

CATALYST

THE NEWSPAPER OF COLORADO COLLEGE

PINK AND GOLD PRIDE

Volleyball scores big with fundraiser and home win



Photo: Erik Enbody

The ladies get pumped up with a pre-game huddle.

Denali Johnson

Volleyball fans had the opportunity to see the Tigers help in the fight against breast cancer when the Colorado College women's volleyball team partnered up with the Side-Out Foundation for CC's first annual 'Dig Pink' event against Colorado Christian University on Wednesday night.

Dig Pink is the Breast Cancer awareness rally being held throughout the month of October. Hundreds, potentially thousands of featured high school and college matches across the country are helping to educate and raise funds to eradicate

breast cancer.

Proceeds will be distributed among research teams focused on target therapies and molecular profiling as well as "living with cancer" organizations nationwide.

In addition to the match against Colorado Christian University there was a raffle, giveaways, and an autograph session with the Tigers after the game.

CC's all-male a cappella group Back Row sang the National Anthem

Cont'd page 5

Weeding in the Devil's Garden

Nikhil Ranadive

A PERSONAL MATTER America to Afghanistan

"It's a very personal matter to have children in other countries dying and families being broken apart ... because of some conflict that happened years ago," says Francoise Annemarie Farrel, an eighth grader at West Middle School in Colorado Springs, speaking of land mine victims around the world. "I can't even imagine, in any other circumstance that could have been me in one of those foreign countries, I could be worrying about land mines all the time. It's kind of scary to say goodbye to your mother in the morning as you walk to school and not know if you're ever going to see her again."

Farrel is not far off the mark. According to Andrew Lyons, vice president of HALO USA, a key player in the clearing up of mines and unexploded ordnance (or weaponry) in Afghanistan and other mine-afflicted war-torn countries, two people a day are killed by land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Afghanistan. This equates to anywhere between 600 and 700 casualties per year.

In the wake of conflicts between the Soviet Union, the United States, the Taliban, and the anti-Taliban force known as the Northern Alliance, Afghanistan now struggles with thousands of square meters of mine-afflicted territory.

Yet there are people out there working relentlessly to de-mine every contaminated piece of Afghani land. Whether in dangerous, mine-afflicted fields of Afghanistan or in the confines of the American classroom, Lyons, Farrel, and their contemporaries dedicate their lives to making tangible change, albeit in very different ways.

GIRLS FIGHT MINES, ONE DOG AT A TIME

Colorado Springs, Colorado

"We are a global community...even though they're just middle school students they can have a world impact." Connie Graven's blue eyes shine with pride, her surprisingly youthful face (she is a grandmother) suddenly wrinkled behind a smile. "When we get our dog sponsored, that dog can go out and literally change the lives of people in the community."

Graven is the faculty advisor for West Middle School's Children Against Mines Program (CHAMPS). A sub division of the Marshall Legacy Institute, CHAMPS works to bring mine awareness to American schools and raise funds to train and send mine-detecting dogs (a training process that costs \$20,000 per dog) around the world.

Two years ago, Graven received an e-mail from the Marshall Legacy Institute offering to bring in a retired mine detecting dog to West and present

Opinion: election day

Why November 4th should be a national holiday

Sam Emmons

Op-ed P6

Features: photo spread

CC students walk in the footsteps of Plato and Sappho during block in Greece.



Photos by Sara Hildreth

Features P4

Scene: restaurant review

The Blue Star choir

Tyler Smith

Scene P7

Election day looming

Jennie Vader

Colorado College has been hit with election fever. The overwhelming support for Senator Barack Obama has been highlighted with celebrity appearances, "Barack Breaks," the Vote Early March, and dozens of zealous volunteers canvassing the community.

Nationwide anxiety is mounting as election day nears. Both candidates and their running mates are making the final push to sway undecided voters.

Questions about both candidates remain. Is Obama doing as well as many of... *Cont'd page 2*

on the issue. Soon after, a presentation was held in the school's auditorium, followed by a session with Utsi, the retired dog, in the cafeteria.

"By the time we got from the auditorium down to the cafeteria," states Graven, "[West Middle School students] France [Farrel], Claire, Heather, Kate, and Ella came up to me and said 'We have to do something about this,' and by the time we walked down to the cafeteria, they had mapped it out, what we were going to be doing to raise \$20,000."

Graven was unaware of what was to come. These middle school girls would raise \$5,000, bring awareness to elementary schools all over Colorado Springs, and present at the Colorado's Service Learning convention.

"Little did I know that it was going to touch those girls so much," says Graven. "Talk about something that you didn't intend to happen, and this was one of those things!"

