

DROWNING IN DEBT

Oklahoma Faces Millions in Unfunded Pension Liabilities

BY TYLER TALLEY
STAFF WRITER

A new report shows that Oklahoma's state debt is beginning to rise rapidly due largely to unfunded pension liabilities according to State Budget Solutions (SBS).

SBS reported that state governments, including Oklahoma, face a combined \$5.1 trillion in debt. Study author Cory Eucalitto reported that this total equals roughly \$16,178 per person nationally, or 33 percent of annual gross state product. At the time of this article's composition, the U.S. National Debt Clock stated that the national debt is just over \$17 trillion.

The SBS report states that the state of Oklahoma's debt ranks in at 32nd with a total debt of \$44,151,947,000, and comes in 30th in terms as the worst in unfunded pensions for government employees with \$41,493,848,000. That translates to \$11,574 per capita according to the SBS.

Oklahoma is not the only state where the driving factor in government debt as evidenced by the SBS report. California is the national leader with \$778 billion in total state debt with \$584 billion of that amount stemming from pension liabilities. The top five is rounded out by New York, Texas, Illinois and Ohio the analysis shows.

Eucalitto told Oklahoma Watchdog.org that the state's debt is "generally in the middle of the pack as far as the rest of the states go." He added that the comparatively below-average debt should not bring comfort to either citizens or state officials.

"Officials should be wary of proclaiming fiscal responsibility before these issues, which are largely hidden from the public, are addressed," Eucalitto said.

John Estus, spokesman for the state Office of Management and Enterprise, stated that Oklahoma's debt position is favorable to many other states and the federal governments as it cannot opt out of paying its debt due to clauses included in the state's constitution.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Photo Illustration by Alike Dyer and Michael McMillan

Teen Pregnancy Declining Across United States

Rachel Brocklehurst

Staff Writer

The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy started in 1983 as the result of an investigative report by the national news media, which revealed a story of brutality and abuse experienced by Oklahoma children who were in the state's custody.

The media report, "Oklahoma Shame," encouraged child advocates from every corner of the state into action to create an organization whose mission was to guarantee the defense of Oklahoma's children.

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Fallin's Budget Proposes Cuts

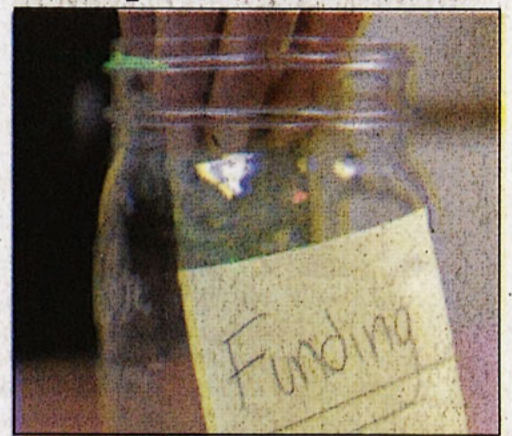


Photo by Alike Dyer, The Vista.

Olanrewaju Suleiman

Staff Writer

During Governor Mary Fallin's annual State of State Address, she highlighted certain aspects of her executive budget. The budget has aspects that could both help and hurt many Oklahomans.

The state department of education will be on the receiving end of funds. They will be getting \$50 million in funding. It will go towards educational programs, building funds, and general aspects of operations for the school districts.

The state capitol building will be receiving \$120 million. Fallin has a proposed bond that will allow the building to have significant renovations.

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Corrections Department and state troopers will each be getting funding for their respective offices.

One of the more controversial aspects of Fallin's budget proposal was lowering the tax rate of high-income earners in Oklahoma.

State employees will be receiving no raises in pay. This includes everyone from welfare workers to Oklahomans who work at the capitol.

Fallin sparked controversy once again by changing Oklahoma's pension benefit program. Her plan, which requires changing the 401 K program, would reduce the overall amount of payment to retired state employees.

Oklahoma State Representative William Fourkiller sees how there could be both good and bad.

"There are some very ambitious goals," he said. "When there are budget talks, money will always be brought up."

Fourkiller notes that the proposed cuts and lack of funding could greatly impact the lives of Oklahomans.

"Tax cuts can make it tough on people," he said. "Agencies having funding cut will limit the people in the state."

The American Indian Cultural Center and Museum in Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma Museum of Popular Culture in Tulsa are currently major issues in the state.

The American Indian Cultural Center and Museum and the Museum of Pop Culture both need \$40 million in funding.

When Fallin issued her 209 page executive budget, she did not mention either project.

Representative Fourkiller is aware that no one wants to pay extra taxes, but realizes that the money has to come from somewhere.

"We have to fill the gaps to fund agencies and to be able to carry on daily services," he said.

Since its release, Fallin has made no comments on her executive budget. The full manuscript can be found by visiting www.ok.gov/OSF.

THE VISTA

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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:

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CAMPUS QUOTES

Do you like Valentine's Day? Why or why not?

RYAN HARRIS

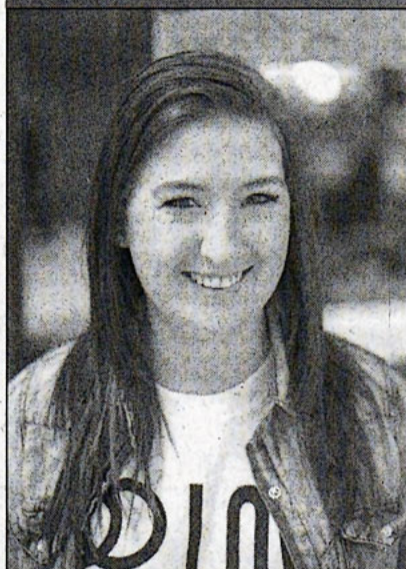
Theater Education - Junior



"I love Valentine's Day, because it's an excuse for guys to be sappy."

AMANDA WITZKE

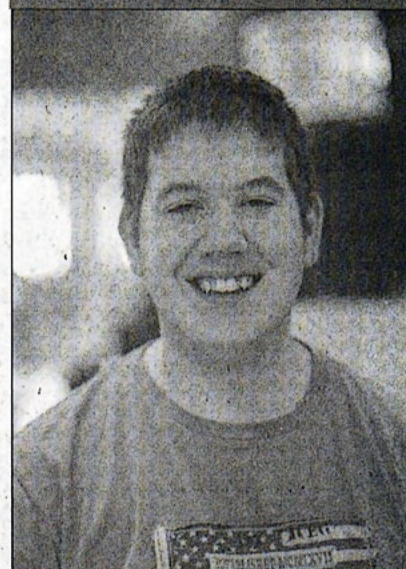
History/Museum Studies - Junior



"I like it because of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and the history behind it."

DYLAN JOHNSON

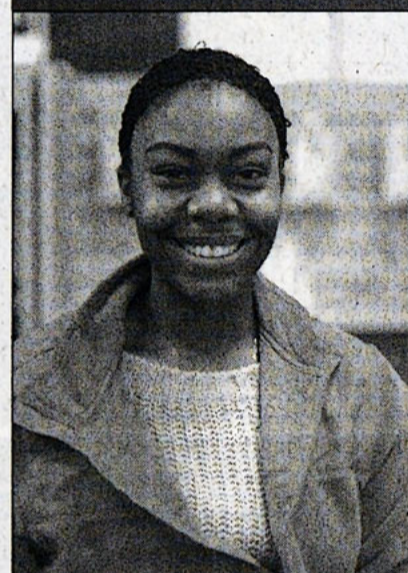
Creative Writing - Freshman



"Sure, I think Valentine's Day is good and silly at the same time. I think it's good, because people who love each other have a special day."

TORI MITCHELL

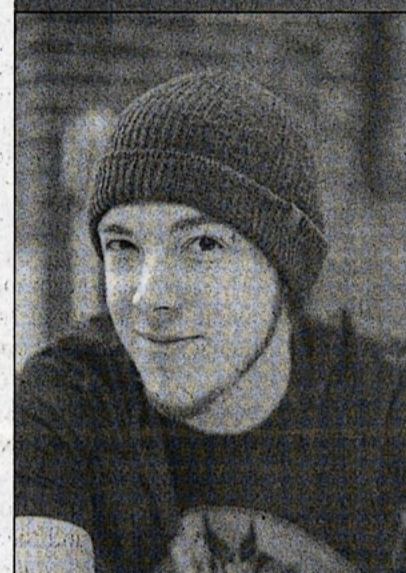
Kinesiology - Freshman



"Yes, because it's the weekend before my birthday and I slowly start getting gifts. And it's really cool to see people loving each other. Seeing love is nice. Seeing people stress over the one they love is really cute."

