

► Fighting against the left

When gay rights groups at Vanderbilt U. pushed for a sexual orientation anti-harassment clause in the school's conduct code, Rob Kennedy and Kelly Wolf decided they'd had all the political correctness they could take.

The result? *The Arena*, a conservative newspaper co-founded by Kennedy and Wolf to compete with what they believe is the more liberal campus paper, *The Hustler*.

Vanderbilt is by no means alone. The past several years have seen the birth of a slew of conservative newspapers on college campuses across the country. Whether well-established or underground, nearly all the papers stem from the beliefs of their founders that the mainstream media just don't get it.

"There's an attempt — mainly by people on the left — to limit free speech," Kennedy says. "It's a real phenomenon. Of all places, the college campus should be the most free."

Free enough, Kennedy says, to make room for right-wing campus publications to fight media that founders say skew perceptions to the liberal agenda.

Philip Sasser is the editor of *The Independent Perspective*, a conservative paper at Florida State U. First published nearly five years ago, the paper ceased printing for two years, and Sasser decided it was time to revive it.

"Our whole idea is to give out the conservative and libertarian viewpoints," says Sasser, a sophomore at FSU. "You don't get to hear a lot of it around." Sasser believes his paper fills a void left by other outlets on campus and has been pleased with readers' reactions. "We don't have a real strict agenda," he says. "But I think it's popular because it's hard to get a hold of."

Conservative views are not as difficult to get hold of at Harvard U. In fact, they literally are delivered to every student's doorstep. *The Harvard Salient* is distributed to every undergraduate, a practice Editor Curtis Gannon believes helps to keep the conservative viewpoint in the public eye.

"*The Salient* is a very respected publication on campus even though Harvard is still predominantly liberal," the Harvard junior says. "But there's only so many minds you can change." ■ **Joel Risberg, *Florida Flambeau*, Florida State U.**

► Bouncers blamed in death

Student bouncers at a popular nightclub on the fringe of the Southern Illinois U. campus say a fellow student who died outside the bar on a Friday night in February was out of control. The coroner later reported that the student's intoxication level was twice the legal limit. And police denied public cries of excessive force used by the bouncers against the student.

But at the heart of the matter, an SIU student died.

And six employees of Checkers, a dance club near the Carbondale campus, were indicted on charges of involuntary manslaughter and face up to five years in prison if convicted.

According to the coroner's report, freshman Jose Waight died Feb. 5 from a lack of oxygen to the brain, allegedly at the hands of the nightclub bouncers who placed him in a neckhold.

Students are demanding the truth about his death. What they are getting, says senior Kenya Vera, is the run-around. "It seems like a lot of people are trying to suppress us, trying to say, 'Don't be angry; don't take it out on the officials because it's not actually their fault,'" she says. "I don't believe that at all."

In response, student leaders have met with city officials and managers of the club to lobby for new policies that would force bouncers to have formal police training.

"Neither the bouncers or police seem to have a clear legal understanding as to when or how physical force is appropriate," says William Hall, a graduate student. "There is an overall perception both on and off campus that the best remedy to control a crowd or person is physical force." ■ **Jeremy Finley, *Daily Egyptian*, Southern Illinois U.**



Even the most obnoxious thrasher abides by the unwritten rules of pit etiquette: Pull the others up and keep them there.

BRAINS TURN TO 'MOSH' WHEN THE PIT HEATS UP

Students grab onto mainstream slam dancing craze

By Patsyann Jones, *The Falcon*, Seattle Pacific U.

Gregg Bierman, a senior at the U. of Michigan, calls it a national youth dance.

Whatever.

Just don't call it a Seattle thing. Slam dancing has little to do with Seattle anymore now that it's a... national youth dance, a free-form flailing from Chapel Hill to Austin to Boise.

"Even if the music isn't punk or hard rock, people seem to do it anyway, just because it's become the thing to do," Bierman says. "There's no point to it anymore."

At one time, though, there was a point to slam dancing. And at least in some circles, slam dancing is still the bumper-car dance of thrash.

Those in the know call it moshing, flinging about with a definite rhythm. Those not in the know might call it insane.

Slam dancing began as a phenomenon of the British punk scene in the mid-'70s. The original British punk rockers were, for the most part, working class kids unable to find jobs and frustrated by a system that seemed stacked against them — a lot like today's grungesters. They needed a way to release some of their aggressions, and both the music and the moshing provided a release.

"The music was so purging and the audience was so angry that they had to do something to relieve the tension, and the pit was born," says Michelle Morrell, a senior at Seattle Pacific U.

The "pit" is the Mosh Pit, the place where dancers congregate in front of the stage in a swirling sea of bodies in motion, like some genetic experiment gone wild — somewhere between gratuitous invasion of personal space and controlled violence.

And if it looks like a riot, that's because the Mosh Pit started as a riot long before they called it dancing.

"They started having riots at shows," says Clinton Sine, a Seattle musician who traces the roots of slam dancing to early punk bands like the Germs and Black Flag. "It came up at about the same time as trashing the shows began to

be popular. I think a lot of it came up before 1980 or so, but the stage diving is new."

And getting old rather fast.

"It's getting to be a drag for the bands," says Michael Mulvihill, manager of the campus radio station at the U. of Missouri.

"We get more and more bands who just stop and beg the crowd to just quit."

What the bands try to stop — and what some still encourage — is stage diving, where a moshers tries to reach the stage by diving through the crowd or being passed to the stage in the upstretched hands of the crowd.

"There are two unwritten laws in the mosh pit: If there's someone below you, you pull them up, and if there's someone above you, you keep them up," says Seattle Pacific's Morrell, a longtime follower of the Seattle music scene.

So what's the attraction? "Moshing is so elemental — it's total regression back to the animal state," Morrell says.

There's a real feeling of community in a mosh pit — it moves as a unit. The average temperature of the pit is at least 20 degrees higher than in the back of the club, and the combination of heat, energy and exertion means the pit is no place for the weak of heart.

"Moshers wear their bruises like trophies," Morrell says. "I remember one guy rushing back to his friends, yelling, 'Chris Cornell's boot hit me in the face,' and his friends responding, 'Cool, man.'"

But in a sense, today's slam dancing is a far cry from moshing of the past. "It's not really as violent as it was," Sine says. "I think if anything, it's been rediscovered."

Rediscovered to a point, Missouri's Mulvihill says, that moshing has become too mainstream.

"In this part of the country it's so prevalent, it's actually getting annoying. It used to be that people were taking out their aggressions and it was really cathartic. Now it's more about fashion.... At this point, people are just looking for an excuse to do it." ■