

Alma College to expand Highland Arts program

By ELISABETH BLETSCH
STAFF WRITER

Alma College students will be exposed to Scottish culture more frequently with the recent expansion of the Highland Arts program. Kate DeGood, Highland dance director and Highland Arts co-coordinator, said Highland dancing and bag piping have been important parts of the Alma College community for many decades. DeGood added, “The college is now expanding the program by creating two Highland Arts co-coordinator positions as well as a director of Highland dance and director of piping position.” DeGood started her position as Highland dance director and Highland Arts co-coordinator in mid-January. In this position, DeGood teaches in the dance department, plans performances, and recruits Highland Arts students both from across the country and internationally. DeGood said President Abernathy and other faculty and staff members at Alma College are always trying to identify, and capitalize upon, the factors that make this institution unique. “Our Scottish Heritage and the Highland Arts sets Alma College apart from other institutions,” said DeGood. DeGood added that in the future, students can expect to see and increased number of Highland dancers and pipers on campus.



Photo by Kayla Roy

Highland dancers Alexa Gilbert (’12), Anne Bourbonais (’12), Maria Taylor (’12) and Christine Cuthbertson (’14) rehearse in the dance studio at the Heritage Center. The Highland Arts program is expanding on campus and more opportunities will be available for Highland dancers and pipers.

“Developing the Highland Arts program will offer more opportunities for Alma College Highland Dancers and Pipers. We also hope to develop a collaborative Highland Arts course integrating dance, music, literature, and history, and possibly a Highland Arts minor in the future,” said DeGood. “We will also be offering teacher and judges training courses in the future,” DeGood added. Andrew Duncan, director of piping, believes this is a thrilling time for those involved with Highland Arts on Alma’s campus.

“I mentioned to the first year pipers a month ago that when they graduate in three years they will not know how to describe all the positive changes they will be a part of over the next three years. This is an exciting time for Highland Arts at Alma College,” Duncan said. Duncan is responsible for the musical portion of the expansion, and he also works in conjunction with DeGood on some of the organization aspects of the program development. As a result of the expansion, Duncan said the pipers have become

increasingly active on campus. “They have enjoyed increased opportunities to perform on and off campus. The pipers have also enjoyed tremendous support from the music department and the Alma College community as a whole,” said Duncan. He added, “The pipers look forward to getting together with some percussion students and putting a competitive band on the field.” Duncan said that through this expansion the college also hopes to build positive relationships with other Scottish organizations.

“It is my hope that Alma College will become recognized as a resource in the Highland Arts community and a supporter of all things Scottish,” said Duncan. He added, “The programs created through this expansion will also draw more talented students to Alma College.” Maria Taylor (’12) said the Highland Arts program was the biggest reason she chose to attend Alma College. A Highland dancer since age nine, Taylor said, “Highland dancing has always been an important part of my life, and Alma’s program allows dance enthusiasts like myself to continue their art form at a competitive level throughout college.” Taylor said the Highland Arts program is “an opportunity unique to Alma College.” She added that the expansion of the program will bring more people interested in the Scottish Arts to Alma. “Already I have heard several younger dancers expressing interest in Alma for that very reason,” said Taylor. Taylor hopes the Highland Arts program continues to grow and develop further. “My vision of the ideal Highland Arts program would include higher level lessons, specifically for competitive dancers and pipers, offered through the college, more shows and campus [and] community involvement, and perhaps even a new building on campus devoted solely to the Scottish Arts, like the Eddy Music Center, complete with high-quality floors and practice room for the dancers,” said Taylor.

SIFE creates board game to teach ethics

By ELISABETH BLETSCH
STAFF WRITER

Members of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) have helped create better individuals for the future at a local elementary school. A group of students involved with SIFE recently created a life size board game to teach first graders at Luce Road Elementary about ethics. Ryan VanDort (’11) said, “Using funding from SIFE and a total of 40 hours of work, we created a game called ‘BIFF’. The main focus of the project was to teach a basic level of ethics and the concept of what is right or wrong to the students in order to create better individuals for the future.” “The game was made up of 50 pieces of paper cut in the shape of rocks. The kids themselves were the game pieces and moved

around the rocks,” said VanDort. He added, “There were also oversized dice and extra large question cards for the kids to read.”

“Using funding from SIFE and a total of 40 hours of work, we created a game called ‘BIFF’. The main focus of the project was to teach a basic level of ethics and the concept of what is right or wrong to the students in order to create better individuals for the future.”
-Ryan VanDort (’11)

This is the second consecutive year SIFE has used this project, according to VanDort. VanDort said the idea originally came from Samantha Wanke (’11), another member of SIFE. “This project was very successful this year and last, and we look forward to continuing this project in the future,” said VanDort. VanDort said this type of project allows SIFE to be active within the Alma community. “We can show everyone that the students at Alma College care about and try to develop a

better community,” said VanDort.

“I thought the experience was great. It was a lot of fun to spend time with the kids, and I think they had a lot of fun too.”
-Jarrett Leister (’14)

“I thought the experience was great. It was a lot of fun to spend time with the kids, and I think they had a lot of fun too,” said Jarrett Leister (’14). Other members of SIFE involved with the project were Jessica Swan (’11), Hannah Bauhof (’12), Elaine Cunningham (’13), Anthony Derrer (’12), Anthony Galarno (’12), Liza Gross (’13), Brian Halas (’12), Brad Neumayer (’12), Tyler Nichols (’12), Lindsey Schaberg (’14), Chad Stripling (’12), and Abby Witham (’13).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Few Snow Showers/ Wind 39°	Partly Cloudy 32°	Drizzle 39°	Few Showers 45°	Showers 48°	Few Snow Showers 31°	Partly Cloudy 30°

Diverse spiritual growth promoted by Interfaith group

By JOSHUA ZEITLER
STAFF WRITER

Even in its early, unofficial formation, the Interfaith Relations Committee aims to inspire a yearning for spiritual growth beyond Alma's Christian bubble. This year the student organization has already hosted several events highlighting religious traditions that students may not have been previously exposed to, including the Hindu festival of Diwali, a Hanukkah celebration, and a meditation trip to a Buddhist temple in Lansing.

"The group is growing every week," said **Katie Gordon ('13)**. "People are recognizing how unique these experiences are and trying to come to a better understanding of the reasons behind certain traditions."

While offering an exploration of spirituality from different perspectives, the committee also serves to accommodate the spiritual needs of those Alma students who don't fall somewhere on the Catholic-Protestant spectrum, according to Gordon. "It makes me feel very welcome, like a legitimate part of the community," said **Chloe Secor ('14)**, who identifies with Judaism. "They really have branched out, and they're reaching out to a lot of diverse faiths."

"While I don't think there is much religious diversity on Alma's campus, I think there is more than most people recognize," said **Meredith Brown ('12)**. "I think there are more agnostics, actively seeking some kind of religious home, than one might have guessed. The Interfaith Council's job, in part, is to reach out to these individuals and give them a sense of community in their journey."

"It is also hopefully functioning to attract students from diverse religious backgrounds to come to the school, as they know they will have a support group here."

"People are recognizing how unique these experiences are and trying to come to a better understanding of the reasons behind certain traditions."
-Katie Gordon ('13)

The activities that the Interfaith Committee can sponsor are limited for the time being, but a constitution has been written and is pending approval for next semester.

Once Interfaith is an officially recognized student organization, it will receive a budget from student congress to expand

the number and diversity of opportunities it currently offers.

"I would love to see them recognize more Jewish holidays, but that goes for other religions too, of course," said Secor.

In addition, plans are in motion to bring in the Interfaith Youth Core to train students and faculty.

Due to a particularly strong interest in the meditation trip that Interfaith hosted in the last week of January, Amy Schneidhorst, visiting assistant professor of history, has begun organizing a meditation group on campus.

Schneidhorst discovered the Shambhala practice while trying to handle the stress of graduate school in Chicago.

"I came as an adult to Unitarian Universalism, and my openness to a variety of religions comes from this Judeo-Christian denomination that believes we have something to learn from all the world's faiths," said Schneidhorst.