MARSHALL'S LEGACY

Arlington, Virginia

Elise Becker became interested in the world's mine problem during a fellowship in Senegal following undergraduate school. "We went to this little hut where there was this woman who had been in a landmine accident, she lost both of her legs, she had no prosthetics, *Cont'd page 3*

NEWS

Campaigns grapple for undecided voters in crucial swing states

Continued from page 1

...CC students hope? Where do the two candidates stand in their campaigns?

Strategically, Senator Obama and Senator McCain are fighting over Pennsylvania, but also hitting other key states. Obama visited Virginia and Pennsylvania as his running mate Senator Joe Biden visited Florida, another key state in the election.

McCain and his running mate Governor Sarah Palin both focused on Pennsylvania, a state with 21 valuable electoral votes that has not voted Republican since 1988.

According to The New York Times, McCain's strategy in Pennsylvania seems centered around winning over working-class voters, independents, and Hillary Clinton supporters.

The Times Electoral Map shows Nevada, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, North Carolina and Florida as toss-up states, so one can certainly expect Obama and McCain to campaign vigorously in many of these states using both media and personal appearances.

Many CC students are excited to hear that Obama is still leading by a significant margin in most polls.

He continues to hold the lead in

voted for Obama and 43 percent have voted for McCain.

Early voting results bode well for Obama. Yet Rasumussen and the

potential voters, a three percent lead over McCain. This is a decrease from his previous 5-10 percent lead earlier this fall.

With four days remaining until election day, changes in national polls seem likely as undecided voters continue to be bombarded with non-stop media coverage.

However, rather than focusing on how the two candidates propose to deal with important issues facing Americans, major media outlets have become sounding boards for increasingly negative campaign story lines.

For those students who have not voted already, the CC voting site is Slocum Hall (Precinct 386) and students must present some form of identification, which can include a CC ID; the polls are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. For any questions see the Election Department website at <http://car.elao.com> or call either 719-520-6226 or 719-575-VOTE.



Photo: Ali Rogers

Oscar winner Kevin Costner entertains the crowd at the Worner Center on Monday.

Pennsylvania, and The Gallup Poll of registered voters polled between October 25 and October 27, shows that 18 percent have already voted. Of this 18 percent, 53 percent have

New York Times suggest that the race is tightening as November 4 draws near. The most recent Rasumussen poll shows Obama leading with 50 percent of the vote among

FREEDOM IS

starting the next chapter
of my life on my own terms.

TAKE CHARGE WITH FREE CHECKING.

Ent's Free Checking* has no minimum balance, no monthly maintenance fees, a free Visa® Check Card, and free Online Banking with Bill Pay and eStatements, giving you the freedom to manage your money anywhere. You'll even receive a free box of checks to get you started. Open your Free Checking account today at any of Ent's convenient service center locations. Learn more at Ent.com/Checking or call (719) 574-1100 or 800-525-9623.



Ent is a community-chartered credit union • Equal Opportunity Lender
Federally insured by NCUA • © Ent Federal Credit Union, 2008
Ent is a registered trademark of Ent Federal Credit Union.



*Account qualifications apply. Fees apply for additional account services including stop payments, courtesy pay and insufficient check charges. Please review Ent's Fee Schedule for additional service fee information.

Weeding in the Devil's Garden

Continued from page 1

...so she was perched on this platform and we couldn't do anything," Becker states, her professional voice replaced by something softer.

Becker, like Lyons, Gravel, and Farrel, is one other force trying to de-mine the world. Becker is the Program Manager of the Marshall-Legacy Institute. The institute's mission includes improving the quality and quantity of mine detection dogs around the world, campaigning in schools (such as West Middle School) throughout the United States to increase awareness of mines, encouraging students to fundraise, and coordinating where these mine detection dogs are placed.

Becker plays a key role in these developments. "I make sure that our information is relayed to donors, and in a variety of different ways we'll put together packets for different organizations about their dogs." It is Becker's job to communicate with beneficiary organizations, check up on the progress of the institute's dogs (in terms of how many mines they have detected), and apply for grants from different organizations and the US government.

The institute has two dog-training facilities—one in Texas and the other in Bosnia. Before being flown off to the world's land-mine hot spots, these dogs are trained to detect and respond to odors and chemicals released by different types of mines. After training, they are absorbed by different beneficiary organizations where they are subsequently deployed.

"Most of the time dogs work in conjunction with other de-mining assets, such as manual de-mining," says Becker. While expensive machines are often used first, dogs go in afterwards to provide quality assurance to make sure the land is really cleared.

