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Banquet brings insight

Firsthand look at hunger across US and world wide

By Amber Hastings
ahastings@valenciavoices.com

WEST CAMPUS — The world's wealthiest 10 percent have a yearly income of \$12,000,000.

The Human Empathy Rights Organization's (HERO) hunger banquet represented these figures by separating guests into classes that represented the world's upper, middle, and lower classes.

The banquet, which was developed by Oxfam America, aimed to bring awareness to poverty and hunger as a worldwide issue as opposed to just a local one.

Oxfam America is one of 17 international branches of a worldwide relief effort.

"Last year, we had 100 people show up," said Professor Subhas Rampersaud.

This year's banquet had 55 people in attendance. By the luck of the draw, nine people were seated at upper-class tables that were set with silverware and the first course of a three-course meal.

Chairs set on the three sides of the auditorium sat the 16 people who drew tickets that represented the world's middle class demographic. The remaining thirty people sat on the floor with no pillow or cushion for the banquet, mirroring 60 percent of the world's population living in poverty.

"We tend to live in this world with a mythical view that everything is fine and it's not," said Rampersaud.

Those who live in the lower class represent the sixty percent of the world's population who make less than \$2.70 a day.

For this demographic, it is not uncommon for an entire day to revolve around gathering water for survival. According to Oxfam, even the most basic healthcare is unavailable and education is limited for children. Education for girls is even more difficult to come by.

Some in attendance were asked to move from upper class tables to the floor



Mike Gramajo / Valencia Voice

West Campus president Falecia Williams participated as a member of the middle class.

to mirror the economic that takes place. During a break in the presentation, buckets of rice were placed on the floor for guests in the lower class to eat that night.

At the same time, guests seated at tables chose from a selection of dressings for the first course salad. Those seated in chairs were served a meal of rice, beans, and water.

"It was about 25 pounds of rice and 42 cans of beans," said HERO member Stephanie Feliciano.

Feliciano prepared the rice and beans
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Clear college costs?

Congress is trying to help

By Renee Schoof
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — College is one of the biggest investments people make, but it can be hard to estimate in advance just how big.

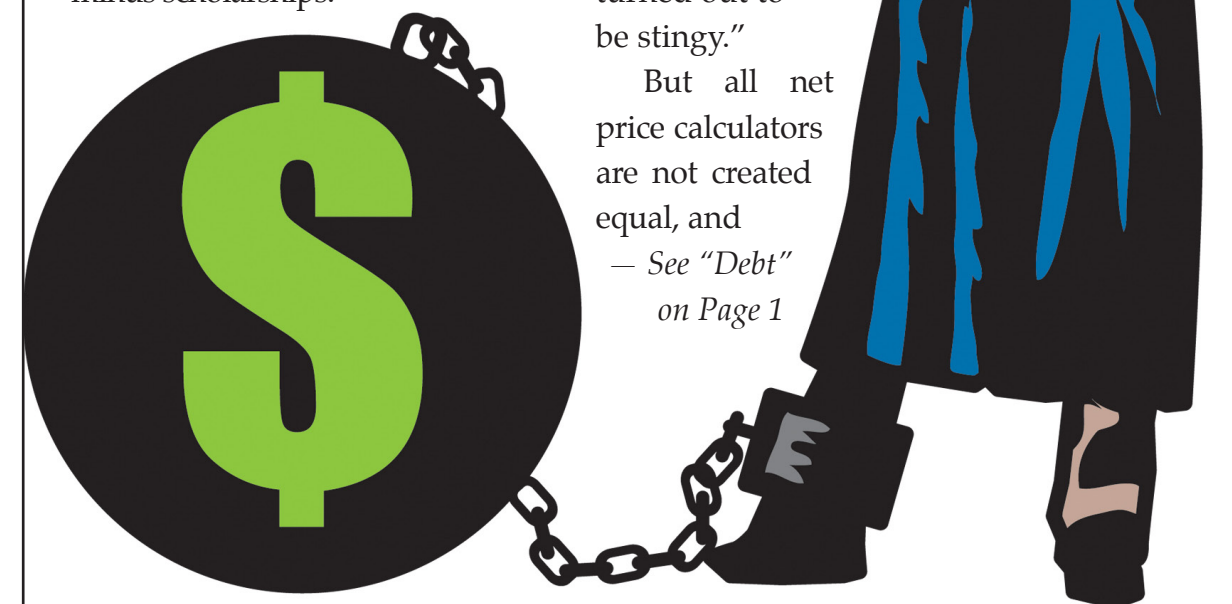
Congress stepped in a few years ago with a law requiring that colleges and universities offer an online tool to help families get a handle on it.

For the past year, schools have had to post "net price calculators" on their websites for students to determine the full cost of attending, minus scholarships.

"By the time a family receives acceptances and financial aid letters in the spring, it's too late for do-overs," said Lynn O'Shaughnessy, the author of a consumer book about college costs, "The College Solution."

