



A history in black and white: the *Almagest* chronicles university's past.

—Pg. 4

Quidditch team sweeps into tournament

Carly Dean
STAFF WRITER

The LSU Shreveport Fantastic Beasts will be flying their broomsticks to Arkansas this April for the annual Hog’s Head Invitational.

The event is hosted by the Razorback Quidditch Organization at the University of Arkansas. It is one of many tournaments held in the South, where quidditch is more popular.

“Quidditch is just a fun way for people to get together,” said Katelyn Quackenbush, junior, psychology.

The Fantastic Beasts were formed in 2012 and compete in the southwestern conference. Membership is currently at 11 players, which barely meets the nine-player minimum set for games.

In the past three years, the Hog’s Head Invitational has attracted many teams from the surrounding areas, even as far as Kansas.

Louisiana State University, the sister school to LSUS, took first place against Texas Christian University at the first Hog’s Head.

All the smaller tournaments’ teams can compete in lead up to the Quidditch World Cup. Last year the World Cup was held in Kissimmee, Fla. Four different countries were represented in 77 teams. The Fantastic Beasts have not made it that far yet. They are choosing to become the most prepared that they can.

See SWEEPS, pg. 3



Photo by Malvya Chintakindi

Shadi Darzeidan and Stephanie Lepretre perform in the UC Port for “Monday Night Live.”

“Just Say Anything” covers everything

Malvya Chintakindi
STAFF WRITER

It was a laughter feast in the UC Port on the evening of March 10 when the LSU Shreveport improv group “Just Say Anything” held a performance to kick off the student appreciation days.

While eating free popcorn, a crowd of about 30 suggested topics for the performers to act out. The performers introduced different games and combined topics.

The topic suggestions ranged from spearmint, space, brunch, breakfast, circus, pineapples, popcorn, dolphins, the moon, and so on. After the end of every piece, their com-

ments and conclusions added to the relaxed atmosphere. For instance, derivative sentences like ‘special bonding right through the left atrium due to the sharing of a metaphorical pack of gums’ instilled the audience with excitement.

“Time warp is a special game where two characters play roles in different time periods. Two-person Shenanigans is a game where anyone from the audience can yell freeze in order to signal either because the performance was too intense or not intense at all,” said “Just Say Anything” President Shadi Darzeidan, junior, graphic design.

Joining him in the stand-up routine was Stephanie Lepretre, LSUS mass communica-

tions graduate.

They combined a few topics and elongated their performance pieces. Dolphins and pineapples hinted towards Hawaii, whereas space and circus led to another piece called “circus on the moon.”

The two performers would raise their eyebrows every now and then to indicate for the audience to clap.

These games were played to make it a more interactive show for the audience. The show ended with a piece that joked about wedding proposals and pizzas.

“It’s pretty intense. I usually have to go to meetings, sit there in theatre and tell other people how to improvise properly,” Darzeidan

See IMPROV, pg. 3

Pre-Dental Society welcomes new members with a smile



PDS Vice President Calvin Barnaby, junior, biology

Photo courtesy of Calvin Barnaby

Emily Wright
STAFF WRITER

The Pre-Dental Society at LSU Shreveport is looking to expand their group member numbers by participating in the Spring Fling activities in April.

“We will be enjoying the weather, eating crawfish, and socializing with our fellow Pilots,” said PDS President Tyler Christie, senior, biology, in an email.

PDS Vice President Calvin Barnaby, junior, biology, said that the dental organization is still in the creation stages for Spring Fling, but is planning on presenting a table with their name and having some type of fundraiser.

Christie encourages students to stop by their table and learn more about the PDS organization.

The PDS is trying to reach out to more

dental students and create awareness for the organization.

“We had quite a few more numbers last year, but a lot of them graduated, transferred, or went to dental school, so right now it’s me, the president, and three other members. I think it’s fairly small because many people don’t know about it,” Barnaby said.

Christie said the PDS has had members in the past that have been in the Greek organization Alpha Epsilon Delta. He said that while there is no partnership between the two organizations, both are involved in healthcare so there will always be a link between them.

