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Courtesy of Valencia College

Feats of dental daring-do

Valencia's program offers savings on hygiene

By Luis Herrera
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WEST CAMPUS — Valencia College offers several medical and nursing degrees, but some students at Valencia do more than just study. Valencia's dental hygiene program allows them to perform dental cleaning and other dental procedures on campus.

Pamela Sandy, program chair, went over the procedure and offered some insight into the dental hygiene program.

"Most of the students have completed their general studies courses so can concentrate on dental and lab courses," said Sandy.

The program is an associate degree program in the Allied Health Sciences division and requires two years of time composed of two to six semesters total

and 88 accumulated credit hours. Students are required to take microbiology, physiology, anatomy and some general medical education classes.

Services offered by students in the Valencia Dental Program are open to the general public. It's just \$20 for an oral exam and teeth cleaning and they also offer digital x-rays. They also sell a variety of dental tools for reasonable price.

Valencia's dental lab is located in the AHS building near the HSB building on West Campus.

"The Valencia dental program always host events for the community," said Sandy.

The student dental hygienists do their job under trained professionals and with a high level of supervision.

For more information on the program visit <http://valenciacc.edu/west/health/alliedhealth/>.

STEM sells?

State of the art degrees trump arts degrees

By Tia Mitchell
The Miami Herald / MCT Campus

TALLAHASSEE -- Gov. Rick Scott went to college with one goal: make money.

He didn't join a fraternity or become active in student government. He took only the classes he needed for his degree and not a credit more.

Married when he attended community college, he paid for a bachelor's degree at the University of

Missouri-Kansas City with help from the G.I. Bill. And he worked full time in a donut shop he purchased with a friend.

The boy who grew up wanting to be rich knew from the start he wanted to become an attorney.

For Scott, college was a means to an end. Now he wants Florida colleges and universities to have the same razor-sharp focus — rein in tuition costs and create cheaper degrees that...

- Please turn to Page 4



Joe Burbank / Orlando Sentinel / MCT

Gov. Rick Scott arrives for the announcement of his proposal to raise teacher pay statewide in the upcoming state budget, during a news conference at a middle school in Ocoee, Florida, on Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2013. Scott has said that he hopes college students make good degree choices.

Fastball fete

UCF Knights baseball team holds preseason party

By Luis Herrera
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ORLANDO – The University of Central Florida Knights baseball team hosted a fan fest in which the team interacted with other students and fans on Saturday, Jan. 26 at the UCF Venue.

At the event, the UCF baseball team and coaches mingled with fans, family and students before their season opens up.

It was a family friendly event where fans had the opportunity to meet their 2013 team and interact with them.

The Fan Fest included raffles for season tickets to UCF's games and other

prizes. They also had a “wiffle” ball home run tournament and a fastball contest.

The team is all ready for this season and are aiming to try and win the Conference USA division.

“UCF baseball is ranked 7th in the country this year and our goal is to get better. Conference USA is an outstanding conference and they're pretty good competition,” said head coach Terry Rooney.

Players also offered their input and shared expectations about the upcoming season. Jomarcus Woods, James Vasquez, Ben Lively, Chris Taladay and outfielder JoMarcus Woods all expect to work hard this season.

“I expect to go out and play hard this season with pretty much a new team this year and I expect us to be tough,” said Woods.

First Baseman James Vasquez can't wait to start this season.

“Conference USA is really tough it's one of the toughest on the country we also have new players with experience but we're ready,” said Vasquez.

Leading last year with nine wins and two losses, pitcher Ben Lively is also ready to start the season.

“This year I've gotten a lot bigger from last year but one of my biggest factors is slowing the game down,” said Lively.



Ty Wright / Valencia Voice

Certified Knight fan Brian Stanley rocks his self-customized jersey at the event.



Above and below, Ty Wright / Valencia Voice

Above: a sweeping view of the scene at the team's baseball event reveals many fans and associates as they mingle in the sea of black and gold on Saturday, Jan. 27 at the UCF campus. Below: head coach Terry Rooney, left, answers questions from a UCF reporter.

Leading the team with batting averages last year with a .298 batting average was third baseman Chris Taleday, who is ready to start off the season well by increasing his batting average.

“Batting 300 is expectation for me. If I don't bat above 300 that's a letdown for me,” he said.

Now UCF is ready to start the season strong with a new team and new expectations starting with their first game of the season on Tuesday, Feb. 19 with a three game series against Siena.



