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Issue 12 of The Saber is full of difficult and at times controversial subjects. We have the scoop on many topics, including same-sex marriage, marijuana legalization, anti-vaccination, the Chapel Hill shootings, and BDSM. All of these topics are current, and all of them have had their fair share of contention. But once again, the voice of the students has compelled us to provide coverage of these important matters. While not everyone feels the same about ideas like #MuslimLivesMatter and medical marijuana, we hope that The Saber aids in creating a healthy discussion about these issues.

In other news, we have exciting developments happening on campus. Check out the article about the acclaim Columbus State has received regarding its stellar community involvement, which includes over 330,000 service hours in 2013. Also, The Saber has continued coverage on this season’s basketball stars on page 11, including the recent brawl between the CSU and Georgia State teams. Will they make it to the PBC Championships? Read and find out. And afterwards, be introduced to another kind of gaming community, and meet CSU’s own League of Legends club, found on page 4.

Finally, I would like to make a very special congratulation to The Saber alum Justin Lewis, for his recent marriage to Shawn Williams. Cheers on making history, and we wish you both happiness in the years to come.

-Catherine Saavedra
Editor-in-Chief
CSU Makes National Honor Roll
University adds Office of Community Outreach, wins award

In Dec. 2014, for the fourth time since 2006, Columbus State University earned a place on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, an accolade created by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The award came again after CSU’s community outreach programs logged over 330,000 hours of service in the year 2013.

Following the successes of the Center for Career Development’s service programs, the Office of Community Outreach was formed and is headed by Anne Brown, the Career Coordinator of the Center for Career Development. According to CSU’s own reporting, “The Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition colleges and universities can receive for community service.” Examples of the service that CSU has accomplished in the past would be Cougarthon, a charity fundraiser, and Day of Service, a monthly service day for students to participate in community outreach projects.

The Saber recently had a chance to speak with Brown and was able to get some statistics from the community outreach programs. According to Brown, in 2014 “over 525 students volunteered at 22 local non-profits totaling more than 2,100 hours on a single Saturday.” Other notable examples of CSU’s community service projects are this year’s Cougarthon on April 10, and the Cougars for a CAUSE monthly donation drive to provide food, toiletries, and other goods throughout the year.

The Office of Community Outreach also offers service awards to students who show themselves to be of a specific caliber for volunteering, such as membership in the 100 Club, for students who volunteered and logged a minimum of 100 community service hours through the CSUinvolve tracker, or the President’s National Volunteer Service Award, for anyone who has logged over 250 hours over the course of their college career.

Other programs for students to become involved in for service hours and volunteering are the CSU Food Bank, where students and faculty can collect and donate non-perishable food products for “homeless and at-risk community members,” or the Alternative Spring Break. The Spring Break event is, according to Brown, “A weeklong series of volunteer events at various non-profits for students who opt out of the ‘traditional’ Spring Break.” For those participating in the event, CSU will be providing both transportation and meals, and students can earn up to seven hours of service each day through their work.

For those interested in representing service projects and outreach programs, there is a group known as the Community Outreach Ambassadors, who serve as a face and voice for the many service projects being worked on at the university.

If interested, more information can be found in the Center for Career Development or by emailing Anne Brown at brown_anne1@columbusstate.edu.

SGA: New Senators, New Ideas
Seven senators join the ranks

This spring has seen a big change of senators in the Student Government Association (SGA), due to a large number of senators graduating as well as conflicts with senator class schedules. The Columbus State University SGA has welcomed seven new senators this semester: Ahna Swait, Chris Fecso, Jasmine Reese, Jordyn Braaten, Kaelin Tharpe, Keanu Moore, and Lindsay Neal. That makes for a total of fifteen senators, not including Speaker of the Senate Toniatendrea Barratt.

When asked about Senate activities, senator E’Lexues Evans said that the SGA did a “walk check” of the RiverPark Campus on Wednesday, Feb. 11, giving senators new and old a chance to talk to students at the downtown campus in an attempt to expand their efforts to address the concerns of RiverPark students. After the “walk check,” senators tallied the issues and decided priorities. Evans also stated: “The main focus of the senate this year is to bridge the two campuses. [For example] forum time changed to accommodate RiverPark residents.”

