New era begins for Viking baseball

Photos, clockwise: Freshman left-fielder Jacob Stafford is up to bat. A group of Vikings after an inning at the Metrodome in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Brady Nowak, a junior who is a pitcher, prepares to throw a strike while Devin Burnsworth waits for the pitch. Tim Roddy, a junior second baseman, walks to the dug-out to prepare for his time at bat. (Photos by Brent Kalwei)
Face catches eye first for identity

Story by Brent Kalwei

The human face is probably the most identifiable feature on the human body. Detective Jeff Nichols, a retired Columbia police officer, dazzled Missouri Valley College listeners about the important use of forensic facial imaging when discovering a murder victim.

Nichols graduated from the University of Missouri and worked in the police business for 25 years, combining his interest in detective work and art to make a nice living.

In Nichols' line of work, people always want to know if forensic facial imaging actually is consistent and works. Nichols said, "The answer is absolutely yes!"

Forensic art has been around for about 100 years and it is used to determine a number of different characteristics. For instance, when finding a body at a crime scene a forensics team must use the skills they have to determine race, gender, age, any facial defects and hair color.

Nichols said a crime scene offers a skilled forensics expert a large number of clues when trying to successfully determine a victim's identification. Items such as hair, jewelry, clothing and other belongings, can play a huge role in this process.

Composite drawings play a major role in identifying a suspect. A composite drawing is simply defined as an eyewitness from a crime scene who tries to identify a suspect from memory from facial structure. A sketch artist will then draw the description given from the witness. The most memorable facial feature is said to be someone's eyes and mouth, Nichols said. Witnesses are less likely to identify ears because people don't focus as much on that part of a person's face.

The Oklahoma City Bombing case in fact used a composite drawing based on a witness's memory.

There are times when the forensics team gets a body from more than 100 years ago of a woman, for example. In this case, a facial structure is drawn out, keeping a number of different variables in mind. First, during those times there were no makeup and creams. In this case, a woman would look older. Hair styles of women also changed. There is no way of knowing for sure which makes it extremely difficult to identify human remains.

It is also difficult to determine who a person is with a large amount of deterioration to the face. There are cases where a license is left with the body and the person looks absolutely nothing like the photo.

A large amount of evidence can be found from one's body. For instance, estimated height, weight and hair can be measured for accuracy. A body must be taken to a morgue to be examined.

Working in the forensic field involves a lot of hard work. Most importantly, this line of work plays a large role in discovering pieces of evidence that may have been missed and that evidence can answer unsolved questions.
Trials and tribulations of a coach

Story by Chase Burgess

Lying in a shallow puddle of water in the middle of the street, rain drops continuously pelt the face of Nathan Christianson. He hears the frantic screams of a fellow student at Northwest State University in Maryville, Missouri, who had just hit him with her vehicle. November 1, 2000 changed Christianson’s life forever.

The former Junior-College Track and Field All-American found himself in a strange situation. It’s not often that you get hit by a vehicle and you’re the one trying to calm down the driver who just struck you.

“I had to tell her three or four times to calm down and that everything was OK,” Christianson said.

The person drove her Jeep Wrangler through the stop sign, hitting Christianson and his bike at 35 mph, according to the police report. He went up onto the hood and broke the windshield. The tire tracks showed that the driver didn’t try to stop until after she hit Christianson.

“I was more concerned about her than me... until they put me into the ambulance,” Christianson said.

The person drove her Jeep Wrangler through the stop sign, hitting Christianson and his bike at 35 mph, according to the police report. He went up onto the hood and broke the windshield. The tire tracks showed that the driver didn’t try to stop until after she hit Christianson.

“I was more concerned about her than me... until they put me into the ambulance,” Christianson said.

Christianson was transported to the hospital where he stayed for a few days and had surgery. During the incident he suffered two fractures in his tibia and fibia, scraped knees, teeth moved around, and back issues that plague him to this day.

