

The Almanian

Volume CI

Issue 11

Friday, December 7, 2007

"Serving Alma College Since 1907"

UNDER THE COVER

A look at 2008 presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.

SEE FEATURE PG. 3

Students ought to be more appreciative of the holiday season.

SEE OPINION PG. 6

Record number of students participate in intramural volleyball.

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BY THE NUMBERS



30,000

The number of LED lights on the Rockefeller Christmas tree this year.



303

The number, in millions, of the country's projected population as 2008 rings in.

132

The number of days until Alma's 2007-2008 school year is finished.

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Alma students programmed for success

THOMAS MCGUIRE
STAFF WRITER

While enrollment in Alma College's computer science program may be small, the performance of the department's computer programming team at a recent regional contest displayed the high academic quality of the students involved in the discipline.

The team, comprised

of sophomores **David Burwell**, **Charles Cook** and **Mitchell Loudenebeck**, traveled to the Association for Computing Machinery's Collegiate Programming Contest on November 9 and 10 at the University of Michigan.

Although they finished 45 out of 116 teams at the competition, the results did not tell the true story of the young team's success.

"In a way, you might say that's not so glorious, but this is a sophomore team and [other] teams are allowed to have a first-year graduate student on them," said Myles McNally, faculty advisor for the team.

Furthermore, the Alma team, named "Best We Can Do," matched up against many universities renowned

SEE SUCCESS PG. 2



Photo by Anna Zichi

The first real snow fell on Mid-Michigan late last week. It blanketed Alma College's campus in a picturesque fashion, allowing the students to have fun in the snow and marvel at the beauty of the campus during this magical time of year.

Community Center's future remains uncertain

SIMONE MISHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Alma Community Center will have its heat turned off for the winter, but the future use of the building is being questioned. During the November 27 City Commission meeting, a public hearing was held to discuss what could be done with the building.

Phillip Moore, city manger, presented the various actions the city could take in dealing with the building's failing structure. Basic repairs for the building would cost \$376,000. A total remodeling project would cost \$882,000.

Repairing the building would cost the taxpayers anywhere between 1 and 2 million. Voter support of a millage for the project was an expressed concern of

Moore's. An estimate cost of two mills would cost the average taxpayer around \$100.

"It just seems kind of

"It just seems kind of senseless to ask the taxpayers for millage on it. Its useful time is over,"

Jeff Cook

senseless to ask the taxpayers for millage on it," said Jeff Cook, community member and former community center volunteer, when the discussion was opened to the public. Cook supported the option of demolishing the building and putting the city

land to other uses. "Its useful time is over," said Cook.

Demolishing the building would cost \$700,000. If the building was destroyed, the city could use the space to better library parking or enhance the city park. Also, the city would be able to eliminate all future annual costs of running the community center, which would save \$117,000.

Other concerns regarding the community center focus on the programming that the building could offer. If a group were to come forward with new legitimate programs for community enrichment, the commission is ready to hear the plans.

There are other places within the city that offer community programming. Alma College

SEE CENTER PG. 2

Placement rates high for Alma alumni

ANNA ZICHI
NEWS EDITOR

It is no secret that once students graduate from any post-secondary institution, they hope to go on to either graduate school or employment in their field of study. The good news for all Alma College students is that this institution has an incredibly high placement rate in both areas.

The most recent numbers are from the 2006 graduating class: Of the 289 graduates (88 percent) that responded to the survey, 110 (38 percent) are currently attending graduate school or plan on attending graduate school within the next six months, 108 (37 percent) are employed, 46 (16 percent) are employed and attending graduate school or plan on attending graduate school in the next six months, and 25 (9 percent) are currently looking for work.

"Students and faculty know each other well and can talk easily because of the close contact with one another,"

Michael Selmon,
Provost

Of the 153 students that reported being employed, 125 (82 percent) are working within their field of study, while 28 (18 percent) are not.

This survey goes out three months after graduation and the findings are presented to faculty and administration. A follow-up survey goes out in the middle of November to help gain more accurate numbers.

One reason that Alma has such a large percentage enrolled in graduate school or employed within their field of study is due to the close relationships formed between faculty and students. "Students and faculty know

SEE LIFE PG. 2

FCEE continues dedication to Ukrainian orphans

Several weeks ago, signs were scattered across campus asking for participants to create Christmas cards for orphans. Yet many students are unaware of the rich connection that Alma has with these children – this connection runs much deeper than Christmas cards.

In 2002, Svitlana Kobzar co-created the Forgotten Children of Eastern Europe (FCEE) group with her friend Shabnam Mirsaedi. Today **Amy Wegener (08)** is one of the driving forces behind the FCEE as co-President.

"The FCEE is really about raising awareness and funds for our adopted orphanage in Ukraine," said Wegener. So far they have raised over \$3000.

For their final event for the fall term, the goal of the FCEE is raising spirits. The FCEE and its participants made notes in Ukrainian for the children at the Veselka (Rainbow) and Way Home orphanages.

"This year we had Robert Gamble speak to the campus, and we will be sending half of the cards with him to Way Home for the Street children

of Ukraine," said Wegener. Co-president **Brittany Law (09)** said that "the Christmas card activities are always great. Even with only a dozen people to make them, it works well for the kids." Christmas for those in Ukraine is not until January 7.

Wegener said, "Next semester we hope to have a flag-football tournament to raise some money and a Ukrainian dinner as well. Our goal right now is to have some function every month."

On a larger scale, the FCEE has some ambitious goals for the future. They plan on raising enough money for new windows at the orphanage and with their new endeavors through Robert Gamble, they have expanded their activities greatly. In addition, the FCEE is planning on sending students to Ukraine to volunteer and bring clothes and toys to the orphans.

Wegener said, "We cannot fix all of the problems in Ukraine, but we sure can help. We can also become aware of how lucky we really are. These kids have no pens or notebooks – things we take for granted."

Wegener went to Ukraine and

lived with the children at the orphanage and said, "The whole thing was a learning experience." Law also went to Ukraine and said, "Two students every year are sent to Ukraine for free. It is open to everyone on campus but preference is given to members of the FCEE. I think some great things are happening in Ukraine through Alma and would encourage even more people to get involved."

Ukraine is a transitional country struggling with political corruption, disease, sexism, and extreme poverty. It is easy to forget that there is a whole world outside the "Alma bubble," but Alma College has organizations such as the FCEE and people like Wegener and Law to inform the masses and create a connection across the globe.

The FCEE has been active in raising funds, awareness, and the spirits of the orphans this Christmas. Law said, "Like most of the clubs here at Alma College, the Forgotten Children of Eastern Europe is small but... I think we are capable of some big things."

Center from pg. 1...

could potentially be one of the places where the city stages programs.

The general tone of the hearing was that the building was outdated and not worth salvaging. Although not every member of the public agreed with the direction of the discussion. "If we go by that

same token, we should tear down the downtown [areal]," said Ken Kline, a community member and owner of Ken's Culligan downtown. Kline suggested that the building be restored and used for receptions.

Discussion of the issue was closed after inquires, directed to Moore, had ended. The commission decided that

any costly effort to save the piping in the building would be wasted. Mayor Melvin Nyman suggested turning the heat down in the building to a minimal level to keep the lines from freezing. Commissioner Mapes suggested that the heat be turned off and the pipes blown out as a minimal effort to winterize the plumbing.

Success from pg. 1...

for their computer science and engineering programs, such as the University of Waterloo and Carnegie Mellon University.

Going into the contest, the team was aware of the stiff competition it would be facing, which influenced their expectations.

"Our goal had been to finish in the top fifty percent and to solve two problems or more, and that's what we did. I thought that was pretty good," said McNally.

According to McNally, success at the competition has nothing to do with school size, as contest rules set limits of three members per competing team.

"So, think if you were playing three on three basketball and one of the guys on your team was Michael Jordan. Then it wouldn't matter that the other team has 100 people sitting on the bench because only three can play," McNally said.

The contest challenged the teams to solve up to eight

problems over a five-hour time period. Scoring was based on the team's overall ability to solve the problems correctly and completely.

"Five hours might seem like a lot of time, but trying to think up of solutions and then actually writing those solutions in, you get a feel for how you need to manage your time," said Cook.

Strategy came into play right from the start for the team.

"We went through the packet and found the easiest problem. Dave is our best programmer, so we let him loose on whichever problem he thought he could solve and Mitch and I went to figure out another one," said Cook.

These problems can challenge even the most talented programmer.

"This is not trivial; this is hard," said McNally. "Every year when I look at the contest problems, there's at least one problem there that I'm not [even] sure how to do, and I'd have to sit there and

think about it for a while."

McNally views the challenges as very beneficial for the student team.

"Part of it is the joy of competition, in general," he said. "One of the reasons why I like it is [because] it tells these kids that even if they're going to a small school, what they are able to do sometimes outstrips people from Ohio State and the University of Michigan."

In the end, the University of Waterloo, whose teams took three out of the top five spots at the competition, narrowly defeated Carnegie Mellon by solving all eight problems in the least amount of time.

While the team does not plan on participating in any future contests this year, it is looking forward to the possibilities that next year's contest offers.

"I don't know if this is a lofty goal, but next year I think we should be able to get two more problems [than] we got this year. That'd be really cool," said Cook.

Life from pg. 1...

each other well and can talk easily because of the close contact with one another," said Michael Selmon, Provost, vice president of Academic Affairs.

"With this close relationship, students are more likely to talk about career plans," said Selmon. "Also, letters of recommendation are more sincere and have greater depth because the faculty [member] has worked closely with the student and knows them at an academic and personal level."

By working with an advisor in their chosen field of study, students are able to stay on track with all that needs to be accomplished before graduation and work on individual projects that enhance their expertise. These projects not only give students more experience but also add depth to their portfolios, especially if presented on Honor's Day.

"Knowing how to respect and interact on a professional level with professors and employers is a skill many from larger schools still lack,"

Christopher Adamec (07)

"Of course it helps that Alma offers a good education to begin with," said Selmon. "One of the things that makes it so good, though, is that the faculty pushes the students to do even better."

That is part of the liberal arts education: to push students out of their comfort zone and challenge them in areas that they might not have experienced otherwise. Selmon said, "There is an emphasis on writing, communication, and working through experiences students have not done before Alma."

"My education at Alma helped me prepare me with the interpersonal skills I would need to both continue my education and succeed in the real world," said Christopher Adamec, a 2007 Alma graduate. "Knowing how to respect and interact on a professional level with professors and employers is a skill many from larger schools still lack."

The Academic and Career Planning Center is also available to help students discover what exactly it is that they wish to accomplish after graduation. One of the most vital aspects of the center is they keep in contact with alumnus to help students foster connections in the outside world.

Every student chose Alma College for their own reason. Selmon said, "The encouraging part to faculty is that the vast majority of Alma graduates continue on."

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Study spaces abound during 'Hell Week'

LAUREN SYPNIEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

Picture the library on Alma's campus. Imagine the cozy corner where the sun hits just perfectly upon the sofa and the café is only steps away. Full access to books and online resources abound, ready for the studying student to take action. The atmosphere is quiet, relaxed, and open for studying. At least that is how some students view it.

"When I study, I enjoy frequenting the library for multiple reasons: resources at my fingertips, large amounts of table space, and the well maintained temperature," said **Nolan Lienhart (11)**.

"Our library at Alma College is lovely and offers many a fun place to hide and get your work done," she said. "Personally, I am not much of a studier, but if I have specific homework to get done, the library is the place to be. Plus, you do have the amazing Highland Java."

Other students see the library not as a cozy corner filled to the

brim with all sorts of books and ideas to delve into, but instead as a place to socialize, which inhibits those on location who came to study.

"In the library, there are always people I know, and I can never get work done," said **Ryan Derby (11)**. "There are just too many distractions."

Other comfortable study areas that are less utilized include the basement of Hamilton Commons and the Rotunda in Tyler-VanDusen. Each location is fairly hidden from student traffic and is stocked with tables, chairs, and couches. The two buildings are also equipped with wireless Internet.

Another relaxing alternative is the lobby of the Hogan Physical Education Building, which is located on the second floor. Students desiring peace and quiet should avoid this area during practices and games.

Located on the first floor of the Swanson Academic Center is a computer lab open to students. The atmosphere is quiet and predisposed to group

studying, due to the large space available. The many computers allow groups to work on multiple computers at the same time.

Another prime location to study is in a dorm room, though this is not the case at times.

"I study at my desk, but sometimes it is difficult because my roommate likes to chat," said **Kelsey Merz (11)**.

"I don't accomplish much in my room because my computer is right there and my roommate is silly, so we get nothing done," said **Jaclyn Dittmar (11)**. "I get more done in the library."

Another place that Merz visits to work on homework is the lobby of her residence hall.

"I like to go to the lobby," said **Rachael Spence (11)**, agreeing with Merz. "It's quiet, and my roommate always has to have the TV or music on."

Whether it be the library, the computer labs, a dorm room or lobby, Alma College has many places to focus on homework; hence, your excuse for not studying for finals should *not* be that there was no place to go!

Know your candidate: Mike Huckabee

KRISTEN HAIGHT
STAFF WRITER

With eleven months to go before the next presidential election, republican candidate Mike Huckabee is rising in prominence.

Huckabee is a Baptist minister who has served as chairman of several business boards and president of two television stations. In 1993, he became Lt. Governor of Arkansas, and in 1996 he became governor, a position he held for eleven years. Since declaring his intent to run for president on January 29, his sole job has been his campaign, and his work is beginning to pay off.

A recent Washington Post poll found that Huckabee has "surged past three of his better-known presidential rivals and is now challenging former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney for the lead in the Iowa Republican caucuses." His greatest strengths as a candidate lie in the public's perception that he is empathetic, honest, and trustworthy.

Huckabee proves to be a staunch conservative on many of this election's popular issues. He disagrees with legalized abortion, supports the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*, and has stated his intention to de-fund Planned Parenthood. Along similar lines, he disagrees with embryonic stem cell research, saying "I don't think it's right to end a life to create a life."

The United States currently has an \$8.8 billion in national debt, and Huckabee has pledged to balance the budget and create a surplus, a feat that he accomplished with the Arkansas budget while governor. His plan to do so includes reforming the bankruptcy policy, reducing federal spending, and eliminating the IRS.

Regarding the issues of drugs and crime, Huckabee has frequently cited his experience as governor. He supports more funding for drug treatment, rather than for incarceration, and used (as an example) a program implemented in the state of Arkansas. "A major reform in dealing with drug offenders in Arkansas was the establishment of drug courts, where a non-violent drug offender could be directed to enroll in drug treatment programs or heavily supervised community service. The recidivism rate dropped to 31%. More significantly, the cost per day was lower than that of prison while, at the same time, allowing the offender to regain his or her life."

Huckabee supports the death penalty, and approved its use during his term as governor. Finally, he has pledged to prosecute all adult pornographers and veto any "hate crime" legislation.

Students from conservative backgrounds should find his stances on education agreeable as well. Concerning sex education, Huckabee has promised to make funding for abstinence-only programs equal to funding for contraceptive-based programs.

He claims to be a strong supporter of public education programs and, while he does not believe in evolution, Huckabee has said that he would not attempt to change public school science programs to incorporate his religious beliefs. He has said that it is important to rein "character education" into curriculum, and that the removal of prayer from schools is a sign of American moral decay.

Global warming is an important and controversial issue in politics today. Huckabee's positions on energy, oil, and the environment reflect this. He promotes less reliance on foreign oil and increased effort to harness alternative energies.

He does not, however, support signing the Kyoto Protocol. He cites his religious background as being responsible for his environmentally conscious policies, saying "I believe that our responsibility to God means that we have to be good stewards of this Earth [and] be good caretakers of the natural resources that don't belong to us - we just get to use them. We have no right to abuse them."

These positions clearly reflect a conservative stance on today's issues. Huckabee's trustworthy persona and conservative policies have made him a Republican candidate to watch.

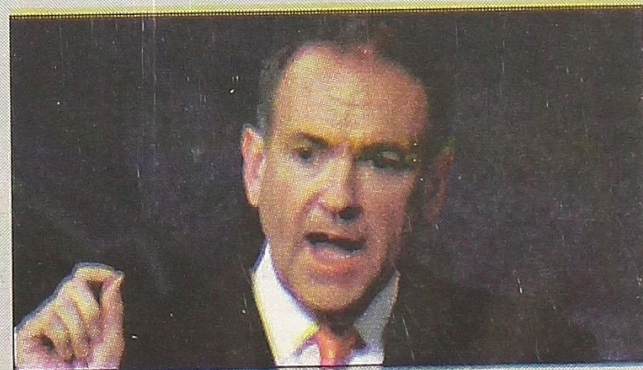


Photo Courtesy of huckabee.tracker.wordpress.com

Beowulf adaptation hits the big screen



Photo courtesy of <http://www.beowulfmovie.com/>

AARON POOLEY
STAFF WRITER

Director Robert Zemeckis teams with writer's Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary in the computer generated movie, *Beowulf*.

Ray Winstone stars as Beowulf, with actors Anthony Hopkins (Hrothgar), Angelina Jolie (Grendel's Mother), and John Malkovich (Unferth) in the supporting roles.

According to Gaiman and Avary's interpretation of the epic poem, Beowulf is drawn to the Hrothgar's kingdom to save its subjects from the demon Grendel, who wreaks havoc upon Hrothgar's great hall. Though Hrothgar throws his support behind Beowulf, Unferth, Hrothgar's advisor, leads a following of nonbelievers.

Beowulf proves to all in Hrothgar's kingdom that he can defeat the monsters sent by Grendel's mother and becomes determined to end the line of monsters by slaying her.

Beowulf claims, after visiting the cave where Grendel's mother lives, that he has slain her. He returns to Hrothgar's kingdom and is told that he will inherit all of Hrothgar's riches.

The second half of the film

focuses many years after Beowulf inherits Hrothgar's kingdom. The kingdom grows under Beowulf's rule and Christianity reaches the land, but Beowulf must handle the unfinished business set into place all those years after slaying Grendel.

Audiences at first may be taken back by the all computer generated creations of the film, including shots not requiring any significant special effects. The animation supervisor from Sony Pictures Imageworks said, "Even though it feels like live action, there were a lot of shots where [we] cut loose. Amazing shots - impossible with live action actors. This method of filmmaking gives [the director] freedom and complete control. He doesn't have to worry about lighting. The actors don't have to hit marks. They don't have to know where the camera is. It's pure performance."

The film adaptation of the epic poem spun the narrative to focus on the demon Grendel and his mother. Avary explains this saying that, "It occurred to me that Grendel has always been described as the son of Cain, meaning half-man, half-demon, but his mother was always said to be full demon. So who's the

father? It must be Hrothgar, and if Grendel is dragging men back to the cave then it must be for the mother, so that she can attempt to sire another of demonkind."

Perhaps the most significant difference the film makes from the epic poem is the extensive portrayal of the flaws in Beowulf's character, instead of portraying him as only the hero. Instead of placing the evil upon the monsters in the film, the humans are involved directly in creating that evil.

In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Stephen Asma said, "The monster, according to this charity paradigm, is just misunderstood rather than evil. The blame for Grendel's violence is shifted to the humans, who sinned against him earlier and brought the vengeance upon themselves."

The only real monsters, in this tradition, are pride and prejudice. In the film, Grendel is even visually altered after his injury to look like an innocent, albeit scaly, little child. In the original *Beowulf*, the monsters are outcasts because they're bad, but in the new *Beowulf*, the monsters are bad because they're outcasts."

Holiday season encompasses more than Christmas

AAEON POOLEY
STAFF WRITER

In 1966, Maulana Karenga founded Kwanzaa, which literally means the "first fruits of the harvest." Kwanzaa does not replace Christmas, but is celebrated December 26 through the New Year by more than 18 million people around the world.

With the month of December comes traditions celebrated around the world; however, understanding holiday traditions beyond the Judeo-Christian concept pays tribute to an all-encompassing and compassionate time of year.

Karenga founded Kwanzaa in order to commemorate African American heritage by observing histories of ancestry and culture.

According to The International Kwanzaa Exchange, "Kwanzaa is a unique African American celebration with focus on the traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement.

"When establishing Kwanzaa in 1966, Dr. Karenga included an additional 'a' to the end of the spelling to reflect the difference between the African American celebration (kwanzaa) and the Motherland spelling (kwanza)."

The word "Kwanzaa" is derived from the Kiswahili language, which is a Bantu language originating from a vast stretch of the central and southern portions of the African continent.

"The Kinara holds seven candles to reflect the seven principles, which are the foundation of Kwanzaa,"

- International Kwanzaa Exchange

In the Kwanzaa tradition, each day is represented by a guiding principle; for each principle, a candle is lit on the day that guiding principle is observed.

The book containing the seven guiding principles is called the Nguao Saba. Karenga said that the Nguao Saba represents the "minimum set of principles by which black people must live in order to begin to receive and reconstruct our history and lives. ... They are social principles, dealing with ways for relating to others and rebuilding lives and a more positive image."

The seven guiding principles

are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (collective economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). The candles, which represent the guiding principles, are held in a Kinara.

The International Kwanzaa Exchange said, "It is important that the Kinara not be confused with the menorah. The Kinara holds seven candles to reflect the seven principles, which are the foundation of Kwanzaa."

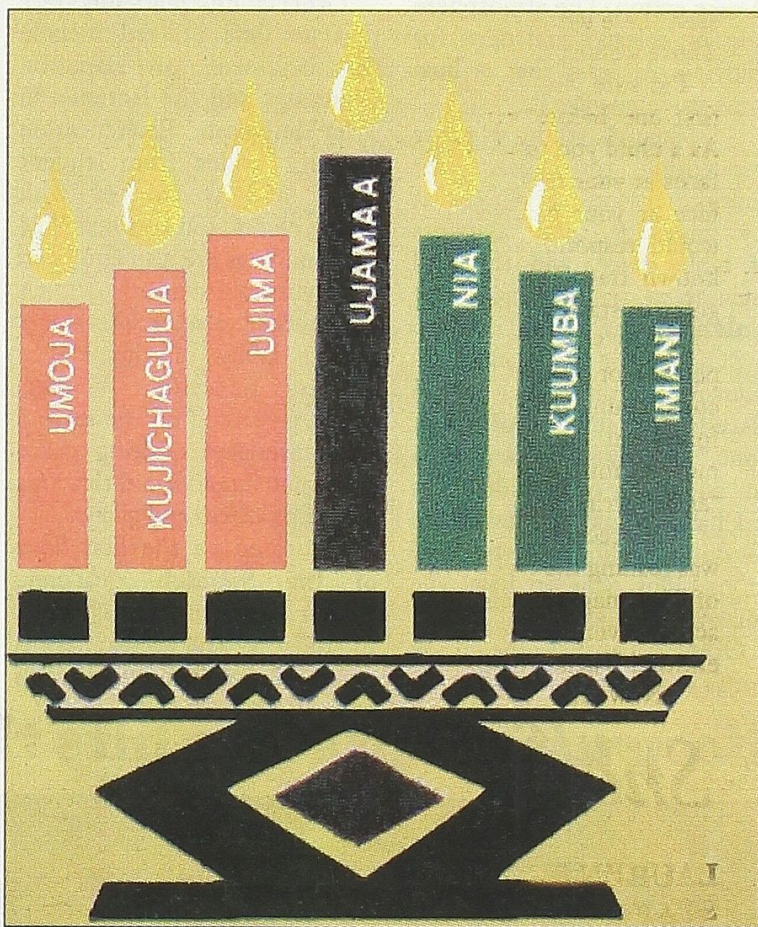
The closing of Kwanzaa is celebrated with the Karamu (feast). According to the International Kwanzaa Exchange, "The Kwanzaa Karamu is traditionally held on December 31 (participants celebrating New Year's Eve should plan their Karamu early in the evening). It is a very special event, as it is the one Kwanzaa event that brings us closer to our African roots. The Karamu is a communal and cooperative effort. Ceremonies and cultural expressions are highly encouraged."

