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ACTA Carries Ambitious Goals, Serious Consequences

ACTA aims to establish an international framework for targeting copyright infringement on the Internet. Image by Samantha Feld

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In the midst of website blackouts, debates over intellectual property and the use of copyrighted material online stands the International Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, also known as ACTA. This agreement has a greater reach than that of PIPA and SOPA, targeting not only copyright infringement on the Internet, but also the sales of counterfeit goods and generic medications.

Primarily, ACTA seeks to establish international standards for enforcement of intellectual property rights, and requires the creation of an independent governing body, the ACTA Committee, outside the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations. The agreement was signed on Oct. 1 by the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea. Last month 22 of the European Union’s member states—including the UK, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Greece and France—signed the agreement without any legislation or public democratic processes.

Stravros Lambrinidis, a Greek member of the European Parliament, said that this “is legislation laundering on an international level of what would be very difficult to get through most parliaments.” Being that this is an agreement between nations, much like a peace treaty, countries are able to bypass these processes and sign the ACTA with little or no public disclosure. In fact, until last year, much of the information regarding ACTA came primarily from online information leaks.

According to one of these leaks, the United States and Japan first introduced the idea of a plurilateral treaty that would aid in the fight against piracy and counterfeiting. This is believed to be the earliest draft of ACTA. It was meant to bring together developed as well as developing countries that wish to negotiate an agreement that enhances “international cooperation and contains effective international standards for enforcing intellectual property rights.” The leak goes on to say that preliminary talks about ACTA took place in secret throughout 2006 and 2007 among many of the countries that signed last fall.

Continued on page 4

Obama to Commission New Mortgage Committee to Investigate Housing Crash

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President Obama has announced a new task force group to look into whether or not big banks are criminals for their behavior in recent years involving home mortgages and foreclosures.

When a home owner and a bank enter into some level of loan or mortgage agreement, it is a process that can take months, so the larger super banks had to devise a way to buy and sell tens of thousands of homes in one fast transaction.

They accomplished this by bundling them together. Thousands of families’ shelters were bought and sold in the blink of an eye.

After doing this enough times, the actual physical paperwork of these mortgages has, in essence, been lost, allowing homeowners to challenge their removal by asking for proof. In some cases all the home owner has to do is refuse to leave and squat in their own home. Continued on page 4
Impending Doom, or the Future of Fossil Fuels?

BRIAN LUEDTKE
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Perhaps the term gas hydrate is an unfamiliar one. Perhaps it has been hushed in the media to avoid pandemonium and chaos. Maybe the media were right, but then again, they could have been wrong.

Gas hydrates are an enormous resource of carbon deposits containing methane, propane, or carbon dioxide. These deposits lay beneath the permafrost layer in the far North and beneath ocean floors around the world. Gas hydrates are usually trapped in an ice-like cage often making them inaccessible, while others are heated or when their covering is removed directly into the atmosphere from the seabed.

One particular deposit along the Alaskan North Slope houses approximately 85T CF of natural gas hydrates. "While this represents three and a half times the U.S. current use, there is no pipeline at present from there to the rest of the world to supply this gas," said Igor Semilotov, one of the scientists working in the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska - Fairbanks.

"One of the greatest fears is that with the disappearance of the Arctic sea ice in summer, and rapidly rising temperatures across the entire Arctic region, which are already melting the Siberian permafrost, the trapped methane could be suddenly released into the air, with potential to rapid and severe climate change," Semilotov said.

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When a black female student at the University of Wisconsin - Parkside was found to be the culprit of a racist "death threat" list spread across campus on Thursday, Feb. 2, the issue - framed as a 'death threat' list - went national and black students. I don't know if it is the local culture, the faculty? Is it because it is intimate and small? Collectively, it's a comfortable atmosphere," Rogers said.

"I get her point," Rogers said of UWSP, "I don't care more or less than anywhere else. I go out, I feel welcome and loved by my community," Rogers said.

"BSU's main mission is to educate others about our community," and vice versa, said Rogers, noting it can be intimidating to enter settings where your ethnic identity is not predominant. "We also try to celebrate our different gaps."

The Soul Food Dinner, the largest of several events put on annually by BSU, does just that. It is meant to "raise cultural awareness, bring people into what we experience," Rogers said. "It's more important to show what we have in common, but we also try to celebrate our differences.

The Soul Food Dinner will take place on Feb. 26, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the DUC Laird Room. The night will feature entertainment, poetry, and other surprises; tickets are already on sale.

Natalia Shakhova, of the International Arctic Research Centre at the University of Alaska - Fairbanks, is another of many scientists researching gas hydrates. "The concentration of atmospheric methane increased [nearly] three times in the past two centuries from 0.7 parts per million (ppm) to 1.7 ppm, and in the Arctic the increase is 1.5 ppm. That is a huge increase, between two and three times, and this has never happened in the history of the planet," Shakhova said.

"It would be great to capture the methane hydrates for energy before they decompose, that would be the best thing to do. If we do not capture it, and let it do decompose, it will release a lot of greenhouse gases," Shakhova said.

"I feel that if we're talking about comfort, we need to think of the comfort of the people we choose to stick to themselves, but we try to bring them in, show them what we're about."
Continued from page 2

Greg Frazier, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer of the Motion Picture Association of America, one of the strongest proponents of ACTA, released a public statement about ACTA. "ACTA is an important step forward in strengthening intellectual property rights." He said, "ACTA is an important step in the global competitiveness and are committed to moving ahead together to protect the jobs of the millions of men and women working in film and other creative industries."

Critics of ACTA believe that Frazier's statement was overly optimistic about the impact of the ACTA agreement. In the statement, Frazier said, "ACTA is an important step forward in strengthening international cooperation and enforcement for intellectual property rights." He goes on to say that it is an "important signal that the world's largest economies recognize the critical value of intellectual property and the need to provide adequate remedies for infringement."

...Arthur Tolstedt, a professor of media law in the Communication Department, said that this could be good for circulation of the copyright holder's product. His advice on the matter is not mentioned online and if it was it was in the paper written for class. Although many countries have signed the ACTA, it is not yet in force. The European Parliament will have a vote in the coming months, with a likely vote to be scheduled in June. A few anti-ACTA websites have urged visitors to call members of the International Trade Committee and recommend that Parliament reject, and therefore disallow ACTA in Europe.

Mortgage Committee/Criminal Behavior

Continued from page 2

"Anyone who has been foreclosed on should now be phoning their lawyers and trying to find out if the foreclosure was legal" - Felix Salmon

The suit arose after UW System Provost Provost said, "We've long held that those syllabi are not subject to open records requests," but was instead simply reposted. Dr. Tolstedt said that this could be good for circulation of the copyright holder's product. His advice on the matter is not mentioned online and if it was it was in the paper written for class. Although many countries have signed the ACTA, it is not yet in force. The European Parliament will have a vote in the coming months, with a likely vote to be scheduled in June. A few anti-ACTA websites have urged visitors to call members of the International Trade Committee and recommend that Parliament reject, and therefore disallow ACTA in Europe.

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The Wisconsin Board of Regents has adopted policies providing that course materials, including syllabi, are the intellectual property of the university and intellectual property "creates them," said Katherine Jore, the records custodian at UWSP. The letter goes on to state that the university is willing to grant the council's other requests for records but would require a $500 fee in order to do so.

The heart of the case is whether or not course syllabi are subject to the state's open records laws. The UW System claims that they are not because they are "subject to copy-right.

The council responds by claiming that nothing in the Wisconsin statutes protect records that are subject to copyright from disclosure, and even then they should be granted access due to federal laws of fair use for "criticism, comment, news reporting, scholarship or research."

The request "is not to reproduce or disseminate these syllabi or to use them for commercial purposes, but to evaluate the content of the associated courses in connection with a national evaluation process."

The UW System is not the only university system to have issues with the review being conducted by the council. The council lists 25 other states that have sent letters to them saying they are refusing to participate in the review process.

"We have received a lot of institutional pushback," McKenzie said, "but it is up to the flagship institutions around the nation who are cooperating."
Women's Hockey Loses Weekend Series Against Adrian College

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point women's hockey team faced Adrian College at home over the weekend and lost both games. The first game on Saturday ended 7-3 while Sunday's game ended 6-4, extending Point's current losing streak to five games.

Saturday began with Adrian getting on the board early in the first when sophomore forward Lauren Turner and freshman forward Lauren Zachwieja set up sophomore forward Sarah Connelly. Point answered three minutes later on a goal by freshman forward Hannah Smith set up Pearson for the 1-1 equalizer.

Morgan Pearson got the Pointers up 2-1 after sophomore defender Ava Plamondon assisted her for the go-ahead score. Adrian College got even just before the end of the first period when freshman forward Hannah McGowan found the net. McGowan was assisted by senior defender Kelly Salis and senior goaliekeeper Brittany Zeches.