While in the hospital, his coach came to see him and allowed him to keep his running scholarship.

“The doctors wouldn’t let me look at my feet for a few days,” said Christianson as he looked down at the scar on his ankle. The doctors told him he would never run competitively again.

After three months of rehab, he ran his first mile since the wreck on February 7, 2001, his 21st birthday.

Christianson battled his way back from the injury to run the following Cross Country season for the Bearcats. However, he only ran one semester there. He remained in school on and off for four years battling injuries and other obstacles. His arms and legs began falling asleep and he had to take medication to remedy this. The medication made it difficult to stay awake during his morning classes. He dropped out from Northwest in 2004, only 12 credits shy of his History Education degree, and transferred to the University of Southern Indiana. When he transferred he weighed 200 lbs, the heaviest he has ever been and nowhere near running shape.

At USI, he became a Physical Education major and began as a volunteer coach for the track and cross country team. While the men’s team was out running, Christianson would be walking. When he got into better shape, he began running with the women’s team and doing their workouts. In 2008, he did something no one thought possible—he ran a 15:54 5k.

His hard work and determination proved the doctors wrong and his accomplishment is a testament that no matter how bad things get, there is always a way.

After graduating with his degree in Physical Education in the spring of 2008, he went on to his first head coaching job at Brescia University in Owensboro, Kentucky. There he earned multiple conference coach of the year awards and led his women’s team to a conference title and the national meet. Christianson recently celebrated his first full year as the Track and Cross Country coach at Missouri Valley College after taking over in January of 2012.

Although the incident itself is just a blur, he’s taken away a valuable lesson: Things disappear very quickly.

He also said that the accident has helped him understand his athletes more. He knows that a strong support structure is important in the life of a college athlete and that a coach can have an enormous impact on a student-athlete.

Christianson’s story is one of hard work and dedication, one of endurance and motivation, and one of inspiration.

You can find more information about MVC events by visiting www.mvcdelta.com or www.moval.edu.

And watch for the summer issue of the new Voyage magazine.
Zombies have invaded every aspect of our culture and it appears as if there is no end in sight.

Zombies are in everything from books to video games to television and even academic institutes. The University of Florida has even gone so far as to implement a plan for a zombie attack, albeit a satirical one.

On February 10, television history was made when one show amassed 12.3 million viewers in one night. It wasn’t a sporting event, it wasn’t a major news story, and it wasn’t the latest episode of “The Bachelor.” It was AMC’s “The Walking Dead.” And 12.3 million people tuned in to the mid-season premiere, setting the record for the most watched basic cable drama telecast ever. Television has become the most useful tool in the zombie arsenal with “The Walking Dead” and several cheesy made-for-TV movies. “I enjoy the ‘Walking Dead’ for character development,” said Alex Kotanone, a fan of both the TV series and the original comic book series.

Our current infatuation with zombies began in the 1960s with George A. Romero’s controversial film “Night of the Living Dead.” This horrifying film sparked both outrage and interest.

When the movie was released in theaters, many people were not prepared for the gore that was shown. Zombies tearing out and eating the organs of their unfortunate victims created nightmares for any child who happened to go and see it. Parents were upset that someone could make something so brutal and grotesque.

However, for every person that finds something shocking, there are always more who become fascinated by it.

Since “Night of the Living Dead,” hundreds of films revolving around the living dead have been made. Some films have even taken a new approach to the genre, and instead of a horror film, they have made a love story or even a comedy based around zombies. According to IMBD’s top 10 horror movies of all time, three of them are zombie films. The most recent Zombie film to grace the silver screen is “Warm Bodies.” This modern, zombie-filled version of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet shows us that even 16th century tales are not safe from the grasp of a zombie.

Max Brooks, the son of famous actor/director Mel Brooks, has written multiple books about zombies including “The Zombie Survival Guide” and “World War Z.”

“The Zombie Survival Guide” gives detailed instructions on surviving a zombie apocalypse, while “World War Z” is an account of the decade long zombie war from the point of view of survivors from across the world.