Karenga's suggested format for the Karamu ceremony begins with the Welcoming, followed by Remembering, Reassessment and Commitment (the evening's speaker), Rejoicing, the Libation Statement, the Unity Cup

(remembering family members and heroes), and the Farwell Statement.

The Libation Statement, as written by Karenga, says, "For The Motherland cradle of civilization / For the ancestors and their indomitable spirit / For the elders from whom we can learn much / For our youth

who represent the promise for tomorrow / For our people the original people / For our struggle and in remembrance of those who have struggled on our behalf / For Umoja the principle of unity which should guide us in all that we do / For the creator who provides all things great and small."



Graphic provided by www.hike.com/memories.htm

Timeless ideas for fun in the snow

BRITTANY LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

With the new snow on the ground, many people are rejoicing and putting a lot of layers on so they can go play in the snow.

If you're fresh out of ideas, here are some things that people like to do.

Many people I asked said that snowball fights and sledding are their favorite things to do in the snow. Some others included building snowmen, making snow angels, and building forts. One person said, "I like walking in [the snow] with a special someone."

Katie Crombe (11) said, "My favorite thing is to build a fort, lay inside it for hours, and think."

Snowmobiling, skiing, and snow boarding were a few other favorites.

With snow there also come memories of traditions that families have during the winter seasons. Some traditions that people recall are snow fort building, skiing, sledding, snowball fights, and building snowmen.

Snow angels are another favorite of people who like to be out in the snow.

Ah, the memories! What are some memories that people

have involving snow? Well, one person said, "My whole neighborhood made snowmen together one year."

Some people remember the times that they've been sledding. **Zach Kerr (11)** remembers fondly.

"We went sledding in the back yard while trying to dodge trees; we often ended up with lumps

and I tunneled through it. It was fun."

Building snow forts seems to be a common memory for many people. Several stories about forts were told, one of which was by Crombe.

"My brother and I spent three straight days building a huge fort. We would spend hours in the snow - sweating yet freezing, and it felt like the fort was completely our own."

One story someone told me doesn't sound like something that could take place at Alma College - maybe when you go home. "We went jumping off the roof into huge piles of snow we positioned underneath."

Building snowmen is also a long standing tradition but, according to this story from **Tara Bigorowski (11)**, it doesn't always stand well. "I built a snowman with my sister that wouldn't stay up, so it was laid out flat on the ground."

If you're bored of the regular snowmen, another idea is to build Calvin and Hobbs snowmen. If you go to Google and type in "Calvin and Hobbes Snow Art Gallery," the first link will show you some new and wonderful ideas for snowmen.

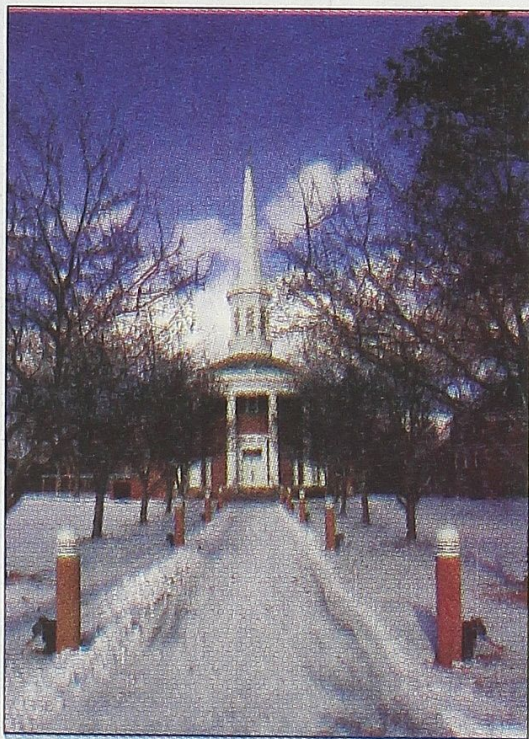


Photo by Anna Zichi

The chapel after the first snow of the year.

on our forehead."

Victoria Kemler (11) recalls a time when she was nine. "Our driveway had just been plowed, and there were huge piles of snow everywhere. My brother

'Tis the season for gift ideas

BRITTANY LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

Lost for ideas for Christmas gifts? So are a lot of people. With Christmas quickly approaching, people need to be thinking about what they are going to give for gifts this year.

There are many ideas out there for all kinds of people, you just have to know the right place to look. Asking other people is also a good way to get ideas.

Some people I talked to said they make handmade items for their friends and family. It is most likely cheaper than buying everything. One person said they were going to the dollar store and buying gifts.

Zach Kerr (11) said that he is going to give Alma College merchandise to his family. So, you can support the college while giving gifts to people, too.

Another person said, "I bought all my friends and family gifts while I was in Ecuador in May. It's something unique that they won't ever get to have again."

It can be difficult to find the perfect gift for each person that you're giving to. So how else could you find gift ideas, other than asking? I went online. As soon as I had typed "Christmas Gift Ideas" into Google, a list of websites has appeared.

There were a couple that really stood out from the others, one of which is ChristmasGifts.com. It is a directory of different websites from which you can buy gifts.

Along the left side of the screen are categories that include art, books, cards, decorations, gift baskets, gift certificates, jewelry, "last minute gifts", pets, toys, and travel.

When you click on the category, it brings up a list of website. When clicked, "Books and Magazines" brings up a list that includes Overstock.com, Applied Scholastics, Bigger Books, Half.com, and Hooked on Phonics.

The other website I found bragged 63 gift ideas under ten dollars. Some of my favorites included gourmet coffee with a personal coffee cup, homemade cocoa mix in a decorative jar, a collage of photos or a photo album, and fancy chocolate bars. For the college students: a pre-paid long distance phone card and/or address book, Christmas ornaments, or the all time favorite; homemade fresh cookies.

According to www.iloveindia.com, the top ten gift ideas for 2007 are digital cameras, cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, DVDs, jewelry, pets, chocolate with wine, holiday packages, and a robot.

Amazon.com's top ten was slightly different. Their list includes an Xbox 360 Console, iPod Video, Call of Duty 3 (for Xbox 360), Need for Speed: Carbon (also for Xbox 360), The Temptations' single: *Chocolate Fountain*, the iPod Nano, *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean 3: At World's End*.

Facial yoga provides new means of fighting stress

KATE LOVE
STAFF WRITER

"You better not make that face again or it will stick like that for the rest of your life," says the loving Mom.

A few minutes later, "Have you seen these wrinkles by my eyes? Those weren't there yesterday!"

I'm sure you have heard the first one before, everyone has. As a child you would make silly faces at your friends, or a nasty face at your parents and they would respond with the well-known trademark phrase: "It's going to stay like that one day."