The next SGA Forum will be held Thursday, Feb. 19 in the Lumpkin Center’s Presidential Room at 3:30 p.m. and will be open to the public. For more information on the SGA at CSU, contact SGA President Rachel Green at SGApresident@columbusstate.edu or 706-568-2403. The SGA office is located in the Davidson Student Center, Room 207. There are no plans to open an office on the RiverPark campus at this time.
League of Legends Champions Unite
Get to know the Columbus Summoners University Club

Founded on April 1, 2014, by junior creative writing major, Cassidy Richards, The Columbus Summoners University Club centers on the Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) video game League of Legends (LoL).

“When I came to CSU, I was caught in between a rock and a hard place. I had just left my dream school. I didn’t know anyone here. I had no knowledge of the clubs. I migrated to the Campus Nerds where I met some other LoL players,” Richards explained.

LoL has been a passion of Richards for some time. “It’s all I do with my life. When I couldn’t go back to my other school, I became depressed. LoL gave me a chance to connect with people I otherwise wouldn’t have been able to,” she said.

The Columbus Summoners University Club was born out of Richards’ desire to create a safe haven for students to learn how to play LoL, engage in Riot Games, Inc. LoL collegiate tournaments, and foster relationships with fellow LoL players. “I wanted people to have somewhere to express their love for the game and have others they could play with,” she said. Richards leads the club alongside junior pre-engineering major Ian Kodl, who is the President of Events, and junior math major Amber Bergeman, who is the President of Finance.

“The cool thing about LoL as well is that people can actually win scholarships if they participate in tournaments made specifically for undergraduates with a collegiate program like ours. There’s even a professional bracket. My hope is to set up some workshops for anyone wanting to take on different roles in LoL,” she said, discussing the opportunities joining the club of approximately 40 members can offer.

The Columbus Summoners University Club meets in CCT room 237 every other Friday at 7:30 p.m., and membership is open to all.

In-game screenshot of League of Legends
College, Love and a Pen
Kinkier than “Fifty Shades of Grey”

It’s sexy. It’s taboo. It can even be a little dangerous, at least to people who don’t understand it. What is “it?” BDSM, or for the people who don’t know what that means: Bondage, Domination, Sadism and Masochism. The topic of BDSM has become rather popular to Vanilla (non-kink) audiences because of the novel/movie “Fifty Shades of Grey.”

The book follows two characters, Christian and Ana, as they find love within the world of BDSM. Ana is the newbie who is introduced to BDSM by Christian. Since there was a multitude of people who weren’t familiar with this kink before the novel was introduced, the result seems to be a set fantasy of what the BDSM world is really like: Sexual contracts, whips, chains, blindfolds, controlled orgasms, and a “Red Room of Pain.” Was the book a clear depiction of it? Are Ana and Christian a healthy depiction of a Dominant and submissive relationship, or a healthy relationship period?

“The obvious answer is that E. L. James just has no real understanding of how important consent is to BDSM practitioners. She researched just enough to use the right language but not enough to really understand what it means. Her male character is exactly what he needs to be in order to sell a good trashy romance novel,” began Silje Wyn, a member of the popular BDSM website ‘FetLife.’

“From a purely technical standpoint, that could have been a brilliant move as a writer. Unfortunately, not really understanding a world that your character feels is the core of their being severely limits the author’s ability to write it well. There is a reason for that saying about writing what you know. Writing what you don’t know is always a risk, and one that E. L. James failed at. I think she knew romance novel formula enough to think that anything she stuffed into place would work. And it does work for the millions of women who don’t know any better,” Wyn concluded.

Some considered the relationship between Ana and Christian to be an abusive one. The controlling dynamic that Christian has over Ana spoaks people who don’t know the world of BDSM.

“As a counselor, I have worked with a number of abused individuals,” began John Roop, part-time psychology department faculty member. “From my experience, an abusive relationship is one in which the abuser uses physical, emotional, psychological, and/or material means to control the abused individual. Christian obviously needed control based on the little bit we found out about his past and his requirement of a contract with his submissives. Christian actually allowed some compromise in the contract throughout and if I am not mistaken, engaged in their relationship and activities without the contract ever being signed.”

