Author Describes “Girls of Atomic City”

By Tieler King
Contributing Writer

Denise Kiernan is the author of the bestselling novel “The Girls of Atomic City,” a novel about the women who unknowingly helped create the atomic bomb in Tennessee.

“The Girls of Atomic City” is a non-fiction novel that took place in 1942 during World War II. It follows the young women who lived and worked on a project in a secret government town that would later be known as Oakridge. At the time, the town was being created and did not exist on any maps.

The project would later be referred to as the Manhattan Project. The Manhattan Project was a top-secret, World War II government project that was focused on harnessing the power of fission, the nuclear energy that is released when the nucleus of an atom is split apart.

Kiernan was inspired to learn more about women’s role in creating the first atomic bomb when she came across a photo of a group of young women, many

Zion and Bryce Canyon Landscapes

By Elizabeth Peabody
Contributing Writer

The Zion and Bryce Canyon Soundscape washed through Alvernia on October 7.

The program was part of the 2014-15 Alvernia Performing Arts Series. The show started at 7:30 p.m. and featured Jill Haley (oboe & composer), David Cullen (guitar) and Susan McDevitt (pianist).

The musicians took the audience on a journey through Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks in Utah with music pieces and audiovisual displays.

The performance came from an album nominated for “Best Contemporary Instrumental Album” by Zone Music Reporter in 2012.

Jill Haley composed the program. Haley spent a week in Utah in which she spent most of her time exploring the parks and taking her own photographs. Her photos appear as part of the performance. After arriving back home in Reading, she spent a few months composing the songs.

The songs the musicians played made the audience feel present in the hauntingly beautiful natural landscape. Afterwards, it left some of the audience whispering about how they want to go visit the parks in Utah after seeing the pictures.

Each song was comprised of pictures that followed a specific theme or area of the parks, such as “Sunflower Cantilena” and “Paria Point.” The pictures and songs flowed in a way that created a relaxing and soothing sensation for the audience.

Jill Haley was available to the audience after the performance. Haley said that her favorite national park was actually Colorado’s Mesa Verde National Park.

She will spend part of the coming spring at the Badlands National Park in South Dakota as an artist-in-residence.

Haley isn’t sure what kind of art may come out of her time at the Badlands.

“You never know what you are going to end up with,” she said.

“You have to get there, look around and get a feel for the area. Whatever art comes out of it is all based on the feeling I get.”

The 2014-2015 Alvernia Performing Arts Series continues on Friday, February 27 at 7:30 p.m. with Gershwin on Broadway with Leon Bates. This concert consists of world-renowned pianist Leon Bates, soprano Louise Toppin and baritone Robert Sim. On Wednesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m., the series continues with Cyrille Aimée, presented by Berks Jazz Fest. Aimée is an award-winning jazz vocalist.

Continued on page 3

Poetry Boldly Helps Students

By Gabrielle Valenti
Editor

Alvernia University boldly took part in the Literary Festival’s poetry contest this October.

The contest features poetry written by students currently enrolled at Albright, Alvernia, Kutztown, Penn State Berks and RACC.

Dr. Tom Bierowski and Dr. Richard Law, both professors in the English department, take part in judging the poems.

Dr. Law has taken part in the Literary Festival for the past six years. He believes that the contest helps to raise the profile of poetry among students.

“I am very glad this contest encourages students who like to write poetry, as well as listen to it,” Dr. Law said.

“College is the time where students realize poetry is not for ‘wimps,’ and they can show who they are through their writing.”

Continued on page 4
Worrell Files: Saga of the Bog Turtlers

This is a story about how a small group of students, faculty and staff (but mostly students) developed and tended a garden, and how big things can come from humble beginnings.

It is also a story of remarkable student leadership. Through this project, these students have learned as much about gardening as they have taught me about hard work and leadership, they have learned a great deal. I am humbled by their work ethic, and amazed by their positive approach and kind hearts. The success they have sown at the garden (pun intended) has touched the lives of many children and families in our community. I am so very proud of them—and I hope you are as well.

It all began in July of 2013, when Holleran Center students and staff visited the Rodale Institute Organic Farm outside Kutztown. Our whirlwind visit included a trip down an abandoned farm lane—backwards, an encounter with a Heritage Pig named Houdini, and a great conversation about Rodale with Executive Director Mark “Coach” Smallwood. The Rodale Institute runs a program called “Agriculture Supported Community” a play on the traditional “Community Supported Agriculture” farming model, whereby individuals purchase farm shares at the beginning of the growing season, and receive a weekly share of produce from early Spring through late Fall. Rodale sells ASC shares to families in Reading, PA

On many days this group, collectively known as “The Bog Turtlers,” would find some land interested in gardening! We would find some land with a project to work on, including developing a plan and continuing to work until it all began to take shape.

Back on campus, we quickly put together a committee of faculty and staff to help us help us out the details of this audacious adventure, and found that Alvernia has a surprising number of people interested in gardening! Campus got excited, and we quickly were given permission to get the project going.

