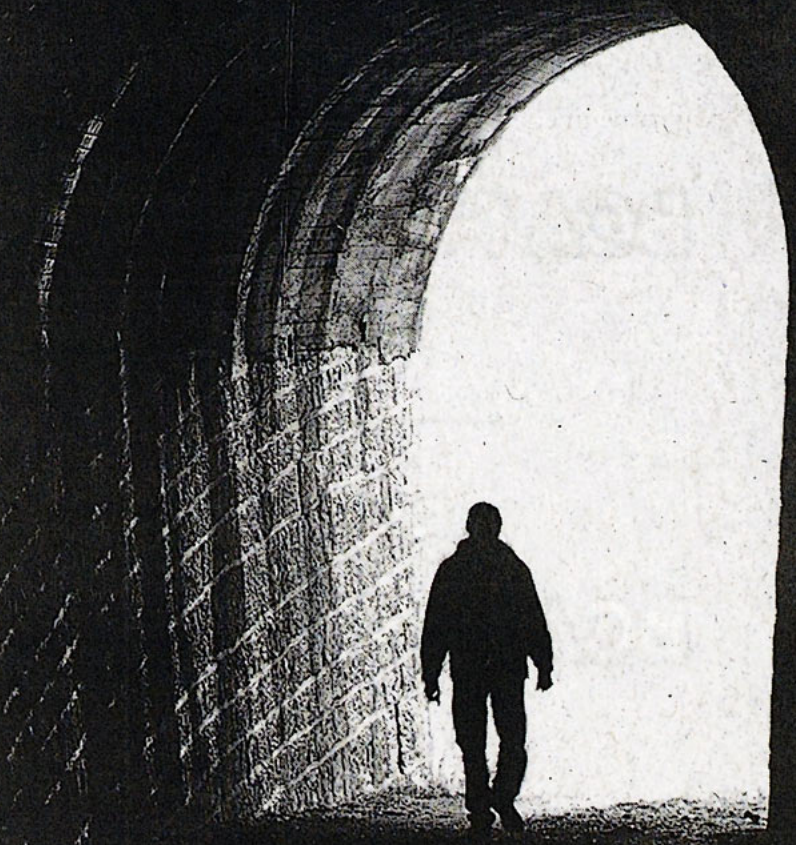
Senior 149 lbs Jordan Basks works for an escape during the dual against Central Missouri in Hamilton Field House on Jan. 29, 2014. Photo by Alike Dyer, The Vista.

SEEKING ALLAH FINDING JESUS

A Devout Muslim's Journey to Christ

A conversation with author and speaker Dr. Nabeel Qureshi with audience question and answer to follow

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Men's Basketball

UCO looks to break conference tie with Northeastern State

Rick Lemon

Sports Reporter

The UCO men's basketball team is preparing to face off with the Northeastern State Riverhawks Thursday night in a crucial Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association game.

The Broncos are 12-7 overall this season (6-6 in MIAA) and are currently tied with the Riverhawks for seventh place in the conference. With only seven games left in the season, including tonight's contest, now is the time for the Broncos to make a push and secure a higher seeding for the MIAA tournament at the start of March.

