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Dr. Michael Farris, Meridian Paulton, Thomas Siu, and Dr. Frank Guliuzza after their win

10th Moot Court Win for PHC

Teamwork Was Key for Championship Win

by Victoria Cook

Juniors Thomas Siu and Meridian Paulton brought home Patrick Henry College's tenth American Moot Court Association championship last week at Stetson University in Gulfport, Fla., in addition to winning the ACMA's Brief-Writing Competition. Having 10 wins is no small feat, especially for a 17-year-old college. For Siu and Paulton, winning the ACMA championship has been three years in the making. Prior to coming to PHC, Siu

and Paulton were high school debaters, which influenced their decision to take moot court for credit their freshman year. Neither expected Dr. Farris to pair them. "When we were partnered together, I wondered, 'How in the world is this going to work?' He knows all of this legal stuff, so he's going to be very good at this, but I just have this totally different personality," Paulton said. Ironically, their personality differences helped them become better debaters.

Siu and Paulton's prep sessions began with reviewing

arguments, distilling massive amounts of case law, and bonding over singing songs and sharing childhood memories. They became better debaters by first becoming better friends. "Once we found that connecting point, that made our partnership a lot stronger," Paulton said.

As freshmen, they won the brief writing competition in 2015, a surprising victory which propelled them to work even harder. As sophomores, they qualified again for Nation-

continued on page 3



Courtesy: PHC Communications

Farris Accepts Position with ADF

by Leah Greenwood

"All people, at all times, deserve robust protection for the free exercise of religion," Dr. Michael Farris said in a farewell video posted on Vimeo. "Freedom is never safe and must always be defended."

PHC's Chancellor Emeritus has accepted a full-time position as the new President, CEO, and General Counsel of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). A hiring firm for ADF approached him this past summer, and Farris accepted the position just before Thanksgiving. He put a considerable amount of consideration and prayer into this decision and consulted with the boards and leadership teams of both PHC and HSLDA. This new position comes to Farris after 33 years

continued on page 4

theherald

volume 25, issue no. 1

thestories

- si alumni fellows program page 3
- new eba director page 5
- inauguration** page 6
- electoral college page 8
- alumni opinion page 9
- faculty opinion** page 10
- movies you missed page 11

themasthead

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editor'snote

Hey PHC! I'm this semester's Herald editor, and I'm excited to serve you. This section will house the student government blurb for the rest of the school year, but this first week I thought that I would share a little bit of my hopes for the spring with you. The Herald staff and I look forward to publishing stories that you care about in the coming weeks, and we always appreciate your feedback. Let us know what you think of this week's issue by Facebook messaging Herald Media, emailing me at ejfordham248@students.phc.edu, or just finding one of us on campus and chatting. Here's to a great spring semester!

-- Evie Fordham, Editor

Champions Paulton and Siu's Hard Work Pays Off

continued from cover

als, and this time, they were picked as one of the teams to represent PHC. While they did not win, Siu and Paulton were determined to improve their arguments for the upcoming season.

Once they knew they were partners again for their third season, Siu and Paulton went over the 2016-2017 case problem and their potential arguments. They knew then that they could win with their arguments, a realization that motivated them through the journey to Nationals.

Over Christmas break, Siu managed the Patrick Henry Undergraduate Law Review, worked full-time, and emailed everyone about APAC updates and group renewal forms in addition to practicing for moot

court. Paulton also was busy, focusing on reviewing case law and arguments.

Leading up to Nationals, Siu and Paulton faced an interesting situation – or rather, an interesting judge. The judge told Siu, “You’re knocking on the door, but you can’t come in,” which slightly perplexed Siu.

“The judge asked me about transgender Mormons which had nothing to do with anything we were talking about, and then he went on and started telling Thomas his Karma,” Paulton said. Similar memories have helped Siu and Paulton laugh amidst the busyness of moot court.

Once in Florida, the moot court team stayed at fellow debater Clare Downing’s house and continued to work with Dr. Gu-

liuzza and Dr. Farris. At Stetson University, where the tournament took place, Siu and Meridian prayed before their round and then went up against the team from the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Through striving to be the best not just for themselves but for PHC and God’s glory, Siu and Paulton accomplished their goal of winning the ACMA intercollegiate championship.