This is where our story gets interesting. Led by the Holleran Center’s own Dr. Alicia Sprow, a small group of students and two VISTA workers showed remarkable leadership and teamwork in meeting the joys and challenges of managing this exciting but daunting project. Students Kalia Druetto, Rob Walter, Brielle Gancley, Daisy Porrazzo (recently joined by Brandon Harry) and Cauliflower in the Garden

During the 35-ish minute drive from Kutztown back to Alvernia’s Campus, we laid out the essential elements for the program to be known as Bog Turtle Creek Farm.

We would find some land on which to grow vegetables for sale on Penn Street in Reading as a way to increase access to healthy food for local children and families.

Produce would also be made available to Alvernia students, faculty and staff through “Alvernia Supported Agriculture” (ASA) shares which would be distributed weekly on campus.

Proceeds from the vegetable sales would be used to pay work-study wages to students who worked on the farm.

Back on campus, we quickly put together a committee of faculty and staff to help us help us out the details of this audacious adventure, and found that Alvernia has a surprising number of people interested in gardening! Campus got excited, and we quickly were given permission to get the project going.

Fast-forward to April of 2014, and we were waiting for the snow to melt so that we could remove the sod and install the shed and fence to begin our project at Alvernia’s Sports Park. We had received grants from the Friends of Reading Hospital, Aladdin Food Services and our good friends Carolyn and Jerry Holleran. By the fall they were hosting banquets, helping cooking contests, and delivering surplus produce to food pantries throughout the area. A remarkable project, and an inspiring achievement!

If, through this project, students and staff are inspired to get involved in community projects, then we have accomplished our goal.

Finally the weather broke, and we were able to get onions, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower in the ground by Easter.

This is where our story gets interesting. Led by the Holleran Center’s own Dr. Alicia Sprow, a small group of students and two VISTA workers showed remarkable leadership and teamwork in meeting the joys and challenges of managing this exciting but daunting project.

Students Kalia Druetto, Rob Walter, Brielle Gancley, Daisy Porrazzo (recently joined by Brandon Harry) working first with Nora and later with second year VISTA member Emily Kytle, took charge of the garden in a way I have not seen from students before.

Many days this group, collectively known as “The Bog Turtlers,” would arrive at the garden as early as 5:30 am, and continue to work until the day’s tasks were completed.

Daily they would harvest produce, water plants, pull weeds and plant seeds. They sold produce weekly at the Penn Street Farmers’ Market, filled a dozen ASA shares every Tuesday, and even sold surplus produce at the public auction in Kutztown and in the Kestrel Cafe.

By the fall they were hosting banquets, hosting cooking contests, and delivering surplus produce to food pantries throughout the area. A remarkable project, and an inspiring achievement!

You should all be proud of the collective impact we Alvernia have on our community.

Congratulations to you all, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to make our world a better place.
Atomic City (continued from page 1)

of whom were recent high school graduates in rural Tennessee, working near machines that were enriching uranium. They would not know that until the war is over.

Kiernan looked more into this information and found that Oakridge, Tennessee was the headquarters of the creation of the atomic bomb. No one had ever told the story of these women. In particular, Kiernan wanted to tell the story of the women involved in the project.

Kiernan interviewed many people beginning with Kani Bouling, a one hundred and one year old man who worked with the women. “It’s pretty amazing,” Kiernan said. “No matter what the situation is, the ability to talk to someone who has been on the planet that long is pretty special. It’s an amazing experience. If you ever get the opportunity, I recommend trying it out.”

Kiernan interviewed many women as well. Many had never heard of the Manhattan Project. At that time in Oakridge, they could not ask for or give any information about the purpose of their job. All personnel were given badges that were very specific so no one could go anywhere they didn’t belong. Oakridge wasn’t even placed on an official map until 1949.

Many women worked in the K25 plant where they all had different duties. Some computed math equations and others worked on enriching uranium. The K25 plant was the biggest building in the world, and remained so for many years. Everyone in the building did not know what they were contributing to nor did they ask. If they did, they could risk losing their job. The threat of losing such a lucrative job was much stronger in the aftermath of the Great Depression.

Further, there were spies working alongside the workers put there to ensure that no one was leaking information. Life at Oakridge was not all work. Since there were over eight thousand people living and working there, there were many recreational activities for everyone to participate in. There was bowling, sports, a rollerblading rink, and dances. White workers brought their children and they lived in trailers with no plumbing, but Oakridge was still home to them. However, because segregation was still alive in the United States, African-Americans did not prosper as much.

PO-TAY-TO, PO-TA-TO, It’s All Service To AU

By Brian O'Shaughnessy

Contributing Writer

Two hundred and thirty students picked potatoes for the Greater Berks Food Bank during the St. Francis Day of Service on September 27. The students harvested over 45,000 pounds of potatoes, which broke last year’s goal of 33,600 pounds.

Marcus Williams, a junior biochemistry major, attended the Day of Service. “It feels amazing to do the St. Francis Day of Service,” Williams said.

“We’re out here with all these people feeling a sense of community. We feel like we can give back to the commu-

nity as well. At the end of the day we’re all gonna feel that good feeling that we did something special for this world.” Participating students received t-shirts and lunch after a rigorous morning in the potato fields. The lunch included French fries.

“Being able to partake in a day of service is a reward in itself, but the delicious French fries were an added bonus,” Ashley Winters, a junior education major said.

