

theherald

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It's A Wonderful Ball



Credit: Kent Hoshiko

Food by Irma

The Person Behind the Fish Tacos

by Meg McEwen

When Irma Rodriguez completed the online application to be a dishwasher at PHC, she did not expect to cook, and she certainly did not foresee students begging for more of her ethnic dishes and calling her the “Michael Jordan of the kitchen” months later. These days, students at PHC cannot get enough of Rodriguez’s flavorful, authentic Mexican dishes that she makes in PHC’s global food center.

“God just put it on my heart because I wanted to serve, and I know that you guys study God’s Word and that really drew me because I did not even know that PHC had a kitchen,” Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez grew up cook-

It’s A Wonderful Ball

PHC Celebrates the End of the Fall Semester With the Annual Christmas Ball

by Beth Bergstrom

PHC hosted the annual Christmas Ball last night. *It’s A Wonderful Ball* was held at the Bush Tabernacle Skating Rink.

After deliberation on a theme, the planning committee selected *It’s A Wonderful Ball*. “We really wanted to do something a little different from previous years, something that would capture the nostalgia and joy of Christmas. *It’s a Wonderful Life* is a

Christmas classic that nearly everyone loves, and it takes us back to our childhoods to remind us what Christmas is all about,” explained Blaire Bayliss, a member of the Christmas Ball planning committee. “I wanted to do something a little different from the usual ‘snow’ and ‘trees’ themes, and I thought this might be something new and fun to try!”

According to the committee planning members, a profit was made from presale tickets.

“In September, we divided up roles: Brenna would do

decorations, I would do promotion, Danielle would get a facility, and Blaire would do food. We picked the theme early on, so once Danielle nailed down a facility, I went to work designing posters and tickets,” said Becca Samelson, a committee planning member. “Brenna talked to Dean Corbitt to get our money so we could buy decorations and food and to see what types of decorations we had access to. I then picked people to sell tick-

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Interested in submitting an editorial?

If so, contact Beth Bergstrom at:

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studentgovernment

The Fall 2016 Chapel Assessment Commission Report was amended and passed unanimously by the Student Senate Wednesday night. One of the primary recommendations is the development of an alternative punishment for students who skip chapel 10-15 times in a semester. Rather than completing two hours of community service, the report recommends that students listen to the chapel they missed and write a response or reflection paper on the chapel, like the assignment for students who miss Faith & Reason lectures.

On behalf of Student Government, enjoy an extended break away from the stress of coursework, and have a Merry Christmas.

We'll see you back here in January.

-Tim Kocher, Senate Speaker

Students Dance the Semester Away

continued from cover

ets, wrote a chapel announcement, picked a date for the announcement, then watched the drama unfold.”

As dates were made, dresses bought, and meals planned the annual Christmas Ball came and went.

“I think there is this expectation that the night needs to go perfectly and that nothing can go ‘wrong.’ I think it is im-

portant to enjoy the time spent not just with your date but with the group you go with and everyone else at the ball,” said Danielle Fife, a member of the planning committee. “Go, eat good food with your date and the group you go with, have fun at the dance, and go out after if you want. It is all about forgetting about the looming finals and how you are going to finish everything with just a week left in the schedule.” ♦



Freshmen Leah Widener and Leo Briceno

Credit: Evie Fordham

A Passion for Service and Authentic Flavor

continued from cover

ing meals for herself and her family in Mexico City. “My mother used to give me 20 pesos to go to the market and get something to eat. So I went home and I made us fish or I made us salsas,” Rodriguez said. She only planned to leave her collegiate studies in Mexico and help her sister in America for six months, but she forged a life for herself here and remains 35 years later.

Rodriguez worked with computer technology for the government for 17 years until her office shut down. She opened her own retail clothing store and sold hand-

made Mexican clothing and jewelry. Her store closed six years later, and Rodriguez decided that she wanted to serve. Whenever Rodriguez drove by PHC, she wanted to work here but did not even know that PHC had a kitchen. One day she checked the website and noticed that the school needed a dishwasher. Even though Rodriguez knew that her skills lay in the culinary department, she decided to apply. Michelle Del Mundo told her that a position had just opened up at the salad bar, and she officially joined PHC’s staff on July 1.

Rodriguez thought that the menus could use a little Mexican spice. On a whim, she asked the chefs if she could make a small addition to the menu. She cautiously put together tostadas with leftover ground beef and a moderate amount of salsa, not expecting students to like it, as her kids were not enthusiastic about ethnic food. To her astonishment, positive review cards began flowing in and lines started forming behind the food bar.

“They were shocked because one time I was making quesadillas I had a line of students... and then everybody was crazy about the fish tacos and I was like, ‘What? That’s so simple!’” Rodriguez said. Soon, the new Global Food Center at PHC’s dining hall opened, and students responded with overwhelmingly positive reviews.

“I’m a senior, and I can say with absolute certainty that some of the dishes Irma has made have been the best food I have ever had in the dining hall. Her style is also something very different from the usual fare, so the new option is heavily appealing to students,” Santos DeBarros said.

“Irma is like an onion. She has many layers. Every time I come to the dining hall I find a new delicious layer she has prepared for us,” sophomore Cooper Millhouse said.

“Living in Southern California and having spent a week in Mexico, I can positively say that that is quality Mexican food. It’s great to have food that isn’t just decent, but restaurant quality,” sophomore Elias Gannage said.

At first, Rodriguez only had the ingredients at hand ordered by Bon Apatite. Gradually, she began requesting for specific ingredients or donating her own to the cause, like corn tortillas or dry hot peppers for the salsa. One time Rodriguez did not have avocados for a dish she was making, but she knew that the combination of jalapenos and a lot of cilantro tastes like avocados, so she supplemented those ingredients in the recipe. “I think the secret of all the dishes is the salsa that you put on or the combination that you put in,” Rodriguez said. ♦



Credit: Becca Samelson

Christmas Dinner at Pakistani Embassy

by Evie Fordham

All Neighbors Loudoun County is seeking volunteers for its first Christmas and Happy Holidays Celebration Dinner at the Pakistani Embassy on Dec. 9. The free event will include a speech from Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Jalil Abbas Jilani, and a traditional Pakistani meal. Ilyas Masih, who grew up in Pakistan, founded and directs All Neighbors. He is expecting around 250 Muslim, Hindu, and Christian guests at the dinner.

"My goal for this program is to help our non-Christian friends understand that Jesus came not only for Christians," Masih said. "He died for everybody - Muslims, Hindus, Christians, everybody."

Eagle Ridge Middle School in Ashburn hosted the Christmas dinner in years past until Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, the Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, attended in 2015 and offered the Pakistani Embassy as a venue.

"God answered my prayer of the last three or four years," Masih said. "I have always had a heart for the embassy. It's the headquarters of Pakistan in the U.S."

Masih reached out to Josiah DeGraaf, president of PHC's Jim Elliot Club, for help recruiting students as volunteers to set up and attend the banquet. DeGraaf attended All Neighbors' Easter celebration in March at Eagle Ridge. Both programs have similar structures.

"The Easter dinner was really neat," he said. "The first half was in an auditorium. The Statesmen sang, Pakistani kids danced, and there were some local politicians giving speeches encouraging unity. The dinner was in the school cafeteria at these long tables, and we were encouraged to get to know the people around us. The people I met were from Pakistan and India, and some were Christians. It was a great way to meet people I otherwise wouldn't have."

DeGraaf plans on leading a group of PHC students to volunteer at the dinner, tentatively departing for the embassy around 4 p.m. in the afternoon of Dec. 9.

"You're mingling with people, meeting them, and enjoying fellowship with them.



Ilyas Masih and family

Courtesy: Ilyas Masih

When appropriate, you can talk about your faith," he said. "A lot of the time college students get involved with short-term mission trips and miss the opportunity to reach non-Christians here."

Masih plans on filing for 501(c)(3) non-profit status soon. All Neighbors not only needs short-term volunteers for its events but also volunteers to develop its online presence. "These days, because of what's going on in the world and the terror attacks, a lot of our Muslim friends are disheartened," Masih said. "As followers of Jesus Christ, this is a good time to show them the hope and peace we have." ♦

PHC Partnership with Tree of Life Ministries

by Leah Greenwood

This Christmas, the faculty and staff of PHC have partnered with Tree of Life Ministries to help six local families in need. Instead of having a normal faculty and staff Christmas party, where the focus can easily be self-centered, President Jack Hays wanted to take this opportunity to bless the community and give to other people. During their annual Christmas party on Friday, faculty and staff members will spend their time wrapping presents and decorating Christmas trees to give to these families.

Six teams, each led by a staff member, have been formed. Each wing has been placed on one of the teams and assigned to one of the six families. The wings will

provide gifts to go under the trees which the faculty and staff members are preparing. Mary Haynes has made contact with each family and has given the teams some basic information on the families, including how many children are in each family, the age and gender of the children, and what the families' needs and wants are.

"We want to reach out to the community and let them know we are here," Haynes said, adding that many of the families are very grateful for whatever they receive.

Each team has received a budget of \$50 to buy items such as clothing, canned goods, living essentials, and toys for the families. Students can choose to spend more on the families if they desire.

Elise Kersey will be renting a U-Haul truck, and on Dec. 5, the gifts and trees

will be presented to the families. Each family will also receive a Bible and a Children's Bible Story Book, provided by President and Mrs. Hays.

RA Julia Tomaszewski is glad for an opportunity to get involved with and show God's love to the community. "It makes you feel good to know you're doing something for others," Tomaszewski said.

"I think it's a really cool opportunity to be able to bless people in the community who don't really have a lot," fellow RA Sarah Geesaman added. At college, Geesaman said, it is easy to quickly become self-centered when everything is focused around getting good grades and figuring out future jobs, so it is important to be able to turn the focus onto other people who are in need because it matters more in the long-term. ♦

Open Letter On Mental Health

The seventh piece in the Herald's Mental Health Series

by Beth Bergstrom

Some people have expressed concerns about the *Herald's* series on mental health issues this semester. Some said it was too dark. Others suggested that discussing the problems would only make them worse.

Clearly, these were some dark and intense subjects, but we do believe the series was worthwhile, and we trust that it benefited the campus community. What we described is reality for many—not all, but many—students; we told the truth as we understand it.

And if we as a community cannot address these subjects openly, if we pretend they don't exist, how will things improve? Where does that leave those who think they are alone in their struggles?

This summer, someone close to me took her own life. Everyone pretended that the depression was situational, and that it would get better

until the night it finally became all consuming. She ended her suicide note saying, "If you want to do something, find a way to raise awareness and find support for those who need it. Depression kills!"

Depression and mental illnesses do kill.

I really don't think that PHC experiences a higher ratio of students who suffer from mental health issues than other college campuses. On a smaller campus, we're just more likely to know those who suffer.

It is easier to pretend that issues don't exist. But history has shown us that ignoring problems rarely results in resolution. When a close friend of mine attempted suicide, that person told everyone she was better. Later I found out that she was already thinking of another way. But it was

easier to pretend that everything was fine.

I chose the mental health series because the easier option in the short term can cause unthinkable long-term damage. It is easier to think that depression is merely a temporary sadness that afflicts college students when they become overwhelmed. But that is not depression.

Depression is being completely unable to get out of bed day after day. Depression is doing everything right and still feeling like a failure. Depression will never be beaten by ignoring the issue. The reality

is, many people who suffer from depression try to pretend like it doesn't exist. And yet, they still suffer.

Anxiety is not being nervous about an exam; it is the crippling fear of walking into the dining hall alone.

Eating disorders are not just dieting; they are becoming physically sick when you try to eat, because the thought of gaining any more weight becomes harder than

forcing the vomit.

There is no easy answer. I would never pretend that there is. But I can tell you what it does not look like. It does not look like pretending the problems facing students are unreal. It does not look like telling someone they just need to control their emotions better. It does not look like telling someone who is struggling that they just need to pray more.

We as a community need to come together and say that mental health is a serious topic. We need to practice loving our neighbors. We cannot continue thinking that the length of a girl's skirt matters more than the scars on her wrist.

The sources used during the mental health series were all women. However, that is not representative of those who suffer with various mental health problems.

Men suffer from depression. Men suffer from anxiety. And men suffer from eating disorders. Earlier this year Joey Julius, the kicker for the Penn State University football team, opened up about his eating disorder.

There aren't flashing neon signs surrounding those who are dealing with mental health problems. It would be easier to help those who are struggling if there were.

Mental health needs to be talking about. Discussions will not always be neat or pretty.

I was never oblivious to mental health struggles. But last winter I could no longer avoid having intense conversations about mental illness.

We need to talk about mental health so that our friends aren't struggling in secret. We need to talk about mental health so that they know there are options. We need to talk about mental health so that it doesn't force someone to hit rock bottom before we pick them up. Talking about mental health won't magically cure anxiety, depression, or eating disorders; however, it may convince somebody that they aren't alone.

In working on the series I have had conversations with student life about the mental health policies. They want a conversation. They don't want any students feeling so lost that they cannot see a way out. They want us to seek help when we need it.

If you're reading this as you watch a friend struggle know that it will all be okay. It is not your job to save anyone. It is your job to show Christ's love to our neighbors, not save them from themselves.

Whether you're a friend or the one struggling, you are never alone.

Sincerely,
Beth Bergstrom ♦

"We as a community need to come together and say that mental health is a serious topic. We need to practice loving our neighbors."

Blast from the Past: Past Acts of Harmonicomedy

by Giovanna Lastra

At the end of every semester, students look forward to the comic relief of the Harmonicomedy show amidst the pressures of finals. With this year's show set to take place tonight, it's a good time to look back on some of the best performances in Harmonicomedy history.

Seniors Luke Thomas and Philip Bunn recalled the **Who's Line is it Anyway? PHC Edition** skit that was done Fall 2014. The skit was conducted like a game show with now seniors Andrew Kelly and Drake Jones as hosts. The contestants were current senior Jesse Eastman, alumnus David Fullerton, and former students Sam Scarlett and Creighton Deems. Other than the prompts given by the hosts, the skit was done completely impromptu by the contestants.

"One of my favorite parts was when the hosts asked, 'What do you not want to see freshmen doing?' and Creighton got on one knee and pretended he was proposing. A few questions later, the host asked, 'What is one way you should not ask a girl to the Christmas Ball?' and Creighton once again pretended he was proposing. It was so funny," Bunn said.

During the Spring 2015 Harmonicomedy, students did a **Lip Sync Battle** skit performing popular songs in competition against one another. Students performed songs such as *Price Tag* by Jessie J, *Better Than Revenge* by Taylor Swift, *Beauty and a Beat* by Justin Bieber, and *Let It Go* from the movie *Frozen*. Alumni Mikayla Feil's performance of *Beauty and a Beat* was especially exciting for students who were surprised when now alumni Matthew Boles



Matt Boles and Mikayla Feil

Courtesy of PHC Communications

jumped on stage to rap Nikki Minaj's feature on the song.

"It was great because it was so unexpected," junior Kent Hoshiko said. "Town Hall went through the roof! It was the loudest I've ever heard it. And the mark of true genius is copycats. It feels like Harmonicomedy is all lipsyncs now."

Students and past alumni also enjoyed the **song parodies** performed by alumnus David Fullerton throughout his time at PHC. In the Fall 2013 show, Fullerton and now seniors Stan Crocker, Andrew Kelly, and Luke Genter performed a parody version of Billy Joel's *Piano Man*. In the song, Fullerton sang about late night paper writing.

"When David Fullerton did his first cover with Stan and Luke, that was pretty cool. It was always a cool moment whenever someone got recognized for their talent for the first time," alumnus and past Harmonicomedy host Ben Williamson said.

Another skit performed in past shows were the **dance numbers** done by senior Thaddeus Tague and alumnus Tim Hsu. Spring 2016 the two performed a dance number about pulling an all-nighter, then getting a burst of energy after drinking a

mysterious liquid.

"I really liked the dance numbers because they were always different. It really incorporated the arts which is something I loved seeing done during the show," alumna Christine McDonald said.

