

Student Life

Student newspaper of Washington University in St. Louis since 1878

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Vigil stresses humanity over politics for Israel, Gaza



MATT MITGANG | STUDENT LIFE

Students hold candles and read prepared statements at a vigil Wednesday night that was held to mourn the civilian casualties resulting from the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas. Approximately 30 other colleges held vigils the same night.

MICHAEL TABB
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Both the Hebrew and Arabic words for peace come from the same root meaning “wholeness” or “togetherness.”

About two dozen students on both sides of the Israel-Palestine ideological divide came together Wednesday evening to mourn the civilian casualties of the recent violence around Gaza in a candlelight vigil.

Similar vigils were held the same night at approximately 30 other colleges around the country, organizers said.

The weeklong face-off between Israel and Hamas that ended with a ceasefire on Nov. 21 resulted in six deaths in Israel and 158 in the Gaza Strip, according to the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

While students at the vigil acknowledged that their efforts will have little effect on an ongoing conflict more than 6,000 miles away from Washington University and few had strong personal connections to those touched by the violence, many appreciated the humanity-centered observance.

“This conflict is so politically heavy that losing the face of civilians sometimes is a real threat, and it's so important to realize that every civilian has life,” sophomore Ayesha Mohyuddin said.

“Like Dean [James] McLeod said, every face has a name and story, and that's such a big thing on our campus,” Mohyuddin added. “[It's] just remembering that's a worldwide thing.”

Mohyuddin also expressed her hope that the conflict will become a more prominent

topic of discussion on campus, where apathy toward political and social issues is a common concern.

“Nothing is very publicly broadcast in terms of news on this campus,” she said. “I think it should [be discussed], maybe staying away from the political aspects of it, but just remembering a life is a life.”

Junior Fadi Abunemeh, a yearlong exchange student from the West Bank, said he appreciated students with differing views coming together for the vigil, but noted that such events will likely have negligible impact on the tension itself.

“It is really meaningful, Palestinians praying for Israeli troops and innocent people and vice versa,” Abunemeh said. “This is really nice, being in contact with the other side. But does that affect politics? No. Does that help the situation? I don't think so.”

“Sometimes you feel a bit guilty about it...you come here, you live peacefully, you do everything you want, and then you talk to your family and it's going really bad over there,” he added.

The vigil brought together J Street U, a national group advocating for a two-state solution, the Muslim Students Association, the Inter-Beliefs Council, Wash U Students for Israel and St. Louis Hillel.

“It's to bring the actual

people together,” junior Morriah Kaplan, co-chair of the campus chapter of J Street U, said. “It's also to make a statement that this is how the issue should be dealt with in terms of diplomacy and relationship building.”

Kaplan said that two weeks ago, the group had more than 200 students fill out postcards to urge congressmen to support American leadership in facilitating the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

“We're not just a dialogue-focused group. We do want to impact policy. But we do think it's an important conversation to open on campus to keep people informed,” Kaplan said.

St. Louis Hillel Rabbi Andy Kastner led the group in a moment of silence and stressed the importance of both sides coming together to serve mutual interests.

“In Hebrew, the word for peace is ‘shalom.’ In Arabic, the word for peace is ‘salaam.’ And at the root of both of those words is the word ‘shalem,’ ‘shalem,’ which means wholeness,” Kastner said. “Shalem—wholeness, completion, togetherness—comes from the capacity of each individual seeing the divine spark in the other—leveling the playing field, seeing the fact that we are brothers, sisters, friends all living under one roof, sharing the same home, sharing resources.”

University will cut January Program after 2012-13 year

WEI-YIN KO
NEWS EDITOR

As Washington University admissions officers sift through early decision applicants for the class of 2017 this month, they will have one less thing on their minds.

“We do it in three-and-a-half,” the age-old motto of the January Program, will soon become obsolete as the last group of JProg students arrives on campus in January.

In the past, Washington University has offered between 40 to 50 students admission to the University under the condition that they begin a semester later than other freshmen. Historically, these “JProg” students have spent the fall pursuing internships, studying abroad, taking classes at local colleges or working.

Washington University decided to end the program primarily because of logistical concerns. The move will make it easier for the to figure out housing for students as incoming classes continue to increase in size, University officials said.

“This gives us more flexibility by having [entire classes] entering as first-year students, all of them in the fall,” Sharon Stahl, vice chancellor for students, said.

While Stahl believes that the program has benefitted students who wish to explore their interests off-campus for a semester, she said that the change will allow for an easier transition to college life.

“I think that one of the positives about this [is that] when students enter in the fall, they can have the full experience of going through orientation,” Stahl said.

But she added that students who are interested in taking some time before attending the University will still have the ability to do so.

“Of course, we still give students the option of taking a gap year, so if a student coming to us wants to take a year off, they can do that, which I think is a great idea,” Stahl said. “The long-range plan is to have a larger class, and this gives us more flexibility in achieving what is best for the University moving forward.”

The change is being implemented collaboratively between the Office of Residential Life and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

“[Admissions officers] had to make a decision not so much [about] what should they do, but what can they do,” Matthew Devoll, assistant dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, said.

Current JProg students noted both strengths and weaknesses of the program.

“It was a great experience for me because I didn't know what I wanted to study before coming to Wash. U.,” senior Daryl Stein said. “In [fall] semester I went abroad and really figured out what I wanted to study.”

Stein admitted that not every JProg student had the same positive experience as she did but argued that for some people it can be an extremely valuable experience.

“I have friends in the January Program, and it wasn't the right thing for them, but then I also have friends who came in September and think that [the program] would have helped them. It really depends on the type of person,” she said.

Senior Lauren Smith-Lin noted the program's limitations for students who consider transferring out of the College of Arts & Sciences.

“I thought I wanted to be in the engineering school, so I took some classes at another university to transfer credits because I wanted to be able to transfer into the engineering school,” Smith-Lin said. “[The College of Engineering] actually doesn't like January Program students because they miss out on a lot of [prerequisites] for the first semester. So the January Program was a little inconvenient for me in that regard.”

Despite its shortcomings, Stahl believes that the program was successful in attracting quality students to the University.

“It really has to do with planning and nothing to do with the quality of the kids who join us in January because these kids have just been amazing and made wonderful contributions,” she said. “It's just that those students will now join us in September instead of joining us in January.”



SAM SCHAUER | STUDENT LIFE

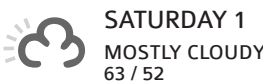
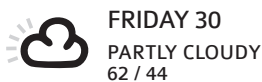
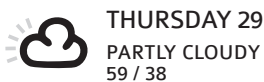
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EVENT CALENDAR
THURSDAY 29

Community Service Office: Effective Proposal & Application Writing Workshop
DUC, Room 233, 4 p.m.
Panel presentation on how to write effective applications and proposals for grants, stipends, fellowships and more, including Social Change Grants. Open only to Wash. U. students.

Jazz at Holmes Fall 2012 Concert Series
Ridgley Hall, Holmes Lounge, 8 p.m.
"Songs of Love and Other Difficulties: Work and Protest Songs" by Kim Fuller Quartet. Introduction by Patrick Burke, associate professor of music. Co-sponsored by University College and the Department of Music.

FRIDAY 30

Performing Arts Department/WUSTL Dance Theatre
Mallinckrodt Center, Edison Theatre, 8 p.m.
"Rootedness, Mobility and Migration." Artistic direction by Cecil Slaughter, senior lecturer in dance. Professionally choreographed by resident and guest choreographers. Tickets \$10 for students, children, seniors, and Wash. U. faculty and staff; \$15 for others. Also at 8 p.m. on Dec. 1 and 2.

Mr. Stereotype MMXII
Simon Hall, May Auditorium, 8 p.m.
The Stereotypes' fall concert and Wash. U.'s premiere all-male a cappella pageant. Featuring music by Jason Mraz, Fun., Imagine Dragons, Norah Jones, among others. Tickets are \$8 for Wash. U. students and \$12 for non-students. Also at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 1 in Graham Chapel.