Adrian College again scored the first goal of the period off of a power play. McGowan and freshman defender Courtney Millar assisted sophomore forward Danielle Smith to get the Bulldogs out to a 3-2 lead.

The Bulldogs took advantage of another power play opportunity five minutes later on a Salis goal, assisted. Both teams had 10 penalties in the third, the third period to get the Bulldogs out to a 5-3 lead. The Bulldogs added two more empty-net goals in the third by sophomore forward Nina Laurie, and Salis tallied her third point.

Freshman goaliekeeper Janna Beilke-Skoug recorded the loss for the Pointers and was replaced by fellow freshman goaliekeeper Johanna Sommers in the second period. Zeches recorded the win for the Bulldogs with 23 saves on the night.

Adrian College again scored the opening goal of the game in Sunday's rematch in sign of a similar outcome. Junior forward Ashley Chin set up Millar for her second point in as many days. Point tied the game later on when junior forward Michelle Luneborg took advantage of an assist by sophomore forward Allie Tanzer.

Millar again scored for the Bulldogs who, again, scored the opening period goal in the second to give them a 2-1 lead. Zeches notched the assist for the goal. A series of goals brought some energy to the game in the second period.

During a power play, Laurie took the Bulldog lead to 3-1, assisted by Turner and Salis. Thirty-six seconds later, sophomore forward Cassandra Salmen brought the Pointers within one on an unassisted goal. McGowan then answered the Pointer goal 15 seconds later. Zachwieja and Smith assisted McGowan on the play.

The third period opened with a Bulldog goal on power play when Connelly and Laurie set up Turner to take the Bulldog lead to 5-2. Under two minutes later Salis scored an unassisted power play goal for Adrian College. The Bulldogs managed to score first in every period and trailed just once the entire series.

Senior forward Erin Marvin gave the Pointers their third goal of the night on a power play. Tanzer and sophomore defender Megan Nickelson recorded the assist on the play. Senior forward Erika Greenen got set up by senior defender Arial Novak and Marvin, but it wasn't enough as the game ended 6-4 in favor of the Bulldogs.

Zeches recorded the win with 18 saves while Sommers recorded the loss with 13 saves on the afternoon. Next up for the Pointers is a weekend series at Lake Forest College starting Saturday, February 11, at 200 p.m.
Would You Rather...

An interesting question was posed by Paul Pabst of the Dan Patrick Show on Tuesday: "Whose career would you rather have right now, Tom Brady or Eli Manning?"

Before you jump on one or the other consider some of the factors in the argument. Tom Brady has been to the Super Bowl five times and has won three. Eli is two-for-two and both wins came against Brady.

Both have been involved in some of the most intense games of our generation. From Brady's Tuck Rule to Eli's clutch performances on the road, both quarterbacks handle the spotlight like a champion.

Both players have underdog stories. As everyone knows Brady was the 199th pick out of Michigan in the 2000 season. He began his professional career as the fourth string quarterback behind starter Drew Bledsoe and two guys named John Fries and Michael Bishop. Yeah, I don't know who they are either.

Even though Manning was drafted number one overall in the 2004 draft, he has been regarded as Peyton's little brother and Archie's other son for longer than he would want to remember. After watching Peyton establish himself as an elite quarterback, I never believed this dorky goon of a younger brother could ever get near his level.

Now I know what you're saying, "Gus, I'm obviously going to pick Brady. Have you seen his wife?" Yes I have seen his wife, the international supermodel. Have you seen Eli's wife? It's not like you're putting your JV players in in the fourth quarter. There is zero drop-off.

Now here we sit. One player that no one had expectations for and another that had all the expectations in the world and two shadows looming over him.

Now for some differences.

Brady has never had a particularly stunning group of receivers to throw to. His best receiving core was during their undefeated regular season in 2007. Brady threw for nearly 4,000 yards and with Pond Street, Wes Welker, Kelley Washington and a still effective Randy Moss. But as good as Brady was that season with the weapons around him, he was still handed his first loss in a Super Bowl.

This season was similar to the 2007 season for Brady, in that he had players around him. Wes Welker is still a top five receiver in the league as he proved this year after leading the NFL in receptions. Rob Gronkowski is an absolute monster, and when you pair him with Aaron Hernandez they make the best tight end combination in the NFL.

Manning has had guys to throw to and has consistently had a decent running game. Victor Cruz and Hakeem Nicks played like gods this season. Mario Manningham made one of the greatest catches in Super Bowl history after Chris Collinsworth had said earlier that Manningham can't make that deep sideline catch. This season the Giants were last in the NFL in rushing but they came on during the playoffs and have a decently consistent triple threat at running back.

Brady, especially in recent years, has had to put the team on his back because of the Patriots' weak sauce defense. And because the Patriots don't have an incredible run game, he has to toss it around the yard more than some other quarterbacks.

When the Giants' run game is on it takes the pressure off of Eli. The Giants also have a stellar defense that Manning can rely on to make stops. Eli, simply by the makeup of his team, doesn't have to do as much to put his team in a position to win.

But it is off the field that we find maybe the most vital difference. Brady is fancy, so obviously he's going to endorse something fancy. That's why he wears Uggs and sprays on cologne. Eli is less fancy. How do I know? He and big brother Peyton endorse Oreos.

Brady is a first ballot Hall of Famer with trophies and awards coming out of his ears. Eli is a two-time Super Bowl champion and MVP. He was born into greatness, but paved his own way to potential legend status. Brady is more accomplished, Manning has years to go.

You have to live forever with the choice you make, but after seeing both their wives I don't think living with yourself will be very difficult.

[This Week in Sports]
The Five Guys of Drinking

Alcohol affects everyone differently. Half the fun of going to parties is trying to spot the various personalities that people take on once you pump enough of grandpa’s old cough medicine in them. I have done a lot of independent research in my three semesters of college and have managed to classify many of the drinkers I have come across.

**Fighting Guy:** This guy as his name suggests is looking to get sauced and get physical. This is the guy that is ready to throw down the minute someone bumps his drink and spils some Fleischmann’s on his shoes. Fighting guy comes in all shapes and sizes, but the majority that I have observed are neither physically or mentally intimidating. Fighting guy always has friends that he relies on to “hold him back” once the situation escalates to something other than chest bumping and bad words.

**Can I Buy Some Off of You Guy:** This is one of the most unfortunate guys you can meet. Can I Buy Some Off You Guy is usually the last one to know about the party and is not prepared whatsoever. He usually walks into your room when you’re pre-gaming and is surprised when he sees that you have alcohol in hand. When you ask him if he’s going out he always responds with the textbook, “I don’t have any booze.” You empathize with his situation because you acknowledge the fact that it happens to everyone. However, once you respond with, “Oh that sucks,” he honors his name and asks if he can buy some off you. You give in to his request upon either payment up front, or in the form of Taco Bell later that night.

**Fun Guy:** This is the guy that we should all strive to be simply for the fact that he classes up a party. Fun Guy is the one that gets drunk enough to slur his words and stumble, but is sober enough to be coherent and stand on his own. Despite his demeanor when sober, Fun Guy is always a social butterfly when he goes to parties. He is adored by men and women alike and is the guy that is most likely to make out with some one by the end of the night. Fun guy is often very touchy-feely and loves to give hugs. He cracks jokes that are not always funny but you laugh anyway because it’s Fun Guy who is telling them.

**Depressing Guy:** Drinking with this guy always ends up bad news bears. Depressing Guys always starts off fine and is often one of the most excited to drink. Once he slams a few shots off Mr. Boston and bongs one too many Keyvres he gets that look on his face. He detaches himself from all conversation and sound besides snoring. Stage Three will be tagged in 20 pictures of his unconscious body.

**Dead Guy:** This is the one who has lost the ability to move and articulate any sound besides snoring. Stage Three Dead Guy is the one who will wake up with marker all over his face and be tagged in 20 pictures of his friends doing despicable things to his head. Stage Three Dead Guy is the one who will wake up against a wall with drool oozing out of his mouth and his head slumped in his chest, just wiggling to the beat. Stage Two Dead Guy is no longer on his feet and had posted up on the nearest piece of furniture he can find. His eyes have gone from glassy to completely closed, but he is still holding on to a drink in hopes that he can get his second wind. Stage Three Dead Guy is the one who has lost the ability to move and articulate any sound besides snoring. Stage Three Dead Guy is the one who will wake up with marker all over his face and will be tagged in 20 pictures of his friends doing despicable things to his unconscious body.

These are the five most common variations of drunk guys that I have stumbled upon during the course of my research. However, I am certain that there are more exotic strains out there of drunk guys waiting for you to discover them puking in the backyard. And don’t even get me started on drunk girls.

I Feel Like Dancing

**MONICA LENIUS**

Whether your life is devoted to dancing in front of a crowded audience or you secretly jump out in the privacy of your own home; Friday Forums offer a little something for everyone.

