

# ACOG hosts 2nd annual AlmaCon

By ANNA WEBER  
STAFF WRITER

The stereotypical college party is extremely casual and very rowdy. However, a different kind of party altogether took place last weekend at Alma—ACOG's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual AlmaCon.

The anime and gaming convention included two major dances, video games, movie rooms, vendors, a performance by a comedy group, foam-based dart gun battles (known AlmaCon attendees as FoBaDaGu), and panels about different topics, such as character development in role-playing games, voice acting, and physics of gaming.

The panels were conducted by ACOG members and special guests, including voice actors Kyle Hebert and Tiffany Grant, cartoonist Kevin Bolk, and animator Chris Niosi. The guests spoke and answered questions from audience members about their various topics.

"It's cool that we have guests that are notable in their fields, like Kyle Hebert, who is a prominent voice actor in the video game industry," said ACOG member **Alexandra Karr ('12)**. Karr helped to host two of the panels: "Never Use Comic Sans" and "Who Is The Best Anime Couple?"

According to **Sarah Scales ('15)**, the ACOG member in charge of planning the dances, the relatively small size of the AlmaCon convention was an advantage over the larger events.

"I'm excited to be part of a convention that is a bit more personal, because the only conventions I've ever been to are the really big ones, like Youmacon," she said. Youmacon



Devin Brines: Staff Photographer

**Two cosplaying attendees of AlmaCon strike a pose during the day's events. Pictured are Sebastian Michaelis (left) and Elizabeth Middleford (right) from the series Black Butler. Guests were encouraged to dress for the occasion. For more photos from AlmaCon, see page 2.**

is another convention held annually in the metro Detroit area.

According to its Website, that event attracted more than 10,000 people last year with its 24-hour programming. In comparison, **Lauren McNabb ('15)**, the chair of AlmaCon, predicted a turnout of at least 500 people, up from last year's 200. Scales said that she was eager to be in a more personal environment with the special guests, like Hebert, instead of being drowned in a huge crowd.

Another significant difference between AlmaCon

and other conventions such as Youmacon is the fact that AlmaCon charges no admission.

"It's unique for a convention that everything's free here," said McNabb. "Usually vendors have to pay for a space. We just ask them to donate, either to us or directly to the charity." McNabb also believes that the charity aspect of AlmaCon is another thing that makes this event unique.

The only events that charged admission were the dances, unless an attendee wished to make a purchase from a

vendor. The proceeds from the admission fees were donated to the charity, Relay For Life.

The first of the dances was the Cosplay Charity Ball on Friday night. With the theme of "Dancing through the Decades," the dress code required formal wear, including "dark suits, tuxes, military dress uniforms (like State Alchemist from FMA or Cornelia Guard from Code Geass), Kimonos, cocktail dresses, prom dresses, or Gothic Lolita," according the website for the event. People from both

on and off-campus gathered in the Stone Recreation Center on to dance to music mixed by Alma College's own Jeffrey Turk.

Turk also taught dances from different decades, including traditional dances such as the waltz and foxtrot, as well as playing era-appropriate music

The second was a rave dance on Saturday. This dance featured techno music, again with the tunes controlled by Turk.

**See 'AlmaCon,'  
cont. on page 2**

# Pinning ceremony brings Greek women together

By ERIN STONE  
STAFF WRITER

The process of joining a sorority can be rewarding and exciting that joins a variety of women together. If you're not involved, you may not realize that every sorority comes together each year to celebrate its new members—but this isn't Walk-Outs.

After the excitement of Walk-Outs, the unity in Greek life doesn't cease. From Kappa Iota to Alpha Gamma Delta, all sororities came together last Wednesday to have an inner Greek pinning ceremony. Most of the new members from each sorority attended, which was eight to thirteen from each group.

**Gwenevere Mueller ('14)** has been involved in Greek life since the Winter 2011 term, when she joined Kappa Iota.

"This pinning ceremony signifies the importance of all sororities coming together to work toward the common goal, which is supporting Greek life," explained Mueller. "The pins symbolize the fact that though the new members are now each involved with separate sororities, we are still all one and part of the same family. I think this pinning ceremony is important in helping

new members realize that."

**Amy Smith ('15)** was one of the new members who attended.

"It was a fun experience and I loved how all the different sororities got the same ribbon and got introduced to all the sororities. It was a great way to see everyone come together and be happy for all the sisters, in all of the sororities," she said, as a result of the ceremony.

**"The pinning ceremony signifies the importance of all sororities coming together to work toward the common goal which is supporting Greek life."**

**-Gwenevere Mueller ('14)**

Currently, there are a few new developments with Greek Life and the community. This has been especially apparent since the fire at TKE.

Mueller stated, "Greek life is currently panning an activity with SAAC - an Alma College Athletics group, which will show us reaching

out. Greek life is also planning an activity that will just be to coordinate ourselves and make the Greek campus more connected."

A few meetings are on the horizon that students in Greek Life should be aware of. There is a Panhellenic Council and Inter-Fraternal Council (IFC) meeting that the Student Congress Executive council will be speaking at. This event will be on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Greek organizations should also take advantage of meeting with President Abernathy in the coming weeks.

If you'd like more information about this ceremony and other Greek Life events, please contact the Student Life Office at 989-463-7333 or email Dr. Nicholas Piccolo at [piccolo@alma.edu](mailto:piccolo@alma.edu). If you are Greek, you can contact your fraternity or sorority president or attend a Panhellenic meeting, to keep tabs on everything in the Greek community.



Kayla Roy: Staff Photographer

**Phi Sigma Sigma member Lauren Switzer ('14) pins Alaina Dague ('13), a new member of Kappa Iota, at the Panhellenic ceremony last Wednesday.**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Partly Cloudy 36°	Cloudy 34°	Cloudy 38°	Snow Shower 35°	Mostly Cloudy 36°	Sunny 33°	Partly Cloudy 37°



## TKE members search through house for salvageable remains from fire

By BRIAN MCCALLISTER  
STAFF WRITER

Although the fire that swept through the Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) house Jan. 29 left the dwelling a total loss, former residents were allowed to enter last Tuesday to see what personal possessions they could recover.

The first floor, which includes the chapter history room and a single bedroom, had the least amount of fire damage. A few items in both of the rooms had water and smoke damage, but most of them were salvageable. The largest amount of retrievable items was found inside of the history room.

"We were able to save three American flags," said **Nate Cushman ('13)**, president of TKE. "One of the flags I flew while deployed in Iraq, and the other flag was for one of our brothers who died while stationed overseas."

"We were also able to recover our historical documents, news clippings, paddles, pictures, presidential gavel, and foosball table. Overall, a lot of what was in there was saved."