Jam on

Big trucks bite into the Citrus Bowl

By Luis Herrera
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ORLANDO — At the Citrus Bowl on Friday, Jan. 25, Monster Jam fans and members of the media were given an up-close look at monster trucks.

Drivers such as Ryan Anderson, Bari Mussawir and Lupe Soza were in attendance. After a first hand look at their trucks, the drivers detailed their strategies and inventoried the equipment adorning their trucks.

Ryan Anderson is in his third season



Luis Herrera / Valencia Voice
Driver Bari Mussawir stands in front of his truck “Spider-Man” on the grounds of the Citrus Bowl.

on the Monster Jam tour, and is ready to win and make a name for himself. As the son of the well known driver Dennis Anderson who drives the monster truck

“Grave Digger,” he is ready to put on his first Orlando show at the Citrus Bowl.

“I’m feeling pressure because Orlando is the hall of fame of Monster Jam and it’s my first show here,” said Anderson. “It’s like a tribute to me, coming here is an honor.”

Anderson drives the monster truck successor to his dad’s truck, the recognizable “Grave Digger.” There are many differences between the trucks, but the main difference is that “Grave Digger’s” colors are green and black, while Anderson’s colors are blue and black.

The truck known as “Spider-Man” was also a big sensation at the media event.

As the first African-American monster truck driver and winningest rookie of the year in 2011, Bari Mussawir is ready to compete in the Orlando Monster Jam.

Mussawir started out racing RC cars



Luis Herrera / Valencia Voice
Native Texan Lupe Soza is no stranger to the heat or the circuit. He pilots the mega truck “Grinder.”

and was discovered by Monster Jam in 2006. His first show was in 2011 driving “El Toro Loco.”

Similar to Anderson, this was also his first show in Orlando.

Mussawir was inspired at the age of six when his mom took him to his first truck show. From then on he knew he wanted to drive monster trucks.

“I’m ready. I know I’m going to have butterflies when I get out there but once we strap in we hit the starter at 1500 hp and there’s no turning back,” said Anderson.

Another veteran who has been in the monster truck circuit for 20 plus years is native Houston, Texan Lupe Soza, who drives the monster truck “Grinder.”

Soza started driving monster trucks in the late 80’s and now he is one of the oldest drivers in the circuit.

“Orlando is one of the biggest shows we do, so, year after year some of the best machines come to Orlando and the crowd is just intense,” said Soza. “Yes there’s pressure because these are some die hard fans.”



Luis Herrera / Valencia College
A legend in the monster truck circuit, the green and purple “Grave Digger” makes an appearance.

Rooting out S.T.E.M degrees

- continued from Page 1

educators who argue dollars and cents aren't the only factors determining the worth of a degree.

But Scott is convinced his ideas are best for the bottom lines of both the state and students.

And he's got his personal history to prove it.

As a kid, Scott's family didn't have much. He vowed to become an adult who didn't have to worry about money.

"I think junior college cost \$200 a semester and the university cost \$255 a semester. ... I could work 40 hours a week and be able to pay for my school," said Scott, 60.

The governor has long been a supporter of STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — because he knows that many of the state's fastest growing industries fall in one

of these categories.

He argued last year that lawmakers should put more money into these fields, even if it means less for liberal arts and social sciences.

"How many more jobs you think there is for anthropology in this state?" Scott told a group of business leaders last year. "You want to use your tax dollars to educate more people that can't get jobs in anthropology? I don't."

To him, practical degrees in business and law were his ticket to joining a top firm and eventually becoming a hospital executive. Students should have a game plan before they step foot on campus, he said.

"Very few people have the financial wherewithal to say, 'I'm going to go take four years and I'm going to learn about something that I know will have no impact on my ability to make money,'" Scott said.



John Walker / Fresno Bee / MCT

More and more graduates are becoming conflicted by how well their degrees will serve them.

The governor believes the state has done students a disservice by not providing clear answers on their employment prospects and what kind of money they can make with certain degrees. He is pushing colleges to collect that data and share it so they can be held accountable for outcomes.

"If you get a degree in an area where there's no job opportunities, just think

about what will happen to you," Scott said. "You spent four years of your time, you probably today have a lot of debt and you don't have a job. That's not what you want when you got out."

But social sciences and liberal arts remain popular not only among students but educators, who said job prospects in these fields can be just as strong as any STEM major.