"Our primary goal...is to give these indigenous organizations the tools that they need to do mine clearance," states Becker. "The people who are working with the dogs, the handlers of the dogs there, are typically almost always natives to that country."

Becker is currently preparing for a trip to Kabul. "We'll be visiting two

beneficiary organizations [organizations that facilitate the de-mining process] that have received our dogs, one is OMARA and the other one is DAFA," says Becker. "I'll be meeting with the directors of those organizations which speaks to part of my job duty as a program manager, which is to establish good connections with the beneficiary organizations."

When asked about the upcoming trip, Becker responds, "I'm excited and nervous at the same time, just because there's been a lot of backlash from the Taliban, even to humanitarian organizations."

THE WORLD'S TOMORROW Colorado Springs, Colorado

Pike will most probably be a Belgian Malinois puppy, trained in Texas and shipped off to Afghanistan to sniff out mines and save the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of people. The young heroes responsible for this puppy's fate (and name): our very own West Middle School students.

West's CHAMPS chapter organized a number of different fundraising activities to reach their goal of twenty thousand dollars. For instance, they held a 'stuffed-dog-rally' for their school, a school-wide Read-A-Thon, designed t-shirts, and spoke in front of the Rotary Club. By the end of the 2008 school year, they had struck a deal with a local pet store (which included 10 percent of a day's earnings by the store) and spoke twice at the State Service Learning Conference in Denver.

Their proudest accomplishment was writing a book, which was published and delivered to them in May 2008.

"It's taught them a variety of skills ... research skills, public speaking skills, writing skills, organizational skills," says Graven proudly. "We'd never written a book and published it before!"

The book, titled "Utsi's Story: A CHAMPS Tale," is about the retired mine-detecting dog who visited them in the cafeteria. Utsi was trained in Texas and served faithfully in Eritrea.

"One of our big proud moments was when the box came home with our books that have been published," says Graven with a nostalgic smile, "Let me tell you if there had been buttons on kids shirts they would have been popping that day because they were so excited ... they had never written a book ... never taken on an undertaking this big to write and illustrate and research."

"We weren't sure we could pull it off," says Graven. "We spent some nights here until 9 at night working because we had a publishing deadline."

The hard work paid off. West Middle School CHAMPS students presented at the Service Learning Conference.

"People from all over the state come to hear about what service learning is and what different projects are and are going on in the state, so we were one of the presenters as well as one of the vendors," says Graven. "When we do something like this, the kids always do the talking, I don't. I introduce them. Then I step back, and the kids do all the talking. So they were in a room with complete strangers, kids from around the state, adults from around the state, and they [the West students] were talking to them, trying to get interest in CHAMPS and seeing if they would like to start CHAMPS at their school."

These West Middle School students have achieved something most adults cannot boast about. The Rotary Club recently pledged an additional \$3,000 to the group, boosting their grand sum to \$8,000. They will apply for a grant to hopefully double these assets. They have also raised awareness in both their own school and elementary schools all over the city.

"I plan to take this [CHAMPS] to Palmer, and I plan to continue with this ... I know that this might not have anything to do with it but I know that I've become a better speaker," says France Farrel. "At the beginning I spoke so fast and my knees were shaking...I'm a more confident person and I feel better about myself

because I'm actually doing something for someone else."

THE DEVIL'S GARDEN Bagram District, Afghanistan

"The biggest story during my time there was this Bagram Frontline... thirty miles north of Kabul, it was the frontline between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance from 1998 to 2001," states Lyons, without even pausing to think, "It's really so heavily mined that it was known by the Afghans as the Devil's Garden, because it was such a dangerous place."

In 1998, the Taliban pushed the Northern Alliance up North past the Bagram frontline. Completely abandoned villages in this area, vacated by fleeing refugees, were prime locations for the Taliban to set up shop.

It was around these abandoned houses that the alliance planted their bombs. "They went one step further," says Lyons, "They created about a hundred incredibly massive booby traps. They took an antipersonnel mine which only needs a few pounds of pressure [to detonate]; they would link these antipersonnel mines...to another, much more powerful exploding item."

After September 11 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, HALO Trust was assigned the job of de-mining the area, which included the task of dismantling the bigger explosives.

"We had two fatal de-mining accidents, there were just some very nasty mines up there. But, in the end, we successfully cleared about nine thousand land mines and a hundred of these booby traps."

Additional pressure was added to the project by thousands of refugees camped outside the village, waiting to return home. "It is certainly one of those things I feel proudest about my career there, clearing the Devil's Garden and allowing 72,000 refugees to return home."

