Sigma Tau Delta Conference Coming Up

By Peter MacNamee

Sigma Tau Delta is an international English honor society with over 870 active chapters worldwide, and approximately 9000 members inducted annually. According to the Sigma Tau Delta official website, the group strives to recognize academic achievement in the study of English, promote interest in literature and language, and fostering literacy.

The Sigma Tau Delta annual convention allows for the organization’s members to attend workshops, presentations, and panel discussions related to reading, writing, and communication.

Dr. Caroline Fitzpatrick, associate professor of communication and English, said, “It is one of the few conferences that is truly directed towards undergraduate and graduate students...the faculty are secondary.”

Dr. Fitzpatrick is Sigma Tau Delta’s current vice president and president elect.

The theme for the convention is “Borderlands and Enchantments”. According to the convention website, the theme was chosen because New Mexico is a borderland in terms of physical boundaries as well as culture.

The second half of the themes title, enchantments, derives from the New Mexico state moniker: "The Land of Enchantment." This year’s conference has three featured speakers: Gary Soto, Simon Ortiz, and Leslie Marmon Silko.

These three celebrated writers were selected as speakers because of how their works tie into the "Borderlands and Enchantments" theme.

Alvernia’s Sigma Tau Delta chapter, Kappa Pi, will be represented by two panel discussion groups. Panel discussions are open to all conference attendees, and operate as a sort of presentation that relies heavily on audience participation.

The first of these two panel discussions, entitled "Alcoholism & Authorship: Inebriation & Inspiration", explores the relationship between writing and alcohol abuse.

Through research conducted by panel members about famous authors, the point is to start a conversation about the role of alcohol in the writing process.

The panel is headed by senior English major Andrew Kaucher.

“It was an idea we’ve thrown around for the last two years,” Kaucher, president of the Kappa Pi chapter said.

There’s No Such Thing as a Free Cap

By Rebecca Perkins

Graduation is less than three months away. With last-minute preparations well underway, some seniors may have been surprised to see a $100 graduation fee assessed to their billing accounts.

Since many seniors have paid over $180,000 to attend Alvernia, why are Alvernia seniors being charged to graduate?

Tracy Hine is the Executive Assistant to the Vice President of University Life. She handles the details of the graduation fee and knows what the money is used for.

“Unfortunately, this is a necessary cost,” Hine said.

The graduation fee helps to pay for a number of things. The most obvious use of the money is to help pay for cap, gown and tickets, but it is also used to defray other fees such as printing costs and the cost for the diplomas.

Alvernia couldn’t pay for all of these minor details without charging some kind of fee.

Why All The Hate?

By Brian O’Shaughnessy

The Alvernia-Albright rivalry is something that has been drummed into the minds of almost every student at both schools. We don’t like them, and they don’t like us. Why can’t we all just get along?

“The rivalry is very intense and very intimidating,” Autumn-Raine Martinez, a member of the Alvernia dance team, said.

Yet, despite the intensity of the rivalry, what lies beneath it? Many students have never asked why it is Alvernia and Albright became cross-town rivals as opposed to developing rivalries with other nearby universities.

Albright College is a private college that was founded in 1856 and is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Alvernia was founded 102 years later and is affiliated with the Catholic Church.

Both schools compete against each other in almost every sport, and both sides
Alvernia lost a promising young double alumna last month. In the early days of this too-freezing winter, Bryan Otruba succumbed to his courageous battle against leukemia. No death is without sadness, and the premature passing of someone so young brings an especially acute sense of loss.

Bryan’s death ended his suffering but brought much pain to family, friends, and many in and beyond the Alvernia community. Yet I write not to mourn his passing but to celebrate the many lives he touched here at Alvernia . . . and, equally, the many ways that this special community touched and transformed his life.

Bryan earned both undergraduate (2008) and graduate (2013) degrees from Alvernia. He met his best friend here and married Camille in our main chapel, Sacred Heart, in the convent of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters. At his and Camille’s request, the viewing was held there.

The chapel and the university were special to them, individually and together. A great couple, with smiles to match, they epitomized “Knowledge joined with Love”—the heart of a Franciscan education. Alvernia nurtured Bryan’s love for Camille and helped make him the man he became.

Bryan was a leader in campus ministry—a student campus minister and, later, a graduate assistant on the staff. Sunday night Mass was an important part of his Alvernia experience, along with the Alternative Break program.

His initial trip to our Sisters’ mission in the Dominican Republic was life-changing. He became one of their first Volunteers in Mission, later serving at their school in Santo Domingo. Former campus ministry staff travelled back to Reading from as far away as Columbus, Ohio, to gather at the wake and funeral, where they were joined by Sisters and others who were part of that mini-community. Alvernia nurtured Bryan’s faith and his spirituality and helped make him the man he became.

