

THE

ALMANIAN

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Learn more
about the
therapy dogs
see page 3

AlmaCon to
arrive on campus
see page 4

PRISM program now accepting applications

for underclassmen research opportunities

By **MECHON CAREW**
STAFF WRITER

Are you currently a freshman? Would you like to get paid to get college credit? Do you think you might be interested in majoring in math or science? Would you rather go out and do research instead of being stuck inside a boring lecture hall? If you answered yes to any number of these questions, PRISM might be the right way to spend your summer. Thanks to a large grant from the National Science Foundation, Alma College has created the Positive Roots Into Science and Math program, better known as PRISM. This is a program aimed at students who are going into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) majors, providing research opportunities early in college experience. The goal is to get students invested and interested in science and math early so that they retain their majors throughout their four years here at Alma. Last Wednesday evening there was a meeting for the PRISM program in Dow L4 in which faculty members provided information about their specific

studies for the summer and the PRISM program in general. Students who are accepted to the PRISM program spend about 10 weeks researching a particular topic with a faculty member and other students. Although they do have to provide their own food, the housing is free and students receive a \$2,500 stipend and four credits of independent study. There are a number of different research focuses, including but not limited to extracting biologically active components from plants at the Alma College Ecological Station, catching and studying snakes at the same site, studying molting in the station's birds, and blowing up meteorites. However, the summer is not all about research. "We do have fun in the summer," said IPHS Professor John Davis, who is one of the founding members of the PRISM program. "We go on a canoe trip [and] have a faculty-student softball game." Although many freshmen who go through the program have been involved in stepping stones such as the ASPIRE program, which takes place during the summer before their first fall term, or PRISM-certified First Year Seminars, there are some students who don't. For one such student, **Allie Frost ('17)**, the presentation seemed to catch her attention.



Biology Professor Eric Calhoun talks to a group of interested students at the PRISM open house.

Olivia Horton: Freelance Photographer

"I think it's really cool that they can involve the students," Frost said. "In bigger colleges, I don't think that would happen." Of course, the real question is if PRISM is actually effective or not. According to **Angie Clayton ('14)**, who took a PRISM study her freshman year, it certainly is. Her research with chemistry professor Melissa Strait didn't stop after that summer, but has continued through her four years in Alma. "I've gotten to present in a couple

of conferences so far," Clayton said. "It's a good experience to apply to grad school or to a job." The statistics show similar good news. About 80-100 percent of science and math majors are keeping their majors throughout Alma, compared to the 60-70 percent nationwide. The constant interaction that comes from spending 10 weeks of the summer together also helps build student-faculty relationships. "These students are then

often working with you [for] several years," Mike Bishop, instructor of biology, said. "It allows you to identify students in your area of science, and then be able to foster that." Any students who missed the presentation but who are interested in the PRISM program can still sign up by visiting the Alma College Website and searching for 'PRISM' to obtain the application form. Completed applications are due Feb. 15.

It's rush week: sorority list signing in full swing

By **EMILY ZADNY**
STAFF WRITER

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a part of Greek life at Alma College? For all non-Greek women, next week is the time to find out! This year's theme for recruitment week is bows. In the past, other themes have included shirts and pants. "Recruitment is a great way to meet a lot of different people," said Gamma Phi Beta President **Meredith Rahrig ('15)**. The week is not simply visiting the houses, attending the events, and meeting the members. "A lot of organizing goes into recruitment," said Greek

Life and Panhellenic Council Advisor Danielle Brandreth. While anyone can sign the list to go through recruitment, there are expectations for women interested in joining a sorority, such as having a GPA of 2.5 and having completed one full semester at Alma. After list signing comes to an end, Brandreth looks over the list to determine which women are eligible to take part. The first set of events to kick off the week is known as teas. "Teas have a more open-house feel to them, and this is when all of the potential new members go to all of the sorority houses and meet the members," Brandreth said. After teas, those women invited back to a sorority attend spreads and desserts, which serve as additional opportunities to meet the members and become one step closer to finding a home.

The big event for all potential new members is walkouts, tentatively held at the Stone Recreation Center at 9 p.m. next Friday. This is the time for all the women to "walk out" and join a chapter. "My favorite part [of recruitment] is walkouts, where all the girls announce their new homes," said Alpha Xi Delta member **Lauren Morawski ('15)**. None of these events could happen without the help and hard work of the Panhellenic Council. "Panhellenic is the umbrella organization to all of our sororities on campus," said Panhellenic President **Brooke Peterson ('15)**. "Basically, we are there to help potential new members find their place in Greek life and to help connect all the sororities on campus

to become one unified front." Being unified seems to be a central theme for Alma's Greek life community. Co-recruitment Chair on Panhellenic **Danielle Harm ('16)** has nothing but positive feedback when it comes to going Greek. "I am a huge promoter of Greek life," said Harm. "Greek life is something that can provide young women with leadership and networking opportunities and ultimately a home away from home at college. It is a family." The potential new members are not the only ones who enjoy the festivities of recruitment week. "You kind of have this sense of pride when you realize people want to join a group you are a part of," said Kappa Iota sister **Marissa Relitz ('16)**. "I am looking forward to seeing the process unfold,

bonding with my sisters through it all, and seeing each woman find that organization she can call home," said Phi Sigma Sigma member **Lauren Buhr ('15)**. With so many aspects of campus being noted and associated with the school's former motto, "Only One Alma," recruitment and Greek life are no different, as Alpha Gamma Delta President **Brittany Verran ('15)** said. "I think it's important to remember that Alma College Greek life is not like what you see in 'Legally Blonde' or any other stereotypical portrayal of Greeks," said Verran. "The sororities on our campus are all very unique and all stand for something different. There is a purpose and meaning to the organizations, and we all work to uphold that each and every day," said Verran.



From left: Allison Mondel, Kristen Dubenion-Smith ('02), and Crossley Hawn perform as Eya, a vocal ensemble that specializes in medieval music for women's voices. The trio entertained campus in a concert in the Remick Heritage Center on Jan. 18.

Patrick Mallett: Staff Photographer

This Week at Alma College February 3 - 9

Monday

Finding Religion in Native American Ledger Art
7 p.m. SAC 109

Tuesday

Internship & Summer Job Fair
3 p.m. Tyler-Van Dusen

Wednesday

Women's Basketball v. Trine University
6 p.m. Smith Arena

Men's Basketball v. Albion College
8 p.m. Smith Arena

Thursday

Artist's Talk: Rowen Schussheim-Anderson
7 p.m. Flora Kirsch Beck Gallery

Friday

ACUB Presents: 20th Annual Casino Night

7 p.m. Tyler-Van Dusen

Wrestling v. Trine University

7 p.m. Smith Arena

AlmaCon

9 p.m. Stone Rec Center

Saturday

AlmaCon

7 a.m. Tyler-Van Dusen/Rotunda

Women's Tennis v. Aquinas College

9 a.m. Stone Rec Center

Women's Basketball v. Calvin College

3 p.m. Smith Arena

Men's Basketball v. Olivet College

7 p.m. Smith Arena

Science departments search for new faculty members

By CHELSEARAE ROWLEY
STAFF WRITER

The biology and environmental studies departments are currently hunting for new faculty members. Throughout this past week, three candidates were brought to campus to participate in a two-day interview process.