CATALYST

The *Catalyst* is a weekly newspaper produced and managed exclusively by students of The Colorado College. Published for the benefit of the college community and the surrounding local area, the *Catalyst* aims to bring general interest and academic-oriented news, ideas, and opinions into greater collective view—to act as a catalyst for informed debate. The newspaper is published under the auspices of Cutler Publications, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit independent of The Colorado College.

Phone: 719.389.6675
Fax: 719.389.6962

Newsroom: newsroom.catalyst@coloradocollege.edu

Letters: letters.catalyst@coloradocollege.edu

Advertising: ads.catalyst@coloradocollege.edu

Subscriptions: subscriptions.catalyst@coloradocollege.edu

The Catalyst
1028 Weber St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80946

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Daniel Anthony

Managing Editor

Alison Kelman

Design Editor

Julia Hathaway

Lead Copy Editor

Anna Harmon

FINANCE

CFO

Jena Polk

Advertising Manager

Max Hillman

COO

Halley Brunsteter

Marketing Director

Chris Ellis

Controller • Karen West

Legal consultation provided by the
Student Press Law Center

WRITERS

Kirstie Beard

Andrew Dick

Daniel Gleick

Denali Johnson

David Mauro

Nikhil Ranadive

Kyleen Breslin

Amy Steinhoff

Warren Takashima

Kristin Oller

Jennie Vader

Preton Brasch

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Ryan Caspar

Denali Johnson

Alex Osmond

Lincoln Peek

Jackson Solway

COMMENT & DEBATE

Co-Editor • Nick Hiebert

Co-Editor • Steven Galinat

Layout Editor • Sarah Albert

NEWS

Co-Editor • Ethan Axelrod

Co-Editor • Wagma Mommandi

Layout Editor • Kira Grush

Photo Editor • Alison Rogers

FEATURES

Co-Editor • Rachel Harris

Co-Editor • Sara Hildreth

Layout Editor • Melissa De Sole

Photo Editor • Carol Earnest

SPORTS

Co-Editor • Jenny Natelson

Co-Editor • Tristan Droppert

Layout Editor • Jordan Yeager

Photo Editor • Virginia Dreux

SCENE

Co-Editor • Greer Schott

Co-Editor • Meredith Mantik

Layout Editor • Tyler Smith

Photo Editor • Gabrielle Greenberg

COPY

Editor • Laura Hays

Editor • Katherine Santulli

Editor • David Cummings

DISTRIBUTION

Ted Barnard

The Catalyst is a member of the
Associated Collegiate Press
Association

Printed on 100% recycled paper
with soy-based inks

SPORTS

CC digs, sets, and spikes to beat CCU and breast cancer

Denali Johnson

Continued from front page.

... and the Tiger Eyes dance team performed between the second and third matches. A crowd of over 450 fans turned out the 'Dig Pink' benefit match.

The Colorado College volleyball team came from behind to defeat Colorado Christian University 22-25, 25-13, 25-20, and 27-25 on Wednesday night in front of the largest home crowd of the season at Reid Gymnasium. Colorado Christian University's record slipped to 7-19.

Colorado Christian jumped out to an 11-5 lead in the first set and led

18-11 before the Tigers got in gear. CC cut the deficit to 23-21, but ran out of time in the 25-point set.

Yet the Tigers carried the momentum through the second set and finished twelve points ahead. They then jumped to a 5-1 lead in the third and never trailed. The Cougars pulled to within one at 16-15, but Colorado College closed out the set with a 9-5 run.

Sophomore middle blocker Emily Perkins from Plano, Texas led the Tigers with 15 kills, including the final two of the fourth set, to put the match away. She completed the double-double with 13 kills and a season total of 357 kills.

Senior outside hitter Anna Clithero of West Linn, Oregon added a double-double with 14 kills and 12 digs.

Sophomore middle blocker Erika Pirotte from Nipomo, CA led the defensive effort with 11 kills and four blocked shots while first year opposite hitter Meredith Ballard of Libertyville, IL hit .375 with seven kills and had three blocks.