“The abused also generally will not defy the abuser the way that Ana defied Christian. She was not only given the right of choice but she exercised it without consequence. For example, when Christian wanted to have sex on the piano and Ana didn’t, instead wanting to continue to talk without consequence. Abused individuals in essence have a choice to comply or not in an abusive relationship, but must face the consequences if they choose wrongly. Based on this I would have to say that Christian was not abusing Ana, but that he certainly showed signs that he had the potential of being an abuser.”

“Overall, healthy relationships are evidenced through trust, communication, respect, and equity between partners. ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’ seems to fall most short in terms of valuing equity. In it there are clear gender roles related to power and submission that can be detrimental to promoting healthy relationships,” said Assistant Professor of Psychology Diana Riser, Ph.D.

“The ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’ trilogy was extremely different,” said Adriana Jackson, accounting major. “The relationship between Christian and Ana was intriguing. I feel if two individuals are consenting to their private activities with one another, it is none of our business. Consent is the magic word.”

While, E.L. James could have fallen short on the true dynamics of BDSM, does it really depict an abusive relationship? There is a clear Dom/sub relationship that makes people antsy. The power that Ana gives to Christian tends to scare people who aren’t used to the world of kink. People have gone so far as to write entire articles on boycotting the film. Not because Christian is abusive, but because BDSM is looked at as abuse.

“Christian enjoys hurting women in bizarre ways. Anastasia is an immature girl who falls for Christian’s looks and wealth, and foolishly goes along with his desires,” said Miriam Grossman, M.D., author of “A Psychiatrist’s Letter to Young People about Fifty Shades of Grey.”

“Consenting adults get to do what they choose sexually in private. Period,” said “Cowhideman,” a member of Fetlife. “Or at least, until you get to the really extreme edges of things. I assume we’re talking things like spanking, not elective surgery. Without context, they are pretty likely to assume that the sort of behavior the average sub directs toward a Dom is a sign of abuse, and non-consensual. Society (very validly) puts a lot of effort into reinforcing mutual equality in relationships, and it’s especially sensitive to signs of abuse in women.”

“If the BDSM acronym words scare them, then explain the most basic principle: It is a power exchange between two (or more) consenting adults. A form of ‘role play’ where one hands their trust to another to free themselves,” said Za, a member of FetLife. “If you need a nice ‘visual aid,’ get your hands on the movie ‘Secretary.’ It will possibly shock them but it definitely does convey a D’s relationship extremely well (in a broad stroke).”

The BDSM world is invigorating, but can be scary to those who have never thought about it. There is a clear definition of what is consensual however. Whether a person is being spanked, hogtied, or begging for more, each dynamic is okay with both the parties involved. Giving power to someone who is dominant over you is giving them trust not to harm you. BDSM is not meant to be evil or abuse, it is a world full of fun, excitement, and adventure. Hopefully, Christian and Ana can get that part right in the future.
Jon Stewart to Leave Comedy Central
“Daily Show” host announces late 2015 retirement

After almost 16 years hosting the “Daily Show,” Jon Stewart announced his retirement from the political comedy on Feb. 10, 2015. Beginning his time on the show in 1999, Stewart changed the show from what had been described by the New York Times as a “Weekend-Update” show to the highly watched satirical political commentary program that it is today. According to the Times, the “Daily Show” has averaged about 2.2 million viewers a night since 2014 began. During Stewart’s run of the “Daily Show,” he helped to launch the careers of many comedians now in the public eye such as Steve Carell, Stephen Colbert, and John Oliver.

When Stewart changed the show from simple comedy and weekend catch-ups to political commentary, criticism, and current events coverage through a lens of satire, the show’s popularity grew with increasing reliance on media by political parties. Stewart closed the segment of his Feb. 10 show with his plans for after his retirement, saying that he wants to “have dinner on a school night with my family, who I have heard from multiple sources are lovely people.”

Black Arts Showcased at Columbus State
Step Afrika! to perform and CSU Libraries host annual Read In

The Student Activities Council (SAC) will be hosting “STEP AFRIKA!” Thursday, Feb. 19. There will be an educational session from 2:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the Davidson Lounge with a performance from 7:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. in University Hall.