On May 26, 2012, the world saw frightening images of a naked man in Miami, Florida, eating the face of another man next to a highway. This attack was followed by a string of smaller incidents that would be referred to jokingly as the zombie apocalypse. Some people have taken these incidents a little more seriously and have created groups such as the Kansas Anti-Zombie Militia. These groups dedicate themselves to train and prepare in the event that a zombie apocalypse actually occurs.

A common theme amongst zombie video games, books and movies is the idea of the apocalypse. The usual zombie film revolves around a group of survivors held up in a building or a walled community eking a meager existence. Rarely do we see a society flourishing in the face of the zombie threat.

“I like the idea of the zombie apocalypse because it brings out human nature in its most basic of forms, such as the need to survive,” Garion Brown said.

So why does our society seem so awe struck by zombies?

Maybe it’s because the fear behind the threat is that they used to be humans, maybe it’s because the event of a zombie apocalypse seems farfetched, or maybe it’s something else.

“Our society is so obsessed with death that we romanticize it by giving life back to the dead,” Damien Edgerton said.

Whatever the answer may be, zombies continue to grab our imagination. Only time will tell if they hold such popularity in our culture, or if they go the way of the buffalo.
New era begins for Viking baseball

Story by Brent Kalwei

Top of the fifth inning, two outs and a flame-throwing southpaw in the development of a pitching rarity. With his team up by a large margin, this intimidating force from East Texas Baptist University has fanned every single batter who has stepped into the batter’s box. The mowing would continue into the fifth inning as John McEachern has struck out 14. John McEachern has done something unheard of; sending every single batter he faced back to the bench with a knockout punch. With his 15th victim in sight an unfortunate twist of fate hit the field. Snow began to pound to the diamond dirt. The game would be called due to the unheralded weather; but that doesn’t take away the achievement at hand. McEachern was one out away from sending all 15 batters he faced back to the dugout with their heads down after striking out all of them. You can say he was pitching a (perfect) perfect game.

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Corpus Christi Barracudas.

Coach McEachern has been coaching for 25 years and he said what sets coaching college baseball apart from high school is the fact that his players devote most of their lives to college baseball. They aren’t just high school players playing because their friends are playing.

When talking about one of his favorite parts of coaching college baseball, McEachern said, “I like working with people who want to be the best they can be.” He also added, “I like being able to handpick the players I work with.”

Coaching is a big part of McEachern’s philosophies to a successful ball club. You really find out what a team is made of when they battle adversity. Rallying around each other is what’s key because one person can’t win by themselves.

Weston Loftin, physical education major, was selected to be this year’s pitching coach. Loftin’s experience as a successful four year starting pitcher here at Missouri Valley College has helped earn him a large amount of respect from other coaches and players. There are a lot of things Loftin enjoys about coaching baseball but above all else he likes to use his expertise to mold them into better players. Loftin said, “Seeing the players use what I taught them and excelling with their skills.”

Pitcher Geoff Butler is a new member to the Vikings baseball team this year. Butler believes in his teammates’ ability to win games. Butler said, “I want this team to prove to themselves that we can win.” His favorite part about being on the team includes the opportunity to turn this program around and turn it into a successful one.

Senior shortstop Troy Langan said this year’s team has the talent to do big things. Langan said, “Our goal from the beginning was to make it to the conference tournament.” He still believes although the team has got off to a rough start, that the goal at hand is very feasible. In order for the team to reach its goals Langan believes the team just has to go out and show their potential on the field and win games like they know they can.

Setting goals as an individual to perform at your best and morphing it together with the team’s goals is part of Coach McEachern’s forte. If this team can play to the potential and reach the goals they set out for themselves, he’s talking about this team winning between 50-60 percent of their games this year. If the Vikings grab this expectation of McEachern, it builds a foundation to compete for a conference championship. It also allows sights to be set on making regional playoffs, the ultimate goal of both coach and team.

