

# STUDENT LIFE

## Wilson, Vaughn, Ferrell is comedy at best

Review by Nick Hammond  
staff writer

"Old School" is a near perfect comedy; it's dumb, funny and damn inspiring (at least in the end). This is less a college comedy than a comedy about guys able to throw away all the commitments of marriage and work for a short time in order to experience freedom again.

"Old School" follows the concept of Animal House very closely, but there is also a hint of originality to it, which makes it a hair better than most of the

immature teen comedies that have come around lately.

Mitch (Luke Wilson) comes home one night to find his wife (Juliette Lewis) engaging in group sex with people she met on the Internet. After the divorce, Mitch packs up his things and heads for his new home, a residence on the outskirts of a local college campus.

According to his two thirty-something and married pals Beanie (Vince Vaughn) and Frank (Will Ferrell), the place can be a gold mine. They could throw parties, hang out with teenagers, and relive their

youth. However, they've got a problem: they have nothing to do with the campus and so it is only a matter of time before the College "jerk" Dean of Students (Jeremy Piven) throws Mitch out of his new house.

This gives Beanie an idea. What if they started their own fraternity? Then they would have a legitimate on-campus affiliation and Mitch would be able to keep his new home. They begin recruiting fraternity members, or in other words, the outcasts of the college. Other people, including an 89 year-old man, get recruited

as well. But their dealings with the "jerk" Dean are far from over.

Directed and co-written by Todd Phillips (Road Trip), Old School is stupid fun that fortunately never lowers itself by putting in excessive gross-out material. But that doesn't mean the comedy isn't laugh-out-loud hilarious. Phillips and co-writer Scot Armstrong throw in a few surprises, one-liners and some priceless material involving cinderblocks, streaking and women sucking carrots.

The result is one of the most consis-

tently funny teen comedies I've ever seen. At times, your chest will hurt from laughing so hard. This is only a reminder that you're watching three of the best comic actors in the business. Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell and Vince Vaughn show so much comic accuracy and charm that you literally feel like jumping out of your seat and rooting for them.

To proclaim Old School rocks is all fair and square. If you see this movie, you will not regret it. Overall, I give this movie a rating of 5 out of 5.

## Counselors offer advice during stressful season

By Carolyn Tellers  
Beacon assistant

The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. For many students, that stress can be doubled with end of the semester final papers, assignments and exams. Nicole Kirkpatrick, from the Behrend Personal Counseling office, gave some suggestions on how people can reduce the holiday stress.

Kirkpatrick says that "contributing factors to holiday stress include: unrealistic expectations of family, of the perfect gift, and of having enough money."

Living in our rapidly progressive culture, many may find it difficult to keep up. Another problem that affects people is Seasonal Affective Disorder, caused by the decreasing daylight. For some people, this causes serious depression and help should be sought immediately.

Luckily there are some steps people can take to manage their stress. One step is to plan your Christmas shopping ahead of time, rather than put something off until the last minute. This includes having a manageable budget and staying away from credit cards. Homemade gifts are always a great idea. Put on some Christmas music and bake some cookies to give a friend. They'll appreciate

the homemade taste as well as the time and effort.

Another way to reduce stress is to make realistic expectations of people and events. Don't expect people in your family to act like the families depicted on TV. "Nurturing yourself is important," Kirkpatrick advises. "Remember to laugh and get in touch with your inner child."

Relax by taking a warm bubble bath or listen to soothing music. Go out and make a snowman or play in the snow. Perhaps watch classic holiday cartoon specials on TV. Avoid traffic and mall congestion by shopping early or during off hours such as weekdays. That alone can reduce a great deal of stress, as well as give you time for yourself.

Kirkpatrick warns against changing your habits due to stress or the holidays. "If you exercise, keep exercising. If you eat three meals a day normally, don't eat five because you are stressed." Also, try to limit your consumption of alcohol.

If you are feeling stressed, please visit the Personal Counseling office. The staff is very friendly and easy to talk with. Call 898-6504, or visit the web page: [www.pserie.psu.edu/student/counseling](http://www.pserie.psu.edu/student/counseling). Also, for more information visit <http://www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/103.cfm>.

## Roll the world up with 'Damacy'

By Nick Hammond  
staff writer

How do you define creativity? Easy, say "Katamari Damacy." That's it. You're done. Katamari is all you need. No wordy explanation, no descriptive imagery, no pronunciation guide and no sentences using it in practical conversation. It's creativity in two words and happens to be some of the most fun the universe can offer for just \$20.

What exactly is "Katamari Damacy?" It all starts when your father who is a comically abusive alcoholic and also the King of the Cosmos, goes on a wicked bender and manages to break all of the stars in the sky. Wanting to get someone else to clean up his mess, he gives you a Katamari, which is a ball that, when rolled over objects that are smaller than it, causes them to cling to it. Then Rainbow Roads you to Earth with a little Katamari. Now you need to collect some junk so dad can make up some new stars to replace the ones he busted.

