

7-29-2008

Avion 2008-07-29

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The 'Travolta Jet': the real story

Andrew Striker
Staff Reporter

Over eight years ago, the actor John Travolta donated a CL-41 Canadair to our University. Though some know its story, others still debate over the intended purpose and the future of the aircraft.

Approximately eight years ago Bill Neese, a professor in the AMS Department, negotiated the donation with Travolta. A resident of Spruce Creek, Neese had the

privilege of meeting Travolta on several occasions and was familiar with the Gulfstream CL-41 he had in the local hanger, a trainer jet Travolta had purchased several years earlier with the intention of using it for recreational flying. The plane itself, however, had significant damage to several key components including moderate corrosion on the main wing spar. The repairs needed to make the jet flyable again far exceeded the overall value of the plane. Upon considering all of his options, Travolta expressed his intention

of reselling the plane to make up for the loss of investment.

After hearing the gossip of Travolta's intentions, Bill Neese approached him with the proposal of donating the plane to Embry-Riddle. This would not only benefit the university but Travolta as well, as the donation would be tax deductible and he could declare the entire value of the aircraft, not just what a potential buyer was willing to pay. Travolta agreed and had the plane transported to the DAB airport. The donation included not only

the CL-41 and its certificate, but also a stockpile of parts for it. The aircraft and its parts were stored at the AMS department facilities, now the only department who could put the plane to practical use.

Since it was received, the plane has been used in several AMS courses, giving students hands on experience with gear retractions and engine runs. Contrary to several rumors regarding the aircraft, there was never an intention for it to be used in any flight activities.

Aside from its occasional use in AMS lessons, it has also been used for PR purposes such as allowing for photographs to be taken

of people sitting in a jet formally owned by John Travolta while visiting the university.

The future of the aircraft is still in debate but its uses as an instructional tool are limited. "Without a doubt the plane will never fly again", said Fred Mirgil, a professor in the AMS department. In recent years the AMS department has tried several times to trade or sell the plane for another aircraft more suitable to the AMS program courses, preferably a corporate jet. "We almost had it traded for a Lerjet-23," said Mirgil, "and then another time for a Jetstar, but both deals ended up falling through."

The aircraft itself, a Canadair CL-41 Tutor, was formally used by the Canadian Royal Air Force

for training purposes. Many may recognize it as the official plane of the Snowbirds, the Canadian counterparts of the U.S. Blue Angels and Thunderbirds. Continual development and modifications to the aircraft saw further models including the CT-114, CL-41G-5, and CL-41R. The Malaysian Air Force also operated 20 of these aircraft starting in 1967. In Malaysia they were known by the name Tebuan (wasp). Though most of the Tutors were retired in the 80's, six were kept operational until their total retirement around 2000. The Snowbirds are now the only fully operational

Please see "TRAVOLTA," page A2

ERAU Summer Enrollment by the Numbers

Daytona Beach Campus Undergraduate Enrollment

- 315: The number of College of Engineering students (27%)
- 680: The number of College of Aviation students (58%)
- 63: The number of College of Arts and Sciences students (5%)
- 55: The number of College of Business (5%)
- 96: The number of new students to Embry-Riddle (8%)
- 52: The number of non-degree seeking (4%)
- 1,165: Total number of undergraduate students

College of Art and Sciences:

- 21: The number of Aerospace Studies Majors (33%)
- 19: The number of Engineering Physics Majors (30%)
- 10: The number of Human Factors Majors (16%)
- 6: The number of Communications Majors (10%)
- 7: The number of Space Physics/undetermined (11%)

College of Aviation:

- 405: The number of Aerospace Science Majors (60%)
- 97: The number of Aviation Maint.. Science Majors (14%)
- 73: The number of Air Traffic Management Majors (11%)
- 67: The number of Aeronautics Majors (10%)
- 14: The number of Applied Meteorology (2%)
- 8: The number of Homeland Security Majors (1%)
- 8: The number of Safety Science Majors (1%)
- 8: The number of other majors/undecided (1%)

College of Business:

- 51: The number of Aviation Business Admin. Majors (93%)
- 4: The number of Aviation Management Majors (7%)

College of Engineering:

- 259: The number of Aerospace Engineering Majors (82%)
- 13: The number of Mechanical Engineering (4%)
- 8: The number of Civil Engineering Majors (3%)
- 10: The number of Computer Engineering Majors (3%)
- 5: The number of Electrical Engineering Majors (2%)
- 7: The number of Software Engineering Majors (2%)
- 13: The number of other/undecided (4%)

*Figures taken from Embry-Riddle's facts and figures page on www.erau.edu. All figures for the Summer B 2008 term, unless otherwise stated. Financial figures for all Embry-Riddle campuses unless otherwise stated.



MATT GOLDBERG/AVION

AVIATION MAINTENANCE STUDENTS INSPECT the CL-41 Canadair that was donated to the university by John Travolta last decade. The 1960's aircraft has never been flown at Embry-Riddle but has been used by multiple AMS courses.

Red Bull Flugtag: Tampa Bay



ANDREW ZABACK/AVION

EVERY YEAR, RED BULL holds an annual event called Flugtag. The basis of the competition is to have teams construct a human powered flying machine completely from scratch. This year an ERAU team competed with a man powered space shuttle.