Linda and Walt Zawaski started the Berks County Potato Project in 2008. The inspiration for the project was a cable news report about a large Midwestern farm that opened its field to anyone who wanted to harvest their leftover potatoes. The turn-outs of hungry people was much larger than expected. Whole families came with shovels, bags, and even toy pull wagons. Some dug with their hands. The story claimed there was traffic backed up two miles from the farm as a result of the demand.

Today, the Zawaski’s Potato Project asks volunteers to come together to plant, tend, harvest and help provide food to neighbors in need. To get involved in the Potato Project, you can e-mail HartHarvey@gmail.com or call 484-648-0381 for more information.

Above: Students participated in the St. Francis Day of Service on September 27, 2014.

Left: Ashley Winters (Left), Ginger Emery (Middle), and Megan Whary (Right) were among the 230 participants for the St. Francis Day of Service.

Right: Students filled many of these bins with potatoes for the St. Francis Day of Service (Photo Courtesy of the Holleran Center).
Poetry Boldly Helps Students (continued from page 1)

The contest seems to be growing with every passing year. "The response this year was better in the first ten days than any other year," Dr. Bierowski said. "It's really good to see students who enjoy creative writing take part in this contest from all different majors." Students who take part in the poetry contest do so for a variety of reasons. Richard Ricciardi, senior, feels that creative writing lets him express himself. "I like creative writing because it doesn't really have boundaries," Ricciardi said. "That's why I like poetry. When I write, I usually relate it back to sports because that's what I know best." After careful consideration by Dr. Bierowski and Dr. Law, the winners have been revealed.

In first place was Catharine J. Mahony for her poem "House Key" and Rebekah Miller for her poem "The Market." Second place went to Andrew Kaucher for his poem "A Poet’s World" and Nina Lygeris for her poem "Life-saver.”

The winners in first place received a $50 prize, and the second place winners received a $25 prize.

Prize-winning poets read their poems in the library on Thursday, October 23 at 2 p.m. Former Berks county poet laureate, Heather Thomas, was also present to read a few of her poems. Every student-submitted poem will be considered for publication in Alvernia’s literary magazine, The Zephyrus.

"The cool thing is that people who submit poems are not professional writers, but they are the writers among us," Dr. Bierowski said. "This is a chance for those students to begin getting some recognition." However, there are more people to be honored and congratulated than the poets. Dr. Law felt it was necessary to recognize the people who set aside time to set up the event.

"We are very appreciative of Sue Guay for overseeing the whole lit fest, and the support of the university for acknowledging the poets," Dr. Law said.
A Journey of Self-Discovery at Alvernia

By Junior Bernard

Editor

Can you handle the untapped power of positive thinking? The Alvernia Self-Discovery Club is committed to helping students discover their potential by exploring how positive energy can help one experience the best of life.

Brandon Harry, senior, and David McDowell, junior, founded the club at the end of the past summer. The club has 14 members as of its first meeting in September, and is still growing today. McDowell serves as the club's president.

"We care about the students here and what they feel in their minds with," McDowell said. "We're dedicated to create an environment around Alvernia where students can think for themselves, have complete control over their minds and live their best life now.

Harry's background as a pollution science and philosophy major combined with McDowell's studies of communication and marketing, allowed them to create this innovative club.

"In today's world, most people spend their lives getting distracted with technology, video games, etc.," Harry said. 

"When David and I met together that day, we knew it was necessary that we started something on campus. We've seen students getting depressed or stressed out about school work, broken relationships and other personal issues. We knew we could help, and that's what we decided to do."

Amanda Rhoads is a first-year nursing student. Rhoads has seen the club be a benefit to her studies and her life. "I met David and Brandon at Courtside the day they invited me to attend Alvernia Self-Discovery," she said. "I didn't think anything of it until that first meeting. This club has been eye-opening to me. Contrarily to high school, today I've been able to discover what I'm capable of."

"The level of my self-confidence has improved a lot, and it feels great to be able to have control over how I respond to the day-to-day obstacles that we all face."

The Self-Discovery Club emphasizes personal disclosure in a non-judgmental, welcoming environment.

"It's not a matter of me and Brandon doing all the talking," McDowell said. "Students voluntarily stand up and share their personal life experiences with everyone whether it's through sadness or happiness. There's no such thing as shame, pride or fear of being judged. We're all in this together because we're all going through similar bumps in life. We help and care about each other deeply. That's the beauty of Self-Discovery."

The club discusses challenging topics as part of its meetings. Students learn how to live life in a healthy, positive way. Carlos Canela, a junior business student, thinks the club has positive implications for the university.

"This club could really mean innovation for the entire university. Students drop out of college for countless reasons, such as lack of funds, poor pre-college preparation, personal negative experience, lack of motivation...the list goes on."

"Now knowing that there's a place here where students can express their weaknesses and fear, not only that, but also get help to overcome those catastrophic dilemmas."

The Alvernia Self-Discovery Club meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Judge Hall lounge. The club's Twitter is @AUSelf-Discovery. Students can contact Brandon Harry or David McDowell at Brandon.harry@alvernia.edu or david.mc Dowell@alvernia.edu for more information.

Circle “K” For Service

By Mikaileigh Baker

Contributing Writer

Alvernia may greet another service-oriented organization onto its campus. Efforts are underway to found a Circle K club at Alvernia.