Paul Dosal, University of South Florida's vice provost for student success, received degrees in history and worked in the field for many years. He knows English majors who became teachers and others who became stock brokers. Studying culture and politics and society gives students an understanding of the world that makes them better citizens and employees, he said.

"We're not just preparing students for a particular vocation," Dosal said. "Moreover, there's enough evidence out there to show the value of pursuing a degree in history or English."



Joe Burbank / Orlando Sentinel / MCT

Florida Gov. Rick Scott is joined by Orange County schools superintendent Barbara Jenkins, right, and Ocoee Middle School teachers and administrators.



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Photos of the week



AI Seib / Los Angeles Times / MCT
Anne Hathaway backstage at the 19th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California, Sunday, January 27, 2013.



Keith Lane / MCT
Tear gas fills the air as protesters attempt to take down part of a wall on Qasr el Aini street. Egyptians protested Friday, January 25, 2013 in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt.

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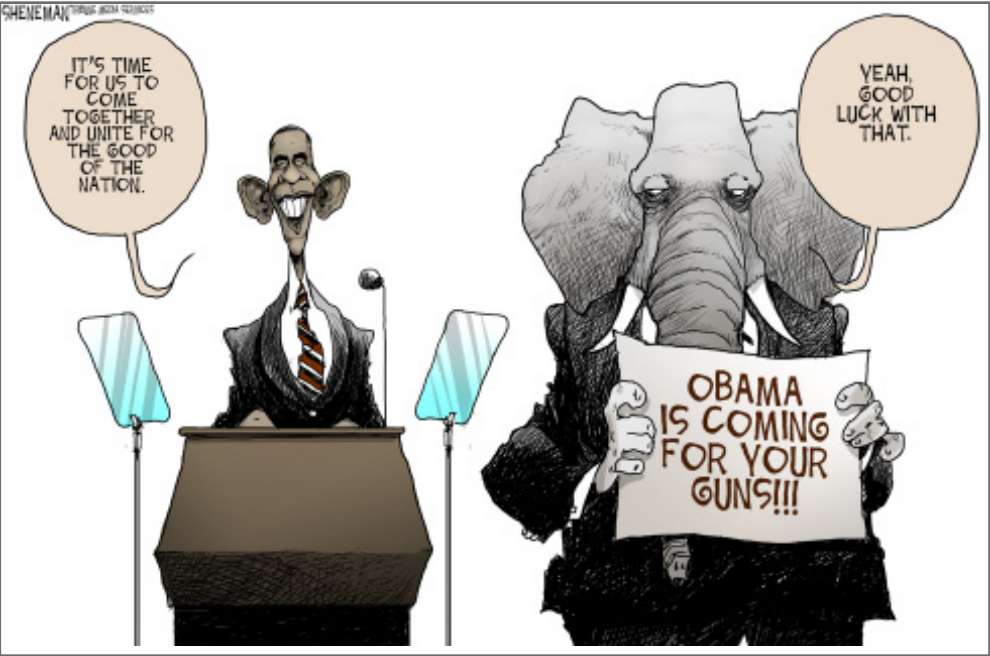
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Drew Sheneman -- The Star-Ledger



Nate Beeler -- The Columbus Dispatch



S.T.E.M. degrees of separation

Rick Scott's assault on the arts hits a sour note

By John Scolaro
Valencia College

Sometime last year, Florida Governor Rick Scott, whose approval rating in virtually every statewide poll is the lowest of any governor since the birth of Florida after Ponce de Leon landed here 500 years ago, proposed that public colleges and uni-

versities, throughout Florida, charge lower tuition for students who earn STEM-related (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) degrees and higher tuition for students who major in the humanities (art, foreign languages, literature, English composition, music, economics, ethics, anthropology, and philosophy).

Governor Scott's rationale is that

STEM-related degrees would yield more job security and higher wages.

The passage of House Bill 7135 includes recommendations, which would substantially reduce the number of general education courses, including courses in the humanities, students would be required to complete.

In fact, I, along with other colleagues of mine, college-wide, recently received a multi-page packet requesting feedback on these proposed recommendations. After all, according to Governor Scott, what on earth would anyone do with a degree in anthropology or philosophy?

Such disciplines have no value whatsoever, and they certainly would never yield enough of an income to pay your mortgage much less your monthly water bill. Besides, what real job would you ever be able to secure?