**Taft Tice ('12)**, who lived in the single bedroom of the first floor, was able to recover many of his belongings.

"I got less than half of the things hanging in my closet, everything in my dresser, all my movies, a pair of car keys, a tool chest, shoes and some deodorant," said Tice. "[My

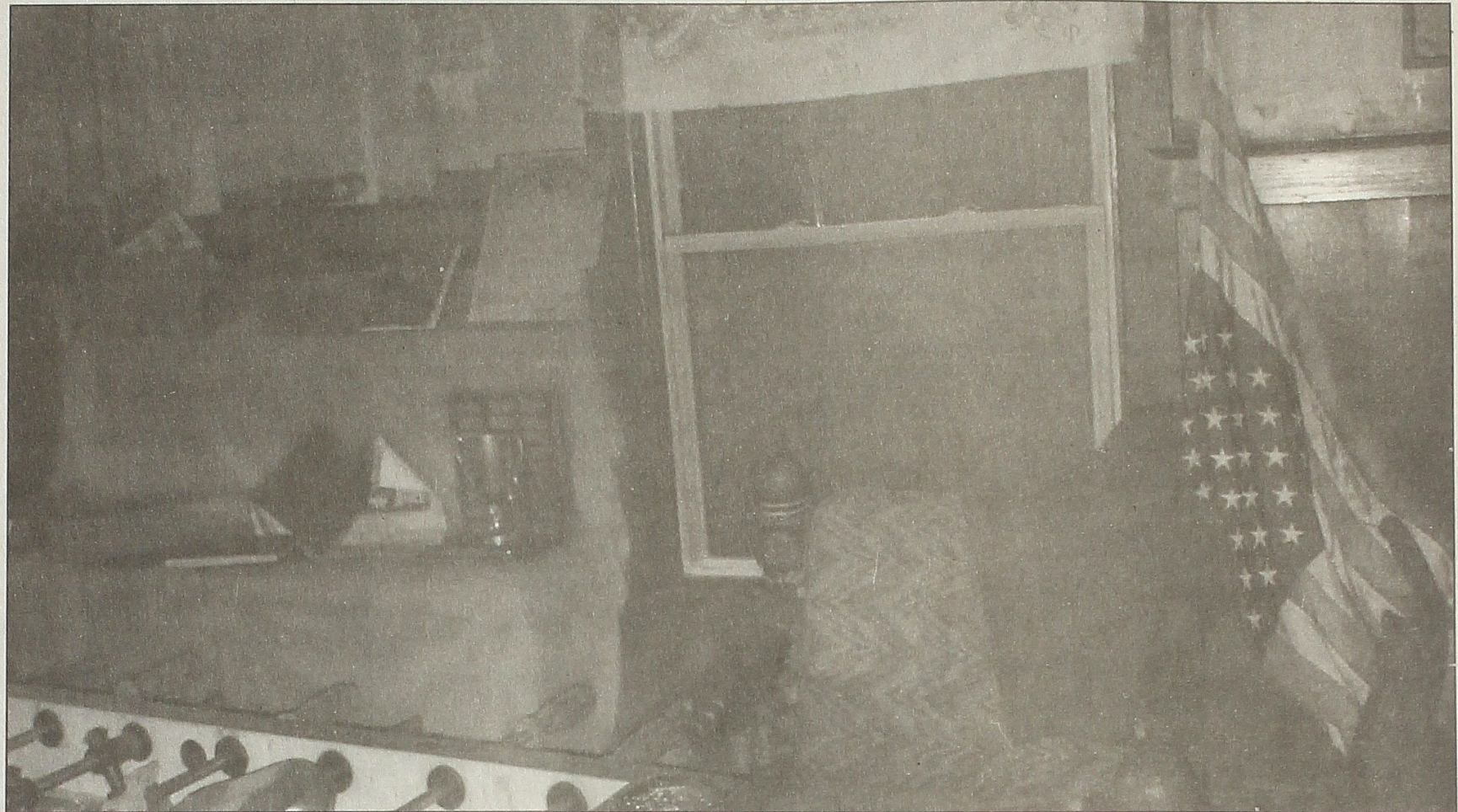


Photo courtesy of Dave Maniez

The main floor of the TKE house received the least amount of fire damage. One of the main floor rooms, pictured above, shows some damage, but the foosball table, along with other items, were able to be saved.

room] was really wet. I'm happy it didn't snow or rain a lot from the time of the fire until now. I'm surprised my room and the history room were barely touched."

All of the other rooms, however, were severely damaged by the fire. The ceiling collapsed in multiple rooms, and the sky could be seen from the back room.

"The first thing I really noticed was our chapter room," says Cushman, upon entering the

house. "Couches were flipped over and thrown across the room. It was just wreckage. You couldn't even step into it because there was stuff blocking the path. It surprised me how much damage a fire can do."

Pets that belonged to the brothers also died as a result of the fire. They included a bird, turtle, mouse, and fish.

Entering the house provided the residents with some personal closure, but for

many, looking at the wreckage was emotionally difficult.

"It kind of provided a bit of closure, but it didn't give me enough," said **Christopher Johnson ('14)**, who lived upstairs in the TKE house. "I started throwing things against the wall. Seeing your whole life thrown in ashes, waterlogged, in pieces on the floor, was difficult. All of it is burned in my memory." Support from Alma

College and the community continues. Even now, donations toward TKE are still ongoing in the chapel basement.

"There's no way to describe the amount of thankfulness I have toward the Greek community, and it brings me to tears to think about it," said Johnson. "We are a community and we can help each other. That's what we are here for. This has restored my faith in humanity."

## This week at Alma College

**Monday, February 13:**

David Grimshaw presents speech entitled "Playing Without Pain: Integrative Medicine and the Performing Arts" at 7:30 p.m. in Dow L4

**Wednesday, February 15:**

Interfaith Council Movie Night, "Arranged" at 8 p.m. in SAC 104

**Thursday, February 16:**

Alma College Theater Presents "The Crucible" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theater  
ACUB Movie Night at 8 p.m. in Jones Auditorium

**Friday, February 17:**

Alma College Theater Presents "The Crucible" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theater

**Saturday, February 18:**

Alma College Theater Presents "The Crucible" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theater

**Sunday, February 19:**

Alma College Theater Presents "The Crucible" at 3 p.m. in the Strosacker Theater  
Alma College Chorale and Glee Club Concert at 3 p.m. in the Heritage Center

## 'AlmaCon'

Participants were encouraged to "wear their trippiest gear [and] bring some glowsticks," according to the AlmaCon website.