Circle K International seeks to help young people develop leadership skills and assist the communities they live in. Per the Circle K website, Circle K started as a Kiwanis club service project in 1936. Circle K's original goal was to provide opportunities to young men to obtain a college education, but soon integrated community service.

Rosemary McFee, an instructor in the Criminal Justice Department, has been involved with kiwanis International for 20 years.

She felt that Alvernia was the right kind of place for another Circle K chapter. McFee is leading the way to help the organization become a recognized student group.

"I have had interactions with the high school and middle school levels of the organizations and I think that Alvernia would benefit and the community would benefit from having a Circle K on campus," McFee said.

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Reading Berks County plans to sponsor the club. Kiwanis members will help student members with service projects, as well as becoming contacts for jobs in the future.

There are over 30 people interested in becoming an official Circle K club.

Any member of the Alvernia community will be able to participate in Circle K activities, particularly service projects.

In the October 16 meeting, the group helped with the "Caitlin Smiles" project, as well as discussed the "Granny Corner" challenge.

The club recently voted on club officers. President is Amy DiPasquale with Christine Aponte serving as President-Elect. Serving as treasurer will be Alexis Traeger while Tiersa Glickel will serve as secretary.

The Circle K group meets on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. in Bernadine Hall room 002.

If you have any questions about the club, or are interested in joining, you can contact Rosemary McFee by phone at (610) 796-8313 or by email at rosemary.mcfee@alvernia.edu.
By Alexis Bendyna  
Contributing Writer

Niamh Callaghan, a business major from Belfast, Ireland, quickly realized she was a fish-out-of-water during one of her first days in America. “I asked someone for a rubber and got a few weird looks. That is what we call an eraser at home. I now know the difference, but that was a culture shock,” Callaghan said. Callaghan is studying at Alvernia as part of the Study USA program. The program is run by the British council and aims to build bridges between Northern Ireland and America.

The program was advertised at her university in Ireland, Saint Mary’s University College.

“America and Ireland are totally different,” Callaghan said.

“The pace of life in America is so much faster, whereas in Ireland the life is much more relaxed.”

Callaghan thinks one of the most striking differences between America and Ireland is schooling.

“In Ireland students complete a series of tests at the end of an academic year to determine the students’ score for that year, whereas here in the U.S. students are assessed throughout the year,” she said.

Callaghan expressed that traveling around Reading is much harder than getting around in Ireland.

“I have no car in the U.S., so I have to constantly rely on other people to bring me everywhere,” she said.

While she loves to shop, the lack of an easy, economical means of transport to stores makes it hard for her to engage in retail therapy.

Luckily, previous travels to Florida, Virginia, and the Big Apple helped Callaghan understand the United States’ way of life.

Her previous travels sparked Callaghan’s desire to study in America. Her time abroad has helped her embrace the many differences that she encounters during her stay here.

“I wanted to study in America in order to fully immerse myself in the American culture because it is just completely different from my life in Ireland,” she said.

“I really wanted to experience the college life and see how American students my age study and socialize.”

Callaghan has big plans over the course of the year.

She will be representing the Crusaders as point guard on the women’s basketball team.

Callaghan also plans to become more involved in the University’s community service activities, and intends to travel around the country before heading home in August 2015.

“I am really enjoying my time at Alvernia, but I cannot wait to go home to see all of my family and friends.”

Photo courtesy of Niamh Callaghan

“A visit with Alvernia’s President” - Thomas F. Flynn, Ph.D., President of Alvernia University; Niamh Callaghan, Business, Junior, 2014-2015 Irish Exchange Student; Michael Iavery, 2013-2014 Irish Exchange Student.

Living Beyond the Classroom

By Courtney Wilson  
Contributing Writer

Have you ever wondered how someone gets a job working in student affairs?

Cristina Urena, a recent graduate of Alvernia University, is currently working on obtaining her Master’s in Higher Education Counseling at West Chester University.

Urena became so fascinated with student affairs when she was an undergraduate at Alvernia that she decided she would like to become a counselor in Higher Education student affairs.

“I became interested in student affairs because I wanted to find a better career path for myself that involved working with students when they are going through their highs and lows,” Urena said.

At first, Urena didn’t know how to start her journey. Fortunately, Dr. Joseph Cicala, Vice President for University Life and Dean of Students, took Urena under his wing as an assistant.

As Urena spent more time working with Dr. Cicala, he helped her learn about the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) program.

The NASPA program is a program for undergraduate students that are interested in pursuing a career in student affairs. NASPA educates students through conferences, workshops, and their own experiences about the importance of student affairs.

Students who join NASPA can attend national conferences where they can work with student affairs professionals on various projects. They also learn about behind the scenes of Student Affairs to see if this career is right for them.

Urena was grateful she had the opportunity to be a NASPA member. Her time in NASPA taught her how to communicate, network, and build and establish a professional relationship with professionals in the field.

Dr. Cicala was particularly helpful in guiding Urena on her journey.

“Having the ability to meet with Dr. Cicala on a biweekly basis allowed me to establish a relationship with a mentor who has prepared me for the field,” she said.

Working in Student Affairs is personally enriching for Urena. Her work sets her on “a career path that involves helping students grow not only academically, but personally,” she said.