“Step Afrika!” is the first professional company in the world dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Founded in Dec. 1994, the company is celebrated worldwide for its efforts to promote an appreciation for stepping and the dance tradition’s use as an educational tool for young people. “Step Afrika!” reaches tens of thousands of Americans each year, and has performed on many stages in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Also on Feb. 19, Columbus State University Libraries and Sigma Tau Delta will be co-sponsoring a “Read In” event at the main campus library, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the forum area. Faculty, students, and staff will be reading five to seven minute excerpts from their favorite African-American authors. Local actress, monologist, and CSU alumnus LaSada Lloyd Owens III will be performing her original monologue “Black Beauty,” and a customized monologue “Dreams,” based on works by poet Langston Hughes. The “Read In” is an annual event hosted by CSU Libraries, with this year being the first in which Sigma Tau Delta is participating. Michelle Jones, Inter-Library Loan Librarian, and Marlene Allen, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English, worked together to organize the event. Jones invited Sigma Tau Delta in the hopes of increasing student participation.

President of Sigma Tau Delta Tia Tucker said: “Besides co-sponsoring, Sigma Tau Delta is helping CSU Libraries celebrate literature in hopes that our efforts will encourage a community of learning. Sigma Tau Delta also hopes to help others recognize cultural diversity and learn about the diversity that exists in our community.”

Last year, the authors selected were: Walter Dean Myers, Octavia Butler, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. A report card of the event will be posted by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), a professional association of educators in English studies, literacy and language arts. The event is open to the public and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Michelle Jones at 706-507-8688, or jones_michelle@columbusstate.edu.

Award Winning Musical Comes to Town
“The Producers” hits the Springer stage

In 2001, famous comedic writer Mel Brooks prepared a musical entitled “The Producers,” which was adapted from his 1968 film sharing the same name. Beginning as a Broadway musical, the show has toured all over the United States and the United Kingdom, and has earned a total of 12 Tony Awards.

The plot follows two ordinary men by the names of Max Bialystock and his assistant, Leo Bloom as they fall on their luck with the plays they are producing. To raise their spirits, the two gentlemen conduct a plan to put on what they believe will be the worst play possible. For the show, they hire many who they think will aid their plans at putting on a horrible show. While they serve as producers, they would acquire all of the money from the Broadway play and skip town. Their plan, however, backfires when the show is the complete opposite and considered extremely successful.

Mel Brooks’ tale of the two men and their escapades will premiere at the Springer Opera House from Feb. 26 to March 14. Shows will take place every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night at 7:30 p.m., with a matinee showing on Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets begin at $40, but Director of Community Outreach Aileen Fowles has a special message for any students who would like to attend the show: “We do Student Rush Tickets, so if students come in for tickets between 7-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, they will get a discounted rate of $10 to $15.”

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Black History of the Arts: Acting Pioneers
From television to big screen, these individuals helped pave the way

Eartha Kitt
Born Eartha Mae Keith on Jan. 17, 1927, Eartha Kitt began her career with the Katherine Dunham Company in 1943. Just two years later, she appeared in the original 1945 Broadway production of “Carib Song.” From the stage, she moved to singing, which earned her six hits on the U.S. Top 30 charts. Following her time on Broadway, Kitt began acting on the small and big screen. One of her more notable roles is as Catwoman in the 1967 Batman television series. She was the first African American to take on the feline villain.

Kitt also lent her voice to the 2000 animated film “The Emperor’s New Groove” and animated television series “The Emperor’s New School” as Yzma. She received two Daytime Emmys for her role. Because of all her work in music, television, and film, Kitt was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960.

Eartha Kitt was more than a singer and actress however. She founded the Kittsville Youth Foundation, a charter school and non-profit organization for underprivileged youth in the Watts area of Los Angeles.

Eddie Murphy
Kitt was also a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. Kitt became well known for advocating LGBTQ rights as well. Kitt died at her home in Weston, Connecticut on Dec. 25, 2008 due to colon cancer.

Edward “Eddie” Murphy was born April 3, 1961. Murphy began writing and performing his own routines at a young age. His first standup comedy album “Eddie Murphy” was released in 1982. At the time, Murphy was also working as a regular actor on Saturday Night Live (SNL).