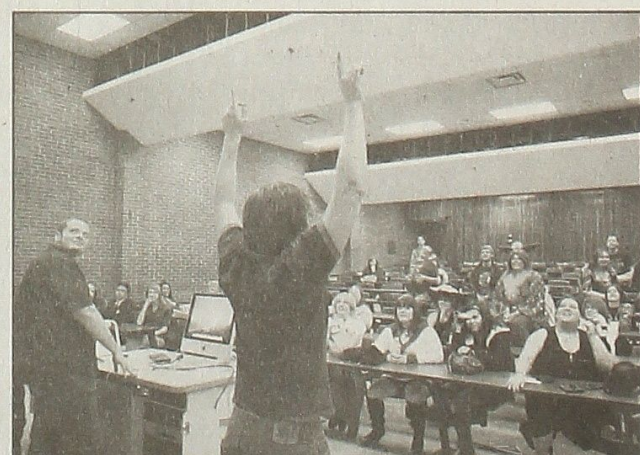
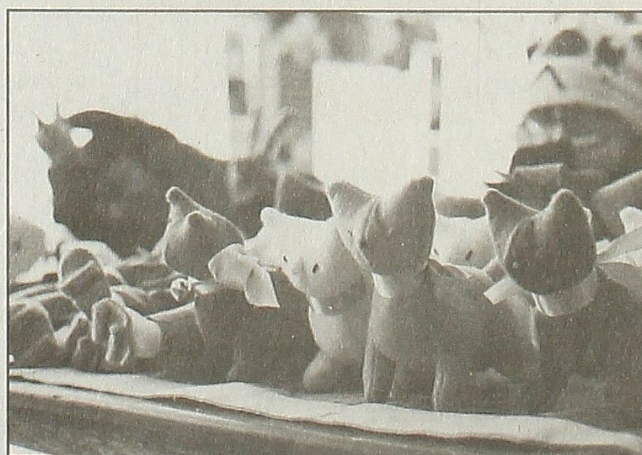
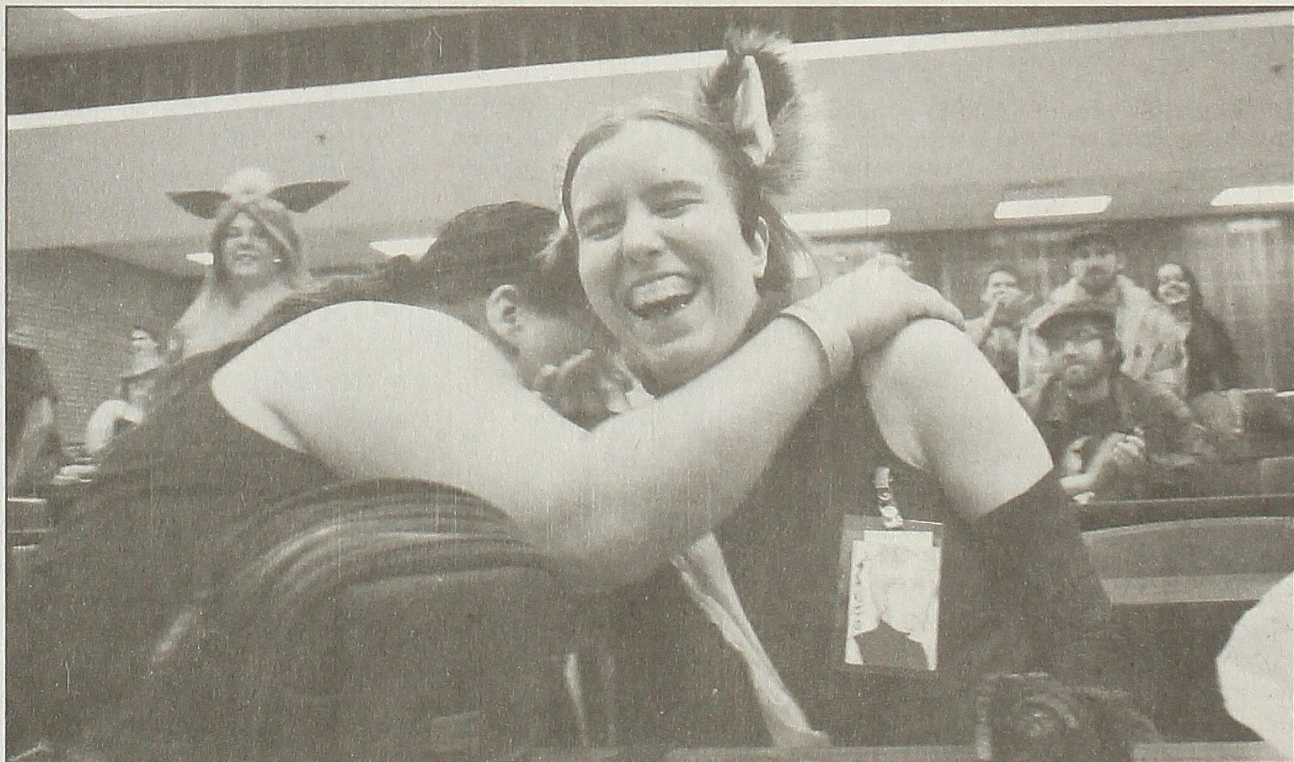
ACOG is already looking forward and planning for next year's AlmaCon. McNabb plans

to continue to expand the event and try to involve more of campus.

"Next year, we hope to expand participation from other Alma students and organizations so it's not just ACOG—make it more of a campus event. The support we've been getting from the administration and professors this year has been incredible,"

said McNabb. "But also, if anyone is severely inconvenienced by AlmaCon, we encourage you to tell us so we can fix it next year."

With its commitment to charity and unique collection of guests and students, possibly the best way to describe AlmaCon is a phrase used by ACOG members: "Only one AlmaCon!"



Devin Brines: Staff Photographer



# International kitchen brings French culture to students

By ELLEN MARTIN  
STAFF WRITER

Students were able to get a taste of the food and culture of France through the French Kitchen held last Tuesday. Hosted by the International

***“I have heard from one of our international students that cooking foods from her home helped lessen her homesickness.”***

***-Kelsey Irland-Wright ('13)***

Club, the French Kitchen took place at the McCurdy House. Cooking began around 5:30 p.m. and the meal was served at 7 p.m. The menu consisted of onion soup, salmon and spinach quiche, quiche Lorraine, as well as traditional

crepes. The dishes were also served in the traditional French order. Instruction Assistant of French, Aurèlie Ruiz-Navarro, was the chef for this meal.

“I selected all the recipes because I like this food a lot and it reminds me of my home,” Ruiz-Navarro said. “I wanted to introduce the French way of cooking, which is different from the American way.”

In addition to preparing food, Ruiz-Navarro, with the help of Christelle Bangsi ('15), taught those in attendance a little bit about French manners and customs regarding meals.

“I was glad that everyone was interested about it. I really like to share my culture with anybody,” says Ruiz-Navarro.

Bangsi was a manager for the event and enjoyed being actively involved in it.

“I come from Cameroon. France was one of the countries which colonized us for close to a hundred years,” explained Bangsi. “In fact, their presence is still felt in my country. French

is one of our national languages and a lot of our international agreements, imports and exports can be traced to France.”

As a manager, she not only helped cook the meal but also helped design the posters advertising the Kitchen event, went shopping with others for the ingredients, worked with Ruiz-Navarro in refining the recipes

***“I selected all the recipes because I like this food a lot and it reminds me of home. I wanted to introduce the French way of cooking, which is different from the American way.”***

***-Aurèlie Ruiz-Navarro  
Instruction Assistant of French***

that were used, and helped create a true and false game

about French customs and food.

The International Club has hosted various Kitchens such as this French Kitchen over the past five years, including a Chinese Kitchen, an Irish Kitchen, and a German Kitchen.

To create meals like those served in various countries, “we invite someone who has an understanding of a particular cuisine,” said Chih-Ping Chen, who worked with the International Club to create these Kitchen nights.

She feels that food is an essential way to broaden one’s understanding of different cultures and sees these kitchens as a way to forge friendships among students. Chen adds that she is grateful for the funding given them by President Abernathy to help them continue to provide students with this experience.

“I love the world Kitchens—it is one of the best ways to experience the different cultures,” said Kelsey Irland-Wright ('13), president of the International Club. “I have heard from one of our international students that

cooking foods from her home helped lessen her homesickness.”

These Kitchen events not only benefit the social aspect,

***“It’s a great way to say Alma’s not the center of the world, but we can bring the world to Alma.”***

***-Chih-Ping Chen  
Associate Professor of English***

they have been used for the past three years by the International Club as fundraising events. They have previously raised money to help victims of the earthquakes in Haiti and in Japan. Recently, the donations have been given to a local organization that gives aid to a community in Honduras.

“It’s a great way to say Alma’s not the center of the world but we can bring the world to Alma,” said Chen.

# Still proud: Student Congress will no longer recognize Gay-Straight Alliance

By KELSEY BLADES  
STAFF WRITER

When you hear the word dissolve, you probably think about stirring salt into water and watching the grains disappear. Campus has just witnessed a similar disintegration; unlike table salt, however, this dissolved element is not turning invisible.

The organization known interchangeably as PRIDE, the Gay-Straight Alliance, and the Queer-Straight Alliance was dissolved by Student Congress last week. This means that it is no longer an official student organization; however, that does not mean that the group members and their mission are gone as well.

“From here on out we’re operating under the fact that we’re unchartered,” said Jessica Paige ('12), president of the Queer-Straight Alliance and manager of the MacCurdy House. “But we still exist. We are continuing to have meetings, we’re not dissolving our group amongst ourselves, but rather we’re not recognized by Student Congress anymore. That’s basically what’s happened.”