Bryan and Camille were both members of the Honors Program, both exceptional students in their quiet, unassuming way. Camille was surrounded at the viewing by former roommates and friends as well as some of her fellow nursing and Honors students. Faculty and staff members were there too—from Nursing, Education, Honors, University Life, and other areas.

A special education major, Bryan became a devoted teacher locally to students with special needs. Without question, Alvernia nurtured Bryan’s intellectual and professional development and helped make him the man he became.

Bryan was an RA, active in campus life, and a serious and responsible leader. Staff and administrators knew and respected him. He was also something of a goofball. At his viewing, Sacred Heart Chapel was filled with pictures of his Halloween costumes. Bryan and Camille are characters in the Wizard of Oz that I’ll never forget.

In their years at Alvernia, they attracted a large circle of fun-loving, life-long friends, many of whom returned to campus to comfort Camille and each other.

The mischievous, playful side of Bryan may be part of the reason he was drawn to Pacelli’s Orphans, our theater program. But I think another important reason was that he found in theater another mini-community.

At least a dozen of our former theater students were on hand, exchanging stories, memories of performances, anecdotes about their friend and fellow actor. It was heart-warming to witness the close bonds they had formed while together in college.

Clearly, Alvernia nurtured Bryan’s creativity and personality (and capacity for friendship) and helped make him the man he became.

Bryan Otruba loved Alvernia and embraced the many opportunities to be involved in the academic, cultural, religious, and social life of the campus. He and Camille found here not only a caring and challenging community but many smaller communities and groups that became special to them.

Alvernia nurtured Bryan’s faith and his spirituality and helped make him the man he became.

At Alvernia, our students’ education is based on relationships—with faculty, staff, and fellow students. Such relationships shape each student’s active engagement—in collegiate life, in and beyond the classroom, on and beyond the campus.

Put another way, we recognize—and value—the power of communities, large and small. That is at the heart of this special place that is Alvernia—“A Distinctive Franciscan University.”

Bryan will be missed by many, but in his story there are some inspirational lessons for us all.
Why All The Hate? (Continued from Pg. 1)

Allbright student Becca Glasser-Baker (left) and Alvernia student Becky Chavan (right) are hardly cross-town rivals. "We joke about the rivalry, but at the end of the day, none of it matters," Chavan said.

"I think we are rivals because we both have similar sized communities, and both schools care about their sports a lot," Glasser-Baker's friends at Alvernia tend to dismiss the rivalry as irrelevant to their campus experiences. "We joke about the rivalry, but at the end of the day, none of it matters," Becky Chavan, Alvernia senior said.

"She's still my best friend. When I think of Albright, the first thing I think of is her, not the rivalry," Carol Schwanger, associate professor of music, has taught at Alvernia for 39 years. She thinks the rivalry comes down to something fairly simple: Similarity. "I see Alvernia and Albright as rivals because of the way they are the same as each other," she said.

"We're looking for the same thing. We come from a religious background, and we're about the same size," Martinez doesn't know why the two schools are rivals. Her answer was similar to that of many Alvernia rivals. Her answer was similar to that of many Alvernia rivals. Her answer was similar to that of many Alvernia rivals. Her answer was similar to that of many Alvernia rivals.

Despite the $100 fee, graduation is an important time in the lives of Alvernia graduates. It signals the transition from student to college graduate, and symbolizes the culmination of their years of time and effort.

"The best advice I can give to graduating seniors is to have fun," Hine said. "Wear the cap and gown with your classmates. Take pictures. Embrace the moment. Commencement is a celebratory milestone that each graduate should take pride in. It's a day to celebrate all the sacrifices and hard work that you — and your family — have made."

The speaker at this winter’s commencement was communication major and Haitian earthquake survivor Junior Bernard. Bernard's rousing speech, "Persist, Persist, Persist!" can be seen on the Alvernia University YouTube page.

It's not that way anymore. Often times people think of Alvernia first. We've been quite successful in crafting our regional identity, and since we're trying to separate ourselves from each other, that makes us rivals." On January 21, 2015, the Alvernia men's basketball team defeated Albright 65-57 in front of a packed crowd at Alvernia. Although there is no definitive answer as to why these two schools are rivals, the one thing that can be said is that this cross-town rivalry fires up school spirit for both Alvernia University and Albright College.

Opens a door in heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

-- Alfred Lord Tennyson
"Early Spring"
Psychology Can Sometimes Be Fun and Games

By Gabrielle Valenti
Contributing Writer

Dr. Erin Way has been a part of Alvernia University’s teaching staff since Fall 2011. She is a developmental psychologist that specializes in early childhood learning, socio-emotional development and prenatal alcohol exposure.

Dr. Way teaches a number of different psychology classes ranging from Introduction to Psychology, Life-span Development, Research Methods, and Senior Seminar. Way also developed a class called Psychology of Play. This class focuses on understanding how critical play is in children’s and adults’ lives. She describes “play” as a crucial part of general academic success and creativity.