"You can't start the process all over again if the schools turned out to be stingy."

But all net price calculators are not created equal, and
— See "Debt" on Page 1



Debt

— Continued from Page 1

schools have flexibility in how they present them.

Indeed, an immediate problem is that some schools don't make them very easy to find.

When you do find them, some calculators can take about 20 minutes to fill out because they require pulling information from tax returns and other family financial records.

Still, they provide an early estimate though schools make it clear that students still must apply for financial aid and that what they receive could be different.

The concept is simple: When students plug in their financial information, they receive estimated net prices based on what similar students paid in a previous year.

"It takes into consideration the institution's financial aid policies, and gives a more accurate picture of what the out-of-pocket costs are likely to be for a family," said Irene Jasper, the director of student lending at Duke University.

Some calculators also ask for grades, class ranks and SAT or ACT test scores to determine whether students are eligible for merit aid, which isn't based on need. The more information, the better the estimate, O'Shaughnessy said.

Some private colleges already had embarked on the idea before it became a website requirement.

But because many now give only average amounts for grant awards, based on income, the net price calculators are "a good idea that's been watered down," said Robert Weinerman, a former financial aid officer at the Massachusetts Institute

of Technology who's an adviser at College Coach, a private college-admissions consulting firm.

Others said that more complicated versions could be daunting.

"I think they have the potential to be tremendously helpful, but two things will determine whether they really are: if people use them, and secondly, if they're user-friendly," said Michelle Asha Cooper, the president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, a policy research group that focuses on helping low-income and minority students succeed in college.

Part of being user-friendly is being easy to find.

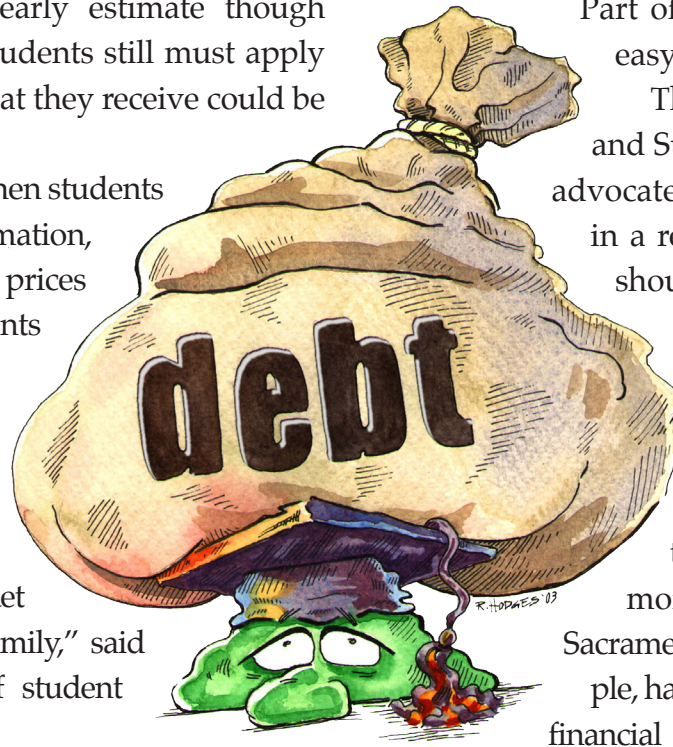
The Institute for College Access and Success, a nonprofit group that advocates for college affordability, said in a report last month that schools should put the net-price calculators in prominent places on their financial aid or costs pages so that potential applicants, and parents, who weren't aware of the tools might discover them more easily.

Sacramento State University, for example, has a link under "resources" on its financial aid page. Tacoma Community College in Washington put the calculator on its student consumer information page, reached by clicking the "About TCC" tab on the home page.

Kim Matison in the Tacoma Community College financial aid office said her office had been talking about making the calculator more visible.

O'Shaughnessy said the calculator was a boon for parents, who could get more personal estimates of what schools would cost them before their children went through the time-consuming, and often anxiety-ridden, effort of applying.

— MCT Campus



Barry Law students (L-R)
Brian Kozlowski,
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East Campus tries to hold 'Headphone Disco'

Event brings students, music for good cause

By Shannon Scheidell
sscheidell@valenciavoice.com

Student Development and the Valencia Volunteers organized a special "Glow the Night Away" Headphone Disco event, Friday night, for those who believe that no one should go hungry during this holiday season.

Charitable intentions and eclectic tastes in music brought a diverse group of people together on the first floor of Valencia's East Campus, in a room near the cafeteria, where beats echoing from the speakers could be heard from outside the building.

The original plan was for two DJs to play separate styles of music at the same time, while attendees were handed a pair of headphones to wear, given the choice to switch between two channels of tunes.

At the last minute the Headphone Disco company fell through and DJ David Alberto came to mix it up for a crowd of about 45-50. Groups of friends and upwards of 20 people gathered around in concentric circles to jam to the beat.