The Pre-Dental Society at LSUS gives dental students the chance to learn and grow in their field of dentistry, while connecting with similar students.

“The purpose of the Pre-Dental Society is to gather any students that are in-

See PDS, pg. 3



Editorial Policy

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Letters to the editor are encouraged. However, the staff reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length, and content. Any letter submitted by a club or organization must be signed by all members of the group or by the group's president. Letters should be e-mailed or submitted to the *Almagest* office, BH 344, by 5 p.m. on the Friday preceding the Thursday publication date. Please type the letter and include your classification and major. *The Almagest* reserves the right not to publish submitted materials. Obscene, libelous and anonymous letters will not be printed.

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Student Activities hosts “Be Well” Common Hour, offers smoothies



Photos by Jessica Ingram

Student Activities hosted a “Be Well” Common Hour last Wednesday in the University Center lobby at LSU Shreveport. The event featured free fresh smoothies for students. Above and below, students wait in line to receive their fresh smoothie. Left, Angel Martin, director of student activities, and Lauren Wood, assistant director of student activities, wrestle in the fresh fruit to whip up some fresh smoothies for students.



VOLUME LXIV, ISSUE 9

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Cure for cancer not for the birds

Corey Drummond
STAFF WRITER

Could the cure for cancer taste like chicken feed? Following the discovery of a new fungus, researchers at LSU Shreveport began evaluating this possibility.

“It was a chicken farm in Minnesota. Farmers were raising young chickens and they noticed something unusual in the black bones of some of them,” said Dr. Elahe Mahdavian, associate professor of chemistry/physics. “They weren’t calcifying and developing normally, so of course this was devastating to the farmers economically.”

The farmers hired investigators to find out what was causing this abnormality. As it turned out, a fungus had grown on the chicken feed. This fungus produced a compound that was toxic and prevented the formation of new blood vessels necessary to bring in nutrients.

Scientists became interested in this fungus. After several years of research, they were able to isolate and purify it to identify the structure, which had not been seen in any other natural product before.

Professors from the biology and chemistry departments at LSUS began work with undergraduate students to treat cancer cells and test their solution. Mahdavian leads the study of this new compound based on a unique fungus found in an unlikely place.

“The research continued on and they wanted to know if it had a toxic effect to cancer cells. They knew that it inhibits the formation of blood vessels but they wanted to know if it directly killed cancer cells,” Mahdavian said.

Formation of blood vessels around a cancer cell is necessary for the cell to grow beyond its normal size. According to Mahdavian, if you have a compound that can block the formation of blood vessels, then it may also affect the growth of cancer cells.

Scientists began to test the compound, called fusarochromanone, to examine its effectiveness. The testing was meant to prove if the FC101 compound would work on more than just cancer cells in a petri dish. Living cancer cells in mice would make a more accurate measurement of its ability to stop growth or kill them outright.

The scientists discover that while it does still kill cancer cells in mice, it is not as efficient as killing the cells in a petri dish. According to Mahdavian, this result was to be expected.

“Most natural products are very potent in-vitro setting. When you treat the cells inside a living organism, the effect is not as dramatic,” Mahdavian said.

In-vitro, testing is resigned to test tubes and petri dishes. The next stage after successful tests is in-vivo, which is in living animals like mice. Finally, clinical trials are three phases of testing in humans. In most cases, effectiveness in a compound is diluted as it makes its way up the testing chain.

This is where LSUS comes in. Soon after these tests, Mahdavian and Dr. Tara Williams-Hart, associate professor of biology, began forming a group of professors interested in testing the fungus for themselves.

“It has been several years that we’ve worked on this

project. Our primary obstacle is that we couldn’t get the fungus to produce. Dr. Hart and I worked hard to get the licensing to have the fungus in the biology department and grow it,” Mahdavian said.

It took some time to get the paperwork done and get the licensing, but when that was done and they brought the fungus, it still wasn’t producing. Mahdavian had rice culture to put the fungus in and several days later extracted the crude mixture of FC101. Unfortunately, it didn’t work.

The next attempt was to use cold weather. Mahdavian knew the fungus liked cold weather, but was not sure if it was genetically evolved to the point in which it would still refuse to produce. After testing the fungus, it was proven that this was so far still the case.

Everyone was still interested in the compound, and was resolved to get the fungus to produce chemically. It took several years with multiple paths and commercially available compounds, but in the summer of 2012, they were finally successful in synthesizing their compound.

“We started collaborating with several faculty at the medical school and those interests in the medical school are on the rise as more faculty becomes interested. They like to test our compound on their systems. They want to know if it works on breast, bladder, or prostate cancer,” Mahdavian said.

Now that they have synthesized the compound, Mahdavian and her collaborators can tweak the structure and make synthetic derivatives. Here they can test them in the different stages and truly begin to develop anti-cancer materials.

The group at LSUS involved with developing this compound have built an exciting network of collaboration between professors, students, and faculty at the medical school. This combination of experts and researchers has the potential to make real progress towards anti-cancer research.

To get all of this research and testing done, Mahdavian and Hart needed funding. They turned to an institution dedicated to the kind of research they needed.

“In 2009, Dr. Mahdavian and I were awarded funds to support our research program from the NIH/INBRE award given to the Louisiana Biomedical Research Network,” Hart said.

The research was funded by the IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence, a branch of National Institute of Health. They allowed funding due to the research group’s goal to discover new cancer treatments that are more selective and less toxic agents than standard chemotherapy.

The amount funded totaled \$1.34 million spread between each of the researchers. The research group’s two principal researchers Hart and Mahdavian were awarded the largest sums. Unfortunately, the funding would only last 5 years.

This is the final year of funding for the research group. Soon they will begin looking to renew their previous award or search for a new source of funding. They have made a significant amount of progress in the years the group has been active. The testing of the compound is still in the early stages, so who knows what the future will bring.

“ “
We started collaborating with several faculty at the medical school...They want to know if [the compound] works on breast, bladder, or prostate cancer.
” ”
- Dr. Elahe Mahdavian



Dr. Elahe Mahdavian, associate professor of chemistry/biology

Photo courtesy of Brooke Rinaudo

PELICAN BRIEF

Job and Internship Fair coming to LSUS

Next Wednesday, the Spring Job and Internship Fair will be hosted from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the University Center Ballroom at LSU Shreveport.

LSUS students and alumni are invited to attend for a networking opportunity, as well as the chance to find a full- or part-time job or internship.

Attendees should dress professionally and bring an up-to-date resume.

The Fair will include recruiters from over 50 major businesses and firms. A full list of employers and schools scheduled to attend the Fair is available at <http://www.lsus.edu/offices-and-services/student-development/career-services/students/career-events>.

IMPROV cont.

said of being president of the improv group.

Darzeidan said that anyone interested in joining the improv group can visit the club meetings every Friday from 3 to 4 p.m. He also explained that teaching sessions are available for the new members to learn the different forms and techniques.

Students may find many benefits for joining the improv group.

“It’s really great for helping people get over their anxiety. It really breaks down that wall that’s built up that can avoid socializing. It helps you relax more and helps you be comfortable with people,” Darzeidan said.

Darzeidan’s partner, Lepretre, cheerfully shared her love for improv.

“I love it. I look up to Citizens Brigade by Amy Poehler, they do long form improvs and that’s like new. It is so much fun. I think a lot of people feel like ‘well that seems like it’s fun but I am not sure if I am comfortable’. But we are a team; we are not going to let you down. It is ok if you mess up. You just have to be comfortable with yourself,” Lepretre said.

The philosophy of the improv group is simple, as Darzeidan explains.

“We teach people to be themselves and really get in touch with what their heart says improv really means,” Darzeidan said. “We just want people to feel that sense of being comfortable being yourself and knowing how to be that with other people.”

SWEEPS cont.

“Right now we only have nine people that show up every Sunday. A game takes nine people on each team, so we need to build our numbers,” said Ray Williams, sophomore, journalism.

The International Quidditch Association states that the game is a co-ed contact sport that combines elements of tag, rugby, and dodgeball. Players attempt to score points while running around with broomsticks between their legs. A neutral player deemed the “snitch” ends the game by being captured by one of the teams.