House Bill 7135 is about the most objectionable law the Florida legislature has ever passed! It is also illogical, and does not demonstrate a true understanding of what I learned about studia humanitatis (the study of the humanities) as a graduate student at one of Europe's premier universities decades ago.

Here is precisely why I think this proposed house bill should be kicked to the curb and abandoned forever: The study of the humanities is the key to a full and meaningful life.

Knowledge of diverse cultures, for example, as well as exposure to diverse points-of-view will eventually result in the birth of global citizens who are politically engaged. This means that a broader spectrum of our population will demonstrate a higher degree of tolerance and altruism as

well as a deeper commitment to civility.

The counter-opposites of these virtuous qualities are ignorance and horrific acts of violence about which the families of the recent Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut experienced. There are other more viable options.

The study of the humanities will also help nurture communication and work with others. Isn't communication in both its written and verbal forms necessary for success in both life and work?

Building and maintaining life-long relationships, between and among others, requires effective communication and writing skills. This goes far beyond the rather robotic and cliché-like language promoted, in its diverse forms, by technology.

In other words, reading the ancient classical literary works and speeches of Greek and Roman scholars may inspire us to broaden our own vocabulary and use of language and to improve our writing skills. These important qualities are essential to an ongoing dialogue, debate, and discussion of diverse issues of import.

Who knows where more effective communication might lead? We might, in fact, even discover our own unique form of creativity, which could positively affect others and change the world forever.

This is precisely why I am radically opposed to the implementation of House Bill 7135. Students enrolled in public colleges and universities, in Florida and elsewhere, should be required to complete more general education and humanities courses. Are you on my page?

John Scolaro is a professor of humanities at Valencia College.



Meng Xu is working on a degree in Biochemistry at FIU, which falls under STEM education. The Florida legislature will likely consider discounting tuition for STEM-subject technology careers.

Griffin / Miami Herald / MCT

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Ravens or 49ers FTW?

Photos and story by Luis Herrera
lherrera@valenciavoice.com

February 3 is set to be another traditionally busy Sunday in America with plenty of commercials and primetime shows starting their new seasons following the 47th Super Bowl.

And now this Super Bowl has the added hype of the tale of two brothers.

Also along for the ride are the dueling minds of head coaches John Harbaugh of the Baltimore Ravens and Jim Harbaugh of the San Francisco 49ers.

This Super Bowl already has a few burgeoning nicknames: "the brother bowl," "the Battle of the Best Brother" and even "The Warrior Bowl" based on the 2011 film "Warrior."

The Super Bowl has a lot to offer this year and both teams are hungry to win.

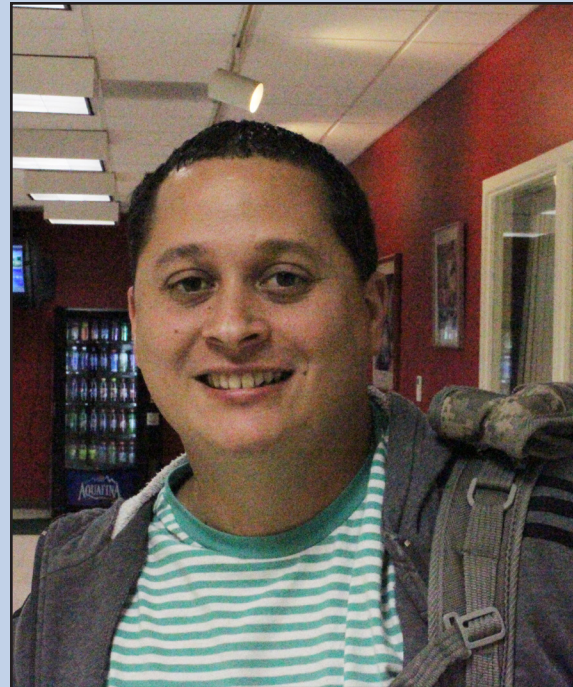
Now lets see which team is hungrier.

We spoke to some students to see which side then stand with.



"Ravens, because they beat the Patriots."