For registered students, three canned goods got you through the door, and each of their guests donated \$5 toward the Coalition for the Homeless. The non-perishable items will go to the Second Harvest food bank.

General studies major Ian Trent said, "I thought it was great. I think they col-

lected a lot of food," which was the initial goal of the event.

Trent wore a gray three-piece suit, with a royal purple tie to accent his outfit. Other students wore rave-like attire, sporting brightly colored T-shirts with glow sticks around their necks.

Carlos Lebron Rivera, Valencia Volunteers coordinator, said it was a great success, considering it was a Friday.

"Though each campus is different, I was surprised about how many people showed up," said Student Development advisor Lauren Kaplan.

She credits Lebron Rivera as being a big influence in her decision to organize the "Glow the Night Away" Headphone Disco.

"The whole point of Valencia Volunteers is to help the community," Kaplan said.

A music buff, herself, Kaplan feasts her ears on all the genres, from Top 40 to unknown bands.

While some felt the turnout was akin to the amount of people who showed up at the occasional house party, Shea Vassall, a computer technology major, expected to see more people at the event.

"I hope they have another one. There were so few people, that when my group started to leave, there were like three people dancing," Vassal said.

For weeks there have been banners hung about the walls of building five, which serves as home base for incoming



Courtesy of Lauren M. Kaplan

Participants helped donate to the Second Harvest food bank and the Coalition for the Homeless.

students and anyone seeking information about the school. There was a significant amount of advertising committed to getting the word out around campus.

With final exams less than a week away, students may have chosen to stay home and study during the weekend, Kaplan suggested.

In addition to the students and staff who attended, someone brought a baby into the musical fray. A group of four sat huddled around on the dance floor, playing and bobbing their heads, along with the young child, to the Dubstep/Pop that reverberated off the walls of the room.

As the first DJ let up on turntables, a second began to add more subtle melo-

dies to his custom-made mix. With the party beginning to thin out at around 9:30 p.m., a group of about 15 students lingered in the cafeteria, chatting among themselves outside the doors of the disco, rehashing the highlights of the night.

Mike Acevedo, president of the Student Government Association for the East Campus, was there as well. While he helped take down the black lights and decorations, he said he also enjoyed the music.

SGA will be holding a White Out party on the East Campus within the next month and there will be a Fall Symphonic and jazz band concert next week. Check out the events calendar at valenciacollege.edu for more information.

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Hunger banquet

— Continued from Page 1

for the banquet with help from her father.

“When you hear ‘hunger banquet’, it’s kind of like an oxymoron,” said Feliciano. “It brings awareness.”

Feliciano had experienced first hand how it was to live without a home during high school. Unable to stay with her parents, she lived with friends.

“There was a time when I was living in my car,” said Feliciano.

Sam Gruber, a dual enrollment student seated in the middle class, spoke out during the question and answer portion of the event. Gruber, who is also a senior in high school, currently lived with her father who had recently taken in his two handicapped sisters and filed for bankruptcy.

“This is the best meal I’ve had in weeks,” said Gruber. After the event, Gruber was given food to take home.

“It’s nice to see that people care,” said Gruber.

For more information on Oxfam America, visit www.oxfamamerica.org.



Mike Gramajo / Valencia Voice

Members of the middle class were served rice and beans.

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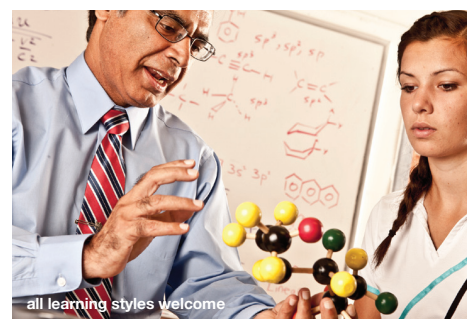
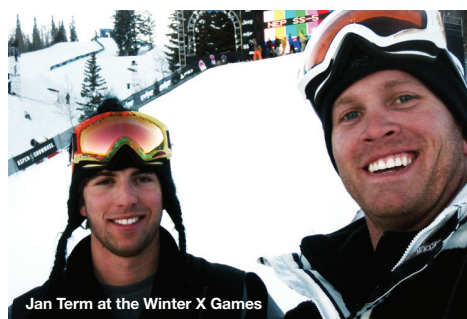
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Tweets of the Week





CollegeTownLife @CollegeTownLife

This is the most I've studied all semester...and it's only been 5 minutes.



College Problems @_collegeproblem

I did NOT sign up for public speaking in this class #collegeproblems




Doug Benson @DougBenson

The upside if the world ends on Dec 21? No AVATAR sequels.



Andy Borowitz @BorowitzReport

Wait, so that's the big news about the Royal Family? I thought maybe one of them got a job.



nick kroll @nickkroll

Punching the keys on your laptop real hard doesn't make what you're writing any more interesting. #traintweets



Shit Nobody Says! @ShitNoOneSayss_

Twilight is Oscar worthy.



Condescending Wonka @OhMrWonka

What happens in Vegas... ends up on Facebook.



Conan O'Brien @ConanOBrien

What do I do? Just got a phone call asking me to QB the Jets this weekend.

Expand

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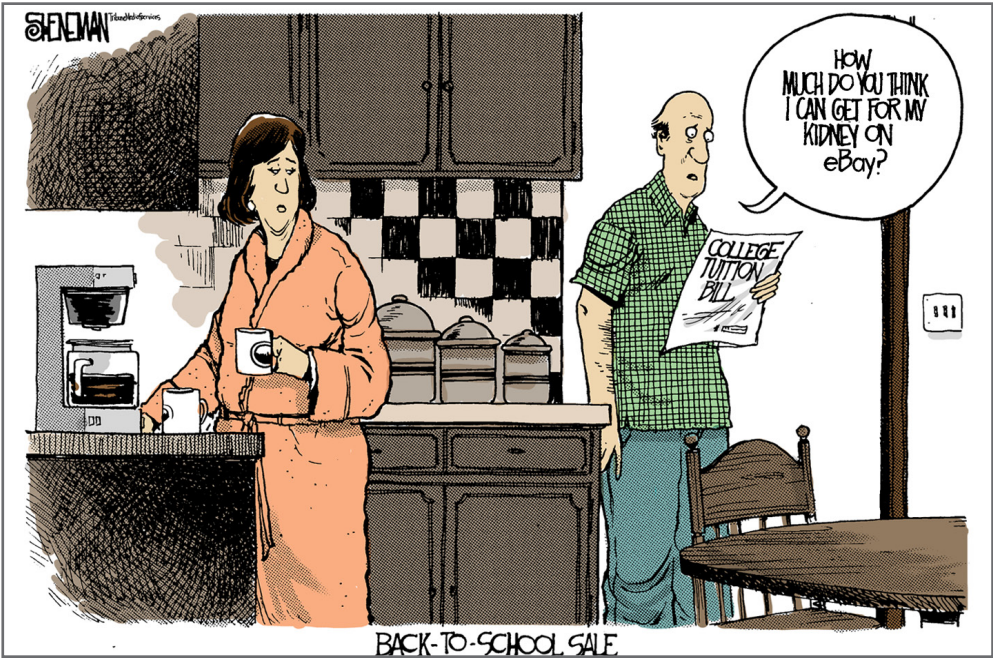
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Entire education system requires radical reform

Standardized tests prove imperfect gauge of teacher performance due to lackluster evaluations

