

Coming Monday
THE EMMY AWARDS
Winners, losers, more

A new mama

Actress Heigl, husband adopt | **D6**



Online
SO WHAT'S HAPPENING?
Dispatch.com/weekender



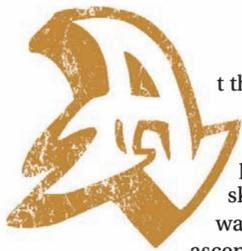
At a park off W. Wilson Bridge Road, Brandon Thomas waits with friends to try some moves.

JONATHAN QUILTER | DISPATCH PHOTOS

Wheels of fortune

Skateboarding teen doesn't let medical condition slow him

By Zach Swartz
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



At the Flow Skatepark on the East Side, Brandon Thomas teeters on the edge of a U-shaped miniramp known as a half-pipe. ¶ In a kneeling position on his skateboard, he leans forward, eyes downward, and plunges. ¶ Within seconds, he is ascending the other side of the ramp, using his hands to lift himself in the air and flip the board horizontally underneath his body before board and body reunite at the top. ¶ "I'm landing kickflips constantly, dude," Thomas says. "Double varials — I never thought I'd be able to do that."



The teen relies on his arms to get airborne.

Kickflips and varials — skateboarding maneuvers that involve skipping into the air and flipping the board with one's feet — are relatively basic ground tricks for even moderately talented skaters.

Thomas' modified versions, though, are much more remarkable: The North Side teenager has mastered the moves without the use of his legs.

The 17-year-old has a rare congenital condition called arthrogryposis, characterized by shortened or curved joints in the arms, legs or both.

"I got really lucky and got it (only) in my legs," he said. "It doesn't affect anything else."

Thomas can move and feel his legs — "So when I go skateboarding and I, like, jump stairs and hit my knees the wrong way, it's a screamer" — but gets virtually no use out of them.

See **WHEELS** Page **D3**

► To see Brandon Thomas in action, visit Dispatch.com/multimedia.

First Person is a weekly forum for personal musings and reflections from readers.

FIRST PERSON

Senior, peers persist in bid to win back sports, clubs

New clothes. Old friends. Lost freshmen. Proud seniors. Class rules. Weird teachers.

School seems pretty typical this year.

But then, when Friday nights roll around and local TV news anchors urge viewers to "enjoy football Friday night," reality hits: It's just Friday night to those of us who attend schools in the South-Western district.

The gorgeous homecoming dresses that pepper malls these days are just painful reminders of a dance that won't happen.

When kids in other districts are waking up early to catch a school bus, we are waking up to walk or hitch a ride.

And 20 years from now, when our counterparts in Upper Arlington, Gahanna or Westerville are dusting off old senior yearbooks, we'll have none to dust.

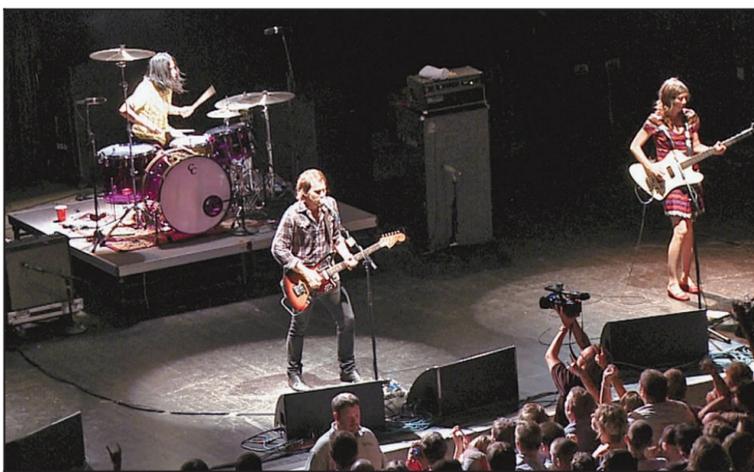
Yes, the 20,000 other district students and I form the collective face of the failure of Issue 2.

The May levy failure left many at Westland High School crying and threatening to leave the district or



MESHA BAYLIS

See **FIRST PERSON** Page **D2**



The band Silversun Pickups, performing at the Lifestyle Communities Pavilion, is featured on *PromoWest Live*, a new TV program created by PromoWest Productions.

Concert video in new show

By Kevin Joy
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Two years ago, only minutes after a Smashing Pumpkins concert at the Lifestyle Communities Pavilion, the venue's creative director went online.

Already posted to YouTube were dozens of amateur videos from the show — short, shaky footage with poor sound.

Yet the quality didn't seem to matter: Unmistakable was the immediate urge — among both concertgoers and Web audiences worldwide — to share and relive the show.

"That was when the first bell went off in my head," said Jason Corron, whose employer, PromoWest Productions, books the A&R Music Bar, the Basement, the Lifestyle Communities Pavilion and the

► **PromoWest Live** will premiere at 1 a.m. Sunday on WCMH-TV (Channel 4).

"There aren't any venues in Columbus that do anything like this. They just book shows."

JASON CORRON

PromoWest Productions

Newport Music Hall.

"We started . . . looking at the way we communicate our shows with advertisers and concertgoers."

The result: the concept for the 30-minute TV program *PromoWest Live*.

Overnight tonight, when the locally filmed and produced show makes its debut at 1 a.m. on WCMH-TV (Channel 4), viewers will get a stylized peek at similar fare.

See **SHOW** Page **D2**

SHOW & TELL



CHARLES DHARAPAK | ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Obama

Obama to be on 'Letterman'

President Obama will be the sole guest Monday night on *Late Show With David Letterman*.

Obama's appearance, his first on *Letterman* since his election in November, will be the show's first visit from a sitting U.S. president.

Letterman airs weeknights from 11:35 p.m. to 12:37 a.m. on CBS, including WBNS-TV (Channel 10).

Fire to light up festival

WaterFire Columbus will ignite tonight for the final burn of the season, in partnership with the Riverfront Art Festival, featuring a performance by Opera Columbus.

Singers will perform excerpts from Puccini's *La Boheme* at 7:30 and 9 p.m., with the bonfire lighting on the Scioto River at 8:30.

The festival, which began yesterday with works by about 150 artists, continues today from noon to 10 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. in Genoa Park, on Washington Boulevard just east of COSI.

The event is free.

'My Boys' to continue on TBS

TBS has ordered a fourth season of the original sitcom *My Boys*.

The series stars Jordana Spiro

See **SHOW & TELL** Page **D3**