Last but certainly not least was **Andrew Bambrick's performance** of Matt Lowry's *Some other Time, Some Other Place* in Fall 2015. In the performance, Bambrick sang a duet with himself, placing a wig on his head when singing the female part. The crowd went crazy during the performance and it remains a favorite amongst those who were there.

"I could not stop laughing during the performance! It was one of the best comedy sketches that I've seen at Harmonicomedy," alumnus Matt Boles said.

This year's host, Brooks Freeland, shared that he and Kelly are revamping the Harmonicomedy show. "We're switching up the format of the show a little bit this semester and making it more of a talk-show styled event. Kelly and I are hoping to be more involved with the show, including doing some of our own acts."

Harmonicomeday will be held tonight in Town Hall at 8 p.m. ♦

A Correction on the Luke Thomas Profile

The last issue of the *Herald* contained a piece on Luke Thomas. The following offers clarifications or corrections on the article. Thomas was not teased for trying

to have discussions on movies. His first experience with film was not the script he showed his roommate. Ian Reid was not unable to guarantee that he could "create

a movie" out of Thomas' film, but there were personal circumstances that kept it from immediately being a reality. Thomas also does not own 80's canvas shoes. ♦

Lauren Mitchell Publishes Book of Poetry

by Beth Bergstrom

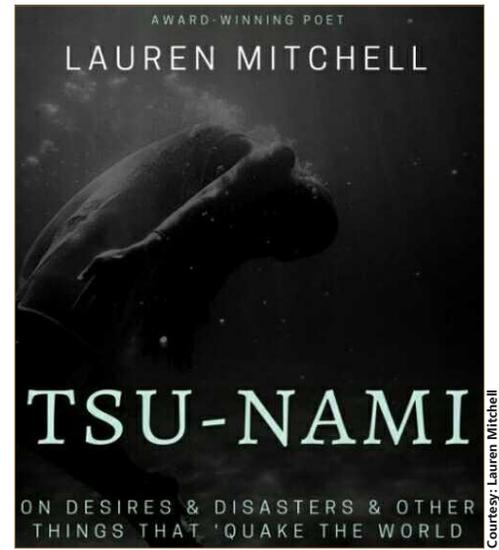
PHC senior Lauren Mitchell's self-published book of poetry, *Tsu-Nami*, is now available for preorder on her website. It is written for the slam poetry community. The title is a play on the Japanese meaning. "In the book's namesake poem, I explain it with this line: "When (tsu) means harbor and (nami) means wave, how can you tell a refuge from a storm?" Mitchell said.

Mitchell has been performing poetry since her mom stuffed her in a pea costume, put a bow on her head, and recorder her as Mitchell performed "I Eat My Peas With Honey" with her best friend Christina.

For Mitchell, poetry is an exercise in empathy. "I want to understand," she

said. "If you can't empathize with a hurting generation, and walk in the shoes of the lost, how are you supposed to show Christ's compassion to them?"

Mitchell aims for readers to gain one thing from her poetry. "It's okay not to be okay! PHC student, If you're reading this, pretending that your life is perfect, trying to be what everyone expects, I see through you. I know that you aren't. I know that you struggle, that you're human, and that you desperately want someone to see you for who you truly are - and to love you regardless," Mitchell said. "Well, cue Lauren. Cue the cumulation of everything Lauren's short life has taught her about pain, about friendship, about love, and about hope. I'm here to be a friend to those who are tired of pretending. And if you're too shy to admit that need, maybe



my book can be that friend, instead."

The proceeds from the December book sales will go to the Children's Miracle Network. ♦

Christmas at Kondak's Market

by Vienna Jacobson

For most people, the Christmas season is filled with bustle and holiday gatherings. While the Kondak family participates in these traditional activities, much of their Christmas is filled with stocking fruit baskets and keeping their family market running.

Kurt Kondak, sophomore Erin Kondak's father, worked for two Italian brothers straight out of high school, and they groomed him to take over the small grocery business that would eventually bear his family name. Six years later, the younger of the two brothers passed away unexpectedly from a heart problem, leaving Kurt in charge of the store sooner than he had anticipated.

In September of 1988, Kurt married his wife, Beth, and together they took over the store. "Because Christmas is such a big part of our business I knew I needed to be there full time," Beth said.

For the next five years, Beth and Kurt worked endless hours, pouring their lives into their new venture. Kurt's parents even mortgaged their house in order for

Kurt to buy the business.

Eighty-hour workweeks became the norm for the next five years, but Beth became grateful for the long days. "It was nice because I learned pretty much everything about the business," Beth said. Experiencing these strenuous days also gave Beth context for the long hours that Kurt would spend during the Christmas season, especially when she became a stay-at-home mom.

Once the five Kondak children were between the ages of two and 13, their parents began teaching all of them to work in the store. Things went smoothly, until suddenly groceries and cash began missing. Just before Christmas of 2007, the Kondaks realized that seven out of their 10 employees were stealing from them.

Using a little video camera, Kurt soon caught each employee loading up on groceries and taking cash. He soon realized that the employees had grown bold enough to steal when he was just downstairs in the office.

"I remember thinking, 'How could people I knew so well turn around and do something like that?'" Spencer, the Kondak's oldest, said.



The Kondak's building

"We felt not only devastated, but also betrayed because they were stealing from us," Kurt added.

Slowly, the store recovered from the hit, although it never regained such a large staff. However, the family was never quite the same, and the store remains a significant part of their life.

The Kondak family hopes to go on the mission field once they sell Kondak's Market, first starting with short-term trips and seeing where God leads from there. ♦

Merry & Bright: The Best of the Season

PHC's Top Traditions During the Christmas Holidays

by Rebekah Jorgensen

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Students return from Thanksgiving to find the BHC transformed into a Christmas wonderland, and thus begins the countdown to finals and the upcoming break. In the midst of existential crises over papers and grades, campus still finds time to come together for time-honored traditions, with DC even offering some treasures of its own.

Lessons & Carols

This is a PHC classic. The events team transforms the gym into a nighttime concert venue, and the chorale puts together a show-stopping performance of both old and new holiday music, interspersed with readings of the Christmas story. To close out the evening, all audience members are given a candle, and the chorale closes out the evening with a participatory singing of "Silent Night." *This year's Lessons & Carols will be held on Dec. 3 at 7 p.m.*

Christmas Ball

This tradition almost goes without saying, but the Christmas Ball deserves its place in the annals of PHC history. After all, it is the first dance of the year in which freshman guys have to ask girls out



for an evening! Ladies don cocktail dresses and men polish their shoes, with most couples heading first to the BHC to have Christine McDonald snap a few photos under the twinkling lights before heading out to dinner. During the ball, partners participate in swing competitions, casual waltzing, and Nathan Jacob leads a group in breaking it down to the *Wobble*. All in all, the Christmas ball is always one of everyone's favorite nights of the semester.

Dorm Decorations

Whether it's Red Hill stringing some tinsel and a few ornaments down their

stair banister, or Mount Vernon quite literally decking the halls with trees, lights, and red bows, each of the dorms puts their own spin on their decorations. It's always a treat to visit the lobbies, steal a candy cane, and admire the Christmas cheer.

Reading of *A Christmas Carol*

With his soothing voice and gentle manner, Dr. Veith used to host an annual reading of *A Christmas Carol* in the lounge of Montpelier. However, since Dr. Veith's retirement, President Haye now carries on this tradition. Make sure to trek on down to the couches of D3 to enjoy some hot



All Photos Courtesy: PHC Communications



chocolate and a classic story!

Handel’s *Messiah* at the National Cathedral

While not a PHC-specific tradition, many students enjoy making the trip into DC to hear Handel’s *Messiah* performed at the National Cathedral. Pro tip: if you buy tickets far enough in advance, you can get a student price of only \$10 per person. The vaulted ceilings and stellar choir make this a night to remember, especially if you have never before heard the entire *Messiah* in its entirety.