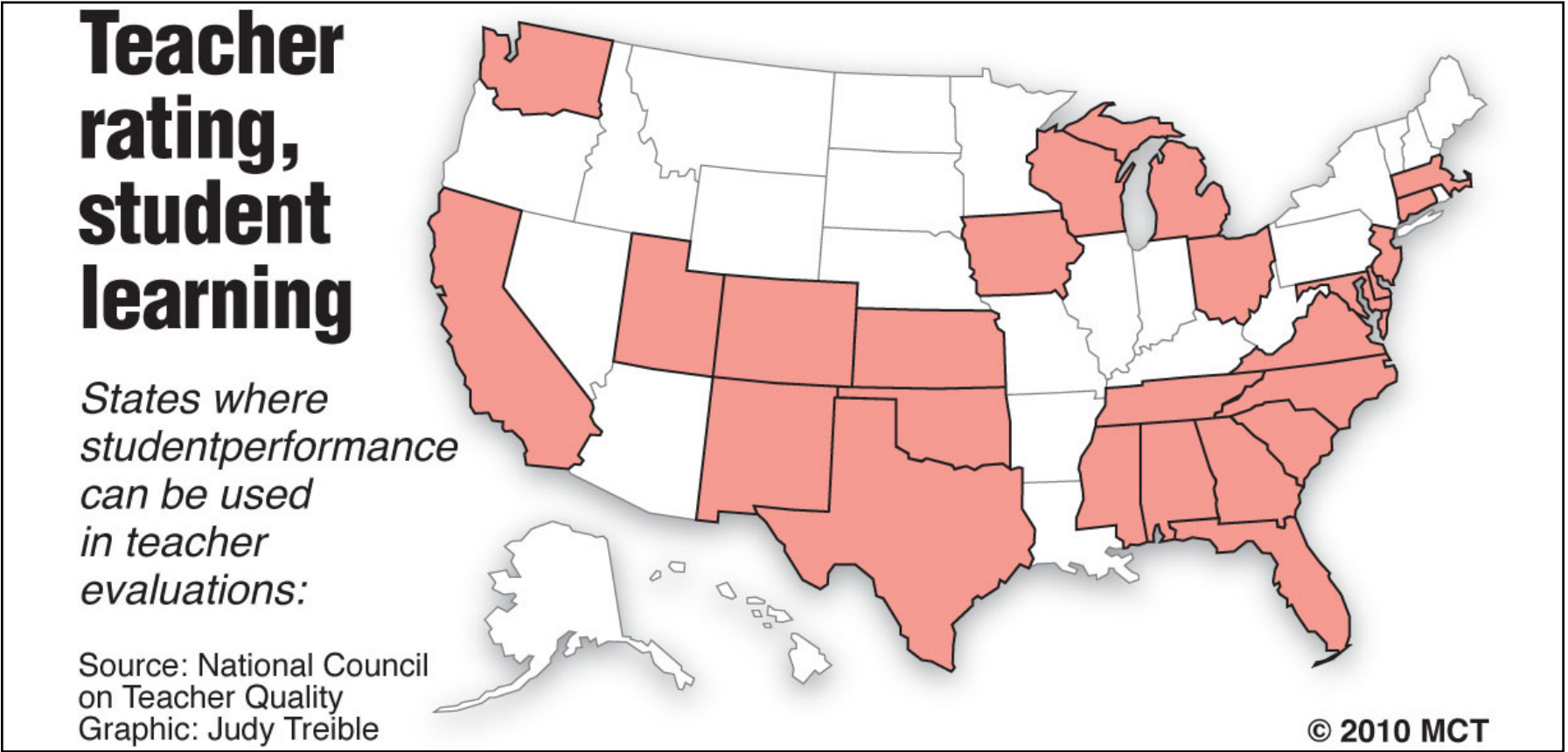
By Charles Chieppo
The Hechinger Report

The Obama administration’s Race to the Top Fund, which was designed to use federal grant money as an incentive for states to replicate programs shown to improve student performance, has been a mixed bag. For one thing, what began as incentives for states to adopt common standards in English and math has risen to the level of what may be illegal coercion.

But the program also has prompted a number of states to lift arbitrary caps on charter schools and, perhaps most important, has gotten 36 states and the District of Columbia to introduce more rigorous teacher-evaluation systems.

There is no factor within the four walls of a school that affects student performance more than teacher quality. Research by former University of Tennessee professor William L. Sanders found that the effects of a poor third-grade teacher were still measurable on a student’s fifth-grade math scores, regardless of the quality of subsequent teachers. Conversely, academic growth in students who had highly effective teachers three years in a row resulted in scores that were dramatically higher than those unlucky enough to have had ineffective teachers.

Current systems clearly aren’t working. A 2010 study commissioned by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for



Education found that over two school years, half of Boston’s public-school teachers had never been evaluated, while one-quarter of the city’s schools hadn’t turned in a single evaluation.

But there is profound disagreement over how teachers should be evaluated, especially since the results of those evaluations will be central to their compensation and job security. Ground zero for the controversy is the role student test scores should play in the evaluations. The issue was at the heart of the recent Chicago teachers strike, and negotiations with Boston’s teachers union dragged on for years before

the sides finally came to an agreement.

Standardized tests routinely attract a torrent of criticism, but the work of noted educational-standards expert E.D. Hirsch is instructive here. Hirsch found a high correlation between standardized reading test results and the likelihood of economic success, adaptability to retraining, civic integration and even the probability of not being incarcerated.

Standardized-test results certainly are not perfect, and they should not be the only measure by which teachers are evaluated. But there is clear evidence that the rate of student improvement on

the tests should be a very significant part of those evaluations.

Money isn’t everyone’s primary motivator, but the almost total disconnect between teacher performance and compensation is one cause of our failure to attract more of the best and brightest to work in our public schools. Rigorous evaluation systems that reward teachers who consistently improve student achievement and encourage those who don’t to seek a different career are one important way to make teaching more appealing to talented, ambitious young people.

-- MCT Campus

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‘Killing Them Softly’ disappoints

By Amy Kaufman
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Brad Pitt’s “Killing Them Softly” barely had a pulse at the box office this past weekend.

Not only did the crime flick debut with a weak \$7 million, according to an estimate from the distributor, the Weinstein Co., but audiences hated it. Those who saw the film assigned it a rare average grade of F, according to market research firm CinemaScore. The last movie to earn that grade was January’s horror film “The Devil Inside.”

Pitt’s movie got slaughtered by a handful of films that have been available to moviegoers for weeks.

Young women have yet to tire of “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn: Part 2,” which was No. 1 for the third consecutive weekend. The final installment in the vampire franchise grossed an additional

\$17.4 million over the weekend, raising its domestic total to \$254.6 million. That’s about \$8 million ahead of where “Breaking Dawn: Part 1” was at the same point in its release last year.

“Skyfall,” now the highest-grossing James Bond film by far, took the runner-up position with \$17 million. The film starring Daniel Craig has now sold \$246 million worth of tickets in the United States and Canada.