You roll the Katamari about collecting cats and thumbtacks, some people and then an octopus and maybe Godzilla or something. Each time you grab something with the Katamari, its size increases. This way the more junk

you get by pushing it around, the bigger it gets. Eventually it'll get so big that you can pick up buildings and islands and clouds and thunderstorms and everything.

"Katamari Damacy" is that idea on a disc. It's an astonishing, simple, outrageous embodiment of creativity and style. It controls like a nimble tank, requires the use of exactly no buttons, and is all about one little star guy pushing an ever expanding Katamari around the world. He rolls on and picks up whatever happens to be there.

It's a box of hilarious, clever joy, and at the same time it happens to be so enchanting it's nearly impossible to look past, even if you're just idly walking by. Amazingly, all this game offers is the Katamari, a time limit, and a complete lack of restraint. Roll on! Everything in the world is bound by weight and size, lighter objects increase diameter and can be picked up, but may be too large and awkward to handle easily, causing the Katamari to roll at odd angles. And then you just keep rolling, swiveling the analog sticks to tightly round corners, racing to reach new areas or to cross fields with wayward cows or circus balancing acts on their far ends. It's great because of scale. It's great because of

diversity. Yet, if only there were more.

In terms of graphics, it's painfully bland at a glance, but marvelously scales to become ridiculously detailed. It's cluttered, animated wonderfully, and broken up by mind-blowing cutscenes that make little sense. It features towering, but blocky humans that wander about constricting environments; then, it suddenly features tiny people who humorously flail around after they've been caught on the Katamari that continually rolls, devouring trees, cars and anything else in sight.

It's not the most technically brilliant collection of scores ever devised, but not since Mario created its everlasting tune have we heard tracks so catchy and so genuine. Add to them the ultra satisfying shouts of surprised pigeons, cats, mice, cows, people and giant monsters make when they're rolled up into the recesses of the Katamari and you have something that's just incredible.

Katamari Damacy is something that's fun, something that's happy and something that's so well put together and so enjoyable, whatever faults it may have fade behind the laughter and smiles it so effortlessly creates.



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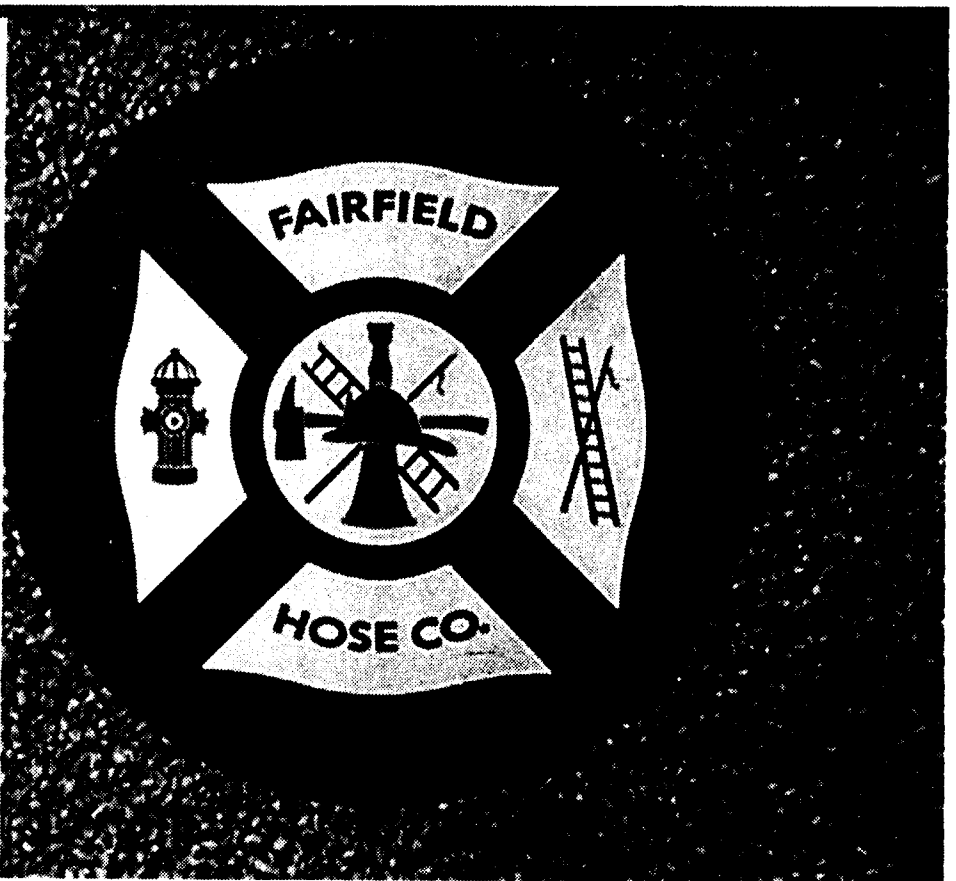
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