Have you ever heard your parents, or maybe even yourself, complaining of the wrinkles found on the forehead, eyes, mouth? You know, the so-called "aging" wrinkles.

Well, recently my roommate was reading the December issue of *Time* magazine and she came across a very interesting article entitled "Facial Yoga".

Now the cover of *Time*

headlines consist of titles like "What Makes Us Good and Evil" and "Barack Around The Clock", so an article like "Facial Yoga" seemed interesting placed in this issue. I read through this article and tried to do a few of the exercises with my roommate to find out if what the article said was indeed true. This is how it went.

Turns out, Annelise Hagen in New York teaches a yoga face class. Believe it or not, the title of the class is exactly what people are signing up for. They line up in front of a mirror at the New York Health & Racquet Club in midtown Manhattan and commence facial yoga.

So what exactly started this new phenomenon? It began eight years ago when Hagen realized that her regular yoga clients were going on their lunch breaks to get Botox injections. She devised a plan to help reduce wrinkles through the spirit of yoga.

Most unreleased tension in your body moves into the jaw line,

creating wrinkles. Learning how to release the jaw creates a more youthful appearance, according to face-yoga supporters.

Exactly how does this facial yoga work, you ask? Well, manipulating face muscles tightens sagging skin and reduces wrinkles. Sounds like fun, right?

There are nine pictures of a woman practicing facial yoga in *Time* - they are quite interesting and attention grabbing if you ask me.

A few of the techniques used in the Yoga Face classes are the Marilyn, repeatedly blowing kisses, making for stronger lips and a firmer pout; the temple-dancer eyes, darting your eyes in different directions to erase crow's-feet; the lion, squinting your face as tight as you can and releasing it; and the satchmo, puffing up your cheeks as though you were about to blow a trumpet, to make them supple. I bet you were trying those as you read, right?

Supposedly doing these

exercises can help release that tension and train the muscles not to go into those worry lines. So, we could all probably use a

bit of facial yoga to relieve our exam pressure then, right? Who knows? Maybe it could actually help!

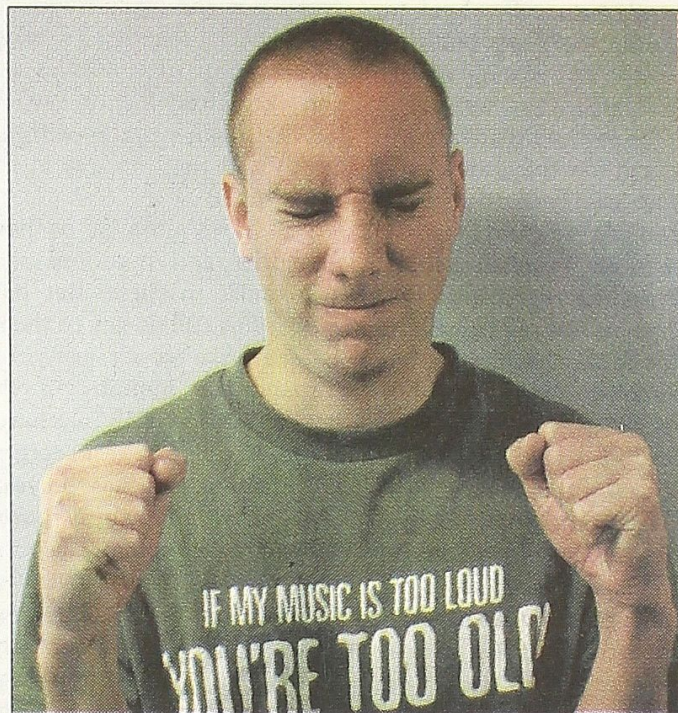


Photo by Kate Love

Freshman Justin Emory demonstrates "The Lion," which is used to stretch and relax all the muscles in the face. If it tingles, you know it's working.

Snow makes winter holidays beautiful, exciting, perfect

LAUREN SYPNIEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

Snow. Who could not adore the beauty and the wonder of flakes that glitter to the frozen earth, blanketing it with a field of even perfection? As the heavens cover the ground in powdery glitter, they decorate it like a Christmas cookie for the holidays.

While keeping in mind the simple truth that snow is no more than frozen water, I can not help but be stunned awakening on a winter's morning to have the newly risen sun reflect off ice and snow covered branches in the middle of winter.

Winter has been classified as the dead season - one with no life.

With that connotation of death comes the removal of beauty. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. There is beauty everywhere: the trees, the ground, the sparkle, the frozen lakes and hills. All is covered in the same white blanket.

While in the other three seasons nature competes for beauty, winter is the season when everything is fair and all is even. In spring and summer, the flowers compete in color, variety and uniqueness.

In fall, people pick and point out which trees have the best color, and automatically those said trees are the best. During the other three seasons, people are completely prejudiced towards objects in nature that

(in their opinion) are the most beautiful.

In the winter, all of nature becomes one. Everything is the same color, and nothing in nature competes for being the most beautiful.

Besides, in the Michigan winter, where there is snow and cold, people get to dress all up in hats and mittens and fuzzy warm coats as they make snowmen and snow angels. Snowball fights and ice-skating abound.

And with snow comes the Christmas spirit. No one likes Christmas, or whatever holiday you celebrate in the winter, without snow... at least they shouldn't!

If I remember correctly, I have only experienced one Christmas

without snow, and it was the only Christmas that did not feel like Christmas - it did not feel as exciting nor as happy. Snow completes the holidays. Snow gives the sense to people to be happy and giving during the holidays. A brown holiday simply makes for a bleak and ugly expanse of color - completely depressing.

Snow makes you cozy. In the summer, I sit at home in 90 degree weather trying to find the coolest place in my non-air conditioned house. Rather, in the winter, I can sit curled up in a warm fleece blanket, a mug of a warm beverage between my hands, and observe the majestic beauty of the snow from my safe and warm dwelling.

I find it interesting that, while

at many times I am against cold weather, I love snow. When I was little, I always wished that there could be snow and warm weather at the same time. I was a bit shattered when I found it was impossible. I do not know, maybe it is just me, but I always thought it would be fun to go sledding, comfortable in my swim suit.

I maintain, and will continue to, my belief that winter is the most beautiful season. It creates a scene unlike any other that summer, spring, and fall could match. Snow completes and perfects the holidays. And - while I can not hope for a dream once thought of when I was little - I must contend with the cold weather to keep the snow; I accept it, just the way it is.

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.

Publication

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Letters are published as layout space allows. Submission of a letter does not guarantee publication. *The Almanian* reserves the right to condense letters for layout purposes. Deadline for publication is 5 p.m. the Tuesday before requested publication. E-mail letters to the editors at o9kdbilb@alma.edu or address letters to *The Almanian*, Newberry Hall, Alma College.

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Take time to stop and smell the pine needles

HADLEY BOEHM
STAFF WRITER

Like most college kids, I frequently turn to Facebook for a little reprieve from studying. The other day, during one of my procrastination sessions, I logged on to find an invitation to join the group "Finals Suck the Fun Out of Christmas." In an effort to further avoid returning to my studies, I started to think. Are finals the reason this time of year is not very fun anymore? Why doesn't Christmas feel like it used to?

I recall as a little kid how eagerly I would anticipate Christmas. Paper chains and hand-made ornaments adorned my classroom at school. I remember watching my mom fix up the house while savoring the smell of all of the holiday goodies coming from the kitchen.

I have especially fond memories of going to pick out the Christmas tree. My mom would bundle my sister and I up

and send us out into the woods with my dad, and in a few hours we would return home with our treasure. We would put the tree up in the living room and decorate it together. I recall the scent of pine needles and the warm fuzzy feeling I would get that night together with my family and that big tree in the living room.