As for “Killing Them Softly,” on Sunday, not even the Weinstein Co. was trying to pretend there was an upside to the film’s poor opening.

“We’re disappointed, and there’s no getting around that,” said Erik Lomis, the independent studio’s president of theatrical distribution and home entertainment. “We thought it was deserving of a wide release because it was Brad Pitt in a gangster movie.”

Typically, a CinemaScore F indicates

that moviegoers were expecting something far different from what they ended up getting. In advertisements for the film, aimed largely at males watching sports, the Weinstein Co. played up the film’s recognizable ensemble cast, led by Pitt but also featuring James Gandolfini and Ray Liotta.

“I think if you looked at the reviews, a lot of them were good for Brad, but they weren’t great for the movie,” he said. “The headlines looked good, but maybe they weren’t as great as they appeared to be.”

Indeed, the film notched a strong 79 percent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes. The movie, in which Pitt portrays a hit man looking into a mob-protected poker game, marks the second collaboration for the actor with Australian director Andrew Dominik.

“Killing Them Softly” marks the lowest wide-release opening for Pitt in nearly two decades. He hasn’t had a



Courtesy of The Weinstein Company
Brad Pitt starring as Jackie in ‘Killing Them Softly’ a Mob drama starring Ray Liotta, Richard Jenkins.

live-action film perform this badly in its first weekend since the beginning of his career, when his 1994 romantic comedy “The Favor” launched with \$1.5 million.

The Weinstein Co. co-financed the actor’s latest film with Megan Ellison’s production company Annapurna Pictures for \$15 million.

— MCT Campus

December 7 “Playing for Keeps”



Rated: PG-13
Running Time: 1 hrs. 35 min.
Genre: Romantic Comedy
Director: Gabriele Muccino
Starring: Gerard Butler, Jessica Biel, Uma Thurman, Catherine Zeta-Jones

“Hyde Park on Hudson”



Rated: R
Running Time: 1 hrs. 34 min.
Genre: Drama
Director: Roger Michell
Starring: Eleanor Bron, Bill Murray, Olivia Williams, Elizabeth Wilson

Box Office

‘Breaking Dawn 2’

Rated: PG-13

This Weekend: \$ 17,416,362

Total Gross: \$ 254,598,866

‘Skyfall’

Rated: PG-13

This Weekend: \$ 16,555,894

Total Gross: \$ 245,585,083

‘Rise of the Guardians’

Rated: PG

This Weekend: \$ 13,388,852

Total Gross: \$ 48,836,105

Wiz Khalifa lights up UCF Arena

The artist promotes his newest album release

By James Tutton
jtutton@valenciavoice.com

ORLANDO — In just over six years of releasing hip hop music the 25-year-old American rapper Cameron Jibril Thomaz, who is known best by his stage name Wiz Khalifa, is well on his way to creating a lasting legacy for himself.

Khalifa brought his unique crazy and cool style to the University of Central Florida for the second time in the last two years with a stop of his “The 2050 Tour” on Friday, Nov. 30.

A wild hip hop exhibition, themed in the distant future where the world has changed and everyone is encouraged to live life to its fullest. The opening acts along with Khalifa excited the nearly sold-out crowd who celebrated and embraced the concert’s work hard, play hard philosophy.

This show provided Khalifa with the opportunity to promote his newest studio album “O.N.I.F.C” set to be released on Dec. 4.

“Don’t let nobody kill your dreams and tell you that what you believe in isn’t the right thing,” said Khalifa, on stage before performing “Rise Above” off his new album.

Khalifa burst onto the scene, supported by his backup band, to begin his



James Tutton / Valencia Voice
Wiz Khalifa takes the stage during his second performance at the University of Central Florida.

chart-topping hit “Black and Yellow” as the start of his performance. This hard-hitting beat with fast-paced lyrics gave an electrifying buzz that carried over through the rest of his set.

A strong draw to Khalifa’s performance style is his carefree coolness, that plays to his overall style while keeping a unique diversity as a hip hop artist. On slower tunes—with audience members holding up the customary lighters—he brings the pace down with an almost slow motion attitude. This is soon followed by a fast-paced hip hop jam, leaving his fans energized and wanting more.

“This is by far the best show I’ve ever seen, I love Wiz Khalifa. He’s my dream boy,” said audience member Anna Carpanzano.

The hit single “Work Hard, Play Hard” featured on Khalifa’s soon to be released “O.N.I.F.C” album, was performed twice, including the final song of the evening. It’s simple, but strong message shows that everyone that works hard in life deserves to enjoy their down time doing whatever makes them happy.

“I’ve been a fan of his for the last four years and everyone I know came to this concert, there was no way I was gonna miss it,” said Derek Hiegel, a freshmen and engineering major at UCF.

Along with Khalifa was several other hip-hop artists that worked to hype up the audience including Lola Monroe, Chevy Woods, Tuki Carter, Berner and Juicy J.

Juicy J, a member of the Academy Award-winning group “Three 6 Mafia” treated the audience to samples of some of their well known tracks including “Stay Fly,” “Sippin’ on Some Syrup,” and “Poppin’ My Collar.” This drew a wild reaction from fans of this group and worked perfectly to set up the final performance of the night by Khalifa.

Wiz Khalifa is a rising star in hip hop music supported by millions of dedicated fans that love his free living ideals and original style. This concert kept its easy going mantra focused on having fun and delivered just that.



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UCF blow out Florida Tech

Knights take home win, take out Panthers by large margin

By Juan Gallardo

jgallardo@valenciavoice.com

ORLANDO — UCF dominated out-of-conference opponent Florida Technical Institute 90-62 on the hot hands of a pair of freshmen, Daiquan Walker and Matt Williams Jr, Saturday afternoon at the UCF Arena.

4,125 attended as Walker and Williams had 15 and 21 points, respectively, both shooting over 75 percent from the field on the night. For Walker, it was his season debut in his first game back since his appendix burst earlier this year.

"It just feels good to be back on the court playing, especially with all I've been through with my appendix bursting. All the trials and tribulations I've been through, it just feels good to play again," said Williams Jr.

Although the freshmen shined the most, they weren't on their own Saturday night. Five Knights were in double figures with senior Keith Clanton (13 points, 11 rebounds) and sophomore Kasey Wilson (16 points, 11 rebounds) contributing double-doubles.

Wilson created sparks when the Knights were going through dry spells with impact plays.

"Kasey is a mismatch four man. With his ability to shoot threes now, his handle has gotten better, and he is rebounding the ball really well now," said UCF head coach Donnie Jones.

The Knights had a sloppy first half of play committing 14 turnovers in the opening period leading to a 29-38 score at the break, but settled down in the second half. Playing a more team-oriented style of ball passing the ball, this led to open shots by Walker and Williams.



Danny Morales / Valencia Voice

Tristan Spurlock going for the easy layup as the Knights regained momentum after losing to Florida a week prior.

The Knights have a two week break before resuming play, Dec.12, against Bethune-Cookman; a break which Jones says his team will take full advantage of.

"These next few days will give us a chance to really take film of what we have done. Almost, like, start training camp again and just continue to improve," said Jones.

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VALENCIA

Day after tragedy Chiefs find a way to win

By Chris Kuc
Los Angeles Times

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The fog that enveloped much of the Kansas City area Sunday morning dissipated a few hours before the Chiefs and Panthers took the field at Arrowhead Stadium.

The sun broke through and temperatures surpassed 60 degrees on the second day of December as children tossed footballs in the parking lots while tailgaters grilled burgers and music blared.

Other than a brief moment of silence dedicated to all the victims of domestic violence and their families, the game had the look and feel of a typical NFL Sunday.

For those affected by the events of the previous morning, when police say Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher committed suicide by shooting himself in the head outside the team's practice facility just minutes after he shot and killed his girlfriend, Kasandra Perkins, the mother of the couple's 3-month-old daughter, it was anything but a typical football game.

"It was tough," linebacker Derrick Johnson said following the Chiefs' 27-21 victory. "It really hit me this morning, waking up and not being able to talk to Jovan. I was really emotional going to the stadium."

At Belcher's stall in the locker room, his equipment sat at the ready, his helmet gleaming, his No. 59 jersey hanging and his cleats untied and ready to



John Sleezer / Kansas City Star / MCT

Players from the Kansas City Chiefs and Carolina Panthers gather at midfield for a prayer after Chiefs 27-21 win at Arrowhead Stadium on Dec. 2.

be stepped into.

"When I walked in the locker room I didn't look toward his locker," starting quarterback Brady Quinn said. "Then I sat down ... (and) looked across and I saw his jersey hanging up, his locker stall filled with everything, and that's when it kind of hit me."

Two stalls down from Belcher's, friend and teammate Dexter McCluster wore a T-shirt memorializing Belcher as he explained how the Chiefs overcame emotions to remain focused on football and win only their second vic-

tory of the season.

"We just had to pull together and ... use the brotherhood we have," McCluster said. "Our main goal was to go out there to win for the organization, for the players and the coaches and for my main man. We love him."

The team plans to contribute money for a fund for Belcher's daughter.

The game went off as scheduled after Chiefs coach Romeo Crennel and the team's captains decided to play the game a little more than 24 hours after the apparent murder-suicide. Crennel

and general manager Scott Pioli were present when the 25-year-old Belcher took his life in a parking lot not far from the stadium.

The Chiefs organization had grief counselors available to the team at its hotel Saturday night, and Chairman Clark Hunt addressed the players.

"It was a good thing that we had people to talk to," defensive end Shaun Smith said. "That's the biggest thing — when you have problems you have to be able to talk to somebody."