“I’m in awe of the win. It’s an amazing blessing that we couldn’t have had without Dr. Farris and Dr. Guliuzza’s help,” Siu said. “It’s a meaningful win for us to have won the last year Dr. Farris is here at Patrick Henry College.” ♦

SI Alumni Fellows Program Enters Second Semester

by Evie Fordham

Strategic Intelligence students for years have had a community of graduates to guide them as they work on special projects like Border Security Alert or apply for internships. This network was formalized at the start of the 2016 fall semester with the creation of the SI Alumni Fellows Program.

“I had worked with a number of students, many in project manager roles, who when they graduated asked the obvious question of, ‘Are we really done?’” said Dr. Gordon Middleton, retired Air Force colonel and director of the SI program. “We attempt to instill a service-oriented leadership model... it’s natural that if alumni are still around and available, they mentor the project managers and by extension the younger students.”

The three alumni fellows, Evan Johnson (Class of 2013), Grace Prigge (Class of 2015), and Sam Watkins (Class of 2015), receive small stipends, business cards, and official PHC email addresses. Johnson,

Prigge, and Watkins earned SI Track in Government degrees, because the SI major did not exist when they declared.

“The program is not unique to SI,” Middleton said. “When I made the proposal to the alumni and the administration, it was not proposed as just an SI thing. The program in concept is open to any major at PHC and requires that faculty, students, and alumni work together.”

Johnson, who works for the Department of Defense, coordinates SI alumni communications, recruits new students, and connects SI alumni to support SI special projects. Prigge, who works for the Department of Justice, mentors the Scenario Development and Crisis Management Exercise teams. Watkins works at PHC as a computer support technician and has been director of the college’s SI summer camps, a key recruitment tool for the SI program, since 2015.

“Prigge was the project manager for CME before I was, so having her experience and help has been invaluable,” said senior Caitey Grissom, current project manager of CME. “My first year as a proj-

ect manager it was especially helpful to have someone who knew the ins and outs of my particular project.”

Prigge drives over two hours round trip to attend weekly special projects meetings.

“It’s very much a partnership with the project manager and me,” she said. “My presence helps to make it more like a class setting.”

Watkins discovered PHC through an SI camp she attended at age 17. Then, she was “the quiet girl who watched and listened.” Now, she’s the designer and leader of the camps, which are aimed at older middle to high school students.

“The most rewarding part is investing in the kids,” Watkins said. “Kids are on campus now that were my campers two or three years ago. I enjoy getting to know them in camps and then seeing them on campus.”

His freshman year, Johnson had three sophomore roommates.

“One was SI and provided a lot of mentorship to me,” he said. “The main thing was [his] willingness to answer typical

continued on page 5

Bittersweet Times for PHC and Dr. Farris

continued from cover

with HSLDA and 17 years with PHC.

Although Farris is not cutting off all ties with HSLDA or PHC, his new position at ADF will require him to take a year off from teaching and coaching at PHC. He will, however, remain on the PHC Board of Trustees and continue as Chancellor *Emeritus* of PHC. Farris will also remain Chairman of the HSLDA Board. In the fall of 2018, Farris plans to return to PHC to resume teaching Constitutional Law and coaching the Moot Court team.

On multiple occasions, Farris has made it clear that he would not have taken this important step if he thought that his leaving would bring serious harm to either PHC or HSLDA. When he spoke in chapel on Monday, he emphasized his belief that he was leaving both PHC and

HSLDA in the good hands of President Jack Haye and President J. Michael Smith, respectively.

Farris said, “[The offer from ADF] coincided with my growing and deep concern for the broad decline of the state of liberty in our nation, starting with our most fundamental liberty – the free exercise of religion.” He believes that by accepting this new position, he is following God’s calling for his life.

Junior Thomas Siu has gotten to know Dr. Farris on both a personal and a professional level. “I don’t think there is another position anywhere in the United States that is a better fit for Dr. Farris’ passions and skills,” said Siu.

Siu has been greatly influenced by the time spent with Farris in his Constitutional Law and Public International Law

classes, as well as Moot Court. He said, “He’s been an excellent mentor for those of us planning to enter the legal profession. He’s taught us much about the law, but more importantly, he’s taught us about life – how to do everything we do with excellence and for God’s glory, not our own.”