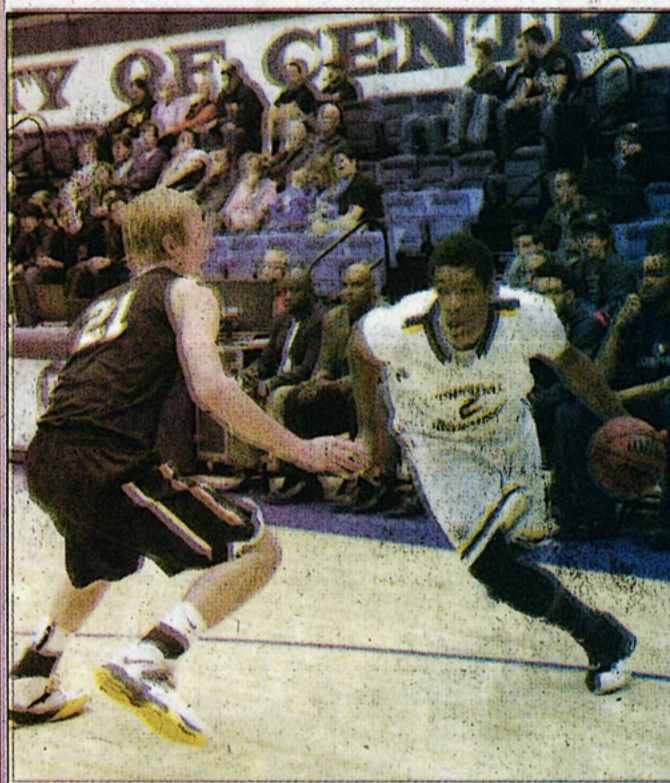
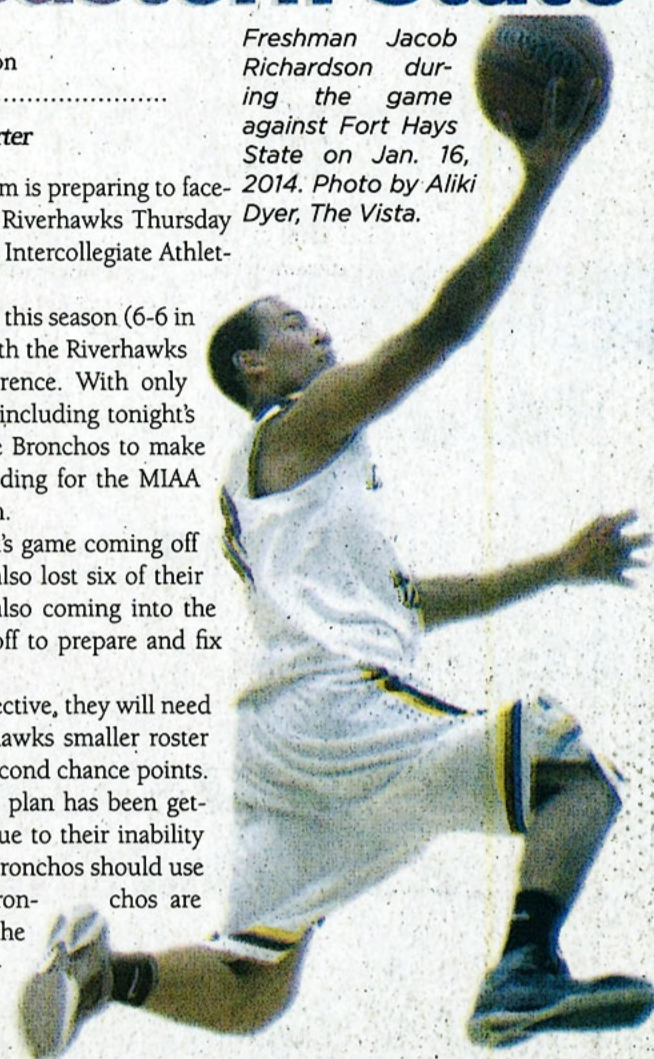
The Riverhawks enter tonight's game coming off of a four game slide and have also lost six of their last seven. However, they are also coming into the game after having a full week off to prepare and fix their mistakes.

If the Broncos want to be effective, they will need to take advantage of the Riverhawks smaller roster and their tendency to give up second chance points. The Riverhawks offensive game plan has been getting bogged down all season, due to their inability to get offensive rebounds. The Broncos should use that to their advantage. If the Broncos are able to get decent pressure on the three-point line and secure rebounds, they should be able to handle NSU defensively.

For the Broncos on offense, UCO will need to watch for the Riverhawks to try and use their speed to their advantage. The Broncos will especially need to watch out for NSU's senior guard Bryton Hobbs, whose 27 points and 10 assists helped to propel the Riverhawks to their last win against University of Nebraska-Kearny.

If the Broncos stick to their game plan and don't try and get into a track meet with the Riverhawks they should be able to get out of Talequah with a win. UCO has the size and strength to be able to play at the pace that they want to play. It's up to the coaches and players to execute.

Tonight's game marks the start of a two-game road trip for UCO as they go to face Pittsburg State on Saturday. The Broncos will then have a three-game home stand, including a rematch with the Riverhawks on Feb. 22 before finishing the regular season on the road. If all goes well, the Broncos have a chance to boost their seeding and head into the MIAA tournament with some real momentum.



Senior forward Josh Gibbs goes for a layup during the game against Fort Hays State on Jan. 16, 2014. Photo by Aliko Dyer, The Vista

Softball

Defending national champions open season in Las Vegas

Austin Litterell

Sports Reporter

The defending national champion UCO softball team will begin their trek for a repeat this week. The Broncos will play in the Desert Stinger tournament in Las Vegas this weekend. Expectations are high for the Broncos this year. UCO is beginning the season as the number one team in the country after their national championship last year with a 51-11 record.