The first meeting for this meditation group will be on February 16 at 4 p.m. in the lower level of the chapel.

Future meetings will occur once a week for approximately an hour.

Students do not need any prior experience, and should wear loose and comfortable clothing.

"Everybody's welcome," said Schneidhorst. "Anybody from any religious background or faith tradition can practice this parallel to their existing traditions."

This week at Alma College

Wednesday, February 16:
ACUB Movie Night at 7 p.m. in Jones Auditorium

Thursday, February 17:
ACUB Casino Night at 7 p.m. on North and South Commons
"Dancing at Lughnasa" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theatre

Friday, February 18:
"Dancing at Lughnasa" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theatre
Wayne State Health Sciences Admissions Visit at 1:30 p.m. in Jones Auditorium
ACUB showing "Remember the Titans" at 7 p.m. in Jones Auditorium

Saturday, February 19:
"Dancing at Lughnasa" at 8 p.m. in the Strosacker Theatre
Up Till Dawn event at 2 p.m. in Fireside
Flu Shots offered from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the Wilcox Medical Center

Sunday, February 20:
Chorale and Women's Glee Club Concert at 3 p.m. in the Heritage Center
"Dancing at Lughnasa" at 3 p.m. in the Strosacker Theatre

Professional printmaker passes wisdom onto Alma students

By JOSHUA ZEITLER
STAFF WRITER

Professional artist Zdzislaw Sikora offered a wealth of insight to Alma College students during his visit last Thursday.

In addition to his reception from 7-9 p.m., Sikora led two printmaking workshops during the course of the day.

"I had never done printmaking before; even as an art major, you don't always get to cover everything," said **Jaclyn Dittmar ('11)**.

"He's very energetic and enthusiastic about teaching and gives a lot of individual attention."

Sikora, who currently works as a professor at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, has a passion for sharing his knowledge and experience that shows in all of his personal interactions.

His 'Kings and Queens' series began after his involvement in a multi-million dollar lawsuit.

"The prosecutors looked like these Fisher Price queens—faceless and automatic," said Sikora. "They would just sit there and smile while lives were being ruined!"

"When people face others of differing power and wealth, they get really afraid, and it became all about power dynamics. I became very interested in politics and the dynamics of fear," he added. "Take, for instance, the current unrest in



Photo by Kayla Roy

Sikora took to drawing black and white plants and floral images after hitting an "artistic block."

Tunisia and Egypt. When they finally get rid of the bad guy, will there just be another 'bad

guy' coming in to take his place? I love the moral hypocrisy of all the people in important positions. The appearance and the reality are never the same thing. The prints are celebratory on some levels, though. It's a way of overcoming it if you look at it right."

Sikora explained to students how he developed his work.

Sikora, who had never done a still life before, hit an artistic block, he said, and decided to draw some black and white floral etchings as an exercise.

"When I first started the flowers I was almost embarrassed," said Sikora.

"Around the twelfth floral piece, once I started to really look at them, that I started to actually see something in them. They're really more reptilian than floral, and everyone who collects floral works always finds them too creepy, too dark, too violent, and so on."

These still lives led into paintings of aerial plants that resembled "lizard-y birds," according to Sikora.

"The shadows for these really take on a life of their own," said Sikora. "I would usually make them up as I went; I really like the spaces in between the shadows."

As for insight into his artistic methods, Sikora revealed a longstanding aversion to the painting process.

"I like the product; I just don't like the physical act of painting,"

said Sikora. "I appreciate my work being called painterly and am proud of it even, but I much prefer using the instruments of drawing than painting."

"I usually bring some of my work from when I was a student so that you can all see how awful it is, and that there is hope after all."
-Zdzislaw Sikora

Sikora also emphasized the importance of being immersed in the arts during his process.

"In my own shop, I always have music playing or a movie on, or even both," said Sikora.

"Lately I've been listening to an artist named Albata: I recommend every student in Alma listen to her. She has a very earthy voice, like someone who smokes and drinks liquor. As she goes down a scale, you get these beautifully round tones - it's like rubbing ice cream on your face!"

Ultimately, Sikora's message to students was one of encouragement.

"I usually bring some of my work from when I was a student so that you can all see how awful it is, and that there is hope after all," said Sikora.

“Vagina Monologues” encourage, celebrate women empowerment

BY MOLLY HENNING
STAFF WRITER

Kappa Iota and the MacCurdy House hosted the annual “Vagina Monologues” last weekend in DOW and the proceeds from the performances went to the Women’s Aid of Gratiot County. The “Vagina Monologues” are held every year around Valentine’s Day to promote “V-Day,” which is a global collection of

promotional events directed towards ending misogyny. “V-Day is meant to promote awareness about women’s issues and rights and it tries to diffuse or negate ‘Femicide,’ which is the idea of women being mistreated,” said **Renee Willoughby** (‘11), “Vagina Monologue” co-producer. “V-Day is on Valentine’s Day in retort to the traditional notions of romance, love and womanhood.” The “Vagina Monologues” themselves, however, are a compilation of biographies written by female activist Eve

Ensler in the mid-90s. Ensler is also the founder of V-Day. “Ensler interviews women all around the world and compiles their stories together into monologues and then groups of women perform the monologues internationally,” said **Julia Ruff** (‘11).

Katherine Crombie (‘12) explained that the monologues are centered on women’s empowerment and revitalizing the female body.

The performers in the show included **Kyla Wojtas** (‘11), **Elizabeth Wayne** (‘13), **Danielle Cunningham** (‘11), **Kristine McNally** (‘12), **Veronica Hill** (‘12), **Sarah Bechtold** (‘12), **Katherine Crombie** (‘12), **Jocelyn Ballast** (‘11), **Abigail Smith** (‘12), **Shelby Schroeder** (‘14), **Laurel Tilot** (‘11) and **Laura Nicholas** (‘12).

“I love the diversity of the girls we have acting,” said Willoughby.

“You see such a wide range of ladies that really care about what the “Vagina Monologues” are about. It’s an empowering process in itself and it shows that the event is not just a bunch of radical feminists who care about these issues—it’s everyone.”

While the majority of the monologues are the same every year, Ruff explained that there is also a “spotlight” monologue that varies each season. This year, the topic of the spotlight monologue is transgendered women and the sufferings that they experience.

“The spotlight every year brings something different to the monologues,” said Ruff. “It can be sad or it can be funny... It’s meant to make people more aware of current issues.”