“Play is a lifelong need in all ages,” Dr. Way said. “It’s a chance for people’s passion to come out.”

Dr. Way always had an interest in how children learn, and don’t have, and address them in Pre-K and Kindergarten,” she said.

The first skill young children need to learn is how to follow directions. This skill comes with the child being able to follow directions that have more than one part, and how children are able to sequence that.

She gave an example of telling a child to “go upstairs, put shoes on, and then put on a coat,” and see how well the child is able to follow those three specific directions.

The second skill is focused on telling narratives, such as getting the child to understand sequences of events by telling a story using a beginning, middle and end.

“If students start school and don’t know their colors, that can be easily taught,” she said. “It is harder when a child can’t follow directions or manage their emotions.”

The third skill is self-regulation, which is sometimes challenging for children.

Way decided to take her research in a new direction in 2012, examining aggression in older adults. She finds this interesting because if an adult is having a problem in an assisted living facility with another roommate, they can’t just leave. Instead, they have to try to address the conflict, but they may not have the social skills to do that.

Way eventually wants to help older adults in these facilities minimize conflicts and bullying.

Psychology majors have been taking part in Dr. Way’s research. Some Alvernia students have been visiting a Programming in Berks County that serves older adults.

Way is excited about her research in a new direction. “It’s a unique experienceworking with older adults because it’s a whole different population that has yet to be heavily researched,” Dr. Way said.

“Students get experience with the research process.”

Dr. Way is excited about the new direction her research is going, and encourages students to take her psychology classes.

If students have any questions, she can be found in her office Mondays from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Tuesday through Friday by appointment in Upland 125.

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A poster in the psychology department of all the teachers and the areas they specialize in.

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro’ the woods

-- Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Early Spring”
“A lot of the classic authors struggled with drinking. Hemingway, Kerouac, Joyce, Faulkner. Our main goal is to bring about and discuss whether their substance abuse affected their writing or, really, their writing and fame affected their substance abuse.”

Accompanying Kaucher and his group will be discussion group focusing on “Disney-fication.” The discussion explores the relationship between Disney films and the original stories from which they were inspired. A member of this panel discussion board is junior communications major Scott Dressler.

“Our goal is to finally shed some light on why Disney changes the outcome of their movies and what type of effect these films have through their altered happy endings,” Dressler said.

A big reason for students to attend the Sigma Tau Delta conference is the opportunity to network with students from other schools. “Since this is my third year I’ve made some good friends from chapters across the country, so I’m excited to see their faces,” Kaucher said.

Another big draw for students is the different location every year. “Getting to visit New Mexico and experience what it’s like out west with some of the other great members from our chapter is definitely going to be a blast,” Kaucher said.

“Students from all majors may attain Sigma Tau Delta membership,” Dressler said. “Perspective members must have completed a minimum of two courses beyond their core requirements in English language or literature, have completed three semesters of college work and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.”

Anyone interested in information about Sigma Tau Delta should contact Professor Beth DeMeo at beth.demeo@alvernia.edu.

Sigma Tau Delta Conference (Continued from Pg. 1)

Crusader Sports Network

By Brad Vangeli
Contribution Writer

Some students may not be aware that Alvernia has an online webcast streaming channel called the Crusader Sports Network.

The Crusader Sports Network allows fans to watch Alvernia games live on their computer. The Network had humble beginnings. “Our first year we rented a tri-caster for about 500 bucks for the week to do basketball PAC playoffs,” Jon King, Sports Information and Associate Athletic Director, said.

“After that we bought a tri-caster and did baseball that spring. We came back and did more basketball and baseball the following year.” The Crusader Sports Network has expanded to broadcast field hockey and soccer, along with its mainstays of basketball and baseball.

Although Jon King played the biggest part in creating the Network, the work is being done almost entirely by the students.

“I try to play the role of the idea man,” King said. “I would rather be the one who has conversations with students about, ‘What can we add? What’s missing? What do we need to buy?’”

The Network not only raises the profile of Crusader sports, but also of the university as a whole.

“I think it’s recruiting for the students who can come in and have this level of experience in college,” King said. “It supplements whatever they’re learning.”

Ryan Shannon, a junior communication major, has been involved with The Crusader Sports Network since he arrived at Alvernia as a first year student.

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Alvernia is a Division III school with a student population of about 2,300. Alvernia is much smaller than a Division I school like Syracuse, one of the top schools in the nation for sports broadcasting, which has just over 14,000 students.

The small size of Alvernia allows students great opportunities to get involved in broadcasting early in their college years.

“If I went to a D-I school there’s no way I would have this opportunity,” Shannon said.

“When I came here is when my interest just peaked because of the opportunity I have here to broadcast. If it wasn’t for the firsthand experience I had, I wouldn’t know anything.”

Broadcasting on the Internet is not easy. Shannon said.

“A lot more goes into this than people think. I had to teach myself everything, how to produce, how to broadcast, and you have to know stats and backgrounds of the players.”

As Crusader Sports Network continues to add more to its productions through instant replays, additional cameras and higher quality equipment, it is also hoping to expand its viewing audience.

Before this season, against the wishes of some other schools and fans, the Crusader Sports Network charged $7.95 per game to watch the feeds online.

The charge was because the startup costs of the network needed to be recovered. Fortunately, the streams are free this year thanks to the network’s good earnings last year.

“Our biggest games last year were about 50 people,” King said. “This year, our biggest games are about 280 to 290, which is a substantial increase. The profits we made from last year allowed us to add new equipment and do more games.”

All broadcast games from this year are located online and are available to watch at any time. Crusader Sports Network can be found at http://athletics.alvernia.edu/watch.

The woods with living airs
How softly fann’d,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

-- Alfred Lord Tennyson,
“Early Spring”
Welcome to College

By Marisa Then

College isn’t always what people expect it to be—especially during one’s first year. Adjusting to one’s first year can be difficult and scary at times. Students are away from the comfort of their homes and expected to adjust to an environment they’ve never experienced.

First year students have just started their first semester at Alvernia University. Some found it to be easier than anticipated while others were overwhelmed. However, going into their second semester may be a bit easier now that they are comfortable with their surroundings.

The majority of first year students chose to attend this school because of the major that they offered. “I chose Alvernia because it had a five year master’s degree for occupational therapy,” Breana Miller, a first year student, said.

However, the academics are not as easy as students may have expected. “I really enjoy my occupational therapy classes,” Miller said. “But I write far more papers and study more than high school!”

First year students (L-R) Haley Balin, Felicia Wieder and Breana Miller in first year student residence hall Veronica Hall.

Not only are first year students taking on a difficult level of academics, but they have also adapted to living with strangers. Meeting and living with someone you don’t know can be scary at first. Most of the time residents get along with each other, but that’s not always the case.

“I had trouble with my first roommate,” Pencena Dennis, a first year social work student, said. “It didn’t work out so well, so I ended up moving out before it became a bigger issue.” Others have gotten close to their roommates.

“I enjoy living on my own and with my new friends,” Miller said. Now in their second semester, first year students know what to expect from the school. They’ve gotten involved in clubs and opportunities Alvernia has to offer.

“I did Campus Activity Board for a semester” Adrienne Hall, senior, said. I was also a part of Active Minds, Adventure Club and the Ethnic Awareness Society-Black Student Union. The school has a lot to offer.” Hall took advantage of a number of the university’s opportunities. Last semester she worked as a Peer Mentor to assist first year students in the required First Year Seminar course.

Nevertheless, there are factors of this school not everyone is pleased with.

“I’m not a fan of the food,” Miller said. “And I wish the campus was a bit bigger.” Hall had a similar opinion. “The dining hours don’t quite meet my needs and the parking on campus isn’t the best. Otherwise, I’m very happy to be here.”

No school can satisfy everyone. Despite Alvernia doing its best to accommodate and meet the needs of its students.

Looking back on her first year at Alvernia, Hall had a few difficulties. “I struggled academically at first. I had to learn how to discipline myself and get my work done.”

For most seniors, this is their last semester. There are things they learned over the years that first year students may not take into consideration right away.

“Don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it,” Hall said. “Professors are happy to assist you because they want you to succeed. We all goofed around our first year and you’re going to want to skip class. Just don’t forget to get your work done. It gets rough along the way so take advantage of the easier classes while you have them.”

College is scary and students learn a lot their first semester. Don’t put the school aside just to have fun. The fun will come along the way.

O, follow, leaping blood,
The season’s lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!
-- Alfred Lord Tennyson,
“Early Spring”
Push Yourself To Your Maximum Limit

By Meg Francescangeli
Contributing Writer

“ENGAGE! ENGAGE!” These are the typical words one might hear from Christine Sullivan, fitness instructor here at Alvernia. It’s all about challenging yourself. Can you handle it?

Maintaining a healthy relationship with exercise is essential for every individual, especially college students. Schoolwork, social events, and work can quickly consume your day.

In college, we form habits that will carry on for years to come. Along with building our knowledge and skills for our future, we also need to learn to keep our bodies active. Exercise can help with getting in shape, building up confidence, and more!

Reduces Stress:
While college can be fun, it is known for being one of the most stressful times in someone’s life. Exercise can help us deal with stress. Whether it is hiking, running, walking or biking, physical exertion releases endorphins in the brain that leave you with a more positive attitude and relaxes your body.

“I feel like exercise has especially de-stressed me,” Nikki DuBois, a junior education major, said. “After I work out or go to my Pilates class, I feel so much better and can continue throughout my day in a better mood.”

Feeling Productive:
Some students feel as though they are falling behind and are always playing the catch up game with their work. Fortunately, the effects of exercise can be felt immediately.