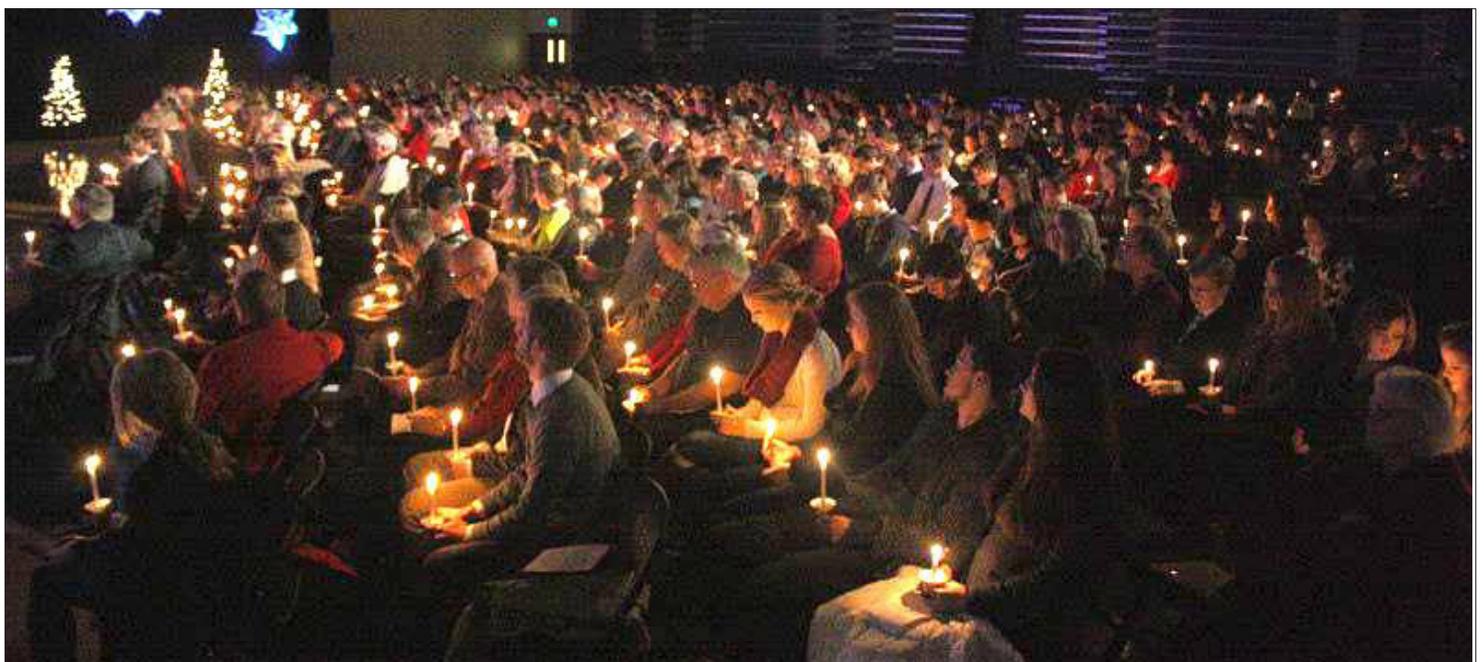
Christmas in Middleburg

If you have never experienced Middleburg, now is the perfect opportunity! Middleburg is well known for its equestrian background, and every Christmas they host a town festival. This year’s events fall on Saturday, Dec. 3. Join the town for shopping, decorations, and more!

D4 Christmas Party

How many people can fit into the lobby of Oak Hill? Roughly three-quarters of the entire campus, as is evidenced every year by its Christmas party. The RAs of the

dorm pool their wing money to fund the party, complete with hot cider, cookies, and candy. D4 musicians head to the second-floor balcony to lead rousing Christmas carols, heralding the triumphant entry of Santa Claus. Grab another brownie and settle into the lounge for Santa’s reading of *The Night Before Christmas*, and if you’re a very good boy or girl, you may even get to tell Santa your Christmas wish list! *This year’s D4 Christmas party will be held on Dec. 4 at 8 p.m.* ♦





Courtesy of Sequoia Poths

by Harvest Prude

Just before Bryan Leines took a knee and proposed to Sequoia Poths, Belle Tague stood in the hotel room fiddling with the lighting and camera settings on her iPhone. She wanted the pictures to be perfect. She knew how special this moment would be; her fiancé, Seth Mitchell, had proposed just several months earlier.

By the time Sequoia came in and crossed the floor strewn with pink rose petals, Belle was hidden behind the door.

“I have two requests,” Bryan had told Sequoia a few minutes earlier. “Follow the roses, and read to the end.”

He then handed her the first white rose.

Sequoia had thought the trip to Harper’s Ferry with a couple friends for Octo-

ber Break was the surprise. But when he handed her the rose, she began suspecting that a far larger surprise was in store.

Sequoia followed the trail of flowers to the other hotel room, picking them up as she went. Arms full, she walked out onto the balcony. There was a familiar scrapbook waiting. She’d given it to Bryan, half-full of pictures she’d printed off for his birthday. Slowly, she flipped through it. Bryan had filled in the other half with pictures or a handwritten note. On the last page, a simple scrawl: “Will You Marry Me?”

This barely registered when Bryan came out onto the balcony. Sequoia hardly noticed Belle in the background, furiously snapping pictures. She said yes.

Both couples are planning their weddings for June 2017.

Seth and Belle will both be nearing

their 20th birthdays. It’s a month before Belle turns 20—exactly the age her dad was when he married her mother, 21 at the time. When anybody brought up the topic of marrying young, he always said, “Never do it. It’ll ruin your life.”

Marriage wasn’t on Belle’s radar. Nothing serious was, until one day as she sat in the coffee shop and watched Seth walk into the BHC lobby, pushing both glass doors open in one confident motion. She watched fiery sunlight pour in behind him and, “I melted,” she said. “I just fell in love.”

It didn’t take long for mutual interest to spark, and they started dating. Seth visited the Tague family in California this summer. They spent one whole day beach-hopping up the coast.

At one point, standing outside the car, Seth asked; “Hey, why don’t we get mar-



Courtesy of Sequoia Poths

ried sooner?” Sooner as in the summer of 2017. After a few weeks of dating, they’d discussed getting married after Belle, a current junior, graduated. But this new plan just worked. They talked to her parents that day.

“They both understand how young we are, and know that it won’t be the easiest thing in the world, but they also know that we’re right for each other,” Belle said. “Having their blessing means a lot.”

Not everyone has been encouraging. Young engagements aren’t always typical. Many people associate a longer period of being single, particularly in one’s twenties, with figuring out how to be independent on live on one’s own before getting married. It’s easy to be skeptical.

“It’s kind of like a lot of people are holding their breath,” Seth said.

But they’d far rather grow up together than do it apart.

“We’re still growing up right now,” Belle said. “There’s an element that is sort of nerve-wracking, but it is comforting knowing that we’re doing it together. I’d much rather be doing it with Seth than by myself.”

Bryan and Sequoia, who are both 20, echo this sentiment. “When you’re young, you have the opportunity to get married and grow together and figure out, what does buying a house look like? Just random firsts,” Sequoia said. “We get to spend all the rest of our lives together and do all the firsts.”

According to history professor Dr. Robert Spinney, the real anomaly in America and the West is later marriages. Historically, younger marriages (late teens and early twenties) were the norm. Spinney believes several factors, many of them due to the cultural climate, have pushed back the median marriage age.

With higher divorce rates and fewer people growing up in intact families, subsequent generations have become more cautious about getting married. Couples



Seth Mitchell and Belle Tague

Courtesy of Belle Tague

living together before marriage also pushes back marriage. Similarly, shotgun weddings, a couple getting married when a woman becomes pregnant out of wedlock, are not givens.

College also pushes off the time before people start doing their “lifework.” This can mean that financially, it can take a few years to be comfortable post-graduation, particularly if young people start off at a lower level job and work their way up.

While a delay in marriage does not necessarily mean delayed maturity, Spinney does think some things typically precede marriage. “People want to know who they are—it seems to me [that’s] taking longer than it used to,” Spinney said. “Finding yourself used to be in the teen years. Increasing people are finding themselves in college.”

Spinney’s added than heightened confusion over gender roles slows down the process. “Is this a date or not? Am I pay-

ing for this or not?” Spinney said. “Without someone driving the process, without someone leading, the process slows down dramatically.”