Junior Abigail Olinski has also taken classes and Moot Court with Farris. She said, “I’ll miss him, but as long as he’s happy and doing God’s will... that’s what is important.”

In his chapel address, Farris left the students of PHC with this reminder: “I want you to pursue academic excellence... The day you start believing your intellect is more important than your spiritual life – that’s the day that you’re dangerous to yourself and to the Kingdom of God.” ♦

IPP Major Plans Study Abroad Trip for Students

Dr. Stephen Baskerville plans to take students to study in Cracow, Poland, this summer

by Danielle Fife

Towering cathedrals and the remains of medieval castles set the scene for PHC’s summer program in Cracow, Poland. Dr. Stephen Baskerville is proposing to take students on a 24 day journey studying the politics, culture, and religion of East-Central Europe right in the heart of history. The plan is awaiting approval from the college’s administration.

“Cracow is one of the most beautiful cities I research and one of the most beautiful in Europe, with a rich culture and a religious and political cultural that is very appropriate for us,” said Baskerville, PHC’s International Politics and Policy professor.

Leaving May 15 and returning June 8, students will have the opportunity to take three credits in “Topics in International Studies: Politics, Religion, and Society in East-Central Europe since 1918.” Baskerville and guest speakers will lecture.

This semester Baskerville is offering an optional preparative “Area Study: Politics

of Russia and East-Central Europe.”

While in Cracow, students also have the opportunity to take other classes for credit including IPP Practicum, IPP Internship, Special Projects in International Politics, Directed Research, and Senior Thesis prep. Any internship must be pre-arranged by the students.

“I think it will be good for the students to get an opportunity to study in Europe, especially in this region, which is both politically and culturally important and very friendly to Americans,” said Baskerville.

During the weekends, students will have the opportunity to tour the areas that they have been studying. These tours will feature cathedrals, medieval architecture, Oscar Schindler’s factory, and Auschwitz.

“Poland is rich in history, and I am so excited to just be there for a little over three weeks studying in a place where others great people have gone before,” said sophomore Abigail Salomon. “I’ve never been to Europe before, and I can’t think of a better time to go.”



Architecture in Cracow

Baskerville and other professors have thought for years that it would be beneficial for the college to have a study abroad program for its students.

Studying abroad will give context to the material that the students are studying, and give them a greater appreciation for the rich political, religious, and cultural history of East-Central Europe. There are still several spots available on the trip. Email Baskerville for more information. ♦

SIAFP a Model for Other Majors to Follow

continued from page 3

'new guy on campus' questions. It's not like he got a grade or credit for it."

Those answered questions in part helped Johnson to excel and eventually become the project manager of both the *Intelligencer* and BSA his senior year. After graduating in 2013, he directed the SI summer camps until 2015. He has men-

tored SI special project Vanguard since fall 2015.

"For our project, what we've found works best is Google Hangouts," Johnson said. "Last year we had a call where one [mentor] was in Southeast Asia, another in D.C., I was in Virginia, and obviously the student was on campus in Purcellville... video chat allows us to tie in more

alumni than those who live in Loudoun County."

A career in strategic intelligence is more than just a job to Johnson

"You can truly live out the motto of *Pro Christo et Libertate*, which is something unique to this career field," he said. "You get the chance to contribute to the safety of the people of the United States." ♦

Dr. Michael Kucks Named New EBA Director

by Bruce Truax

As the new director for the EBA program, Dr. Michael Kucks plans to advocate capitalism.

"I want to be very clear... that free markets and capitalism are good things," Kucks said. "In most of academia they are like the devil incarnate. I've gone to conferences where the statement is just blatantly made, 'Well, we all now know that capitalism is a failed system.'"

Kucks has, "worked in industry for a number of years." He is formally taking over leadership of the EBA program and has held informal temporary management of the program since the previous faculty, Dr. Daniel Bennet.

Kucks wants to encourage his students to start their own companies before they graduate. He said that students who graduate with purely educational business degrees learn less than students who have had hands on experience. Some EBA students are planning on starting businesses, and he wants to "make them a reality."