The “Monologues” are famous for their diversity. Each story covers a

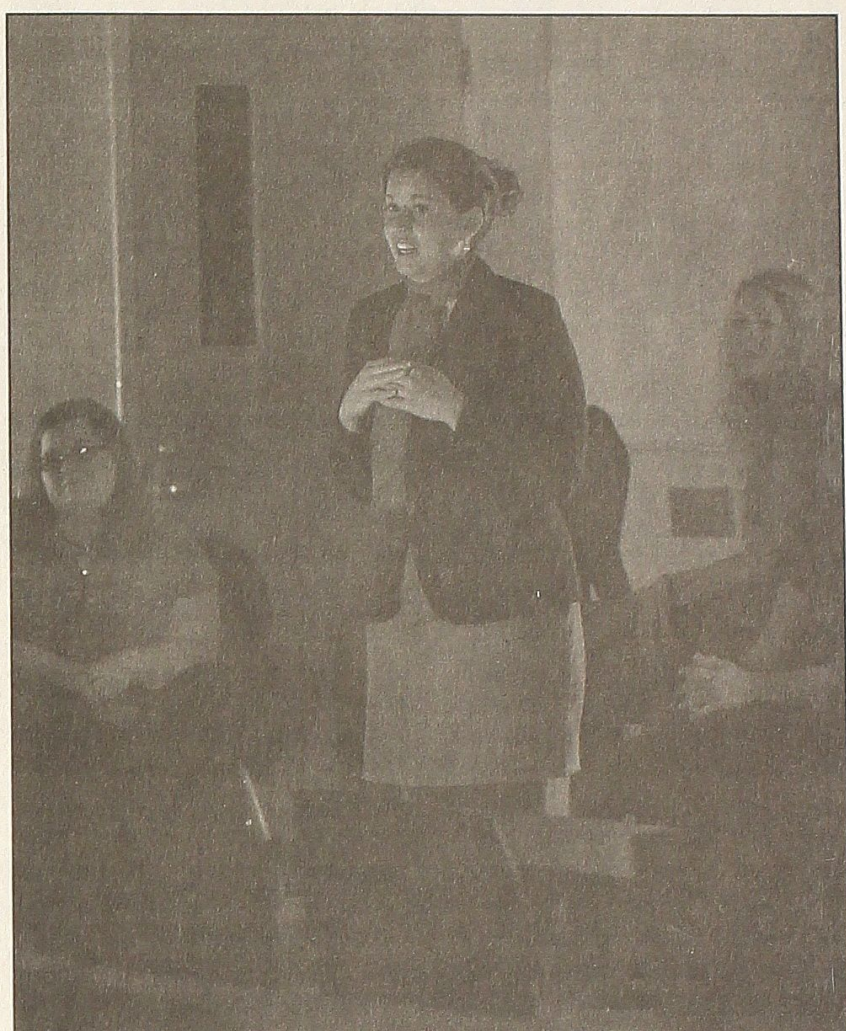


Photo by Simone Boos

Kyla Wojtas (‘11) performs her piece for the “Vagina Monologues” last weekend. The show was held in Dow L-4.

very different aspect of femininity and the challenges of womanhood and this “something-for-everyone” set-up keeps international audiences strong each year.

“The thing that I like about the ‘Vagina Monologues’ are that each monologue is powerful in its own way—some are deep and sad, others are funny and others are angry,” said Crombie. “It hits every emotion.”

Willoughby said that the goal of the “Monologues” is to get people thinking about and removing themselves from the stereotypes and ideas that society has handed to them. Willoughby added

that the “Vagina Monologues” make these issues and women’s empowerment something relevant to all disciplines and all people.

“My hope is that the audience enjoys the ‘Monologues,’” said Willoughby. “But, if in any way the ‘Vagina Monologues’ shed light onto women’s issues and ways for people to help, then it’s achieving its goal.”

Willoughby co-produced the “Vagina Monologues” with **Jessica Gauthier** (‘12). Danielle Cunningham and Laurel Tilot both directed the event, while Julia Ruff and **Kimberly Thompson** (‘13) were both stage managers.

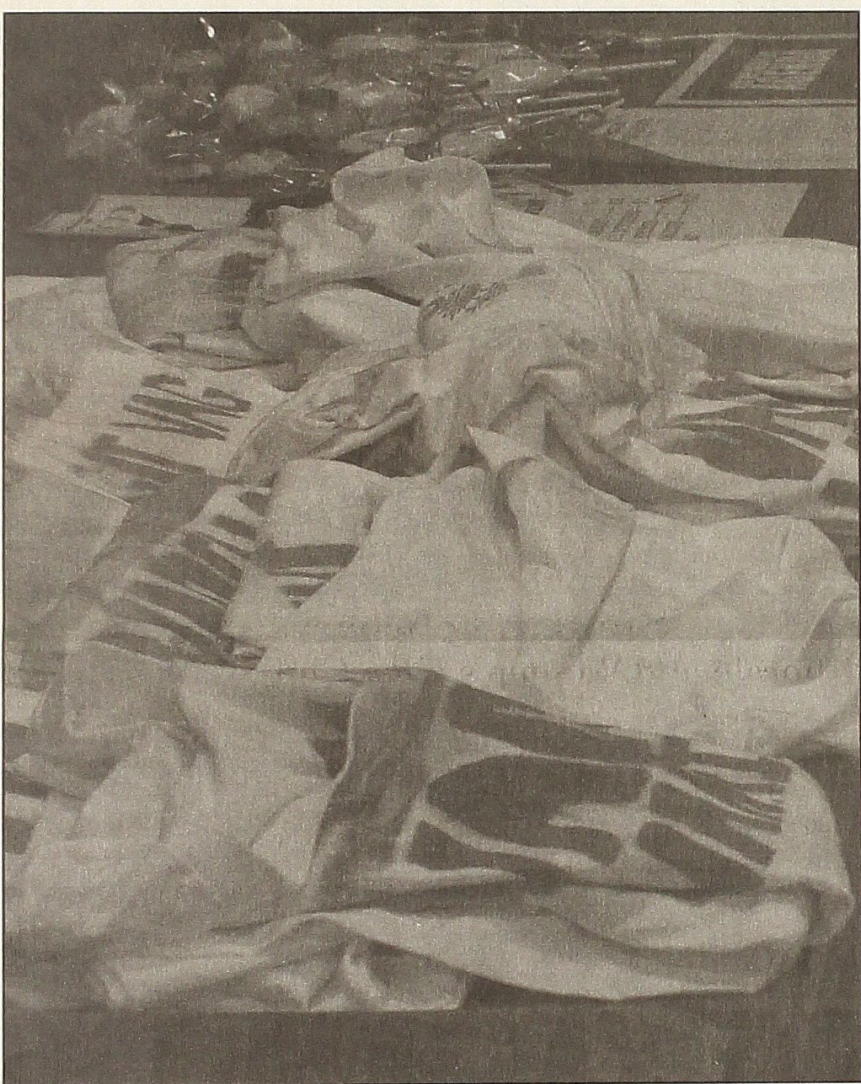


Photo by Simone Boos

T-shirts and vagina-shaped lollipops were available for guests. The show performed both Friday and Saturday nights last week, and held its last performance yesterday afternoon.

Percussion Ensemble invited to festival

BY LAUREN ANDALORA
STAFF WRITER

When members of the Alma College Percussion Ensemble performed last Sunday, the campus was given a taste of the music that will be played at upcoming national festivals. The Jazz Percussion and Steel Drum Ensemble have been invited to play at the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival for the sixth consecutive year.

“It is a national jazz competition which accepts tapes in November and then narrows the competition down to the top 10 that will be judged by the Clayton Brothers Quintet,” said David Zerbe, director of percussion studies and bands at Alma. “Many of our students have garnered outstanding soloist awards and they have even had awards created to commend the group as a whole.”

“Playing at Notre Dame is always an incredible honor,” said **Trevor Kline** (‘12). “The fact that we have been invited the past six years speaks volumes about the reputation of this percussion studio. It is always an awesome experience to play

in front of some of the top jazz musicians and it is great to hear the feedback that they have for us.

There is nothing better in this world than performing music and playing on a national stage—it is truly something special.”

Like Kline, fellow drummer **Jake Castillo** (‘12) is really looking forward to making his third trip to Notre Dame with the Ensemble.

“Every year that we go we have

“It is exciting to be able to have this opportunity to perform because everyone puts so much work into the ensemble.”

-Dana Wygmans (‘12)

an opportunity to represent Alma College to groups of people who would otherwise have no idea our school even existed,” said Castillo.

“Furthermore, it is an honor to be invited back six consecutive years and it proves that we have represented our college in a positive way.”

The group agreed that it is especially helpful to receive feedback from renowned

musicians such as the Clayton Brothers. The input helps them to fine-tune their skills and prepare for advancement in the musical world.

“The thought of playing at Notre Dame has always been a very intense feeling for me because I know that I am playing great music in front of people that can truly understand and critique it,” said **David Fair** (‘12).

After hearing ACPE play in 2006 at Notre Dame, Artistic Director of the Lionel Hampton International Jazz Festival John Clayton invited them to play at the Port Townsend International Jazz Festival.

“We were the only college group that had ever played there before because it is meant for professionals at the international level,” said Zerbe.

Not long after, Clayton invited Zerbe to put together an all-star group to headline at the festival and this is how the Legacy Percussion Orchestra came to be.

Legacy is composed of twenty musicians; eight Alma alumni, nine percussionists from the Robert Hohner Jazz Ensemble, a pianist, a bassist and Dave Zerbe himself.



Photo by Simone Boos

Percussion Ensemble members rehearse in preparation for the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival.