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Opinions A5
Comics A6
Classifieds A7
Entertainment A8



"The Dark Knight" Shatters
Box Office History

Entertainment, A8

CL-41 future an uncertainty



MATT GOLDBERG/AVION

PHOTO COURTESY SNOWBIRDS.DND.CA

□ "TRAVOLTA" from FRONT

CL-41's in existence. Although there are still a few

others flying, corrosion problems and fatigue and stress fractures make them difficult to maintain. This is apparent as the Tutor located near the Flight Maintenance

hanger suffers from similar problems. However, many of the problems that have developed with the plane in the past 5 years are a result of it sitting idle and unprotected from the elements. The lack of space for the aircraft in any hangers has left few other options. The AMS department

hopes to build a new storage hanger soon to prevent this in the future with any of its teaching tools including the CL-41.

Though many students have become accustomed to the Tutor's presence and the many rumors and stories behind it, its future is yet to be deter-

mined. Though the University would like to see it traded, they must first find an interested party. For now the plane will sit near the AMS hanger awaiting its unforeseen destiny, though no questions behind its presence.

Campus Briefs

The hockey team recently got some good news about their upcoming season. Despite concerns of the hockey rink closing with changes being planned for the Sunshine Park Mall where the rink is located, it appears that a reduction in rent for the rink's operator will allow it to remain open. At the Planning Board Meeting in South Daytona, the plans for the mall listed the area where the rink is as "entertainment". The rink's operator told SGA Vice President Brian Dietz that his rent for the facility was being reduced by half to a more manageable \$9,000. This means that as long as the rent is paid by August 1, the hockey team will have a facility to compete in for the upcoming school year. Members of the hockey team have been working diligently to procure sponsorship for the boards around the rink in order to meet the August 1 deadline.



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Starbucks poised to open at ERAU



MATT GOLDBERG/AVION

THE CAMPUS LIBRARY STARBUCKS had some of its finishing touches put on it this week as it appears ready to open for business shortly. While the construction equipment and fences were removed from around the outside, new employees could be seen being trained within the restaurant throughout the week.

Advertisement



Thursday, 7/31

Co-op/Internship Contract Signing Meeting
IC-104, 4PM

All students who have been selected for a Fall 2008 Co-op/Internship must attend an informational meeting complete a contract for registration. In order to earn credits for the experience, a contract must be signed with Career Services before the experience begins. We will discuss the process, review the procedures and talk about responsibilities for the Fall 2008 Co-op/Intern experience.

Register in EagleHire
<http://erau.erecruiting.com>

Career Corner

<http://www.erau.edu/career>

226-6054
McKay Hall 280

Northern Lights mystery solved

Andrew Zaback

Space and Av. Editor

In February of 2007, NASA launched a group of five satellites aboard a Delta II rocket to study what causes weather to occur in space. The fleet is called THEMIS which is an acronym for Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Substorms.

Recently, the THEMIS team has made a giant breakthrough in the mystery of what causes the Aurora Borealis. Better known as the Northern Lights, the source of this natural show has been unknown until now.

Researchers have determined that massive magnetic storms power substorms which in turn causes the pulses of light in Earth's atmosphere. The storms occur about one third the distance from the Earth to the Moon.

The reconnections of magnetic fields are the cause of these lights. Scientists on the project compare the concept to a rubber band that has been stretched too far. These are

known as substorms. These storms cause fluxuations in auroral displays seen at the north and south poles on earth.

Dr. Vassilis Angelopoulos, the principal investigator for the THEMIS mission at the University of California in Los Angeles takes pride in the project. "We have discovered what makes the Northern Lights Dance," said Angelopoulos.

In addition to causing the northern lights, the substorms are normally accompanied by larger, more severe space storms that effect communications and other utilities on the surface. This discovery is only the first step in the process to solve when why and how substorms occur.

Once scientists understand fully how space storms function, better models can be created to more accurately forecast space weather.

Essentially, the borealis is a storm in space caused by energy gathered from solar winds. When this energy is thrown into space by Earth's magnetic field, it becomes dis-

torted enough to change shape, sending the energy to the magnetic poles of the earth.

These observations were made using the THEMIS system. The fleet aligns once every four days along the equator with cameras aiming to each pole. They also have sensors that measure light particles flowing through the magnetic field of Earth.

The measurements help scientists predict when and where substorms will happen and as a result where the space storms will take place and their intensity. The observations made by THEMIS prove that when magnetic fields reconnect in different shapes a flare of the aurora will occur.

For more information on the THEMIS mission, visit http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/themis/main/index.html.



PHOTO COURTESY U.S. AIR FORCE

External Tank Arrival



PHOTO COURTESY NASA

THE EXTERNAL TANK FOR STS-125 is moved into the Vehicle Assembly Building from the Pegasus transport barge. Once inside, the tank will be inspected and hung vertically for storage. Stacking of the solid rocket boosters is scheduled for Aug. 7.

Advertisement

Upcoming Cape Launches

NET Sept. 26
Delta 4H
Classified NRO sat.
Launch window TBA

Oct. 8
Space Shuttle Atlantis
STS-124
Hubble Service
Launch window:
1:30 a.m. EDT

Oct. 10
Atlas 5
Wideband Global
SATCOM
Launch window TBA

Date TBD
Delta 2
Next GPS satellite
GPS 2R-20
Launch time TBA

Nov. 10/11
Space Shuttle
Endeavour
STS-126
Multi Purpose Module
Launch window
9:28 pm.