While PHC was formulating the program, the board members who had business experience voiced their disapproval

of the current business education system common in other colleges. "Their businesses had been hiring business degree graduates for a period of time, and they often were disappointed in those hires not having the skill level that they wanted or expected," Kucks said. The college decided that the business program would also focus on math, economics, and business analytics.

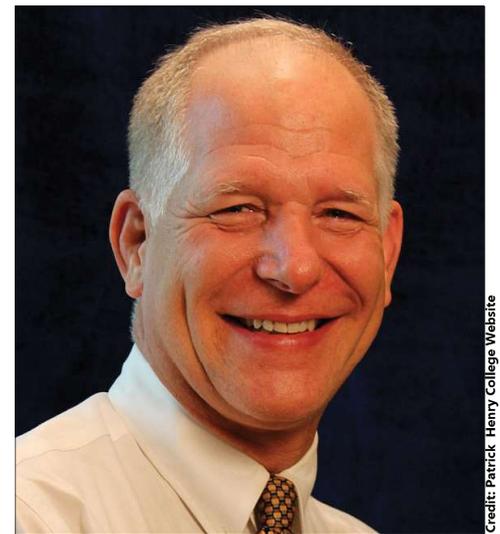
Kucks said that he would be open to student feedback to further modify the focus of the EBA program. However, he will be wary. "I've seen the error on both sides in my mind, people who were so standoffish that they did not let anyone give an opinion that was contrary to theirs... and I've seen others who tried to implement every idea that came across their desks and neither one worked," he said. "Lead-

ership is there to sift and sort through the ideas so that whatever is implemented moves the ball forward."

His organizational ideas and teaching style have earned him the admiration of many of the EBA students.

"His idea about starting our own businesses sounded really exciting and useful," said sophomore Daniel Fierer.

"To me it seems to be the best-balanced major here," said junior Meredith Mon-



Dr. Michael Kucks

roe. "Dr. Kucks is the best math professor I've ever had."

Kucks was on the committee that formed the EBA program. The administration considered adding a business major during the time he first came to PHC. Eventually, a strategic planning committee was created to come up with a business program. After the committee decided on the key points of the program, economics professor Nathan Russell and Kucks were tasked with writing the curriculum, made available during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

"There is a perspective in the church that capitalism is evil, and free markets are evil... they can be, but they don't need to be," Kucks said. ♦



Credit: Evie Fordham

by Evie Fordham

Over 25 PHC students attended the inauguration and more tuned in on TV, but President Donald Trump's inaugural address did little to convince students that he could tone down his in-your-face style and win them over to himself or his policies.

Freshman Madison Crawley traveled to the inauguration with 20 other students in a trip organized by PHC's College Republicans. She was motivated to go because of the historical ceremony, not Trump, whom she believes lacks professionalism and is too emotionally driven.

"I was definitely pleased with the fact that he gave a more polished speech than he normally presents, but I was definitely disappointed in the content of his speech," she said. "It did not change my view of Trump necessarily, but it did provide me with a little more confidence in the sense that he can be professional when it matters."

"I would consider myself as a Trump supporter," sophomore Seth Lucas said. "I believe he gave an excellent inaugural address. He stated his goals clearly in a way the average American could understand and emphasized well how politicians must be accountable to the people."

At least 700,000 people witnessed the inauguration from the National Mall, according to Politifact. Religious leaders, including Franklin Graham and Samuel Rodriguez, prayed, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) spoke about his faith in the American people. Trump emphasized in his inaugural address that the political establishment had betrayed the people, and that he was returning power to the people to make America great again.

"[The speech] had its problems," said junior Keith Zimmerman, who attended the inauguration. "He kept saying he was going to lower taxes and also build new roads and bridges. Where else is he going to get the money but from the taxpayers?"

Outside the Mall, over 200 protesters were arrested and charged with felony rioting for smashing windows and vehicles as well as throwing things at police officers, according to Washington's Top News.

On the Mall, the mood was heated as well. Sophomore Esther Katz had an orange ticket to the inauguration, meaning she was in one of the first standing sections on the Mall.

"When Schumer talked, there was constant booing and chanting 'Drain the Swamp!'" she said. "People were screaming at him to get off the stage... I couldn't hear Schumer, and I was surprised at the lack of respect."

