

# TRU Life

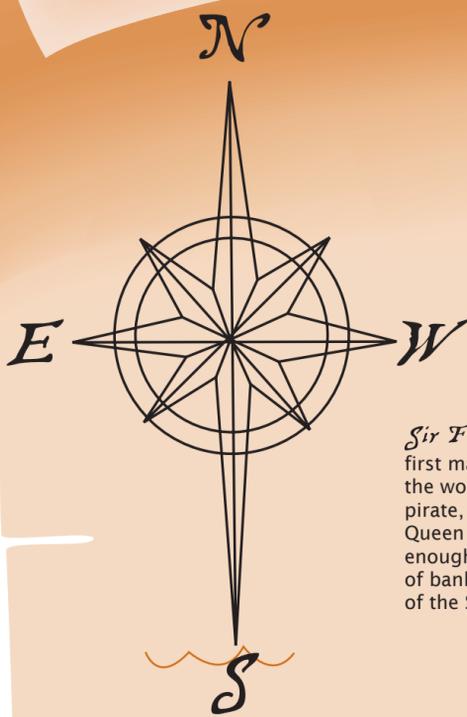
**COMMON'S  
ALBUM FINALLY  
RELEASED**

Common's  
"Universal Mind  
Control" album  
hits stores 6  
months late

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## Pirates still dominate the high seas



The "Sea Peoples" are the earliest documented instance of pirates, appearing sometime around 1200 B.C.

Sir Francis Drake was the first man to circumnavigate the world. Although he was a pirate, he was a close friend of Queen Elizabeth. He secured enough loot to help England out of bankruptcy with the capture of the Spanish Galleon in 1579.

Batholomew "Black Bart" Roberts is arguably the most successful pirate in history, having captured more than 400 ships and 50 million pounds of gold and treasure in his 30-month career. He also was the main inspiration for Jack Sparrow in the Pirates of the Caribbean series.

Somali pirates have been active along the African coastline since 2005.

The famous pirate Black Beard would often stuff lighted cannon fuses under his hat and in his beard.



Design by Rose Runser, Chris Drew, and Antionette Bedessie/Index  
Source: thepiratesrealm.com

**BY STEPHANIE HALL**  
Features Editor

Break out the eye patches and peg legs: There's a new bunch of pirates in town.

Somali pirates have been attacking and holding tankers ransom in Africa since 2005. According to the International Maritime Organization, from January through September 2008, 4,730 acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships were reported. Although the Somali pirates lack the traditional eye patches and peg legs, they share more in common with some of their early pirate predecessors.

"These are not pirates of the old type with big ships and that sort of thing," professor of history David Robinson said. "What they are, apparently, are people who used to be fishermen."

Climate change and overfishing by large companies in Africa caused the fishing industry in Somali to change dramatically, he said. With bigger companies moving in, smaller fishers cannot compete, Robinson said.

"People have lost their jobs but still have their boats and feel like they have been run out of business by the big shots," he said. "They have no opportunities so they go out there and manage to impose these big ransoms on the ships."

These ransoms include millions of dollars in United States currency. Robinson said many poor countries do not print their own money anymore, so inhabitants trust the U.S. dollar more than their own currency.

During a more recent ransom payoff, helicopters flew the money to the Somali pirates. During their escape, their boat sank under the weight of the money, killing some of the pirates and sacrificing their money, Robinson said.

"This is not a well organized bunch," he said. "The thing is the coastline. The area is so poorly organized and managed and there is valuable cargo going through — that's how they've been able to get by with it for so long."

The Somali pirates are very similar to some of the first pirates in existence, but their arrival is not due to wealth but of need.

"A phenomenon known as the Sea Peoples happened around 1200 B.C.," said Lynn Rose, professor of ancient history. "That might be our earliest documentation of piracy in a way, because you know that pirates are just people in boats stealing things and destroying things."

Rose said sea people were just lots of people in boats coming from unknown places. They were pushed out by climate changes that wiped out major civilizations. Other early signs of pirates were recorded in books like "The Iliad" around 800 B.C., Rose said.

"Piracy was an easy recourse for the hungry and those familiar with the local tides and currents," Rose said.

The Romans were the first to get a handle on the pirate problem. Rose said that in the first century B.C., Pompeii cleared the Mediterranean of pirates by chasing them to land, rather than fighting them in the water.

"What happened was, [Pompeii] ended up conquering places like Judea, so the Roman Empire grew as a result of his trying to con-

quer piracy," Rose said.

In Somalia, Chad and Darfur — where there is a great deal of trouble and unrest within the governments — the conditions are perfect for piracy, Robinson said. He explained that these were similar conditions to when piracy broke out in the Americas in the 1500s and 1600s.

"I think piracy often takes advantage of disputed authority and the possibility of being one side and switching to another," Robinson said.

After Spain and Portugal claimed the entire new world after the treaty of 1494, and the Dutch and British started trading in the Western Hemisphere, they were called pirates because of the territories that the Spanish and Portuguese claimed to run, he said.

"You could think of the new world as a place where fights over piracy settled the difference between Latin and North America," Robinson said.

The French and British ended up with North America and the Spanish and Portuguese got Central and South America, which at the time were the hottest properties. Thus the pirates of the Caribbean were born during the golden age of piracy.

Senior Nigel Dunetts studied abroad last summer in the Caribbean and learned about the golden age of piracy, which occurred from the 1660s to 1720s.

"There was some piracy over in Europe, but the European countries had well-established navies that kept them away, but at the

time, the Caribbean was still flourishing," Dunetts said. "There was a lot of rapid development, and because of that, there wasn't very much protection, but there was a ton of wealth."

This wealth could be attributed to the islands' extremely valuable sugarcane plantations. Dunetts said piracy flourished in those areas for the better part of 50 or 60 years while there were wars going on in Europe.

"There was a bunch of trade in the Caribbean, and because most of the military were over in Europe, there wasn't anyone there to protect these new colonies," Dunetts said.

With the colonies unprotected, this spawned privateers. Privateers are essentially pirates who were paid to protect colonies that hired them. These people usually were familiar with the sea whether they were pirates, slave traders, sea merchants or ex-navy personnel.

"If you put out a beckon like that, you will pay someone basically to be bodyguards," Dunetts said.

However, more often than not, they acted as much more than bodyguards that nations would use to attack other colonies. It's this type of behavior that inspired movies to portray pirates as pillagers who destroy towns like in the first scene of "Pirates of Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl." Dunetts said from his research that the pirates from the Disney movie actually probably looked pretty close to the pirates from real life. He said they were probably based off the pirate Black Bart.

"Sometimes the rumors were true especially with this guy," Dunetts said. "He actually did look the part of the pirates according to records. Big hats and flamboyantness of pirates are modeled after him."

**"They have no opportunities so they go out there and manage to impose these big ransoms on the ships."**

David Robinson  
Professor of History

### Around the Ville

**Jan. 23**

7 p.m.  
**String Fest**  
Two-day workshops with string players

Ophelia Parrish  
Free



**Jan. 24**

9 p.m.  
**Concert**

The Full Moon Bar hosts Blues Hog

The Full Moon Bar  
\$3



**Jan. 27**

7:30 p.m.  
**Lyceum Series**

Hubbard Street 2

Baldwin Auditorium  
Adults \$7  
Under 18 \$4