SATURDAY 1

Japanese Film Series: "Akira"
Busch Hall, Room 100, 8 p.m.
This screening is sponsored by the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. The movie, released in 1988, will be shown in Japanese with English subtitles. This event is free and open to the public.

SUNDAY 2

Department of Music Choir Concert: "Joy and Wonder"
Graham Chapel, 3 p.m.
This concert features the Washington University Concert and Chamber Choirs, under the direction of Dr. Nicole Aldrich. The concert is free and open to the public.

U.S. News removes George Washington University from Best Colleges 2013 rankings

BECKY PRAGER
NEWS EDITOR

Washington University students who are upset when they are mistaken for attending George Washington University could become angrier now that GW's national reputation has taken a hit.

GW was removed from the 51st spot in the U.S. News and World Report's "Best Colleges of 2013" rankings after it was revealed that the Washington, D.C. university misreported data. "On November 8, George Washington University...advised U.S. News that it had erroneously reported its high school class standing information for more than a decade," wrote U.S. News director of data research Robert Morse in a blog post on the U.S. News website. "This misreporting resulted in George Washington submitting to U.S. News a value for the percent of the fall 2011 entering class in the top tenth of their high school class that was inflated by 20 percentage points."

Morse declined further comment but referred Student Life to his blog posts regarding the issue.

Claremont McKenna College and Emory University were also recently revealed to have fudged their data reporting, but U.S. News concluded that the actual data would not have changed the rankings of those two schools.

"In all three cases, U.S. News did a statistical simulation of what each school's numerical ranking would have been in their U.S. News ranking category if the corrected data had been used," wrote Morse. "In the case of George Washington University, the simulation showed that the school's numerical ranking would have been lower as a result of the large change in the school's corrected high school class rank data."

The changes in data have been recorded on GW's school profile page on the U.S. News website, explained Morse, to ensure that the public stays informed.

"U.S. News believes that consumers should be able to see the new data online. We remove the data that has been reported as incorrect from the school's entry on usnews.com and replace it with the newly reported statistical data provided by the school," Morse wrote. "This has been done for GW."

The last instance of a school being moved to the category of "Unranked" due to misreporting data occurred in the 2012 edition of Best Colleges, when Iona College was unranked after admitting to falsifying data points.

John Berg, Washington University's vice chancellor for admissions, expressed regret over the recent news about GW.

"We were sorry to hear the news, but we know both institutions have made adjustments and accepted the consequences and moved on," Berg said.

Berg insisted that the chances of the University misreporting data are unlikely.

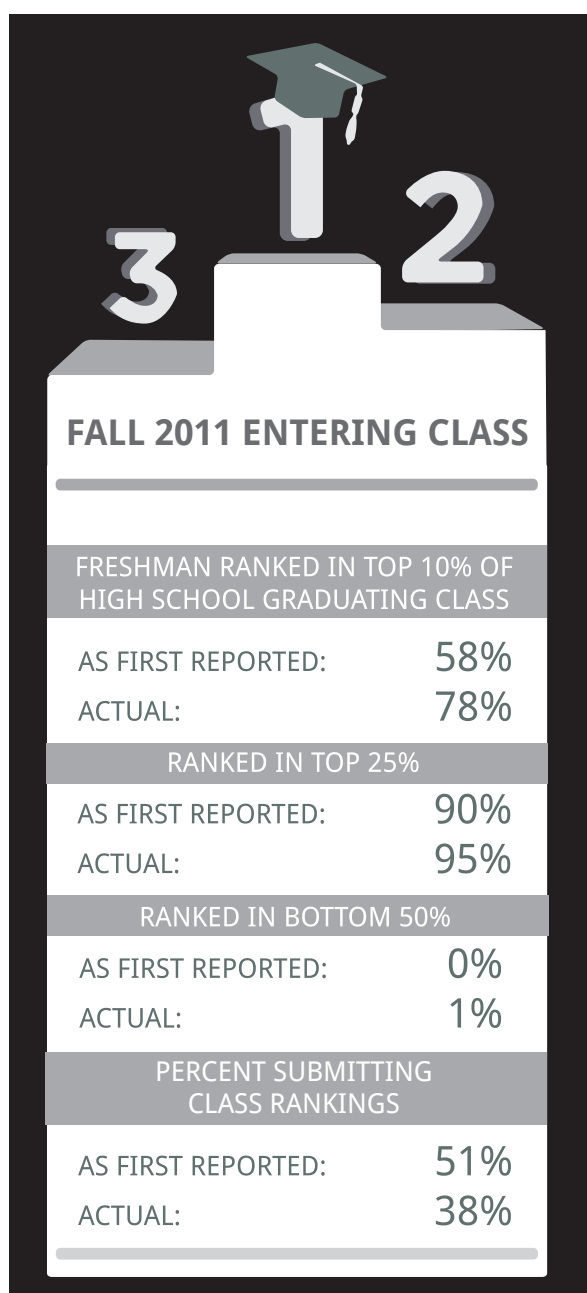
"I think it could happen anywhere, but we do have several additional layers of safety here," Berg said. "A number of years ago, the university began conducting surprise and random audits of information submitted to U.S. News."

Some University students said they would feel betrayed if their own university were to misreport data or be removed from the U.S. News rankings.

"I would definitely feel cheated, as I attended Wash. U. based on the assumption that it really is what it claims to be... but I think the worst part would be the realization that I'm not as competitive...a student as my admission to Wash. U made me believe," sophomore Jeff Otieno said. "I'd definitely expect some huge amount of accountability from [the school's] higher-ups."

"I would be upset that an institution that I had invested so much time in and loved so much felt the need to alter their statistics," senior Anna Beets added.

Despite how some students at the University think they would feel if it were their school that



LEAH KUCERA | STUDENT LIFE

misreported, GW has seen a different response.

"Students at GW do not think it is a big deal. They enjoy their four years at GW and gain a lot of internship and job experience throughout the process," George Washington University junior Doriel Jacov said. "The rankings are just a perk, but in reality GW offers great programs, and the students appreciate that."

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Washington University in St. Louis

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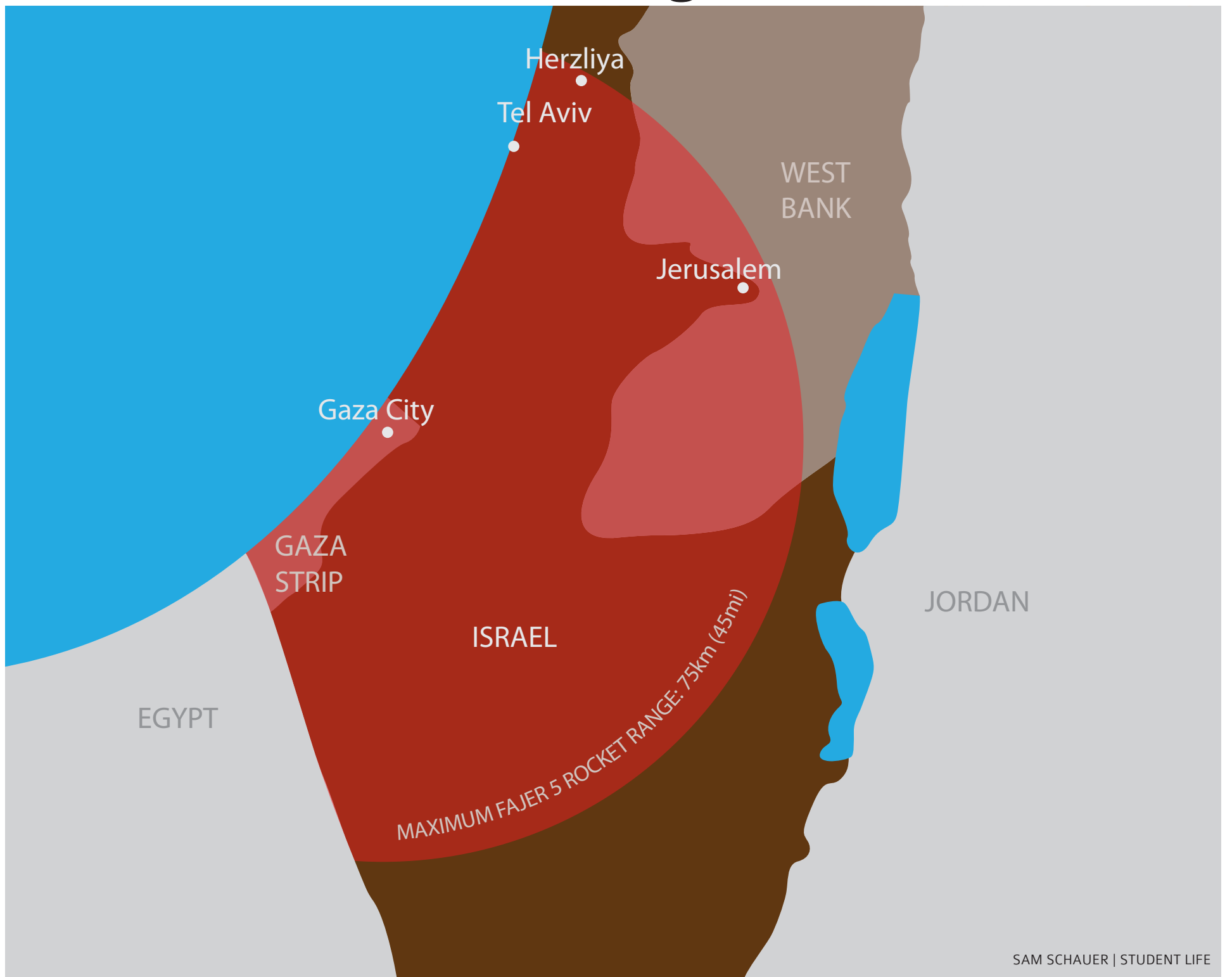
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Conflict zone within range of Hamas rockets