This procedure is designed to discover how well candidates will fit into the social atmosphere at Alma College.

"We really need to make sure that we get the right person for this environment—for the students, for the building, for the campus," said Tim Keeton, associate professor of biology.

In order to make sure that potential professors are the right fit for the college, current faculty call upon the help of students.

Biology and anthropology major **Anna Foltz ('14)** enjoys participating in the task.

"I love having input in the selection process," she said. "It makes me feel that I can have a good idea about what types of research I could be a part of in the future."

Although candidates were brought to campus for only two days, the process of searching for a new professor is much more time consuming.

When recruiting professors, the biology and environmental studies departments do not typically head hunt for candidates. Instead, advertisements are

placed in scholarly research journals, including the Journal of Higher Education.

After posting the job in various publications, the next step in the process is to review the applications sent in by candidates.

Possible faculty members in the biology and environmental studies fields typically send in cover letters, résumés, and "their statement of research and teaching interests," said Keeton.

Reviewing the written material is the first step; the next is conducting telephone interviews with a select number of candidates.

According to Keeton, the phone interview is his favorite part of the process. He said it allows the search committee to gain a greater insight into what the candidates have to offer.

After conducting phone interviews, the search committee works closely with the provost's office to extend campus invitations for the candidates. During their visits, potential professors meet with faculty and students, in addition to giving a presentation on their research.

The lecture is a crucial part of the interview procedure. Potential professors must "impress us [current faculty] with what they do, but keep it at a level that the students will remain interested also," said Keeton.

Students play a large role in the interviewing. They not only attend research lectures, but they also take faculty members out to various meals and show them around campus.

"I love having input in the selection process. It makes me feel that I can have a good idea about what types of research I could be a part of in the future."

- Anna Foltz ('14)

Chelsea Martin ('16), who participated in the interviews, said, "I look for a professor that is professional and interested in their students, someone that cares about the students and really wants to help them succeed."

Foltz also said that she has specific qualities in mind during the interviews. "I look for someone who is personable, passionate about their work, and excited about their students and what their students hope to accomplish," she said.

With the new candidates being present on campus, current faculty members offer words of advice. Keeton said that he would say to potential new faculty, "Don't be afraid to fail."

He added, "You have to start out really understanding that you are not going to be good at this job right away—not in all aspects of it. Try to understand that [being the perfect professor] is not expected and is not necessarily possible. You have to be patient with yourself and be ready to change and adapt throughout your first few years of teaching."

Campus unites for common cause; fundraising has begun for Relay for Life team members

By JON CLARK
STAFF WRITER

Once a year, students, faculty, and community members come together to participate in a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, called Relay for Life. This year the event will begin Saturday, March 22 at 10 a.m. and last a full 24 hours until 10 a.m. Sunday morning.

Various student organizations, faculty groups, and family members form teams that spend much of the 24 hours walking around the indoor track in honor of survivors and those who have lost their lives to cancer.

Teams participating include, but are not limited to, Gamma Phi Beta, Alma lacrosse, Alma volleyball and wrestling, Alpha Xi Delta, Alma faculty staff and friends, and Alpha Gamma Delta.

This particular Relay event is being hosted by the group Colleges Against Cancer, and will take place at the Alan J. Stone Recreation Center.

includes students and faculty members from hundreds of different schools nationwide. These members strive to make an impact in cancer awareness and prevention through advocacy, Relay for Life, cancer education, and survivorship.

"I am passionate about finding a cure so nobody has to suffer from cancer again," said **Aleia McKessy ('15)**, a member of Colleges Against Cancer. "My past experiences with Alma Relay were amazing."

There will be five separate ceremonies throughout the day, starting with the Opening Ceremonies, and followed by the Survivor Ceremony at 4 p.m., which includes a story by a cancer survivor, dinner, and an honorary lap around the track.

At 8 p.m. the Luminary Ceremony commences, which is held to honor all who have lost their lives to the disease. The Fight Back Ceremony begins at 10 p.m. and features a guest speaker who informs, urges, and motivates students to become more involved in the continuous efforts against cancer.

Finally, there are the closing ceremonies. This, as the name might suggest, takes place at the end of the event. How much money was raised is announced, and everyone finally heads home.

The various teams will have campsites set up at the edges of the gym floor and will hold on-site fundraisers. Activities and small games will be held in the center of the gym in order to entertain participants while they take a break from walking.

Each Relay has a different theme, and this year the teams will revolve their sites around Disney.

As of last Friday, the Alma teams had collectively raised \$2,666 and are expecting to have a much higher total by the end of the event.

Relay For Life activities are 100 percent charitable and are

extremely important to all involved.

"For me, Relay For Life means hope," said **Danielle Harm ('16)**, team leader for Alma Lacrosse. "Hope that we are close to finding a cure, hope that someday people will have more birthdays."

With 25 teams, and 116 participants so far, the floor will be crowded at the Stone Recreation Center on Saturday.

"I am so glad to be a part of such a powerful campus and community that can come together for a cause," said **Ashley Hurt ('14)**, leader of the Scots team. "I absolutely love every minute of Relay. It is such an uplifting atmosphere."

There will, and have been, several fundraisers for Relay for Life teams, other than each team member's personal goal. Last

week a combination of human rights groups on campus held a bake sale, with all proceeds going towards Relay. Phi Mu Alpha will host a spaghetti dinner as a fundraiser, and Zeta Sigma will collect cans to raise money.

Anyone can donate to the local cause by going to the Relay for Life Website, and searching for the Alma College event.

Students and faculty alike are very passionate about this event, and have certainly made significant efforts to assist in the fight against cancer.

"It's a hope that my friends won't have to worry about their mothers or their fathers or their siblings," said **Megan Lamrock ('14)**, head of the Phi Sigma Sigma team. "Simply put, Relay for Life is hope."

Letter Policy:

Letters are published as layout space allows. Submission of a letter does not guarantee publication. The Almanian reserves the right to condense letters for layout purposes. Deadline for publication is 5 p.m. the Friday before requested publication.

Address letters to:
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Email letters to:
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Words cannot begin to express how grateful we are for all of the support we received during the search for and death of our much-loved son and brother Sean. Many thanks to our family, friends, the Alma Police Department and other law enforcement agencies who aided in the search for Sean, and everyone from Harbor Beach, Huron County, Alma College, the City of Alma, and surrounding areas who reached out to us in any way. Your thoughtfulness, concern, and compassion will be remembered always.

With love and gratitude,

Rick, Lori, Jacob, Daniel, and Jonathan Murawske

Canine companions bring joy to campus

By KILEE DEBRABANDER
STAFF WRITER

For a couple of hours once a month, Alma College's library is occupied by something other than students studying and finishing projects: playful, four-legged friends.

Dealing with homework, classes, projects, clubs, sports, on-campus jobs, or other programs is often extremely overwhelming for students, so a local group of certified therapy dogs visit the college monthly to help relieve some of the stress.

"Any time you can spend time with an animal helps lower your level of stress," said Terri Freeland from Counseling, Health, and Wellness.