“Exercise allows my brain to take a break from my everyday stress,” Sam Rabuck, a senior nursing major, said. “It makes me feel good about myself. I feel as though it is another thing I am accomplishing for the day.”

Energy: All those late nights are catching up to you? Our bodies need exercise to use energy efficiently. Sometimes when you are lacking the energy to study or trying to find the motivation to accomplish work, take a break and burn off some steam with some movement.

“This will allow the body to produce more energy and put you back in the right frame of mind.”

“You can always find me at the gym,” Jenny Affleck, junior social work major, said. “Especially around finals time.”

Stimulates The Brain:
Exercise can help us think more clearly and remember more things. If you know you are going to have a challenging semester, schedule in time for that extra thirty-minute workout. This should keep your brain active and ready to study!

Alvernia students are provided with a state of the art fitness center and numerous exercise classes that are free and sometimes worth a credit.

Here are the fitness classes that are being offered in the Commons fitness center.

On Monday and Wednesdays you can enjoy yoga or spinning class from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
You can also “mix it up,” with a total body toning class on Mondays at 12 to 12:45 p.m. or 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., get ready to dance your heart out with some Zumba. You can also join Barre from 12 to 12:45 on Tuesday and Thursday for a total body workout.
By Aubrianna Stafford
Contributing Writer

Studying abroad is a unique experience.
Sahrina Logozzo, Alvernia graduate assistant for global learning and the Study Abroad coordinator, believes that being open-minded plays a big part in the overall experience.

“Go there with an open-mind and don’t make assumptions beforehand,” Logozzo said. “If you have built up expectations and they aren’t met, then you could be disappointed.”

Having a plan set in place for how you want to spend your money will help it last longer. Decide early on in your semester what you want to do and where you want to travel so you can build that into your spending plan.

Alyssa Sullivan, a junior Health Care Science major, studied in Ireland.

“If you do your research and compare prices, that’ll save you a lot of money,” Sullivan said. There are several websites that offer discounted prices for airplane tickets, performances and tours. It takes some extra effort and time to do your homework, but will save you some money.

Another important tip for students abroad is to travel while you’re there. Exploring seems obvious, but doing so is a big part of the opportunities that studying abroad offers.

“I loved traveling Europe. I knew all of the places that I wanted to go and I took advantage of that while I could,” Sullivan said.

During her semester in Ireland, Sullivan traveled to 7 countries, including France, Italy and Spain. Students should also take the time to get to know your new school and classmates. The people you meet could become some of your closest friends.

Dr. Jodi Radosh, associate professor of communication, teaches Event Planning as one of the Service-Learning courses offered this semester.

“Service-Learning is a win-win for both students and the community partners,” Dr. Radosh said. “It gives students the unique opportunities to apply classroom learning to support or enhance the work of local community partners.”

Alvernia targets its service-learning courses to serve community partners that do not have the funds or the time to achieve what they aim for.

Dr. Radosh’s Social Media Marketing service-learning course last semester made social media campaigns for the YMCA in Sinking Spring, the Yocum campaign for the YMCA in Sinking Spring, the Yocum Institute of the Arts, and the Animal Rescue League.

Carla Brough, junior biology major at Alvernia University, is currently taking the service learning course Ethical Treatment of Animals.

This course is taught by Dr. Donna Yarri, an associate professor of theology. The course has students raise money for the humane society as well as volunteer as either a dog walker or a cat cuddler at the shelter.

“Service-Learning is a good way to utilize what we are learning in the classroom in a real world setting and it makes you feel good about yourself for helping the community,” Brough said.

In Ethical Treatment of Animals, the students will be volunteering at the humane society on various days throughout the semester.

“I would like to see the program offered to more majors and classes so people can get more hands-on experience in all different fields,” Brough said.

The service-learning curriculum is becoming more important to the university as it works to adapt to the changing demands of the new century.

“I would like to see the service-learning program continue to grow,” Dr. Radosh said. “In fact, this semester the Advertiser’s Workshop is doing an advertising campaign for the service-learning program. We hope to get the word out about the benefits of service-learning to students, faculty and staff across campus.”

For more information on the service-learning classes and events, contact Alicia Sprow in the Holleran Center. Dr. Radosh or Dr. Yarri can be contacted by email at jodi.radosh@alvernia.edu or donna.yarri@alvernia.edu.
An Alternative to Break

By Natalie Messaros
Contributing Writer

One of the great opportunities that Alvernia offers to students is to participate in alternative breaks. Campus Ministry organizes and funds these trips to send current students to experience and learn from these life changing service projects. Alternative breaks have been going on for about 6 or 7 years now," Brian Ballantine, Campus Minister said. "The program was brought to Alvernia by Dr. Flynn's son, Daniel Flynn, during his years working in Campus Ministry." These trips provide students, who will one day be leaders, with a unique opportunity to put names and faces to stories with people," Ballantine said.