SAM SCHAUER | STUDENT LIFE

This map shows the maximum range of Hamas' Fajer 5 rocket launched from the Gaza Strip. The conflict between Israel and Gaza lasted approximately a week and resulted in about 160 casualties. The majority of the deaths were Palestinian civilians. Rockets from Gaza reached as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, though most were effectively shot down by Israeli defense.

SU^p this week

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FORUM

STAFF EDITORIAL

A refreshing demonstration of unity

Wednesday evening, students gathered in the DUC courtyard for a candlelight vigil and moment of silence to reflect on the recent violence between Israel and Hamas in and around Gaza. Many other universities around the country held similar vigils the same night.

Most of us have been exposed to the politics of this situation—we see it on the news, we read about it, it's even markedly present in something as simple as the Facebook statuses of our friends. But what we often lose sight of, and what this vigil reminds us of, is the humanity of the crisis in Gaza. The politics of the situation often obscure

the human cost of the conflict. No matter how you view the conflict, the loss of innocent life is a loss to be mourned.

The vigil, organized by the Jewish student group J Street U in collaboration with the Muslim Students Association, Wash U Students for Israel, the Inter-Beliefs Council and St. Louis Hillel, gave us the opportunity to get away from the harsh yet impactful social media scene of the situation. The event brought together a diverse group not for argument but for support of a common goal.

The rhetoric we often see in situations like these is based in deeply-rooted, long-standing and unchanging views on both sides of the issue. Given that the

conflict has intense religious and cultural roots, it can be difficult to view the situation with objectivity. While each side certainly has its merits, we often have a tendency to focus on who is in the wrong and lose sight of the personal loss taking place in a region that longs for a solution to allow its people live in peace. We cannot help but recognize the countless deaths resulting from the most recent bout of violence as a tragedy, and the sporadic bursts of violence won't end if we continue to move forward without a solution for peace.

It's commendable for students on both sides of the issue to come together. Although arguing political points with one another is within our rights of

expression, we cannot move forward without finding common ground. Decades of diplomatic standstill over the issue are emblematic of a failed discourse.

Any international conflict can seem distant when we are caught up in our own lives. But the simple acts of gathering and lighting candles in support of our common humanity promotes peaceful dialogue and debate on campus. While we obviously cannot solve the conflict in Gaza, we can still come together to have civil dialogue about the issue. And mourning casualties on either side of the divide is certainly a worthy place to start.

The absurd secession crisis

WILL WILDER
STAFF COLUMNIST

On Nov. 7, hours after Barack Obama was re-elected as president of the United States, an unidentified man from Slidell, La., going by "Michael E" created a petition on the White House website asking the federal government to allow the state of Louisiana to withdraw from the United States and form its own country.

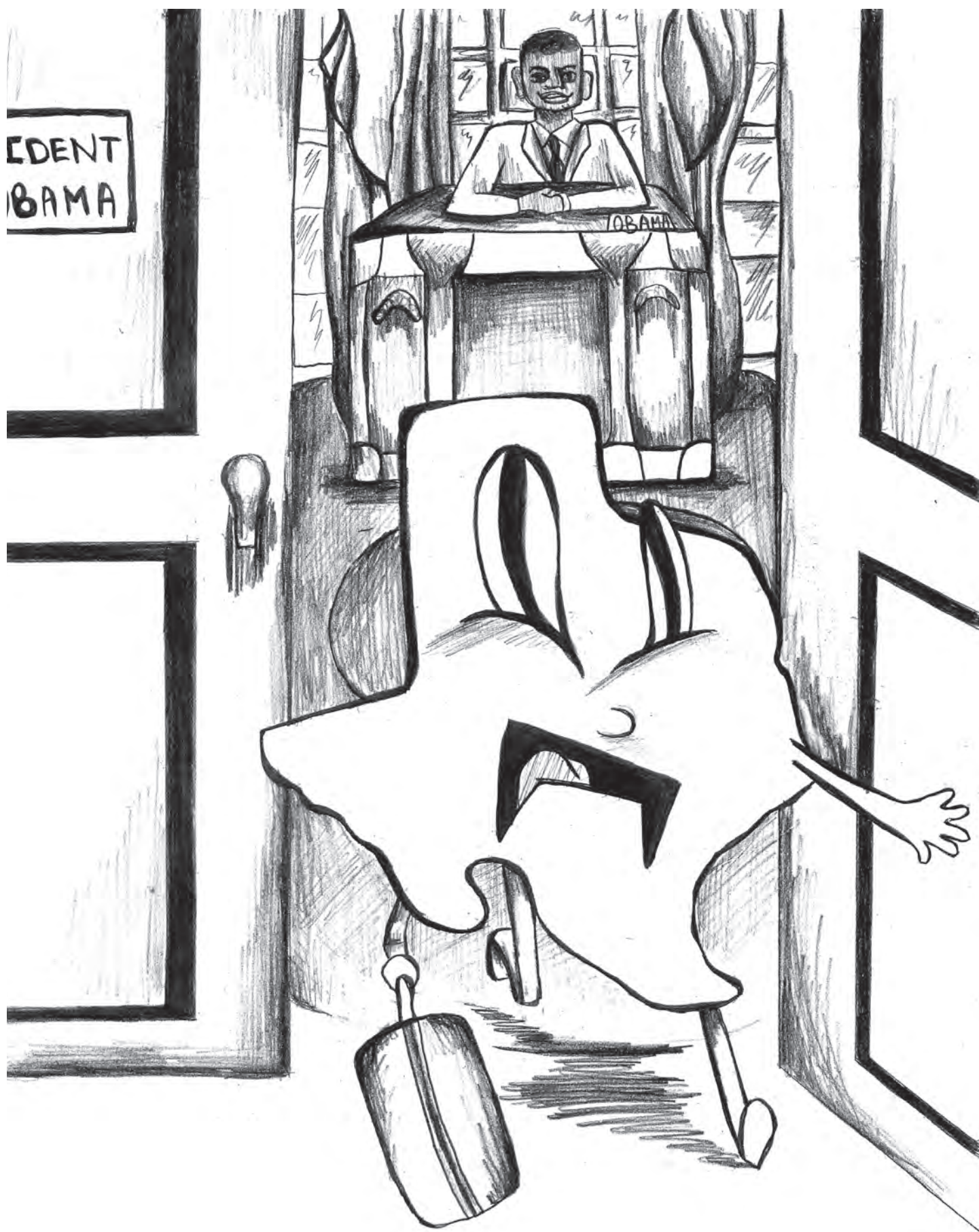
Within a week, a similar petition had been filed in every state in the nation. The petition from Texas has reached more than 100,000 signatures. Bumper stickers with phrases like "If at first you don't secede, try, try again!" are rapidly gaining popularity in many conservative states. Texas gubernatorial candidate Larry Scott Kilgore legally changed his name to Larry SECEDE (yes, all caps) Kilgore. Could this mysterious "Michael E" have started a revolution? Has our country finally reached a breaking point of bitter partisanship where Republicans and Democrats cannot even live in the same country anymore? Could we be careening down the path toward a second Civil War? Or will half the nation just split off and form a Democrat-free paradise? The answer to all of these questions is absolutely not.