She wanted to tell those around her to be more respectful but lost her courage when a man near her made a similar comment and was told he was not a "real Republican."

"It was especially discouraging after those leaders had just prayed and asked for unity and understanding," she said. "Part of me wonders if the way Trump



Courtesy: Kyle Permann



Credit: Evie Fordham



Credit: Mary Katherine Collins

conducted himself in debates allowed people to think that that kind of childish behavior is okay.”

Many believe that Trump has divided the nation like no other candidate, but Associate Professor of History Dr. Robert Spinney pointed out the similarity between the latest presidential race and that of 1828, when Andrew Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams.

“Jackson was a political outsider, a champion of the common man,” Spinney said. “He ran as the ultimate political outsider. He didn’t use the phrase ‘Drain the Swamp,’ but he would have... He had no ideology and no political principles... he distrusted elites and banks and wanted to represent the common man.”

Trump and Clinton’s race was as ugly as the race between Jackson and Adams. They had faced off four years earlier, but neither had gained a majority in the Electoral College. The House of Representatives had chosen Adams as president even though Jackson had earned a plurality.

His supporters felt cheated during Adams’ term, and the 1828 election was one of “extreme vitriol,” Spinney said.

“The difference is, Jackson did not have a Twitter account and did project a modicum of presidential gravitas,” Spinney said. “What is unprecedented is that [Trump] seems to display an impetuosity, lack of moderation, and a willingness to have Twitter fights... he’s unpredictable. Even when Jackson was going into office, people could have predicted what he was going to do.”

Katz has hope that Trump will prove himself to the American people.

“As a person, he seems hard to respect because of things that have come out about his behavior,” she said. “However, I do have hope because I do believe he’s surrounding himself with a cabinet with people of faith, and if not with people of Christian faith specifically, with people of integrity... I’m not as worried as I once was.” ♦



Courtesy: Mary Katherine Collins



Courtesy: Kyle Permann

Is the Electoral College a Glitch in Democracy?

by Meg McEwen

“The electoral college is a disaster for a democracy,” tweeted a notable businessman in 2012. Four years later, that same man won the presidential election only because of the 306 votes that he received from the Electoral College. When President Donald Trump lost the popular vote by an alleged 1.02% of the 130 million votes counted, moral outrage rippled across the nation. How could a country truly call itself a democracy if the exact will of the people did not ultimately matter? To many it seemed like the founding fathers wove a glitch into the fabric of the United States.

Despite these twenty-first century disputes, the founding fathers had a good reason to believe that the Electoral College would serve an essential purpose as a check on power in America. But at what cost?

“The idea of the Electoral College was carried through from the Great Compromise in the Constitution itself. We wanted to protect small states and large states and give equality...This was not just arbitrary,” Dr. Michael Haynes, a government professor at PHC, said. Each state receives

several electoral representatives equal to its number of congressmen and in proportion to its population size, totaling 538 votes with an extra three allotted for the District of Columbia. Representatives of the Electoral College generally vote for the candidate that the majority of their state constituency chooses, but sometimes a representative chooses not to.

An Electoral College may not make sense within a democracy, but America

is a *republican* democracy. In *The Republic*, unconstrained democracy rubs shoulders with tyranny within Socrates’s understanding of the forms of government. “I think the founders were very concerned about mob rule... for the president you have to win the Electoral College, and for the senate you have to reach a sixty-vote threshold,” PHC senior Tim Kocher said. Under the Electoral College system, a candidate must garner at least 270 electoral votes to become president. The Electoral College is just one of a series of checks and balances instituted in the American system that prevents tyranny.

The Electoral College also provides political stability to the two major political parties, which can be viewed positively or negatively. If popular vote alone elected a president, then a nationally unfavorable candidate could more easily win. The ticket could be like that of the Republican primary in 2016: too many good candidates splitting the majority vote, resulting in a controversial selection. “If we did not have an Electoral College, all of the sudden someone could win with 25% of the popular vote. That is dangerous in and of itself,” Dr. Haynes said. Within a popular vote system, presidential candidates

“If we did not have an Electoral College, all of the sudden someone could win with 25% of the popular vote. That is dangerous in and of itself.”
-Dr. Michael Haynes

would only have to appeal to the large audiences in highly populated states, like California and Texas, to the exclusion of the interests of smaller, more rural populations.

