Alvernia Theatre Serving “Water by the Spoonful”

By Brian O'Shaughnessy Contributing Writer

Who doesn’t love a night at the Theatre? After last semester’s productions of Low Level Panic and Puppets at the Fairground, Alvernia Theatre is getting ready to perform their newest production: Water by the Spoonful by Quiara Alegría Hudes written by Hudes about Elliot as he comes back from the Iraq war.

“We were giving our attention at the beginning of the semester to another play and after auditions it appeared that we had a very unique grouping of actors,” Dr. Nathan Thomas, director of Alvernia Theatre, said. “One of the things that is important to us is having plays that fit the personnel that we have. We’re lucky to have a diverse group of performers.”

Despite last year’s hit productions of What Mighty Magic and Low Level Panic, Dr. Thomas feels no pressure to keep building upon the past successful shows, but to provide the best show possible.

“We work to provide the best show we can provide. One of the things that has been helpful the last year is that we’ve been lucky to have great chemistry.”

When the curtain rises on opening night for Water by the Spoonful, Dr. Thomas hopes that the audience takes something away from it.

Alvernia took part in the 2014 St. Francis Day of Service with iHartHarvest.

Alvernia WiS Third Straight Conference Title

Lifestyle

What Does Lent Mean to You?

Events

What Was All That Jazz At Francis Hall?

Forty Hours: More than a Requirement

By Elizabeth Gonyea Contributing Writer

Alvernia University treats service as the heart of its mission, but sometimes students do not understand why service is important.

“The university’s commitment to service is front and center. The first statement in the Alvernia Course Catalog is, “To instill a spirit of service, Alvernia University requires community service to be completed by all undergraduate students before graduation.”

Its mission statement is “To Learn, To Love, To Serve.”

The specific requirement Alvernia places on students is to undertake 40 hours of community service before they graduate. That is roughly 10 hours a year. Some students complain that being forced to volunteer isn’t actually volunteered.

Brielle Gincley, senior

Spring Fling Approaches

By Meg Francescangeli Contributing Writer

The feeling of anxiousness starts to overwhelm your body. Your head is spinning. You’ve received an email you’ve been waiting for all semester. You open the email and your stomach drops!

“We have the Spring Fling artist. Alvernians to speculate about who will be the next Spring Fling artist. “Once spring time comes around there’s this instant thought of Spring Fling and who the artist is going to be,” Courtney Strautz, senior health care science major, said.

“The feeling of anxiousness starts to overwhelm your body. Your head is spinning. You’ve received an email you’ve been waiting for all semester. You open the email and your stomach drops!”

The warmer weather leads Alvernians to speculate about who will be the next Spring Fling artist. “Once spring time comes around there’s this instant thought of Spring Fling and who the artist is going to be,” Courtney Strautz, senior health care science major, said.

“All the students here, including myself, get so anxious waiting to find out if it will be someone well known!”

This year, Alvernia will be welcoming Dan + Shay and Cassadee Pope to the stage on Saturday May 2.

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The Alvernian

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02

campus news

Myers Files: Alvernia The Anchor

For much of the past academic year, I’ve been working with a group of Alvernia faculty and students assisting the Reading Health System explore ways that it could use its assets as an “anchor institution.”

An anchor institution is an organization closely identified with a community that uses its resources, like its people, or its purchasing power or the properties that it owns, to help revitalize that community.

We’ve brought a number of experts to Reading to help us better understand how universities and hospitals have worked in places like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Lancaster and Worcester, Massachusetts have worked to revitalize those cities, in hope that we can apply those lessons here in Reading.

From its inception as an orphanage, Alvernia has been actively engaged in the life of this community. Since 1991, every student has been required to perform at least 40 hours of community service. Our mission, in part, is to foster “reflective professionals and engaged citizens.”

This commitment to service and community engagement has been a hallmark of Alvernia, as evidenced by the Carnegie Foundation recognition of the University as a “Community Engagement” academic institution.

Alvernia’s commitment to public service was expanded in 2006, when President Tom Flynn announced the creation of the Holleran Center for Community Engagement and the O’Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service. This initiative has expanded Alvernia’s impact in a number of ways.

Today, the Holleran Center for Community Engagement and the O’Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service are active agents in the broader community.

Today, the University is engaged in the community in multiple ways touching the lives of Berks County residents.

Last year, more than 5,000 Alvernia students performed over 33,974 hours of community service. Each day 50 elementary students participate in the South Reading Youth Initiative program. We have over 18 academic courses are offered that include service learning opportunities. In the summer, the Holleran Center hosts a Science Exploratory Camp for 150 elementary students at Angelica Park.

It’s not only Alvernia undergraduates who have been active in the community. Graduate Students in the MALS program are required to do a community based “capstone” project. This year one the projects involved the creation of a scholarship fund to assist community members seeking their high school equivalency diploma, a significant effort in a community in which one-third of the adults didn’t graduate from high school.

Faculty and staff from Alvernia are helping to launch a Health Clinic in the Oakbrook Public Housing development, where students and faculty will help deliver care to low-income residents.