Nov. 13
Delta 2
STSS Demo.
Launch window TBA

Edited by Andrew Zaback

Life is for everyone!



If you, or someone you know, is thinking about suicide...

Remember:

SHOW YOU CARE • ASK THE QUESTION

• GET HELP •

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

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The World come to Oshkosh!

By Mary Grady

Well, maybe not the whole world, but in EAA's opening-day excitement, it does feel like the whole aviation world has descended upon AirVenture. As visitors stream in through the main gate, they find the now-venerable Cirrus Design on one side, showing a mock-up of the Cirrus Vision jet (the real one will fly into Oshkosh for the first time on Wednesday), and on the other side, the Icon light sport aircraft, fresh from its first flight. That sets the tone for the mix of old and new, tried-and-true and cutting-edge, vintage and experimental, industry leaders and hopeful upstarts, that mix it up across acres and acres of nonstop aviation exuberance here in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. With the "virtual" unveiling of Burt Rutan's giant WhiteKnightTwo -- the world's largest-ever carbon fiber aircraft -- set for Monday in Mojave, with a live video link here to the AirVenture crowds, the show promises to be off to a grand start, showcasing its experimental roots and celebrating the futuristic vision of Virgin Galactic.

AVweb staff has the event covered, with daily videos, podcasts, newsletters, and photo galleries. Be sure to check the AVweb.com Web site every day for all the latest news-as-it-happens, and every morning our AVwebFlash digest will be delivered direct to your inbox. The weather for the whole week promises to be severe clear, with cool breezes and low humidity -- and no doubt a thunderstorm or two tossed in -- sure to help keep the airplanes flowing in and out nonstop, great for the thousands of campers, and encouraging

for the EAA folks, who hope that their usual throng of visitors will be willing for a week to forget about high fuel prices and other dreary economic woes and come to Oshkosh to explore the world of flight.

Diamond tries to soothe DA42 customers

By Russ Niles

Diamond Aircraft is offering DA42 position holders a variety of options after suspending the production of the twin, which the company said had 80 percent of the piston twin market. But the insolvency of Thielert Aircraft Engines and the decisions of the insolvency administrator (among them canceling warranty support and TBO prorating) on the diesels prompted Diamond to stop production while it gets alternatives in place. Most of the options involve a significant wait time for delivery but there is one way to get instant gratification if the owner is willing to bet on TAE's recovery from its current woes and Diamond's ability to fill in the support gaps in the meantime.

"A very limited number of TAE-equipped aircraft are available for delivery from distributor inventory. All such customers are eligible for the Diamond DA42 Customer Assistance Program, also announced today, that may address the current support issues for many position holders," Diamond said in a news release. The program essentially subsidizes the increased operating costs of the Thielert engines resulting from the decisions of the insolvency trustee and would be viewed by most as an interim measure until Diamond's own Austro diesel is ready, which could be

later this year. Other options include simply waiting for the Austro, waiting for the Lycoming 360 avgas engine option to be ready or asking for a full refund of the deposit (which comes with a \$20,000 discount on any other Diamond aircraft. "Diamond enjoys a great, loyal and supportive customer base. With the uncertainty regarding resumption of TAE powered DA42 production and viable options now on the horizon, we designed this program to offer maximum flexibility to our DA42 position holders," said Heike Larson, Diamond's VP of Sales and Marketing.

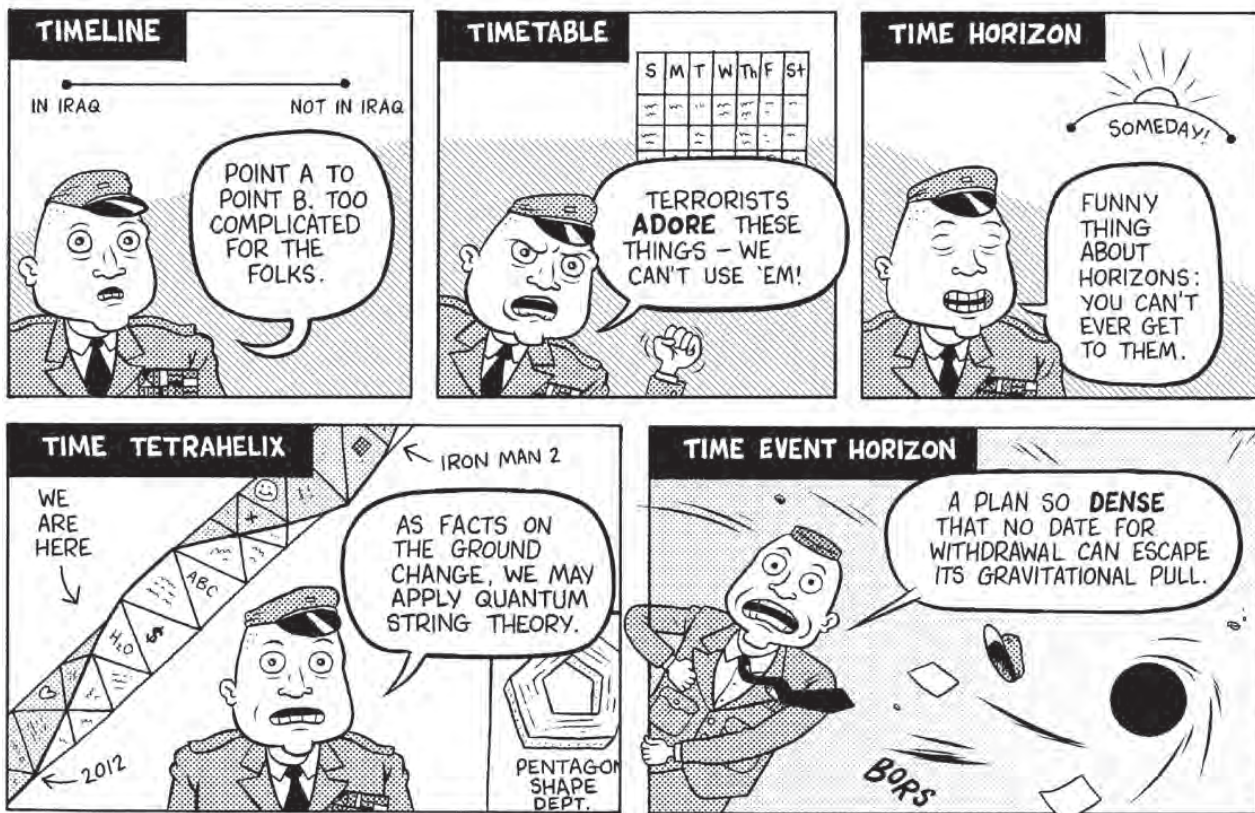
FAA medicals now last longer for younger pilots