COPPER BILLINGTON

Photography - Sophomore



"Yes and no. I like it because it's a way to express love to family and friends. I don't like what it's become. It's very commercialized and businesses make people feel bad into buying gifts."

ALINA PETER

Psychology - Senior



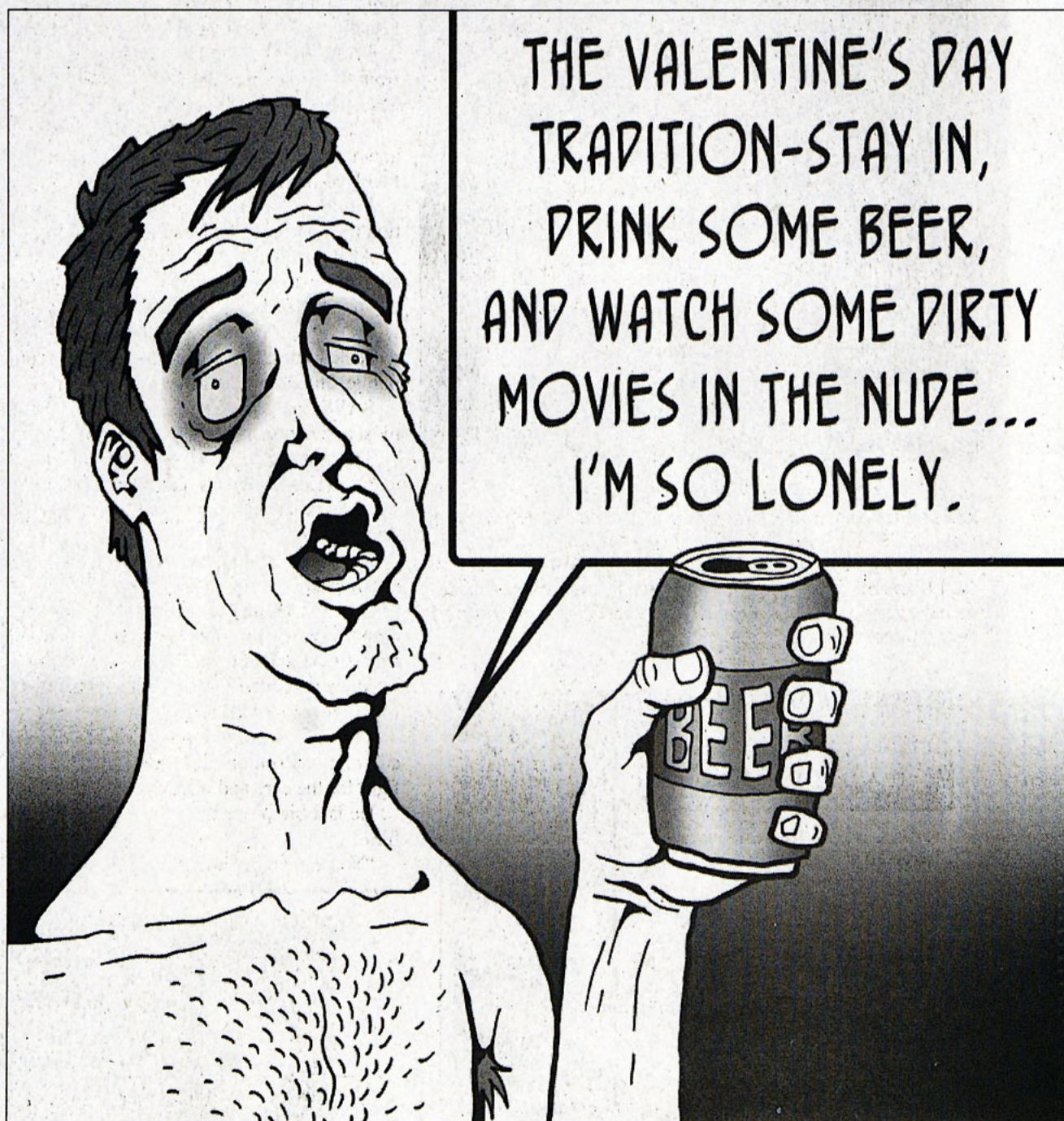
"Yeah, it's 50/50. Showing someone you love them should be everyday."

All My Valentines

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

It's no secret that Valentine's Day is this week. Though, I have to admit that being as busy as I am sometimes leads me to become caught off guard by the suddenness of the arrival of such holidays. As I scanned through the usual tweets and Facebook statuses about Valentine's Day, I saw the happy tweets of "lucky" couples and the faux-depressive messages of "single forever" guys and girls. When it comes to Valentine's Day, I like to take a different approach. In my opinion, Valentine's Day is about the celebration of love. However, I don't think this celebration should be limited to the love experienced between couples. Instead, we should celebrate the love that surrounds us every day, from not just our significant others, but from everyone that we love and experience love from. So today, I'm doing just that. In preparation for Valentine's Day, I'd like to take a moment to celebrate the love that I am privileged to have in my life. To my parents: There are no words to describe all you've done for me. You love me unconditionally. And, I love you both for it. To my soul sister: You have brightened my life more than you know. Each time I'm with you it's like a bright ray of sunshine in my life. You're one of the most beautiful people I have ever met, inside and out. And, I love you for it. To my real sister: You're my best friend. I couldn't imagine a single day without you. I can't wait to see what the future holds for us. You make every day an adventure. And, I love you for it. To the most interesting man I've ever met: You bring a whole, new depth to my life. I've had some of the best conversations and hang out times with you. You're so easy to talk to and you make me feel worthy of friendship. And, I love you for that. To my Vistas: Since I've become friends with you, my life has become more fun. Beach queen, you're so sweet and you are a light to us all. Greek goddess, you put the fun in all of our lives and we wouldn't be the same without you. Total two-stepper, you are funny and always make sure we're treated right. And, I love you all for those things. Love surrounds us all. Let's take the time to celebrate every facet it adds in our life.

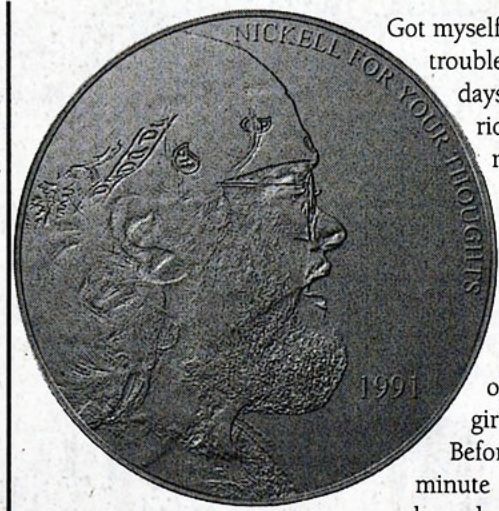
CAMPUS CARTOON



Cartoon by Evan Oldham

Opinion

THE PATHS YOU TAKE AND A HOLE IN THE GROUND *By Brooks Nickell*



Got myself into quite a bit of trouble in my younger days, nothing too serious. I would run my mouth off to Mrs. Johnson out on the playground in the sixth grade, get in fights due to "touch football," or push one of the girls down at recess. Before the first five-minute mark whistle, I was bound and determined to find myself on the first stage of punishment, spending time on the wall. And, while swats were often the next step up in the line of punishment, there was an intermediate era of punishment that involved sitting in the library and writing certain sentences on repeat. You would think I'd remember, after mindless repetition, the exact words that made up those sentences. However, I think that the jest of it was as follows:

"One day I'm walking down the street. I come across a hole. I fall in the hole. I get out of the hole. The next day I'm walking down

the same street. I fall in the same hole again."

I'd be led into the library after one of these intermediate offenses and sat at a desk with partitions, writing these sentences over and over until my hand would start to cramp up, drawing tighter and tighter on the pencil.

At the end of recess, or whenever "those in charge" deemed your time served, you would write one more collection of sentences:

"One day I'm walking down the street. I come across a hole. I fall in the hole. I get out of the hole. The next day, I choose a different path. I don't fall in the same hole."