Over time, it is anticipated that the programming at the clinic will expand to include financial and adult literacy training, counseling and social work services, nutrition education and other family centered programs.

Alvernia has also launched a number of educational partnerships with local businesses to address their education and training needs. We have academic partnerships with other local academic institutions, such as the Reading Health System School of Health Sciences and the Reading Area Community College.

While it is natural to focus on higher education, Alvernia recently launched the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program, designed to encourage students in Reading to remain in school and graduate. Some of these students will ultimately come to Alvernia for college, where we have built a support network to help them succeed.

This year, Alvernia provided over 500 hours of tutoring and college readiness preparation to intermediate and high school students in Reading and enrolled the first cohort of scholars on the Alvernia campus.

Alvernia has also supported the community through its research capacity. The Vital Signs report, produced for the Berks County Community Foundation, was extremely well received.

The University is now producing a series of more targeted reports, focusing on issues such as basic education, brain drain and the health of non-profit organizations.

The University hosts a number of public lectures on issues such as interfaith dialogue, ethics, civility and public service. One of the largest lectures is the First Year Seminar Lecture which has featured speakers such as Jonathan Kozol and Coach Mark Smalwood.

The University has also partnered with community organizations such as Common Heart, the Greater Reading Junior League and the Greater Reading Immigrant Project on important community-oriented programs.

Through the annual Literary Festival, the University’s arts and theater programs and more recently its participation in the Berks Jazz Festival, Alvernia is an important contributor to the cultural life of the community.

Alvernia contributes to the community in some other significant ways. Leadership Berks has helped train over 800 county residents to serve on community boards.

The University makes an annual contribution to the City of Reading, and rather than removing all of our property from the tax rolls, we have chosen to pay taxes on some of our properties.

In partnership with the City of Reading and the Berks Conservancy, Alvernia maintains Angelica Park, which is not only a significant recreational asset, but also a substantial environmental landmark in the region as a stream restoration project.

By hosting the Reading Police Academy, the University also supports a vital city agency, the Reading Police Department.

Alvernia makes significant contributions to our community. But over the coming months, we may accept the challenge of identifying new, creative ways that we can strengthen both our region and the University.

Write for the Alvernian! Fame and fortune await.
Spring Fling Approaches (Continued from Pg. 1)

Dan + Shay are a country band composed of Dan Smyers and James Shay Mooney. "Dan + Shay brings a different style to Alvernia," Matt Pyne, Campus Activities Board executive, said. "They have a unique country style and our students are really excited for Spring Fling because of their notoriety." Their band was not the first time fame came into the lives of Dan + Shay. Mooney started as a solo artist for T-Pain's label, and Dan was in a previous band called Bonadventure.

"We discussed her feelings about service at Alvernia. "Whether it is volunteering at an after school program, a community garden, or a nursing home, volunteering to help others is something everyone should experience," Gincley said. 

"I live by the quote, 'the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.' After service, I know that I have made a difference in someone's life, even if I only see them that one time I do service for them."

Gincley also believes service should be a requirement. "[Service] teaches you many life lessons that cannot be taught in the classroom. Alvernia has the service-learning classes, which I believe is a great way to blend classroom learning with actual service."

"I do not see it as a burden in completing 40 hours of service; it is much easier than people think." The university considers service important enough to require students to take part in for a variety of reasons. Jessica Umbenhauer, the assistant director of community engagement on campus, believes that the service requirement is vital to a complete Alvernia education. "Alvernia has service as a condition because service is a core value of the Franciscan tradition, and it is something that the Beradine Franciscan sisters see as a crucial living service," Umbenhauer said.

"We should give back to the community, and students should apply what they are learning in the classroom to the Commonwealth," she said. There are many options for service. One option for students is to go on Alternative Break. Campus Ministry organizes weekly service trips during university holidays, such as Spring Breaks. Alternative Break typically has students travel to a location to immerse them in an impoverished area's culture while they complete a service project.

This year alone, there have been alternative breaks to Philadelphia, West Virginia, and there will be a trip to Tennessee to rebuild a home.

"This gives students the chance to travel, get knowledge of the area they are in, and earn the 40 hours of community service hours. Brian Ballantine, Alvernia's campus minister, discussed the importance of community service and how it is more than just a requirement. "I think it is important to require community service. First, it pushes students to make concrete connections between some of the things they learn in the classroom with what actually happens in the real world."

"For example, a conversation about urban education makes more sense to students that have volunteered in an after school program than it does in a classroom," Ballantine then discussed how it could help a student's morality. "Punishment as a school is to form 'ethical leaders with moral courage,' and I believe that service, when it is done well, helps students see the people whom they are serving as real people, formed in the image and likeness of God, and so they realize the issues that are affecting this person, also affect them as part of the human family."

"I went to Camden, New Jersey," Reed said. "It was an awesome experience because I was submersed in a community that I didn't know, and I was able to help as well as meet new people."

"I believe her experiences are representative of most Alternative Breaks. She felt that the experience helped to make her a better person. "I get to devote my time and relieve stress that other people have on Alternative Breaks. As an Alternative Break leader, I can let people know the strengths they have and help them in situations that people have."