The reasons for the dissolution probably aren’t what you think they might be.

“What we have going on right now is that there has been miscommunication between our organization and Student Congress about who the leadership was, [which was] also translating into issues with having consistent representation

from our organization at Student Congress meetings,” said Paige. “And because there was miscommunication about the leadership, there wasn’t the same communication with the warnings and the updates about [us not] being represented at Student Congress meetings.”

As a result of the communication failures, the organization has been dissolved. All the benefits of being an official organization—including recognition from Student Congress and having a budget—are gone for the time being.

“We have been told that we can resubmit our by-laws and our constitution and submit to be a member of Student Congress again, so that is most likely the next step we’re going to take,” Paige said. “But there’s been a lot of discussion in the group about where we want to see our organization head in more of the distant future . . . and now we have more of a clear direction about us as a group and what is it most important for us to be concentrating on right now and sort of the things that we need to tackle.”

Although dissolution seems like an extreme penalty for missing meetings, Paige bears no bitterness toward Student Congress.

“They’re trying to re-establish themselves within Student Congress and to make Student Congress a more legitimate organization, which I totally respect and understand,” Paige said. “Because of communication errors and whatnot, it’s on record that we missed so many meetings, so they’re just trying



Photo courtesy of Jordan Hammel

(Left to Right) Jordan Hammel ('15), Jon Haley ('13), Tieler Holland ('14), and Jessica Paige ('12) attended the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference at University of Michigan last weekend representing Alma College’s Gay-Straight Alliance.

to follow their rules and their bylaws. So we’re just kind of operating from the standpoint that we’re going to respect that and acknowledge that.”

The organization is looking at the bright side of the issue.

“Now we have a more clear understanding of what the bylaws and the regulations are about being in Student Congress and being a recognized organization,” she said. “[We’re going to] operate from here on

out on that understanding.”

All the same, the situation has been uncomfortable.

“It has been rather disconcerting that this is something that could happen so quickly with an organization like this,” Paige said. “There’s a lot of things that we want to do and there’s definitely the need for the organization on campus.”

“We’re really working on making ourselves more accessible and really expanding out onto

campus and reaching more people, so I’m hoping this will get people more fired up about the organization and people more interested and start to take more of a concrete stand about getting involved and realizing the importance of the organization.”

The Queer-Straight Alliance meets on Wednesday evenings. This week the group is participating in National Condom Awareness Day and promoting HIV/AIDS awareness.



## Housing season: making decisions for next year

By KELSEY BLADES  
STAFF WRITER



Elaine Cunningham: Photo Editor

**Off-campus apartments are one of many options available to help make students feel more at home in their living situations.**

Finding your second home through the college housing process shares similarities to a matchmaking show: you examine all of your choices and then choose your preferred option. If you pick the hall with an environment that suits you, your campus home may be where your heart is.

With that in mind, the time for housing selection is fast approaching.

Although the housing process has undergone a couple of changes since last year, most of them are minor, according to Director of Campus Life Dave Blandford. The most significant change involves the room retention procedure.

"We used to have one night where students could retain their room and they'd have to come over to Van Dusen and retain their room on that evening," Blandford said. "This year, what we're doing is that if students have a roommate lined up and they want to retain their room, there's a couple of times between Mar. 29 and Apr. 4 where they can just come in to the Student Life Office anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and keep their same room for next year. It's just trying to make it more convenient for students."

The minor changes involve the wording of the housing booklet. "We've changed some of our language in regards to theme housing," said Blandford. "We've now incorporated

our more kind of traditional theme houses along with all the other theme houses so that it's kind of one thing—Model UN, MacCurdy, all of those houses plus the other various little houses that we have around."

The college features four residence halls on north campus, which are inhabited by first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year (and occasionally fifth-year) students. The privilege of moving to south campus is reserved for upper-level students: sophomores, juniors, and seniors are allowed to move into the south complex comprised of Brazell, Nisbet, Carey, and

Bonbright Halls. Wright Hall and the Wright Avenue apartments are reserved for seniors and juniors, with preference given to all-senior groups of students. The small housing units include the themed and Greek houses and are available for second-year students and above.

Although there aren't many new housing opportunities for next year, eight students have the chance to live in a new space off campus. "There will be some additional apartments available... a few more units than last year," said Blandford. "I think there are an additional eight spaces or so for people, so a couple more

groups that are interested in apartments will get apartments."

Blandford said that having more apartment spaces for seniors "makes south complex a little easier for sophomores to get into" and noted that sophomores "have the hardest time because they don't have as many options [because] they aren't eligible for Wright Hall and they aren't eligible for apartments. So, really, they're eligible to either keep their [current] room or be able to move within the available rooms that we have after that."

"I would encourage [students on north campus] to retain their rooms just because after room

retention, we block off rooms for first-year students," he said. "If you're in an environment that you like, retain. I would say that most sophomores who are interested in going over to south should be able to get over there."

Blandford doesn't think that the destruction of the Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) house will affect the housing process.

"Obviously, we have to figure out what to do with the TKEs and where to house them," he said. "They're an important group to campus and we want to allow them to still be able to be near each other. Without a house we need to figure out some ways to do that."

Although the housing lotteries for the traditional dorms aren't until early April, it's a good idea to start thinking about living arrangements for next year. Students won't be able to participate in their class lotteries until they have registered for classes for the fall semester; furthermore, students who haven't selected a roommate must wait until after the lotteries to choose rooms.

Applications for Wright Hall, themed housing, single rooms, and residency exemption became available last Monday. Residency exemption applications are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 5. The other applications are due on Tuesday, Mar. 20. The Student Life Office is hosting informational meetings on Tuesday, Feb. 21 and Tuesday, Mar. 20. Both meetings are at 7 p.m. in the Rotunda.

Questions concerning the housing process should be directed to and will be answered by the Student Life Office.

## Latest theater production premieres Thursday

By ERIN STONE  
STAFF WRITER

An award-winning play about honesty, community, perception, and the truth during the infamous Salem Witch Trials, Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" will be hitting the stage at the Heritage Center starting Thursday. **Samantha Arthur ('15),**

**"...Over time I have been able to not only connect with the scenes I am in, but with my fellow actors."**

-Samantha Arthur ('15)

are scheduled to work four hours per night every day of the week. Students aren't always there the entire night, however. During the week before the show, run-throughs happen every single night. The weekend before the show is when the students are there from noon until midnight. These meetings are called "cue-to-cue" rehearsals.

"For me personally the hardest thing was laying in the bed for so long and trying to draw on emotions to make the scene feel truthful when I couldn't see what was going on around me," said Arthur. "There were nights where I would get angry with myself for not being able to connect with the scene the way I felt I should. However, over

time I have been able to not only connect with the scenes I am

**"Just about every lighting instrument we have is being called into service, which states a lot about the enormity of this production."**

-Matthew Crossman ('13)

in, but with my fellow actors." During the performances, it is important to get into character and Arthur has.

"Playing Betty, I have to scream, and as I was sitting there completely silent, I don't think anyone expected such a loud noise to come from such a little girl," said Arthur. "Watching everyone jump out of their seats in shock made me laugh. Remembering it still brings a smile to my face."

**Matthew Crossman ('13),** who's involved in lighting, had good feelings about the show.

"It's fantastic. The new technical director, Victor Shonk, designed the lights for the show," said Crossman. "The lighting not only gives the audience a sense of time but an emotion; it provokes feeling. It's certainly not a bright and happy show and the lights really reflect it.

"Just about every lighting instrument we have is being called into service, which states a lot about the enormity of this production," he continued.