In this age of golden youth, more than likely, I was blind to the lesson here. Now, it's clearly evident, if you repeat the same mistakes in life, go down the same path, then you are perpetually doomed to fall in the same hole.

Now, while that's a lesson the majority of us have been taught from various avenues in life, there is something there that's deeper.

"I used to say, 'There is a God-shaped hole in me.' For a long time I stressed the absence, the hole. Now I find it is the shape which has become more important."

-Salman Rushdie-

It's inevitable; we will go down paths in life that are deemed wrong by others. And, we will fall in holes, over and over again. We can preach the saving grace of choosing another path. We can illustrate to those the importance of making choices and be cautious of the paths they travel down, but when we teach through these avenues we are focusing on the absence, on the hole. The truth is, the hole will always be there. No matter what path we go down, there will always be a hole to fall in.

I know that now. So, instead of trying to decide what path to go down or overthinking the consequences at the end of that path, I focus more on the shape.

What shape? My mental shape, my physical shape, these are all things that contribute to my ability to crawl out of whatever hole I find myself in.

There is no right or wrong path. There are simply those that do and those that don't. We possess the innate ability to rise above whatever faces us. It may currently lie dormant in some while the star shines ferociously bright in others, but one thing that I know to be true.

No matter the depth, no matter the summation of overwhelming odds that fill it, you can climb of that hole. And, you'll be better for it everyday of your life.

Follow me on Twitter @JbrooksNickell

Technology Infrastructure Refresh Project brought to UCO

Kanesha Brown

Staff Writer

After getting approved from the Regional University System of Oklahoma for funding, six buildings on UCO's campus are expected to be upgraded after spring break from the technology infrastructure refresh project brought to UCO by the Office of Information Technology.

Vice President of Information Technology & CIO Cynthia E. Rolfe, said these buildings include: Wellness Center, Nigh University Center, Murdaugh Hall, West Hall, Liberal Arts and the Hamilton Field House.

Central Plaza and the library are already finished. The Nigh University Center and Wellness Center are expected to be done in February before the Oklahoma Undergraduate Research Day at UCO. Murdaugh Hall, West Hall and the Liberal Arts will be under construction during spring break, said Rolfe.

The next fiscal year, the University Commons and the suites will be upgraded.

OIT is partnering up with Cisco and Chickasaw Telecom Inc. Cisco is a communications company that is providing equipment and software. Chickasaw Telecom Inc. will provide the services such as planning the refresh, making frequencies maps and wiring the data, said Rolfe.

The OIT department has been saving up, but they have applied for a loan through the Master Equipment Lease Program to be able to refresh in a short amount of time. UCO made a promise to not borrow more than \$8 million and pay it off in five years, said Rolfe.

Rolfe said OIT are primarily focusing on updating the communications aspect of the infrastructure concerning the networks, telephone system, wireless networks, identity management and the underground fiber.

The access points on the ceilings, the switches in the network closets and the central controls are the pieces that are going to be updated, said Rolfe.

"The fiber in the ground connects building to building and then out to our internet service provider... OneNet is our service

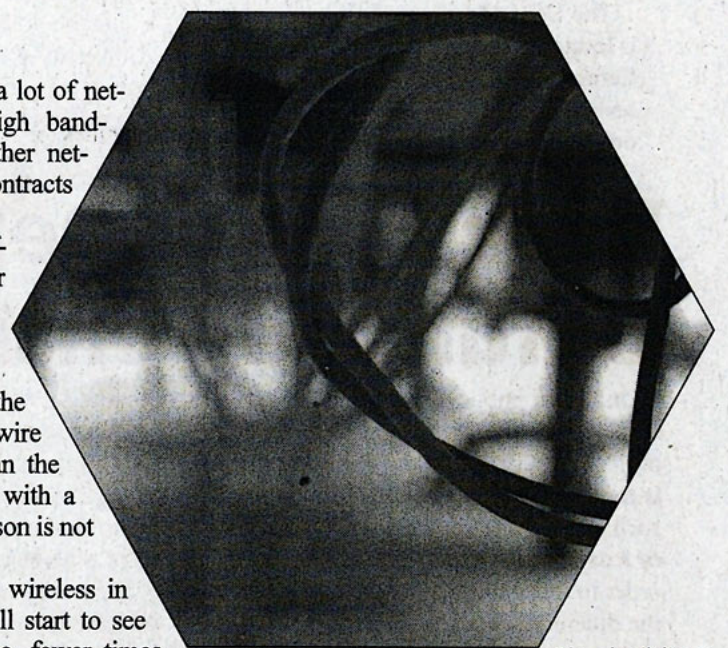
provider," said Rolfe.

The university does a lot of network traffic that is high bandwidth. OneNet joins other networks that they have contracts with.

"When our traffic goes to OneNet, their equipment figures out which network will be the fastest," said Rolfe.

Because of the way the industry is set up, hardware networks run faster than the wireless networks, but with a hardware network, a person is not as mobile, said Rolfe.

"As we upgrade the wireless in these buildings, you will start to see a little bit faster service, fewer times that you are knocked off, but until we finish the entire refresh of everything behind the scenes, it won't be as perfect as we want it to be," said Rolfe.



Six buildings on UCO's campus are expected to be upgraded after spring break from the technology infrastructure refresh project to UCO by the Office of Information Technology. Photo by Alike Dyer, The Vista.



Victor Holmes, left, clutches the hand of partner Mark Pharris as they leave the U.S. Federal Courthouse, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2014, in San Antonio. District Judge Orlando Garcia said Wednesday he would issue a decision later after the two Texas men filed a civil rights lawsuit seeking permission to marry, and a lesbian couple sued to have their marriage recognized. The Associated Press.

SAFE screens award-winning movie to bring AIDS awareness

Xavier Jackson

Contributing Writer

Ron Woodruff is the titular character in the film Dallas Buyers Club where he desperately fights to survive his AIDS diagnosis. Dallas Buyers Club was shown Monday night in Pegasus Theater by the Student Alliance for Equality and Literature in Performance.

SAFE Advisor Dr. David Macey discussed messages from the acclaimed film and how they apply to UCO. Macey has been involved with SAFE for the last 15 years.

When Macey began working at UCO, he saw an announcement for a meeting and wanted to help and be involved in the program.

Fifteen years later, SAFE is a very different organization then it was when Macey attended that first meeting.

At that time, Macey said that SAFE was more of a support group for students, mostly for those that were uncomfortable being openly gay on campus.

"We're a lot larger organization now and have a lot more activities," Macey said. "We've become a lot more public, and have a lot more allies."

SAFE has grown to be one of Central's largest and most active organizations.

This year, SAFE wants to continue to build on the many success they've accomplished already. Also, SAFE wants to reach out even more to the community, Macey said.

He said that the partnership with LIP came about organically.

"We try whenever we can to collaborate with other organizations, and seeing as how I am chair of the English the department, I knew of LIP," Macey said.

Macey credited Professor James Daro, LIP's advisor, for coming to SAFE and inspiring the collaboration.

"When you're confronted with denial, discrimination and marginalization, do whatever steps are necessary to fight for the care and respect that you need."

He is a big proponent of the powerful message of the film.

"You can go out and change the world."

One of the greatest lessons the AIDS crisis emphasized was that entire populations could be ignored, and that they would need to find their voice, Macey said.

"We've gotten so used to the idea that AIDS can be managed, we've forgotten the scale and the real human toll it takes. The communities largely affected are still ones that are still marginalized," Macey said.

In his opinion, AIDS particularly affected the gay community because that's where it first emerged.

"I think that because it was disease thought to be for gay men, there weren't really any resources," Macey said.

This stigma, Macey said, is what made the impact of AIDS so great.

"Getting the word out is important because it is still spreading. New drugs help to manage the symptoms, but it is still a death sentence," Macey said.

Dr. Macey has high-hopes for a post-AIDS gay community.

"I would hope a more empowered, more confident community that is able to apply even more energy to creativity, to service, to really transforming the world," Macey said.

However, he understands that the movement would see setbacks, as well as victories in the future.

"Well, I feel there's been a tremendous movement towards marriage equality. Any form of progressive social change generates a sort of push back."

Macey stresses that while things for gays in America may be on the upswing, the community must start to look globally at countries like Russia and Nigeria.