McEachern said, “I want to work up to the end of March where we are rolling.”

In order for this team to reach its potential McEachern said players have to believe in themselves and battle through rigid adversity, such as having the strength to battle back in games when the team is trailing their opponent. He wants his players to polish their skills and continue to get better day by day.
March and April are probably the busiest months for the academic side of Missouri Valley College.

Left: Charity-Mika Woodard, Art assistant professor, organized and provided a presentation for the series of “15 Minutes of Feminism” in late March. Others who presented information related to feminism and women’s rights or issues were MVC President Bonnie Humphrey; faculty members Tamara King, Cindy Adams, Jennifer Livengood, and David Roberts; Campus Counselor Teresa Ceselski; and Nurse Diane Weinrich.

Below: Jennifer Eimers, English assistant professor, was one of the speakers for the King James Bible presentations, held in coordination with an exhibit at the MVC Murrell Memorial Library. Other speakers were student Sam Spurgin, English Professor John McLean; and David Roberts, assistant professor of Mass Communication.

Busy days School year rolls to end

Left: MVC students Geneva Looney and Chase Burgess check out a recent Career Fair, held in the R. Wilson Brown room and coordinated by Tiffany Bergman, assistant professor of Social Sciences.

Sam Spurgin was one of 24 student scholars who received recognition for academic honors from Sharon Weiser, vice president of Academic Affairs, and others at the Scholar Banquet in early April. Spurgin also won the essay contest, conducted by Ed Leslie, Mathematics associate professor. See the Delta website at www.mvcdelta.com for a story and photo of the scholars. (Photo by Aki Nagasaka)

It’s always great to see visitors to the campus, like Sister Katherine Wildt, retired MVC English professor. Many people will be visiting for graduation.

Beverly Katz, Business assistant professor, explains the kind of food that people would have enjoyed for Passover. Students tasted samples during the special event at the Murrell Memorial Library in early April.
Awards honor broadcast skills

Missouri Valley College Mass Communication students competed at the annual Student Media Competition sponsored by the Missouri Broadcast Educators Association (MBEA), picking up six awards for MVC.

LeKyndra Duncan won first place in the audio air-check category with her “Kick’n It with Kyn” radio show which airs Tuesday and Thursday nights on KMVC-FM.

Jacob Coleman received honorable mention honors in that same category for his weekly radio show on KMVC.

Matheus Silva won first place in the audio station promo category for his “KMVC-We Play That” promo. He also worked with Aki Nagasaka to receive an honorable mention honor in the audio feature category for their “International Students at MVC” story.

Phillip Fowler and Brent Kalwei won the audio sports story category with their feature on the 2012 Missouri Valley football team and its post-season run to the NAIA semifinal game.

In the audio documentary category, Scott Charboneau received honorable mention honors for his interview and story on the alternative music group Unwritten Law.

“Our students continue to excel, a sign of the good training they are receiving from our Mass Communication faculty,” said Harry Carrell, assistant professor of Mass Communication.

The MBEA includes many of the colleges and universities in the state of Missouri. The purpose of the association is to encourage and coordinate educational and instructional activities related to broadcast education in the state.

Students receive newspaper awards

Missouri Valley College students received 22 award certificates for writing, photography, design and even multimedia work for the Delta newspaper, the Delta website, or other Mass Communication publications, according to the Missouri College Media Association (MCMA) on Saturday.

The awards represented 10 different categories of newspaper achievement and recognized MVC student work in the Delta newspaper, on its website, or in other special publications for the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 semesters.

Individual student award-winners were Jessica Crabtree, first place in news writing for a story about a gay student’s concerns for acceptance; Rebecca Richardson, second place in entertainment review for a review of the “Breaking Dawn” movie; Amit Jain, third place in website design for the Delta website; Cali Anderson, honorable mention in feature photography for a photo of a homeless woman; Phillip Fowler, honorable mention in news writing for a story about students learning from the disability struggles of others; Melinda Houttuin, honorable mention in column-writing for a commentary about students who are commuters; and Velimir Stefanovic, honorable mention in information graphic for his creation of math puzzles.