Literature professor Dr. Steven Hake stressed that the enormity of marriage should not be taken lightly. “The decision to marry a certain person at a certain time is a big deal. Second only to, who am I going to serve in life?” Hake said.

“The only real question is—does God want you to get married?” Spinney said. “To some people that sounds mystical. Of course it sounds mystical. We’re in a religion, aren’t we?”

Bryan said that while he doesn’t feel old enough to be on the verge of marriage, he has felt peace at every step of their relationship.

“It was completely different than anything I had planned for my life but so much better,” Bryan said. ♦



Courtesy of Sequoia Poths

Life in the Kart: A Freshman's Racing Career

by Carrie Durning

Lining up in the starting box, the sound of thousands of horsepower pounding into the track as 350 engines start up is nearly drowned out by the anxious driver's pounding heartbeat. Sitting in the formula kart with the engine running, the fuel sloshing around, and the engine kart shaking, Luke Shanahan narrows his eyes as he peers through the window in his helmet at the heat rising off the track around his competitors, his gaze falling on Colby Yardley, his biggest rival of the weekend.

As the clock ticks down to the start of the final event, Shanahan puts his head down and visualizes the upcoming race, blocking out the sound of the engines and any thoughts of Yardley; he pictures himself pulling the clutch in, and placing the kart in neutral, keeping the engine warm as the clock ticks down to ten seconds before the start. Opening his eyes, putting the kart into first gear, and holding the clutch in, Shanahan watches as the starting lights flash red, red, red, green. In the anxious seconds he has left to wait for the final light to flash red, Shanahan says one final prayer, knowing that he has no control over what happens once he dumps the clutch. Ahead of him, the final starting light flashes from green to red, and releasing the clutch, Shanahan launches into the race.

After a strong rivalry all weekend between Shanahan and Yardley, Shanahan finished first of 350 drivers in the US Open of Colorado in Grand Junction in 2016. From this competition, Shanahan went on to place third in the national championship in Las Vegas later that year, this being one of the final races before his



Courtesy: Luke Shanahan

decision put his racing life on hold to attend Patrick Henry College.

For the past four years, Shanahan has raced formula karts in most of the major cities in the west and central United States, competing with drivers from all around the world through Pro Tour and U.S. Open. Since first competing at age 15, Shanahan has won or placed top five in numerous races, such as the US Open national championship, the US Open of Colorado, and the Pro Tour World Finals in Las Vegas. Since first driving a kart at age 12, Shanahan has never lost his passion for racing, even while taking a break from the tracks while attending Patrick Henry College. Shanahan's racing career has been one of perseverance and endurance, with his failures only helping him improve.

"Luke has always been one to endure, no matter the task at hand," said his father, David Shanahan. "Seeing him continue with his passion of racing even after a few discouraging races and unfortunate setbacks has been such a delight."

In the racing world, emerging from four years of racing with only some sprained ankles and wrists is a rare thing, although an injury of any kind is considered a setback and is discouraging no matter what. Despite these injuries, Shanahan continued to train and compete. Although Shanahan left the track mostly unscathed each race, others have not been so lucky.

"The scariest thing about witnessing a crash directly ahead of you in a race is, first, maneuvering through the pileup of karts, and then the instinctive thought of 'that could be me. I could be in the next kart piled up on the side of the track,'" Shanahan said. "But it is also one of the most accomplishing feelings, maneuvering through a pileup of karts ahead of you to take the lead."

Shanahan has won many races by finding the gap between the wreckage and committing to it, safely taking the lead. "By far the worst wreckage to drive through is when [someone's] engine blew up and the smoke is so thick it is impossible to see through it," Shanahan said. "In that situation, I put my foot down and am entirely guessing at an opening while going 100 miles per hour. It's insane."

In one situation, Shanahan was the kart to avoid as he spun off the track. At the US Open of Dallas, Shanahan started in the front row, a guaranteed safe start. But in the opening corner, the kart in third ran into the back of his kart, sending him spinning to the back of 35 racers. Although now in dead last, Shanahan didn't give up.

"As soon as the last kart passed me, I launched back into the race," said Shanahan. "It was so satisfying to pass 30 out of the other 34 drivers and finish in fifth place, ahead of the kart that put me in last."



Courtesy: Luke Shanahan

Shanahan Puts On the Brakes for College

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The biggest setback Shanahan had to overcome as a beginner driver was to not let his thoughts of what was taking place all around him consume him as he raced, especially when in the lead. “When I would take the lead, I would become so obsessive about the drivers behind me that I would lose focus, and sometimes lose my position in first,” Shanahan said. “The goal once I take the lead is to block out any thoughts of what is going on behind me and only focus on going as fast as possible without overheating the kart, so I can keep my position.”

“Racing is both a mind game and an art form,” Shanahan said. “It is a fine balance between control and pushing the limits, all the while acknowledging the only thing in your control is yourself and your kart.” It didn’t take long in Shanahan’s racing career for him to acknowledge he didn’t have control over all situations. For this reason, Shanahan has made the final seconds before the start of any race a time to talk with God. In the 30 seconds he has between pulling up to the starting box and shifting the kart into first gear, Shanahan hands over whatever is about to happen in the next 45 minutes to God.



Luke Shanahan, second from left

“I give the race up to God, because I have no control over what happens next,” Shanahan said. “I am going to do what I can to the best of my ability, but I cannot control the outside elements. Only God can do that.” After six years of continuous training and racing, Shanahan put his life in the kart on hold to join the class of 2020 at Patrick Henry College, deciding it was time to aim higher than just racing. “I miss racing, and everything that went along with it, but had to make the decision to come to school,” Shanahan said. “Racing isn’t a profession, but a professional skill.”

Still, Shanahan hasn’t forgotten about racing. “It’s obvious that racing is his passion,” said Blake Harp, a close friend of Shanahan’s. “He can talk about racing for hours, and is constantly going for drives to clear his mind.”

In coming to PHC, Shanahan aims to obtain a profession that will support his love of racing in the future.

“I fully intend to continue racing when I’m not here at school,” Shanahan said. “Racing is my passion, and I can’t imagine my life without it.” ♦

PHC Presents Disney Karaoke

by Marquis Gough

For the first time in forever, Thadd and I will be hosting PHC’s first semi-annual Disney Karaoke Night in the coffee shop this upcoming Monday, December 5th at 9pm. Why Disney Karaoke? A better question is: why hasn’t Disney Karaoke become a thing sooner? Most people close to us could tell you that Thadd and I are huge Disney fans! Thadd saw *Frozen* in theaters six times, including the sing along edition, whereas I still watch my favorite Disney film, *Robin Hood*, to this day and know nearly every line by heart.

I’d just like to encourage people to take a break, even if only a brief one, from



their studies and come enjoy the company of their fellow PHC students. But even more importantly I’d encourage them to let it go and sing a song, even if they’re terrible because that’s what karaoke is. I mean come on, you saw Thadd and I try

to sing for our chapel announcement, we’re awful, yet we’re the ones co-hosting it! So PHCers, put aside finals and your self-esteem for an hour or two, come be our guest, and let us show you a whole new world, which includes free pizza! ♦

Aaron Kamakawiwoole: PHC's Modern Cowboy

by Heather Faison

Knees locked, the angular man shuffled toward the table. "There is no need to run," he rasped to those seated. "Stand and pray, mortals, for the Spectral Army descends, and you may still be granted mercy." Suddenly, Aaron Kamakawiwoole relaxed, breaking the spell of his immersive storytelling and explaining to the role players gathered around the table that they had the option either to join the undead army attacking their city, or try to flee to a safe location.

To many on campus, "Aaron K," as he is commonly known, is a beloved admissions counselor. To others, he is the designer and leader of the *Warriors of Zurn* role-play game groups. But he is someone who can swoop in and help people, both on and off campus, and he has put in a great deal of effort to live up to that ideal since coming to work at PHC.

Kamakawiwoole had looked at a few other colleges, but wanted to go to PHC. "That was my life's dream," he said. He was accepted, and initially chose a Government major with several literature classes on the side.