He recognizes Central as making great progressive strides, but says more can be done.

"The degree of progress varies with which department you're in. A few areas have really been at the forefront, and I hope everyone catches up," Macey said.

Dr. Macey mentioned that SAFE has more screenings coming up, along with their annual Equality Week.

He stressed that each coming out experience is different.

Macey said, "There's no 'right time' for everyone."

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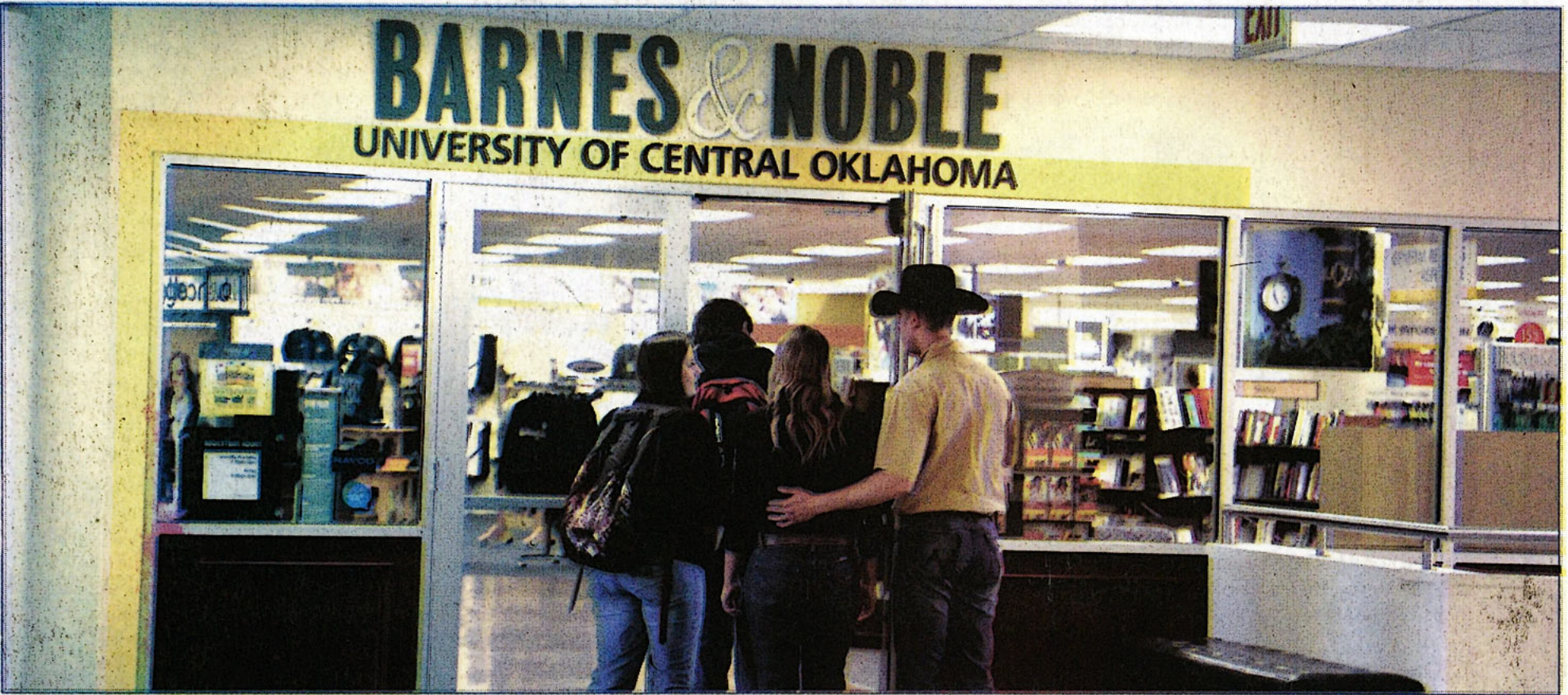
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Bookstores seek new ways to grab student business



Students gather outside of the Barnes and Noble on the University of Central Oklahomas campus. Photo by Quang Pho, The Vista.

Lei Lei Chen

Staff Writer

Bookstores in schools and off campus are seeking many new ways to make students their loyal customers.

The UCO "Barnes and Noble Bookstore" is located on campus in the Nigh University Center on the second floor. Students have several options for purchasing textbooks online. Students can rent online for around

50 percent off, purchase an eTextbook at lower prices than the printed version, and you can buy your books online where you either pick them up in the store or have them shipped to you.

At UCO, financial aid can also go towards buying textbooks.

Textbook Brokers is located at 123 N. University Dr. This bookstore guarantees low-prices and faster service. They do delivery book rentals, which are delivered to

your door with no due dates. And if you spend more than \$100, it will be free shipping.

The other Bookstore next to Brokers is called, Ratcliffe's Bookstore. It opened last year. Jordan Pyle, a store staff member said, "In order to serve better, we usually order books before every semester starts. And related to school schedule, we create the class label and change it frequently. It will help students to find their book correctly and

faster."

Similar with other stores, they offer online rentals and are currently developing their financial aid program.

According to three stores' records, students usually return books because of the wrong edition or they found it cheaper online. Bookstores are trying their best to service students better financially and help them.

Drowning in Debt: Oklahoma Faces Millions in Unfunded Pension Liabilities

...Continued from Pg 1

Unfunded public pension liabilities of state employees and retirees represent 79 percent of the overall \$5.1 trillion. Pension liabilities is the amount of money that an employer - such as a private company, or a city or state or federal government - must account for in order to make future pension payments. It is the difference between the total amount due to retirees and the total amount of money the company actually has to make those payments. Traditional pension plans include li-

abilities, in which employers agree with their workers agree to contribute a certain amount into the pension fund over an allotted time for a guaranteed source income during retirement. However, if the employee has a 401(k), there is no guaranteed amount at retirement.

There are a number of rules in place to prevent the misuse of the money collected within pension funds. However, governments often face problems with pension payments to government workers. Liabilities can come to

fruition in a number of ways. For example, when governments divert money meant for pension collection for other projects, they must go back to refund the pensions at a later date. When they fail to do so, they create a liability.

"No other debt issue Oklahoma faces holds a candle to the unfunded pension liability," Estus said. "Other than the pension liabilities, the vast majority of the state's debt is within acceptable, conservative ranges and

managed very responsibly."

Estes stated that his office had not reviewed the methodology of the SBS report so he could not comment on the gross difference between their final numbers and his office's, but could report on the numbers he and his associates had compiled for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

...Continued from Pg 1

Teen Pregnancy Declining

OICA has persisted on being alert to that duty, fighting for policies that improve the lives of children and families by being their voice at the State Capitol and in the communities.

For three decades, the Institute has informed and educated state policymakers and other citizens on the importance of participating sensibly in children and families.

They understand that when children prosper - the state prospers, as well.

Whether working with state policymakers and agencies, or with health, education, business and community organizations across the state, Oklahoma's children- and the state's economy- are reaping the benefits of the work they do together as voices for Oklahoma's future.

OICA also works hand-in-hand with the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.