Taking place every Friday from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Noel Fine Arts Center Dance Studios, students of any major share a style of dance or a topic related to dance with other students.

“This format allows dancers to academically explore other dance styles or topics in a structured environment and it also gives dancers hands-on experience teaching a class,” said Kailey Field, an arts management major, dance minor, and dance student representative. “For other students across campus, Friday Forums are a free and fun way to learn more about dance, while simultaneously having a good workout.”

The Dance Program Student Representative, chosen by the majority vote of dance majors and minors in September, is responsible for serving as the student voice in weekly faculty meetings and organizing Friday Forums. However, the topics themselves are chosen by students.

In the past, these forums have offered tap, contact improvisation, yoga, zumba, ballet, ballroom, jazz and hip hop dances.

“Any student can contribute ideas to Friday Forums, that is the whole point! Friday Forums are up to you, the students,” Field said. “If you want to lead a forum, jam out to a particular dance style, or learn about the topic related to dance, contact me at my email, kfield69@uwsp.edu.”

As a dance major and previous teacher of a forum class, Emily Nowak claims that “it’s incredibly beneficial for participants as well as those instructing because it is all student-run. The classes are fun, energetic, and a variety you wouldn’t necessarily get through dance classes within the department. The no-pressure situation lets everybody enjoy themselves and have fun. I mean one day we even got to learn the flamingo and hip hop. It’s not every day that you get to do that.”

Upcoming Friday Forums include the Cha-Cha Caliente on Feb. 10, Reviving Yoga on Feb. 17, and Celidih Dance (taught by foreign exchange students from Ireland) on March 2.

As always, these events will take place in the NFAC dance studios from 3:30-4:30 p.m. To learn more about future Friday Forums, contact Kailey Field, check out the Dance Program bulletin board, or watch your Student Message of the Day.
As a child, I didn't accept the fact that humans weren't carnivorous. I didn't know that vegetables weren't out to poison me. It took me quite a few years to understand that there are some people that didn't eat like I liked to eat and now in college I've actually made friends with some of "them." They are, gasp, vegetarians!

Initially when I learned about vegetarians, it was in my eighth grade health class when discussing "what we're supposed to eat," the food pyramid and all that jazz. I learned that there are different types of vegetarians—some eat fish, others don't eat chicken eggs, and yet some go further and abstain from consuming any animal products and are labeled vegans. That blew my raptor-like middle school mind.

It is important to understand vegetarianism and veganism as someone that cooks for others. For me, learning to cook for vegetarians became important because I started to make friends who were vegetarians and I wanted them to eat what I would make, instead of being hungry while I tried to eat a ham by myself. When making food for a party or potluck, I would make one vegetarian dish and one dish with meat.

In reality, the cuisine isn't at all different. There are black bean burgers, soy hot dogs, tofu and other meat-like materials made from soy that can replace meat in recipes. And if you're really missing meat after eating a single vegetarian meal, I think you need to get your cholesterol checked because not having meat in one meal is the least of your problems.

This recipe is an altered version of a chicken potpie that I threw together in desperation before a friend's potluck. It's so wickedly simple because for the pastry we'll use Bisquick so we don't have to bother with making a proper pastry crust. There was success in the simplicity of the dish so I pass on the recipe for you to try.

Though I'm still an omnivore with carnivorous leanings, I have sympathy and respect for those who choose an herbivorous lifestyle. You just have to think, "Thank goodness we're not dinosaurs."

### Recipe

#### Ingredients:
- 1 package firm or extra firm tofu
- 2 c. of assorted frozen vegetables (I recommend peas, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and green beans)
- 1 10 oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 c. Bisquick baking mix
- ¼ c. milk
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp. butter
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. garlic powder

#### Instructions:
1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Cut the tofu into cubes and mix with the frozen vegetables, cream of mushroom soup, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Spread the mixture on the bottom of a 9-inch pie pan (or you could use multiple loaf pans).
3. Mix the Bisquick with the milk and egg (use a splash of milk if the Bisquick appears too dry) and pour on top of chicken mixture. Bake for 30 minutes or until top turns golden brown.
4. Melt the butter a couple minutes before the pot pie is finished and drizzle on top of the crust.