— MCT Campus

Solar Bears return home

By Danny Morales
dmorales@valenciavoice.com

The Solar Bears will return to Orlando on Friday, Dec. 7, to face off against the Fort Wayne Komets for a three-game series, after being on the road for the past two weeks.

The road trip started off with two games against the division leading Gwinnett Gladiators, both of which the Solar Bears lost by a score of 1-0. This was the first time Orlando was shut out in back-to-back games this year.

Ontario, Cali. was the next destination for the Solar Bears, as they took on the Ontario Reign. Orlando got on the scoreboard against the Reign, but would lose in Ontario as well by a score of 6-2. The Solar Bears had goals from both C.J. Severyn and Nick Petersen respectively.

C.J. Severyn helped Orlando snap its four-game losing streak when he scored the Solar Bears' lone regulation time goal, as they beat the Las Vegas Wranglers 2-1 in a shootout on Nov. 30, at Orleans Arena in Las Vegas. The Solar Bears wouldn't be as lucky the next day, as they would fall to the Wranglers by a score of 0-4.

During the two-week road trip the Solar Bears went 1-4, while falling into a tie for last place in the division with their in-state rival, the Florida Everblades.

Orlando is 12 games into its inaugural East Coast Hockey League season. The Solar Bears now have a 9-10-2-1 record, which is good for 21 points.

Over the course of the weekend the Solar Bears will play Fort Wayne three times in three days, starting with the first game on Friday at 7 p.m. Orlando will also play the Komets Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m.

Beckham bids farewell as L.A. Galaxy wins MLS Cup

By Helene Elliott
Los Angeles Times

Champions rally from behind to retain title in bittersweet ending

David Beckham walked off the field at the Home Depot Center with a smile on his face and an American flag draped around his shoulders, leaping to high-five one last fan as he ended his most excellent MLS playing adventure with a powerful performance.

Beckham didn't score in the 3-1 victory over Houston that secured the Galaxy's second straight MLS Cup championship, but he was a strong presence with his trademark curving free kicks and dynamic leadership. The Galaxy had been forced to rally all season, and he would not let its playoff journey end Saturday without a bounce-back triumph.

He was sure of himself and his choices, a certainty played out in his every move. If he had a tear in his eye as he exited in front of his three sons, each wearing T-shirts with his No. 23 and the name DADDY on the back, it reflected joy over a job well done, not sorrow over leaving a task unfinished.

By contrast, teammate Landon Donovan seemed detached from the festivities, lost in an emotional and physical state he said could be described as burnout. Saturday's game might have been his last for the Galaxy, too, a decision he's still grappling with.

"It's just been a long two years, for all of us," said the 30-year-old midfielder,



Gina Ferazzi/Los Angeles Times/MCT

The L.A. Galaxy celebrate after defeating the Houston Dynamo in the MLS Championship at Home Depot Center in Carson, California, on Dec. 1.

who played a key role in the 2010 U.S. World Cup effort. "It's not a woe-is-me story, but I have to listen to my heart and my gut, and right now my gut says to get away for a while."

A muffed scoring chance in the 13th minute left him doubting himself, an odd sensation for one of the best players America has produced. "You feel like you let everybody down and candidly, it sat with me till halftime," he said. "I took

a few minutes at halftime and sort of collected myself and tried to stay present, because you can't change it."

He changed the course of the game when he converted the 65th-minute penalty kick that put the Galaxy ahead for good, but he wasn't sure he'd succeed. That, too, was a strange and unwelcome sensation.

Both strong personalities, they initially didn't get along. Maybe over the course of Beckham's six seasons here

they learned to appreciate each other's strengths instead of lament each other's weaknesses. With Donovan at an emotional distance lately, Beckham stepped up, joining the electrifying Robbie Keane in elevating a fourth-place regular-season team into a champion. That shouldn't be omitted from the list of Beckham's considerable accomplishments here.

Because he said this victory was harder-won, Beckham was repeatedly asked

if it was more meaningful to him than last season's or others. He wouldn't bite.

"The feeling of making the final, the preparation, the feeling around the club — it never gets old," he said. "I'm 37 and I've been able to play in quite a few finals and championship games, and I still love it like I did when I won my first."

Beckham brought glamour and credibility to MLS, which needed them. If some of the gossipy coverage was laughable, it was tolerable because he seemed in on the joke, incredulous that a kid who grew up in modest circumstances in London had become an international soccer and style icon.

"I just hope I've brought a bit of interest to the game," he said. "If that's the single thing that I've done, then great. But I think the foundations are there now in this league. It's a 17-year-old league and the foundations are great. It will continue to grow."

"I had a really nice moment where my sister just had a baby and she got to come down on the field and he was sleeping on her," Donovan said of the postgame scene. "It sort of puts it all in perspective and makes me realize that I want to be close to my family for a while, and then I can figure out the soccer part later."

Beckham figured that out and left without regrets. Whatever decision Donovan makes, he deserves the same certainty in an uncertain world.

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