Not long after leaving SNL, Murphy started acting in films. He was featured in the successful action comedy “Beverly Hills Cop” in 1984. Following that, he appeared in the 1988 comedy “Coming to America” and the 1989 crime comedy film “Harlem Nights,” which he wrote and directed. “Harlem Nights” also starred Richard Pryor, Murphy’s greatest stand-up comedy influence.

Murphy is well-known for his role as Professor Sherman Klump/Buddy Love in “The Nutty Professor” film series. He also received much recognition for his work in the 2006 musical drama film “Dreamgirls.” The role earned Murphy a Golden Globe award and a Screen Actors Guild award among others.

Angela Bassett
Angela Evelyn Bassett was born on Aug. 16, 1958. She attended Yale University where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in African American studies followed by a Master’s of Fine Arts from the Yale School of Drama. Bassett’s first onscreen appearance was in 1985 on the TV movie “Double Take.” Following these successes, she began to gain notoriety for her portrayal of a number of influential African American women, including Tina Turner in the 1993 biopic “What’s Love Got to Do with it” and Rosa Parks in the 2002 film “The Rosa Parks Story.”

Bassett continues to appear onscreen today. She recently portrayed Marie Laveau, a voodoo witch, on the third season of “American Horror Story.” Bassett also made her directorial debut in 2014 on the set of “Whitney,” a Lifetime biopic on Whitney Houston.

Denzel Washington
Denzel Hayes Washington, Jr. was born on Dec. 28, 1954. He was exposed to acting for the first time in the summer of 1976 at a summer stock theater in St. Mary’s City, Maryland. There Washington performed in “Wings of the Morning.” The following year he made his on-screen acting debut in “Wilma.” Then came his first Hollywood appearance in the British-American comedy “Carbon Copy.”

In 1989, Washington starred in “Glory,” which earned him his first Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor. He would later win another for his work in 2001 crime thriller “Training Day.” Washington currently holds the record for most Academy Awards by an African American actor.

Washington returned to his onstage roots a number of times over the years. In 2010, he worked alongside Viola Davis in the Broadway revival of August Wilson’s “Fences.” Washington received a Tony Award for Best Actor for this role. He also appeared as Walter Lee Younger in the Broadway production of Lorraine Hansberry’s “A Raisin in the Sun” from April to June 2014.

His most recent film appearance was in action thriller “The Equalizer,” which is based on the television series of the same name.

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Wedding Bells Ring
Same-sex marriage legalized in Alabama

In a landmark decision on Monday, Feb. 3, a U.S. Federal Appeals Court ruled that the Alabama state ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court to stay the ruling, but it was denied and same-sex marriages began across the state. In direct defiance of the ruling, Alabama Chief Justice Ray Moore ordered probate judges in the state to not grant same-sex marriage licenses, and the conflicting orders caused many counties to simply cease issuing any marriage licenses whatsoever, even to heterosexual couples.

Despite the chaos and confusion, many same-sex couples flocked to larger Alabama cities such as Birmingham, Huntsville, and Montgomery to receive a license. The conflicting orders were finally resolved Thursday as a federal judge in Mobile ruled that a southern Alabama probate judge could not deny marriage licenses to same-sex couples based on state law, and within the hour Mobile County had also begun issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Justin Lewis, a student at Columbus State University, visited the courthouse in Montgomery with his partner, now husband, Shawn Williams, after learning that their county of residence, Lee County, was not one of the mere seven out of 67 total counties to grant marriage licenses to gay couples.

“I made happy to see that there were many supporters there cheering for all the people going to get their marriage licenses.” said Lewis. “There were only really one or two protesters, and they were outnumbered so they didn’t really do anything.” Lewis and his partner had to walk through a gauntlet of police officers to enter the barricaded courthouse, and were officially married on Monday, Jan. 9.

With the addition of Alabama, thirty-seven states, as well as the District of Columbia, now legally sanction same-sex marriage. President Barack Obama stated in an interview on Tuesday that he expected all fifty states to soon allow same-sex marriage.

“My sense is that the Supreme Court is about to make a shift, one that I welcome, which is to recognize that — having hit a critical mass of states that have recognized same-sex marriage — it doesn’t make sense for us to now have this patchwork system.”