"Therapy animals can assist students in alleviating symptoms of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and other adjustment and mental health issues. The affection of a therapy dog often is a needed break and always adds brightness to their day."

Margy Riemer is the owner of two therapy dogs, Kindle and Boomer, who are regular visitors on campus every month.

Boomer, a gentle Golden Retriever, is 10 years old but still has the heart of a young puppy. He was found in the woods by a local farmer, starving and skinny, and Riemer took him in. Boomer is good at sensing

people's stress and is very patient, except when he knows that his owner has treats in her hand.

"He loves his toys, but he won't retrieve any of them until he sees Kindle do it," said Riemer.

Kindle, who is a 4-year-old Yellow English Labrador Retriever, always has plenty of energy and loves to play and swim. She enjoys putting her front paws up on people and can constantly be counted on for a shower of puppy kisses.

"She has a knack for playing with and eating shoes and water bottles," Riemer explained.

Along with Riemer, Jon Brown also brings his therapy dog, Anya, a German Shepherd, who is only 3 years old. She loves hurdles and agility training, and although she is slightly more nervous around people than Kindle and Boomer, she is extremely good with the people with whom she works.

Anya was also left in the woods and found famished and underweight, then taken to a shelter in Mt. Pleasant.

"They contacted me and I agreed to foster her, but I ended up just keeping her," Brown said.

These dogs, certified by Therapy Dogs International, went through intense training that involved being tested in obedience, how they react around food, handling people and loud noises, and how they behave around medical equipment. The dogs must be 1 year old before testing.

Riemer, who started the local chapter of Therapy Dogs International, was living out of

state when she met a man who took his therapy dogs to read with children at local libraries.

"I saw what he was doing and decided that my dogs needed a job," she said.

Along with the college, the dogs visit local hospitals, elementary schools, and nursing homes.

"When the dogs come into my room, I always feel very happy and uplifted," a patient at Gratiot County Hospital stated.

"It's exceptionally refreshing to have the dogs around, and they put a smile on everyone's face."

For the patients, students, and children, a visit from Boomer, Kindle, Anya, and the other local therapy dogs is always something to look forward to.

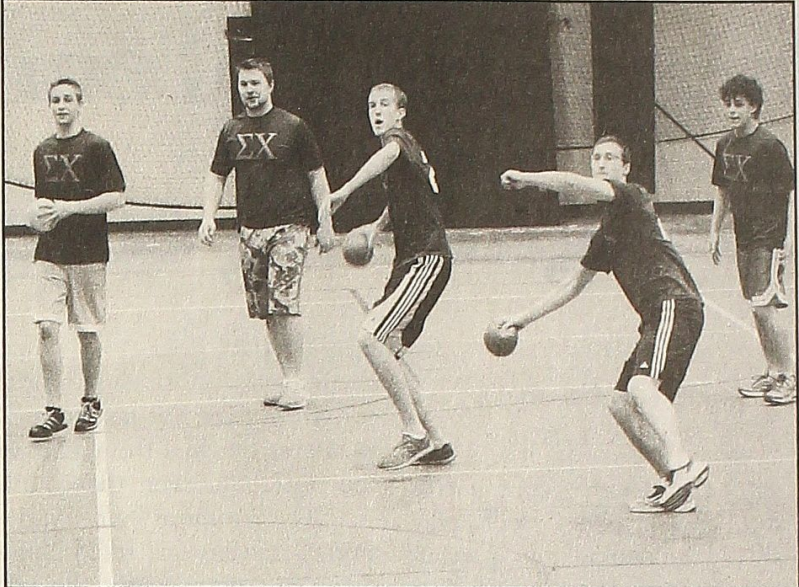
"I know these dogs can brighten anyone's day; they always make me feel better when I'm having a stressful day," Alec Genter ('17) said. "Not to mention, their owners are saints for spending so much time and effort training their dogs to go around and improve people's moods."

The therapy dogs, which started coming to Alma College in 2011, are expected to continue to visit for many years.

"Who doesn't love to spend a little time with a great dog?" Freeland asked. "These visits have been helpful to the emotional health of Alma College students and for those students who miss their pets at home."

"If you haven't had a chance to meet them, do yourself a favor and stop by to see them the next time they are on campus!"

Recap: Dodge for Diapers



Kayla Roy: Photo Editor

Students and staff dip, duck, dive and dodge in last week's Dodge For Diapers. Money was raised for the local Red Cross diaper pantry.

Seven teams participated in last Monday's Dodge for Diapers tournament, raising a total of \$400. "Sliding Filament" (the IPHS department) was the champion team. Sliding Filament won a special Dodge for Diapers Champion T-shirt and the bracket poster. Sigma Chi came in second and won Alma College water bottles. The Spirit Award went to "Pony Up" (the Alma College Glee Club Sopranos). All the teams had great fun and supported a wonderful cause. A big thank you goes to all the teams and their captains!

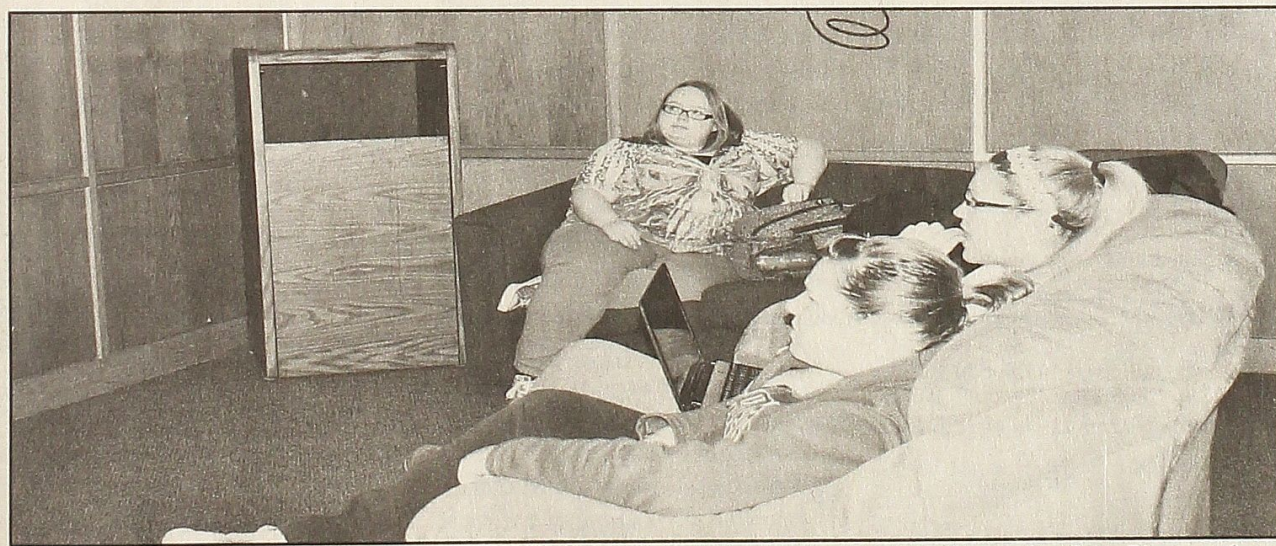
-Alma College Service Learning



At the passing of
MR. RICHARD ABERNATHY:

Keeping Dr. Jeff Abernathy, his family, and everyone at Alma College in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Student hangout opens in Fireside Lounge



Olivia Horton: Freelance Photographer

From left: Victoria Sheffer ('17), Megan Sanborn ('17), and KenDra Hallett ('17) enjoy the new lounge.