I think most of us have memories and traditions that are similar to these. But how many of us still do any of them? It seems like we are just going through the motions of the holiday season. We reminisce about scattered recollections and fleeting glimpses of years past, but we are too busy to stop and enjoy the present.

I think Charlie Brown was probably right. The Christmas season officially starts the day after Thanksgiving, and we begin it by going out and spending a bunch of money on Black Friday. What if we spent an extra day together with our family, or stayed home putting

up decorations and catching up on each others' stories?

Lately I have been thinking about all the Secret Santa gift exchanges of which I have been a part. We always seem to find the time to go out shopping and spend money, but finding the time to get together and exchange the gifts often takes a back burner, and more than once it has become a chore. I know giving gifts is a nice gesture, but what about just spending time with the people you are close to instead of feeling like you have to buy them something?

After Thanksgiving Break, college students all return to school with one thing on their minds: EXAMS!

They monopolize our thoughts for the first two weeks of December. The papers and quizzes and tests and presentations all pile up, and the chaos crowds any thought of putting up a tree or baking cookies to the obscure corner of our minds. There is a lot of busyness but not very many of

the warm fuzzy feelings I used to remember feeling around Christmas time.

The best I can figure is that this is an inevitable change and a plight of college students is here to experience it. We are a group of busy and stressed people, and as exams approach that only increases.

We don't think we have the time to watch Rudolph or Frosty specials anymore, and our anticipation of the presents we might get has been replaced by an anxiety to find time to go shopping for everybody on our own list. Plus, we're away from our families and it's not really possible to go cut down a tree or smell cookies in the oven.

Somewhere along the line I think we grew up, and now we've all got more worries. We've lost the naivety and innocence of being a little kid, and somehow that has cast a shadow over the excitement of the holidays. So... can grown-ups still have fun at Christmas?

During an exceptionally

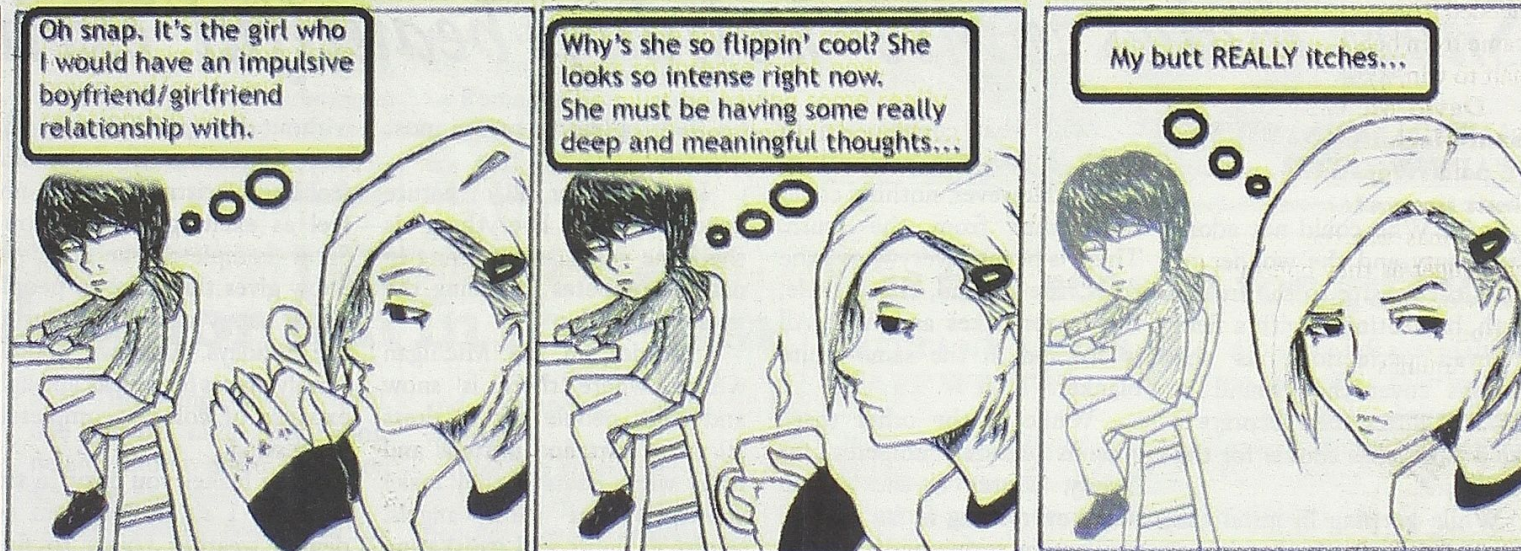
productive procrastination session, I formulated a theory about this. Yes, I think we can still enjoy the holidays; we just need do a little priority assessment and try not to get caught up in the things that really don't matter in the long run. Instead of buying presents for each other, let's enjoy a little fellowship and eat dinner together.

Instead of watching cable TV or getting on Facebook during a study break, put up some Christmas lights in your room. Make some cookies in the dorms. Don't stop believing in Santa and the spirit of Christmas. Stay up an extra half hour just to watch Christmas specials. Read the Christmas Story. Send out cards to all your family and friends to wish them a happy holiday season. Call your mom and dad to talk.

Yes, we're all busy but this time only comes around once a year. If we forget to stop and smell the pine needles, we'll miss it.

Awkward Misconception

By Chris Schneider



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The staff of Sodexho would like to say thank you Alma College! Thanks to your charity, we were able to raise over 850 lbs of food for underprivileged families right here in our own community.

On November 7th, 2007, Sodexho locations all across the country attempted to break a Guinness world record for the amount of canned food items collected in one day by a single organization.

Each location was given a target weight of food to raise based on the size of the school. The target amount for Alma College was slightly under 300lbs. The total weight of all the food donated by the students was nearly triple that amount. The student response was phenomenal.

We are proud to serve such a charitable group of students and faculty members. After the day of collection, the food donated by the Alma campus community was taken to the local Salvation Army where it will then be distributed to local needy families.

So once again from all of us at Hamilton and Van Duesen, Thank you for your support! Now many more families in the area, and across the country, can have a better thanksgiving.

Sincerely,
The Sodexho Staff

Holiday brings opportunity to help others

ANNA ZICHI
NEWS EDITOR

It is evident by the rapid weather change and the commercials seen on the television that the 2007 Holiday Season is upon us at last. We have reached that time of year when the fall semester has come to a close, and shopping and cookie baking are all one has to think about. No more finals to take, just the smell of gingerbread filling our brains.

The unfortunate truth is that, while the above may be all you have to think about come December 15, there are many in our nation that have to wonder where they are going to sleep each night and where their next meal is going to come from. Because of this, we see charity events popping up around the country and bell ringers for The Salvation Army appearing in front of stores asking for donations for those in need.

Tomorrow, the sisters of Alpha Gamma Delta will be in front of Glen's Market ringing

bells doing their part this holiday season. This is one way to give back to the community that has given so much, and help those less fortunate.

Alpha Gamma Delta participated in this tradition for the first time last year and most, if not all of them, had the time of their lives. I stood out in the bitter cold with **Heather Evans (09)** and **Angelica Luttrell (09)** for an hour ringing bells and singing Holiday songs. Nothing beats a rendition of "The 12 Days of Christmas," especially when the singers do not know all 12 days and have to ask passersby for their help.

This year, though, Evans, Luttrell, and I have been practicing the beloved holiday classics and hope to bring joy to those that receive our donations and to the innocent bystanders that just want to get their milk, but instead have to listen to us sing.

All of us are incredibly fortunate to attend such a highly esteemed school and to know where our next meal will come from, even if it is at

Hamilton Commons. Because we are so fortunate, though, it is our responsibility to donate goods and time to those that are less fortunate.