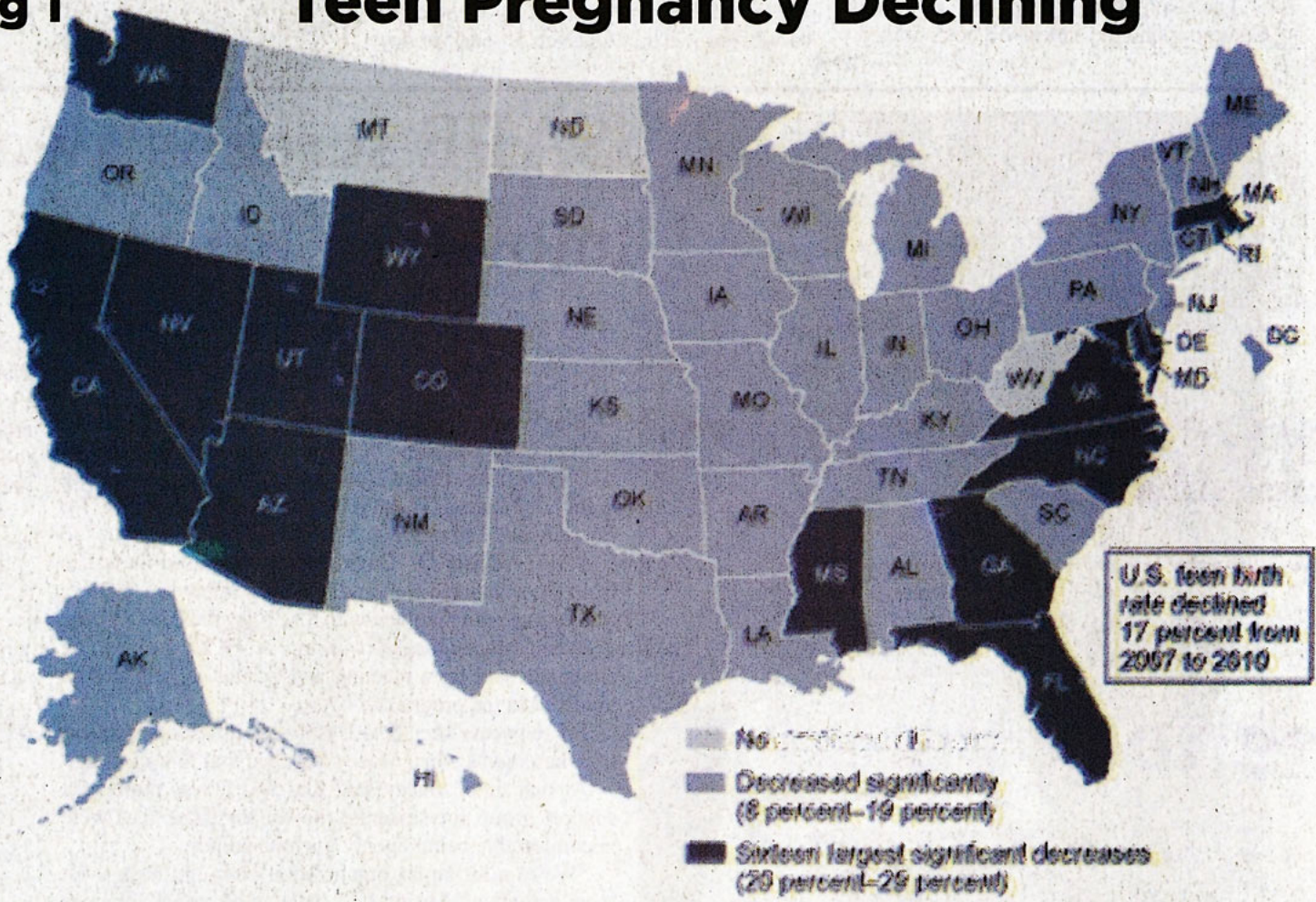
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project Director for the Institute for Child Advocacy Shante Fenner said, "There are a ton of good things happening in schools right now," Fenner said. "The fact that there can't be more abstinence speakers coming in more often has to do, not only with lack of funding, but also pushback from parents, in that they want to be the primary educators as far as sexuality goes."

Having someone come in and speak to young people doesn't change anything.

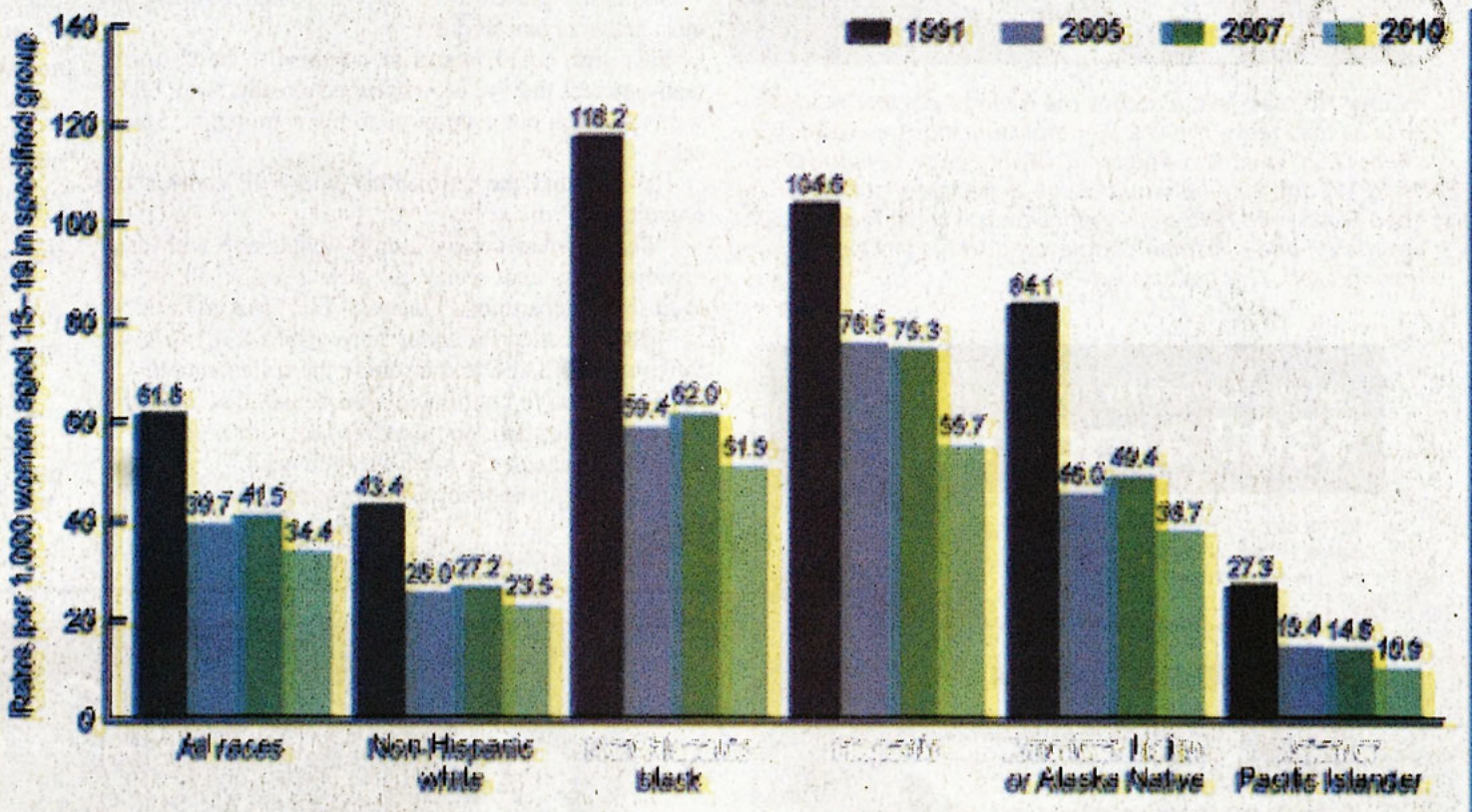
"You've got middle school age believing myths that since their body is made up of water, they won't get pregnant, or gravity doesn't have anything to do or no effect on if they're jumping up and down due to there not being any education when it comes to topics like that," Fenner said.

There's not a mandatory health education class for children that age.

Fenner said, "Preventing pregnancy for young people is a community effort."



The graph above shows the declined U.S. teen birth rates from 2007 to 2010. Provided by www.cdc.gov.