By HANNAH KING
STAFF WRITER

Whether passing through on the way to Joe's, looking for a place to watch the game, or just wanting to relax after a long day, the new Student Lounge—provided by the Alma College Union Board—is available.

The area is located in the Fireside Lounge room in Tyler-Van Dusen Campus Center, directly

across from North Van Dusen.

It is open Monday through Friday from 6 p.m. to midnight and on Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to midnight.

The idea for a student lounge was initiated by the former ACUB advisor, with support from college life executives, and is being carried out by ACUB members and David Lewis, the new advisor of the group.

"We have four couches, Netflix, and a wide variety of DVDs," said Josh Spratt ('14), ACUB worker for four years. "It's a comfortable environment to hang out, listen

to music, or play cards in."

The new hangout offers video games on X-BOX 360, X-BOX 1, and a Wii with several controllers. The X-BOX 360 and X-BOX 1 are part of a Kinect system, and they can be used for "Just Dance" as well as other video games.

"I played 'NBA 2K14' the other night, and it was a blast," said Anthony Garcia ('14).

The Fireside Lounge is also equipped with a full sound system and three flat-screen TVs, as well as a full-sized projector screen.

"The lounge is a great environment for students

to have fun, relax, and get away from studying for a few hours," said Spratt.

The lounge is a very large space and arranged in such a way that multiple activities can take place at once.

"I helped design the lounge," said Spratt. "We tried to utilize as much space as possible, without making it seem too busy. We attempted to keep the design feng shui, making the room a relaxing area."

This is the first time that ACUB has run an ongoing event, and the members are enjoying this opportunity.

"I am really glad that ACUB now has a constant presence in the campus community, rather than simply hosting events," said Maxwell Vanderpool ('15). "It also gives us a relaxing work environment where we can get feedback and ideas from students easily."

ACUB members conclude that because the new student lounge is located conveniently near Joe's, student turnouts have been decent thus far, and should continue to get better, especially when the weather is more pleasant.

"Between board games, video

games, and movies, students should always be able to find something to do here," said Lewis.

The lounge kicked off with its first event last Sunday, hosting a Super Bowl party with several TVs streaming the game, surround sound, and pizza and pop.

While it has only just opened this semester, there are many events currently being planned for the rest of the year.

On Friday from 7-10 p.m. the lounge will host a Casino Night in North Van Dusen. The evening will consist of poker, black jack, and roulette.

"We are fortunate enough to have access to North Van Dusen, so we hope to utilize that space for something when it is open," said Lewis. "It would be a great spot for studying or watching a movie with a big group."

ACUB plans to host parties for future Red Wings games, as well as regular movie nights showing new releases.

"Hopefully we can do more with the lounge next year, but this will only be possible if students show interest in it this year," said Lewis. "It is a work in progress, but in the end, it should be a great hangout for all students."

Student organization hosts annual comic book and gaming convention

By JON CLARK
STAFF WRITER

For the fourth consecutive year, Alma College will play host to the anime and gaming event that is AlmaCon. This year, the convention will begin Friday and last through Sunday.

Attractions include discussion panels, vendor and anime rooms, a charity dance, special guests, and live action role play sessions.

Alma College Otaku and Gamers, popularly known as ACOG, will sponsor and work the event. ACOG is an organization on campus that strives to promote Japanese anime and comics, as well as role-playing games and video games.

Current members and club alumni will manage the entire three days. The convention has grown drastically since its beginning in 2011. The inaugural AlmaCon had about 100 visitors and took place only in the Tyler-Van Dusen building.

Just last year, there were roughly 1,000 fans in attendance, and the event occupied the Swanson Academic Center, the Dow Science Center, the Alan J. Stone Recreation Center, as well as the Tyler-Van Dusen building.

This year there are over 500 pre-registered attendees, and ACOG members are expecting as many as 1,500 enthusiastic

participants. Those who attend the convention are not just from the local area but hail from all across the state, and even the country.

"We promote at various anime conventions in Michigan, doing our best to get the word out about our convention," said **Kaitlyn Mays ('15)**, convention chair for this year. "As we get bigger, we expect the range of attendees to increase as well. We've had artists and vendors travel, or be willing to travel, from as far as New York and Georgia."

Guests to speak and sign autographs for this weekend include a variety of voice actors, writers, and performers.

Mike McFarland, a voice actor and director, is one of the major guests. He has worked on shows such as "Fullmetal Alchemist," "Brotherhood," and "Dragon Ball Z."

Other expert guests include Martin Billany, co-creator of "Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Abridged Series," actor Chuck Huber, comic book writers Comfort Love & Adam Withers, Internet critic Doug Walker, and Team Con-Don, an improvisational duo who reenact "Doctor Who" episodes.

There will also be voice actors J. Michael Tatum, Stephanie Sheh, Yuri Lowenthal, and Tara Platt.

In addition to the festivities, there will be three separate charitable events with proceeds

going directly to Relay for Life. Members will host a rave, with music provided by **Jimmy Scollin ('16)**, as well as a masquerade ball and a charity auction.

"The past events have been very successful, where everyone has enjoyed the con and met many new people," said **Kily Buta ('15)**.

Tickets to the rave and the masquerade ball cost \$7 each and \$10 for couples. For access to the panel rooms, artists, and vendors, admission is \$5. Students can attend all of the non-charitable events for free.

The three-day festival will certainly provide a change of pace on campus compared to the typical concerts, speakers, and sporting events.

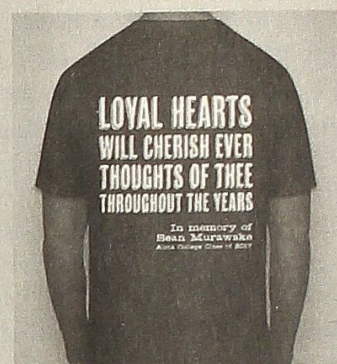
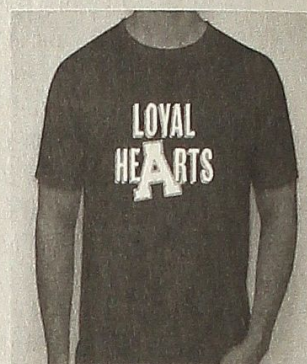
"AlmaCon is a convention where people of all ages can come together and celebrate their love of anime, gaming, cosplay, pop culture, and the things that make up the 'nerd' culture in a safe, family-friendly environment," said **Abigail Delaney ('16)**.

While the convention does draw a large crowd from people outside the Alma area, students are encouraged to attend as well.

"We'd love for the students of the college to enjoy the convention," said Delaney. "Our attendants can tell us how much they had fun, but then they leave. We live with you people! We'd like you to enjoy it too!"

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The Almanian.