The Broncos have also been picked to finish first in the MIAA this year, as well. UCO went 23-3 last season in what was also their first season in the conference. Missouri Western and Fort Hays State are picked to finish second and third behind the Broncos.

The team is returning with plenty experience from last year's team. The Broncos return eight starters. Including in this lineup are All-region players, pitcher Kalynn Schrock and second baseman Ally Dziadula. Schrock finished last season 34-6 with a 1.69 era. Dziadula had an impressive .355 batting average. Also returning this season is Hannah Justus, Tori Collet, Devyn Frazier, Kaylee Brunson, Brooke Zukerman and Sam Cool.

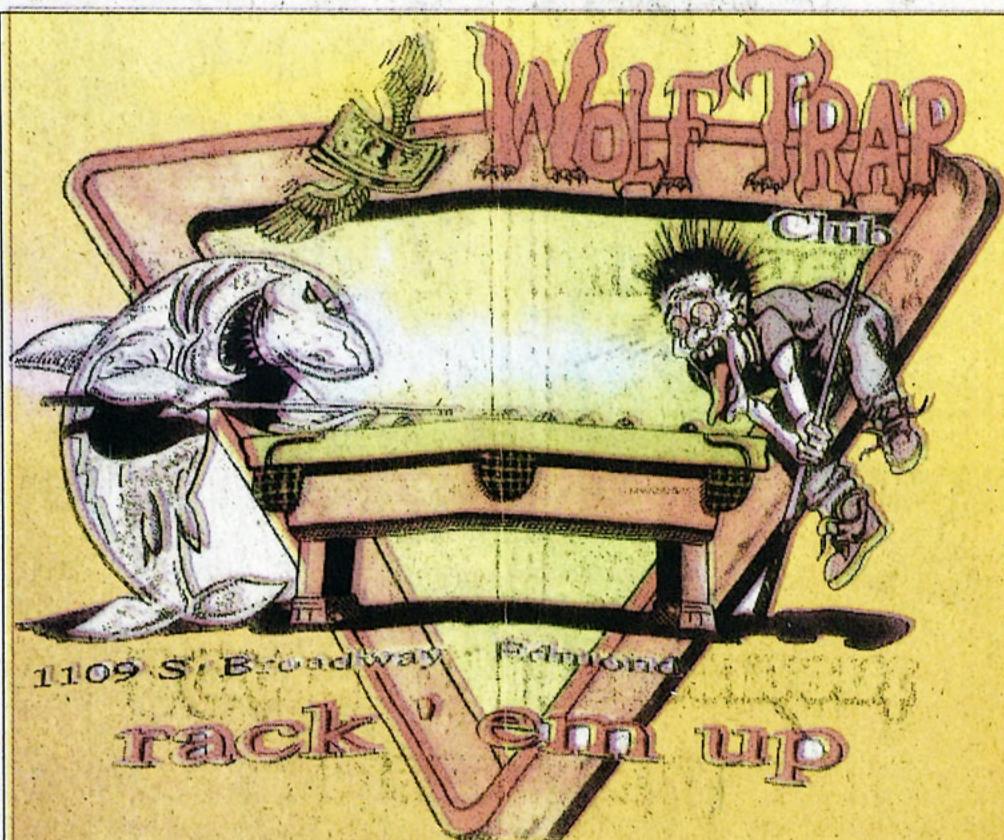
All of this experience helps with the tran-

sition to a new coach this season. Former Assistant Coach Cody White has moved to the interim coach position this season. Head Coach Genny Stidham left to coach Texas Woman's University in the fall.

The tournament is going to be a good challenge to start the season for the Broncos. UCO will play five games in three days, including two games against ranked opponents. They will face eighth-ranked West Texas A&M and 22nd ranked Augustana. The tournament lasts from Friday until Sunday. UCO will open up against Augustana on Friday.

The Vikings finished their regular season 26-12 and ended up winning their conference tournament. The Vikings fell in their regional going 3-2 and finishing their season with a 32-14 record.

It will be a long time before the Broncos actually play a home game, however. After this week, the Broncos play three more tournaments during the rest of February and early March. After Las Vegas, UCO will travel to Monticello, Ark., San Antonio, and then to Wichita for a two-game series. The Broncos will have their home opener March 8 against Lincoln University.



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