By Russ Niles

Pilots who haven't turned 40 yet now have five years between medicals and the new term is retroactive in many ways. As of July 24, a third class medical for someone who hasn't reached his or her 40th birthday lasts five years, instead of three years, and a first class medical is valid for a year, up from six months. AOPA says it even reactivates some medicals that were expired on the day the new regs came into effect.

For instance, if your three-year medical had expired before July 24 it was automatically extended to five years from the anniversary date. Also, turning 40 during the new term of the medical doesn't affect the length of the term. If you renew your medical the day before your 40th birthday, the new medical is good for either full five years or one year. "This is welcome news for the GA industry," said AOPA President Phil Boyer. "AOPA supported the FAA's move that makes it easier and more affordable for younger pilots to fly."

MAPPING VICTORY IN IRAQ



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Yes we are still here this summer and we are still taking your opinions. Stand Up and your opinions will return on September 9. Submit your opinions online at www.avionnewspaper.com or e-mail them to theavion@gmail.com

Student Forum

The Avion asks: "If you could invent a word what would it be?"
 -Compiled by Matt Goldberg and Jason Preston



Eric Bosh
Senior
Aerospace Engineering
"Whose-it."



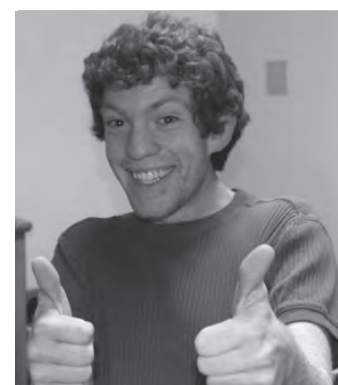
Clay Butler
Senior
Aerospace Engineering
"Purlenknocker."



Aaron Wrex
Junior
Aerospace Engineering
"Eastlakeism."



Matt Ellengold
Sophomore
Aerospace Engineering
"I think 'um' should be a word."



Alexander Strauss
Sophomore
Business
"Sexcapades."



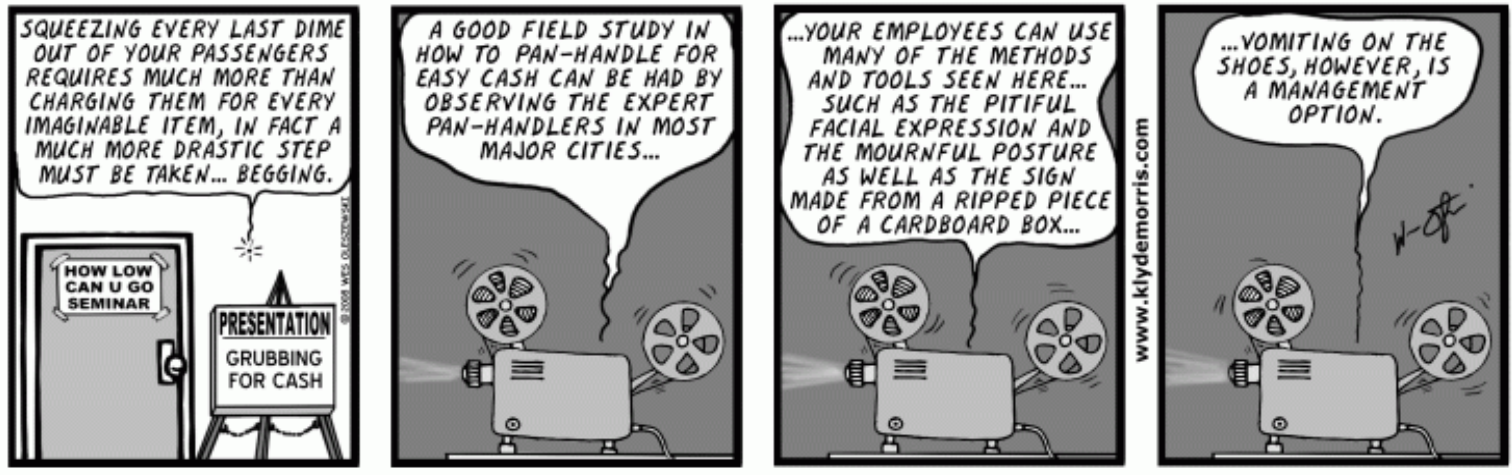
Patrick O'Bryan
Sophomore
Engineering Physics
"Jenkedy."