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The Almanian is a newspaper published not only for the students at this institution, not just for the faculty on campus, and not solely for the administrators who work for Alma, but for all people interested in Alma College and the lives it touches. The writers, editors, publishers, and distributors of this newspaper are dedicated to producing an interesting, accurate, timely, fun, and error free newspaper on a weekly basis in order to inform and educate the people for whom it is intended about the culture and nature of Alma College.

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Speakers present rare opportunities

By RAY VISSER
STAFF WRITER

I've recently stumbled upon a surefire way to make a bland, schoolwork-filled life infinitely more exciting, and no, it doesn't involve anything illegal. In fact, it's free.

There's nothing more eye-opening than surrounding yourself with fascinating, contagiously enthusiastic people. And you can find many of those people visiting campus to give presentations on everything from exercise medicine to a calculus-solving dog to poems about urban Detroit.

"And you can find many of those people visiting campus to give presentations on everything from exercise medicine to a calculus-solving dog to poems about urban Detroit."

- On the various presentations at Alma.

You're paying thousands of dollars—or putting off paying thousands of dollars—to attend this school. That reality is slowly settling in, squeezing tighter every day like the ice-cold claws of some abyssal monster.

Anyway, in exchange for your money, the college tries to

provide opportunities for us to gain new perspectives and ideas. A guest lecture is one of those opportunities. Those posters around campus advertising upcoming speakers aren't meant just for faculty members' eyes. They're for you, the students.

I often hear the argument that no one has time to attend those events. There's too much bioelectromolecular chemistriology to be done! Why would I waste my time learning about anything else?

I'm a firm believer, however, in the concept of what I'll call "intellectual distraction." If you're stuck on something, if your brain has clocked out for the time being, it's time to go wake up that turncoat gray blob in your skull.

Sit down to listen to a speaker. Really engage with his or her presentation. Don't look at the clock. Stretch your critical skills and think of some pertinent questions, even if you don't have the courage to ask them.

If you treat a speaker as a learning experience instead of an obligation for class credit, you are much more likely to come out of the event with your head full of new insights. You'll be buzzing with connections you may never have made in your life.

And whether or not a presentation on "Examinations of Multi-Tiered Fifth-Dimensional Arrays" applies to your work in 15th century foreign science-fiction criticism, "intellectual distraction" has a sort of turbocharging effect on your brain. You end up thinking academically,



Photo Courtesy of adogbreeds.com

In the 2012-2013 school year, Dr. Tim Pennings came to Alma's campus to discuss the possibility of dogs completing calculus. Presentations on campus are meant for students of all interests.

critically, and attentively, and that level of mental operation can be transferred to whatever you're doing.

In essence, listening to intelligent people will make you feel more intelligent, more open to new ideas, and more prepared to tackle whatever gargantuan, hairy, many-armed task is breathing heavily in your face.

And you can go beyond simply attending the presentation and learning mind-blowing things about the world. At a school this size, you can do things your big-college friends would write off as the dreams of a flying pig.

Last Thursday, University of Michigan professor Phil Deloria came to Alma to give a

presentation on the portrayals of American Indians in popular culture. Notice I said "American Indians," not "native Americans." That distinction is just one of numerous fascinating insights I got from the talk.

But Deloria's presentation wasn't just fun trivia. He combined humor, a lightning-fast pace, a well-planned PowerPoint, and general enthusiasm in a way that made me want to simply hang out and learn from him.

Here's the thing: Alma is the kind of place where that can happen. I heard that Deloria was having lunch with students on Friday, and within ten minutes I had talked to the proper professor about joining that meal. Done. No

questions asked, no permission, letters of recommendation, or blood sacrifices were necessary.

Where else can you get a chance to sit down with a visiting scholar at a moment's notice and chat about whatever comes to mind? I wasn't involved in planning for his visit and I'm not any sort of college representative. This is just the place for little unexpected human interactions to flourish.

I urge you to take advantage of Alma's smaller opportunities. Get to know a professor or two. Talk to everyone you meet. Despite everything you may think, people are actually incredibly interesting.

And most of all: go see speakers. They're here for you.

Winter activities allow for more fun than students admit

By SAMANTHA COYKENDALL
STAFF WRITER

Most of us have been complaining about the freezing cold lately. With the below-freezing temps raging across Michigan right now, if you try to claim that you are not one of those people, you may as well just admit that you are.

But for those that are self-proclaimed "snow bunnies," the outdoor fun is just beginning. From ski and snowboard trips to ice rinks and sledding, Alma College and the surrounding mid-Michigan area provide a multitude of outdoor winter activities for everyone.

This year, the Alma College Union Board is sponsoring a ski trip to Caberfae on Feb. 7 from 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. Caberfae is located in Cadillac and features 34 ski runs, multiple chairlifts, and vertical hill drops maxing out at 485 feet. The price for the ski trip is only \$10, which includes transportation to and from, the lift ticket, and rentals.

Whether you are a beginner or an old pro, this is sure to satisfy your outdoor winter adventure. Those interested should make sure to sign up quickly, as this is one of ACUB's most popular events.

Another iconic winter activity originally located on the chapel

lawn is the ice rink. New changes to the ice rink include moving the location to a spare lot across from Stucchi's where night lighting is now available along with shovels for clearing off the rink. For those who do not have skates, the Stone Recreation Center has free rentals available.

"Since last winter, we had an alumnus donate \$1,500 worth of new skates, and we sharpened all of the remaining older pairs," said **Tessa Rademacher ('15)**, Stone Recreation Center employee. Many student can be seen skating around the rink with a group of friends on the weekends.

"I've been out there a few times with buddies just skating and shooting around; it usually turns into a pickup game of hockey," said **Eric Strickler ('15)**. "It gets pretty intense between the guys—no one wants to lose even though it's just a pickup game."

"Alma College and the surrounding mid-Michigan area provide a multitude of outdoor winter activities for everyone."

- On combating winter boredom.

Sledding, often thought of as a childhood activity, brings back a rush of memories from snow days to night sledding. Even though most college students have outgrown those memories,

sledding is still a great winter activity. All it takes is some inexpensive sleds, warm clothes, and the perfect location!

Just up the road in Mt. Pleasant is Deerfield Nature Park in Isabelle County. This park hosts steep hills for sledding as well as multiple cross-country skiing trails. For a single day pass, admission to the park is \$6 per vehicle. It's just the right price, distance, and carefree activity to allow you to grab your friends and head out for a great day on the hills.

As students, we often forget to take time out of studying to enjoy everything around us.

We forget that winter allows for us to curl up under a warm blanket with a good book, or gives us an excuse to savor hot drinks.

Even better, you could build a snowman with friends. Challenge yourselves and make an entire snowman village. You don't have to pay to have fun in the snow.

Instead of continually wishing for the summer months, enjoy the now. We live in the middle of one

of the most beautiful winter states in the country. We might as well enjoy the season while it lasts.

Calm down about the lack of warmth and sunlight—it won't be long before we complain about the ceaseless humidity and sunburns. If the winter blues have gotten you down and you are stuck in a slump, take advantage and experience all of the exciting activities that ACUB, the Stone Recreation Center, and the surrounding community can offer during the winter semester.