Obama stated in the past that although he did not support gay marriage, he does support avoiding bans and restrictions on it. Since that statement, however, his stance on gay marriage has significantly evolved. Long a supporter of civil unions, Obama says that his views changed after listening to the beliefs of his wife and daughters, as well as interactions with friends who are homosexual; Obama now publically supports gay marriage.

“When you start playing around with constitutions, just to prohibit somebody who cares about another person, it just seems to me that’s not what America is about. Usually, our constitutions expand liberties, they don’t contract them.” Obama’s stance reflects that of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who claims, “It would not take a large adjustment for everybody if the justices were to declare gay marriage a constitutional right.” As more political figures openly support the decision of the courts to legalize same-sex marriage, it gives couples like Justin and Shawn Williams hope that one day soon everyone will be able to get married regardless of their sexuality.

Tragedy in Chapel Hill
Three students dead in N.C. shooting

Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, 21, and Yusor’s sister Razan, 19, were shot dead Tuesday evening in Chapel Hill, N.C. The shooting took place at the Finley Forest condominium complex near the University of North Carolina campus. The shooter, Craig Stephen Hicks, a neighbor of the victims, turned himself in and has since been charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

Chapel Hill police have released an official statement identifying a parking dispute as motive, though the victims’ families are skeptical and have stated that they believe this was likely a hate crime. People across the nation have taken to social media to show solidarity with the victims’ families through the hashtag “#MuslimLivesMatter,” reminiscent of the “#BlackLivesMatter” campaign following the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mississippi.

The victims’ families believe the shooting was religiously motivated because Hicks was a vocal atheist. Many of Hicks’ posts on his personal Facebook page denounced all forms of religion. In one post circling the Internet, Hicks allegedly wrote, “Your religion started this, not me. If your religion kept its big mouth shut, so would I.” Hicks’ wife Karen insisted at a news conference that her husband was not a bigot and the murders “had nothing to do with religion or the victims’ faith.” She affirmed the police statement that a parking dispute was the likely motive.

Barakat was a student at the UNC School of Dentistry. He married Yusor Abu-Salha in late December. Yusor had just been accepted to UNC, and was scheduled to begin dental studies this fall, while her sister was studying architecture and design at North Carolina State University. According to the fundraising website YouCaring.com, Barakat was raising money to provide free dental care to children who had become refugees during the ongoing Syrian War. Barakat and his wife were scheduled to travel to the Salaam School in Turkey this summer to help refugees of war.
City Bus System Plans to Improve Services
New routes, extended hours coming this year

The Columbus bus system, run by METRA, has been no stranger to criticism over the years. Limited routes, long gaps between service at many stops, and no evening or Sunday service has forced many who would consider taking public transportation to turn back to their cars. This may soon change, however, as METRA has recently released a statement detailing their plans to dramatically improve the service over the next year and beyond.

METRA initially gathered information from citizens to find out exactly what they thought was needed to improve the bus system. Through several public outreach meetings last year, rider surveys, and interviews, METRA created a “Transit Needs Assessment” that summarized their findings. Citizens wanted routes to new locations, earlier and more frequent service, and extended service into the evening.

In response, the bus system partnered with the Columbus Planning Department to design a two-phase plan to start rolling out improvements. Phase one, which begins this year, will include extending service until 10 p.m., improving timeliness for existing routes, and adding service further into Columbus Park Crossing and farther east towards Milgen Road and the various Warm Springs Road neighborhoods. Circuitous one-way loops which are common on several routes will also be eliminated if possible. Several new vehicles will be purchased this year as well, and more shelters at popular bus stops will be built as the project progresses.

The long term plans, which are projected through 2022, include the purchasing of more busses, service to new areas like Flat Rock Park and Victory Drive, a more efficient UpTown trolley, and the establishment of several “community hubs” to better facilitate connections. In these hubs, busses from many different routes will congregate in one area to allow riders to go directly on the route they need, much as they do in the current transfer center downtown.

These hubs are to be built at the Gateway Walmart, the City Services Center in MidTown, and at the Wnn-Dixie on S. Lumpkin Road.

The funding for these projects is coming from the T-SPLOST tax, passed by Columbus voters in 2012. The 1% sales tax is set to provide over $22 million in revenue specifically to be used for these improvements to the bus service. As for the price of riding, METRA has not made any announcements regarding changes in fares. As of now, fares are $1.30 for a one-way ride, or $1 with a student ID, while the UpTown trolley is a flat $0.55. Transfers require an additional payment.

As more people, and especially students, turn away from cars in order to save money and lessen their environmental impact, the public transit system will become increasingly important to the healthy functioning of Columbus. Time will tell how well these new plans will be implemented and how much they will help the city reach a new level of quality in their transportation services.

Georgia House Plans Medical Marijuana Bill
Committee evaluates the use of marijuana as treatment

Cannabis oil is often used as a source of medical treatment for conditions such as seizures, forms of autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even cancer. As of February, 23 out of the 50 states have legalized its usage. Georgia looks to be one of the first states in the South to follow with some form of legalization.

Georgia is currently one of 10 other states with pending legislation on the matter. Many officials within the state are showing their support for legislation, and hope to get the law passed as soon as the end of this year.

Curt Thompson, a senator for the state of Georgia, has already begun plans for it. “Few would disagree that physicians need every good tool in their medical toolbox to provide the best healthcare possible to their patients,” Thompson said. “During the 2015 legislative session, we will have the opportunity to provide our doctors with an additional tool by legalizing marijuana for medical use.”

Thompson, however, is not alone in his views on legalization. House member Allen Peake has also strongly supported the usage of medical marijuana. Originally proposing the idea in early 2015, the bill, referred to as HB 1, would have allowed parents of children with seizures or other illnesses to legally obtain cannabis oil for medical use.

HB 1 was dismissed before reaching the House of Representatives. Now, however, there is a new bill supported by both Governor Nathan Deal and Peake. If passed, it would “Provide immunity for parents possessing the medication. It would not allow growing, possessing, or selling the oil in Georgia.” Gov. Deal has publicly stated that he will work with the legislature on medical cannabis legislation that is “safe, legal, and supervised by doctors.”

“Rest assured that these three guidelines are at the heart and core of this bill. We have studied similar types of legislation for months and heard from all those who hold a stake in the matter; therefore, I am confident that we will craft the best possible version of this bill,” said Representative Peake.

The House is scheduled to make a decision soon regarding the future usage of medical marijuana in Georgia. Georgia’s history with marijuana law actually dates back to the early 1980s. A program was created in Georgia to be overseen by the Patient Qualification and Review Board to test the effects of medicinal marijuana on patients with cancer and other illnesses. The idea was never able to go into effect, mainly because of the short supply of the nation’s legal cannabis.

Nationally, only Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington states have legalized marijuana for use both medically and recreationally. Washington D.C. is preparing to be the next district up for complete legalization.
Measles Outbreak Invades Disneyland
Some parents refusing vaccines

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as of Feb. 6 at least 121 people from 17 different states in the U.S. were reported infected with measles. The disease began to spread in late December at the Disneyland theme park in Anaheim, California. Officials involved with the CDC believe that the outbreak likely started when a traveler became infected overseas and then visited the park, spreading the disease to other visitors. The CDC has stated that the disease is so contagious that “90 percent of [unvaccinated] people close to the [infected] will also become infected.” The CDC also stated that a majority of the people who continue to contract and spread the disease are not vaccinated.

Measles is a virus that can be spread to others through coughing and sneezing. According to the CDC, the measles virus can live on surfaces of objects for up to two hours. Symptoms of measles include high fevers, coughs, runny nose, and rashes in the throat and on the skin. Children younger than five can be subject to further complications such as hearing loss, ear infections, pneumonia, and even brain damage or death. As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), measles is one of the leading causes of death in children; the disease killed over 145,000 people worldwide in 2013.

The CDC recommends that individuals receive two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) by the age of six. The vaccines provide a lifetime protection from measles, proving to be 97 percent effective at preventing infection. The MMR vaccine demonstrated to be so effective that by the year 2000 the United States declared measles as virtually eliminated from the country. However, health officials in the U.S. are particularly concerned about the recent outbreak, because a growing number of people are following a trend many refer to as an Anti-Vaccination Movement.