Other awards went to Andrew Bridges, Jacob Coleman, and Matheus Silva, third place in special supplement for a special Delta edition produced by the Copy Editing class; Scott Charboneau and Amit Jain, honorable mention in multimedia for video, still photos and information on the website about a dance performance in the skateboard park; and Korah Agre, Cali Anderson, Andrew Bridges, Sarah Christopherson, Tyrelle DeWitt, Paulene-Wendy Ntsame Assoumou, James O’Sullivan, Roderick Owusu-Andrews, Randy Ritter, and Matheus Silva, honorable mention in special supplement for the Spring 2013 Zoom photojournalism online magazine, produced by the Photojournalism class.

“It is always great to see many students recognized for their newspaper and photography work in the state contest,” said David L. Roberts, faculty adviser and assistant professor of Mass Communication. “It is very encouraging and hopefully motivates students in creative and challenging ways.”

Roberts said the first-place winner in the news writing category is a freshman who wrote the story for the Basic News Reporting class. But it doesn’t matter if the student is a freshman or senior, or the courses they are in, as it is really about their ability to find and tell a story that has qualities of “heart” in it, report and write well, and edit and add to the story again and again, Roberts said. He said the Mass Communication program allows an early advantage for students, even in their freshman year, to write news or feature articles and to take photos, and then to compete and win with worthy material in a statewide contest.

Roberts added that a student doesn’t have to be a Mass Communication major to be part of the creative process, as one of the award winners this year showed with his creation of math puzzles.

Since the Delta became a member of the MCMA in 2008, 74 award certificates carry the names of MVC students.

The Delta competes with newspapers at Webster University, Drury University, William Jewell College, Evangel University, and others. Twenty-six colleges and universities in Missouri are MCMA members.
Freshman 15, leaving home, and dorm life is something that most freshman seem to worry about when they graduate high school and decide to attend a 4-year college. What if those three elements were the least of your worries?

Coming to a new school as a freshman is nerve-racking enough but coming in as an athlete can add so much more pressure. Jordan Epps freshman of Springfield, Mo., made his debut at Missouri Valley College this past fall and left an unforgettable first impression in basketball.

Epps was recruited for basketball out of Nixa High School where he was named first team all-district and first team all-conference his senior year. When Jordan made his first HAAC conference game appearance as a Viking, he scored a season-high 30 points against Culver-Stockton and was picked as the top freshman, in over 10 seasons, to be named first team all-conference.

Epps also was the leading scorer in the regular season in the HAAC. Jordan had an average of 18.8 points per game and, though he was the top scorer, he knew he had to “just remember what he was here to do.”

With Jordan being the starting point guard, expectations were held high for the freshman student-athlete. From what Epps’ stats show from his first season that the pressure did not seem to affect him. Ending the season with 18.8 points per game, 67 total steals, 564 total points, an average of 2.233 steals per game, an average of 2.467 3-point field goals made per game, and a total of 74 3-point field goals made, Epps set a high bar for any incoming freshman in the future.

Ending the freshman season being named first team all-conference and also being named all American, Jordan made sure to leave a lasting first impression.

While a majority of incoming freshmen find themselves worrying about the “freshman 15,” Jordan was surpassing his freshman 15 and made his “freshman 30” in his first conference game. Moving away from home was never an issue for Epps since home is only a few hours away, and dorm life ended up being “gym life.”

As an athlete, you find yourself spending most of your time around the sport you play and for Epps that’s exactly what consumed his life; and it paid off. “Success comes from knowing you did your best to be the best.” — a quote from John Wooden, legendary UCLA coach.

*Freshman 15: The amount of weight a freshman is expected to gain in their first year of college.

Delta writer Kathrine Flores is a Mass Communication Broadcast major from California.