“It’s very rewarding, and you learn so much from the relationships you build with students.”

As a future student affairs professional, Urena hopes to teach students about all of the benefits, opportunities and resources that are available to them. She is excited to start “making a difference in students’ lives even if it is one student per year.”

Urena’s advice to aspiring student affairs professionals is to seize any and all opportunities despite any doubts a student may have.

“If you feel any doubt, but you have interest, do it anyway,” she said. “The experience you have is going to be phenomenal, inspiring and life changing because you are giving your time and energy to help students.”

Cristina Urena, recent graduate of Alvernia University, is currently working toward her Master’s in Higher Education Counseling/Student Affairs at West Chester University.
**Do You Have An Affinity for Housing?**

By Marisa Then

Alvernia University experiment in Affinity Housing began fall of 2012. Affinity Housing is an on campus living option in which student residents are able to get more involved with the school through fundraising and service opportunities. "We wanted to do something a little different," Karolina Dreher, resident life advisor, said. "We wanted to do something fun and exciting and find a way for students to get more involved.

Affinity Housing is primarily used for the townhouses for upperclassmen, but there are also some Pods dedicated to this program for interested sophomores.

There are over a dozen Affinity Housing programs this year. Each house has a theme that all of the students living in it are interested and passionate about.

The Affinity Housing program has a few requirements that Resident Life enforces. Each townhouse needs to complete two projects within the Alvernia Community. They must be service oriented and relate to the theme of the house. They also request that residents hold a few events within the house among each other. Examples are having an open night or attending a school event as a group.

The Children in Hospitals and Mental Health Awareness.

"The Children in Hospitals housing are looking for book donations that they can send to the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia or the Ronald McDonald House. Donations of books may be sent to Amber Nikolaus at Assisi townhouse 104.

The Children in Hospital's affinity choice came from some of the residents’ earlier experiences helping afflicted children in high school. "I participated in Thon in high school,” Amber Nikolaus, junior, said. "Thon is a year-long marathon that raises funds and awareness for the fight against pediatric cancer.

Another townhouse focuses on Mental Health Awareness. Next semester they plan to hold a fundraiser by selling t-shirts. The t-shirts will have a yellow ribbon design on the front and quotes on the back.

One of the quotes being “Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.”

A few weeks ago, students in this townhouse participated in a walk called Out of the Darkness. This event helped create awareness and raise funds for suicide prevention.

“We all have a personal connection to a family member or friend that is suffering from mental illnesses,” Nina Lygeris, sophomore, said.

Alvernia has a history of successful Affinity Housing programs. The Ice Hockey sport affinity house raffled off camouflage jerseys for the Wounded Warrior Project.

In the fall of 2012, an Affinity focused on Breast Cancer sold short and long sleeve shirts in the cafeteria and at sport games. They rose over $2,000 for the Susan G. Komen foundation.

For more information on Affinity Housing visit the Resident Life office in Veronica Hall or call 610-706-8320.

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**The Woes of Commuter Students**

By Preston Moser

There are advantages and disadvantages to being a commuter in college. However, commuting is a very good option to avoid room and board expenses. One of the negatives is the commute to get to class.

Unlike a student who lives on campus, a commuter has to worry about driving to school in order to get to class. "Driving to class is almost always a hassle, especially when your class time is in the morning rush hour," Charles Van Tran, first year commuter, said.

Not living on campus can also make it harder for students to connect with their peers. "It’s just harder to make friends, because you don’t live with the people you go to class with," Van Tran said.

One other negative of being a commuter is time management. When you stay in a dorm, you can plan your entire day, lay out what you need, take what you need for a certain class, and come back when you need to get the materials for your next class. As a commuter, you have to take all the materials for the day with you to every class.

With this concept also comes with a little extra pressure to not forget things you need at home. As a campus resident, if you have to go back to back classes, and you forget something for your second class, you can simply run back to your room. However, if you live off campus and you forget something, you have to deal with not having all your materials or drive all the way home.

"It’s just a pain, you have to worry about everything a little more than if you stayed within walking distance," Van Tran said.

Even expanding on commuter struggles, when it gets wintry outside, commuters have to adjust even more than they already had. In this case if there is ice and traffic all over the roads, a commuter’s commute could last longer than at first suspected and change everything.

The added stress of being a commuter plus adjusting to the college workload may be enough to get the best of an incoming freshman.

The last and most common response a college student will have when deciding on staying in a dorm over staying in the comfort of home is that they want to live the “college experience.”

The college experience is a valuable life venture that teaches the lesson of living on your own without your mom and dad always there to look after you. That becomes invaluable after your four or sometimes five years in higher education.

Both staying on campus and staying home and commuting have their advantages and disadvantages, but, to truly experience what the collegiate lifestyle is, you have to spend the extra coin.

The question is whether or not the experience itself is worth going into further debt down the line, but that’s a separate issue.

"Driving to class is almost always a hassle," Charles Van Tran said. Van Tran is a first year commuter student who would rather not have to find a parking spot somewhere on campus on a busy morning.
Alvernia Operates Under A “Low Level Panic”

By Katelyn Evans

The curtain rises on Low Level Panic on November 8. Low Level Panic is one of the two fall productions put on by Alvernia’s Theatre Club this semester.