Sudoku

Sudoku is a type of number puzzle. If you're not familiar, here are the rules:

-Each 3x3 square can contain each number (1 through 9) no more or less than once.

-Each row and column can contain each number no more or less than once.

-The puzzle is complete when all spaces are filled in.

Sudoku difficulty is determined by how many numbers are initially filled in. This sudoku is considered "medium."

There are many different types of sudoku, so if you like this, try out some more!

6		5	7	2			3	9
4					5	1		
	2		1					4
	9			3		7		6
1			8		9			5
2		4		5			8	
8					3		2	
		2	9					1
3	5			6	7	4		8

Biddy answers students' questions Tears and Cheers

By BIDDY

STAFF COLUMNIST

Ask Biddy: From relationships to study tips, I'm your go-to columnist! Don't forget: anyone can e-mail me their questions at askbiddy@gmail.com.

Question from "Not a Player": My girlfriend doesn't trust me and I have no idea why. We went on a date the other night and when I went to the bathroom, I returned to her telling me that she looked through my phone. She was mad because she saw that I was texting another girl, but the texts were not "flirty" at all. I informed her that this girl was just a classmate and she refused to believe me and called me a player. She hasn't talked to me in a few days. What should I do?

Dear "Not a Player": I know that it is hard to understand your girlfriend's hasty reaction. But you have to try. Most of the time when girls don't trust a guy under illegitimate circumstances, it is because they have been in previous relationships with guys whom they truly should not have trusted.

Going through something like that—such as your boyfriend cheating on you—is horrible and almost always seems to result in trust issues; you cannot blame your girlfriend for that. First off, remain calm.

Don't get mad at her for her actions. I understand the invasion of privacy can be frustrating at first, but eventually, if your relationship grows, you should be comfortable with no secrets between each other. Just be patient and continue to prove to her that you are someone she can trust. You can do this through introducing her to the girls you are friends with and casually bringing them up in conversations—not bragging about them, just reassuring her that they are around for simple day-to-day reasons.

Question from "Stressed": I have three jobs, am taking 21 credits, am involved in more than four clubs, and this semester just feels like it is the one that is going to be too much to handle. I have been reading up on meditation as a way to relieve stress but I just don't know if I am doing it right.

I try and "clear my head," but there is just too much going on in there. I tried it two times and I think it might just be a waste of

my time. Do you think meditation is just not right for me, or do you think I am doing it wrong?

Dear "Stressed": What a workload you have! You are definitely a prime candidate for meditation, and I don't think you are "doing it wrong" as much as you are just not giving it a chance.

During my first few months of school, I was very stressed too, and I tried meditation. At first I thought the same thing, but I got the hang of it by the fifth time or so. I still meditate every once in a while and it usually does the trick to calm me down and refresh my head.

I say give it at least four more goes and I think you will find that it really is for you. Also, a good indicator that it is working is if you fall asleep. I know it seems silly, but I have read that if you fall asleep after meditating for about 20 minutes, the meditation is relaxing you to the very fullest.

Hint: Download some tacky nature sounds. I was hesitant to do this at first, but sometimes focusing on a little noise helps to stray your mind from the stress.

Question from "The Best Friend": Dear Biddy, a few weeks ago my best friend from high

school and her boyfriend of five years broke up. She ended it with him because she is a freshman in college and felt like he was holding her back from truly experiencing college.

I spent the whole week with her after they broke up because she was pretty much a mess. But now we are back at school and she still calls me everyday complaining about how she keeps thinking about him or is scared she is going to see him.

I am getting annoyed because I have my own life to worry about right now and I can't be her on-call psychiatrist. Does that make me selfish? What should I do?

Dear "Best Friend": I think there is a simple solution: be honest. If she is really your best friend she will appreciate what you have done for her so far and accept that, while you care about her, she needs to sort out some of these issues on her own or with her ex.

She is probably missing having someone to talk to at any time of the day, but I think she will understand if you tell her the truth. Plus, remind her that it was her decision to break up with him, so she should stick with it for now and attempt to move on.

By LISA FOLKMIRE

OPINION EDITOR

Tears:

-Facebook has become a mass composite of what "Toy Story" characters and "Mean Girls" characters say your friends "really" are.

-Christmas bills are rolling in—as your ability to pay for a quality Friday rolls out.

-Punxsutawney Phil called it: Six more weeks of bitter, bitter winter.

-J.K. Rowling admitted that Ron and Hermione may have been a wrong call on her part. Ronmione shippers worldwide wailed at the loss of their favorite ginger/genius pairing.

-It's the time of the term for first essays, major tests, and first quarter projects to be turned in. All on the same day.

-The library is full of people cramming to finish their papers and projects. Which is fine—if you're into people.

-Michigan seems to be prepping for an even chillier February. Consider investing in long-johns. Or succumbing to hibernation.

-The news is centered around J-Biebs and his head-thumping crimes, which means that his smug overgrown preteen face is everywhere, all the time.

-Cars still don't understand that the most considerate thing to do is stop for the freezing people waiting to cross the street.

-If it's not icy, it's slushy; worse yet, waddling like a penguin to compensate for this is not an efficient method of transportation to get to class on time.

Cheers:

-For every day of snow or bitter cold, hot chocolate becomes completely necessary. Pass the marshmallows.

-One Direction's new music video features Grandmas and a Kebab House. Bieber may still hold much of the spotlight, but the teen-bopper music industry at least has some humorous blokes to keep up the pleasant side of youth.

-We once again have a new batch of Super Bowl commercials to gossip and gab about. This year's front runner: Budweiser's runaway pup and his best horse bud.

-The focaccia bread in SAGA tastes like one giant cheese- and garlic-sprinkled breadstick.

-According to the New York Times, vintage popup books are now artistically recognized. These popup books reach about a foot off the page, which makes this achievement even cooler.

-The official trailer for "The Fault in Our Stars" was viewed last week, mostly through a layer of tears.

-People still write love notes to total strangers and send them through used schoolbooks. The method of a message in a bottle just got one-upped.

-Despite officially knowing how this winter season will pan out, we still owe thanks to America's quirkiest tradition featuring a top hat-wearing rodent.

Phil calls it quits: six more weeks 'to boot'



Photo Courtesy of blogspot.com

Last Sunday, America's most beloved forecasting furball called what we all were regretting: six more weeks of a bitterly cold winter. Luckily for him, he gets to hit the snooze button for the duration of the snowy season. As for us lowly humans, button up and strap on those snowboots—it's about to get considerably colder. Who knows, maybe the snow will consider melting before summer.

Esther Grace Earl shines

By NICOLE ECCLES

STAFF WRITER

In 2012, John Green published his novel "The Fault in Our Stars." But that's not what this article is about. Later this year the movie adaptation of "The Fault in the Our Stars" will hit theaters, starring Shailene Woodley and Ansel Elgort as the main characters, Hazel and Gus. But that is also not what this article is about.

In 2010, a 16-year old girl with thyroid cancer, Esther Grace Earl, died. This is only partially what this article is about.

In truth, this story is about a combination of all of these things. Mainly, because to understand what this article is reviewing and what it is ultimately about, you need to understand these three related things.