Ballantine thinks that these trips reinforce Alvernia's core values among the students. "These trips provide students with a chance to put their faith into action and to connect, through service and nightly reflections, on what truly motivates them," Alternative breaks are funded by the students. To make these trips affordable for them, it is required for all students to participate in the fundraising and they become part of "adopt-a-breaker." The students involved send out letters to family, co-workers or anyone that they wish to ask for a donation.

The students that went on the most recent trips were willing to give up a week of their winter break to serve not just our own Reading community but also people in Cincinnati and Philadelphia. The students that served in Cincinnati were there for prayer and worked through Franciscan for the Poor, a ministry that helps with alternative breaks.

All of the students were placed non-profit agencies. That gave them the chance to communicate with others about poverty, how it happens and what the effects of it are.

Many college students gathered in Philadelphia to work and interact with people of different faiths. The purpose of this trip was to encourage interfaith learning. While the students were there, they visited up to six diverse faith communities and participated in community service. A select few got the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic. The few students that traveled to this location worked alongside the Bernardine Sisters so that they could teach, learn and serve in their parish.

One of those students was Ashley Turton, a junior occupational therapy major. "I had the best time of my life," Turton said. "I never thought this trip would have the impact it did on me, and I wish that everyone could see what I saw. The way they lived in the Dominican is a way we will in the U.S. will never learn to appreciate. They were all so happy with what little they had. They barely had clean water and yet they walked around every day with smiles on their faces and positive attitude. "I can tell you I went there with every intention to change their lives, but they have changed mine," Turton said.

"The way I see the world has changed, I want to meet more people and experience their cultures and make more changes." For more information about getting involved, contact Kelly Caddy, Director of Campus Ministry at 610-796-8300, via email at kelly.caddy@alvernia.edu, or stop by her office in Campus Commons 104B.

Below: Students in the Dominican Republic completing a worksheet.

Club Profile: The Social Work Club

By Precious Dennis
Contributing Writer

The Social Work club recently went on a service exchange trip to Misericordia University. At Misericordia, the club met up with the head of the Social Work department. Alvernia’s social work club and Misericordia students toured the campus. From there, the students took a tour of the windmill farm, which has 83 windmills on it. The farm is very profitable according to Misericordia students. Misericordia’s food pantry also provides aid for people, along with its library and clothes closet. The students also toured Misericordia’s museum, which describes the history of the university, followed by a period of quiet reflection. But what is social work? The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people. Meeting basic needs is particularly important for people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. John Lichtenwalner, instructor in the social work program, describes social work in terms of helping. "Social work means helping people who are in need of help, especially people who don't get a lot of help otherwise," he said.

Social workers help by dealing with relationships, solving problems, and coping with social, economic, and environmental concerns. Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest in the pursuit of social justice. They pursue social change on issues of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people.

The purpose of the Social Work Club is to enhance professional growth in the human service field and to promote a greater understanding of the social work profession throughout the university community. While most members of the Social Work club are social work majors, you don't have to be a social work major or an upperclassman to be in the Social Work club.

The Social Work club meets every other Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Crusader Café. At these meetings, the club discusses fundraising, service projects, and coordinates calendars. Lindsay Bittle, a senior social work major, will be graduating in May. She is presently the president of the Social Work Club. "As President, my goal is to bring together people to do community service," Bittle said.

I enjoy getting the experience of bringing social work students to bond. Also I don’t just want to restrict the club to just social work majors, I like it open to everyone." As primary social work majors, our goal is to provide services for people in our local community here.

Bittle is pleased with how the club has developed over her time at Alvernia. "It has grown a lot over the years," she said. "I hope it continues to grow and continue to be prosperous. We’ve done a lot of projects and I hope it continues that way.

"Social work is not for everyone," he said. "It takes a strong and special person to care about it and invest in it." For more information on Social Work itself, contact John Lichenwalner by email at John.Lichtenwalner@alvernia.edu or his office phone (610)796-8280. For more information on the Social Work club, contact its President Lindsay Bittle by email at Lindsay.bittle@alvernia.edu.
Lecture Prompts Debate About Peace

By Elizabeth Gonyea
Contributing Writer

Can faith create peace? Many of us hear about all the tragedies in the Middle East from radical group such as ISIS and the Taliban that stem from a place of faith.

Yet, a recent lecture by Dr. Ingrid Mattson on January 28, discussed how faith can unite us, no matter what higher power a person believes in.

Dr. Ingrid Mattson is a Muslim religious leader and esteemed professor of Islamic studies. She is an interfait activist as well as a Windsor Community Chair in Huron University and in the University of Western Ontario in London.

But what is peace? Alvernia students sometimes seemed unsure about the meaning of the word. Bryan Raymond, sophomore, defined peace as “happiness.” By comparison, Gabriela Stephens, sophomore, believes that peace is “a place where there are no arguments, no crime, no evil.”

