



The 'Real Deal'
hits UMD
PAGE 2

A message to
Isaac Hayes
PAGE 5



Serving the Students of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

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Housing selection process approaches

Many students unsure of housing plans for the 2006-2007 academic year

By Chris Donovan

In almost a week's time, the housing registration process will begin. As is common, there are many rumors flying left and right about housing issues. Why are particular buildings closing? Are there going to be enough rooms? Why is it more expensive this year? In a recent interview Victor Culatta, the UMass Dartmouth Housing Director, cleared

up a lot of these grey areas. One issue that has had a lot of students buzzing is the fate of Cedar Dell. By now, most students are aware that Cedar Dell South was shut down this semester, and the entire Dell will be shut down for the 2006-2007 year. Rumors have been flying as to why. The rumors can now end: Cedar Dell will be closing simply because the Office of Housing and Residential life wants to in-

crease the quality of living there.

Culatta states, "Cedar Dell will be taken offline next year—not used for housing—in order for us to really study it when it's unoccupied to really determine the scope of work needed to bring it up to univer-

"I have not considered [2006-2007 housing shortages] a possibility at this time."

Victor Culatta
Housing Director

sity standards." This does, however, bring up another question: where is everyone going to live? Fears are being expressed about there being a lack of housing next year. In order to know for sure if there will be

enough housing, the OHRL must first receive information about all potential residents, including current residents, transfer students, exchange students and freshmen.

According to Culatta, the OHRL is doing just that, "creating a strategy to identify exactly where folks will be held and also taking a look at the number of people who have expressed interest in returning to on cam-

pus housing next year and then also calculating the number of incoming students." However, at this moment, that information isn't available.

When asked about a potential problem of not having enough rooms, Mr. Culatta stated, "I have not considered that a possibility at this time."

Another rumor around cam-

See HOUSING, page 4

Many fearful of debt following graduation

By Rachel Robinson

"I have out-of-state tuition, and it is scary to think that I will owe thousands of dollars in student loans right after graduation. It is not like students are going to find a decent paying job in their field right away. It makes me really nervous, and I am afraid I will go into debt," says Ava Ramstad-Stern, a UMass Dartmouth senior.

Ramstad-Stern is not the only student apprehensive about reimbursing college loans, especially with the current increase on interest rates. The Bush Administration recently announced that interest rates on school loans are scheduled to rise again in addition to the increase in July 2005. The interest rates on loans taken out by students, federal Stafford loans, are expected to rise from 5.3 percent to 6.8 percent, a 1.5 percent increase. This plan also allows students to take out more loans.

Prior to the recent rise on Stafford loan interest, UMass Dartmouth students were accumulating a large debt. Bruce Palmer, the UMass Dartmouth

Director of Financial Aid Services, states that most students acquire a debt of approximately \$14,600 over the course of four years. This estimate does not include the amount that students pay back in interest. These rates depend on the payment plan a student chooses to reimburse the loans after graduation.

"Most students choose the standard payment plan," says Palmer. For the average UMass loan of \$14,600, students will make 120 monthly payments of \$184 for a period of 10 years. With this plan students will pay back \$7,078 in interest making the debt total \$22,078.

Jared Lord, a UMass senior, is also worried about reimbursing his loans. Lord states, "My plan is to go to school until I die so I can keep deferring my loans. I'm hoping that by the time I start paying my loans off, I'll be making enough money that it really won't matter. However, finding a decent paying job after college is like winning the lottery."

Even postgraduates fear their accumulated debt lurking

See DEBT, page 4

Hero of 'Hotel Rwanda' visits UMD

By Pascal Opara

The eyes of many were captured by the chilling recounts of Paul Rusesabagina last Wednesday night as he told his story to large capacity crowd in the Main Auditorium. People genuinely took in the surrealism of his story and were just as easily saddened by the horrors he described. Rusesabagina's story was portrayed in the film "Hotel Rwanda" where his character is played by Don Cheadle.

When Rusesabagina arrived on stage to begin his lecture, he was met with a standing ovation. Though a man small in stature, Rusesabagina carried a strong tone as he told his story of how he saved the lives of over 1,200 people while the world stood aside to watch the genocide of over 900,000 people. His account moved some in the audience to tears.