If you're unfamiliar with "The Fault in Our Stars," allow me to give you a quick rundown—because this is one small but important part of this story.

"The Fault in Our Stars" is a love story between a 16-year old girl named Hazel, who is terminally ill, and a boy named Gus, who is currently in remission but is missing one of his legs. This story might seem like another tragic cancer/love story, but the thing about John Green books is that they're never as they seem.

"The Fault in Our Stars" highlights the harsh and confusing parts of life and the hard reality of death, while at the same time shows the simple pleasures of life and love. It will make you cry and laugh and hurt, but isn't that what good books are supposed to do?

Green is the link between this book (soon to be movie) and Earl. Their connection? Simple. They were friends. The book is dedicated to Esther; unfortunately,

she never got to read it.

Some of you have made a connection between Hazel and Esther, and while they lived with the same cancer, it is important to recognize that they are different. Green has often stated that Hazel is not based directly on Esther, and seeing the videos and reading Esther's writing lets you easily see them as two different people.

This article is about Earl's book that came out this year. It was published posthumously by her parents and is a collection of her journals, fiction writing, letters and sketches. Esther's dream was to be a writer (well, more specifically, a published writer), for you can tell from her writings that she was always a writer. With the publication of her book, "This Star Won't Go Out," the dream has been realized. The books title comes from Esther's name, which means "star."

Earl was a video blogger, a nerdfighter (the nicknames for the fan base for Hank and Green), and dedicated to reducing what nerdfighters call "world suck levels."

I've only just bought my copy, and am slowly working my way through it, but each entry is a moment of bright light, whether sad or happy or silly. Earl was an amazing writer; her thoughts are silly and sometimes so deeply thoughtful and profound that you can't deny her young wisdom.

This is a recommendation to read both "This Star Won't Go Out" and "The Fault in Our Stars." I hope Esther delights you as much as she does me. If you find yourself inspired, consider going and donating to Esther's foundation, also called This Star Won't Go Out. The organization helps families with children battling cancer.

This star won't go out because we won't let it. Read on.

Track & field teams break records at Saginaw Valley State University

Scots defeating larger colleges from across the state

By **JUSTIN KETTERER**
STAFF WRITER

Several Scots broke indoor records at the Saginaw Valley State University Cardinal Invitational meet last Saturday. Alma's next meet will be at the Calvin Invitational next Saturday.

"We may have to send sympathy cards to the bigger schools because a little Division III school beat them."
- **Coach Gordon Aldrich**

That meet will be another shot to face competition from Division III schools.

Coach Gordon Aldrich said that beating the bigger sized schools was very nice for his team.

"We may have to send sympathy cards to the bigger schools because a little Division III school beat them," Aldrich said.

Chelsea Mertz ('15) broke the indoor women's high jump record by reaching 1.58 meters in the meet last Saturday. Mertz was the only record breaker in field events for the Scots.

Maggie Chambers ('15) broke the 400m dash indoor record by running the race in 59.22 seconds. **Kaitlyn Arnold ('17)** broke the 800m run record with a time of 2:23.67.

The 4X400 relay team of

Ashly Halm ('15), Mertz, Arnold, and Chambers set the new record at 4:06.46.

The distance medley relay team of **Misty Godley ('15)**, Arnold, **Kara Giles ('16)**, and **Anna Sall ('14)** set the record with a time of 13:13.56.

Last week at the Defiance meet the 4X200m record was set by Halm, Mertz, **Shelby Niedzwiecki ('16)**, and Chambers with a time of 1:49.08.

Chambers is also ranked 26th in the nation for the 200m dash and Halm is ranked 27th in the 400m.

"Both girls are only a couple places from qualifying for the national championship," Aldrich said. "It'd be really sweet to have athletes competing for a championship."

Will Germain ('15) said that the Saginaw Valley meet was good for the team.

"Blake Padget ('15) and David Slusser ('15) made the finals for shot put. Our 'B' 4X4 team also beat the Michigan and Michigan State teams."

- **Will Germain ('15)**

"Blake Padget ('15) and David Slusser ('15) made the finals for shot put," Germain said. "Our 'B' 4X4 team also beat the Michigan and Michigan State teams."

Aldrich said that the week leading up to the SVSU meet was good for the team coming

off of the win at Defiance.

"We feel like we can get some sixth, seventh and eighth place finishes for our athletes," Aldrich said. "We know it will be higher competition but we are excited and ready for the meet."

The Cardinal Invitation was back to a format without team scoring for the Scots, unlike the Defiance meet both teams won last week.

"The kids loved the team scoring at Defiance," Aldrich said. "Especially since it was the same sized schools and not the big Division I and II teams it was real good to face same-level competition."

"Since we are coming off of the win at Defiance and a good performance at Saginaw, we are looking forward to the Calvin meet," Godley said. "We think we can perform well there in a couple weeks."

Wrestling competition big at Wheaton invite; Matt Tuttle ('14) triumphs, clinches second

Senior night on Friday versus league match-up with Trine

By **JUSTIN KETTERER**
STAFF WRITER

The Pete Wilson Invitational meet was held at Wheaton College last weekend where the Alma College wrestling team took 10th place out of 32 teams. The Scots finished six spots above the host school.

The Scots will host their senior night on Friday, when they host Trine University for a dual-meet.

"Since Matt (Tuttle) is our only senior the ceremony will be short," said **Collin Lesko ('15)**. "It'll

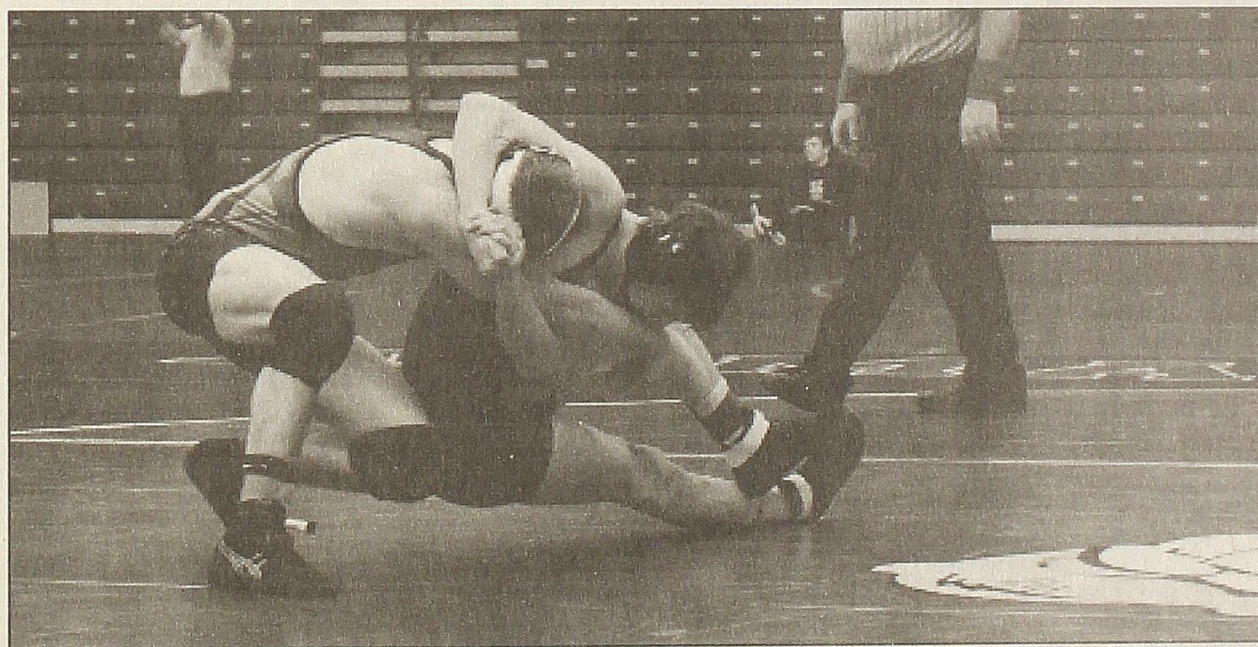
be a nice gesture and should be a good match with Trine."