"You have to be willing to give the time needed to be involved in performance at the Alma College theatre," said Arthur. "It is a huge commitment and it's not something you should walk into on a whim. Theater can help you see the world in a new way and I can truly say being involved in theater is a huge blessing."

"The Crucible" is at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16 through Saturday, Feb. 18 and 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 19. Tickets are free for students, so go reserve your seat at the box office today!

who has been cast as Betty, has already been a mainstay on the Alma stage. "I'm only a freshman but I've been involved in every production this year so far. I was an extra in 'Antigone,' and in the One-Act Festival, I was Mimi the mime in 'Check Please.'" The theater crew themselves

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Unusual roommates: Can pets come to campus?

BY ANNA WEBER  
STAFF WRITER

In schools around the country, the traditional rules against pets in college dormitories are beginning to become more flexible. Many of the country's top universities, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Case Western Reserve University, now allow students to keep a variety of animals in their rooms. Stephens College in Colombia, Mass. allows dogs in some residence halls, and both MIT and Case Western Reserve allow cats. At Alma, students may keep fish, reptiles, or amphibians under 10 inches in length. With all respect to the small lizards of Alma, this rule places the college far behind the more flexible universities. Most animals that are permitted do not make particularly good pets. Most object to being handled, and they are generally very delicate animals, picky about temperature, humidity, and amount of light. For many students, a friendlier, harder, and cuddlier pet would

be preferred. Because of this, students should be allowed to keep small mammals, such as hamsters, rats, guinea pigs, or rabbits in their dorm rooms, provided the animals are well looked after. Even though there are certainly negative aspects to students keeping pets, one can't ignore the positive side of the issue. In a society where the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 9.1 percent of adults suffer from depression, students need all the help they can get to remain emotionally healthy. Pets provide companionship, and they are often used in therapy, as they reduce stress and can help prevent homesickness. They have even been proven by several studies to reduce depression rates, lessen recovery time after a serious illness, and even extend a person's life expectancy. Students who have difficulty interacting with others will feel less lonely having a completely non-judgmental friend to spend time with. Although social drama is attributed more to high school than to college, plenty of students still experience fights with

friends or family. An affectionate pet can be a huge comfort. According to HolisticOnline.com, "Unlike people, with whom our interactions may be quite complex and unpredictable, animals provide a constant source of comfort and focus for attention. They also make us feel safe and unconditionally accepted." Although small reptiles, fish, and amphibians are wonderful, they aren't known for being particularly welcoming of attention from people. Small mammals, on the other hand, are in general much more willing to socialize with people. After a painful experience, it wouldn't be particularly helpful for a student to come home to a critter who doesn't want anything to do with him. When pets have the potential to be so beneficial to a person, why shouldn't Alma allow more of them? Those who oppose the pet-friendly policies say that the animals are too much responsibility for a college student and that they won't receive the necessary care. These are both valid points. Many college students keep extremely irregular hours and don't

spend much time in their rooms. No matter how responsible an owner is, there is no denying that a life spent mostly alone in a small room is no life for a dog or a cat. Dogs especially require exercise and attention in order to be happy and healthy. Additionally, there have been reports from resident assistants of animals being abandoned at the end of the school year. While dogs and cats are not dorm-friendly pets, there are fewer reasons why a small mammal in a cage should not be allowed. These animals don't suffer when they are left alone, as long as they have plenty of food, water, and adequate space. A small room is of no importance to them, since they generally live in cages, anyway. They may actually be more low-maintenance than small lizards, since their room temperature and humidity don't need to be carefully monitored. Other objections to the pet-friendly policies can be addressed in other ways. Maybe the more relaxed rules about pets should only apply to a

few residence halls, in imitation of MIT's strategy. This way, students who are allergic or dislike animals can choose not to share a hall with a furry pet. Those who wish to bring a pet should definitely need their roommate's approval before bringing one to the room. If the cage starts to smell, RAs should be able to document students, as more frequent cleaning would probably take care of the problem. This would require students to at least keep the animal in a hygienic environment. Owners of abandoned animals should be fined, or subject to some other form of disciplinary action. Maybe students would even need to apply for or buy a permit to keep a small mammal, in order to discourage impulsively bringing a pet to school. Clearly, there are many realistic ways to create more friendly pet policies. Keeping a small mammal as a pet can be extremely beneficial to students. With so many ways of controlling the potential negative aspects, it doesn't make sense to continue with the current strict policy.

Support growing for gay marriage

BY BRIAN MCCALLISTER  
FREELANCE WRITER

Washington State recently passed a same-sex marriage bill on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Washington State will now be joining Massachusetts, Iowa, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and the District of Columbia as states that grant same-sex marriage licenses. While this is a great stride for the same-sex marriage movement, this bill doesn't take effect until June but if opponents of the legislation gather enough signatures, the law will be put on hold until November, which will give them more time to strengthen their campaign against gay marriage. Despite this potential impediment, this bill indicates that there is an increasing trend of support for gay marriage through the nation. It hasn't even been a year since gay marriage legislation passed in New York, during last June of 2011, and already the United States has passed another bill. One can only hope that the rate in which states grant same-sex

marriage licenses will only rapidly increase as years go by. Same-sex marriage is a right that ought to be granted for those that want it. The legal benefits of marriage and solace in having matrimony with the one you love is important. However, I don't understand the desire for gay-marriage when I consider the religious aspects of it. The entire reason that many people are opposed to gay marriage is because it goes against their faith. Why, then, do so many homosexuals want to be married in a ceremony with that faith attached to it? For homosexuals to involve themselves in any way with a religion that has persecuted against them confuses me. I don't mean to imply that all Christians, Catholics, Protestants, etc. hate homosexuals, but it is unmistakable that sexual orientation has been a basis for persecution for its violation of traditional beliefs. I think that same-sex marriage ought to at least exclude religious aspects from it. It's not very realistic to believe that every state will allow same-sex marriage, but there's reason enough to believe

that many more states will pass legislation that advocate these rights. The increasing trend of support for LBGTQ rights in the nation supports this. Students across Alma College have also voiced their support for Washington State's gay marriage legislation, advocating equality for United States citizens. People are much more vocal

in voicing their support for gay rights. Outrage towards negative comments about LBGTQ rights can be readily seen within news media. Rick Santorum and Rick Perry recently caused a national outrage in their campaigns against same-sex marriage. This is an example of how the people of the United States are becoming evermore passionate

and rational about equality. "I saw a video recently of a Republican legislator speak during a debate endorsing gay marriage, and the fact that a person with a Conservative mindset realizes the importance of these marriage bills demonstrates the legitimacy of gay marriage," said **Brendan Lodge ('14)**. "Love is love-who are we to question it?"

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

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

Valentine's Day: What is the reason for the season?

BY ISRAEL PACHECO SANTOS  
STAFF WRITER

With Valentine's Day fast approaching and last minute ideas coming together to express love, one has to wonder as to why we celebrate this holiday. Sure it is romantic, and who does not love being guaranteed gifts, flowers, and/or sex? Valentine's Day is a holiday that is enjoyable for both genders. So don't let heartbroken individuals who are secretly envious of what you have stop you from going all out. But is Valentine's Day really a holiday created by the candy and gift card companies in the efforts to make more money off of you? Have we forgotten the historical meaning behind this loved and

sometimes hated holiday that we have connected so adamantly with displaying affection? Or should we not even care about the reason of its existence and just focus on celebrating love? Historically, Valentine's Day was created to honor the Christian martyr, Saint Valentine. This holiday was first celebrated in the romantic sense for the act of courting during the days of Geoffrey Chaucer

*Who does not love  
being guaranteed gifts,  
flowers, and/or sex?*

*- On the perks of the  
holiday*

in the Middle Ages, but was later sanctioned as a holiday by Pope Gelasius in 496 AD. However, many people believe that we have forgotten the original meaning of love and how to celebrate it. Popular belief is that modern society has turned this once romantic holiday into a day of expecting material goods. In today's society, Valentine's Day is a time for couples to express their love for each other by giving flowers, candies, and gifts. In this sense of giving, couples can find themselves in a dangerous balancing act. Spending more money obviously means that you love your partner more, while not spending enough means that you don't love them, and spending too much may mean that you are trying to make up for something. However, my belief is that

Valentine's Day has become perceived as a materialistic holiday. People who are heartbroken are more voluble with their antipathy towards this holiday than the people who have a significant other to celebrate it with. Allow me to extend an apology for their lack of being in a relationship and an early "Happy Valentine's Day," to all those bitter people who refuse to let love be expressed proudly. People who are in a relationship have one day where they are allowed to show their affection for each other without being depicted in a negative light. Single people who are on edge about the holiday may argue that they choose to be single, that they are not ready for a relationship, or they are afraid of commitment. Regardless of their reasoning, if

people who are in a relationship support single people, then why can't bitter single people support love for one day? One can argue that instead of focusing on love for only one day, we should put in the effort and show our love all year. True, we should aspire to do this. However, there is something about having a day to proclaim and show your love makes the sentiment that much better. This coming Valentine's Day, ignore the negativity and forget that we may or may not be basing love on material possessions, and pay no heed to the hateful speeches of bitter single people forsaking Valentine's Day—simply celebrate it. At the end of the day, it is only about you and your significant other.



Accept reality, make dream realistic

BY ISRAEL PACHECO SANTOS  
STAFF WRITER

Imagine that you are a loveless individual, with no job, and might be fighting a terminal disease. Such is the case of Frank, in the upcoming film “God Bless America,” an independent film that depicts the retrogressive mentality of the United States.

With nothing to lose and nothing to gain, Frank and his sidekick, 16-year-old Roxy, decide to arm themselves and cleanse our society of some of the most idiotic, misanthropic, and nauseating members of society.

Opening fire on a pseudo-American Idol audition that eliminates individuals whose sole purpose is to gain fame through the media, Frank and Roxy seek to remove self-centered individuals who lack the consciousness to realize that there are people out there who suffer from problems other than those of the first-world.

Which brings me to my question: has our progressive society unintentionally created the breeding ground for individuals that are too fixated on personal glory, fame, and

interest that they have shunned the well-being of society?

Newly constructed ideology has created a fixation on the self. Hit shows like “American Idol,” “America’s Got Talent,” and “Teen Mom” have created a belief that any ridiculous talent or condom mistake offers you the opportunity to strike it rich and become a household name.

I will agree that some shows offer a display of true talent and actually produce people with respectable abilities. However, these same shows also display and glorify individuals who are in denial of their lack of talent and who see their public humiliation as a reinforcement that they should continue to chase their dreams.

The continuation of these kinds of shows only hinders our society. In giving talentless people the hope that they will one day become a star, constructive criticism and blunt honesty are forced to become non-existent. We must all accept that there is a social hierarchy, some of us are meant to shine and others are meant to pick up the phones.

We are all considered equal, but in reality, all facets

of society have to be filled.

Still, there are those individuals that seek to remain in blissful ignorance. These are the individuals who, according to “God Bless America,” should be eliminated from society.

Though it is hard to agree with Frank and Roxy’s tactics, one can only argue that their methods produce immediate results.

Think of their methods as an evolutionary progression of our species—eliminating the variables that are counterproductive citizens of society and leaving us with the citizens of society who focus on plausible dreams and contribute to society.

I am not advocating that someone mimic the efforts of Frank and Roxy, but rather, we should accept reality and dream within a plausible realm. If we don’t, we will continue to procure individuals who are materialistic, wasteful, and oblivious to the needs of others.

If we live in a civilized nation, then why do we promote the fixation on the self, forsaking the betterment of our fellow man and promoting the abandonment of good virtues?

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

January was National Mentoring Month! Big Brothers Big Sisters would like to thank our Big Brother and Big Sister mentors: Katie Arend, Morgan Beeler, Simone Boos, Carolina Cortes-Kleman, Justine Cowan, Katie DeJonge, Raeann Dumka, Lisa Folkmire, Michelle Foos, Chelsea Fouts, Elizabeth Gupton, Waris Hussain, Zahra Hussain, Kelly Hutcheon, Dylan Jehnzen, Lance Jongekrijg, Kelsey Knapp, Micaela Lacey, Kayla Landeweer, Rachel Lane, Colter Lubben, Kelsey Merz, James Myers, Ashley Parsons, Marta Perez, Meredith Rahrig, Stephanie Sakorafis, Abigail Savin, Leslie Schmeling, Kyle Schmitt, Alixandrea Shea, Danae Sietsema, Kayla Smart,

Heather Walendzik, Kali Walther, Jennafer Young, and Kayla Zuiderveen for giving their time, love and compassion to make the life of a child a little brighter!

Once people become mentors, they are amazed at what they get out of it. 97% of mentors say they would recommend it to a friend. If you’d like more information about becoming a mentor, please visit us at [www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org](http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org) or call us at 989-463-3434. BBBS is a partner agency with United Way. Start Something!

Thank you.  
Suzanne Derry  
Executive Director  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Gratiot & Montcalm Counties

Following the Beat with Ben King: Valentine’s Day

BY BEN KING  
BEAT WRITER

There is no doubt that while Valentine’s Day is a day of love and romance, it is also one of anxiety and perhaps even tension.

If an individual is in a relationship, there can be a high expectation of having an “amazing” day. For those not in a relationship there can be disappointment and irritation from being “alone” on a day of love.

Regardless of all of the anxieties this day brings to both singles and couples, Valentine’s

Day is just one day of the year. There are so many ways to make it one of the better ones regardless of an individual’s situation.

As college students, we all tend to be a little short on money. Hollywood and television would have all of us believe that in order to have a nice Valentine’s Day, one must spend lots of money and all romantic gestures ought to be extravagant and perhaps even flashy.

This is not the case. Valentine’s Day is one in which individuals are meant to express their love for their significant others. One does not need to spend a ridiculous amount

of money in order to do this.

A college student who shares his or her love of music with their significant other could make a romantic C.D. of songs that remind him of his sweetheart.

If you both like to eat, but cannot afford to go out to dinner, perhaps cooking a simple meal and making a “swanky” dining setting with candles and a table cloth may be even more romantic.

It is not about being able to show off how much money one has. It is the amount of effort and thought put into a gift that matters. In matters of the heart, it is always the thought that counts.

Now, if one is single on Valentine’s Day, there are many things that can be done to make the day better if it has a tendency to bring one down.

Perhaps the most simple way to counter the Valentine’s Day blues is to just ignore it. It is one day out of the year and many other people are in the same position. You will wake up, go to bed and the next day will be Feb. 15. It will be just like any normal day.

Spend time with other single folks. Do something that you enjoy and try to have fun. It is always nice to do something just for oneself.

Above all, if you happen to

be single on this day of love and adoration, try and remember that love is not about a particular day, or even being in a romantic relationship. All people ought to love one another regardless of the day. If you are in a relationship then you should always try and show your love to your partner regardless of the day.

We all should cherish the love of others and the impacts those lives have on us every single day. It is the people who surround us and care for us, that matter.

So, Happy Valentine’s Day everyone. I hope that you all have a special day!

the Almanian.