This is all based on the wizarding game J.K. Rowling created in her Harry Potter book series. The enthusiasm and support for the game, as well as the strong part it played in the plot, is a leading factor in the popularity of “muggle” quidditch.

A muggle is anyone who is not a wizard or witch.

Any muggle who would like to see what quidditch is about can view practice every Sunday at 4:30 p.m. behind the HPE building.

PDS cont.

terested in pursuing a career in the dental field, whether it’s general dentistry, dental hygiene, or even specialty dentistry,” Barnaby said. “There’s somewhere for people that express the same interest that you have. You have all of these different societies, but you don’t really see dental too often.”

While in meetings, PDS members can expect to be informed of events associated with their field of study and requirements for dental school, as well as general information.

“We go over dental education, the basic parts of anatomy of the mouth, where different glands are, and teeth numbering. Also, we discuss the different aspects and stages of getting into dental school,” Barnaby said. “Members gain general knowledge of the dental field and they gain a wide range of wisdom. They gain a better understanding of dental school and the dental field altogether.”

The PDS meet during Common Hour every second and last Friday of each month. For more information about PDS or how to join, contact President Tyler Christie at christiet38@lsus.edu or Vice President Calvin Barnaby at Calvin.barnaby@navy.mil.

The *Almagest* chronicles the cyclical history of LSUS

Iris MacLean
STAFF WRITER

A student picking up a copy of the *Almagest* on the way to class in 1967 might have read an article about the new vending machines offering cakes and cigarettes or an opinion piece about women choosing to be career girls or housewives with their home-economics degree.

Throughout the history of LSU Shreveport and the newspaper that has grown up right along side the school, the issues and stories student reporters write about in the *Almagest* haven't changed much.



Photo by Iris MacLean

The first ever issue of the *Almagest*, preserved in the Noel Memorial Library Archives.

“I believe the present-day *Almagest* is a good representation of the paper’s tradition at LSUS,” said Crystal Vandegriff, executive editor of the *Almagest*, senior, journalism. “We are still searching out the stories that are the most important to students, that have the most impact on students, and that celebrate LSUS students’ accomplishments.”

Fernand Garlington, archival assistant for the Library Archives and Special Collections, was a student at LSUS

from 1991-1995. Garlington remembers his peers in school complaining about the lack of a true college feel at LSUS.

“Many of the issues you all deal with as students today, I dealt with in my time, and students before me dealt with as well,” Garlington said.

Garlington also remembers many talks of mergers with Louisiana Tech or potential name changes to give LSUS its own identity. These problems have arisen today as well, proving that college students tend to be interested in the same topics throughout the course of time.

The first issue of the *Almagest* was printed in October 1967 under the faculty advisor Evelyn Herring. Herring chose an experienced staff of reports. The first Editor-in-Chief was Suzette Severs. The assistant editor was Russell Knighton, and the feature editors were Ann Landers and James Oliver. The rest of the staff was comprised of ten columnists, reporters, and a photographer.

The first dean of LSUS, Donald E. Shipp, welcomed LSUS’s first class with a personal letter included in the first issue. In the letter, Shipp highlights the carefully selected faculty and lets the students know he is very excited for the school and it’s future.

Columnist Tara O’Brien proposed the name of the paper to Herring and Shipp. The word “almagest” derives from “al” and the Greek “megiste” meaning “the greatest.” According to the original article in the *Almagest* about the name, the Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defined it as “any of several early medieval treatises on a branch of knowledge.” “Tiger Tales” and “Cornucopia” were the other two ideas considered.

The *Almagest* kept its name for quite some time until students began questioning its meaning a few decades later. The Nov. 5 issue in 1993 was printed under the name “The Sentinel.” The new name lasted until April 15, 1994 when it was changed back to the *Almagest* in the following issue.

“At the time, a number of students working at the paper were saying, ‘You know, this word Almagest, what does it really mean? We need something that sounds like a school newspaper,’” Garlington said. “So they decided to change it.”

The staff, at the time, held a poll asking the student body whether or not they thought the name should be changed back. An overwhelming majority of 105 out of 143 total voted to change it back.