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Weekly meetings on Tuesdays @ 7pm in the Endeavor Conference Room



THE AVION



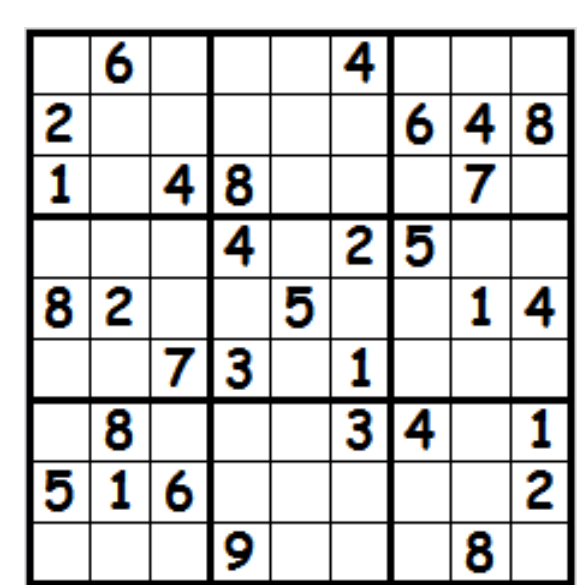
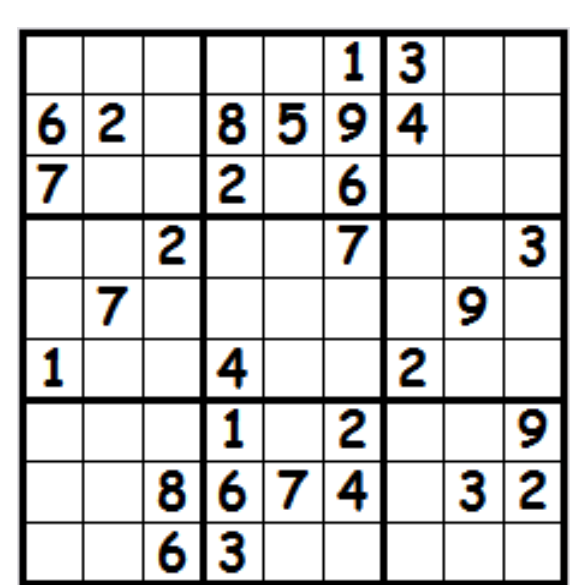
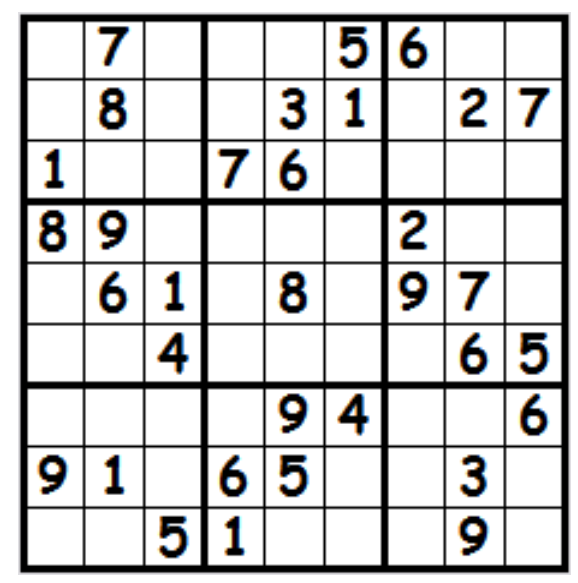
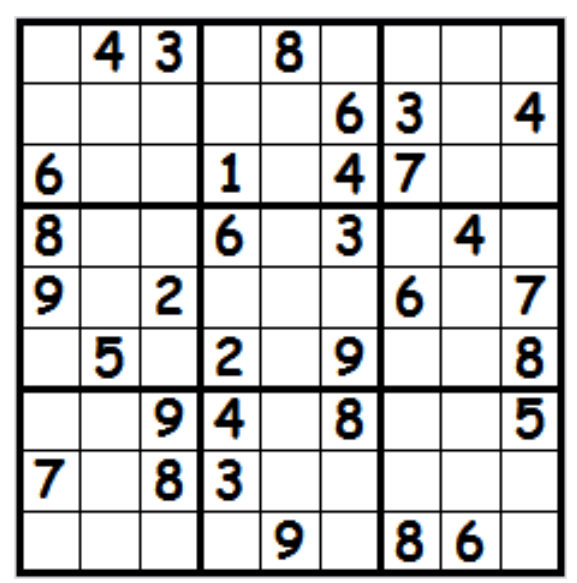
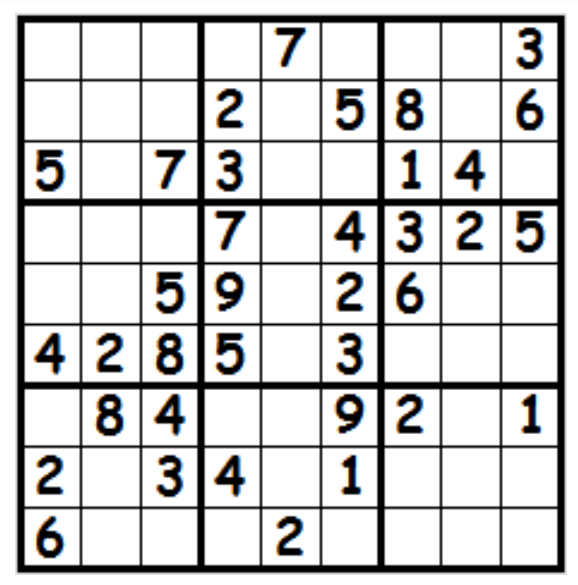
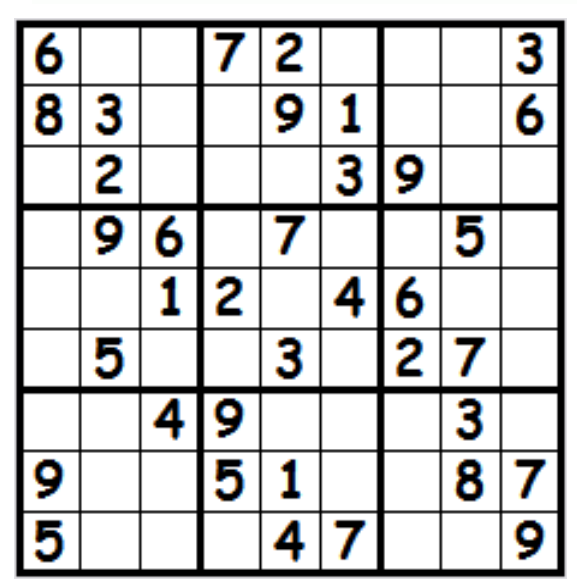
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S U P P L I E S

S I M P L E

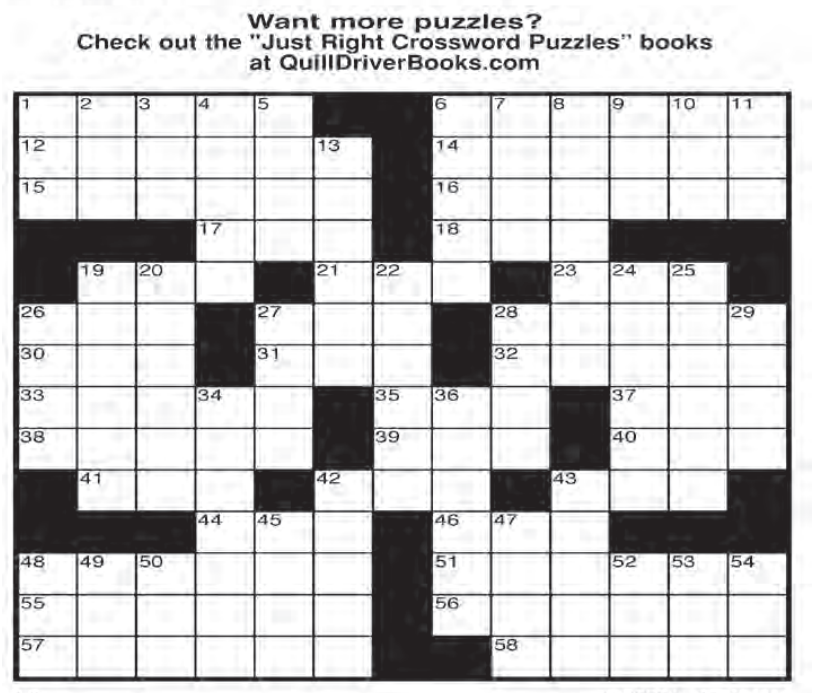
M E D I U M

D I F F I C U L T

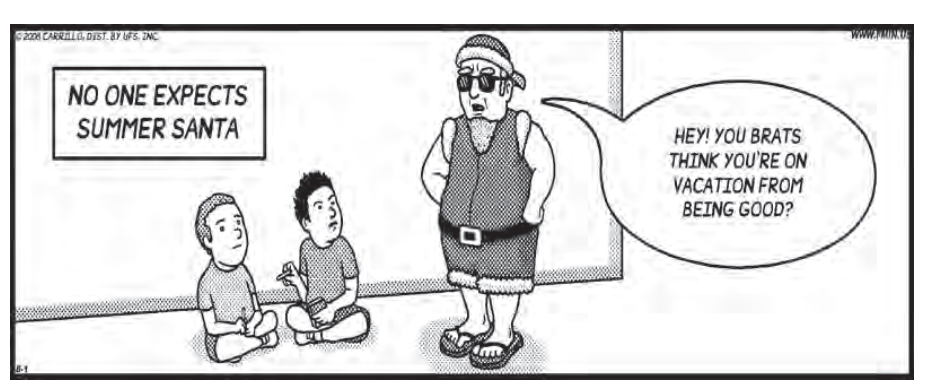


- ACROSS**
- 1 Suffuse
 - 6 Crusty roll
 - 12 Keen insight
 - 14 Far afield
 - 15 Agile
 - 16 Read to the class
 - 17 Slalom run
 - 18 Murmur of content
 - 19 Dog sound
 - 21 Make lace
 - 23 Free electron
 - 26 Big parrot
 - 27 Society miss
 - 28 Eagle's lair
 - 30 Fuse word
 - 31 Mag execs
 - 32 Neck problem
 - 33 Holy cats!
 - 35 Word of disgust
 - 37 Slangy thousand
 - 38 Creep about
 - 39 Trigger's rider
 - 40 — take forever!
 - 41 Psyche parts
 - 42 Recipe word
 - 43 Whichever
- DOWN**
- 1 Woosnam of golf
 - 2 Sprint rival
 - 3 Sponge off of
 - 4 Brown color
 - 5 Morays
 - 6 K, to a jeweler
 - 7 Not in harbor
 - 8 More scratchy
 - 9 Delhi honorific
 - 10 Hit the buffet
 - 11 Some whiskey
 - 13 Raised a brood
 - 19 Zodiac twins

- Answer to Previous Puzzle**
- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | E | B | C | O | D | E | B | O | O | | |
| A | M | I | O | D | O | R | W | E | N | D | |
| V | I | T | A | M | I | N | G | A | G | E | D |
| E | L | E | V | E | N | O | F | T | | | |
| R | E | S | E | T | A | T | O | M | | | |
| N | O | B | L | E | R | W | E | D | | | |
| E | C | R | U | L | O | A | O | L | E | O | |
| E | R | I | E | A | L | S | A | S | K | S | |
| K | I | D | A | B | L | E | S | T | | | |
| B | E | A | D | A | E | G | I | S | | | |
| T | E | A | S | H | R | A | N | K | | | |
| R | E | N | O | P | U | T | A | S | I | D | |
| O | M | E | N | S | P | A | R | T | I | E | |
| N | U | T | E | S | T | A | S | A | T | | |
- ACROSS**
- 20 Knocked firmly
 - 22 Utterly senseless
 - 24 Roots
 - 25 Fine point
 - 26 Starr and Kendall
 - 27 Cubicle filler
 - 28 Stiff and sore
 - 29 Just scraped by
 - 34 From Maine
 - 36 Lady of Coventry
 - 42 Gather together
 - 43 Bauxite giant
- DOWN**
- 45 "Diana" singer
 - 47 Loose threads
 - 48 Powdery residue
 - 49 Quaker pronoun
 - 50 Hurry along
 - 52 Prince
 - 53 Val's son
 - 54 Cloud backdrop



F MINUS



Dark Knight set box office record

The Dark Knight



Hannah Brown
Staff Reporter

"The Dark Knight" delivers. For once, a movie has not only lived up to the enormous hype, but it soars far beyond the realm of expectations. This film is outstanding in every way. Every actor delivers a fantastic performance, and I won't even bother getting into how outstanding Heath

story building is literally Christian Bale with two ropes attached to his torso; forget about green screen. This just makes it all the more impressive. As far as the plot goes the writing is flawless, you couldn't possibly get bored. The plot is constant, suspenseful and enthralling. It's full of action, but also takes time to introduce each character and explain his or her side of the story in a way that helps the viewer to develop strong connections. In retrospect, this



IMAGE COURTESY OF WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES

Ledger's performance as the Joker was because I'm sure you've all heard it. But I will say that after such a performance, easily the best of his career, it's a real shame he won't be around to top it. (Jack Nicholson who?) The action sequences in this movie are stunning and fantastical. Here's a little FF (that's fun fact) all of the stunts you see in this movie are real. The flipping of a semi in the streets of Gotham (middle of downtown Chicago in reality) was done with wires and cranes, not computers like most of what you see in movies today. All of the explosions are real and a scene with Batman standing on top of a, let's say, 70

movie real-ly isn't about Batman, this is Harvey Dent's story. Harvey Dent, portrayed beautifully by Aaron Eckhart, is Gotham's new District Attorney, Gotham's "whiteknight" and the eventual villain, Two-Face (whose gory makeup is out of this world.) And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the score, which is exquisite and moves the film along flawlessly. "The Dark Knight" is now number one on IMDB's top 250 movies of all time ranked 9.3 out of 10 by 135,443 users, sur-

passing "The Godfather" and "The Shawshank Redemption". As far as box office, "The Dark Knight" has brought in over \$314 million, becoming the first film in history to make so much money so fast. All in all, it's pretty rare for a sequel to be better in almost every way than the original. It will be interesting to see if Chris Nolan can top "The Dark Knight" with a third film in the "Christopher Nolan's" Batman series.

Girl Talk scores with new album

Girl Talk



Hannah Brown
Staff Reporter

Ever wonder what Radiohead mixed with Jay-Z would sound like? Well wonder no more, if you even were wondering. Pittsburgh's own Girl Talk, alias of DJ Gregg Gillis, has

come out with a new mash-up album which mixes such bands as Huey Lewis and the News with Ludacris, Avril Lavigne with Jay-Z, BLACKstreet with Michael Jackson and Radiohead, and most impressive, The Beach Boys with Snoop Dogg. Now, I realize that in many cases, mixing these types of music together would constitute bleeding from the ears, but Gillis is genius when it comes to rhythms and beats and he really knows how to make this stuff sound good. I'm not a big fan of rap or hip-hop but I love it mixed with these

songs. This is Girl Talk's fourth album, "Feed the Animals," following in the footsteps of "Night Ripper" which I wouldn't have expected him to top, but he has. The entire album can be heard at www.myspace.com/girltalkmusic, and you can download the album for whatever price you choose (including \$0) at www.illegalart.net, the physical CD is not yet out. I would recommend everyone check out both "Feed the Animals" and "Night Ripper;" you'll love it, and if not, at least you gave something new a try.