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**The Artist: Film Review**

The comedy-drama "The Artist" is an incredibly delightful film experience that bubbles with nostalgia, saluting the silent film era. Director Michel Hazanavicius had the daunting task of delivering a silent film (there is music, however) that pulsates with life for a loud, impatient world that frequently enjoys movies that arrive in theatres dead on arrival. He succeeded completely. Even sans dialog, the storyline is extremely accessible, almost as if the plot is being whispered within the film's moody shadows and shadowed in the exaggerated movements of its actors.

The film's story focuses on George Valentin (Jean Dujardin), a silent film star whose career is stunted by the advent of the dreaded "talkie." Peppy Miller's (Berenice Bejo) fame rises with the popularity of the talkie. Miller is discovered by a chance encounter with Hazanavicius. Romantic entanglements, arson, a small dog, and dance numbers all ensue.

Did I mention a dog? Add a small dog to an already sympathetic man, and he becomes doubly sympathetic to the point of tragic. George and his canine counterpart are rarely seen apart during the film. They are quite an on-screen duo.

Both Dujardin and Bejo were nominated for Oscars, as was Hazanavicius, along with numerous other nominations.

Hazanavicius' directing, which rises with the popularity of the talkie. The advent of the dreaded "talkie." Hazanavicius' directing, which provides little nuances like using the 1.33:1 full frame aspect ratio to imitate the 1920s style of film, gives a glistening polish to a beaming final product. This film is a cinema buff's delight.

I couldn't help but notice some parallels between "The Artist" and our current economic state: Times change; jobs are eliminated; savings are lost. Everything else goes, but the dog stays by the side of the disenfranchised. Things get better, little by little. Hopefully the same is true for us.

"The Artist" stabilizes between the tragedy of seeing a man broken by the changing times and the comedy of a highly animated John Goodman (He's in the film too). "The Artist" is just a beautiful film from top to bottom.

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**TOFU POT PIE**

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 package firm or extra firm tofu
- 2 c. of assorted frozen vegetables (I recommend peas, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and green beans)
- 1 10 oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 c. Bisquick baking mix
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**The Pointer**
February 9, 2012

pointlife

The Grammy Awards: Our Picks

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COMMENTARY

Generally, The Grammy Awards are predictable and showcase a small variety of music. Along with this being the first year where the recording academy has reduced the number of categories from 109 down to 78, it seems as if they are broadening their nominations, making the possible winners less expected. The Indie world is well represented this year, with Bon Iver and Mumford and Sons nominations in top categories, showing that last year’s Record of the Year win by Arcade Fire was not just a mistake.

We have gone through a few of the top categories and chosen who we think will take the award, and why:

Record of the year nominations include “Rolling in the Deep,” Adele; “Holocene,” Bon Iver; “Grenade,” Bruno Mars; “The Cave,” Mumford & Sons; and “Firework,” Katy Perry. Our pick is a long shot we know, but we chose “The Cave” by Mumford & Sons to take the award. The song is timeless, delivers an unexpected sound, and builds to a point of explosion that brings certain creativity to song-writing that isn’t seen as often as it should in the current music industry.

The Album of the Year award honors artistic achievement and overall excellence in the recording industry, regardless of album sales or chart position. The nominations in this category include “21,” Adele; “Wasting Light,” Foo Fighters; “Born This Way,” Lady Gaga; “Doo-Wops & Hooligans,” Bruno Mars; and “Loud,” Rihanna. Due to the fact that we didn’t choose Lady Gaga to win Album of the Year, we have to give her this award: her dedication and passion to the music and performance industry is unmatched.

Finally the last award: Rock Album of the Year’s nominees are “Rock n’ Roll Party Honoring Les Paul,” Jeff Beck; “Wasting Light,” Foo Fighters; “Come Around Sundown,” Kings of Leon; “I’m With You,” Red Hot Chili Peppers; and “The Whole Love,” Wilco. Wilco will win this category because not only is Jeff Tweedy the guitarist, but this is their eighth album and it deserves to be recognized because it’s their best album since “A Ghost is Born.” They took an extended time off to create this album and it sounds like a recharge.

The 54th Annual Grammy Awards will air Sunday Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. on CBS. Performers at the show will include Adele, Paul McCartney, Nicki Minaj, and Deadmau5.

Normal Heart: A NFAC Production

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AIDS. Many of us are familiar with this term and probably know about the AIDS crisis that began in the 1980s—but do we really know?

In honor of the 30th Anniversary of the AIDS crisis, Steven Trevillion Smith, professor and director of the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point Theater and Dance program, is bringing “The Normal Heart” to the UWSP Noel Fine Arts Center Studio Theatre on Feb. 10-12 and 15-18.