He began his story by providing a chronological outline of Rwanda and the events that led to the 1994 genocide. When the country was colonized by the Belgians, slavery had already amongst the two dominant tribes in Rwanda, the Hutu and the Tutsi. The



TORCH PHOTOS — PASCAL OPARA

Last Wednesday Paul Rusesabagina, a survivor and hero of the genocide in Rwanda, spoke to a packed crowd in the Main Auditorium. Resesabagina's terrifying and inspirational story was the basis for the movie "Hotel Rwanda."

Tutsis assumed the role of the monarchy in Rwanda, who ruled the Hutus through fiefdoms, thus creating a caste system that put the Hutus in economic dependence with the Tutsis.

There were tactics used by the Belgians to separate the

two tribes that made it easier to conquer both of them. The following result of those tactics deepened the resentment between the two factions. The Europeans favored the Tutsis because they believed that the Tutsis were a superior race of people to the Hutus, especial-

ly considering that the Hutus were at that time enslaved by the Tutsis.

As Rusesabagina explained, "They came and favored the Tutsi because they were taller. They said that

See RWANDA, page 4

In this issue

News 1-4

- Game show gives the 'Real Deal' 2
- MassPIRG interviews hurricane victims 2
- College students making a difference 2
- Rho Rhoses hold third annual Women's Luncheon 2
- In the News 3
- Deval Patrick visits UMD 3
- Christianity and Islam: Two worlds connected 3

Opinions and Editorial 5-6

- Scientology was already a joke 5
- The elusive, exclusive PR firm: Part Two 5
- New english requirements help writers 5
- Happy mediums of Spring 6
- "Crunchy Cons": Political buzzword 6

Arts and Entertainment 7-9

- Travel Wit 7
- CVPA Calendar 7
- Elise's Pieces 7
- Chautauqua coming to WRC 7
- Garbage at the Box Office 8
- The Nomad 8
- MFA Theses Exhibition at UMD 8
- Movie review: 'Dave Chappelle's Block Party' 9
- Book review: 'The Blue Pages' 9
- Review: 'X-Men: The New Age of Apocalypse' 9
- Comics 9

Sports 12

- Opening Day brings memories, expectations 12
- Sox open season in Arlington 12
- From The Bleachers 12

Future of Campus Center pub in question

By Kit Graham

The Campus Pub is a place for students (of drinking age) to get together and enjoy themselves after long days of classes. This semester Thursday nights at the pub have been a success—often resulting in people being turned away at the door.

Even though the pub had been closed for nearly a month this semester due to a leaking drainage pipe, it is now reopened. However, there has been recent talk around campus that the pub might soon be closed for good.

Thursday nights seem to be the big night at the pub because special events are often held then. It is open every weeknight. The pub opens at 5 p.m. and closes at 1 a.m., but on slow nights, it closes early. For those who do not know, the Campus Pub is located on the first floor of the Campus Center between the ATM and the Campus Store.

Jeffrey Augustine, the Director of Campus Services, described the Campus Pub as being a service for students. The pub employs students and teaches



TORCH PHOTO — KIT GRAHAM

The UMD Campus Pub, located on the ground floor of the Campus Center, may be shutting down operations soon due to lack of student interest in the past.

them about running a business. It is also a place for students to hold social events.

One of the biggest benefits to having a pub on campus is that it is a safe secure place at a convenient location. Since it is located on campus, students do not need to worry about driving home. In many ways the pub is a safe alternative to drinking off campus.

During recent years, the pub's popularity has declined. Augustine said that the pub is as successful as students make it. The success of the pub is how the school decides if they want to keep it open. Over the past few years, the issue of continuing to have a pub on campus has been consistently brought up since business has not been as success-

ful as it was in the past. The pub needs to be feasible in order to keep it open on a regular basis. It also needs to be worth the cost of keeping it open. While the goal of the pub is to provide a place for students to socialize and not to make money, the school still does not want to lose money by keeping the pub open.

In order for the pub to break even with the cost, an average of 400 students would need to attend the pub each week. Currently, student attendance at the pub is not reaching that number. In order for the pub to work, students need to take ownership of the space and make it a place where they want to spend time.

Addressing concerns that the Campus Pub is going to be closed and that the radio station will use its space, Augustine did say that this is a consideration. There is a possibility that the radio station could displace the pub. There is a need for a better facility to house the radio station, and by moving the radio station space to where the pub currently is, space upstairs in the

See PUB, page 4