The CCU Cougars nearly forced a fifth set, winning the first and overcoming a 23-20 deficit to tie the fourth set at 24-24 on kills from Cougar junior outside hit-

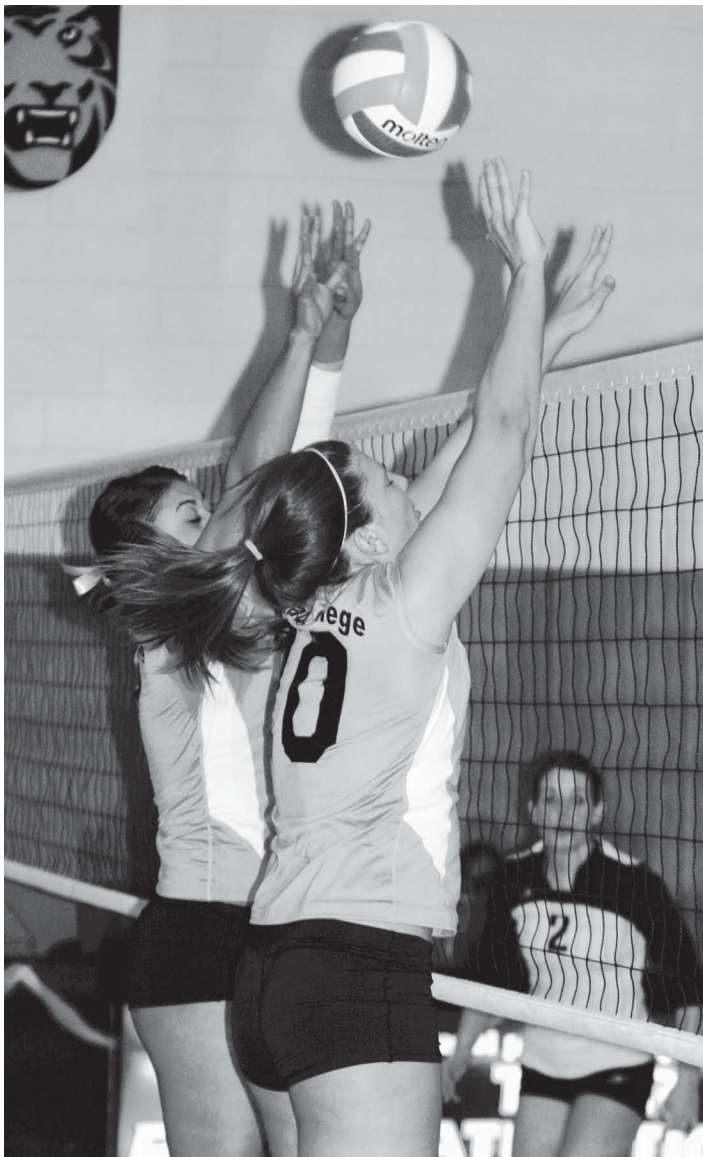
ter Lynda Hughes. CCU went up 25-24 on a kill by their senior outside hitter Cassie Schott, but a service error gave the Tigers another chance and Perkins was there to capitalize on their mistakes.

Colorado College is now 24-9 overall and riding a five-match winning streak, including a victory over then-ranked No. 7 Trinity University on October 18.

Colorado College will host Den-

ver's Johnson & Wales University on Friday afternoon at 4 p.m. for their final home match of the season. Come out and support the Tiger seniors, as they play in senior night at their last home game.

CC expects to earn its 11th consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance when the field is announced on November 9.



Amy Schornack and Emely Perkins block a shot.

Photo: Eric Enbody

Phantom Football! Show your team spirit, save \$\$



Sunday

Happy Hour 11 am-close
Show your team spirit
and get \$3 select shots

Monday

Happy Hour 3 pm-close
Team spirit = \$3 shots
Dozen wings & pitcher \$10

Team Spirit = Team logo

Show your team logo hat, shirt
jersey, helmet and even tattoo!

*Valid in Billiards Hall only.
IPA not included.*

719-635-2800
2 E. Pikes Peak Ave.
www.PhantomCanyon.com



**PHANTOM CANYON
BREWING CO**



SUNFLOWER MANAGEMENT, LLC OFF CAMPUS HOUSING

www.sunflower-management.com



818 N. Tejon St.
Colorado Springs, CO



719-634-6490



Office Hours:
Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 10-4
Sun Closed

COMMENT & DEBATE

November 4th: The day of rest

Sam Emmons

Holidays are a time when we rearrange our priorities and remind ourselves of what is important in life. They are a great way to show respect for a person, a group of people, or an historical event. July 4th is a holiday that almost all Americans can identify with. It marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence – a symbolic day of celebration for our most symbolic statement of American values. We also have holidays in honor of some of our greatest Presidents, of our veterans, and in honor of a dinner at which, presumably, white British settlers dined on turkey with Native Americans in the most peaceable of ways.

Yet curiously, the United States has no official national holidays – i.e. when every single working American has the day off and all business is halted. Employees across the country do not even have the right to take the day off on the holiday in honor of themselves – Labor Day. In the grand scheme, this does not exactly

constitute a crime against humanity. Few would argue that the lack of an actual national holiday severely threatens anything.