Others see the Electoral College as imposing a rigid party system which disallows diversity of views. “I think

that the Electoral College is a part of the whole reason that we do not have political diversity. My problem with that is that you’re sort of competing in this winner-



takes-all contest... In two out of the last five presidential elections, the president has not been chosen by the popular vote. It’s been chosen by essentially an accident of geography,” PHC junior Christian McGuire said.

Despite its republican function, the electoral votes of almost every state are allotted to the majority ruling of the state population. Votes that the losing candidate receives in a state might as well be propelled in a time-capsule to Mars. They do not count. This is the real reason why the Electoral College does not always reflect the consensus of the people. To bypass this conundrum, Maine and Nebraska allot one vote to each of their congressional districts and two votes to the overall winner.

If you are a Christian conservative residing in California or another traditionally liberal state, do not stop exercising your right to vote, even if your vote does not seem to count. Instead, look to Pennsylvania for hope. Even though Philadelphia is notoriously liberal, the traditionally blue PA swapped to red in the 2016 election through the efforts of grassroots organizations. ♦

On the Border of a Dark Land

by Bridget Degnan

Degnan graduated in 2012 from PHC's Journalism program. She currently teaches 10th Grade Advanced English at a Foreign Language High School in South Korea.

The train platform was cold and empty except for a few South Korean soldiers pacing up and down the grey-stoned floor. They seemed relaxed, but I knew they could be deadly in a heartbeat. I stepped up to the platform edge and peered north, down the line. Wind whistled across the tracks leading to Pyongyang, as if pushing back against the muffled propaganda that blasted across the border from North Korean loudspeakers.

I was at Dorasan, the last stop on the Korean peninsula before entering North Korea, one of the most isolated countries in the world. I'd spent the day touring the border, a stretch of land known as the Demilitarized Zone or DMZ in South Korea.

Earlier in the day our bus had lumbered down an empty road surrounded by minefields in every direction. We stepped foot into North Korea within the safety of the Joint Security Area's neutral zone, snapped photos of a North Korean soldier known as "Bob" who stood guard on the other side, crawled through tunnels dug out by North Korea as part of an extensive plot to invade the South, and looked out over the fake village of Kijong-dong, where North Korean soldiers pretend to be happy civilians riding bikes or playing catch.

And now I walked the platform of the very last station before entering the dark land of Kim Jong-un. The North Korean leader's calls, amplified by loudspeakers, drifted down the tracks to where I stood. I imagined the countless people who lived in isolation just one stop away.

North Korea is largely ridiculed in the U.S. and elsewhere. We make Hollywood comedies about assassinating their leader, and even the country's growing nuclear aggression is often treated like the buzz of a mosquito, a global annoyance.

But since moving to South Korea, I've found that my comical image of the northern regime has been altered. South Koreans typically speak of the oppressive country with a sad sort of sobriety, like a man whose loved one has terminal cancer. South Koreans talk of healing their divided peninsula, but the sad shake of their heads reveal a hidden fear that only children speak of freely and adults with hesitation: that it's too late. The cancer has spread for too long.

It's hard to tell whether everyday North Koreans know that their country is sick. Their constitution guarantees virtually every civil and political right in the book, including freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly. Do North Koreans speak proudly of the "freedoms" they enjoy in the same way Americans celebrate their own? Can a country so oppressed really believe itself free?

The question plagued my mind long after the tour had ended. Later that night, I found myself standing on a street corner as hundreds upon thousands of South Koreans marched upon the home of their democratically-elected President, Park Geun-hye. Her involvement in a corruption scandal has sparked a level of national outrage not seen in South Korea since the country gained democracy in the 1980s.

Thunderous chanting from as many as a million voices called for her resignation throughout the night, shouting slogans like, "Park Geun-hye, out!" and wielding signs like, "Not my President!" Park Geun-hye, like every other weekend since October, listened to their cries until the sun rose. Such a demonstration would be impossible in North Korea. People there die for even a whisper of protest against the government.

Then again, it would also be impossible in America. Unlike the protests we know in the States, anger and violence were



Degnan by a piece of the Berlin Wall at the DMZ

hard to find. Entire families marched side by side, waved flags, held candles, ate food, even sang between chanting. It almost looked festive.