Metrocon 2008 fun for everyone

Every so often the levels of

Metrocon



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frustration begin to peak intermittently like an angry sine wave and there's the need to blow off some steam. Luckily having been invited to accompany a few friends to the anime and video game convention Metrocon 2008 in Tampa Bay, the trip was a little vacation away from the usual debasement of whatever is spat out from the entertainment industry. Now since those who attend these conventions are often put together in their own classification of social weirdo, one can't help but feel like they must liaison the events like a foreign diplomat, in this case it will be in this reviewer's stereotypical asocial manner. Now take it away, myself.

After a fun-filled drive through some very obscure areas in downtown Tampa thanks to the GPS hating the driver for missing the correct exit, we arrived at the hotel, which was a lovely 500-foot walk from the convention center. However, even before check-in there was a teenage girl who was huddling behind a kart of luggage because the average-sized towel in the hotel bathroom had more surface area than her costume. Needless to say this is the one of the pros and hazards of going to such events. Some people can really pull off the look of the character they're trying to emulate, others fail horribly, and others still just shouldn't even dress up at all. For instance, a 250 lb man cosplaying in a

Japanese school girl's outfit is not something from Sailor Moon no matter how much you stretch the imagination, even with reality altering substances in one's bloodstream. Another bad case was the encounter with a Man-Rei, basically a man trying to look like Rei Ayanami from Evangelion. It was slightly troubling that there were more girls dressing up as male characters than actual males dressing the part, but when you recall that 95% of all male anime characters look like girls anyway, it makes it a bit easier to handle. While no one can tell others who they can and can't cosplay as, it's agreeable among most that a person should at least make a decent attempt at trying to portray the character. This is a convention after all, not Halloween, and even if it were, there's no candy for the 250 lb man trying to look like a Sailormoon character.

Not to say a bunch of cosplaying weirdos was the only scene to be had at Metrocon, there was also an entire area dedicated to the anime that is so loved by the cosplaying weirdos, and a whole range of events for anime-loving, cosplaying weirdos... so maybe it was just anime and cosplaying weirdos but even those who weren't into the whole idea that it's illegal for a character to not have something absurdly large

whether it be a weapon or area of the female torso. During the 3-day event there were plenty of performances and showing of various movies and anime series to keep people busy. Such performances included the Original Anime Human Chess

Match, the Super Hero Stunt Show, and the crowd favorite, Azula's Fire Show. Although we bailed during the start of the first showing of the human chess match, it wasn't something that one couldn't live without. Even more so was the Super

Hero Stunt show, which was cancelled at first for an unknown reason, only to be replaced by a lack-luster attempt to show what people do to make a fight scene look realistic. Azula's Fire Show however, was one of the best performances seen at Metrocon. Perhaps the majority of the people there were attracted to the swirling fire dances like a fly to an electric bug-zapper, but the choreography of the dancers was rather impressive. When's the last time you say a break-dancer doing the worm with a hoola-hoop of fire spinning around his neck? I didn't think so.

The nightly entertainment consisted of much of the same as the day time with the addition of The Fantasy Masquerade, movie showings, rave dances, and the aniRAGE comedy performances just to name a few. Sitting in for the showing of Gundam MS IGLOO: The Hidden One Year War while my friends went off to the masquerade, the technical difficulties seemed to surround the entire convention since up to that point no performance had gone on without some sort of glitch. Even during the Blackout Rave, which started at 2am didn't go entirely flawlessly. There was one part where a cord had come loose somewhere, thus cutting off the sound and leaving

hundreds of previously moving bodies to slow to an awkward halt. As for the aniRAGE comedy hour, it was more like 45 minutes of fairly good comical material. Part of the problem was the actors arrived at the panel room at midnight, which was when the performance should've began, but didn't actually start until about 15 minutes afterwards but still promptly ended at 1am. Granted there were some parts that had the audience laughing hysterically, but at other times it seemed to be just a silly and weak attempt at applying anime characters into real life situations.

So how to describe the whole convention? Well, as someone who's been to anime conventions in the past, if you've been to one, you haven't been to them all. Even when Metrocon was offline during the hours before dawn and boredom became a very real threat because one does not merely sleep through Metrocon, the hotel staff was nice enough not to notice the paper airplanes made from the complementary notepad gliding down from our balcony on the 22nd floor. Granted some of the performances could have been much better their first time around and the people running the show weren't fully prepared on the first day, the event as a culmination of all three days was very memorable. Sure, many may not be into the whole anime thing, but there are competitions for people like that in which you can beat the stupid out of those cosplaying weirdos with fake swords and win the grand prize of an even bigger fake sword you can take home and beat your friends with. Once one starts to disregard the potential for the person next to them being the opposite sex of what they think they're looking at, these conventions are rather fun.