In a 1998 study Andrew Wakefield, a British surgeon and medical researcher, produced a research paper with the claim that there was a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. It was discovered that the results of the research were fraudulent. According to the CDC, many studies have looked into whether there is a correlation between vaccines and autism, and to date the studies continue to show that vaccines are not associated with any developmental disorders. Wakefield’s research paper has since been retracted and his medical license permanently suspended in the UK; however, the paper was not withdrawn before he drew international attention and created a fear of vaccines among some groups of parents.

In the years following Wakefield’s research, Jenny McCarthy, a popular media personality and actress, became a public anti-vaccine activist, claiming that her son’s autism was caused by the MMR vaccination.

Wakefield’s falsified research coupled with McCarthy’s anti-vaccine campaign perpetuated the idea that the MMR vaccine can cause health issues, such as autism, in children. This has resulted in growing number of communities consisting of people referred to as Anti-Vaxxers. Anti-Vaxxers are people who refuse to vaccinate themselves or their children because of personal beliefs.

With more and more people failing to vaccinate their children, measles is able spread more easily. The CDC frames the Anti-Vaxxer trend as one of the primary reasons that a disease that was virtually wiped out has resurfaced with over 600 reported cases in 2014. President Obama addressed this controversial issue in early February 2015, assuring parents that “the science [behind vaccinations] is pretty indisputable” and that “there is every reason to get vaccinated. There aren’t reasons to not.”

College Kitchen
How to make ramen healthy

Ramen noodles are a staple in every college dorm, mostly because they are incredibly cheap. Packs of ramen noodles sell for around 20 cents in Columbus, so, if you do the math, you could buy 9400 packs of ramen for the same price as a meal plan. That’s enough to eat nothing but ramen three times a day for almost nine years, which would be great, except eating nothing but ramen would definitely kill you. What most college kids don’t realize is ramen is actually really bad for the body. One package of noodles cooked with the seasoning packet has 36 percent of the daily saturated fat and a whopping 74 percent of the daily recommended sodium intake. The good thing, however, is that it’s easy to make ramen healthier. The first step: ditch the seasoning packet and pick up some of your favorite vegetables.

Makes: Two 8 ounce servings

Ingredients:
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 scallion, chopped
Kale, shredded
Maruchan Ramen Noodle Soup package

Instructions:
1. Fill a pot with two cups of water seasoned with chopped garlic
2. Bring water to boil
3. Add extra vegetables
4. Open the ramen and slam dunk the seasoning packet into the trash
5. Add noodles to water
6. Cook for three minutes or until kale is wilted

For even healthier ramen, try adding a source of protein, like chicken or shrimp. You can even add some broccoli, olive oil, and parmesan after the noodles have cooled to create a chilled pasta salad.
Basketball Cat Fight
CSU Cougars pounce on Bobcats

Kenney Funderburk shooting a foul shot
Eryn Cochran shooting one of four free throws

It was a great week for Cougar basketball as both teams grabbed a win. The Lady Cougars made amends for their January loss against the Georgia College Bobcats and swept them 46-68, with Michelle Mitchell taking over and scoring the Cougar’s first 10 points, with an 18 point total over the course of the game. The Lady Cougars were in the lead the entire game.

The men’s team put plenty of effort into getting their 77-72 win over Georgia College, despite starting the game off with the fear that CSU’s inability to grab the lead in the first hour would be a premonition of the game’s conclusion. The Cougar’s first point came from BJ Battle’s three-pointer for a score of 8-3 at three minutes in. It was Kenney Funderburk who got CSU’s momentum started with two dunks and a three-pointer about midway through the first half.

While Georgia College kept the points coming, they couldn’t stop the machine the Cougars were becoming in the second half. The game finally tied with a little over nine minutes in the half, and the fan response was deafening. Fans audibly disagreed with referee calls after a tied game was announced, and calls of “boo” echoed around the court.

But the last minute of the game led to four free throws for the Cougars, giving them just the push they needed to get the lead and win. The Cougars faced Montevallo at home on Wednesday, Feb. 11 and snagged a win of 68-37.

As of Feb. 12, the Lady Cougars are 7th in the Peach Belt Conference with only one loss this season, and both the Men and Lady Cougars have a shot at making it to the PBC Championship. If both teams win, it will be the first time both the men’s and women’s teams have won a championship in the same year.
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