- Michael Guntensohn



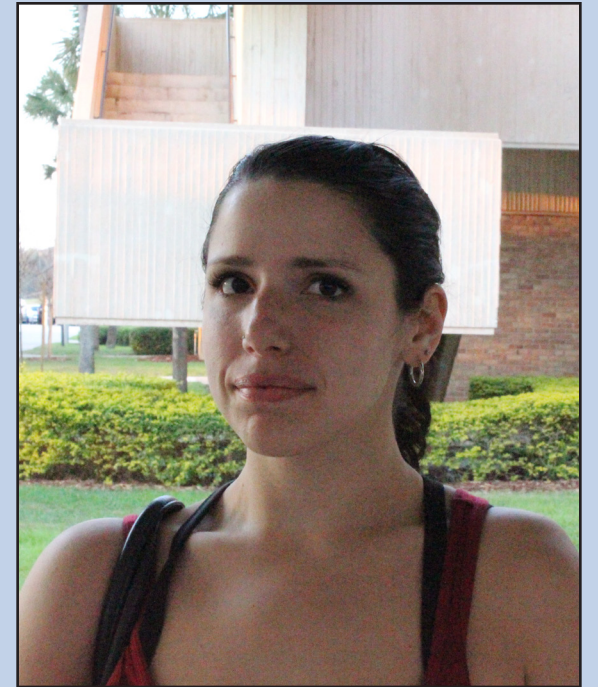
"Ravens, because they have the heart."

- Amyori Valentine



"Ravens. Ray Lewis is a defensive player and defense wins games and they have a stronger team."

- Kevin Dozier



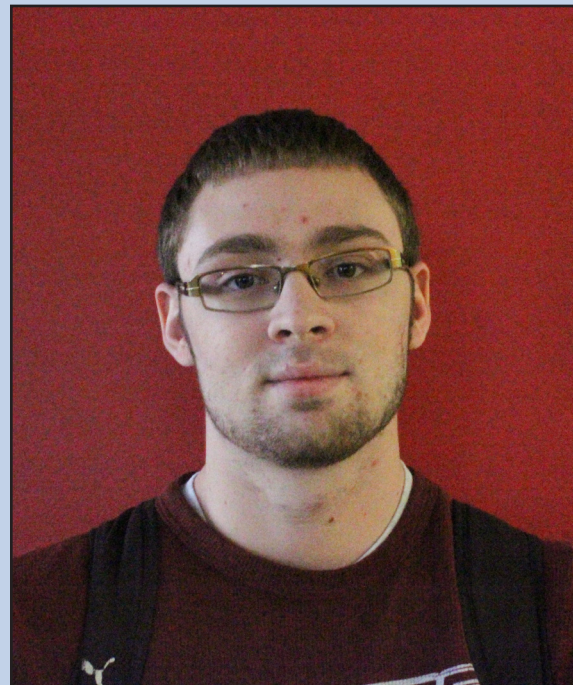
"49ers, they have a better defense."

- Michelle Suria



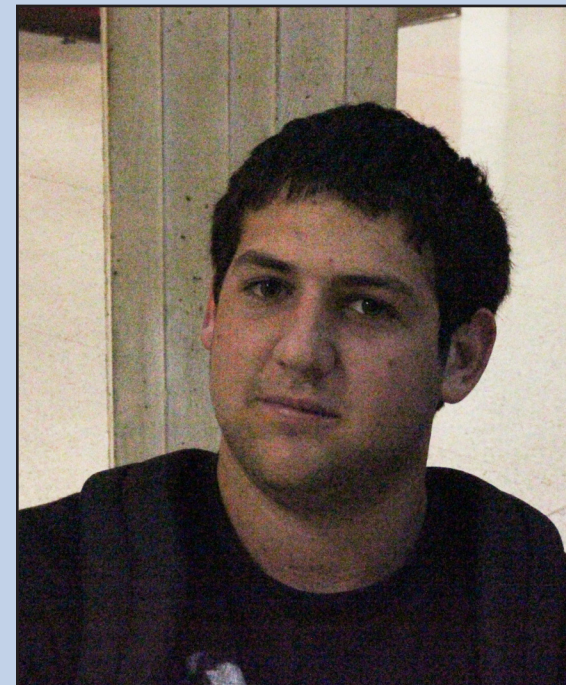
"Ravens, Colin Kaepernick of the 49ers doesn't have more experience than Joe Flacco. The Ravens are more of a consistent winning team."

- Cory Williams



"Ravens, because they have the Ray Lewis motivation to win and Joe Flacco started every game. The players have more experience."

- Kyle Hines



"49ers. They made the playoffs last year but got robbed, they're hungry to win."

- David Barr



"49ers, because they have a good Colin Kaepernick and a better coach in Jim Harbaugh."