These secession petitions should not be taken seriously in any way at all. First of all, what appears to be a growing revolution of hundreds of thousands of people from every state in the nation is actually just a few thousand people manipulating the White House website. According to John Archibald of The Birmingham News, for instance, a substantial number of signatures on Alabama's petition came from outside the state. The White House website does not require someone to live in a state to sign a petition, so the same group of a few thousand people has created and signed nearly every one of the secession petitions.

The notion that any state could operate as an independent country is ridiculous. Every person who says that his state would be better off independent of the federal government does not realize just how dependent on federal money most states are. National defense, trade relations with other countries, federal highway dollars, agricultural subsidies—states cannot provide any of these things on their own. I'm from Alabama, which was the third state to file a petition, and we cannot even re-write our own constitution (which is the longest in the world and filled with outdated racist language). The idea that we could be successful as our own country is ridiculous.

What's more ridiculous than any state thinking that it could operate on its own is the fact that we are even discussing this. Has our political discourse really reached a level of vitriol where the reaction to losing an election is to threaten to secede from the Union? Many of the secession petitions feature quotes from the Declaration of Independence and claim that the Obama administration has leveled the same amount of injustice on the American people as the British government during the colonial era.

However, this argument completely misses the point of the Declaration of Independence.



MARGARET FLATLEY | STUDENT LIFE

The Founding Fathers wanted to secede from the British Empire because they had no representation in Parliament to dispute the taxes and other injustices enforced on the colonies. The U.S. Constitution was framed with this in mind—the reason we have elections and equal representation in Congress is to create a civil way for people to express their grievances. Threatening to secede because you do not like the results of an election does not put you on the same level as Thomas Jefferson. In fact, perhaps the most crucial moment in American

history was after the election of 1800. In what is still one of the most bitter campaigns in our country's history, Thomas Jefferson defeated John Adams in an extremely close and controversial election that was ultimately decided by the House of Representatives. Supporters of both sides were ready to march on Washington and seize control if their candidate lost; however, both Jefferson and Adams called for civility and compromise. Adams peacefully relinquishing power to Jefferson set the precedent for peaceful transitions of power that has

allowed the United States to continue to grow and become the greatest nation on Earth. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, perhaps the greatest authority on secession of all time, "There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law." Talk of secession undermines the very form of civil discourse on which America was founded. If we want to take any steps toward reforming our political system, we need to start by acting civilly and addressing our grievances the right way—through activism and elections.

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Fraud alert: I am not a woman

NATALIE VILLALON
SENIOR FORUM EDITOR

“Women aren’t women anymore,” at least according to Suzanne Venker. In a Fox News article not-so-subtly titled “The War on Men,” Venker argues that women “have been raised to think of men as the enemy.” Women have so changed the dynamic between the sexes by working and becoming sexually liberated that men not only no longer want to marry them, but feel as if women have “undermined their ability to become self-sufficient.” Luckily, if women simply “surrender to their nature,” then their Prince Charmings will whisk them off to Candyland to live happily ever after. That last part is my own embellishment, I’ll admit, but the rest of her article is almost as deluded. Not only

is Venker’s conception of gender norms fundamentally flawed, she doesn’t consider the positive changes that have resulted from the feminist movement.

I agree that gender norms have changed in recent years, but they’ve always been more complicated than the rigid dichotomy that Venker assumes. Most of you are familiar with the Disney movie “Mulan,” based on a classical Chinese poem. In the poem, Fa Mulan fights for 12 frickin’ years, rises through the ranks and is never discovered. It’s a stretch to call the original poem feminist in the modern sense, but it’s certainly a representation of more fluid gender roles. Feminism and changing ideas about gender have freed a lot of people sexually, financially and socially. This is certainly for the better; women now are able to develop themselves intellectually, personally and professionally in ways that weren’t possible in the past. This has

certainly presented new challenges, but so does any kind of social change as a whole.

One frustrating aspect of this article is that Venker has such a fairytale conception of love, marriage and gender. Every romantic relationship in every classic fairy story from Snow White to Rapunzel includes a man and a woman and ends in marriage. No anxiety over their respective sexualities, no wondering who’s going to bring home the bacon and who’s going to raise the baby. Given that she’s supposed to be analyzing society in a realistic manner, Venker makes assumptions that are both insulting and more than a little naive. Not only are women just as suited by nature to work and pursue academics as are men, but men, in my experience, are also not sniveling babies (except when they have colds; then they’re useless) who can’t find marriageable ladies. They don’t complain about how women won’t

let them provide for their families or girlfriends or pet fish. Additionally, as many previous responses have pointed out, the piece ignores the existence of individuals who identify as homosexual, bisexual, transgender, polyamorous and a whole slew of other identities that aren’t encompassed in a standard episode of “The Brady Bunch.”

Even in the army, a traditional bastion of masculinity, the divide between men and women is becoming increasingly blurry. Earlier this week, our servicewomen, all of whom have served in Iran and Afghanistan, are suing to be allowed in active combat situations. These women “aren’t women,” by Venker’s proposed definition; not only do they want to go into combat, but they also want to rise up through the military ranks. These servicewomen and I are supposed to “surrender to [our] nature,” but what does that mean? I like to bake, but I want to

have a legal career. I’m a female who identifies as heterosexual and wants to get married; I’m barely nudging the gender-norms envelope. Those servicewomen are protecting both Venker’s and my civilian butts, not to mention the saggy butts of millions of men in this country who are too obese or too selfish to join the army themselves. They are strong, and they are certainly women.

Given that Venker is a real woman and not a Disney princess, her personal struggle with her identity as a woman, a mother and a human being is probably more complex than the simple picture she paints in the article. The idea of rigid gender norms is comforting, I suppose; it’s much easier simply to follow a pattern than worry about the ramifications of change. But retreating into a fairytale world and urging the rest of us to do the same is hardly the solution; actually, it’s kind of delusional.

OP-ED SUBMISSION

Response to ‘The right to self-defense’

FADI ABUNEMEH
EXCHANGE STUDENT

Being one of the few Palestinians—if not the only one—on campus, I was really disheartened to see such an academically dishonest piece as the one written by Josh Zenilman. While it is indisputable that Israel has a right to defend itself, Zenilman grossly misrepresents recent events.

Zelman’s claim that Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005 is personally offensive. While Ariel Sharon bravely withdrew settlements from Gaza, amid considerable Israeli objection, a systematic blockade began following the democratic election of Hamas in 2006. Since then, Israel and Egypt have had direct control on flow of people and goods through Gaza, ostensibly to

block shipment of arms to Hamas. This blockade has devastated the Gazan economy and has been used as a means of collective punishment. Dov Weissglass, former chief of staff, summarized: “The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet.” Rather than joking description of the blockade, the Israeli government actually calculated the calories required to sustain Gaza and permitted less than the required amount of food to enter, necessarily requiring “illegal” smuggling tunnels. These tunnels from Egypt have accordingly become a lifeline to keep Gaza from imploding. After forcing Gazans into a catch-22, Israel maintains the right to destroy these at will, which it does frequently. Territorial sovereignty is non-existent. Gazans are routinely shot at and killed even within Gaza territory as Israel maintains a buffer region within the concrete walls surrounding

Gaza. Fishermen are harassed and shot as well, limiting fishing to a polluted, small three-mile corridor, which effectively blocks finding sustenance from the sea.