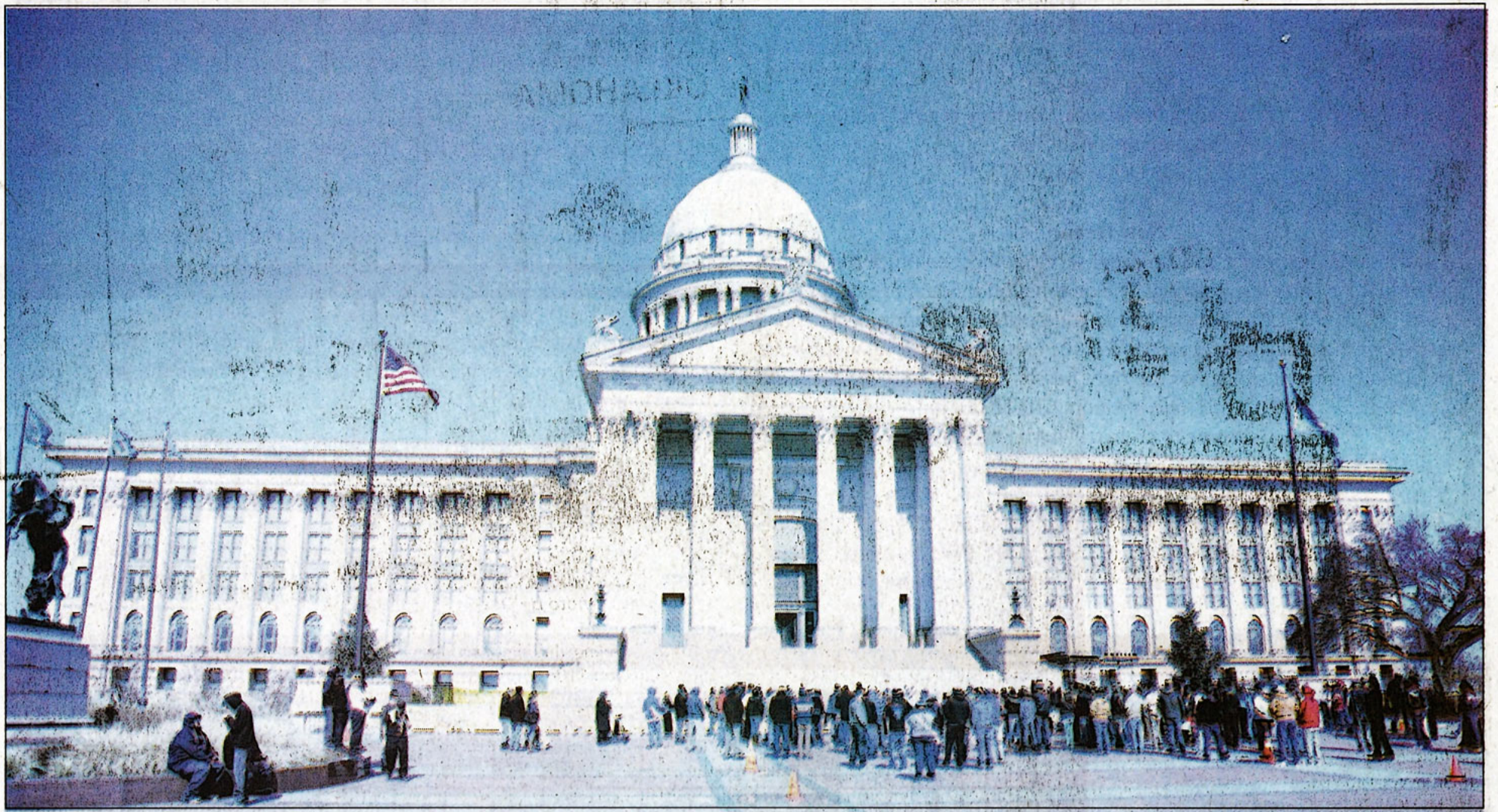


The graph above shows the rates per 1,000 woman aged 15-19 in specified groups. Provided by www.cdc.gov.



The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA) began in 1983 as the result of an investigative report by the national news media which exposed a horrific story of cruelty and abuse experienced by Oklahoma children who were in the state's custody. Logo provided by OICA.

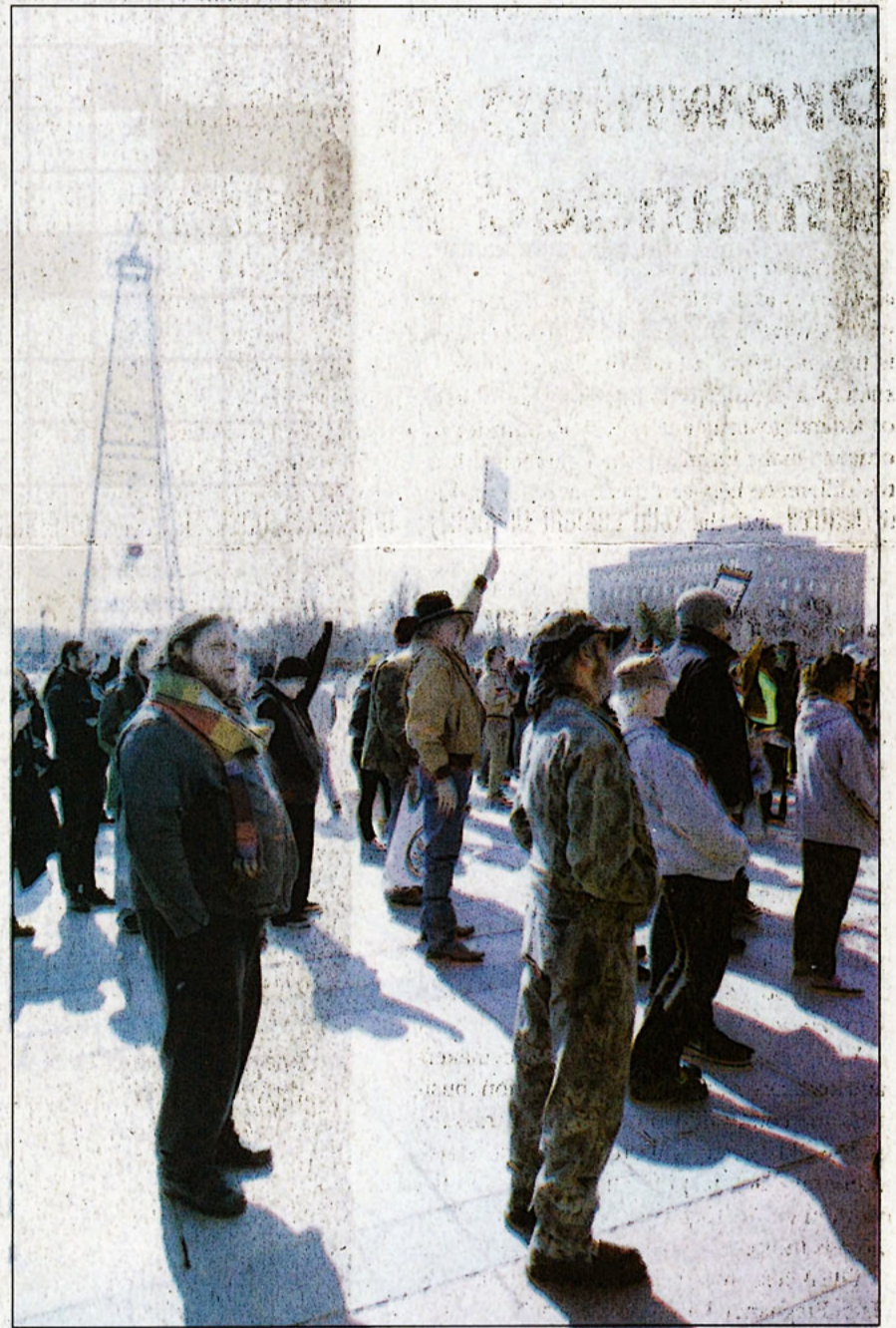
Oklahomans gather at capitol to support Senate Bill 2116: State Senator Constance Johnson's bill to legalize marijuana still in the hot seat



A rally supporting State Senator Constance Johnson's bill to legalize marijuana in Oklahoma at the Oklahoma state capital on Feb. 12, 2014. Photo by Brooks Nickell, The Vista.



Supporters of Johnson's bill wave flags showing their advocacy for the legalization of marijuana in Oklahoma. Photo by Brooks Nickell, The Vista.



People rally around the Oklahoma State capital on Feb. 12, 2014 in support of Johnson's bill to legalize marijuana. Photo by Brooks Nickell, The Vista.



A supporter's van displays banners at the rally. Photo by Brooks Nickell, The Vista.

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Some supporters of Johnson's bill held signs showing their approval of legalizing marijuana in Oklahoma. Photo by Brooks Nickell, The Vista.

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RANDOM FACTS

The Pittsburgh Penguins made Mister Rogers an honorary captain in 1991.

The only state highway in the U.S. that prohibits motorized vehicles is M-185 on Mackinaw Island in Michigan. You can travel on foot, bicycle, or horse.

The space between your pointer finger and thumb is called the "purlicue."