However, an internship at ParentalRights.org taught Kamakawiwoole that government is not his calling. "It was a lot of fun," he said, "and I learned a lot, not the least of which was that I hate politics. I'm glad the Lord showed me that before I decided to try it as a career and burn myself out on it."

The only job he could get was working with his grandfather building a house and garage, which taught him many skills he could later use to help friends. However, building houses didn't create a steady flow of income. So after his graduation from PHC, and after a great deal of prayer and job hunting, Aaron Kamakawiwoole had no plan for his future.

Fortunately, another rejection turned into a new career path. Kamakawiwoole applied to work as a data coordinator for PHC's admissions office. Someone else filled the position, but the admissions office advised that Kamakawiwoole apply to become an admissions counselor.

In spite of being the dark horse candidate for the position, he made it to the second round of interviews, a simulation of a conversation with an applicant's family. He was the only candidate to bring a slideshow presentation to the interview, and put in about 20 hours of research in order to prepare. He got the job.

Kamakawiwoole is not certain what he wants to do beyond admissions. He has considered several careers, from teaching rhetoric to hunting pirates. But instead of determining what he wants to do, Kamakawiwoole prioritizes determining who he wants to be. "You can apply that no matter what your vocational occupation is," he said. Kamakawiwoole aspires to be a dependable, loyal man of integrity, with a good work ethic, and a good member of his church and his family.

Until a few years ago, Kamakawiwoole considered helpfulness a hobby rather than a lifestyle. One of the reasons he bought a truck was because most people at PHC do not have a vehicle with which they can move large items.

"The four words that are my Achilles' heel are 'I need your help,' and that's okay, because that's who God made me to be," Kamakawiwoole said.

One of the ways Kamakawiwoole has been able to put this into practice recently has been helping Eden Troupe with their production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The play involves many soldiers and fights; soldiers need armor to fight, and the costume department needed armor for the soldiers. Kamakawiwoole had learned to make chain mail in preparation for a Teen



Courtesy: Aaron Kamakawiwoole

Camp a few years ago, and when Eden Troupe's costume department told him they were swamped, he was more than willing to help with the armor.

Jane White, one of the students involved with both the play and the armor crafting, said that Kamakawiwoole made most of the leather armor, using strips of faux leather riveted to a t-shirt. The armor was durable enough to protect student actor Nathan Karnes from injury when fellow actor Jimmy Waters accidentally stabbed him in the chest with a practice sword during rehearsal. Kamakawiwoole also helped choreograph the fight scenes of the play, many of which involved large numbers of actors in combat at once.

Kamakawiwoole also sees his roleplay game, *The Warriors of Zurn*, as a means of being helpful. *Zurn* was formed in several dreams that Kamakawiwoole had as a child – he did not so much create the land of Zurn as he woke up in it. The game is not intended to be a form of escapism; rather, it is a chance to become a hero and go on adventures, with plenty of opportunities for both the character and the player to grow along the way. "It is designed to help you learn about yourself," Kamakawiwoole said. He plans to launch

"Aaron has shaped the atmosphere of the college by being here and by being somebody that I know cares."

Jane White

See a Need; Fill a Need

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the game into a national company, as well as fund a Zurn Foundation scholarship for PHC.

Kamakawiwoole has influenced many students, both in and out of the admissions process. White said that since he was available to talk on Facebook, she didn't face the pressure of composing

an email. "It was like I was talking to a friend, and that allowed me to associate a friendly, helpful person with the school." Will McManus described Kamakawiwoole as "a modern cowboy from Hawaii," adding that Kamakawiwoole likes to associate with "sensible nerds."

Kamakawiwoole has impacted many people on PHC's campus, whether by

helping them fulfill their dreams of coming to the college, by helping out students in need, or by fixing wobbly tables in the dining hall with a wrench that he keeps in his office for just that purpose. "He has shaped the atmosphere of the college by being here and by being somebody that I know cares," White said. ♦

Snowflakes Bring Memories and Unity

by Marjorie Pratt

In the past weeks, the temperature has been falling, rising, then falling again. Winter coats have woken from hibernation and gloves have emerged from their hiding places in sock drawers. After a fairly warm afternoon, PHC experienced its first snow flurries on Nov. 19. Senior Elisabeth Wilk announced the first snowfall via an email to the student list, and Rachel Stahr, another senior, followed up with another email explaining the tradition post-snow proposal email. "When the first snow falls," Stahr wrote, "a senior girl sends out an email announcing it. All the underclassmen are supposed to respond with poetic marriage proposals."

Since the flurries on Saturday, the snow has been a hot topic on campus. Stories of "Snowmageddon 2010" and "Snowpocalypse" of last semester, along with stories of winters at home have been

pulled out of coat pockets and enjoyed over warm drinks. Upperclassmen scare freshmen with Snowpocalypse horror stories, relaying the creeping feeling of cabin fever, the torture of digging cars out of the snow, and the sight of dirty snow that clung around for ages.

Sophomore Elias Gannage believes that the winter and snow-time festivities bring people together. "When it snows, you see strangers playing together," Gannage said. Whether students love snow or hate it, all can enjoy a good story or a silly ritual that snow brings about.

Two students eventually replied to Wilk's snow email. Gabriella Johnson and Mikey Pozo shared their poetry skills for the General Student List to enjoy. Johnson expressed affection for her friend with a Roses-Are-Red-type poem while Pozo shared his thoughts in lyrical form.

Clare Downing, a sophomore from Florida, experienced her first winter with an appearance of Snowpocalypse last se-

mester. "I was so excited about it that I thrashed through the snow and basically bounced around for a week," she said

Philip Bunn and Luke Thomas stayed off-campus at Jesse Eastman's house during the Snowpocalypse, not expecting it to snow as much as it did. The three found themselves stuck in the house through the weekend, living on cookie dough and cereal. "The snow was so deep in the yard that we could actually jump off of the back deck into the snow," Bunn said. After the trio ran out of milk, they finally decided to shovel themselves out. Because they only had one snow shovel, they used a large mixing bowl to "excavate" their cars. After three hours of digging, they drove to the store and prepared for a large meal. Bunn declared it, "one of the best weekends I've had during my time at school."

"Snow is the great unifier," alumnus Aaron Kamakawiwoole said. ♦



Finding God Through *Anna Karenina*

by Danielle Fife

Like most couples, Sara and David Pensgard spent long hours of both day and night while at Northwestern University discussing life and their future. As their relationship became increasingly serious, they began thinking more seriously about their future, and the idea of marriage came to the table.

There was just one problem for Sara and David's future: David was a Christian and was worried about being unequally yoked with Sara, an unbeliever. David knew this would be a problem when he first asked Sara out, February of her freshman year of college, but he had hoped to convert her.

Sara remembered first bringing up the topic of marriage. "David said 'I love you very much but I cannot marry someone who is not a Christian,' and I said, 'We'll see about that,'" Sara said. "Of course, I was thinking that I would convince him to change his mind, and God was thinking that he would change me."

Sara Pensgard, the Director of the Patrick Henry College Library, was uniquely converted as an adult and through a Russian literature class. "It is an amazing thing to be converted as an adult," Sara recalled. "It is very visceral - emotionally and physically - it involves your whole self."

College years found Sara and David Pensgard both attending Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. While Sara originally intended to study the sciences, she ended up gravitating towards economics and Russian language studies.

Sara's love for the Russian language came at a young age. "Probably about fifth grade the Latin teacher left the private school I was attending," Sara said. "One of the moms knew Russian, so she stepped up and taught us Russian for a couple years."

While at Northwestern, Sara and David lived in the Residential College of Culture and Community Studies. It was in this environment that Sara truly began

to search for the truth of how we ought to behave in the world. It was also in this environment that Sara and David met for the first time. In their co-ed dorm, David was a senior when Sara came in as a freshman. "He was automatically the coolest guy in the dorm," Sara said.

"I was coming down the stairs to meet all the new freshmen and stopped in at the girls' floor to get a rubber band to tie back my hair," David said, remembering a day when his hair was much longer. He stopped in the only room with an open door, which just happened to be Sara's room where her family was helping her get settled.