However, the biggest problem I have is not the lack of this, or of the contradictions of our existing federal holidays, but an extremely important day to this country that is not recognized as a holiday. It is coming up next week on Tuesday and there is a lot of hubbub about this one.

Of all days on the calendar, of all things to celebrate or honor, this is the most practical day for the entire country to have off. The conditions of a national holiday stipulate that whatever is being observed or celebrated is bigger than anything else. It is more important than doing business.

The right to vote is essential to the core of our fundamental beliefs in democratic government. The “great experiment” hinges on this very civic duty. Yet as essential as it is, we must also respect the progression of voting rights. We can not forget that originally one had to be a property-

owning white male to vote. After some progression, one only had to be white and male. The conclusion of the Civil War brought Amendments to our Constitution “guaranteeing,” among other things, the right to vote for black males as well. However, in certain areas of our country this right was suppressed up until the 1960s, when the country finally decided that enforcing voting rights was a Constitutional duty. Still yet, women – that is white women – had to wait until the early 1900s until the government decided that they too deserved the right to vote.

Thus, this was not something that the founders and patriots fought for and finally secured at Yorktown. The right to vote has been fought for by those who knew it was their right ever since from those who would deny it to them. Simply put, voting is the most important right and duty of American citizens.

This is why I find our voter turnout rates to be downright horrifying. Yet more and more I believe that it is mostly, if not entirely, a function of

exclusion – not mass apathy on the part of the electorate. November 4th is just another school or work day, thus voting is an extra errand to do. Every four years, there are millions and millions of working Americans who either can not afford to take time off to vote or simply are not permitted to at all by their superiors, lest they lose their job. Millions are excluded from casting their ballot simply on the grounds that they can not make it to the booths. For reasons that are not their choosing, they have no say in the process that they have every right to participate in.

There needs to be a serious effort to instill exactly how important Election Day is to our country. The first step should be making November 4th into an actual national holiday. It would be a chance for millions of unheard registered voters to have an actual say in the political processes of our government free of any restrictions from their employer and from their children. The economy can afford to take one day off, seeing as how the most important part

of it, the Stock Exchange, takes two days off every week. Early voting and mail-in ballots are helpful and should not go away, but in the context of truly making voting an open and accessible process, these are only partially solving difficulties. I went to early voting yesterday and the doors closed at 5pm. This is when most people get off work, even white-collar types!

Election Day becoming a national holiday would be a great thing, not only to honor our foundational beliefs and the fight of others to gain the right to vote, but also to fundamentally change elections. No longer would campaigns be media entertainment narratives for the middle to upper classes. For once, we might actually try to get at the idea of true majority vote. A workless, schoolless day on November 4th would probably mean the end of our embarrassing turnout rates and thus a much more democratic and representative voice of the actual majority of American people.



Cartoon: Dolores Moon

SCENE

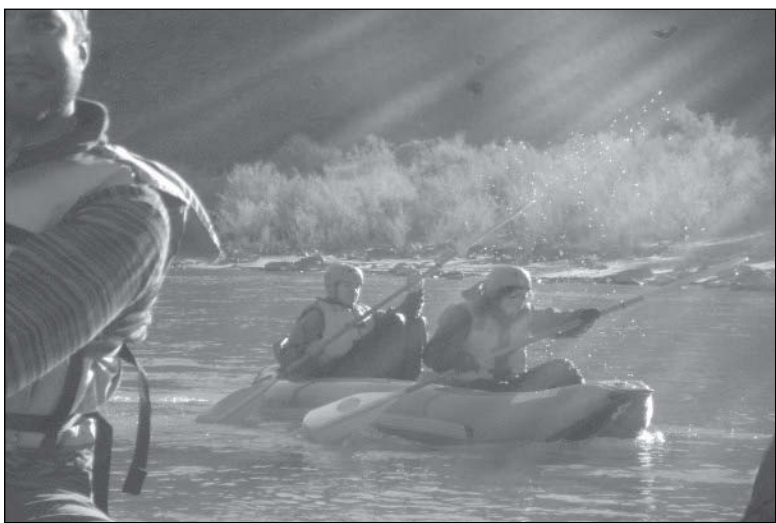
From Morocco to Baca, second block break in pictures

Rakhi Voria

Colorado College students spent their second block breaks traveling all over the mid-west and beyond. Because the autumn season is quickly descending upon us, many students spent their long weekend outdoors under the sun. Camping trips were especially popular this past break, as several students came together and planned trips to deserts and national parks. Here are some photos and stories from their block breaks.