"It changes you as a person. It changes me personally each time that I go."

For more information about service opportunities contact the Holleran Center at (610) 790-1925 or email Jessica Umbenhauer at Jessica.Umbenhauer@alvernia.edu.

Happy art thou, darling insect, Who, upon the trees' tall branches, By a modest draught inspired, Singing, like a monarch livest! To The Grasshopper" -- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "To The Grasshopper"
Advance into the Future with the Alumni Association

By Aubrianna Stafford
Contributing Writer

Every student benefits from the work that the Institutional Advancement Office does, but few students know how the office does its business. The Institutional Advancement Office works to build and continue Alvernia’s relationships with alumni, friends, students and their families. They fundraise and friend-raise, meaning that they work hard to raise money for the school and its departments through these relationships, allowing Alvernia to continue improving its facilities and programs.

For example, the building of the Campus Commons and renovations to Francis Hall and the Franco Library were all made possible because of donations to university. Many students would be surprised to learn that the hard work of this office helps pay for about a quarter of every student’s tuition. “73% is what students actually pay, and that other 27% is picked up by friends, alumni and others,” Jennifer Reimert, Assistant Dean of Student Support Services for Graduate and Adult Education, said that Mr. DeSantis’s students held a lot of respect for his MAT 208 (Statistics) classes.

Mr. DeSantis even went out of his way to make scheduling one of his classes easier for students. According to Reimert, “[DeSantis] became aware that the RN to BSN students often had difficult scheduling statistics due to their work and course schedules, and offered a Friday afternoon semester section that was great for these students and others.”

Many adjuncts make sacrifices for the sake of their students’ education. Adjuncts at Alvernia are paid a lower salary than that of full time teachers and do not receive benefits. But according to adjunct theology teacher Joe Owen, that’s not the point of being an adjunct.

“It is necessary to obtain the most recent and accurate information related to the subject being taught and to develop a class presentation that is accurate, succinct, encourages participation and is an effective learning experience for the students,” Owen said.

Such sacrifices have also proven fruitful. Owen also serves as a Permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. To him, teaching theology at Alvernia is a reward in its own right. “I believe teaching at Alvernia is an outstanding, fulfilling and rewarding experience,” Owen said.

“I have the opportunity to teach Alvernia students about God, foundational aspects of the Catholic faith, and offer them a broad overview of other religions and practices,” Dr. Michael Withner, an adjunct history and economics professor at Alvernia, was invited to teach at Alvernia in 2010 after retiring from his 30 year career in secondary education.

“I was just thrilled to have the opportunity to teach Alvernia University after my public school retirement,” Witmer said.

And giving up retirement has certainly reaped great rewards. “In 2013 I was honored to receive Alvernia’s Saint Bernardine Award for teaching excellence, at the Spring awards ceremony.” Unfortunately, this may be Witner’s last semester at Alvernia.

“The passing of Mr. DeSantis, and the upcoming departure of Dr. Witmer, reminds students to appreciate the work that adjuncts do to educate their students, before they’re gone.”

As students become alumni themselves, the hope is that they give back to help support future students. “Yours are the shoulders that future alumni will stand on through your giving...” Jung said, paraphrasing a former colleague.

Students can get involved with the Institutional Advancement office by working at the call center in the Alumni House, becoming a Student Ambassador and—of course—making a donation.

This year they are also starting a “thank-a-thon” where students can call or make hand written notes to say thank you to the donors. For more information about the Institutional Advancement Office, contact Marlene Schutz, Administrative Assistant, at 610.796.8259, email marlene.schutz@alvernia.edu or visit the office located in the Upland Center room 206.
Alvernia Theater Getting Ready to Lift Curtain (Continued from Pg. 1)

“Water by the Spoonful has both comic moments and dramatic moments,” Dr. Thomas said, “but it shows us people who have real lives, real problems, real desires to have real relationships with people and the dissonance that is in our lives, as well as the need for resolution and forgiveness, which I think is very Franciscan.”

“I hope people come away from it and having enjoyed it but also have an experience of dissonance, resolution, and the real importance of love and forgiveness in our lives.”

Water by the Spoonful opens on April 16 in the Francis Hall theater. It plays April 16 through 18, and April 23 through 25 at 8 each evening. There will also be a matinee on Sunday April 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets are free for all Alvernia students and faculty, but $5 for others.

Jerry Holleran’s “Irish Green” Smiles on Alvernia

By Marisa Then
Editor

On March 17, Alvernia University hosted the opening reception for artist Jerry Holleran’s “Irish Green” exhibit in the Miller Gallery. The exhibit features 25 of Holleran’s oil and watercolor paintings.

Oil painting is painting with pigments that are bound with a medium of drying oil. Watercolor paintings are created by pigments of paints that are suspended in a water-soluble vehicle.

Holleran began his artistic career in the 1970s when he took watercolor classes at the Yocum Institute of Fine Arts in Wyomissing. “It was the teacher that really got me interested,” