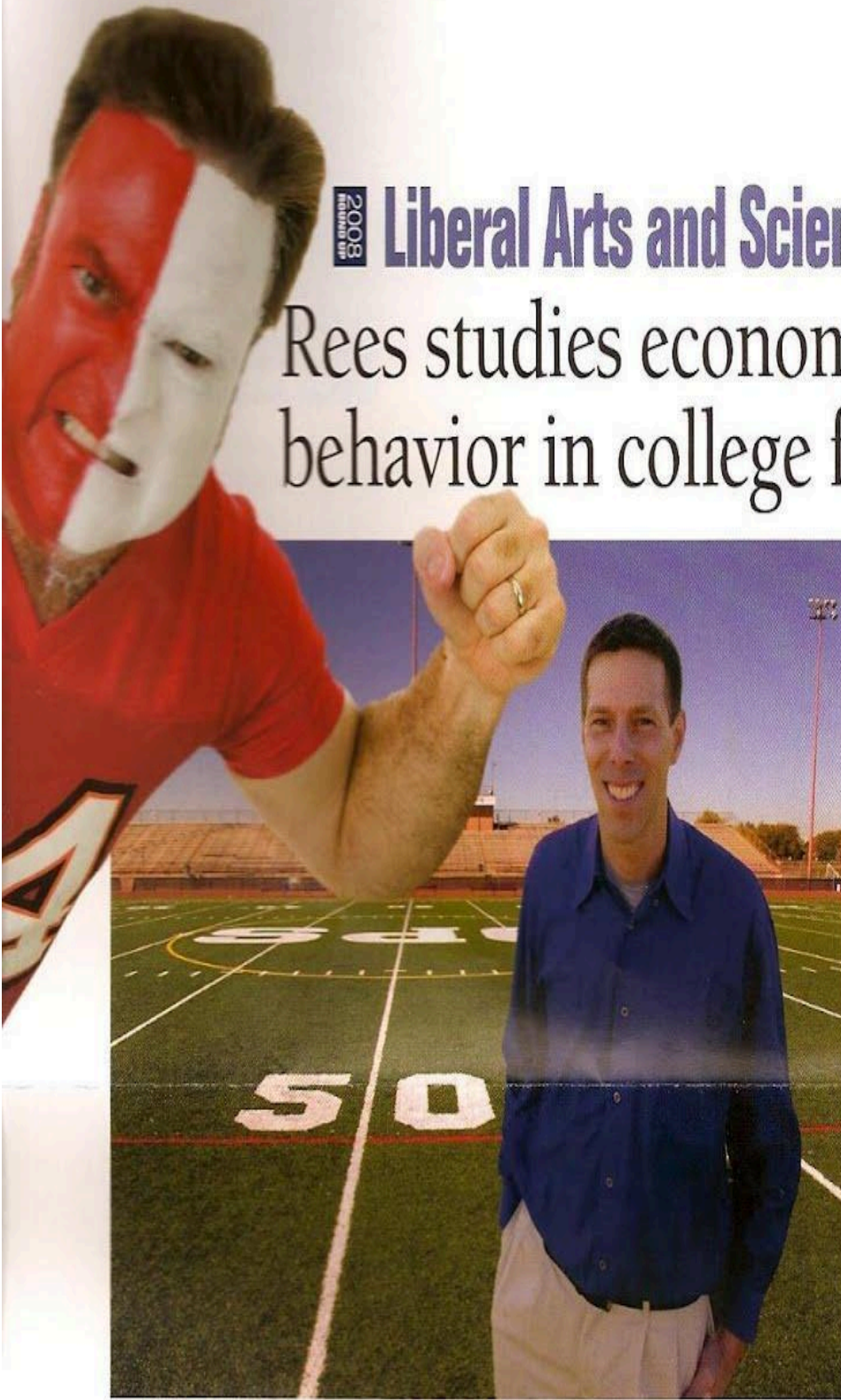


Senior Ashley Paggen has a little fun with a skeleton during her internship at the Arapahoe County Coroner's office

2008 ANNUAL Liberal Arts and Sciences:

Rees studies economics of behavior in college football fans



Daniel Rees (above) and former graduate student Kevin Schnepel showed that violent incidents rise in communities after games when the home team unexpectedly wins or loses.

daniel Rees is fascinated by the mystery of human behavior—but his approach begins with the numbers. An associate professor of economics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences since 1993, he has co-authored a study he believes goes beyond anecdote and offers statistical evidence for aggressive behavior among college football fans.

The study specifically investigates acts of vandalism, disorderly conduct, assaults and drinking-related crimes that occur in towns that host Division I-A college football games. Evidence shows that, compared with non-game

or away-game days, violent incidents happen more frequently when teams host games in their hometown communities. In particular, Rees says the greatest rise in aggression follows games that result in an upset.

"It didn't matter whether the home team won when they weren't supposed to, or lost one they were expected to win," he says.

The findings rely on crime data reported by law enforcement agencies that hold jurisdiction over Division I-A college football communities to a National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Currently only 26 of 119 Division I-A teams are housed in communities where law enforcement agencies report to the NIBRS.

Rees' former graduate student and coauthor, **Kevin Schnepel**, MA '08, methodically researched and gathered crime statistics from every game played by the pertinent football teams from 2000 to 2005.

The data show the influence of alcohol consumption on crime. Division I-A football stadiums ban the sale of alcohol but more numerous reports of alcohol-related crimes on game day suggests that drinking still occurs.

While the college football games and crime study references two psychology-based theories for behavior—the social learning theory and the frustration-aggression hypothesis—Rees says neither adequately explains their findings.

The upside of Rees' statistical findings is that it challenges current theories of behavior. "On the other hand, no one quite knows what to do with this," he says. "The study offers a statistics-driven explanation for behavior but doesn't approach the problem in a way other social scientists might."

Rees doesn't recognize any immediate public policy implications as a result of the study, though he suggests it informs Division I-A football communities of what should be expected on game day. It has even raised eyebrows in the media. *Colorado Matters*, a state public radio program, has interviewed both authors, and the study was mentioned in the *New York Times*' Freakonomics blog.

Despite its unusual position in the world of social sciences, the study will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Sports Economics*.