Several students attended Senator Obama's speech at Civic Center Park in Denver on Sunday, October 26. Over 100,000 people filled the event, the greatest number of people gathered in the park since Pope John Paul II spoke there in 1993. Students in attendance stated that Obama's speech was eloquent, moving, and inspirational. **Photo: Natalie Baumann**



The CC administration set up a rafting trip for sophomores only, where students had the opportunity to bond with their classmates and relax after a hard block. "We got a couple of hours of alone time, which was so refreshing," said trip member Shan Shan Chan. "I can't remember the last time I took an hour to just sit in silence with my thoughts." **Photo: Shan Shan Chan**



A group of students traveled on a BreakOut Trip to Tapetes de Lana, a non-profit weaving center that aims to provide employment to low income rural families through the art of weaving in Mora, New Mexico. The group's community service tasks consisted of cleaning the center, fixing a loom, making an informational poster on the yarn made in the center, painting a mural on the outside wall, and picking wool, which sophomore Danielle Bouchard described as "a dirty process." **Photo: Danielle Bouchard**

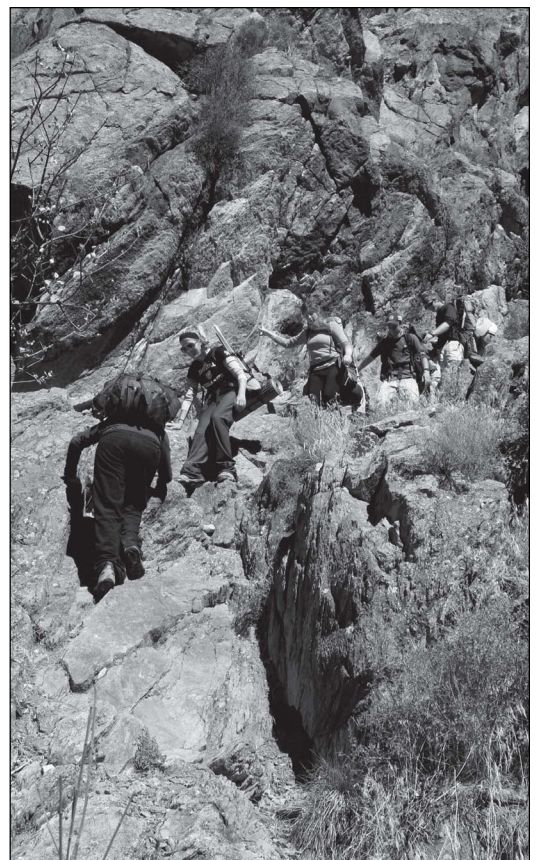
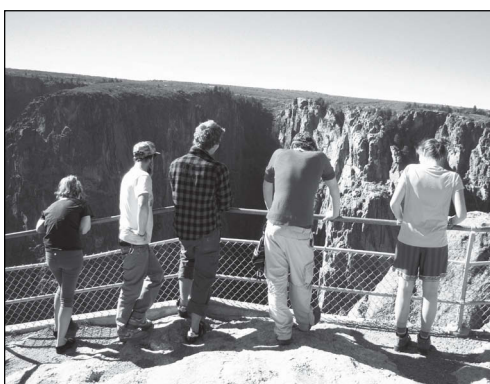


Sophomore Rachel Harris spent second block as well as block break traveling in Morocco. In the city of Fes, she visited a leather cooperative where they skin, dye, and assemble leather products. The dyeing vats on the roof of the building are pictured here against the backdrop of the city. **Photo: Rachel Harris**



The Chaplain's Office led a retreat and pilgrimage of 26 students to several religious sites in Crestone, Colorado. To the left, the students ascend the stairs of a ziggurat, an ancient Mesopotamian monumental tower. Captured above is the labyrinth at the Temple of Consciousness, where one can find spirituality through meditation and recitation of certain Hindu mantras. **Photos: Clara Stiefel**

No other canyon in North America combines the narrow opening, sheer walls, and startling depths of the Black Canyon in Gunnison, Colorado. On the first night, the group camped at the top of the canyon where temperatures dropped below 20 degrees. To their surprise, there was only one other hiker in the entire national park. They spent two nights in the canyon exploring, swimming in the freezing water, and hiking. Johnson said that even though it was a five-hour car ride and they ran out of food during the trip, it was completely worth it. **Photos: Denali Johnson**



Blue Star outshines local restaurants

Tyler Smith

It is rare to find a restaurant in Colorado Springs in which a patron must actively seek out an imperfection in his or her dining experience. The Blue Star, located next to the Bristol Brewery on South Tejon, is one of those exceptional restaurants.