“I’m very excited,” said Zerbe. “It’s one of those things that you prepare for your entire life, especially in this career as a musician, practicing countless hours and playing gigs for free simply for the love of the music.”

You make sure that you play at the highest level you can and this means making sacrifices along the way. You have to be at the right place at the right time, but you also have to be

prepared and ready to be there.”

The Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival is Mar. 5 and the Lionel Hampton International Jazz Festival is Feb. 26.

“It is exciting to be able to have this opportunity to perform because everyone puts so much work into the ensemble,” said **Dana Wygmans** (‘12). “We are all working toward this common goal and playing at the festival is a big payoff.”

ACUB, ACOG sponsor college's first gaming conference

BY LAUREN ANDALORA
STAFF WRITER

Alma College Otaku and Gamers (ACOG) and Alma College Union Board (ACUB) co-sponsored AlmaCon 2011, an event whose name was inspired by Detroit's anime conference: YoumaCon.

"We were kidding around when we said we should have an AlmaCon," said **Katherine Brower ('10)**. "Then I started emailing people and booked Van Dusen and after a lot of work and worrying it came together."

ACOG and ACUB organized a series of activities and demonstrations in Van Dusen and the Rotunda including tabletop games, magic cards, an arcade and videogames.

"I got a chance to play Mario Kart and learned how to play magic cards," said **Alex Colwell ('13)**.

"There were many creatively

designed costumes, such as Jack Sparrow and Crane from Batman."

There were also discussion panels and voice actress Tiffany Grant came to speak.

"The panels were interesting, especially having Tiffany Grant here talking about Hello Kitty and her work with Neon Genesis Evangelion," said

"I had never been to a convention before and this was a very exciting event to bring to Alma."

-**Alexandra Karr ('12)**

Sara Gensterblum ('13).

"I did a panel on how to properly tie your kimono," said **James Woods ('12)**. "It was very fun."

There was a costume competition which brought a variety of students to Van Dusen dressed in everything from anime to Snoopy.

"I dressed up as Envy from Full

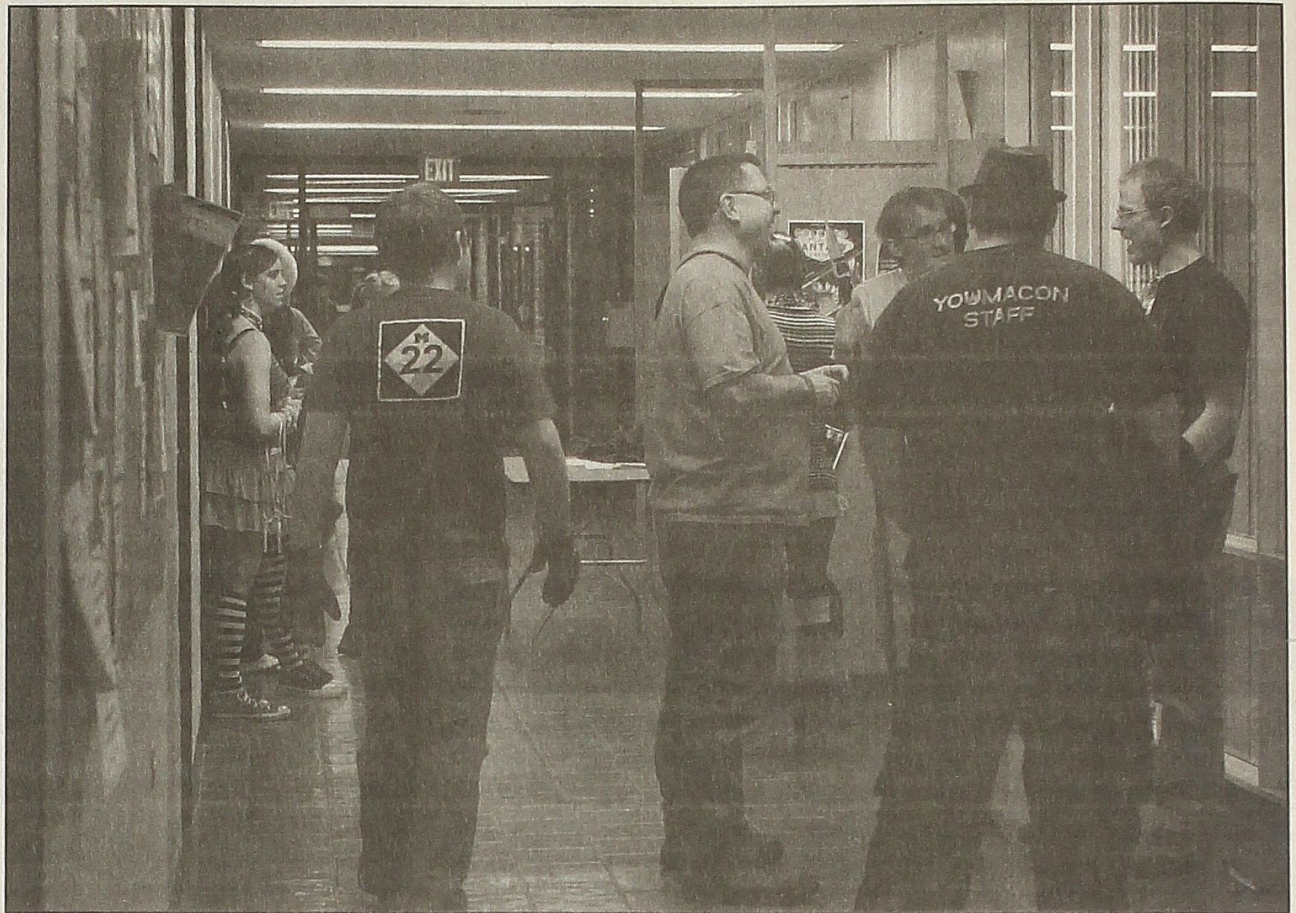


Photo by Simone Boos

Guests of AlmaCon 2011 met last weekend for a variety of activities that were sponsored by both ACOG and ACUB.



Photo by Simone Boos

The conference also featured a costume competition that was held in Van Dusen.