"Can you imagine a million people protesting like this in America?" a friend asked. A violent scene of pepper spray, looted stores, and angry mobs flashed across my mind. No, I couldn't.

Freedom looks different from one country to the next. The "right to bear arms," for example, is a hallmark of American liberty, but no such thing exists in South Korea. But surely the differences that distinguish us from South Korea are categorically different than what separates us from North Korea. Concentration camps, censorship, and draconian punishments for political dissidents are the status quo in that country. Religious practice is commonly punished, and traveling beyond the guarded border is completely forbidden, with few exceptions.

But North Korea boasts of its freedom like the rest of us. The constitutions of all three countries guarantee similar rights, but the manifestations of "freedom" in each are vastly different. At what point do our differences become so great that one

Why Write a Senior Thesis?

by Dr. Stephen Baskerville

The IPP and APP programs have recently followed Political Theory and History and introduced the option of a Senior Thesis. So far, we understandably have had few takers. Writing a thesis can be a daunting undertaking. The path of least resistance is surely to fulfill the apprenticeship requirements with internships.

So why do it? Two practical considerations are that a completed thesis can be impressive to show to employers or graduate schools and can demonstrate your initiative and independence. Writing a thesis takes you to the next level of education. If you think you are being called to post-graduate work, you might want to test the waters by writing a senior thesis.

Undergraduate education in practice sometimes seems to encourage a short attention span; at least, it can only do so much to overcome it. Typically, you begin each semester excited by the prospect of learning, say the theories of the Greeks or about the governments of the world. Fifteen weeks later, you are likely so sick of Greeks and governments that you never want to look at them again.

A thesis thrusts you into a different mindset. It is expected to be an original work and therefore a creative act, a step closer to God-like creation. You are ex-

pected to produce an original contribution to knowledge. Again, this is daunting at first. With an undergraduate mindset, you often get your fill of it after a few months.

But if you stick with it, the act of creation begins. Reading is no longer the passive absorption of knowledge. You learn to discern and discriminate, to read selectively, to separate the chaff from the wheat. So, you learn more of what is important without having to read so much.

You learn more easily to distinguish good scholarship from bad. Great books are worthy of reading cover-to-cover, but you cannot always read scholarly books and articles that way. You must learn to acquire what is useful and ignore the rest. In the process, this should teach you how to produce good scholarship yourself, scholarship that is useful to others and not ignored by them.

The main danger to this is obsession. Graduate students often become obsessed with their theses and begin to see the entire world as refracted through the prism of their subject. So the whole world is somehow connected to the alignment of altar tables in the Reformation in the northeast corner of southeast Rutland during a three-month period in 1573. Their social life becomes non-existent, and they spend Friday evenings in the archives. But perhaps that is not such a bad thing.



Dr. Stephen Baskerville

Those of you familiar with the realities of academic life may suspect that we are encouraging you to choose this option, because we have reached that stage in the life where we would like to have graduate students write our books for us. Perhaps so, but the Christian world needs more scholars who are willing to write on a variety of issues. As I often say to students, you must write the books you should be reading. In the meantime, I can think of a few topics where a good senior thesis would be useful for next year's classes. ♦

Alumna's Observations from South Korea

continued from page 9

of us is no longer free?

My friends and I eventually made our escape to another part of town. Surprisingly, the city remained in one piece. People even stayed to clean up and sweep the streets the next day. Not a single arrest. Many foreigners in Korea expressed doubt to me that the protests would accomplish much of anything. But on December 6th, the President announced that she would submit to a decision by Parliament; days

later Park Geun-hye was impeached.

Park's impeachment would have never happened apart from the millions of voices speaking out against her. Her impeachment is a tremendous victory of the people exercising a precious freedom that modern countries across the globe, including North Korea, guarantee to their citizens. But unlike North Koreans, South Koreans don't just have the right to peaceable assembly. They use it. Any country

can boast, but saying you're free is not the same as being free.

And as her impeachment goes to the country's Constitutional Court for a decision, I begin to wonder whether concepts of freedom are defined in writing so much as they are defined by action. Freedom can be written onto a piece of paper called "the Constitution" as much as anyone likes. But just because you say you're free, doesn't mean you are. ♦

Movies You Missed Over Christmas Break

by Jared Midwood

Students should note that some of the following movies are rated R.