Zelman insists that Israel left strong infrastructure in Gaza after the withdrawal, but whatever may have existed has fallen under disrepair without the ability to continue capital improvements. Many fundamental building materials are banned from entering Gaza in fears they can be used to build defensive bunkers. Fuel shortages require significant manual labor to rebuild and remake cement from bombed rubble—compounding the caloric dilemma. Damage from “Cast Lead,” Israel’s invasion in 2009, destroyed buildings that can never be rebuilt and razed orchards that take decades to re-grow.

So while Israeli settlers and troops have withdrawn, Gaza remains an

engineered humanitarian disaster. While Israel hopes collective punishment can be used to overthrow Hamas, it has so far been unsuccessful. While Hamas certainly has been responsible for rockets historically, so have other factions in Gaza. In fact, Hamas typically enforces ceasefires remarkably well given its lack of control, even acknowledged by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] prior to Cast Lead. The Gaza rockets are crude, within reach of an ambitious high schooler, and can be produced by anyone. They are ineffectual, pathetic grumblings of people who have no other recourse. Gazans wonder that if Israel can defend itself, how can Gaza defend itself from the blockade? Rocket and mortar launches have been as little as several per month, but the blockade still stays.

The only questions are why does Israel choose to respond so


heavy-handedly? Why now? No one objects to self-defense, but not only is this collective punishment not self-defense, it doesn’t even work. The blockade has not worked in limiting launches. Cast Lead did not work in uprooting Hamas or stopping launches. Cynically, one must wonder why Cast Lead and recent events are just prior to Israeli elections. The deputy defense minister has warned Gaza of a “shoa,” Hebrew for holocaust, and Ariel Sharon’s son wrote: “We need to flatten entire neighborhoods in Gaza. Flatten all of Gaza. The Americans didn’t stop with Hiroshima—the Japanese weren’t surrendering fast enough, so they hit Nagasaki, too.” There is no shortage of hate on both sides, but without sovereignty or effective central control, Gaza is in no position to change what happens in Gaza. The key to peace is in Israeli hands.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

THINGS MORE LIKELY THAN WINNING THE POWERBALL



Odds of the Royals winning the 2013 World Series:
100 to 1



Odds of dating a supermodel:
88,000 to 1



Odds of dying via vending machine:
112,000,000 to 1



Odds of winning the Powerball:
175,000,000 to 1

LEAH KUCERA | STUDENT LIFE



thumbs up

Thumbs up to a bipartisan vigil to honor the victims of recent violence in Gaza.
Thumbs up to the Graham Chapel gingerbread house now on display in the Dining Services office.
Thumbs up to St. Louis County for voting to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination ordinance.

thumbs down

Thumbs down to midterms one week before finals. The “mid” of this “term” was a few weeks ago, right?
Thumbs down to having no chance at winning the PowerBall.
Thumbs down to reaching the time in the semester where it seems we’ve all run out of meal points. Chinese delivery anyone?

SPORTS

Men's basketball forwards play big role in team's dominance

ALEX LEICHENGER
NEWS EDITOR

The Washington University men's basketball team has raced to a 5-0 start with four of its wins by at least 18 points and climbed 11 spots in the Division III rankings since the preseason poll to No. 10 overall. Key to the success have been the contributions of the three starting big men, 6-foot-7 senior center Rob Burnett, 6-foot-5 junior forward Chris Klimek and 6-foot-6 sophomore forward Matt Palucki.

In the midst of applying to medical school, Burnett has averaged 12.4 points and 7.6 rebounds per game to rank second on the team in both categories. After sitting out his entire freshman season because of injury, Klimek has built on a strong sophomore campaign with a team-leading 17.0 points per game on scorching 73.1 percent shooting. Palucki controls the boards for the Bears, pulling down 8.4 rebounds per game while chipping in 11.4 points.

Student Life chatted with the frontcourt trio about the team's hot start to the 2012-13 season.

Student Life: You three combined are averaging about 40 points and 20 rebounds per game, which is about half the team's total output in those areas.



DANNY REISE | WUSTL PHOTO SERVICES

Junior Chris Klimek pulls up for a jumper against North Central College in last year's NCAA second round. Klimek is averaging 17.0 points per game this year.

significant size advantage, and we ran the plays that did give us the touches. If we do play a bigger team, we have plays where the backcourt shoots the ball more, but with our size, we're pretty freakin' huge. It's unbelievable—I'll go

the ball really well and we find the opening, which allows for the big guys not to take really tough shots, and we're getting really easy shots in the lane, which leads to the scoring.

SL: Behind the dominance inside, the team has started

6-foot-5, which makes for a pretty big frontcourt in Division III. How have you used this size to your advantage so far this season?

RB: What size brings to the table is defense and rebounding, and that's where we can count on a consistent performance in each game, and it carries us to a win in each game because with size, you've got a defensive presence where you feel like other teams don't want to drive on you. They don't want to attack inside a big defensive frontcourt, and rebounding—our rebounding margin is like plus-20—and that's just helping us get more possessions and more shots at the basket than the other team.

MP: I think the main thing, with us being that tall, we need to dominate the boards every game. If we don't dominate the boards, then we probably don't have a very good chance to win, so both the defense and offensive boards, if we can dominate those, we'll have a good chance to win every game.

SL: Matt, you've made the transition from playing mostly power forward last year to this year working on

ready to shoot. And then although I moved from the "four" to the "three," I still kind of have the "four" mentality where I'm trying to get the ball more inside. I'm working on it day-by-day, working on the shot and ball-handling.

SL: Rob, you're a new starter this year. How has the transition been from the bench to a starting role?

RB: For the last two years, I've been behind [graduated center] Alex Toth, and coming in as a starter this year has kind of been an easy transition because I've had a lot of time in the games, and I feel comfortable with the players I'm starting with.

SL: Chris, you're the team's leading scorer at 17.0 points per game. Can you talk a little bit about taking the mantle of offensive first option this year?

CK: I wouldn't necessarily say "offensive first option" just because our offensive scheme allows for those shots...My teammates have done a really good job of getting the ball exactly where it needs to be so I can make the easy layup or get to the line for free throws...I really think the difficulty that other teams have guarding us is

Kevin Bischoff stepped up and won that game for us.

SL: This weekend, you guys play in the 29th annual Lopata Classic, where you have an opportunity to face Illinois Wesleyan, the No. 7 team in the country. What are you guys looking to prove in this weekend's games specifically?

RB: Well, over the last two years, our program has really built itself up getting big wins. When we took down No. 1 Augustana [College] in the Lopata Classic last year, it was an unbelievable experience for our team as far as our growth and maturity. And we think we have the same parts, if not an even better chance to do it again this year, and we're really looking to just use this weekend to grow and get better as a team.

CK: I feel Illinois Wesleyan isn't the end-all, be-all. It's a good measuring stick. We know we've played some pretty quality teams so far, but we don't know if they're the top-25-level teams, so it'll be nice to see how we measure up against the No. 7 team and see how far along we came and how much further we need to go.



DANNY REISE | WUSTL PHOTO SERVICES

Senior Rob Burnett goes up for a jump shot over a North Central College defender in last year's NCAA second round. Burnett is averaging 12.4 points and 7.6 rebounds per game in his first year as a starter.

The team has also outscored opponents by an average of 20 points per game in the paint. What do you think are the factors behind the success of the frontcourt so far?

Chris Klimek: Well, I think a lot of it comes from the actual offense. When we do know that we have a size advantage, we have plays to incorporate mostly just us in the post. And we found that in the first couple of games, we did have a pretty

up for a rebound, and both of these guys will be here snatching it up already.

Rob Burnett: The other thing is that it's a team effort, and even though we have those numbers, it's everybody boxing out his own individual guy and contributing to the offense as hard as they can; it's really giving us the numbers that we have.

Matt Palucki: I would say that all the guys, including the guards, too—we pass

5-0. How do you maintain this pace?