- Vladimir Damour

Fairy tale not so whimsical

Hansel and Gretel flick fails to awe

By Chris Fain
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“Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters” is really dumb. Not a little dumb, not kinda dumb, but really dumb. Watching this movie was a lot like pulling teeth; painful and possibly easier to get through with sedation.

The film is about two kids who grow up to become witch hunters after an encounter with a lady in a candy house. It is competently shot, and, as is often the case with modern action films, utterly devoid of any sort of shame or good taste.

We get shot after slow motion shot of the most ridiculously inane “action” scenes. If it can be seen in slow motion, chances are good that Tommy Wirkola, the film’s director, has shot it.

This movie earns its “R” rating with some of the most gratuitous gore shots I’ve seen in awhile. Every couple seconds a head or arm explodes, and one can almost hear the Wirkola’s boyish glee. For some reason, lots of directors seem to think that they can easily cover any scripting problems with a fountain of blood.

Speaking of scripting problems, this



Courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Renner, right, and Arterton, left, flail as this famously sweet familial duo turned deadly.

movie has a ton of them. Obviously, a movie about witch hunters requires some suspension of disbelief, but, when you set your movie in a time period that is obviously before the 19th century, it is your duty as a filmmaker to justify the existence of machine guns and insulin.

The script, written by Wirkola and Dante Harper, also suffers from a lack of tension. Hansel and Gretel are so awesome and invincible that I never once felt that they were in any sort of danger. They spend so much time building up threats, and then deus ex machina comes in and handedly saves the day.

Jeremy Renner and Gemma Arterton spend a lot of time spouting lame duck one-liners, and generally, not being very interesting to watch. Renner, in particular, gives a performance so phoned in that even Verizon won’t be able to hear it. Smoldering looks don’t work as well when you don’t have a Hulk to back you up, it would seem.

I, wholeheartedly, recommend that you do not watch this movie. It is terrible. The member of the audience who told me it was “really good” is really wrong.

A sequel is forthcoming.



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‘Last Stand,’ last straw

Arnold’s latest action romp falls comically flat

By Luis Herrera
lherrera@valenciavoice.com

Arnold Schwarzenegger has lost his edge after a decade of not acting in an action film.

His new movie “The Last Stand” casts him as Deputy Ray Owens, a man trying to protect his border town in Arizona from a cartel of drug dealers.

The film is action packed with plenty of thrills, lots of shooting and some big time explosions, with just the right dose of comedy out of left-field.

And the film has pretty decent cast.

Co-starring and trying his hand at the action genre is Johnny Knoxville, a familiar comedic face from films such as “Jackass,” “Dukes of Hazzard” and “The Ringer.”

Knoxville plays Lewis Dinkum, gun

loving local with a passion for weapons who later ends up being deputized and protecting his town with Schwarzenegger by his side.

It also stars Forest Whitaker, Luis Guzman, Jaime Alexander and Eduardo Noriega.

Whitaker appears as head FBI Agent John Bannister, who is trying to catch the escaped drug dealer who played by Spanish actor Eduardo Noriega.

Noriega is known from the 2001 film “The Devil’s Backbone” that was directed by Guillermo del Toro.

Jaimie Alexander also contributes as Officer Sarah Torrence. She could have been most recently spotted in “Thor.”

The film also had a dose of comedy from Luis Guzman who plays officer Mike Figuerola.

The movie was pretty decent but it



Courtesy of Lionsgate

Alexander and Schwarzenegger lead a popular ensemble cast that falls further than flat.

could’ve been better if it was something more than your standard, cliched action film.

February 2013

‘Warm Bodies’



Rated: PG-13

Running Time: 1 hr 37 min

Genre: Comedy / Horror / Romance

Director: Jonathan Levine

Starring: Nicholas Hoult, Teresa Palmer, John Malkovich, Rob Corddry

‘Bullet to the Head’



Rated: R

Running Time: 1 hr 31 min

Genre: Action / Crime / Thriller

Director: Walter Hill

Starring: Sylvester Stallone, Sung Kang, Sarah Shahi, Jason Momoa

Box Office



‘Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters’

Rated: R

This Weekend: \$ 19,000,000

Total Gross: \$ 19,000,000



‘Mama’

Rated: PG-13

This Weekend: \$ 12,860,000

Total Gross: \$ 48,648,000



‘Silver Linings Playbook’

Rated: R

This Weekend: \$ 41,202,458

Total Gross: \$ 41,202,458

Magic fall to Raptors at the buzzer

DeMar Derozan hands Orlando fourth consecutive loss at home

By Mike Gramajo
mgramajo@valenciavoice.com

ORLANDO -- Toronto's DeMar DeRozan's clutch buzzer beater handed the Orlando Magic a fourth straight loss to a score of 97-95 Thursday night, as the Magic rallied back late in fourth despite Toronto's guard scoring 14 points in the fourth quarter.