If summer is the season of superheroes and blockbusters, winter is the season of philosophical and thought-provoking genre pieces. From space to Nazi-occupied Europe, filmmakers took their crowds to some truly intriguing places during the 2016 Christmas season. Here are four films you may have missed when you went home for break.

Allied

Jake Cole, writing for *Slate* magazine, labeled Robert Zemeckis' latest swash-buckler a "claustrophobic story." In some respects, *Allied* is intended to be exactly that. The story follows a Canadian intelligence officer stationed in North Africa during World War II. Played by a painfully dressed but convincing Brad Pitt, protagonist Max Vatan slowly becomes aware that the government believes his wife (Marion Cotillard) is an Axis spy. The narrative develops in a cloistered fashion that simultaneously shrouds the viewer in mystery and develops the strong emotional bond between Vatan and Marianne Beauséjour, all set against the retro warmth of *Casablanca*. A heart-wrenching conclusion begs the question: what would you do if you suspected that someone you loved wasn't who they said they were? *Allied* asks this inquiry in a majestic way, albeit utilizing rigid dialogue to underscore the solemnity of the (mostly) true story.

Passengers

Passengers as a film was regrettably mischaracterized from the beginning of its meager advertising campaign. Director Morten Tyldum arguably tries to do more here than craft a sleek sci-fi thriller, instead employing the much overused medium of space to ask some important philosophical questions. Jim Preston (Chris Pratt) is on an interstellar craft headed towards Homestead II, a habitable colony planet. His hibernation pod

misfires, waking him up 90 or so years before his scheduled arrival with the rest of the ship's five thousand passengers. Left to live and die alone, Pratt embodies the struggle of Ayn Rand's rational egoism. He spends a year conversing with an automaton bartender named Arthur about whether he should wake up another passenger to bring companionship to his miserable existence. Ultimately choosing writer Aurora Lane (Jennifer Lawrence), Pratt's character grapples with the moral ramifications of dooming another human being to die. *Passengers* taken at face value is cheesy and glamorous fanfare, but underneath the celebrity veneer is a darker story. As the passengers on board the ship struggle against its alarmingly regressive system failures, they also struggle to find their place in a paradigm created by very basic human desires. The film welcomingly presents forgiveness as the only viable solution.

Manchester by the Sea

Casey Affleck may not have the name recognition of his older brother Ben, but his critically acclaimed lead acting job in the indie drama *Manchester by the Sea*, directed by Kenneth Lonergan, deserves to be on everyone's list of 2016's great performances. Receiving an unprecedented critic metascore of 96 on IMDb, the film follows Lee Chandler (Affleck) as he is asked to care for his young nephew in the wake of familial loss. *Manchester* rivals *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* and *The Squid and the Whale* as recent film's best portrayal of relationship drama on the big screen. Arriving at its climactic moments out of nowhere, the movie effectively employs flashbacks to build an almost Biblical model of masculine mentorship. There are plenty of setbacks, drawbacks, and conundrums, but the film solidly frames tragedy in light of the healing that is available through mature relationships. As far as indie flicks go, this one may have been the year's best.



Credit: Pixabay

Patriots Day

On April 15, 2013, two isolated bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The explosions killed three and injured nearly a hundred times that, launching a multi-day manhunt for the suspected Tzarnaev brothers - radicalized Chechnyan terrorists who had planned the attacks well in advance. Mark Wahlberg's intrigue thriller comes nearly four years later but unfortunately regresses into banal political drivel that handicaps the ability of the film to tell a powerful story. The strongest aspect of the movie is that it presents itself as Wahlberg's love letter to the magnificent city of Boston. The saddest part is its constant mediocrity and inability to break the surface of an internationally charged tale of terrorism and heroism. *Patriots Day* is worth seeing not for its technical appeal but for its resounding affirmation of police officers in a day and age that is decidedly hostile toward their ability to perform the most basic acts of public safety. ♦

Correction

A photo in our Dec. 1 story, "Christmas Dinner at Pakistani Embassy," was captioned as a photo of event organizer Ilyas Masih and his family. The photo actually depicted performers at the event. ♦