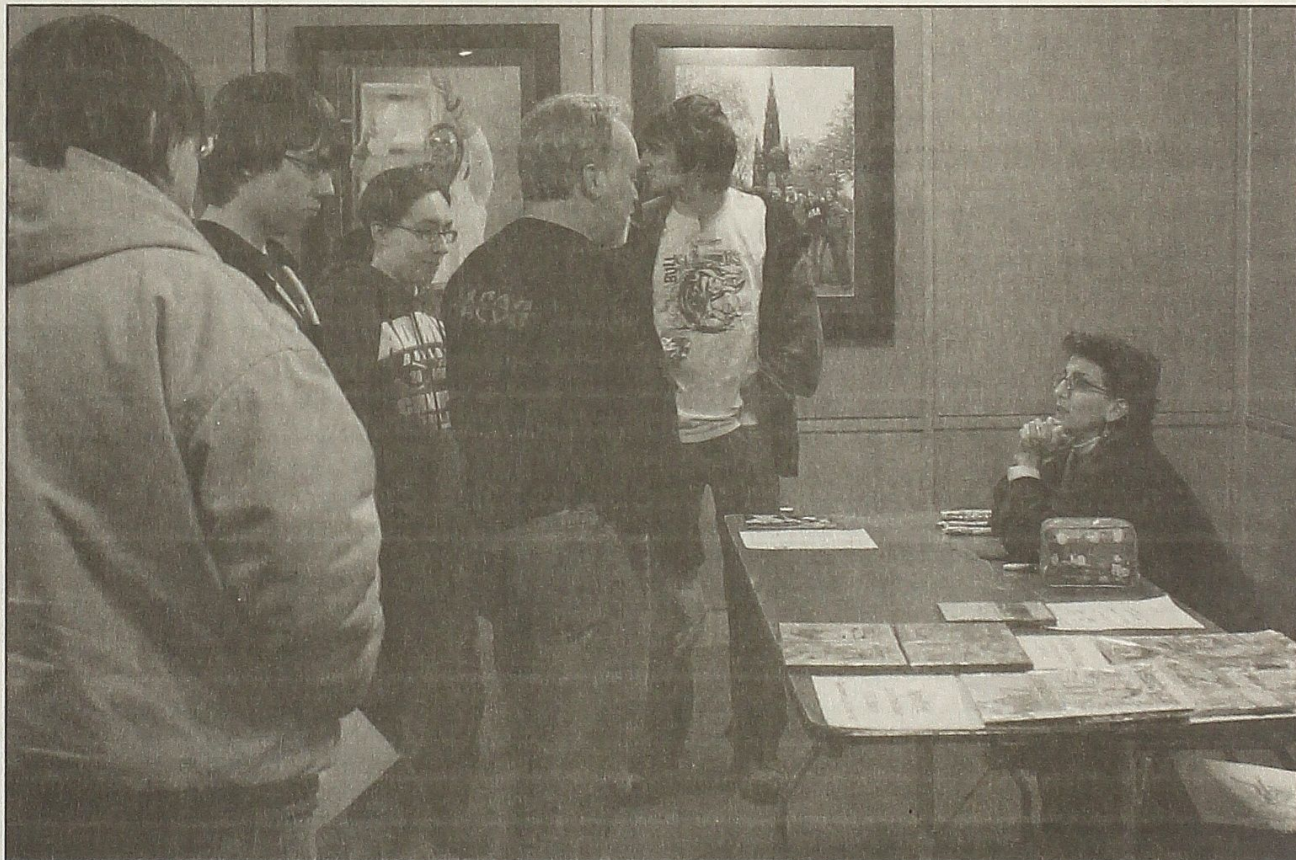


Photo by Simone Boos

Voice actress Tiffany Grant attended the conference and expounded on her work with Neon Genesis Evangelion.

Metal Alchemist," said Brower. "A lot of work went into making the costume and it was fun to see what other people created."

Local vendors such as Metal Artisan Studio, Bowen Dragon, Hall of Heroes and Cardboard Addiction came to sell their wares and students sold crafts.

"I sold hats and jewelry to benefit Relay for Life," said **Sarah Herberger ('12)**. "I

was also a DJ for the dances and I really loved dressing up."

"I took commissions for drawings," said **Alexandra Karr ('12)**. "I had never been to a convention before and this was a very exciting event to bring to Alma."

To conclude both nights there was a formal dance and rave, which cost \$5 that went towards Relay for Life fundraising.

"It was good to bring people into the college," said **Lauren McNabb ('12)**.

"I don't even like anime but I had a lot of fun seeing everyone dressed up and introducing the culture to people," said **Kayla Montney ('13)**.

"Looking back at our first con there is a sense of great accomplishment," said Kevin Carmody, co-advisor of ACOG.

The band "Neon Trees" will visit and perform at Alma College on April 7.

Concert organizers plan to sell 2500 tickets. All will be general admission.

Tickets for Alma College students, faculty, and staff will be available be **Monday, February 14**, for a two-week period.

Alma College students may have one free ticket and can purchase up to two additional tickets at this time.

Faculty and staff tickets are available for \$10 each. (There is no limit at this time as to how many tickets faculty and staff may purchase.)

Ticket sales will open to the public on **February 28** for \$10 each. Students may buy additional tickets at that time.

Tickets must be purchased in advance. No ticket sales will be available at the door on the night of the performance.

Diet soda linked to increased stroke risk

By MASON WARLING
STAFF WRITER

Recent statistics released by the scientific community have linked diet soda consumption to increased risk of stroke, after comparing hospitalizations between this decade and the last. Government researchers compared hospitalizations in 1994 and 1995 with ones in 2006 and 2007, comparing hospitalizations between diet soda drinkers and non-drinkers. The sharpest increase, 51 percent, was among men 15 through 34. Strokes rose among women in this age group, too, but not as drastically, at a rate of 17 percent. Daily diet soda drinkers (there were 116 in the study) had a 48 percent higher risk of stroke or

heart attack than people who drank no soda of any kind (901 people, or 35 percent of total participants). That's after taking into account rates of smoking, diabetes, waistline size and other differences among the groups. This basically reinforces the claim that diet soda is still worse for you than good, old-fashioned cola. Besides the oft-cited links to cancer due to the poisonous blend of artificial sweeteners, diet soda can also wreak havoc with who-knows-what mutagenic chaos in your genetic code. That, coupled with the propensity of diet-drinkers to drink far more soda because of its low-calorie no-guilt drinking. Full-flavor soda is not the worst

“Besides, the oft-cited links to cancer due to the poisonous blend of artificial sweeteners, diet soda can also wreak havoc with who-knows-what mutagenic chaos in your genetic code.”
-Mason Warling

thing that could happen to you. Coca-Cola is only 140 calories, a negligible amount in the scheme of your day. That said, the statistics just released don't claim to know exactly what it is about diet soda that causes an increase in stroke frequency.

Even so, the beverage findings should be “a wakeup call to pay attention to diet sodas,” said Dr. Steven Greenberg, Harvard Medical School neurologist and vice chairman of the International Stroke Conference in California, where the research was presented last Wednesday. Doctors have no chemical or biological explanation for why diet soda may be risky. It could be that people who drink lots of it also fail to exercise, weigh more, drink more alcohol or have other risk factors like high blood pressure and smoking.

However, the researchers took these and many other factors into account and didn't see a change in the trend. “It's reasonable to have doubts, because we don't have a clear mechanism. This needs to be viewed as a preliminary study,” said lead researcher Hannah Gardener of the University of Miami. But for those trying to cut calories, “diet soft drinks may not be an optimal substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages,” she said. A simple solution, she said, is to drink water instead.

Government wastes \$190,000 on bottled water in three months

By ELIZABETH CORBIN
STAFF WRITER

Politicians continually vow to cut out bloated government spending in order to decrease taxes, yet this promise is rarely enacted. One prime example of senseless waste in government spending is the ridiculous amount of money extravagantly spent on bottled water. In the first three months of 2010 alone, the House of Representatives squandered \$190,000 on bottled water. That's \$190,000 of taxpayer money put to misuse, and this amount doesn't even put into account all the other government offices that also purchase bottled water on a large scale. Nationwide, this could amount to a massive sum of money. This is especially ironic as Speaker of the House John Boehner recently stated that he intends to eliminate \$35 million dollars of wasteful fiscal spending from the House of

“That's \$190,000 of taxpayer money put to misuse, and this amount doesn't even put into account all the other government offices that also purchase bottled water on a large scale.”
-Elizabeth Corbin

Representatives' budget, even though they continue the trend of purchasing bottled water. It doesn't look like they're off to a very promising start. The New York City Council realized its own impact and banned bottled water in its offices back in 2008. The Council have also been successful in actively persuading some other government offices to do the same, and the House of Representatives should catch on. It's really not a novel idea. The general manager of the area water utility in D.C. even offered to give a free reusable bottle to each member along with free water quality testing

to settle qualms over whether or not the tap water is safe to drink. Although the bottled water industry insists that their water is cleaner and better tasting than tap water, research shows that this is not so. Bottled water often comes straight from the tap instead of from fresh and pure springs, like what is pictured on their labels. On average, bottled water is not healthier to drink. According to the environmental campaign Think Outside the Bottle, bottled water costs between 4,000 and 10,000 times more than tap water. Essentially, the bottled water companies put regular tap water into bottles and end up with a ridiculous amount of profit. Besides being financially careless, bottled water proves to be environmentally irresponsible. Considering that they are sometimes transported from halfway around the world, bottled water requires a great amount of oil in being shipped from the manufacturer to the consumer. Although the bottles are recyclable, they tend to be

PUZZLE CORNER

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Puzzle courtesy of [dailysudoku.com](#)

“...studies show that eight out of 10 bottles end up being thrown away.”
-Elizabeth Corbin

carelessly tossed into the trash where they will join trillions of other bottles. In fact, studies show that eight out of 10 bottles end up being thrown away. The House of Representatives

needs to purchase some Brita filters. It's really as simple and obvious as that. Seeing as they have a great amount of power, the House of Representatives is the in a position to do something if they have a feeling that there is an issue with the water quality. If politicians don't feel safe drinking water from the tap, they shouldn't expect their citizens to be fine with consuming it either.

the Almanian.