Garlington noted the importance of preserving the continuity of the paper in archives because it is one of the few traditions that has stuck with LSUS from the very first semester until now. All volumes of the *Almagest* are bound and stored in the Noel Memorial Library Archives. The more recent editions, which are online only, have been saved as PDF files on the archival tip server since the fall of 2009. The PDFs are then printed and saved in the archives to eventually be bound as well.



Photo by Iris MacLean

One of the few issues of the *Almagest* printed under the name “The Sentinel,” preserved in the Noel Memorial Library Archives.

There has only been one gap in print of the *Almagest* before it switched to completely online in the fall of 2012 to present. On October 8, 2009, due to the cost of printing, the paper was forced to publish online only until September 23, 2010. The only summer publications of the *Almagest* were online in the summer of 2009.

The *Almagest* has struggled the past few years with the shift to online only and a shift in faculty advisors. However, the *Almagest* is returning to the game with fresh faces and making a swift comeback. Student reporters in the coming semesters will have a chance to enter their writing in the Southeastern Journalism Conference to get the *Almagest* on the map and winning awards.

“I am very proud of the *Almagest* and of the time I have spent here,” Vandegriff said. “I know it has helped prepare me for working in the journalism field in the future, and it has helped me to visualize exactly what I would like my career path to be. I’m very proud of my fellow editors, Jessica and Alex, as well as our student reporters. We went to competition for the first time in a long time this spring and I feel we really held our own after being away so long--we came away with two award-winning writers.”

Students procrastinate, miss out on procrastination workshop

Elizabeth Murray
STAFF WRITER

Walking past the financial aid office, the hallway leads you into a circular motion around the back of the building. It is there you will find Administration Building room 215.

At 10:55, one student walked in and occupied a table of 10 chairs facing a projector showing the title slide for the event.

“I’m a procrastinator,” said John Kuster, freshman, accounting said. Kuster said he has always been a procrastinator, and hopes to gain “insights to better see procrastination and prevent it.”

Paula Atkins, director of student development, arrived to host the seminar at precisely 11 a.m.

The student development center exists to work on study or academic skills, career, counseling, and disability services. Atkins passed out a short survey and a print out of the PowerPoint she had prepared for the seminar to the student.

“You might have to wait until the last minute, pun intended,” Kuster said.

At this point there was only one student in attendance for the seminar.

“It’s hit or miss,” Atkins said when asked about attendance. “Unfortunately, this semester we have had fewer students in attendance.”

Atkins said they have had no students show up at the weekly seminars, but have also had as many as 15.

“Sometimes instructors will give credit-many of the instructors in first-time freshman classes [do],” Atkins said. “They recognize that students may lack some basic academic success skills so they ask the students to come and sometimes give them some credit. Not only in these, but in other kinds of campus activities.”

At this point in the meeting it was precisely 11:06 a.m. as another student came in to hear the seminar. The student



Photo by Elizabeth Murray

Director of Student Development Paula Atkins gives tips to avoid procrastination to an audience of two.

had a white cup with a purple smoothie in her hand identical to the smoothies that were being served at the U.C. The free smoothies were a part of student appreciation week at LSUS and were given out during Common Hour, which also started at 11 a.m.

“Time is all we have,” Atkins said, “so we have to be really good managers of time so that we get our goals met, we don’t end up being dissatisfied.”

Atkins noted that about 90% of college students admit to procrastinating and about 75% of those students receive or experience negative consequences as a result.

“I am hoping to at least start the thought process that there are choices and there is more control over procrastination then sometimes we think there is,” Atkins said. “There

is a wide range of reasons people procrastinate.”

“I’ve heard [procrastination] defined as laziness,” Kuster said. “But I don’t personally think its laziness. It’s just a weird mental process that people triage what they need to do.”

Atkins describes procrastination as a complicated factor- there is not one reason or personality type that procrastinates and she believes we do it in spite of the negative consequences.

“Habitual, intentional, voluntary- it might be laziness,” Atkins said.

The student development center welcomes all students to their weekly seminars. Their next seminar will be Wednesday 11 a.m. and will focus on “Understanding Distress.”