Many events have taken place on campus, such as the Giving Tree and the Holiday Cards sent out to orphanages, to help show our generosity, and after break many more will occur. However, this idea of giving should not leave all of us when we leave Alma's city limits. We need to bring it to each of our hometowns and help spread joy throughout the entire nation.

It is my hope that even if you do not stand out in the cold to ring bells, when you do your holiday shopping you do not simply walk past those freezing, but instead think of who they are helping and donate money to such a good cause.

By ringing bells for The Salvation Army, I am helping do my part in bringing others joy during the Holiday Season, which in turn makes my year seem a little brighter. You can help, too.

Scots fight to overcome slow start

IAN FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The Alma College men's basketball team has had a rough season thus far, still not having gained a win. The Scots' began the season with a loss at the Case Western Reserve Tournament, losing their games to Case Western, 88-69, and Lake Erie, 74-44.

Alma's second game was against the Bulldogs of Ferris State, in what most people thought would be a blow-out

"The Scots next game is December 14 against Kalamazoo"

of a Division II school by a Division III school. The Scots had a different opinion.

Alma kept the lead for most of the game, with a score of 28-16 at halftime. However, Ferris State somehow found what they needed to get back on track, and came from behind in the second half to win, 47-43.

David McNally (09) and Sam Machuta (10) both had 11 points for the Scots, and Matt Brown (09) had eight.

Aquinas was the Scots' next challenger as they continued to look for their first win of the season.

Aquinas had beaten both

Hope College and Calvin College in the past week, and was a tough team for the Scots to handle. Brown led the Scots in offense, with 13 points and eight rebounds, but it wasn't enough for the Scots, who ended up losing 72-49.

Alma moved on from their loss, however, and focused on the games to come. Their next opponent was the men from Madonna University.

The Crusaders of Madonna seemed to know what the Scots' weaknesses were, and took care to make sure they made very few mistakes, something the Scots had struggled with in the past few games.

Brown once again had a great game, this time putting up 20 points and four rebounds, but did not receive as much support as he needed for Alma to take the win. The Scots were defeated once again, 76-66.

The Scots' next game was scheduled for this past weekend, against Elmhurst College, but a faulty transportation vehicle forced the Scots to reschedule their match-up.

Now that Alma has had a weekend off, maybe they'll review what has been going on in the first half of their season, and make some changes to their game-plan to gather their first win of the season.

The Scots host the Yeomen of Oberlin College at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 14, and host the Alma Tournament on Friday, December 28.



Photo by Tony Rosenblum
Sophomore guard Lance Guardner looks move the ball for a better scoring opportunity.

Swimmers dive into heart of season

RACHEL DOTSON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The women's swimming and diving team is set to host the Bells of St. Mary's College at 1 p.m. tomorrow in a makeup meet from November 9.

"We're excited to swim against St. Mary's at home," said head coach Chris Hamstra. "We will get strong competition to push us to do our best."

The Maroon and Cream competed last weekend at the DePauw Invitational in Greencastle, Indiana, and are looking to build from their results. The men's team tallied 126 points, placing tenth out of ten, while the women's team took seventh of eleven with 166 points. The Tigers of DePauw University captured both first place titles.

"The DePauw invite was very exciting for two reasons," said Hamstra. "The first being that we had a lot of personal best and season best swims; the second is that the team is coming together and rallying around each other to provide support in and out of the pool."

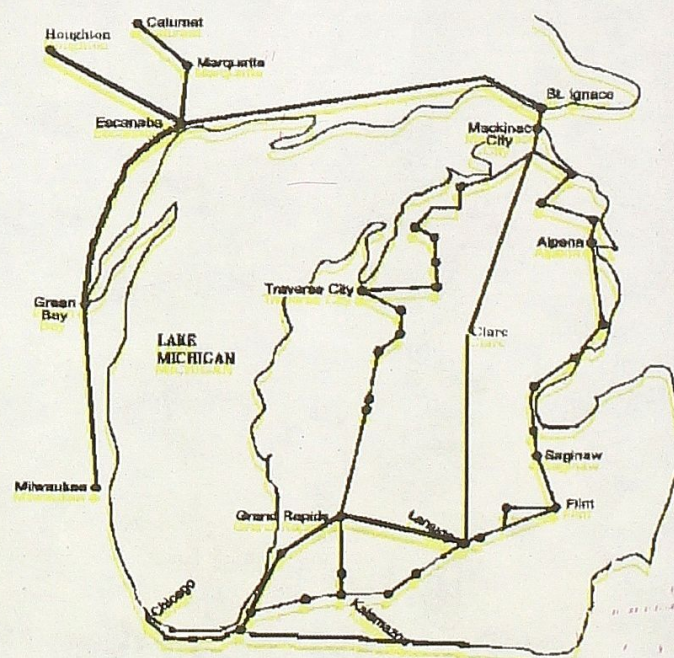
"After a busy weekend at the invitational we got back in the pool with some hard practices," said Shaina Buhl (11). "[Coach Hamstra] has been pushing a

SEE SWIM, PG. 8

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IM volleyball provides fun for all levels

CHELSEA CLARK
SPORTS EDITOR

Intramurals have grown in participation this year - starting with football and now onto volleyball. There are currently 22 teams and a total of 264 players signed up.

"It is the largest participation since I have been here, and the largest I have heard of from a school this size," said Julian Springer, director of the Stone Recreation Center.

"I think that more people signed up to play because the buzz was bigger around campus. [Intramural volleyball] is not at the same time as the volleyball season so the volleyball players were able to participate and get their friends who do not play to come out, too," said Springer.

The teams are split in to four conferences: the maroon, white, black, and grey. Each team plays

all others in their conference, with 16 progressing to the tournament during exam week.

There are teams from all kind of skill levels. **Elena Cangelosi (11)**, captain of the only all freshman team, The Monstars, said, "I played in high school for two years, but that's the most experience on the team. I ended up teaching everyone the rules."

Sarah Gross (11) a Monstars team member said, "A lot of balls have gotten kicked - at least more than bumped, and there is a lot of 'I got it, I got it... bam.' It is a lot of fun though."

The intramural system is setup so that it does not have to be too large of a time commitment for busy students. Each volleyball team has twelve players, even though only six play at a time. "It is hard with everyone's different schedules, but we have always had enough to play," said

Cangelosi. "We have not had any forfeits the entire season," said Springer.

The increased amount of teams has helped to give players of all levels what they are looking for. "Having more teams has made everything more competitive - there is more intensity," said Springer.

In the intramural football season, the Shockers dominated all year, finishing the season without losing a single game. Even in the championship game, the Shockers controlled the majority of the game against Team Haslett, winning 56-18.

When students return in January, the intramurals will switch to basketball.

"Basketball is next; it is going to be bigger and better as more people see others getting involved," said Springer. "It is a lot more fun to have a lot of teams."