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

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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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Despite Hallmark, Valentine's Day not solely about consumerism

By ELIZABETH CORBIN
STAFF WRITER

Valentine's Day has, for the most part, been made into just another Hallmark holiday of the year with the purchasing of cards and candy for significant others.

Like so many other holidays, the focus has been put on the buying and exchanging of gifts rather than spending quality time with your significant other.

I despise this consumerism of Valentine's Day.

Let me first state that Valentine's Day is my birthday, so I'm particularly opinionated about the holiday.

Jewelry companies try to insist through their advertisements that men need to buy their

expensive diamond necklaces or bracelets in order to gain or reinstate the affection of their lovers.

Card companies try to convince you that you need their cards that can sing and flash glitter in order to express your emotions, which implies that you are unable to do so on your own.

There is no limit to what people will try to sell you when you are desperately trying to find the most perfect present for your loved one and it turns out that they do pretty well with the peddling of these items.

According to Hallmark research, 141 million Valentine cards are exchanged each year in the United States.

This number excludes children's Valentine cards,

which are exchanged in nearly every elementary classroom and to nearly every student.

Many people do not even know the origins of the holiday.

According to the early medieval legend, Valentine was a priest who gained the disapproval of Roman Emperor Claudius II for continuing to perform marriage ceremonies after it had been outlawed in order to recruit more men into the Roman army.

Because of this, Valentine was imprisoned and ultimately executed.

But, before his death, he befriended the jailer and healed the man's blind daughter by sending her a note signed, "From your Valentine."

In his remembrance, lovers exchange romantic messages to each other.

Did Valentine have to run over to the nearest store to pick up a card?

No. He made one by himself, and everyone else is capable of doing the same.

Instead of merely buying a card with a pre-written message, why not write a love letter or make your own Valentine?

It's really not that hard and you can incorporate anything that you have available from plain notebook paper to construction paper and lace.

The art of writing love letters has unfortunately been, for the most part, lost and replaced with pitiful text messages full of acronyms and incorrect grammar.

For shame. I have an extremely

strong dislike for cards.

To me, they show that the card giver didn't want to take the time to write out their own personal note.

So, instead, he or she bought one and quickly signed a name on it.

Or it could also imply that the person really didn't have anything meaningful to say at all, but still felt the need to give you one.

There really is no need to spend money in order to celebrate Valentine's Day with a significant other.

Instead, make coupons with services that you can offer such as a 15 minute massage, a special dinner that you prepare, or perhaps even something a little morerisquewhichcanberedeemed throughout the year until they expire on the next Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day holiday of consumerism, appreciation

By MASON WARLING
STAFF WRITER

Valentine's Day is today, assuming you pick the paper up on time.

Whether you're single, in a relationship, or "it's complicated," the holiday is going to protrude into your life whether you like it or not.

Valentine's Day is supposedly the veneration of the Catholic Feast of Saint Valentine of Rome who, when marriage was outlawed in the Roman Empire, conducted secret marriage ceremonies for couple in Rome.

Nowadays, however, people mostly use it as a special day to express their love to their significant other, or to drink if they don't have one.

People spend exorbitant amounts on chocolates, cards, jewelry, and fancy dinners, and lots of that will be done online.

As always, Valentine's Day consumers will do their online shopping at the very last minute.

"Among all holidays, Valentine's Day has the greatest compression of sales within the three days prior to the day," American Greetings Group Vice President and National Sales Officer Bill DeWitt said.

Around 60 percent of Valentine's Day sales come on February 12, 13 and 14, which

"Among all holidays, Valentine's Day has the greatest compression of sales within three days prior to the day."
-Bill DeWitt, American Greetings Group vice president and national sales officer

isn't a surprise when you think of all the guys who are scrambling at the last minute when they realize Valentine's Day has snuck up on them.

As a rule, men will spend over twice the amount women spend on the holiday.

In terms of age, those who are in the 35-44 year old age

group will spend the most this year, followed by young adults.

Last in place for Valentine's Day are those over 55.

Many, many people completely reject Valentine's Day, throwing out terms like "Hallmark Holiday" and "I Love Capitalism Day."

Sometimes, this is an exclusively male thing, and any woman on the other side of the relationship gets upset at not receiving anything special when all her friends have.

Sometimes, couples mutually boycott Valentine's Day, and spend it together like any other day.

But those who dismiss Valentine's Day in order to spite it miss its real point, which is a day set aside to spend

time with and do something nice for the person they love.

Some people can't always make time to be with that special someone, so they use Valentine's Day as a surefire day to make that person know they're loved.

Hallmark Holiday or not, it's a great way to make someone feel appreciated, whether or not you spend money to do it.

For example, the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha will be singing their musical Valentines, an easy and inexpensive way to let someone on campus know you care.

So, embrace Valentine's Day! Any opportunity to spread happiness is one you should take advantage of!

Except Sweetest Day. Sweetest Day is worthless.

Following the Beat with Ben King: Simple hobbies can combat boredom, require little time

By BEN KING
GUEST WRITER

It is quite easy to become bored while at college, but what some don't know is that there are many different ways to stay occupied at Alma College.

Both the school and student organizations offer numerous activities and events for students to participate in.

However the solution of constantly attending organized events poses two problems. Firstly, it is impossible for one individual to attend every event possible.

Secondly, all events may not appeal to everyone. Spending time with friends

and doing the same thing every day can become quite boring.

It is important to add variety to one's schedule and create activities for oneself so they one may not succumb to boredom.

The easiest and, in my opinion, the most enjoyable way to do this is too create hobbies for oneself.

Hobbies can be as simple as reading a book, or as complicated as knitting a pair of fingerless gloves.

Being college students, our options for hobbies are somewhat limited.

Several constraints affect most college students in regard to hobbies.

When choosing a hobby, college students must consider both cost and time commitment.

College students must choose

a hobby that properly fits their budgets.

There are thousands of hobbies that cost next to nothing, or nothing at all, that all that students can enjoy.

Students should also choose a hobby that fits their schedules.

Obtaining an education is the most important part of the college experience, so it is important to choose a hobby that will not hinder one's studies.

For example, knitting is a hobby that is both productive and cheap.

While I am not a knitter myself, the art has always intrigued me.

One can make gifts for friends, or useful outerwear to protect him or herself from the cold.

Another plus that knitting and other craft holidays

provides is their accessibility.

One can begin a craft project and then take a break for a meal or classes and then resume the project whenever he or she pleases.

In my own recent attempt to combat boredom, I took up photography.

I enjoy photography for numerous reasons, but I especially enjoy it because taking pictures is a hobby of processes.

Firstly, one must look for a subject.

Personally, I like to go out, hike and take pictures of things I find in nature.

Secondly, the process of photo editing is something that one can start, take a break from it and then return to it whenever he or she pleases.

It is important to keep oneself occupied.

Hobbies are an excellent way to not only keep occupied but they are also a great way to learn a new skill.

In your spare time, practice learning a foreign language.

If creative projects seem to interest you, then look into crocheting, painting or drawing.

These craft projects require little time and very little money.

Performing arts hobbies are another great way to learn a new skill.

Cheap guitars can be found at most second-hand stores and learning an instrument is both rewarding and enjoyable.

There are thousands of hobbies for individuals to choose from, one just has to find the right fit.

If you see anything in the Opinion section that you want to respond to, please write a letter to the editor!

E-mail 11amlabb@alma.edu with any thoughts/feelings on the articles

Men's basketball loses to Calvin, Kalamazoo, 1-10 in MIAA contests

BY TARYN HANDYSIDE
STAFF WRITER

The Alma men's basketball team suffered a loss against Kalamazoo College last Wednesday in the Art Smith arena.

Kalamazoo left with a win of 76-56, leaving the Scots with an overall record of 5-16 and 1-10 in the league. The game improved the Hornets record to 9-13 overall and 6-5 in the MIAA.

"Despite the losses that we have faced, our drive to win is still within us."

-Arik Hesselink ('14)

Kalamazoo started the game with a made layup within the first minute and from that point on the Hornets held the lead for the entire half.

"We came out flat and didn't play defense very well in the first half, but I thought that in the second half we worked harder and played a lot better," said **Brett Lackie ('14)**.

"Our team just needs to put together a whole game—we play hard in spurts, but we need to keep that intensity and execution up for all 40 minutes."

Brandon Krause ('14) cut the Hornet's lead to only 3 points when he made a layup at the 12:42 mark, bringing the score to 12-9. Shortly after, Kalamazoo managed

to take their biggest lead of the half when they went on a 16-4 run.

The first half ended in the Hornet's advantage with a score of 40-28.

The second half opened with a made shot by Kalamazoo and they continued to take the lead with a 9-0 run. Alma managed to cut the margin down to 15 points when **Trevor Closs ('14)** hit a shot and put the score at 64-49.

The Hornets then managed to gain a lead of 25 points and finally won the game with a 76-56 victory.

The Scots finished the game with a 41% shooting average, making 25 out of 61 attempts. They also made three of 10 from the 3-point line. The Hornets earned a 52% average and finished with 11 three-pointers.

Greg Silverthorn ('13) led the Scots on offense with 11 points and five assists, while **Lackie** contributed nine points and two assists. **Krause** also added eight points for the Scots and one assist, with **Arik Hesselink ('14)** adding seven points.

On defense, **Tommy Erickson ('12)** earned seven rebounds and two blocks, while **Kevin Ginther ('11)** added six rebounds. **Silverthorn** helped the Scots with five rebounds, five steals and one block.

Despite the lead that Kalamazoo held, **Krause** said that the team was still working with intensity the entire game.

"We played with high intensity most of the game and kept playing hard even when the game got out of

reach in the second half," he said.

Alma traveled to Grand Rapids last Saturday to take on Calvin College and came out with a loss, 11-65.

"We played with high intensity most of the game and kept playing hard even when the game got out of reach in the second half."

-Brandon Krause ('14)

Before the game, **Lackie** said that the team was looking forward to playing one of their biggest rivals.

"We just need to get our rhythm on offense and keep them off of the glass on both ends of the floor," he said.

The Scots will take on Adrian College on Wednesday in the Art-Smith arena at 7:30 p.m. following which they will travel to Olivet College on Saturday for a game at 3 p.m. The Olivet game will be their last league competition of the season.

The guys say that the team is staying positive and hoping to end the season on a high note.

"Despite the losses that we have faced our drive to win is still within us" said **Hesselink**. "We are pushing ourselves each day in practice and once the tournament comes around records do not matter."

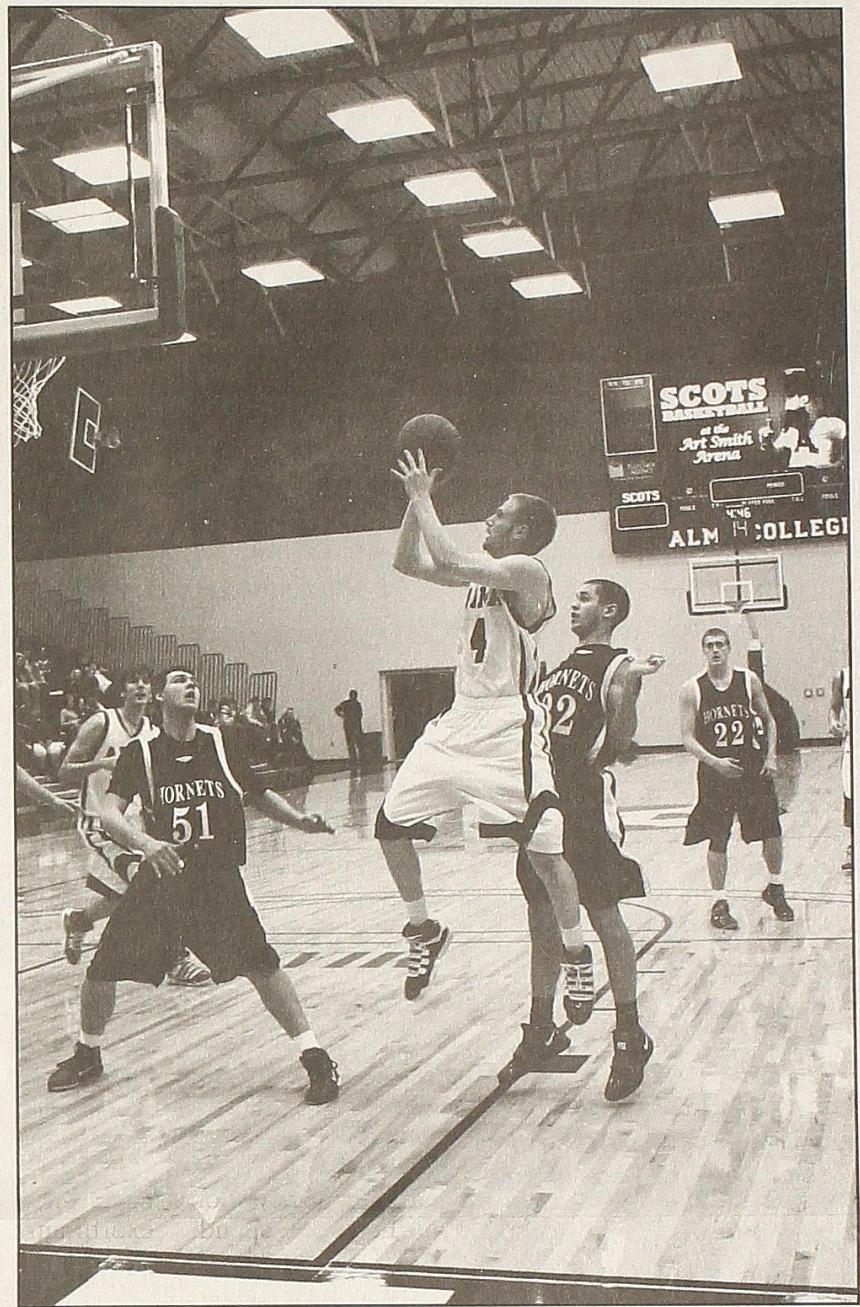


Photo by Elaine Cunningham

Greg Silverthorn ('13) goes up for a jump shot against two Kalamazoo College defenders. **Silverthorn** had 11 points and five assists in the game against the Hornets. The Scots lost, 76-56 last Wednesday night.

Spotlight: Grant, Gill start club hockey

BY ADAM MUNCY
STAFF WRITER

United by a love of the game and a common desire to compete, one group of Alma students has successfully established a club hockey team on campus.

Drew Grant ('13) and **Luke Gill ('11)** began playing in the adult hockey league at the Isabella County Events Arena located in Mt. Pleasant in the fall of 2010.

just a high demand for it so we started looking for an alternative."

It wasn't long before **Grant** and **Gill** had found enough interest on campus to develop an Alma team. Nearly all of the members have been involved in hockey competitively in the past.

Each week, the men travel to Mt. Pleasant where they compete in the adult intermediate league at the ICE Arena. Their opponents are comprised of mostly CMU students and may include entire fraternities, halls and various

"We started asking around on campus and before we knew it we had guys from here that were willing and able to play," said **Jason Popiel ('13)**. "We realized that we could have an exclusively Alma College hockey team."

The men have now played four games and stand with a 1-2-1 record.

"Ice time is obviously pretty expensive but we get out on the chapel lawn ice rink and practice — getting on our feet

as much as we can," said **Popiel**.

"A lot of the guys on the team are involved in other varsity sports too, like track and field, football and baseball. In this way we get some off-ice conditioning."

The adult intermediate season lasts a span of eight regular season games with seeded playoffs to follow. This particular set-up means the men will be playing well into March.