"It was a team effort, every guy that stepped on the floor," said Magic head coach Jacque Vaughn after the game. "I thought there were multiple times throughout the course of the game where we got multiple stops in a row and that's what we want to focus on."

The Magic began the fourth quarter losing by eight points, but Orlando sparked a late rally, consisting of Jameer Nelson (14 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds), Glen Davis (15 points, seven rebounds) and J.J. Redick's (14 points) late four-point play to take the win late in the fourth quarter, but Toronto's late dominance in the paint cost Orlando a loss.

"The coaches drew up a good play. They had Jose [Calderon] shoot out at the top and I go off the screen and run across the floor," said DeRozan on his game winning shot that handed Toronto a win after falling in overtime to Miami last night.

Nikola Vucevic finished the game with 19 points and 14 rebounds, controlling most of the paint during the game, despite not playing in the fourth quarter.

"Matchups, they went small. I could only have one big on the floor. They had four perimeter guys whether it was Calderon, Lowry, Ross,

Fields, Anderson," said Vaughn on why he didn't play Vucevic in the fourth. "They went small. It was just matchups."

Orlando had trouble holding Toronto as the Raptors opened up the game on a 7-2 run. The Magic would respond to a run of their own, going on a 9-2 run taking its first lead of 9-7 with 8:35 left in the first quarter.

"We're losing all the games that are close right now. Soon those games will back to us," said Davis after the game.

The Magic look to rebound from the loss and their four game losing skid when they host the Detroit Pistons on Sunday.



Courtesy of Orlando Magic
J.J. Redick scored 14 points in the defeat to the Raptors.



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Robert Van Deering / Valencia Voice

Isaiah Sykes (UCF) drives past Nick Russell (SMU) to the paint as he scores 21 points in the Knights conference USA victory over the SMU Mustangs 74-65.

Upcoming UCF men's basketball schedule

1/30 at Tulane

2/02 at Marshall

2/06 vs Southern Miss



UCF takes care of Mustangs

Ties for third with Conference USA victory (4-1)

By Danny Morales
dmorales@valenciavoice.com

ORLANDO — Isaiah Sykes had 21 points and ten rebounds, as the University of Central Florida Knights defeated the Southern Methodist University Mustangs 74-65 on Saturday afternoon at the UCF Arena in Orlando.

Sykes' 21 points and ten rebounds were good enough for his third double-double of the season.

"He's a winner," said UCF head coach Donnie Jones of Sykes after the game. "That's all you can say about guys like him, he's got great touchness. I thought he really gave us a lift when they needed it."

SMU started the game on a 10-3 run, but UCF countered with a 10-0 run of their own to jump out to a 13-10 lead over the Mustangs with 13 minutes left in the first half.

The Knights finished the first half on a 9-2 run in which guard Calvin Newell scored five of UCF's nine points. UCF went into the locker room with a 38-32 halftime lead.

"We're more confident," said UCF forward Tristan Spurlock after the game about winning despite a low point output from Clanton. "But still Keith is the best big in the conference and maybe the country, so we've got to give him the ball."

SMU went on a 15-6 run midway through the second half to tie the game at 63-63 with

3:45 remaining in regulation time.

"I just told them we had to calm down here, we had to get some stops here, and we got to execute," said Jones on what he told his team once SMU tied the game. "We got to get to the free throw line, make sure we're not taking quick long three's and let's make sure every bucket is a drive to the rim or a post feed to Keith, and on the other end everybody's got to rebound."

UCF finished the game on a 11-2 run after the Mustangs had tied, Sykes had five of the Knights 11 points during the final run of the game.

"We don't like giving up leads," said Spurlock about SMU's late run to tie the game. "But we've got a team that's young. Sometimes you just got to be able to take the other team's best punch, and be able to give them one right back."

Sykes had 11 points during the second half, as he finished the game with 21 points and ten rebounds for his third double-double of the season.

"Spurlock finished the game with 14 points and six rebounds for the Knights, while Clanton finished with nine points and four assists for the night.