The 12-student cast will show the audience the progression of AIDS through the emotional story of a tight-knit group of friends that refuse to let doctors, politicians and the press hide the truth behind AIDS. Following a gay activist over the course of four years, death tolls rise and the audience will watch the wall of silence fall down as he tells the world about the unspoken epidemic of AIDS. The original show opened on Broadway in New York City in 1985—just after the real life events took place.

“People need to understand that the discrimination towards the gay community that this play presents is something that has not stopped and is something that needs to. As the only homosexual member of the cast, this message is especially important for me to portray,” Schneider said.

As she provides information regarding the time period of the show, she makes sure everything is historically accurate, from the places, people and events that are mentioned in the play. “This show is not subtle; it is very in-your-face. It will make the audience think about the topics addressed in the show such as homophobia and AIDS. Theatre is a great way to enlighten people on various issues this show does just that,” Kacere said.

Tickets for “The Normal Heart” can be bought at The University Information and Ticket Office—$17 for adults, $12 for students (or free on day of the show with valid student I.D., if available seats).

Photo courtesy of olive.tv

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Mr. Lovenstein

Dad, I drew you a picture!

Wow, this is definitely going on the fridge.

Mr. Lovenstein by Justin Westover

[photo of the week]

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Prop 8 Held Unconstitutional—Rightly So

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The past seven days has provided many different topics that I could have commented on, from the decision by the National Rifle Association to hold funding from Planned Parenthood for cancer screenings, and their subsequent reinstatement of grants after massive social outrage. Or I could have brought up the decision by New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg to not hold a parade for returning Iraq veterans but their choice to hold one for the Super Bowl champion New York Giants on Tuesday.

There was the revelation that Wisconsin Assembly Republicans signed forms stating they would not discuss plans concerning the redistricting after the 2010 census. Finally there was the decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday that upheld a decision declaring that California’s Proposition 8 was unconstitutional.

It is this last topic that I am choosing to dedicate this column to today, not only because I unequivocally support the decision, but also because I think that there is a lot of room to misinterpret what the 9th Circuit ruling actually did. So let’s start with the facts of the case.

In July 2008 the California Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have a constitutional right under the California constitution to marry each other. This overturned Proposition 22, which passed during the 2000 elections, and was merely a voter initiative, not a constitutional amendment. Then in the elections held that November, Proposition 8 was passed, amending the state’s constitution to read that a ‘marriage’ was between one man and one woman.

Over this three and a half month span, approximately 18,000 same-sex couples married in California, and remained married after Prop 8 took effect. California still allowed same-sex couples to engage in ‘domestic partnerships’ that were legally identical to the benefits that ‘married’ couples enjoyed, and this was true before the California Supreme Court struck down Prop 22. This fact will prove crucial in the 9th Circuit’s opinion.

After the California Supreme Court upheld Prop 8 it was appealed to the Federal District Court, which ruled in 2010 that Prop 8 violated both the Equal Protection Clause and the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment. Finally, on Tuesday the 9th Circuit issued its opinion affirming the ruling.

The 9th Circuit issued a very narrow opinion, holding that “Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples. The Constitution simply does not allow for ‘laws of this sort.’”

What the 9th Circuit did not do is decide whether or not the Federal constitution allowed the prohibition of same-sex marriage, “because California had already extended to committed same-sex couples both the incidents of marriage and the official designation of ‘marriage,’ and Proposition 8’s only effect was to take away that important and legally significant designation, while leaving in place all of its incidents.”

In affirming the district court ruling overturning Prop 8, the appeals court found that California had “no rational basis for limiting the designation of ‘marriage’ to opposite-sex couples,” and that “Proposition 8 singles out same-sex couples for unequal treatment by taking away from them alone the right to marry.”

The court noted that those defending Proposition 8 themselves admitted, “that the word ‘marriage’ has a unique meaning,” which effectively argued against their position of withholding that term from being used by same-sex couples.

“The name ‘marriage’ signifies the unique recognition that society gives to harmonious, loyal, enduring, and intimate relationships ... We do not celebrate when two people merge their bank accounts; we celebrate when a couple marries ... Proposition 8 works a meaningful harm to gays and lesbians, by denying to their committed lifelong relationships the societal status conveyed by the designations of ‘marriage.’”

Almost immediately after the ruling was announced it was pretty much guaranteed that the Republican presidential candidates would come out with statements condemning the decision.