The players currently

provide all of their own equipment and transportation.

"We are going out there to have fun, score goals and play defense," said **Popiel**. "It's a great way for guys that love the sport to get out there with some buddies and have a good time."

The men plan to continue reaching out on campus in an effort to achieve greater involvement and support from fellow hockey players and enthusiasts.

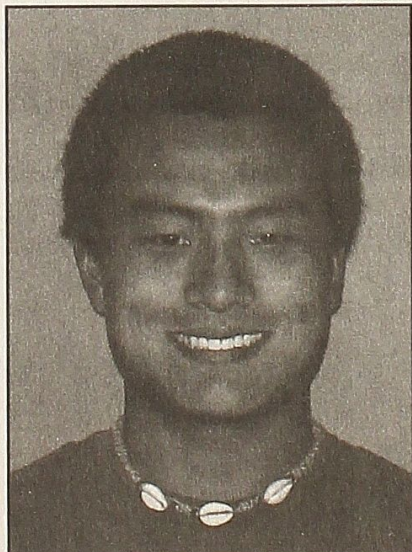
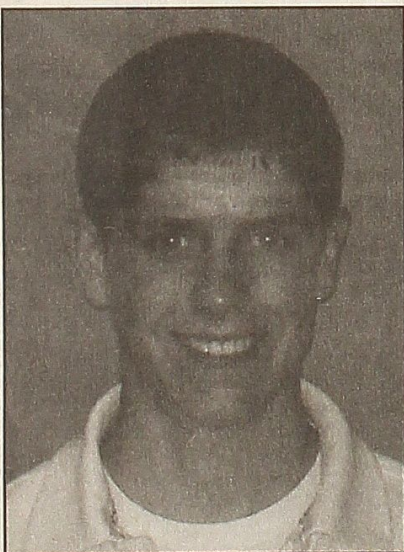


Photo courtesy of www.alma.edu

Grant and Gill started the hockey team last year in the fall.

The two played with friends from Central Michigan University but it soon became their goal to create a team of their own.

"We had a couple buddies and my cousin that we played with," said **Gill**. "Their team roster was getting full because there was

organizations that compile their members in hopes of having enough people to actually play.

Currently the league is 11 teams strong but continues to grow.

Grant and **Gill's** group consists of 16 players; 14 Alma students and two from CMU.



Photo courtesy of Chris Schanz

Drew Grant ('13) skates in a game at the Isabella County Events Arena in Mt. Pleasant.

Women's tennis opens the 2011 season with a victory

By TARYN HANDYSIDE
STAFF WRITER

Alma women's tennis traveled to the East Hills Tennis Club in Grand Rapids on Feb. 5 for its season opener. The Lady Scots came away with a 9-0 victory against Grand Rapids Community College.

"The team played strong against GRCC," said Abby McCue ('11). "It was a first match going in and we decided to just go in, play hard and have fun. They were competitive with us and we were able to pull out the 9-0 win against them."

In doubles, Jen Meloche ('12) and McCue came away with a win of 6-3 and 6-2, while Amy Baranowski ('12) and Lauren Stevenson ('12) won 6-1 in both matches. Katie Meloche ('13) and Lauren Moreau ('14) came home with a 6-3 and 7-5 win.

In singles, Jen Meloche earned a 6-3 and 6-2 win, while McCue had a 6-0, 6-2 win. Baranowski won both matches with a score of 6-1 and Stevenson also won both with a 6-2 score. Meloche won with 6-3 scores and Moreau came home with a 6-2 and 6-1 win.

Things are looking up for the women who ended their season last year with an overall record of 8-13 and 1-7 in the MIAA conference.

"We have a really experienced group of girls who want to work

hard to get to where we need to be," Moreau said. "The team is devoted to having a strong season and puts in the time and effort."

The players agreed that their goals this year are set high yet they are achievable if they work for it.

"We aim to be strong and confident, playing everyone we are put up against," said Moreau. "We would rather play our best and lose than wish we had done something differently."

"I want to help my team build and become better because I am the only one leaving."

-Abby McCue ('11)

"We want to compete strong in the MIAA conference," added Jen Meloche. "We have always been in the middle to lower half and we are looking forward to moving up."

Coach Jim Fox has been the women's head coach since 2006 and has been coaching for over 20 years. Before coming to Alma, he worked for 13 years as the coach for the Alma High School girls' tennis team at which time he had a 99-21-3 record.

The Panthers won ten conference championships, two regional championships and Fox had 11 of his 13 teams qualify for the state tournament.

The Lady Scots hope that with such an experienced leader and dedication on their part they will find success in their upcoming trip. Both the men's and women's team will be traveling to Florida to compete during spring break. The women said that they hope to come back with even more experience and a great sense of unity.

"We play a match every day during spring break," said Katie Meloche. "Days are very tiring because we play both doubles and singles. By the end of the week we are physically beat, but energized to get into the season. Florida shapes our team dynamic. We are constantly supporting each other, making memories with each other and our coaches."

The Scots have one senior, McCue, who is looking forward to an excellent year, the team says.

"I want to help my team build and become better because I am the only one leaving," said McCue. "Our team can be really strong next year with a decent amount of returning players."

The Scots will travel to Florida on Feb. 26 and then come back to compete against Spring Arbor College on Mar. 10.

"The Florida trip is now on everyone's minds," said Jennifer Meloche. "I am looking forward to watching the team reach its full potential. I don't think that we achieved that last year, but I'm very hopeful this year."



Photo by Elaine Cunningham

Lauren Stevenson ('12) serves in a scrimmage against Central Michigan University last Friday.

Track prepares for first outdoor meet

By ADAM MUNCY
STAFF WRITER

The Scots indoor track and field team is beginning preparations for the upcoming outdoor season which will open in Memphis, Tenn. It will compete in the Rhodes Invitations at Rhodes College on Mar. 26.

"We're looking forward to our first outdoor track meet down in Memphis which has a variety of divisional schools attending," said Xavier Curranza ('12). "Most of our sprinters will be competing in the open 200m and 400m dashes and also Joe Merlo's 400m hurdles are exciting events to watch."

Both the men's sprinters and distance runners are currently preparing for the concluding indoor competitions as well.

Though the long distance runners have been battling the bitter cold outside they are still hopeful and confident.

"Right now we are doing pace per miles," said John Gwizdala ('11). "It's pretty much a non-stop run up to about 10 miles. Once we have that base we are going to start slow interval workouts which we will do until the end of the season."

The sprinters however, have been battling their own monster; the limited availability of space for use in the Stone Recreation Center. They have also been contending with intense training that makes physical stamina hard to maintain.

"Our workouts are demanding but when we are consistent and continue to get better, our outdoor season should show great results," said Curranza. "Right now our program is pretty tough

because most guys are still getting into shape and we have to run in the Stone Recreation Center which is a tough place to train."

"Once we get outside we are going to have a strong team."

-John Gwizdala ('11)

The greatest challenge the Scots must overcome is the "major-injury bug." The men are doing their best to stay injury and sickness

free heading into the season.

"Once we get outside we are going to have a strong team," said Gwizdala. "We are going to have a lot of depth this year, from the 800 meter all the way up to the 10 kilometer events. We are going to have guys in multiple events with the possibility of scoring in each."

The indoor team will be traveling to Central Michigan University for the CMU Invitational on Feb. 18 and 19. The MIAA indoor Jamboree will follow on Feb. 26 held at Trine University in Angola, IN.

"Thus far, I can see all of our sprinters competing well with the top contenders of the MIAA at the Trine meet in a few weeks," said Curranza. "I would categorize the sprint team as a small but competitive group; there is only a handful of us but we work very hard every day. Our strongest events should be every event we enter."

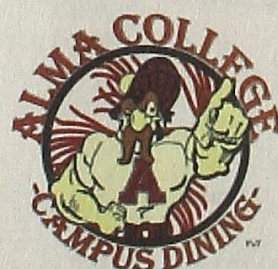
"In regards to the distance team, I would say, we sit about third in the MIAA conference with the possibility of doing even better," said Gwizdala.

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