"The Wheaton event is the Division III wrestling event of the season," Coach Todd Hibbs said. "It is definitely an event we mark on our calendar."

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater won the meet with 155.5 points. The Scots tallied 59.5 points as a team.

The Scots' best finish at the Pete Wilson Invitational was 17th out of 32 teams prior to last weekend. Hibbs said that the team's goal was to improve on that.

Nationally ranked **Matt Tuttle ('14)** finished the tournament in second place in the 165-lb. weight class. He lost to Cedric Gibson



Patrick Mallett: Staff Photographer

Ryan Foley ('17), above, works to overcome his opponent at a recent home meet. **Tyler Foley ('15)**, below, makes a move against his opponent recently at home.

from tournament champion Wisconsin-Whitewater. No other Scots placed individually.

Hibbs said that the tournament offers some of the best competition in the country and would prove to be great tests for his wrestlers.

"At the 125 pound weight class this weekend there'll be 11 of the top 25 wrestlers in the country," Hibbs said. "Wheaton is where the men get separated from the boys."

"The Wheaton event is real tough and I thought we competed hard today," Lesko said. "We're really excited about placing in the top ten against some very good programs."

"Wheaton is where the men get separated from the boys."
- **Coach Todd Hibbs**

"The guys did real well this weekend," **Paul Mikhjian ('15)** said. "We can use this going forward in our season for confidence."

The Scots came into Wheaton last weekend off of their home open tournament two Saturdays ago. Hibbs said that he was proud of his team performing in Art Smith arena.

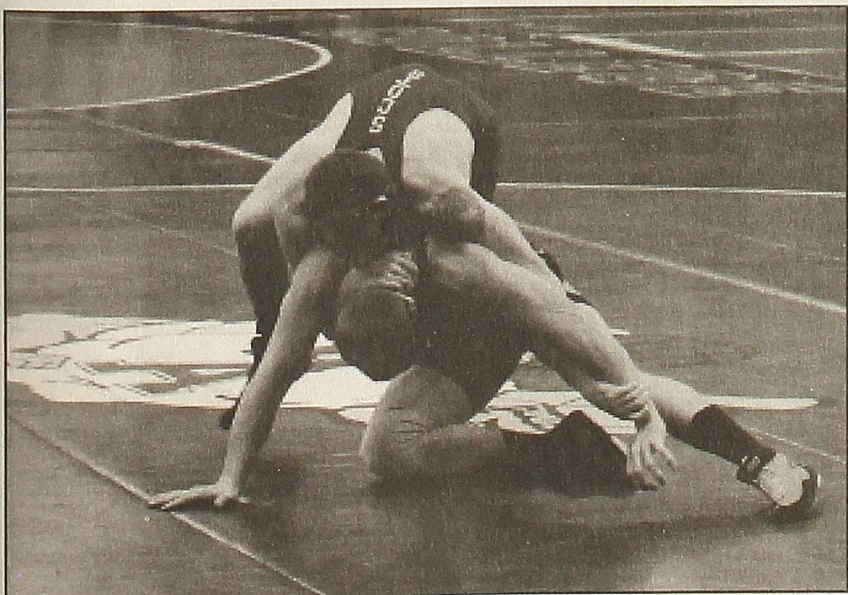
"We had several placers but the standout performances on

the day were our runner-up finishes for **Tyler Foley ('15)** and **Shawn Brewer ('16)**, and our champion at 197 pounds **Trevor Maresh ('16)**," said Hibbs.

"Trevor defeated an opponent in overtime who had pinned him twice previously in his career," Hibbs added.

Maresh's victory came over a wrestler from Ohio Northern, which is a prominent program according to Hibbs.

Hibbs said that he was proud of the showing his wrestlers put out for hosting a big tournament for a program that has only been going on for three years.



Patrick Mallett: Staff Photographer

Men's basketball and sorority unite to "Light It Up Blue" for autism

By **EMILY ZADNY**
STAFF WRITER

The Scots men's basketball team will not only fight for a win against Albion at 8 p.m. at the Art Smith Arena this Wed., but also for children affected by autism at the Light It Up Blue game sponsored by sorority Alpha Xi Delta.

"Everyone somewhere has a connection with someone with autism," said A Xi D sister and event planner **Taylor Tripp ('15)**. "Many people do not realize how prevalent this disease is becoming."

Head Coach Sam Hargraves jumped on the idea after Tripp

came forward suggesting a game for charity, awareness, and a cause that has an impact on the Alma community.

"I think it is a wonderful idea, obviously to raise money for autism, but also to bring together athletics and the Greek system on campus," said Hargraves. "I hope we can continue to work together on more events like this in the future!"

"I wanted to do something new on campus," said Tripp. "We have had constant struggles with athletics and Greek life, and this was our chance to change that."

The basketball team will

wear shooting shirts in warm-ups that promote the sorority's philanthropy, Autism Speaks.

At the half, children with autism from the surrounding areas will come out on the court and shoot around with A Xi D members while a public service announcement with autism facts plays on the big screen for the fans.

Throughout the game, there will be an awareness booth where fans can come out and learn more about autism and how to help.

Members of A Xi D are also asking fans to donate \$1 either prior to the game or afterwards to go towards autism research

and funding for Autism Speaks.

Spectators will be able to meet some of the children during and after the game, a memorable experience for both parties.

"This event is going to be fun and will give people the chance to see that autism is not a terrible disease; it is just another way of life," said Tripp.

While this game is a great opportunity for charity and awareness, it will also play a significant role on campus and with student life.

A Xi D sister **Tracy Gallihugh ('15)** feels that being able to host events such as this

one is one of the many perks students reap by attending Alma.

"It is awesome to be able to have athletes and Greeks supporting each other and working together," said Gallihugh. "It's one of the benefits of having such a small campus."

Both the men's basketball team and members of A Xi D hope the night will leave everyone in attendance feeling warm and fuzzy on the inside.

"It is the best feeling in the world to learn how much we do for [others] and to know that we put that smile on their faces," said Gallihugh.



Last Monday, the Scots took on Adrian College at Art Smith Arena. Alma fell 90-80 in a close league match-up. DJ Beckman ('16) led his team with 22 points.