Low Level Panic, written by Clare McIntyre, focuses on the story of three female roommates living in a small apartment in London, struggling with sharing the same bathroom.

Two flat mates, Jo (Katie Evans) and Mary (Jaliza Cruz), use the bathroom as an escape to confront their feelings and inner struggles, as well as a place for gossiping and complaining. The other roommate, Celia (Chiara Marone), simply wants to take a bath.

Male viewers may gain insight into the great mystery of the female mind, while female viewers may agree with how the play discusses the struggles young women face each day.

“Low Level Panic is very much a mirrored production of everyday reality, which is especially seen when the characters confront the taboo topics of sexual assault, insecurities, and female masturbation.

Dr. Nathan Thomas, Alvernia professor and theatre director, is genuinely excited about Low Level Panic.

“I think there are a few public places where we can raise genuine issues about our lives,” Dr. Thomas said. “While we see stories in plays, videos, and ﬁlm, we have an opportunity to see characters in situations that can give both meaning to the situations we ﬁnd ourselves in as well as raise questions about how we handle those situations.”

Each character in Low Level Panic has different attitudes toward their bodies and their sexuality.

One character, Mary, suffered from sexual violence in her past. Celia seems to have given in to commercial and media ideas about the feminine ideal.

She seems to depend on a wide range of commercial products in order to “make something of herself.” Mary endured sexual violence on the street, which led her to disassociate from herself to cope with the trauma. As the play progresses, the audience also learns that Jo has masturbation fantasies about being taken sexually.

As the play progresses, the audience also learns that Jo has masturbation fantasies about being taken sexually.

“Sexuality is often challenging for many people in our culture, but female sexuality is a particularly sensitive topic.”

While our culture avoids frank discussions of female sexuality, women continue to explore it on their own. Cosmopolitan Magazine polled 2000 of their readers, of which 98% were young women in their early twenties.

The survey discovered that most women in the study women start touching themselves when they are 15 and 16 years old. Yet, only a third of the women in the survey have ever discussed masturbation with their friends.

Traditional beliefs about how women should express their sexuality often emphasize the privacy of a man’s pleasure.

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One character, Mary, suffered from sexual violence in her past. Celia seems to have given in to commercial and media ideas about the feminine ideal.

She seems to depend on a wide range of commercial products in order to “make something of herself.” Mary endured sexual violence on the street, which led her to disassociate from herself to cope with the trauma. As the play progresses, the audience also learns that Jo has masturbation fantasies about being taken sexually.

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“Sexuality is often challenging for many people in our culture, but female sexuality is a particularly sensitive topic.”

While our culture avoids frank discussions of female sexuality, women continue to explore it on their own. Cosmopolitan Magazine polled 2000 of their readers, of which 98% were young women in their early twenties.

The survey discovered that most women in the study women start touching themselves when they are 15 and 16 years old. Yet, only a third of the women in the survey have ever discussed masturbation with their friends.

Traditional beliefs about how women should express their sexuality often emphasize the privacy of a man’s pleasure.

Low Level Panic is very much a mirrored production of everyday reality, which is especially seen when the characters confront the taboo topics of sexual assault, insecurities, and female masturbation.

Dr. Nathan Thomas, Alvernia professor and theatre director, is genuinely excited about Low Level Panic.

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A Minor Setback for a Major Comeback

By Richard Ricciardi
Contributing Writer

The look of disbelief and disappointment fell over Amanda Galanti’s face when she found out that what she thought was a mesk foot injury turned out to alter her career. “My heart sank,” Galanti said. “I couldn’t believe this was happening to me.” While Galanti was participating in preseason field hockey during the fall of 2013, she sliced her left foot with a hockey stick. “I noticed something wasn’t right with Amanda, she was walking with a limp and not being as explosive as she usually is,” Haas said. After an exam, the doctor told Galanti that she would be out for eight months because of the tear in her foot. Once Galanti underwent successful surgery, the long haul of rehabilitation was made easier with the help of her support system. “At first I had a lot of self-doubt about myself, it’s hard to perform when you’re thinking about your foot the whole time,” Galanti in high spirits after her surgery. “I’m really thankful that my support system around me is so good and the trainers had my back. They deserve all the support.”

Dr. Mark David Kaufman, Ph.D., the new Assistant Professor of English at Alvernia University intends to launch a new course next semester, ENG 290H, Spy Stories: Law, Literature, and Espionage. Although it will be an honors course, it will be open to all students, and it will focus on how spy novels and films integrate culture, politics, religion, and fantasy. Espionage is the act of spying to discover competitors’ secrets, but to Kaufman it is “much more than the act of spying on foreign governments or stealing government secrets.” Dr. Kaufman said. “Espionage is the quintessential postmodern condition that we live in a roundabout way, a window into our daily lives. Some of us are destined to experience some type of devastation small, all of us will experience some type of devastation in our lives. Some of us are blessed to have people in our corner to help us get through the tough times. I’m really thankful that my support system around me is so good and the trainers had my back. They deserve all the credit for getting me back on the field.”