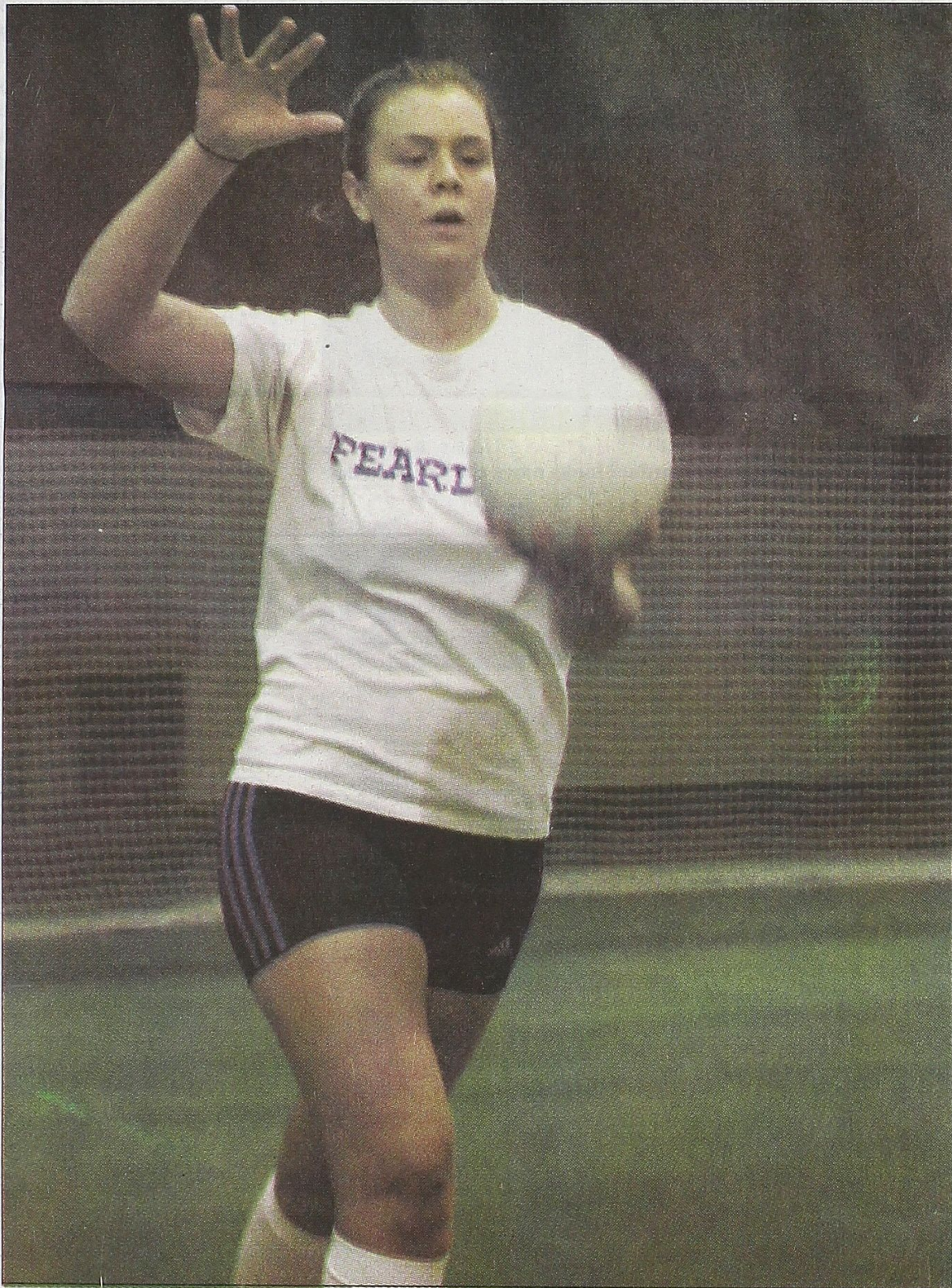
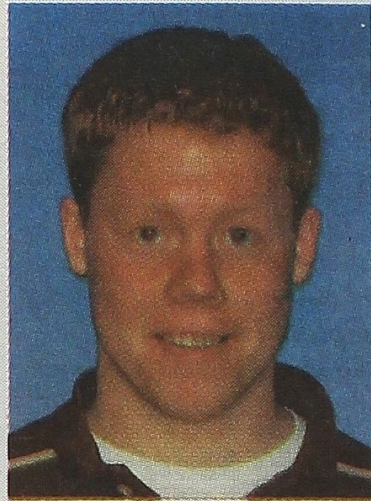


Photo by Tony Rosenblum

Freshman Molly Marino focuses to ace her serve in Wednesday's intramural volleyball match.

Lions fall short of playoff appearance

IAN FOWLER
STAFF WRITER



The beginning of the 2007-2008 season had Lions fans talking about a possible playoff appearance. Detroit started the season at 6-2 - their best start since 1999, yet has failed to tally a win since.

The Lions continued their fall losing streak this past weekend against the Minnesota Vikings, losing at the Metrodome, 42-10.

Detroit was unable to match the Vikings' opening drive, allowing Minnesota to score five touchdowns in the first quarter.

"We can't sit around talking about the playoffs and this and that - we just need to stop this bleeding right now," said center and team captain Dominic Raiola. "That's it. We can't keep talking about playoffs. We need to win a game."

The Vikings kept the Lions under control fairly easily, with an opening drive touchdown, and a 103 yard kick return, ending in a touchdown. Detroit was still not be able to answer back, and did not score at all in the second quarter.

"It's like I told the team afterwards," said head coach Rod Marinelli. "It's on me. I accept that responsibility. I thought we were flat, a little lethargic. We didn't have any zip to us. As a head coach, that reflects who I am, and that is just not good enough."

"How can you put it all on him?" said Raiola. "We've been here 11 weeks. We should be able to come out on Sunday and just play - not even practice all week. We can't do that; we can't put it all on him. There are 53 guys responsible for what happened out there."

The Lions' obviously had some trouble on Sunday against the Vikings' running game. Minnesota has the number one ranked duo of Adrian Peterson and Chester Taylor, and the Vikings ran for 186 yards in 29 attempts - scoring 3 touchdowns.

"We have to make plays," said cornerback Fernando Bryant. "I heard [Coach Marinelli] took the blame for this one and everything like that, but eventually players have to stand up and say, 'it was me.' That's the bottom line. Coaches can't tackle for us; coaches can't catch balls for us; coaches can't do special teams for us - all they can do is put you in position and eventually you've got to make the plays."

Before their game this past Sunday, the Lions had lost three in a row, but still had a chance for a play-off appearance. They would have had a wild-card spot, if the season had ended before the Minnesota game. They still have a chance to get a spot, but should probably worry about winning their next game, instead of worrying about getting into the playoffs. The Lions just haven't seemed to be clicking for the past couple games.

"We've had four big games now and it just seems like we haven't shown up for any one of them as a team," said wide receiver Mike Furrey. "You know, we need to go back and look in the mirror at ourselves and see what we're doing and if we're doing what we're supposed to do. We're just not clicking right now."

The Lions need to find something that is going to haul them out of this valley that they are in right now, but nobody seems to know what it is that could do it.

"Nothing magical is going to save you," said guard and tackle Damien Woody. "There is no special play, offensive play, or defensive play. It just takes hard work by each individual on offense, defense, and special teams to get the job done."

The Lions' next game is at Ford Field against a tough Dallas Cowboys team, appearing 11-1. The Lions will have to update their defense and find a way to shut down Dallas' impressive offensive set-up as a team. Hopefully, they won't disappoint us, and will find a way to sneak into the playoffs.

Swim from pg. 8...

competitive mind-set, pushing us to say, 'I want to swim; I want this race.'"

The divers also competed last weekend, traveling to the University of Akron in Ohio for the Zippy Invitational. The Scots were the only Division III team present, and fell to

last place in both the men's and women's competitions.

Top performances for Alma came from **Dustin Conlin (11)**, who captured ninth place on the 3-meter, and from **Hanna Leestma (10)**, who took fourteenth place on the 1-meter and sixteenth place on the 3-meter.

Following tomorrow's meet

the teams will have a week of rest during exams, after which they will travel to Fort Pierce, Florida, on December 15 for a week of winter training.

"It will be a great time to really take our training to the next level [and] begin to push toward the league meet," said Hamstra. "And it should be one of the best team bonding

experiences of the year."

While in Florida, the Scots will take on Keene State University and Indian River Community College.

"I see us building a better base in Florida that will help us see the kind of results that we want at the end of the season," said captain **Emily Smith (08)**.

The athletes return to campus

on December 31 in preparation for their January contests, which include meets against Wheeling Jesuit University on January 12, Olivet College on January 19, and Kalamazoo College on January 26.

The match-up against Kalamazoo marks the teams' next and final home meet of the season.