RB: It's been a challenge coming in at halftime for the first four games and being up 20, but we've really made it a point to start each half like the game is 0-0, so that's really helped us to kind of tune our system and figure out how to attack and take each half as it comes at us. And we're not really trying to use these wins as a way to wipe the smaller mistakes under the rug. We're focusing on each little thing that's going to make it better because that's what's going to help us beat the better teams that we come across later in the year.

CK: Also, just going into the game [with the mindset that] you prepare for that game—your main goal is to win that specific game that night. I think we've done a really good job because... say this is a couple years ago, we'd be, like, "Oh, we have Illinois Wesleyan [University] in a couple weeks, possibly in the Lopata Classic," and we'd worry about them. This year we've done a really good job focusing on this scouting report, this team and getting the win.

SL: You guys are all at least



DANNY REISE | WUSTL PHOTO SERVICES

Sophomore Matt Palucki goes up for a fast break layup in last year's NCAA second round contest against North Central College. Palucki is averaging 11.4 points and 8.4 rebounds per game after switching to small forward in the offseason.

the small forward game. How has that adjustment been for you so far, and what did you work on over the summer to make it?

MP: Basically what I worked on in the summer was coming off screens and being

that we do have so many weapons. So if Rob and I have an off night, [junior guard] Tim Cooney is stepping up, Matt Palucki is stepping up, [junior guard] Alan Aboona is stepping up. Last game, [junior guard]

MP: We're looking to prove that we're a top-10 team. We just recently broke [into] the top 10. I think playing both Wilmington [College] and Illinois Wesleyan will be a great test to see...how good we actually are.

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CADENZA

Video games for the holidays

GLENN HARRIS
VIDEO GAMES EDITOR

Though 2012 has been a relatively lackluster year for video games, this holiday season aims to change that with a slew of major releases. Here are a few games to consider buying for yourself or for friends—as well several to avoid.

GAMES TO AVOID

While Treyarch should be commended for bringing some variation to the stagnant “Call of Duty” franchise, “Black Ops 2” is not sufficiently varied from its predecessors to warrant being purchased, except by those who remain obsessed with its online community. “007 Legends” misses the mark in a way Bond never

would; the game attempts and fails to be a clone of more popular, successful franchises. “FIFA 13” is literally unchanged from “FIFA 12” on the Wii and PlayStation Vita, and is to be avoided. “Hitman: Absolution” and “Assassin’s Creed III” each fail to live up to the expectations of their respective series.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALLOFDUTY.COM

GAMES TO LOOK FOR



Ubisoft’s open-world first-person shooter (FPS) had high expectations, and early reviews indicate that it has exceeded them. Stranded on a Pacific island, the player has effectively free control over whatever he or she chooses to do. For example, though the game allows for dual wielding, Jason Brody, the player-protagonist, only starts with one holster, meaning he has to build a

new one to carry a second weapon. Though most FPS players would not normally list crafting as an integral part of the gaming experience, “Far Cry 3” skillfully integrates it into its open-world construct, one that manages to thrill and enthrall. While the plot is subpar, gamers will still enjoy being enveloped by the beautiful, virtually limitless environment.



A remake of the 1994 “UFO: Enemy Unknown,” “XCOM” is a turn-based strategy game that remains far more faithful to its forerunner than more recently developed spin-offs. This also means that it’s far more difficult than your average game these days and will frustrate all but the most determined of gamers. However, the game also has its own feel, one that enables it to stand on its own, beside—and not behind—the original. “XCOM,” far more than its competitors,

creates battlefields covered by fog of war and peppered by gunfire and not mere grids for squad members to stand. Thrill seekers will enjoy “XCOM”, every move and action is a perilous decision, as you consider which shots to take, what technologies to develop and where to move soldiers. One poor decision will result in the death of a soldier you were just beginning to know and love. Few games today offer the budding tactician this level of intrigue or difficulty.



Called the “new standard of open-world driving games” by Edge magazine, Criterion Games’ addition to the long established franchise offers an unparalleled experience for racing fans. The visuals are beautiful, representative of the overall excellent attention to detail displayed by the producers. The 41 vehicles

range from a Dodge Challenger SRT-8 to Lamborghini’s flagship Aventador. In true “Need for Speed” style, breaking the law grants the player “Speed Points,” which can be exchanged for add-ons, so you can attach a nitrous exhaust to your otherwise beautiful Aston Martin V12 Vantage.



Nintendo is starting the eighth generation of console gaming with the WiiU, a console that could continue in the innovative steps of the Wii, or fail to attract a large audience. Fortunately for buyers, Nintendo fans are loyal and optimistic, and the device is selling out as quickly as its predecessor. The WiiU’s new controller, the GamePad, acts as a second, tough sensitive screen, which can display a map, allow the player to throw shuriken, or, once TVii is released, act as

a universal remote. However, Nintendo will face issues in the future with the WiiU. Some features feel like Nintendo is trying to catch up to Sony and Microsoft, such as 1080p output, which has been standard for years on the 360 and PS3. Most critical will be competition with mobile platforms, which have come to dominate the casual market. Still, initial results are positive, indicating that Mario will be around for at least a few more years.

From St. Louis to Sunset Boulevard: A homegrown Hollywood success story

GEORGIE MORVIS
SENIOR CADENZA EDITOR

Conventional wisdom goes that a degree in theatre won’t ever help you get a job.

Catherine Elhoffer, who graduated from Washington University in 2009 with a dual degree in theater (with an emphasis in costume design) and marketing, proved this wrong. Her list of credits now numbers five features, more than 20 short films, video games and music videos as well.

Perhaps the business school degree helped, but she really credits Wash. U. itself with helping her prepare for Hollywood. She was costume designer for two Performing Arts Department shows, “Hamlet” and “She Stoops to

Conquer.” “Wash. U. really helped me learn how to focus, and the PAD taught me that everything has to be ready when the curtain goes up,” she said.

A St. Louis native, Elhoffer originally came to Wash. U. for a degree in history, but her parents strong-armed her into getting a degree from the business school as well. From a young age, though, she showed an interest in costume design.

“When I was 15, I joined the Greater St. Louis Renaissance Faire, and I was, like, holy crap. This is really cool. You can dress up! And then I learned I could sew, and that it was a talent that you could have.”

At the end of the first year, she found out about the PAD

and its costume shop. She started working there, and the head of the costume shop, Bonnie Krueger, invited her to take costume design classes with her as well.

“That’s when I realized that this was a thing that you could do and that you could learn. I thought it was just one of those things where people just go to Hollywood and become it, but you can actually learn it. So I tried to take every costume design class possible and all the theater requirements and ended up with a degree in theater,” she said.

Krueger also took Elhoffer with her on a trip to Germany, where she learned how to sew at an opera house. This professional training is a detail Elhoffer

said really helps her resume stand out. While at Wash. U., she also worked on the Oscar-nominated film “Up in the Air” and an independent feature with an alumnus, which allowed her to learn what a film set was like.

A week and a half after she graduated, she partnered up with a fellow graduate and moved out to Los Angeles and immediately started looking for work. While she was still looking for a place to live, she sublet a fellow alumnus’ apartment.

“There’s a really great Wash. U. network in L.A. I wouldn’t have met my roommate, or the girl whose apartment I stayed in without the university,” she said.

Her big break came from an independent Western

feature called “Yellow Rock,” which was released in 2011. A makeup artist friend who knew the casting director gave Elhoffer’s card to the producers. She had done work on two Western short films before, along with a period piece at Wash. U., which gave her a leg up on the other competition. The producers recognized her as a legitimate costume designer, not just some girl interested in fashion, and without a real interview, they hired her to be their costume designer.

“It just snowballed from there. I networked on set, got in with the producers and during post [production], they needed someone to take care of the website and Facebook. I was, like, I’m the youngest person on this film by 20

years, so how about I help you with that? So I started doing that, essentially for free, and I asked them, can I get another credit?” Elhoffer said.

They gave her an associate producer credit. Since then, along with her aforementioned feature and short film success, she has expanded into the web as well. She’s done three web series and does work with Nerdist as well.

