

ARGONAUT

ARTS & CULTURE

Revolutionary MOVES



Pullman High School's Sean Anderson tears up the dance floor of the "Dance Dance Revolution" game at Bumpers video arcade Thursday evening in the Palouse Mall.

DANIEL BICKLEY / ARGONAUT

"Dance Dance Revolution" sweeps arcades and dorm rooms alike.

BY HILLARY FLOWERS
ARGONAUT STAFF

As Robbie Krishner walks into Bumpers arcade in the Palouse Mall, he exchanges his \$2 worth of rolled nickels for \$2 in quarters at the front counter. He isn't there to play just any game. He walks up to a machine, puts in his 50 cents and starts to dance.

He's playing "Dance Dance Revolution."

"DDR" was released in Japan in 1998. The game came to the United States in 2000, and is now available as an arcade game and in Xbox, PlayStation, PlayStation 2 and PC versions. The mastermind behind the game is Konami Digital Entertainment, a Japanese corporation. Bemani provides the music for the game.

The arcade revolution

The nearest arcade version of "DDR" is located inside Bumpers in Moscow's Palouse Mall.

Store manager Sam Whipple, a senior broadcast journalism major at the University of Idaho, said he has seen groups of people surrounding the game waiting for their turn to play. On a typical weekday, about 10-20 people play "DDR" every hour, Whipple said. On weekends, he said, the game is played nonstop during business hours. While some college students play the game, Whipple said it is most popular among junior high and young high school students.

"Our 'DDR' machine rakes in about \$200 a week," Whipple said. "Considering that all of that is in quarters or tokens, it's a pretty popular game."

At 50 cents a game, this means the game is played about 400 times a week. Whipple said Bumpers makes about 20 percent of its revenue on the game.

Whipple said people are drawn to music, and "DDR" is one of few games that incorporate music as a centerpiece.

"They're doing more than just using their thumbs or moving a joystick," Whipple said. "They have to use hand-eye coordination."

Whipple said one particular woman comes in to play the game just to exercise. He said if

a person wanted to go on a diet, "DDR" would be a reasonable form of exercise to go along with the diet. He said "DDR" was mentioned in a health journal.

"It's good for the mind and body," Whipple said. "Mostly just wasting time, but it can be effective."

Krishner, a sophomore computer science major, plays the game about once a week. He said he used to play "DDR" more, but now he only spends about a dollar a week on it.

"I just like the music," Krishner said. "It's easy to do, and it's something that I seemed to have picked up naturally."

Krishner said the game is convenient for this school-based community, and agrees that it's a good form of exercise. He said he prefers to play "DDR" at the arcade rather than the version that is played at home, because the pads and arrows are more responsive. He said the home version wears out quicker and shifts around while being played.

Dancing in the dorm room

Junior psychology major Mike Larsen has owned the PS2 version of "DDR" for about six months. He first discovered "DDR" a year ago when he was at a friend's house. He played, and was instantly hooked on it. He said he thought it was a blast, and it's not so hard once the player gets used to the game's unique style.

Larsen said he usually plays it in the family room where he lives in the LLC Engineering dorm, because if he played in his room he would disturb the students below with all the jumping and stepping that goes with playing "DDR." He plays once a week for about three hours.

He said "DDR" includes many motions and rigorous exercise. He likes it because unlike other video games, the player is actually moving around, and not just sitting playing with a controller.

"I just think it's really fun," Larsen said. "It actually gets my heart going."

Larsen spent about \$300 on the game and foam dance pad. He said he would spend more

See DANCE, Page 7

Blues legend to play Spokane Opera House

BY TOM BANKS
ARGONAUT STAFF

The King of the Blues is back, and ready to bring Spokane to its knees.

B.B. King, along with his beloved guitar "Lucille," will be playing at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Spokane Opera House. Tickets are \$39.50 and \$49.50.

"Aside from being a legend, B.B. King is the defining character in the entire blues genre," said Matt Gibson, marketing director for the Opera House. "He just is the music. He's one of those guys who you absolutely have to go see at least once in your life, just so you can say, 'Yeah, I saw B.B. King do a show one time.'"

King is also one of the few original electric bluesmen still alive, let

alone touring and recording. He turns 80 this year.

"His age does not affect his musical abilities on stage at all. His singing and guitar playing are as strong as ever," tour producer Brian Martin said.

King's capabilities on stage have put him into an elite category of musicians of the last half-century. He stands as one of the most influential and gifted guitarists of all time. He has a unique touch on the instrument, and is widely known for Lucille's polished tone and his instantly recognized vibrato.