Yet, is it possible for human beings to live amongst each other without conflict? Alvernia students sometimes felt that the world situation seemed hopeless.

“Peace is an unachievable thing because there will always be violence,” Natalie Hymen, freshman student, said.

Mackenzie Lynch, sophomore, agreed. “There will always be something socially or economically that people are very passionate about that will cause tension because some group of people won’t agree with another group.”

Attimes peace seemed like something that could only exist in a vaccum. Jessica LaMont, junior, defined peace as the temporary absence of conflict. “America will never have peace, without conflict we would not know what peace is,” LaMont said.

Fortunately the pessimism of some was countered by a modestly more hopeful attitude from other Alvernia students.

Connor Mustakas, sophomore, believes that we do have peace depending on who you ask. “America has peace for some, not all. Economically, someone can live peacefully. I think America has peace, but I don’t think there is a time when everyone had peace,” Mustakas said.

“It is up to the individual to live what peace is. You can live with ten dollars to your name and still have peace.”

Other students are more hopeful about the prospects of a more peaceful world. Alexis Travers, sophomore, has high hopes about peace in America.

Who Is Truly At Fault for Alvernia’s Parking Woes?

By Mia Capizola
Contributing Writer

Alvernia students often complain about parking. Commuters struggle the most, being entirely reliant on on-campus parking to be able to get to class on time.

Will Grigas, senior political science major, commuted for a while before eventually moving on campus. “Tuesday and Thursdays were the worst,” Grigas said. “I had to get here early to get a spot. People would be parking on the grass and by the islands.”

The recent snow made it difficult for people to find parking spots. Snowdrifts sometimes covered up formerly available spots, leaving students with nowhere to turn.

Upperclassmen also have parking challenges. “It wouldn’t be so bad if we weren’t in the last car, but we have to walk all the way around. It could have been laid out way better,” Deitrich said. Kaila Deitrich, senior education major, spent three years parking in I Lot.

“I have been parking down there for three years now since I lived in the Pods my sophomore year,” Deitrich said.

“Wouldn’t it be so bad if it were just us, but we have to walk all the way around. It could have been laid out way better.”

Deitrich now lives in Piscelli, and walks down to her car every day to go student teaching. There is a parking lot directly in front of Piscelli, but Kaila has to walk around to the stairs leading to I Lot and down to her car.

“I have to get there by 8:30 and I leave school to go to field work and every day I have to park into a spot that still has snow,” Gonsalves said. “A parking garage for I Lot could cut on snow removal.”

A parking garage for I Lot could also make parking safer, as some students still try to back into spots where snow has not been removed.

“I leave school to go to field work and every day I come back I have to park into a spot that still has snow,” Gonsalves said. “It has gotten better now that the snow has started to melt, not because the school has taken care of the snow.”

One episode that shocked Harms was a student with consecutive tickets. “A student appealed that his windshield was smashed and he didn’t get a new pass, but he got one right after the appeal,” he said.

“But then five appeals later his name came up again that he didn’t have a parking pass. He parked illegally and got another ticket. He used the same excuse and said he got a parking pass right after appealing, but yet again he didn’t.”

According to Harms, the committee has waived some tickets due to the snow shrinking the number of spots, but this will likely change when the weather improves. To try to make parking easier on students, some students have proposed that the university invest in more parking facilities.

“A parking garage for I Lot could cut on snow removal,” Deitrich said. A parking garage for I Lot could also make parking safer, as some students still try to back into spots where snow has not been removed.

“I leave school to go to field work and every day I come back I have to park into a spot that still has snow,” Gonsalves said. “It has gotten better now that the snow has started to melt, not because the school has taken care of the snow.”
Talk of the Town: The Veterans Club

By Edgar J. Hartung, M.A., J.D.
Criminal Justice Department Chair; Former Captain, U.S. Air Force

The Alvernia University Veterans Club touches the lives of many people in our community.

“Our Veterans Club is a key source of affinity and support for our student veterans, and serves as an important link between our veterans and the rest of the university community,” Dr. Joseph Gcala, Vice President of University Life and Dean of Students, said.

“Over these first few years of the club’s existence, I’ve personally relied on the officers and members for partnership in several endeavors and they’ve never let me down. Their service to the university community is as valued as their service to our country.”

“I feel the veterans organization here at Alvernia University has been a good thing for all of the veterans enrolled.”

Brian Johnson, military veteran and interim President of the Alvernia University’s Veterans Club, said.

“It gives us the sense of support and community that we once had while serving.”

“The Veterans Center is especially a nice touch. It is a place for us to go to take a step back, relax, and catch our breath.”

Speaking from personal experience, when stress is peaked, so are the symptoms of post-traumatic stress. This makes everything more difficult. I am grateful for what Alvernia has done (and continues to do) for us to make a higher education experience a fulfilling one.”