“ALMA COLLEGE’S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER, SERVING THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY SINCE 1907.

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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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Opinion Beat

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Staff Writer

Staff Writer

Staff Writer

Staff Writer

Staff Writer

Staff Writer

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# Women's basketball drops two conference games, two remain

By **JOSH SPRATT**  
STAFF WRITER

As conference play is quickly coming to an end and the MIAA tournament looms in the near future, the women's basketball team was pitted last week against two conference opponents. Last Saturday the Scots played at Albion and were defeated by a score of 74-61. On Saturday, they took on the Flying Dutch of Hope College at home and dropped that game 76-53.

The next time the team will play at home will be at 1 p.m. Saturday against Trine University in its final game of the regular season.

At Albion, the Scots came out strong scoring on their first two possessions as **Rachel Jaksa ('12)** knocked down a couple of jumpers.

Alma led for a majority of the first half as the team shot 35 percent from the field and was perfect from the line.

With just under five minutes remaining in the first half, Albion picked up their scoring efforts and went on a run to go up by seven, but Alma cut the lead to just one going into the break.

After the half the Brits continued a strong offensive attack and would not let Alma regain a lead.

The game stayed close for almost the entire second half with the Brits keeping a lead by

one or two possession scores.

Alma was forced to foul late in the game and the Brits were ice water from the stripe connecting on nine of 10 in the last 41 seconds of the game to increase their lead and win by double digits.

After the game coach Keisha Brown was quoted in a press release.

"We played well tonight and just hit a couple of stretches where we didn't score. This one stings because they really played well, but we had to foul down the stretch and it was very difficult for us because they made their free throws."

Against the Flying Dutch last Saturday, Alma again outscored their opponent in the early going, but could not keep up the offensive tempo for the entire game.

The Scots drew first blood off a lay-up by **Sarah Stinson ('14)** a minute into the game and then on their next possession **Mallory Pruett ('15)** drilled a triple to increase the lead to five.

Alma led by as many as six in the first half, but the Flying Dutch had opened up a nine point lead by the time the teams went into the locker room for the break.

After halftime the Scots managed to cut the lead to six, but that was as close as they could come for the remainder of the game.

Hope's biggest lead of the night amounted to 23 points when they were up 68-45 with 5:51 to play in the game.

The Scots cut the lead back when they applied pressure

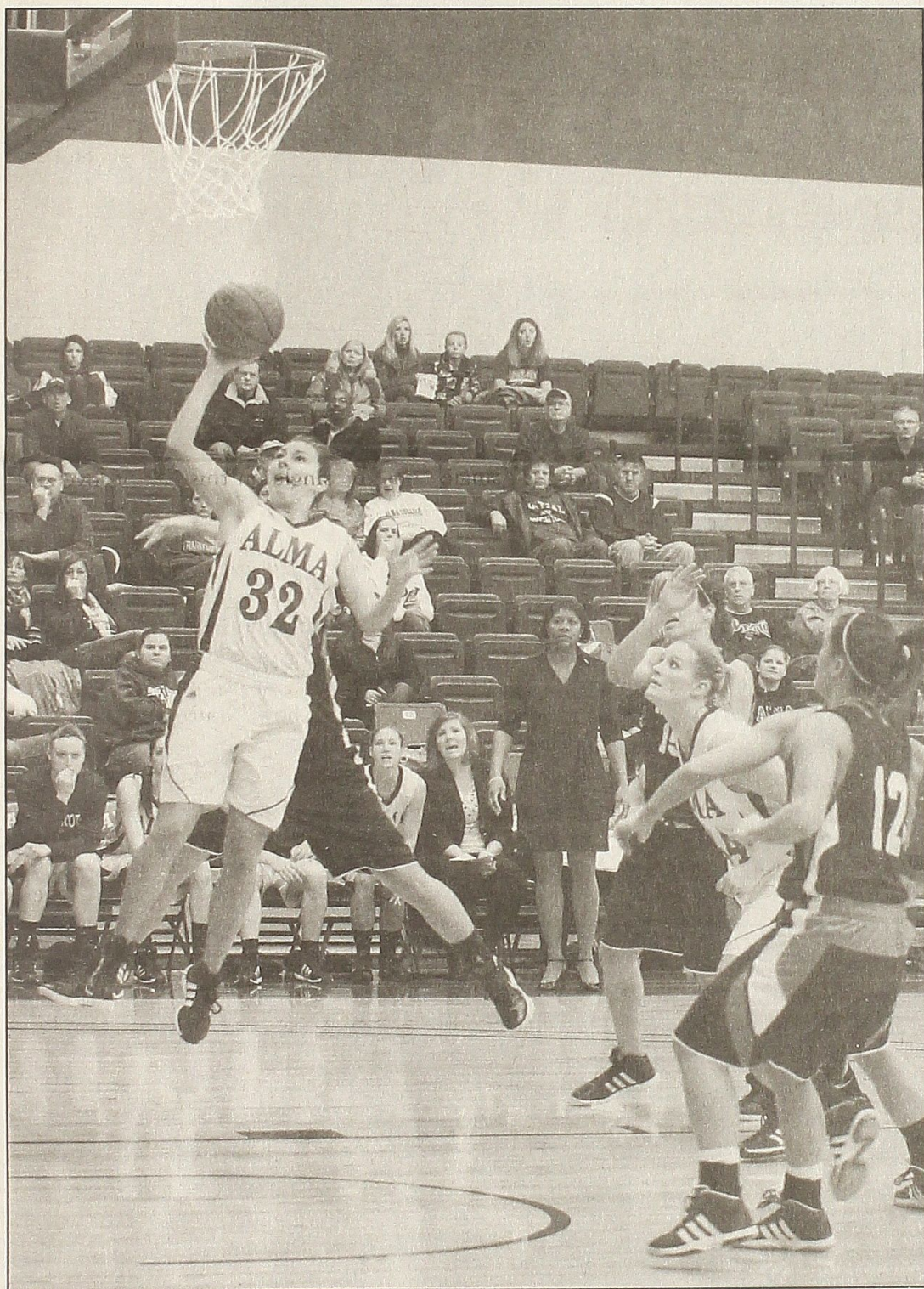
in the backcourt which led to a few Dutch turnovers.

Ultimately the deficit proved to be too much to overcome in the short amount of remaining minutes and in the end Hope came out on top by 17.

Leading offensive players for maroon and cream were Pruett with 17 points, **Danielle Hicks ('13)** with 12 and Jaksa with 10. Each of them along with Stinson had two assists for the game.

As a team Alma shot 33 percent from beyond the arc and 71 percent from the charity stripe in the game.

After the loss the Scots sit at 6-17 overall and 4-10 in conference play with two games remaining on their schedule.



Kayla Roy: Staff Photographer

Left: Danielle Hicks ('13) leads the Scots in scoring and rebounds this season. Right: Mallory Pruett ('15) is second in scoring for the Scots.

## Women's tennis loses season opener, 8-1

By **JOSH SPRATT**  
STAFF WRITER

Even with the unusually warm winter temperatures, the women's tennis team was still not able to start its season outdoors. The Superior Street tennis courts remain covered in snow and ice, forcing the team to kick off the indoor part of its season last week in the Stone Recreational Center.

This season, the Scots will look to balance the young firepower of the new recruits with the experience of the seasoned veterans.

Some notable new faces on the team include number two singles player **Erin Clutter ('15)** and **Maleah Benn ('15)** at the five position.

The Scots will continue play in Orlando Florida over the winter term break as they take on an array of opponents including Augustana College, Hanover College, Capital and Concordia University of Minnesota.