With the win, the Knights' record improves to 14-5 while going 4-1 in Conference USA play.

UCF now hits the road for their next game against Tulane on Wednesday, Jan. 30 at 8:00 p.m.

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Sacramento ponders dull future if Kings leave the city for good

Team owners reached deal with Seattle investment group to move team north as the Supersonics

By Chris Megerian

Los Angeles Times / MCT Campus

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – For many, this city's biggest selling point is its proximity to other, more exciting places, like the cosmopolitan hills of San Francisco or the ski slopes of Lake Tahoe.

But for almost three decades, there has been one thing people didn't need to leave town for: professional basketball. For Sacramentans, the Kings are more than just an NBA franchise. They're a sign that the city is not second-rate.



Andy Alfaro / Sacramento Bee / MCT Campus

Kings fans are hurt by their team possibly going to Seattle.

Fair-weather fans here are scarce; devotees have stuck with the Kings through miserable season after miserable season. The team is central to the vision of local politicians, planners and builders to make their downtown a more vibrant urban center with a new arena. The mayor, Kevin Johnson, is a former NBA star and one of the team's biggest supporters.

But now, after years of tormenting locals by flirting with out-of-town suitors, the Kings' financially troubled owners have reached a deal to sell the team to a Seattle investment group. The buyers want to bring the team north and rebrand it as the Supersonics, restoring a franchise that bolted Seattle five years ago.

The pending loss of Sacramento's only big-league sports franchise is a blow to a city with a long-standing inferiority complex. It didn't help that Arnold Schwarzenegger refused to move here while he was governor, commuting by private jet from Los Angeles instead.

"They already call Sacramento a cow town," said Alice Morrow, 55, who was tending bar in the city's Midtown neighborhood. "And now we're not even going to have a professional team?"

Situated in the northern reaches of the Central Valley, Sacramento helped anchor California's gold rush and was the final destination for the first transcontinental railroad. More recently, the capital city has been an epicenter for suburban growth.

Today, it's alive with farm-to-table eateries, hip cocktail lounges and artisan coffeehouses that attract plaudits from the elite of the food-and-drink-obsessed Bay Area.

Such amenities mean "the world doesn't end if the Kings do leave," said Roger Niello, president and chief executive of the Sacramento Metro Chamber and a former legislator.

But even those who eagerly defend Sacramento's charms which include a bounty of majestic trees and the gleaming white Capitol nestled in a 40-acre park admit that losing the Kings would be a setback.

"If the Kings go, what do we have to look forward to?" said salesman Kimo Wong, 29. "A couple of concerts? Monster Jam?"

Moving the Kings to Seattle still requires NBA approval, which could come in April. Meanwhile, Johnson has launched a frantic effort to retain the team.

The mayor canceled his trip to President Obama's inauguration and is forging a coalition of local business leaders willing to bid for the team. He's hunting for investors who could put up the hundreds of millions of dollars necessary for a credible alternative plan.

"It's bigger than basketball," he said last week at City Hall. "It's about jobs. It's about economic development. It's about creating an identity."

Sacramento's built-in political class has rallied to the cause. When the Kings' owners considered moving the team south to Anaheim, Republican consultant Rob Stutzman collected signatures in an effort to block public financing for a new arena there. The plan eventually fell through.

"Don't think we won't take a look at Seattle and what they're going to do with public funds up there," Stutzman said in an interview.

When the Kings moved to Sacramento from Kansas City in 1985, fans packed a small gym to watch their new hometown team practice, cheering on the players even during routine shooting drills. Since then, the Kings have sold out 19 of their 27 seasons.

The Kings often struggled but eventually hit their stride, winning division titles in 2002 and 2003. Bars filled with fans on game days, and the Sacramento arena gained a reputation as one of the



Jose Luis Villegas / Sacramento Bee / MCT Campus

The Maloof brothers, from left, George and Gavin, sold the NBA's Sacramento Kings to a Seattle investment group.

loudest in the league.

David Taylor, a commercial real estate developer working with Johnson to keep the Kings in town, said having a winning team sent a message to potential investors: "This was a fun place to live. It's an attractive place to live."

But the Kings have fallen into trouble as the team lost talent and the arena slid into disrepair. Last year, ESPN ranked the Kings second to last of 122 professional sports teams on such benchmarks as fan relations, winning records and stadium experience. The team won't get the same adoration from Seattle.

"I don't think anybody could love the Kings like Sacramento has," he said.