RANDOM QUOTE

One kernel is felt in a hoghead; one drop of water helps to swell the ocean; a spark of fire helps to give light to the world. None are too small, too feeble, too poor to be of service. Think of this and act.
- Hannah More

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CROSSWORD

Across

- 1. Crack
- 6. Kiss
- 10. Ices
- 14. Fergie, formally
- 15. "___ bitten, twice shy"
- 16. After-dinner drink
- 17. Surround and blockade a city
- 18. Sycamore, e.g. (2 wds)
- 20. Brown earth pigments
- 22. Persia, now
- 23. Drops on blades
- 24. Internet junkie (2 wds)
- 26. ___ carte (2 wds)
- 27. "Star Trek" rank: Abbr.
- 28. Bird ___
- 29. Dwell on
- 31. Clamorous
- 33. Attired
- 34. Easily moved to anger (hyphenated)
- 39. Can of worms?
- 40. Angler's gear
- 41. Branch of mathematics
- 45. Bit
- 46. French vineyard
- 49. National Institutes of Health

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14					15				16				
17					18				19				
20				21	22					23			
24					25					26			
27				28			29			30			
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	34	35					36	37	38				
39							40						
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49				50			51			52			
53				54				55					
56			57				58			59			
60					61					62			
63					64					65			

(acronym)

Down

- 19. Carbon compound
- 21. Divided
- 25. Boot
- 30. "God's Little ___"
- 31. Do, for example
- 32. "Absolutely!"
- 34. Projecting feature
- 35. Of noble birth
- 36. Allocate, with "out"
- 37. Baby grand, e.g.
- 38. John ___, founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony
- 39. Tossed back and forth
- 42. Actor Pitt
- 43. What one does to the same book over and again
- 44. Outline
- 46. Full of trivial conversation
- 47. Takes great delight in
- 48. Online newsgroup system
- 51. "E pluribus unum," e.g.
- 52. Flight segment
- 57. Same old, same old
- 58. "___ to Billie Joe"
- 50. Becomes full again
- 53. Center of a ball?
- 54. Length x width, for a rectangle
- 55. Organ stop
- 56. With the intention of (3 wds)
- 59. Like Cheerios
- 60. Almond
- 61. Battery contents
- 62. Deed
- 63. Mar, in a way
- 64. Buggy terrain
- 65. Assniation
- 1. Appropriate
- 2. Deified hero
- 3. Underworld to Hades
- 4. Knights' attendants
- 5. For it, in legalese
- 6. Clobber
- 7. Dark
- 8. Sacred beetle of ancient Egypt
- 9. Kind of seat
- 10. Decide to leave, with "out"
- 11. Shallow enough to be crossed
- 12. Live off someone's generosity
- 13. Manage

WORD SEARCH

Caesar	A	O	S	E	T	O	T	T	A	P	E	E	T	A	I	I
Cato	E	A	G	R	H	C	I	E	I	N	P	R	T	R	G	E
Cinna	L	H	D	E	R	E	T	O	O	R	N	F	E	E	A	R
Clove	I	E	I	D	U	H	R	U	E	F	I	I	M	O	O	R
Effie	E	E	A	U	S	K	A	T	N	I	S	S	C	S	O	A
Fox Face	U	O	N	F	H	T	S	P	S	O	F	E	V	E	C	O
Gale	Y	E	G	T	C	N	A	J	B	T	C	G	P	O	A	T
Glimmer	Y	T	P	E	L	G	H	B	M	R	O	I	R	M	T	N
Haymich	A	N	Y	S	O	T	A	B	A	H	B	N	I	U	O	I
Katniss	I	S	J	N	V	E	R	S	N	A	A	E	M	Q	V	L
Marvel	N	N	D	G	E	E	E	H	L	Y	N	E	R	N	M	N
Peeta	R	C	A	E	M	A	Y	O	E	M	Y	I	O	L	B	T
Panrose	E	L	T	M	C	O	D	E	A	I	C	F	S	A	S	L
Rue	E	O	I	K	O	E	A	E	E	C	U	F	E	N	Q	W
Thrush	N	L	M	A	R	V	E	L	T	H	N	E	R	S	L	U
	G	T	I	N	C	R	P	I	F	O	X	F	A	C	E	L

VISTA SPORTS

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Opinion

Litterell-y Sports: Not a "Smart" decision



Austin Litterell

Sports Reporter

This last week has been a busy week in the world of sports. The one thing that has had everybody's attention over the past week is

the implosion of the Oklahoma State basketball program. The implosion reached full destruction on Saturday as Marcus Smart went into the crowd and shoved the Red Raiders' 'number one fan'.

Fans have been something athletes have had to deal with forever. They have been constantly overstepping the boundaries of fan and crazy person. Paying to see a sporting event has given them a sense of entitlement that they can say and do whatever they want. Jeff Orr, even if all he said was "piece of crap", should be punished in some way. I think him not going to a game the rest of the season is a start although I am not completely sure it was voluntarily. He should have his seats moved away from the basket. If he had said something worse than his tickets should

have been taken away. Texas Tech can find another number one fan if that is the case.

Back to Marcus Smart and the state of the program. Frustration from the past few games seemed to hit the breaking point for Smart Saturday afternoon. Smart, no matter what Orr said was wrong for what he did and deserved a suspension. Three to five games was a good amount so I think the Big 12 actually got this correct.

Smart made himself bigger than the team on Saturday when he acted the way he did. This is not the first time though that it has happened. When he announced his return, kicking the chair against West Virginia, there have been many examples of this. Now, he has to miss three games, which will not be easy.

With all of that being said, I can't blame Smart for his actions. How much do student athletes have to take from fans before they do react like this? A nineteen year old possibly having to hear racial slurs, most would probably react the same way. If Orr said what Smart says then maybe a push was light for this guy. A teenager with the pressure that Smart is dealing with is bound to make mistakes.

From the outside, it does look like Ford has lost control. Discipline is a problem and he just does not seem to want to take action. It took two arrests and being sent home from a tournament for Ford to dismiss a freshman. This program is in trouble right now and it does not look like Ford can save it.

Men's Basketball

Women's Basketball

Bronchosports.com

Bronchos host three games this weekend

EDMOND -- Central Oklahoma will look to even the season series against Washburn on Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. inside Hamilton Field House.

The Bronchos have won three straight games to improve to 14-7 on the season and 8-6 in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association. The Ichabods are 15-6 overall and also 8-6 in the league.

Washburn took the previous meeting, 76-69, on Jan. 23 in Topeka, Kan. and the teams are tied for fifth in the conference standings. The top four teams in the regular season standings earn first-round byes in the MIAA Post-season Tournament.

Leading scorer Josh Gibbs was held to a season-low seven points in the first meeting against the Ichabods. Gibbs, a senior from Kansas City, Mo., is aver-

aging 20.8 points and 11.5 rebounds a game and has topped the 20-point plateau in 14 of the team's 21 games.

Cal Andrews led the Bronchos the last time out by scoring a career-high 21 points against Pittsburg State. Aaron Anderson is second on the team in scoring with a 14.0, while Andrews is at 12.4 and Seth Heckart at 11.3.

It's the opener of a three-game homestand for the Bronchos, who return to the court Saturday in another revenge game against Emporia State. The previous games against Washburn and Emporia State mark the only two-game losing streak UCO has suffered this season.

Bronchosports.com

Central Oklahoma starts final homestand Thursday

EDMOND -- Central Oklahoma starts its final homestand of the season Thursday when the Bronchos entertain Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association rival Washburn.

Game-time at Hamilton Field House is 5:30 p.m.

UCO is 10-11 on the season and 5-9 in the league, while the Ichabods are 13-8 and 8-6.

Washburn is sixth and the Bronchos 10th in the conference standings.

Twelve teams advance to the MIAA Post-season, with the top four receiving first-round byes while teams 5-8 host teams 9-12 in the opening round.

Game Notes

- Washburn won the first meeting, pulling out a 65-59 overtime victory on Jan. 23 in Topeka, Kan. that started UCO's current five-game losing streak. The Ichabods have a 6-2 lead in the series.
- Senior Jill Bryan leads the Bronchos with a 13.4 scoring average while adding 5.0 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 1.6 steals a game. She has moved into 14th place on the school's career scoring list with 921 points.

Sophomore Julia Mason is UCO's only other double-digit scorer with a 10.7 average to go with 5.2 rebounds.

Senior Britney Morgan is now 16th on the school's all-time scoring list with 886 points. She's also in the top five in 3-pointers made (fifth, 142) and attempted (fourth, 392). Morgan is averaging 9.3 points a game and is shooting a team-best 37.5 percent (30-of-80) from 3-point range.