The next time the ladies play at home will be on Mar. 16 against Cornerstone University and will start conference play against Trine University on Mar. 24.

In the season opener the Scots played NAIA opponent Davenport University and dropped the match 8-1.

"Davenport is always a tough

team to play, their top three singles players are all seniors attending on a tennis scholarship," said co-head coach Anneliese Fox.

*"Davenport is always a tough team to play, their top three singles players are all seniors attending on a tennis scholarship."*

-Anneliese Fox,  
co-head coach

The only winning flight for the Scots was number 6 singles played by **Lauren Moreau ('14)** who soundly

defeated her opponent 6-1 6-2.

In the eight game pro-sets played by the doubles teams, the number one flight of **Jen Meloche ('12)** and Clutter and the number three flight of **Brittany Miller ('13)** and Benn were both able to get three games a piece before ultimately losing to their opponents.

"Currently we are working on doubles strategy and mixing up doubles teams to find the right combinations. This year the team has been working incredibly hard at practice and during conditioning to prepare for its trip to Orlando," said Fox.

At the number four singles flight, **Katie Meloche ('13)** came close in her second set but was not able to push her

opponent to a deciding third set and in the end lost 6-4 7-5.

In the number three singles flight **Amy Baranowski ('12)** managed to take games from her Davenport foe, but dropped the match in straight sets 6-4 6-3.

With some new talent as well as leadership from senior co-captains Meloche and Baranowski, the Scots will look to rebound this season and try to pick up some wins against conference rivals Albion and Adrian, who they have had trouble with in the past.

"Our goal this year is to finish in the top four of the MIAA and play in the MIAA tournament. It is important for us to reach our peak performance just in time for conference play," said Fox.



# Scotlight: Coach Jason Levesque kicks off lacrosse legacy at Alma

By JASON POPIEL  
STAFF WRITER

As the first men's lacrosse coach in Alma College history, **Jason Levesque** has been tasked with building a brand new program from the ground up.

The St. Catherine's, Ontario native was named head coach in January, when men and women's lacrosse were considered club sports. Ever since taking the reins as coach, Levesque has led under the philosophy that the first and foremost priority will be beginning a program that understands the fundamentals and will work towards being a force in the league.

"I think Coach Levesque is a really good coach and is going to build a great program here," said defender **James McCoy ('12)**. "You can tell he really cares about the players and is easy to get along with."

Levesque joins the Alma staff after a stellar college career at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. Levesque came to Canisius at a time when the program was struggling, but his class quickly

turned the program around. Levesque's class became the most successful program in school history when he graduated, and the four-year starting mid-fielder led the Saints to their first two MAAC Conference Tournament appearances. Upon leaving Canisius,

Levesque served as defensive coach and recruiting coordinator at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, N.C., and participated as a counselor in various lacrosse camps across the nation. Before coming to Alma, Levesque spent the last two years as defensive coach at his alma mater.

"I'm a younger guy so I feel like I can relate to the guys pretty well," said Levesque. "I'm pretty laid-back and personable, but at the same time I'm very passionate and competitive, so our goal will be to win games and championships."

Levesque recognizes that the program must take small steps to achieving the ultimate goal of a championship, but he believes that a firm foundation is being set.

"We just want to improve every day and compete every day on the game and practice field," said Levesque. "We're not expecting to win right away and we're not expecting to go undefeated right away. We're going to take some lumps, and we're going to have some peaks and valleys but I think that if we can stay focused on the short term goal of competing every time that we step on the field that we will be alright."

Levesque hopes that he will be able to utilize the skills he learned as a lacrosse camp counselor to recruit student-athletes from across the nation to Alma in order to accomplish the goal of winning a championship.

"Our long-term goal is to win that championship," said Levesque. "This is a great school, we have a quality education to offer, we have phenomenal facilities that are on-par or even better than our counterparts in conference, so I think we can attract some great student-athletes and win an MIAA Championship relatively soon."

The team will continue their season on Feb. 26, when they will travel to Danville, Ky. to take on Centre College before moving on to Ga. for a spring break series of games.



Elaine Cunningham: Photo Editor

Coach Jason Levesque hopes to build the men's lacrosse program at Alma College.

*"We're not expecting to win right away and we're not expecting to go undefeated right away."*

*-Jason Levesque, head coach*

turned the program around.

Levesque's class became the most successful program in school history when he graduated, and the four-year starting mid-fielder led the Saints to their first two MAAC Conference Tournament appearances.

Upon leaving Canisius,

**Staying on top of the game: This week in sports:**

Men's basketball:

Wednesday vs. Albion

at HOME 8 p.m.

Saturday vs. Kalamazoo

at HOME 3 p.m.

Men's tennis:

Saturday vs. Spring Arbor

at HOME 11 a.m.

Women's basketball:

Saturday vs. Trine

at HOME 1 p.m.

## Men's and women's track season takes off

By JASON POPIEL  
STAFF WRITER

Spring is right around the corner, and with the warm weather comes the start of men and women's outdoor track season.

The squads have been competing in an indoor season since before Christmas break, and attended meets that have featured teams from all NCAA divisions as well as NAIA schools.

The Scots return letter-winners as well as all-MIAA performers from last year in the sprints, distance, and field events. They look to use the experience gained from the indoor meets to reach their goals in the outdoor league season.

"We have some very good individuals this year," said head coach Gordie Aldrich. "The national championship this year is in San Diego, and hopefully many of them make it there after they score very well in the MIAA Jamboree."

The men's team returns many members that were very successful last season, including

**Henry Brun ('12)**, who was named an all-MIAA performer in the triple jump. Brun won the league championship in the triple jump in 2011 with a length of 47' 1", and went on to compete at the National Championship meet.

The sprints will continue to improve this season, as four-year runner **Xavier Carranza ('12)** returns for his senior season. Carranza earned a sixth-place conference finish in the men's 200 meter dash with a time of

*"The national championship this year is in San Diego, and hopefully many of them make it there after they score very well in the MIAA Jamboree."*

*-Gordie Aldrich, head coach*

22.85 seconds. Carranza joins **Tyler Yascolt ('14)**, **Barak Henderson ('12)**, **Jon Young**

**('13)**, and Brun in a group of very talented sprinters that will all compete for spots in the sprint relays. The distance team features **Garrett Lacy ('13)** who was the Scots' top finisher at the cross country Great Lakes Regional meet and came in second place in the 10,000 meter run at last year's MIAA Field Day meet.

"Things are looking very promising for us this season," said Young. "Coach Aldrich's recruiting in the off-season and the in-season workouts are looking very beneficial to our future as a track program."

The women's side features defending MIAA pole vault champion **Abby Witham ('13)**, who also garnered first team all-MIAA honors with her 3.3 meter jump at the MIAA Field Day. **Lindsay Schaberg ('13)** and **Karen Hopkins ('12)** are two more Scots that will score points in the pole vault.

Distance runner **Anna Sall ('13)** will help pick up the extra slack that was created when all-MIAA runner **Kellee Lemcke ('11)** graduated last year. Some new,

young freshmen and sophomore sprinters will also fill voids that were left by graduating seniors.

"The team is aiming to win the conference this year and I

*"Things are looking very promising for us this season."*

*-Jon Young ('13)*

think that we have a really good chance," said Witham. "I have a personal goal to make the national championship for pole vault."

Overall, this could be a big year for a program that has continually become more established in the MIAA.

"We are going to score points even though we lack the overall numbers to score a lot of points, and we are going to perform well at both the Field Day and the MIAA Jamboree," said Aldrich.

The Scots will begin their outdoor season on Mar. 23, when they will travel to Atlanta to participate in the Emory College Classic.