"I suddenly appeared in the doorway and asked for a rubber band and met her and her entire family. They all stared at me silently, perhaps in shock," David said. "No one moved and Sara looked like a deer in headlights."

David was one of those people who liked to engage in deeply intellectual dinner-time conversations.

"He very quickly showed me that I had no grounding for my ideas of what was right or wrong or how the world ought to function," Sara said. David brought his Christian faith to their dinner time conversations and pushed Sara to question her own beliefs until she narrowed her religious quest to the question of Christianity.

It did not take long for Sara and David to realize that they had more in common than intellectual curiosity, and they began dating in February of Sara's freshman year.

That summer Sara was working shelving books at the college. Each day as she wandered the isles of the library shelving books, she prayed. "I would ask God if he really existed," Sara said. "I asked Him if he wanted to communicate with me, and asked that he would reveal himself to me."

Second semester of her sophomore year, Sara delved back into her Russian studies with a Russian Literature class taught by Dr. Gary Morrison. While Morrison was not a Christian, he clearly understood the culture and the role the



David and Sara Pensgard

orthodox church played in the culture. He had a keen realization that most of the students did not understand the culture or Christianity, and took the time to explain these elements.

It was March 8, 1996 and Sara was sitting in the little tan chair next to her bed, reading *Anna Karenina* when she found a character, Levin, who reminded her a lot of herself. As she neared the end of the book, Levin had an epiphany that God is great and that he is the creator of the world. "I had this realization that God is Creator, and he has the right to decide what is good and right and the right to judge us if we don't live up to that," Sara said.

She began crying tears of joy as she realized that God is in control of everything and that he is real and that he did want to communicate with her.

"I felt like it wasn't real until I prayed with David," Sara said. "David prayed for me and then I prayed this rambling prayer to claim God as my own." In that moment, Sara's life was never the same. She saw her grades getting dramatically better, her anxiety levels dropping, and her church participation increasing.

Sara was baptized in the fall of that year and has been learning and growing in faith with David ever since.

"My parents were constantly in prayer for me that I would find a good Christian wife," David said. "I am sure that my parents' prayers were effective in Sara's conversion as well." ♦

PHC Men's Basketball Begins Season

by Bruce Truax

The PHC men's basketball team lost the first game of the season by 18 points, but refused to let another disappointment dampen their spirits too much. After all, they were down only by eight points at halftime, and were also missing some key players.

PHC did not have a single win last year but the team is confident that they could have a strong season, even if their record doesn't improve much.

"My strategy is to win the 'hustle' categories," Coach David Ness said. "We do not have many players that have been playing basketball all their lives. We are also

lacking explosive talent. The areas that we can control and win are loose balls, turnover margin, defensive and offensive rebounds, and general conditioning."

"The first game was an absolutely phenomenal start of the season," junior Andrew Shepherd said. "I was pleased with all the young players stepping up their game and really contributing well on offense and on defense."

"I was encouraged by our performance in the first game," Ness said. "My optimistic goal for the team this year is three wins. Realistically, I am hoping for us to win one game, and that is our last game of the year at Appalachian Bible College."

Whatever the goal of this year's season may be, it is going to be tough on the

Sentinels. Practice officially starts at 5:30 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. "Getting up literally causes most players to go through each and every day tired and sore in some way, its very difficult not to sleep sometime later in the day," Shepherd said.

Team members also feel a lack of support from PHC's community. "Being on a sports team in college is a highly valuable extracurricular activity and I would love for it to be supported," Ness said. "The basketball players are learning valuable life lessons like teamwork, physical and mental determination, how to win or lose with grace, and what it is like to get up at 5:00 a.m. for practices." ♦

Studying Scripture with Dr. Spinney

by Victoria Cook

"Would you be willing to start a Bible study, Dr. Spinney?" a student asked.

From that question on, the yearly tradition of a male PHC student asking Dr. Robert Spinney to lead a Bible study was born. The group is an opportunity for students to have fellowship and delve into the Word in an open yet more intimate atmosphere. The group currently consists of 13 students who are reading through Colossians.

Jordan Hughes has ensured the group's continuation for the past two years. "My freshman year, my RA encouraged me to keep it going when he graduated," Hughes said. "I ask [Spinney] at the beginning of every semester if he's willing and able to continue and he always accepts. He puts a surprising amount of time and thought into it."

Spinney's teaching method for the group is precisely focused but open enough for students to ask questions. He and the students read through a passage and then slowly break down the verses to uncover the meaning. They often can spend a month to a year going over a short

book of the Bible. The in-depth discussions that follow have helped build better characters amongst the guys that attend.

"Dr. Spinney has challenged the group in a lot of different ways. He's not focused on a particular schedule, so he's willing to take time to focus on what the students want to talk about," freshman Andrew Shelton said. Shelton started coming earlier this semester and finds the hour of Bible study to be refreshing and insightful.

For senior Josiah DeGraaf, going to the study group almost did not happen due to a busy schedule. After attending regularly, DeGraaf was able to understand 1 John and take away some personally relevant truths. 1 John 3:16 particularly inspired him to love the people around him through service. "Often I'm happy to help someone when it's not much of a personal cost to me; so, it was a helpful reminder that if I really love someone, and not just my friends but everyone, I should be looking for opportunities to be sacrificial," DeGraaf said.

Spinney's hope is that the men who come to the study learn that understanding the Bible is not something only a "super-Christian" can do. "The Scriptures

emphasize that the Holy Spirit indwells in believers and gives them both the desire and the power to do what God instructs in the Bible," Spinney said.

"When men are in a Bible study, I think they realize that it really isn't that hard. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work through passages slowly," he said.

For one Bible session, a student asked about the difference between joy and happiness. The next week, Spinney and the rest of the group took a detour from the scheduled text to discuss the difference. "It opened my eyes to some things that I had been wrestling with and how I could clarify those things by knowing the distinction between happiness and joy," said senior Graham Jackson.

Spinney sets the example of a godly Christian. "If he believes that something is true and clearly stated in Scripture but it is inconvenient to do, he still does it anyways, because he wants to follow what the Bible says," sophomore Michael Patton said. "There are not enough Christians who live with that type of abandon; they read things in Scripture and have a predetermined level of what their commitment is." ♦

Review: *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*

by Jared Midwood

“Yesterday, a wizard entered New York with a case. A case full of magical creatures. And unfortunately, some have escaped.”

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them prominently features a briefcase with contents that are whimsical and immersive. This magic briefcase is momentarily confused with another, far more ordinary briefcase that contains freshly baked bagels and donuts, products of a “no-mag” (commonly referred to as a Muggle in *Harry Potter*) who is applying for a government loan to open a bakery. The other, fantastic briefcase is stuffed full of the magical creatures that fans of the wizarding world have come to know and love.

The briefcase mix-up helpfully leads into the meeting of Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) and Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler). Newt is coming to the United States to seek a breeder of some rare creatures for his work back in the magical world of Europe. Kowalski feels he is wasting his life in a factory, so he is trying to open a food service business but is denied a loan by the state, having to get creative to make his dreams come true.

Redmayne’s Scamander is the chosen protagonist. “You’re an interesting man, Mr. Scamander. Just like your suitcase, I think there’s more to you than meets the eye.” Percival Graves sums up what the viewer already knows: Scamander is not here to find a mythical breeder at all, but rather to return magical beasts to their happy environments. He is minding his own business in a world of wizards whose first rule is also the first two rules of *Fight Club*: “You do not talk about ...” An infringement on the silence law is punishable by execution.

It is largely impossible to place *Fantastic Beasts* in a cinematic context without examining it in the larger multiverse of *Harry Potter*. Comparisons are in order, and helpful. There is much spillover between the two stories. The original series is a causal cornerstone for the new film.



The Cast of *Fantastic Beasts* at Comic Con San Diego

Director David Yates (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*) took a supporting role to J.K. Rowling on this one. She doesn’t disappoint. *Fantastic Beasts* largely picks up visually and cinematically where the eight-part *HP* movie series left off. Rowling infuses America with the same magical vigor and fanciful characters of *Harry Potter*.