Rick Santorum called for the 9th Circuit to “be abolished and split up,” and that “The people of California spoke clearly at the ballot box.” The only problem with that is that rights are not supposed to be voted on—we receive them regardless of popular opinion. It is why Rick Santorum can be the bigot that he is.

Mitt Romney came out and said that he would “appoint judges who interpret the Constitution as it is written,” but the only problem with that statement is that is exactly what the judges on the 9th Circuit did on Tuesday.

The equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment clearly says, “No state shall ... deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Past case precedent has established that states “have a legitimate reason for withdrawing a right or benefit from one group but not others, whether or not it was required to confer that right or benefit in the first place.”

That is exactly what happened in this case after the California Supreme Court ruled that Proposition 22 violated the state’s constitution and that same-sex couples could legally marry within the state.

An interesting facet about this case is that no California state official is defending the law at this point. They are still parties to the lawsuit and could chose to file motions if they so choose, but much like the Department of Justice has stopped defending the Defense of Marriage Act, they have refused to. That means those who filed the initial paperwork to get Proposition 8 on the ballot in 2008 are the ones currently defending the law.

So what happens next? Well, the supporters of Prop 8 now have to decide whether to request an en banc hearing in front of the entire 9th Circuit, the ruling in Tuesday’s decision was from a three-justice panel, or they could request that the United States Supreme Court hear their appeal.

It is unlikely that an en banc hearing would produce a different result that what we saw Tuesday, so that leaves the Supreme Court as the likely destination, but the question is, will they even chose to hear the appeal?

As most casual observers of the Court know, it is ideologically split down the middle, with Justice Anthony Kennedy largely considered the ‘swing’ vote on the court. It should be noted that the 9th Circuit relied heavily on Romer v. Evans, a case from 1996 where the Court held that Colorado could not deny homosexuals equal protection from discrimination, and it just so happens that Justice Kennedy wrote the majority opinion in that case. It takes only four out of nine justices to vote to hear a case that has been appealed to them, but with Justice Kennedy, not only voting in favor of gay rights, but also authoring the majority opinion nonetheless, it seems certain that the appeal would lose if granted review.

So while it seems certain that Proposition 8 will be struck down on equal protection grounds, it does not carve out a constitutional right for same-sex couples in other states to marry their chosen partners.
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MUSIC REVIEW

With my first week as a UWSP “Pointer,” in the books it was nice to come back to my one-bedroom apartment in the “Polish Corners” with the rewarding job of reviewing new music for WWSP’s 90FM. Like most nights, I unlock the door, toss my jacket on the couch, light a candle, slip into some sweatpants, make a grilled cheese and usually resort to catching up on some British Lit. This night was a little different, however; I had a golden stack of new music to discover. My strategy was simple: ditch the British Lit for a night and pick the album with the best-looking cover art. I chose the aesthetically pleasing “A Different Kind Of Fix” by England’s The Bombay Bicycle Club.

“A Different Kind Of Fix” is the junior album for the club, produced by Jim Abbiss and the intriguing Ben H. Allen, who has produced tracks from both Animal Collective and M.I.A. The album result is what I would describe as the love child of British rockers Foals and Seattle’s Fleet Foxes.

We start in the beginning, with the entrancing “How Can You Swallow So Much Sleep” that mesmerizes the ear into a world of melodic guitar initiations and electronic drum beats. Escorted by the repetitive lyrics that are “Can I wake you up/is it late enough,” the song is what I would consider a “floater;” relaxing, simple, and thought provoking. Though not what most of us would call a “hit single,” the song is a beautifully crafted tune and one of my favorites on the album.

Like most musical pieces, the mood changes. The band’s single “Shuffle” is appropriately named due to the fact that you won’t be able to refrain from shuffling a bit to this track. With quick-tempo beats, broken keys, poppy guitar and walking bass lines, I can’t help but agree with my farmer friend Dave, who said, “Disco is back.” Songs like this make wigglng your body fun again.

Lastly to be highlighted is the song “Still,” where the lead singer of the club (Jack Steadman) seems to channel Radiohead’s Tom Yorke. To most people this is a good thing; sadly, to me I think the vocals of Yorke remind me more of Chewbacca after a night of heavy drinking by himself. Thus, “Still” for me is the least attractive song on the album.

All embracing, “A Different Kind Of Fix” isn’t “flawless” but it isn’t something easily put away either. The album has its melancholy ballads and its hip popping singles, which make it a very wholesome collection of songs. Lastly, I encourage anyone with curiosity to pick the album up and give it a listen; it’s the perfect soundtrack for your afternoon.