Freshman Olivia Mason tops the team in rebounding with a 7.0 average while adding 9.4 points. She's had six double-digit rebounding games this season.

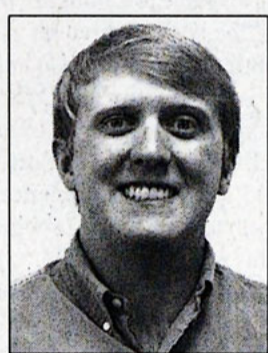
All five Washburn starters are averaging at least 10.0 points a game. Casyn Buchman tops the Ichabods with a 15.5 average.

Up Next

UCO is home again Saturday, hosting No. 7-ranked Emporia State at 1:30 p.m. The Bronchos play their final contest at Hamilton Field House the following Saturday, Feb. 22, against intrastate rival Northeastern State.

Opinion

The Lemon Drop: Out of the closet, into the Draft



Rick Lemon

Sports Reporter

On Sunday night, one of the biggest football stories this year or any year broke to the national media. Co-defensive SEC player of the year Michael Sam of the University of Missouri is gay.

Sam came out in three separate interviews, one with ESPN's Chris Connelly, one with the New York Times and one with SB Nation's Outsports.

His revelation to the world is significant because of what he plans to do next. Sam's announcement, only two weeks before the NFL scouting combine, has already been declared for the NFL Draft. If Sam is drafted or signed as a free agent, he should be picked in the fourth round. Then he will become the first athlete in the NFL to be openly gay and actively playing.

The groundwork for this landmark event has been laid down in the past years as players in almost every major sport have revealed after their retirement that they were indeed homosexual. Most recently, Jason Collins, who played most recently with the Washington Wizards of the NBA, came out in an interview with Sports Illustrated. Collins, however, was cut from the Wizards' roster and has not appeared in an NBA game since.

Sam has embraced his coming out and has immediately become a role model and spokesperson for the gay community in sports. He first came out to his teammates at the University of Missouri last August, before the start of the football season. The fact

that his Mizzou teammates were able to accept Sam for who he was as a man and as a football player should make for the perfect template of how an NFL locker room should act to adding Sam.

It will, however, take a strong NFL franchise with established leadership to handle the distraction bringing in Sam would cause. He has the potential to be the most scrutinized and publicly talked about middle round pick that a franchise has ever made. The media attention that the locker room as a whole would receive for accepting the first openly gay player in the NFL will be massive.

As such some teams that might be a perfect fit to be able to handle that type of scrutiny and fanfare would be teams like the New England Patriots, the Baltimore Ravens or the Seattle Seahawks.

The New England Patriots have been one of the most steady and heralded franchises in the NFL since the millennium. Their front office has been excellent at keeping continuity on the team and their whole team is filled with strong leaders. From owner Robert Kraft, to coach Bill Belichick, to QB Tom Brady, the Patriots are filled with vocal and strong leaders. They are also no strangers to media ciruses. They were one of the few teams who were able to handle what was at that time, the media frenzy that was Tim Tebow, who was invited to last year's training camp before being cut.

The Baltimore Ravens are another example of a franchise whose leadership would help make a difference in drafting Sam. The Ravens' general manager, Ozzie Newsome, is one of the most respected GMs in the league. And along with coach John Harbaugh and QB Joe Flacco they have recently brought a Superbowl to Baltimore. Also, though it won't compare to the media firestorm that drafting Sam would create, the Ravens have already shown their ability to handle media attention when drafting Michael Oher, whose story was the subject of the book-turned-movie "The Blindside".

Lastly the Seattle Seahawks would be a perfect fit for Michael Sam. The current world champions have the staff, culture,

and environment to support the publicity that an openly gay NFL player would bring. Between the culture that Pete Carroll is cultivating, and the young leaders on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball, such as Russell Wilson and Richard Sherman, that locker room is as solidly together as any in the league. Hoisting the Lombardi Trophy doesn't hurt for fostering locker room continuity either.

Ultimately I hope that this is only the beginning of a long and successful career for Michael Sam. It will eventually come down to the same criteria that every NFL player is

judged by, what have you done on the field. The media with eventually fade into the background and the only reason that he will or wont be playing in the NFL will be his ability on the football field, not his sexual orientation. Sam said it best during his interview with ESPN's Chris Connelly, "I'm not afraid to tell the world who I am. I'm Michael Sam. I'm a college graduate. I'm African American, and I'm gay... I'm comfortable in my own skin". If all goes well he'll be able to add "I'm an NFL player" to that list of accomplishments.



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Baseball

Central Oklahoma hosts season opener

Austin Litterell

Sports Reporter

The UCO Bronchos' baseball season begins on Friday. The team will host The University of Arkansas-Fort Smith at 2 p.m. in the first of a three-game series over two days.

UCO head coach Dax Leone is entering his fourth season with the program and is quickly turning the program around. Leone has led the team to two straight 30-win seasons. There are some expectations for the team this year as well. UCO is picked to finish third in the MIAA behind Central Missouri and Missouri Western. The Bronchos finished tied for third last season and lost in the semifinals of the conference tournament.

While this will be the first game for UCO, Fort Smith will already have three games under their belt. They are currently 2-0 on the season with victories over Henderson State University. The Lions finished with a 29-20 record last year and finished third in the Heartland Conference.

The Bronchos will have plenty of experi-

ence returning from last year's team. The team has 15 lettermen returning this season. Also, three players were named to the All-Region team for this season. Matt Johnson and Cesar Wong were named to the first team while Tyler Crabtree was voted to the second. Johnson finished last season as the Bronchos' best power hitter. He led the team in at bats with 168, home runs with 10 and runs batted in with 50.

Wong has been the typical do-it-all player for UCO. He led the team in batting average last season with an impressive .358 average, .362 in the last 33 games. Wong was also the team leader in assists on the defensive side of the ball as well. He finished with 132 assists.

Crabtree was the second leading hitter on the team based on average and had the 12th best on base percentage in the country for the Bronchos. He also tied the Division II record for being hit by a pitch last year.

After this series UCO will not be home until the 28th of February. UCO will travel to face Arlington Baptist and then open up conference play against Emporia State University.



Senior Matt Johnson during a game in the spring of 2013. Photo by Vista Archives.

Wrestling

Broncho Wrestling enters post season

Rick Lemon

Sports Reporter

The fifth ranked UCO wrestling team has ended the regular season and now is focusing on the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association tournament that starts this Sunday. The Bronchos enter the postseason with an overall record of 14-4 (5-1 in MIAA), second only to undefeated Nebraska-Kearny in the conference.

UCO trails Nebraska-Kearny by only one point in the national rankings the powers of the MIAA have stayed log jammed at the top of the rankings all season. Nebraska-Kearny is ranked fourth with 132 point, UCO is right behind in fifth with 131, and Fort Hays State has had a great turn-around year to go from unranked to sixth place nationally with 116 points.

Speaking of Fort Hays State, they are playing host to the MIAA tournament this season and will hope to use a home-mat advantage to sneak away with a conference title. When UCO went up to Hays, Kan. earlier this season to wrestle the Tigers. They were able to escape with a close 22-16 victory. Look for the Tigers to be out to revenge all three of their conference losses this weekend.

The Bronchos will be seeking a revenge of their own against the defending national champion Nebraska-Kearny Lopers. The MIAA tournament is a perfect chance for UCO to be able to familiarize themselves with one of the biggest obstacles in their quest for their 8th team National Championship.

As far as individually, there are several Bronchos that are primed to make deep runs in both the MIAA and National tournaments. At 133 pounds, All-American Casey Basks will look to finish his 123-win career at UCO with his first national title.

At 149 pounds, All-American Jordan Basks has posted a 33-2 record this season including fifteen falls, a tech fall, and seven major decisions.

At 157 pounds, Cory Dauphin is seeking to keep his 44-match unbeaten-streak alive on his way to winning a second straight national title.

Finally, All-American Cody Dauphin, brother of Cory, will also be looking to make a big push this postseason and compete for a title.

The MIAA tournament will be held this Sunday in Hays, Kan. The NCAA Division II Central Regional begins Friday at Hamilton Fieldhouse.



Senior heavyweight Cody Dauphin ties up against a wrestler from Newman University on Feb. 6, 2014. Photo by Alike Dyer, The Vista.