Walking into the restaurant, customers are offered the choice of dining in the hip, colorful cocktail lounge or the more modestly decorated dining room with a view of the open kitchen.

The dining room and the cocktail lounge have separate menus. When dining in the lounge, patrons are offered both. Strangely, however, customers that choose to eat in the dining room only are only able to choose items from the significantly more expensive menu.

The cocktail lounge does not accept reservations and the wait time can exceed an hour on busy nights, so show up early if you want to enjoy its lively and funky atmosphere. Local art available for purchase adorns the brightly colored walls. Large tapestries and soundproofing panels hang from the ceilings to counterbalance the noise that reverberates off the stylized cement floors.

On the west wall, a backlit glass shelving system houses the restaurant's impressive array of spirits. The metal-encased drink menu offers a



fun selection of specialty martinis, over-ice cocktails as well as an impressive selection of vodka, tequila, and 18 different types of rum.

At \$12 each, the specialty martinis are more expensive than some of the entrees – but the unique pairing of flavors makes these alcohol-heavy drinks worth the hefty bar tab. The “Absolutly Fabulous” martini, colloquially termed the ‘ab fab’ among the wait staff, is made with Absolut Apeach vodka and white cranberry juice. Finished with a healthy splash of champagne, this cocktail is a refreshing and not-too-sweet complement to any entrée.

The “Velvet Rosa” is a less enjoyable version of the aforementioned martini. Made with Tommy Bahama White Sand Rum, Peach Schnapps, cranberry juice, and champagne, this specialty drink is painfully strong and overbearingly sweet.

Other creative cocktails include the Japanese-inspired cucumber sake-tini and the hearty Grandma Thorpe's Baked Apple Pie martini.

Both menus offer a diverse selection of tapas, soups, salads, and entrees that incorporate unconventional and at times bizarre ingredients. The hempseed pot stickers with butter-nut squash and shiitake mushroom fill-

ing are one such example. Served in a mushroom soy broth and sprinkled with scallions, these fried dumplings came out slightly too saturated from the broth, but were flavorful nonetheless.

Another tapas dish on the dining room menu is the deliciously crispy zucchini fries battered in Chablis, dusted with pecorino cheese, and served with horseradish creme fraiche and pickled radish. Move over McDonalds, these \$7 fries are well worth the price.

The salad selection is equally creative, but the house greens were a disappointment. The salad consisted of only mixed greens and a simple, tart balsamic vinaigrette. For only \$2 more, opt for a more creative concoction such as the mixed greens salad with maple-candied walnuts, crumbled chevre, pear slices, and D'Anjou pear vinaigrette.

The dining room entrees, priced from \$19 to \$28, are more expensive and larger portions than the equally

innovative cocktail lounge entrees. The largely meat-based dining room menu features seven market-priced selections including duck, alligator, and big eye tuna. The most expensive item on the menu is the \$28 Colorado lamb shanks served with baked brie, mixed fruit chutney and a baby cilantro salad.

Each menu features one vegetarian option. The reasonably priced “Maca'gnocchi' and Cheese” is a delicious take on the Italian favorite. The small, oval-shaped potato dumplings are crispy on the outside, covered in a brown butter sauce, and sprinkled with crumbled gorgonzola. Cubes of slightly sweet butternut squash pair wonderfully with the salty gnocchi. A meager trimming of fried sage garnishes the dish.

For dessert, try the corleone, a signature Blue Star dish. A ball of vanilla bean ice cream is rolled in a house mix of toasted and crushed walnuts, pecans, almonds, cinnamon, nutmeg, dark chocolate and white chocolate. Although delicious at first, once the flavorful crust is gone, one is left to enjoy only the ice cream center.

Although the Blue Star is among the more expensive restaurants in Colorado Springs, the first-rate service, innovative menu, and internationally recognized bar makes this restaurant well worth the splurge.

THE Election Viewing Party of the Decade

- Different television channels
- Comment and analysis from:
 - Political Science Professor Bob Loevy
 - Political Science Professor Tom Cronin
 - Psychology and Feminist and Gender Studies Professor Tomi-Ann Roberts
 - Colorado College President Richard F. Celeste, former governor of Ohio.

Wear your “I Voted” sticker and get your first drink for \$1. Free snacks; cash bar. Party goes from 5 to 10 p.m.

Sponsored by Colorado College Alumni Relations and the 1874 Society.

Free and open to the public and the CC community.

Members of the public may call (719) 389-6607 for disability accommodation, additional information or directions.