"His unique style has influenced everyone from Eric Clapton to Steve Miller," Martin said.

King's style has remained unmistakably his own through a 50-year career. His quavering, emotive guitar licks anchor tracks such as "The Thrill is Gone" and "Payin' the Cost to be the Boss."

King is still one of the most avid

touring musicians out there. He averages about 250 live sets every year, and continues to record on a regular basis.

King will be busy in 2005. In addition to his seemingly nonstop touring, he is being honored with a museum built in his name.

Construction of the B.B. King Museum will begin in June in his original hometown of Indianola, Miss. The state of Mississippi has also declared "B.B. King Day" a state holiday. Bulfinch Press is also publishing "B.B. King's Treasures," a collection of memorabilia, photos, and letters.

King's most recent tour kicked off this month and will continue through the end of the year.

"He's very much like Ray Charles, one of those guys who is just an amazing live performer and defines the genre he's a part of," Gibson said.

Student life caught in Web

BY JON ROSS
ASSISTANT ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

The University of Idaho is now on the cyber-map.

UI, along with 60 other campuses across the country, was added to thefacebook.com on March 1. Thefacebook is a national online service that allows college students to stay connected with high school buddies and make new friends.

"I think the site is popular because it's versatile," said Chris Hughes, co-founder of the Web site. "Different students use thefacebook in different ways, but in general, college students return to the site to find information on their

peers, to make connections with friends and acquaintances, and to communicate with one another."

Once registered on the Web site, students can create a profile listing such things as class schedule and high school. Users may also start groups, like "Beer Pongers Anonymous" and esoteric factions such as "Committee To Get Sharon Hutchinson A New Wardrobe."

"It's a reference tool and a means for communication," Hughes said. "I think that combination — and the fact that it's fun to use — keeps people coming back."

Though the UI portion of the site has grown to more than 1,000 users, word is still spreading slowly on

campus. Jamie Hastler, a sophomore majoring in international studies, first logged on Saturday. She uses the site mainly to get in touch with high school friends, but doesn't spend a lot of time surfing the directory.

"I actually don't think it's that cool," she said. "It's OK."

Hastler notes that there are other sites on the Internet that offer a comparable service.

Web sites that seem to be in direct competition with thefacebook are Catch 27 and IdahoFacebook.

IdahoFacebook, which serves as a more compact version of thefacebook,

See WEB, Page 7

ARTSBRIEFS

Northwest bands descend on Mikey's Gyros March 22

Three bands will be featured at Mikey's Gyros March 22. Heroes and Villains, from Portland, and Thomas Paul, an electric folk band from Boise, will play. T-dub and Junkyard Bandstand will also perform. The show is all ages and there is a \$3 cover.

Participants needed for second annual Artwalk

The Moscow Arts Commission is asking for artists for Moscow's Artwalk 2005. The event, which was launched last year with 28 participating businesses and dozens of artists, is a collaboration between the City of Moscow, Moscow Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce. Original work less than two years old

will be considered. Artists may submit a range of different media, including painting, drawing, photography and sculpture. Artists must be able to provide three to six pieces framed and ready for hanging.

Folklore society announces March dance March 9

The Palouse Folklore Society will have a Contra Dance March 19. The dance will be from 7:30-11 p.m. at the 1912 Center on East Third Street. Cost is \$7 for members, \$5 for newcomers. Dance instruction starts at 7:30 p.m.

Folklin' it up at the Unitarian church April 10

Ginny Reilly and David Maloney, a folk duo, return to the Inland Northwest in their first appearance here since the late 1980s. The musicians will play a

concert at 7 p.m. April 10 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse. The Palouse Folklore Society sponsors the group's visit.

The musicians recently released "Together Again," their first studio recording in 15 years. Wes Weddell will be accompanying the duo on mandolin. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the door.

Val Kilmer not invited to Mystical Tatto concert

D.P. Productions will be hosting a wide-ranging group of musicians at 7 p.m. Friday at Mystical Tatto in Pullman. The "Everyone Invited But Val Kilmer Show" will bring five area bands to Pullman. Corner Stone, Chuck Lush, Elusive, Sick As I and 867-RKO will all perform. Tickets are \$4 and \$3 with a can of food.

'I Heart Huckabees' treat for philosophy-loving minds

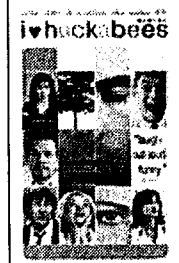
BY TYLER WILSON
ARGONAUT STAFF

"I Heart Huckabees," either one of the most bewildering or

genius comedies in years, asks viewers a few unusual questions. Have you ever had existential issues? Is the entire universe connected, or are we individuals moving through life without a purpose?

Albert, played by "Rushmore" star Jason Schwartzman, is questioning his purpose in life. He calls upon a couple of "existential detectives," played gloriously by Lily Tomlin and Dustin Hoffman, to clarify the coincidences in his troubled life. Albert battles a cocky executive of Huckabees Department Store (Jude Law) and befriends Tommy, (Mark Wahlberg), a firefighter facing his own existential issues. If the plot sounds a bit vague, that's because it is.

REVIEW



'HUCKABEES'

Now Available

The movie itself could be considered a great mystery of existentialism. Many things happen, characters do crazy things, but for what purpose? Some viewers may find relevant, life-altering issues at the heart of "I Heart Huckabees." Others probably won't have the patience to look.

Despite the divisive premise, the film is often laugh-out-loud hilarious. Wahlberg, never really considered a quality actor, manages to steal every scene he's in, and brings a surprising poignancy to an otherwise comic-relief-type character.

The rest of the cast is also a blast to watch, especially when their characters begin to question the very premise of the movie. Albert seems to be as confused as the viewer, which results in many funny explosions of bewilderment. Jude Law hams it up as Albert's dastardly nemesis, and Hoffman and Tomlin are on cruise control, playing the detectives with such panache it hardly seems like they're acting.

Writer/director David O. Russell ("Three Kings") keeps "I Heart Huckabees" brisk, and he relies on his quirky characters to entertain viewers that may be uninterested in the existential debate. He also uses a ter-

rific score by Jon Brion, arguably the best "indie" composer around, to enhance the film's ultimate purpose, whatever that is.

"I Heart Huckabees" is one of those "love it or hate it" kind of movies. But if strange, outside-the-realm-of-traditional-storytelling is your cup o' tea, a head trip into existentialism may at least have you reconsider Marky Mark's place in the acting universe.

NEW DVDs THIS WEEK

"Ladder 49": John Travolta, Joaquin Phoenix
Travolta continues his long, annoying quest for a comeback.

"Friends: The Complete Ninth Season"
Probably better than trying to sit through an entire episode of "Joey."

"Felicity: The Complete Fourth Season"
There were four seasons of this show? Wow. Gives "Joey" a bit of hope doesn't it?

"Barbie Fairytopia"
Join Barbie in this delightful direct-to-video adventure. OK, so the choices are slim this week.

DANCE
From Page 6

money in an arcade over time than he spent buying the home version.

Junior psychology major Guy Anderson owns the PS2 version and plays it about one hour a day. His mother bought him the game for exercise around the end of January.

"When you start off, you're really bad," Anderson said. He said he got better after about a week, and now gets above-average scores.

Playing "DDR" gives Anderson a sense of pride. He gets to exercise and have fun at the same time, he said.

"You feel physically fit afterward," he said. "At least when you do the songs right."

He said owning the system is beneficial to him because it doesn't cost as much as playing at the arcade. He said the game that was released in the United States doesn't include some of the arcade songs, but that still doesn't take away from the excitement.

"Seeing that you improve every time, that's

real encouraging," Anderson said.

Join the obsession

DDR Games at ddrgame.com is the nation's leading distributor of the game. To play at home, a player needs a TV or game projector, PlayStation, PS2 or Xbox console, game software and a "DDR" pad.

The PS2 games are "Konamix DDR," "DDR-MAX," "DDRMAX 2" or "Extreme." "Konamix DDR" is the preferred version. The Xbox games include "Ultramix" and "Ultramix 2."

A variety of dance pads are available, in materials such as acrylic and metal.

Price lists and places to buy "DDR" can be found at ddrfreak.com. "DDR" console games range from \$30-\$40. Pad prices range from \$9-\$580, depending on quality. Bundles can be bought that include the game, pad and pad covers.

There are 10 locations with "DDR" machines in Idaho, including Boise State University, Washington State University and Zeppo's in Pullman also have machines.

Bumpers is open 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday and noon-8 p.m. Sunday.

HOW TO PLAY "DDR"

To play "Dance Dance Revolution," a gamer steps on four "dance pad" arrows to the beat of techno-pop music. Arrows stream up the game screen, and when they reach the top, the player is supposed to step on the corresponding arrow. The player earns points for getting the right steps with the right beat.

A Dance Gauge appears on-screen to show the player's progress. The game shouts "Perfect," "Great," "Good," "Boo" or "Miss," depending on how well the player is doing. If a player misses so many steps that he fails, the game stops. Players earn a grade of "SS," meaning all steps perfect, to "E," meaning failure. Players choose the game's difficulty level, ranging from "light" to "challenge."

WEB
From Page 6

limits users to the college community. According to the Web site, IdahoFacebook allows people to "check out the six degrees of Idaho and meet students you wouldn't otherwise meet."

While not affiliated with the facebook, IdahoFacebook boasts membership from a significant portion of campus. By sending out a mass e-mail to VandalMail accounts, the site was able to get a jump on thefacebook, which did not solicit interest.

Catch 27 touts the slogan "your social life is a game," and allows students to trade friends the way children exchange base-

ball cards. Creator E. Jean Carroll envisioned the site as an alternative to thefacebook.

"Everybody behaves like a bunch of old ladies on thefacebook. I wanted a site for unruly people," Carroll said. "Catch 27 is the anti-facebook."

Interested users log on and write personal information on virtual trading cards. Acquaintances can then be invited to the site and the trading and buying of friends begins.

Carroll, a former writer for "Saturday Night Live," hatched the idea for the site after reading numerous relationship letters.

"I receive thousands and thousands of letters from people in college. I am perfectly aware that you spend all day trading

FIND THESE SITES

Thefacebook: www.thefacebook.com
IdahoFacebook:
www.idahofacebook.com
Catch 27: www.catch27.com

your boyfriends and girlfriends in for hotter, smarter boyfriends and girlfriends," she said.

These Web sites have all popped up within the last year, but updates are still being made. Hughes has many plans for the future of thefacebook.

"We'll continue to expand to as many schools as possible," he said. "We're interested in keeping the site as efficient and useful for college students as possible."

'The Whole' is a whole lot of something

BY TARA KARR
ARTS&CULTURE EDITOR

There are hilarious books, inspirational books and terrifying books. And then there's John Reed's "The Whole."

"The Whole" is something. Ask again later.

The book's central character, Thing, is a former MTV VJ who is rehired after her replacement is sucked into a mysterious hole. The hole devours the Peterson family's house, the town of Prairie Dog, neighboring Grouperville and most of the Midwest. Thing decides she's fated to discover the meaning of the hole, and the ensuing adventure is a sloppy mishmash of giant talking bunnies, pink cocktails and Santaworshipping cults.

The cover of the book trumpets itself as "a subversive satire of modern culture," which it certainly is. Reed does a decent job of mocking everything from MTV to the Mormon church in highly bizarre ways. Thing is a stereotypically stupid celebrity, whose frequent malapropisms and verbal misunderstandings are one of the humorous high points of the book (Example: "You've but-

tered your bread, now sleep in it").

Reed attempts to drive this satire into the world of the surreal, but it doesn't come off well. Rather than reaching the hilarious heights of strange writers such as Douglas Adams ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy") or Jasper Fforde ("The Eyre Affair"), "The Whole" flounders in a confusing, often disturbing muck of plot.

The book starts out fresh, but grows less appealing as it grows stranger. It even occasionally feels boring, as the same things happen repetitively. Thing and her camera crew go somewhere, funky stuff happens, Thing giggles and gets laid, there are a couple of aliens, they leave, and it starts over again.

The most difficult thing

about the book is finding the point. Not the "theme," per se, but the reason it exists at all. "The Whole" might be about fate, but it might not. It might be about celebrity culture, or the wild-ride effects of alcohol, or lobsters. It's next to impossible to tell.

The end only makes things worse. There are some mind-bending twists, but they fail to be clever or interesting at that point because the entire book is stuffed full of twists and complications.

"The Whole" promises a mental adventure, but the result is a strong urge to find a wall somewhere and repeatedly smash skull to brick.

But on the other hand, it is slightly intriguing. Reed makes Thing a complex-if-shallow character (paradoxes like this are perfectly acceptable in the book's world), and the hook of the book, the hole, is curiosity-inducing.

Most horrible of all, the book is impossible to figure out, so it's nearly impossible to give a solid rating to. Four stars. No, one star. Can book reviews have "???" stars? Fine. Three stars. Happy medium. Read it if you want. Or don't.

REVIEW



'THE WHOLE'

★★★ (of 5)
John Reed
Now Available

Where to be seen...

... a guide to the nightlife on the Palouse



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