That being said, the locale is decidedly less scrumptious than Hogwarts. Compared to the drab and sometimes lifeless streets of New York City, *Fantastic Beasts* falls short. But the film doesn’t have any trouble blowing up the city with all the Marvel-esque CGI it can muster, or rebuilding in inverse-*Inception* like fantasy sequences.

In *Fantastic Beasts*, Yates and Rowling instead take the summer blockbuster approach of blowing up anything and everything in sight. The film virtually starts with the Obscurial, raging underground and obliterating everything in its wake. By the end of the film there are enough crumbled buildings, displaced cars, and presumably dead citizens to make Captain America and Iron Man proud. Regrettably lost is the familiar man vs. man conflicts that made *Harry Potter* such a joy to read and watch.

That being said, there is a decent bit of character development in this film. Kowalski bumbles around the screen falling in love and eating magical food, getting chased by a bulbous rhinoceros and being struck speechless by the world he is not supposed to see. Colin Farrell (*The Lobster*) plays Graves to a tee, warm

and supportive at first and menacing and scheming at the end. The whole Farrell-turned-Johnny Depp Easter egg sets up a sequel (or four, as it so happens) nicely.

Fantastic Beasts (rated PG-13 for some fantasy action violence) touches on social issues in a sneaky and subtle way. The characters at one point lament that magical humans and non-mag individuals are prohibited from developing a romantic relationship or marrying (uh-oh for one of the main characters). However, the politics are momentary and repressed, and do not overwhelm the action in the slightest.

Perhaps the thing that was most expected as a leftover from the original movies, but also the thing that caught the most people by surprise about *Fantastic Beasts*, was the strong element of darkness and malfeasance that runs through the world of man. The Second Saemlers are a secret witch hunting society, whose head lady beats her children regularly to instill fear of the dark side in them. The *LOST*-ish black smoke that tears up a subway station and ultimately gives force to the final showdown of the film will be scary for younger viewers. *Fantastic Beasts* is not fantastically violent or dark. What it does do, however, is give visual representation to the malice haunting New York. Many throughout the film discover this principle firsthand.

Fantastic Beasts returns the magic of *Harry Potter* to the big screen, with ample room for improvement. Luckily for us, we have at least four more franchise films to look forward to. ♦

Opinion: Why PHC Sports Matter

by Santos DeBarros

When was the last time you worked incredibly hard on something? Was it that 30-page paper you wrote the other week? Or that hour-long group presentation? I'm sure you were proud that you had finished it, especially if it meant a lot to you or your grade. So how would you feel if you heard people trashing all the hard work that you put into your project?

You can imagine it: knowing that people are badmouthing you, being hypercritical or overly cynical of individual performance or the group's. And all the while you can't really do anything about it. That's what student athletes at PHC go through all the time.

You've heard the jokes about the basketball teams and the soccer teams. You've seen the one-liners online, on Twitter and PHC Family. And yet most students aren't affected by it, simply because they aren't on a PHC sports team. But what about the individuals who are?

The men's and women's soccer teams as well as the men's basketball team have suffered teasing and ridicule from the student body, and it's time for this pattern to end. These are men and women who sacrifice their time and bodies to exercise, workout, and train themselves.

The men's basketball team got up at 5am three days a week during preseason to practice, and then practiced again on Thursday nights. They have games to travel to and play. The women's soccer team practiced twice a day during the preseason and three times a week during the regular season. So did the men's soccer team.

For comparison to your classes, the soccer teams practiced around four hours a

week during classes, in addition to time taken up for traveling to and playing their games.

It's like taking a six-credit class that you don't get a grade for and prevents you from working on homework, papers, and any other extracurriculars. I bet Eden Troupe participants can empathize with this.

I understand that it's not a secret that our sports teams have not been incredibly successful for the past few years. But our athletes continue to get up early in the morning, go out late at night, and hit the court and the field in order to improve and stay sharp. This is something that we should respect as fellow students.

Our athletes understand they are not likely going to win every single game they play. However, they continue to push forward and practice so that they can be competitive every time they go out.

Beyond that, these athletes deserve our support as PHC students, their friends, and fans. Admission to our games is 100% free, and yet attendance has steadily gone down over time. Perhaps this is a reflection on an imbalanced emphasis on academics over everything else (but that's a discussion for another day).

But ultimately, if we're going to discuss PHC sports in a positive way, I would hope that you've at least attended games in the past or plan to in the future. Your fellow students need your support.

It's disheartening to play your hardest and then hear or read other students talking trash about your performance. Ultimately, this comes down to the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

We all have hobbies and activities that we enjoy and participate in. We've all suffered the misfortune of having our chosen hobbies made fun of. So let's not do it to others.

These people work hard, and they de-

serve our respect for the sheer amount of time and effort they put in when faced with the difficult academic workloads that we face here at PHC. So when we make fun of them, we're putting down all of the work that they've put in.

We're putting down all the time that they have sacrificed. If we're going to show Christian love and support to our brothers and sisters, the biblical way to do this would be to support them unconditionally.

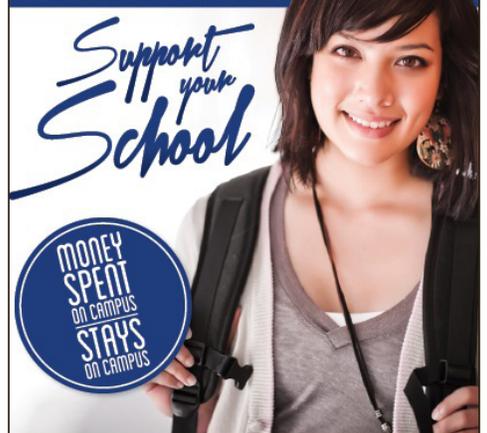
We're not a big school, which limits our pool of potential players. We don't offer athletic scholarships. But we have teams of dedicated players who deserve our unrelenting support when they hit the field or the court.

I've seen us take home multiple victories over the last four years. There's nothing quite like it. I hope you'll join me in the stands as our teams fight hard for the love of the game. ♦

"We don't offer athletic scholarships but we have teams of dedicated players who deserve our unrelenting support when they hit the field or the court."

A Notice from the Bookstore

SELL YOUR BOOKS ON CAMPUS AND



PATRICK HENRY COLLEGE BOOKSTORE
TEXTBOOK BUYBACK

**Tuesday - Friday:
DEC. 6TH - 9th
9 AM - 12 PM & 1 PM - 4 PM**

Sell your books back and be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card to use to purchase your Spring books.

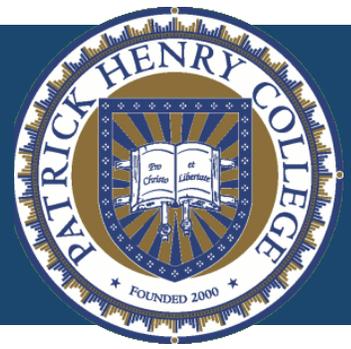


PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Students decorating ornaments during the Christmas tree lighting event

Courtesy: Rebekah Jorgensen

#trendingatPHC

“My favorite Christmas movie is **The Grinch Who Stole Christmas**. For me, it just has timeless Christmas humor. I can’t watch it or think of it without laughing. And people always recognize it when I quote lines from it.”

-Marquis Gough

“My favorite Christmas movie is the classic version of **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer**. My dad introduced it to me and my siblings when we were little. It was a tradition of ours to watch it every Christmas for several years. Everytime I see it now I think of home and the people I love.”

-Kendra Olson

“My favorite Christmas movie is **Christmas in Connecticut**, because it’s a classic Christmas story with both romance and satire, and the house that most of the movie takes place in is so cozy.”

-Carrie Durning

UPCOMING EVENTS

Eggnog & Awesomeness
Dec. 2
9 pm
BHC Student Lounge

Lessons and Carols
Dec. 3
7 pm
BHC Lobby

D4 Christmas Party
Dec. 4
8 pm
D4

Disney Karaoke Night and Pizza Party
Dec. 5
9 pm
BHC Coffee Shop

“I am still too quick for you, even in death.” -Hailey Kilgo

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Have a candid pic of campus life? Post it on social media and tag us. Or send it to gmlastra811@students.phc.edu