Spy Stories, Passwords, and More

By Courtney Wilson
Contributing Writer

Dr. Kaufman plans on discussing how WikiLeaks, a website that publishes vital government secrets to the public, and fantasy intertwine with one another. In addition to the readings, 30 percent of the course will focus on films, which will allow students the opportunity to identify the “thrilling” aspect across various forms of media. Kaufman became interested in espionage while living and working as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in Prague, Czech Republic, from 2002 to 2007. “Growing up in the Cold War, Eastern Europe seemed inaccessible and mysterious, and so to suddenly find myself living there felt a bit like being part of a spy mission. It was contagious.” He was so intrigued to learn about the espionage that it was his primary focus for his dissertation, Secret States: Modernism, Espionage, and Official Secrets Act. Dr. Kaufman’s dissertation focuses on British writers, who were hired by the British Secret Service to write about official secrets. Later the British writers were punished for revealing government secrets. Kaufman is currently working on publishing his dissertation into a book. What set Kaufman apart from the other applicants for the Assistant Professor of English position was the fact that he had a thorough knowledge in espionage. Beth DeMeo, chair of the English/Communication department, was fascinated by his through knowledge in espionage. DeMeo and others in the department felt that Dr. Kaufman would be a valuable asset to the Alvernia community. “His expertise on espionage was intriguing, and we thought it would be interesting for our students to learn,” DeMeo said. Caroline Fitzpatrick, Assistant Professor of English and Communication, was pleasantly surprised by his interest in espionage that she felt instantly that he should join the Communication/English department. “One of the reasons we selected him because he has expertise in an area of literature that we believe students would have an interest,” Fitzpatrick said. “Our goal in our department is to provide diversity and content, to the students at Alvernia University.” Kaufman believes that it is vital for people, especially students, to be aware of espionage because it’s an aspect of our daily lives. For more information about ENG 290H, please contact Dr. Mark Kaufman in the English/Communication department.

"Espionage is the quintessential postmodern condition,” Dr. Kaufman said. “The literature of espionage offers us, in a roundabout way, a window into our own lives.”
Apple Releases Its Newest Device

By Kyle Grim

Contributing Writer

Apple released the iPhone 6 on September 19. Apple sold 10 million iPhones in the opening weekend alone.

The iPhone 6 has a larger screen that allows more apps to be visible at once. The iPhone 6 has a 4.7-inch screen, with the 6 Plus has a 5.5-inch screen. Devon Vites, a sophomore communication major loves that the screen is big and clear. “I watch Netflix on it all the time. The picture is so clear it’s like having a little television right there,” Vites said.

With the larger screens, Apple decided it would be beneficial to add a new feature called “reachability.” This allows users to pull the screen down. So, if they have smaller hands or do not feel like making the reach, they can access the top of their screen.

Apple made significant changes to the camera making for better picture quality. The new iPhones come armed with such a clear picture that Ashley Wilson, a junior biology student, thinks it is just as good as a camera. “I absolutely love the camera and the different shots you can take such as slowmo and time lapse. This camera can easily replace a fancy digital camera,” Wilson, who her first iPhone, said.

Wilson decided to get herself an iPhone 6 Plus because of her friends and family’s support of the Apple product. “I have never had an iPhone before, and a lot of my family uses Facetime and iMessage. I also have friends that live in Europe and can use iMessage and FaceTime with them as well,” Wilson said.

The iPhone 6 will also allow for Apple Pay. Apple Pay allows users to pay for things with their Touch ID. Over 220,000 stores plan to participate in Apple Pay starting in November. The iPhone 6 also comes with the new iOS 8. iOS 8 has built-in apps such as HealthKit, iBooks and others. It will also be equipped with Wi-Fi calling. This allows users to call people over Wi-Fi connections rather than a cellular network.

The new phones were met with some criticism, but Vites has had no problem with his iPhone 6. “I don’t see anything wrong with them. They are faster and have better battery life than the old 5 I had,” Vites said.

One of the problems reported was that the Plus would bend if you have it in your pocket. Wilson has not had this happen and she feels she has taken the proper steps to avoid this. “As soon as I received the phone I put it in a strong case and don’t carry it in my back pocket to prevent it from happening,” Wilson said.

Life After the Military

By Zulynette Santiago-Rivera

Contributing Writer

From serving to studying, the transition from military life to student can be difficult. What most find hardest is the fact that they have endured life situations others won’t understand. Leaving the military also leaves many veterans with a higher maturity level and more life experience. “The pressure of having a deadline is not stressful because I’m used to a fast paced environment,” said Brian Johnson, a sophomore communications major and acting president of the Alvernia Veterans Club.

The differences veterans have from other students can make it hard for service members to relate to other students when returning to the world of non-military life. Yet, if being in the military creates such independence, why leave (the military) to go back to school? The military lifestyle may not be for everyone. It’s exhausting. Your personal life is never private; you can’t leave work and escape the military. If a soldier is single, it is mandatory to live on base. Not only are you constantly working, you must be mentally prepared to go anywhere at a moment’s notice.

Too many people leave their military service and do not have a game plan. To ensure a successful transition, a veteran needs to know what they want to do next.

Fortunately, the military provides a transitional mandatory class. The transitional classes provide resume workshops, job research, entrepreneurial classes, and general college courses.

Veterans can go to college for free by using either the Montgomery GI Bill or the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Both are a Veterans Affairs administered program that eligible veterans and active duty personnel can use after completing their service obligation.

The main difference is that the Post-9/11 GI Bill can only be used towards programs at a college or university. They both pay for 36 months of education, and provide a varying monthly allowance. GI Bill benefits can also be transferred to a spouse or children. The rate of spouses and children using benefits has increased over time, according to militarytimes.com.

In 2011, 32,000 children and spouses took advantage of this benefit. In 2012, it increased to 70 percent, and 54,000 dependents used the benefits. This is causing some debate over the transferal of benefits. If a veteran does decide to take advantage of their benefits, the transition can be quite tricky.

Alvernia University has a Veteran’s Club that acts as a support group for any veteran students. “What we are striving for with the Veterans Club is a solid support system for not just those who have served but also for those who have loved ones who are still serving or have been lost in combat,” Johnson said.

Veterans with financial issues can speak to Jason Deitz in the Office of Student Financial Planning. Deitz, who serves as assistant director and a VA Certifying Official, is always available for students having any issues.

For more information, stop by the Veteran’s Center in Bernardine Hall.
Going to College: Prepared or Not Prepared?

By Samantha Marino
Contributing Writer

For many students, going away to college for the first time can be scary. Not knowing what to expect can be overwhelming. Many incoming first year students worry about material items, but not so much the educational aspect.

“As juvenile as it sounds, I was prepared for college materialistically not educationally,” Alex Bendyna, senior communication major said.

“Looking back, I had all of the necessities to survive college; however, when it came to coursework I don’t feel my high school prepared me properly for what was ahead of me.”

Another challenge new students can face comes from having less structure in their lives.

A lack of time management skill can come back to haunt students who aren’t prepared for college-level demands.

“I remember coming to college freshmen year thinking how awesome it will be to have all the extra time and how I wouldn’t fall behind in my work,” Megan Wanner, senior business major said.

“But if you do not manage your time properly, it can really affect you. I saw it happening to my roommate and changed my ways immediately. I knew I didn’t want to fail behind in any of my classes.”

Fortunately, with hard work and determination, first year students can grow into confident, prepared seniors.

“Now that I am in my senior year of college I am amazed with all of the skills I have acquired, all of the knowledge I have obtained, and how prepared I feel for the real world,” Bendyna said.

“Throughout my college career, I devoted much time and effort to my studies and utilizing the help of my professors. It is these factors that got me where I am today; positive and confident for life after college.”

Entering college can be nerve wrecking for anyone. Some are more prepared than others; however some may feel as though they are not prepared academically, while others may feel as though they lack the skills to prioritize the heavy workload that is assigned in college.

Through trial, error and perseverance first year students can advance into confident, successful students. Devoting time to your studies and forming relationships with your professors is sure to help you through your college career.

Why Alvernia? From City to Suburbs

By Maeve McGhee
Contributing Writer

My twin sister, Graoch and I were inseparable when we were younger.

As we grew up, we started to discover different and separate interests. We decided we were going to go to different universities our junior year of high school.

This is how I ended up in Reading, Pennsylvania at Alvernia University, while Graoch stayed at home in Baltimore, Maryland studying at the University of Baltimore.

Alvernia University is a small private, liberal arts school right smack in the middle of the suburbs in Reading, Pennsylvania. When you look to one side, you see a mountain full of trees, and to the other you see a neighborhood.

When you stand in front of Judge Hall, you are right in the middle of campus, and it will take about two minutes tops to get to another building. It takes a max of five minutes to get from one side of the campus to the other.

The only reason it would take longer is if you stopped half way to talk to a friend that’s in three of your classes. When going to a some sports event there is a 100% chance that you will see at least ten people you’ve seen countless times before.

By the time you finish your first semester of your first year, you’ll probably have seen at least 3/4s of the school’s population. If you ever hear a siren or a helicopter, you may become a little confused because it has been so long since the last time you’ve heard one. If you hear anything loud or unusual in general, you’re going to become a little startled because it’s not the norm for you.

Overall, Alvernia is a very laid-back, go at your own speed kind of school. The University of Baltimore, also known as UB, is a small, public school dropped right in the middle of Baltimore City, Maryland.

No matter where your gaze lands, it’s going to be on a very tall building that made out of either brick, stone, or metal. Even if you were to stand in the middle of the campus, you wouldn’t be able to see past all the buildings blocking your view.

It may not take very long to get from one building to the next, but it will take you awhile to get around the building.

Each one has multiple floors with a maze of hallways on each one. When wandering the maze of hallways and busy streets, you aren’t going to see someone you know.

With the mixture of people who work in the buildings that surround the school, and the students, there are too many faces to begin to sort through.

When it comes to hearing sirens and helicopters, or even a gunshot, people hardly even blink.

It would be unusual if you didn’t hear any of those sounds on a regular basis.

When comparing Alvernia University to the University of Baltimore there aren’t many similarities. One is a more close-knit community, while the other is a bee-hive of activity.

When choosing to go to Alvernia, you are saying that you’re looking for a home style living and when you pick UB you’re going there because you love the busy-ness that the city offers.
Interested in getting ahead this winter break? Then stay on course by taking advantage of Alvernia’s Winter Session. Courses are offered in accelerated formats: Online and Blended.

Register today online at www.alvernia.edu/winter

All courses are accredited, and the credits are readily transferable.