“The Web is a really cool place. I worked on this series called ‘MyMusic’ by the Fine Brothers, with 3 million subscribers. It’s a growing industry, which is great. If you’re young, you’ll be able to get into it really easily. That’s where you should focus your energy, if you can,” she said.

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SCENES

Empris Durden

You may have seen her in Denny's commercials

EMILY SYBRANT
GRAPHICS EDITOR

Three-year-old Empris Durden was watching TV when she told her parents she wanted to be an actress. From that point forward, her parents dedicated themselves to making her dream a reality.

Though she originally expected to focus on academics as a freshman at Wash. U., Durden soon became involved in the acting and directing scene. She recently co-wrote and directed "The Girl Next Door: A United States Sex Trafficking Awareness Production" as part of the Freshman International Leadership Program's "Human Trafficking is Modern Slavery" Awareness Week.

Durden's acting career began in her home state of Texas where she modeled children's products, working with toy stores and JCPenney. Durden also pursued an opportunity to perform as an extra on "Barney & Friends," which was shot in Dallas.

As Durden turned six and grew even more serious about acting, her family moved to Los Angeles, a city ripe with entertainment opportunities. Homeschooled from kindergarten through eighth grade, Durden had the flexibility to pursue acting throughout her childhood. In California, her family hired her an agent through the prestigious Osbrink Agency, best known for representing Dakota Fanning.

Durden's parents took her to about five auditions per week when she was six to eight, though in some slow weeks she wouldn't have any and in other weeks she would have more.

"You go to a lot of auditions, but it's like scholarships—you apply to a lot but then you only get a few in return. I've gone to say 20 auditions and get one part," Durden said.

Durden had roles as an extra on "The Jay Leno Show,"

"Baywatch," and an educational video that teaches kids about pronouns. She also shot commercials for Bounty and Denny's.

"In the Denny's commercial, you just have to pretend to eat and you're having fun with the family. Even though you don't know these people, you sometimes make up conversation. 'Ha ha, these eggs are so bad,' because you're fake, you know," Durden said.

She also appeared in a Halloween episode of "General Hospital" in which she played a member of a Girl Scout troop that tied up Luke Spencer (Anthony Geary) and stuffed marshmallows in his mouth.

In addition to advertising and television work, Durden landed major parts in two movies, "Zero Option" and "Climbing Changes." The movies were never released, however, due to a lack of funding.

After two years in California, Durden moved back to Texas.

"I wanted to get back to friends, family in Texas. I really was trying to keep [acting] in Texas, but then you run out of auditions and work," she said.

Durden stopped acting professionally and considered performing more of a hobby. When she started high school, she focused mostly on academics.

"I think sometimes about how it could have been, like say if I was the next Hannah Montana or whatever, but it's not a present thought in my mind. It's just kind of like that was in the past," Durden said.

However, Durden's recent involvement with "The Girl Next Door" and acting on campus has rekindled her passion for acting.

"I find now in being involved in public speaking and directing and production, [acting] is still a part of me," she said. "And I'm always going to keep that. I used to think acting was a hobby, but now I see how it's powerful."



KASTYN MATHENY | STUDENT LIFE

Freshman Empris Durden became immediately involved in the acting scene at Washington University. Durden was on several television programs and commercials as a child.

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Read my lips

Study finds lip-reading is easier when they're yours

ADAM COHEN-NOWAK
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

From George Costanza farcically misreading the lips of Jerry's deaf girlfriend in an episode of Seinfeld to the Youtube channel "Bad Lip Reading," which left many Wash U. students giggling behind their MacBooks in Olin library this election season, faulty lip-reading skits find their niche in a wide range of popular comedies, sitcoms and spoofs.

Lip-reading, also known as "vision only speech perception," is actually rather difficult for most people. Just watch the news on mute and try to pick apart what the newscaster is saying.

But how does lip-reading really work?

According to Wash. U. audiologist Nancy Murray, lip-reading activates both the occipital and auditory cortices of the brain—regions responsible for visual processing and spoken language processing, respectively. However, the auditory cortex is only activated if lip movements are perceived as speech movements. Inform a participant that they are not witnessing someone speak and only the occipital cortex is activated.

Working with research psychologist Joel Myerson, Murray has been examining exactly what factors into a successful lip-reading attempt. In their most recent study, they've found that people may have better luck looking in the mirror—their study found that people on average are better at lip reading their own sentences than others.

First, they recorded each research participant speaking hundreds of random, nonsensical sentences constructed from a list of 36 words.

Sentences included phrases like "the frog watched the girl" and "the duck watched the boy." Two to three weeks later, participants returned to try their hands at reading lips in the recordings of ten people including themselves.

On average, participants lip-read their own sentences better than others, even if the phrases were complicated or confusing.

"The results were surprising," Murray said. "Who sits in front of a mirror and watches themselves talk all the time?"

The study is actually one of the first to test the link between language perception and language production. But Kjartan Brownell said he personally doesn't find the results particularly startling.

"That doesn't surprise me," Brownell said. "I know which words and phrases I tend to use in everyday conversation, so I'd know what to look for when lip-reading myself."

Although certain people seem to be naturally adept at reading lips, according to Murray, genetics may not be the only component.

"It is unknown whether lip reading ability is an innate skill, or can be improved by practice," Murray said.

Those with congenital deafness possess an advantage in lip-reading over those with normal hearing, an advantage which increases with age. But someone with hearing loss who has practiced lip-reading may not necessarily maintain such an advantage over someone of the same age with normal hearing.

Moving forward, Murray and her colleagues plan to start offering lip-reading lessons and track participants' learning curves.

But at least for now, bad lip-reading seems to be here to stay.

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	3		4		6	
6		5		2	1	
				7		4
		1	7			8
			2	9		
7				6	9	
	7	8	5			
		4	9		8	6
5			6			3

11/29/12

Level:
1 2
3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

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1	8	5	7	4	2	6	9	3
9	3	6	8	1	5	4	2	7
4	7	2	9	6	3	8	5	1
2	5	1	6	9	8	3	7	4
3	4	8	2	5	7	9	1	6
7	6	9	4	3	1	5	8	2
5	2	4	3	7	9	1	6	8
6	9	7	1	8	4	2	3	5
8	1	3	5	2	6	7	4	9

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FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 29, 2012

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle
Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Winter coaster
- 5 "Go ___ Tigers!": 1968 Detroit baseball theme song
- 10 Verb for thou
- 14 Vehicle at a stand
- 15 Martini garnish
- 16 Empty room phenomenon
- 17 Unattributed, as a quote: Abbr.
- 18 Show hosted by 23-Across
- 20 Uncommon, to Caesar
- 21 Taking care of the job
- 22 Muse for poets
- 23 Popular TV personality (11/20/1932-6/2/2012)
- 26 Syr. neighbor
- 27 Royal Navy letters
- 28 Brightness nos.
- 30 Put a match to 35
- 35 Vocal quality
- 39 18-Across list topper
- 42 Proboscis
- 43 Did, at some point
- 44 Fish-fowl connector
- 45 Syr. neighbor
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SCENE

Voices from the Middle East Students reflect on their experiences in Israel and Gaza

GAZA

ALANA HAUSER
SENIOR SCENE EDITOR

Junior Mahroh Jahangiri, a political science major at Wash. U., is currently studying abroad at the American University of Cairo in Egypt. Following the recent violence in the Gaza Strip, Jahangiri decided to join a humanitarian convoy to Gaza, accompanying 100 American, European and Egyptian students across the border into Rafah, Gaza last week. Escorted throughout the Gaza Strip by Hamas military officials for two days, Jahangiri witnessed the wreckage and heard the stories of the victims of violence in the Middle East. She shares her reflections on the experience with Student Life below.

Student Life: Why did you decide to go to the Gaza Strip after the recent Israeli airstrike?

Mahroh Jahangiri: The civilian deaths were up to around 50 or 60, and around that time I saw a picture at Wash. U. being circulated that said 'We stand with Israel' and it [showed] the DUC filled up with students. And I was really taken aback... I had heard about the deaths and I had heard much more being in Cairo—the news reports here were obviously more favorable towards Palestine—so I definitely wanted to see personally what was going on and if so be able to send that stuff back home.