Dr. Karen Cameron, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, sees the Veterans Club as a critical resource for her students.

“Multiple veterans from the club have graciously offered their time and shared their very personal stories regarding military service, their experiences, and their injuries to students in my occupational therapy class.”

“This intimate sharing has helped my students to gain a greater perspective on what it means to serve, an understanding of how that military ethos of service is forever a part of their very being, and how that always must be respected and considered when caring for them.”

“The Veterans Club is a resource for our student veterans to come together in community and to serve those who have served,” Jason Dietz, Assistant Director of Student Financial Planning, said.

“It provides great value and to those who have served and continue to serve. The club’s commitment to service aligns perfectly with Alvernia’s values.”

“The Alvernia Veterans Club means a great deal to me,” Shaun M. Rosteck, military veteran and member of the Alvernia University Veterans Club, said.

“To be around individuals close to my age, maturity, and who hold the same values and commitment to excellence is special. The club offers me the opportunity to help those comrades in arms with tutoring, advice, VA programs and forms, and mentoring. The club allows us to reach a common goal of adjusting to collegiate life by learning together.”

“Our veterans have a chance to continue serving the community through volunteering, event planning, and sharing experiences with those who are open to listening. It’s with pride that I am part of a network of people whom I can count on in times of trouble or an ear to express any issues that arise.”

“For me, the Veterans Club means being around individuals who have had similar experiences,” Heather Foreman, former Third Class Petty Officer U.S. Navy, said.

“The military is its own language, its own training and its own way of life that becomes very ingrained in you from the moment that your feet touch down on the soil at whichever boot camp you are assigned. The various services themselves are subcultures to the overall identity that encompasses being a member of the military service.”

“There are still many commonalities that william, friends, and family members may not understand. The Veterans Center is a private and secure location to talk to others who share similar military experiences. It is also a communal area to share issues or problems...”

“The Veterans Center and Club represent an extension of that military community that we no longer have and we no longer have a part of but still have a connection to. It also gives us capabilities to back to other veterans and active military personnel.”

Roarin’ on the Road

By Justin Strohm
Contributing Writer

The Reading Royals have roared into the hearts of Reading residents. The Royals, who play in the ECHL (East Coast Hockey League) have gelled nicely ever since Larry Bramble of the Royals came to town late in 2009.

The ECHL is a minor league division of hockey where you usually have players start out so as to make their way to the AHL (American Hockey League), and one day hope to make it to the NHL (National Hockey League). Most ECHL teams are affiliated with NHL/AHL teams that would send players for development.

The Royals’ current affiliate is Philadelphia Flyers/Lehigh Valley Phantoms.

During Courville’s reign, the team has earned a solid ECHL Kelly Cup in the 2012-13 season, defeating the Western conference powerhouse Stockton Thunder in five games.

Despite the team’s recent success, the team has a strange quirk. The Royals tend to be better on the road than at their home ice at Santander Arena.

Fortunately the Royals have had better success at home lately as they swept the three game home stand against the Florida Ever-blades. The victories put them in first place overall in the East, and better their home record to (14-6-2).

Currently on the road, the Royals are unbeaten in regulation in 8 straight (8-0-1) and have two more road games in the month of February as they travel to Kalamazoo and Cincinnati. Reading Royals alternate captain and all-time leading scorer Ryan Cruthers speculated about what the magic formula is on the road.

“It’s not really one specific thing on the road but sometimes being away together and bonding carries over on the road,” Cruthers said.

“There are less distractions when you’re on the road, but really we are just a confident team right now.”

Cruthers insists the team doesn’t change a thing on the road, win or lose.

“Mr. Rituals stay the same every game. Nothing has changed since we started our streak, we are just sticking to what’s working.”

The Royals also seem to have a flair for the dramatic, scoring critical goals in the third period.

For some strange reason, the team likes to pour it on out in the final stanza. They have won most of the time when doing so, including a wild 4-3 win over Indianapolis in November. The team was down 0-3 before the third period, but the team peaked, so are the symptoms of post-traumatic stress. This makes everything more difficult. I am grateful for what Alvernia has done (and continues to do) for us to make a higher education experience a fulfilling one.”

“The reason for our third period success is that we have the confidence in our team that no matter what the score going into the third, we know we can win,” Kevin Walrod said.

“Being able to have that confidence has allowed us to have this streak of success and a top team in our league.”

The Royals will have a number of home games coming up as they season winds down. Out of the 13 total home games, the Royals will have seven games at Santander Arena.

This includes match-ups with Elmira Jackals (1st & 2nd), Toledo Walleye (7th & 8th), Kalamazoo Wings (14th & 15th) and Florida Ever-blades (25th).

The team also has nine more games away from the friendly confines of Santander Arena. This will include the team’s first ever trip to Brampton, Ontario for a three game set in the third week of March against the Beast.
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