SL: What did you see in Gaza? Was it what you expected?

MJ: The convoy had been in touch with the local government—which would be Hamas—because they needed Hamas' permission to allow a convoy of like 100 people to come in. So once we were there we were basically escorted by Hamas officials for a day and a half. When we first got there we were taken to one of the families. There were two families that live close to each other that lost two people during the strikes. One of the two had been firing rockets and he was hit by an Israeli strike in return and was killed. We met his widow and his 20-day-old daughter, and so the family was still in mourning. I was not expecting to be taken into people's houses that had just had someone killed like three days ago. So I was definitely very taken aback.

SL: Did you speak with the family there?

MJ: She [the widow] was definitely not in a talking mood. She was sitting there balling. The house itself was still in a post-funeral setup. It was just like an open house for people to come and mourn in.

SL: Where else did you go during your trip?

MJ: Basically it was a quick recap of everything that had happened in the past three days, all the destruction... So we passed the bank that was hit. One of the ministries was hit so we stopped there. [We] saw the debris, and it was all very recent so nothing had been cleaned up.

The next house we were taken to... I don't know if you've read the story about the one family that lost twelve family members in the strikes, so that was the second house we were taken to. [I] also was not expecting that. For me personally that was terrifying to be there. I was a mess.

SL: Did you speak to any family members at the house?

MJ: The first house was definitely more hostile and acknowledged being part of the resistance. But the second family had no part at all with the resistance. The father was pretty old... he said he had taken his little son out just to the grocery store and when he came back his house was gone, his neighbors' house was gone and his family was all dead. So, we got a chance to like walk through the structure of the house next door that was remaining and you could still see kids' sweaters caught up in the debris. You can see the phone hanging, you can see the dirty dishes that they had



COURTESY OF MAHROH JAHANGIRI

A building in the Gaza Strip is left in shambles by Israeli rockets fired during last week's violence between Israel and Hamas. Junior Mahroh Jahangiri accompanied a humanitarian convoy to Gaza while studying abroad at the American University of Cairo in Egypt and witnessed the destruction firsthand.

been eating off of a few days earlier. So that was really hard.

SL: How were the Hamas officials who guided your group when talking about the conflict?

MJ: Very angry. Very much angry at the fact that Israel had been getting away with this. Or getting away with strikes or killing civilians. In a sense, [this trip] worked for me because if I had more time I would love to see all of Palestine, but for me, for us, we were going on a humanitarian trip. So to see the disaster part of it was probably the most important thing we could see in two days. And [the military officials] were also very conscious of that too. They wanted us to see the worst of Gaza and like take that back with us.

SL: What did the Egyptians you traveled with to Gaza have to say about the conflict?

MJ: Everyone's unanimously against Israeli policies and Israeli government. I think there was a huge spectrum on what Palestine should be doing... the only unanimous consensus is that Palestine has the right to exist and the U.S. government and the Israeli government haven't done anything to move forward on that.

SL: Now having returned to Egypt, what are your reflections on your trip?

MJ: First and foremost I felt so responsible for what's happening. Regardless of the politics of it, people forget so easily the humanitarian issues that come along. Thinking of

Palestine, it's just somehow Hamas being the official government, I think, is used as a justification for civilian deaths in the area... I wasn't really talking politics with people. I was just going to destroyed houses and families that had lost civilians. So that part of me makes me want to be more vocal about the issue... because at Wash. U. we do have students studying abroad in Israel... I regularly have [updates on] students [in Israel] that might feel unsafe and statuses that they post, but we don't have a connection to Palestine at all. I don't know if we've ever had a student in Gaza, but we very rarely have a personal connection to Palestine. I feel like the human side of Palestine is very easily forgotten.

ISRAEL

MICHAEL TABB
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Juniors Elana Widmann and Amanda Packer are Olin business school students currently studying abroad at IDC-Herzliya in Israel. They live about 10 miles north of Tel Aviv, one of the most distant targets of Hamas rockets in the recent conflict between Israel and the Gaza strip. They sought shelter in a sunglasses shop when the city's Iron Dome missile protection system shot down a rocket aimed for the city, and have stopped taking the busses since one was bombed about a week ago. Below, Student Life speaks with them on how they're getting on with their study abroad experience and their reflections on the violence of the past couple weeks.

Student Life: What does the atmosphere in Israel feel like right now?

Amanda Packer: If we weren't reading the news and if we weren't paying attention, not much changed, at least where we live.

Elana Widmann: It was pretty incredible to see because when we heard the sirens, we were in Tel Aviv for, I think it was the second siren, and I started hysterically crying after the siren because I was terrified. There was a siren, and we heard the explosion of the Iron Dome intercepting the rocket. We heard an explosion, but we didn't know at the time what happened. And I'm crying outside this coffee shop and the coffee shop owner comes up to me, and he just looks at me like I'm ridiculous. He was, like, "Why are you crying?" I was, like, "You're serious? Like, there's a rocket." Life goes on; business goes on; class goes on.

SL: Is that hard making the connection between the rest of the world seeing it as a top news headline and people there just going on with their daily lives?

AP: Everyone's talking about it all the time. You don't act differently but every conversation surrounds it... 59,000 people were actually called [to the reserves]. But even then, that affects everyone. We have

friends from class—some of our best guy friends went into the reserves and were in the army for that week. It's completely different living here and knowing people and just witnessing it firsthand and how people deal with it, it's completely different.

SL: Is living within miles of a major conflict something you were able to transition to?

EW: I think we became more numb as the time went on, and we became a little bit more relaxed. I remember the first two or three days we could barely sleep. We couldn't think about the next 10 minutes, let alone the next day, just because it was so tense, like... are there going to be bombs? But then the Israelis would be like, "Don't worry about it. You're safe; you're safe." But what we were saying is, "We know we're personally safe, but we're worried about all those people on both sides who aren't safe, and that's the fear."

SL: There had been a major push on campus to look past the partisanship of the conflict. Is it hard being in Israel where you are physically on one side of the divide?

AP: The people vary on their opinions. There are people that are very extreme about it. They are very harsh how they talk about the Gaza situation, how they talk about Palestinians.



GLI ELIYAHU | XINHUA | ZUMA PRESS | MCT

The damaged bus is seen after an explosion in Tel Aviv, Israel, November 21, 2012. An explosion hit a bus in the heart of Tel Aviv on Wednesday, wounding at least 10 people in what officials said was a terrorist attack. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton shuttled between Jerusalem and the West Bank to help piece together a deal to end Israel's weeklong offensive against Palestinian militants in Gaza that has killed more than 130 Palestinians. Militant rocket fire into Israel has killed five Israelis.

EW: But then you have Israelis who are so liberal and totally understand that something needs to change.

AP: And it is hard because I think both of us try to keep very well educated in this and especially being here and witnessing this. I would never I say I agree 100 percent with everything that the Israeli army does. It is horrible what happened there for the people who aren't supporters of Hamas and are just people who live in Gaza, and this is their home. There's innocent people who were really hurt by this and by no means would I ever be like "I stand with Israel 100 percent no matter what

they do." It's a conversation that needs to be had, and the whole problem with this over all these years is that people won't have the conversation. There are extremists, and there are very right wings on [each] side, and they refuse to have the conversation that needs to be had and to listen to the other side.

EW: What I believe now more than ever, the way to be a true supporter of Israel is to be able to criticize where criticism needs to be. Looking back I can totally criticize both sides and see where both sides are wrong and Israel definitely needs to make some changes and hopefully attempt to collaborate with Egypt

who will collaborate with Hamas.

AP: But I hope the other side sees that, too. There are people who are pro-Palestine whether they be in Israel or at Wash. U. Israel is not this oppressor—

EW:—Israel wants peace. It's just a matter of getting the right people to the table.

AP: You can't bring it up when every single person you know knows someone... almost everyone knew someone who was on that border who was in danger. And like, yes, people want to move on with their lives, but it's always in the back of their heads that they know someone is in danger.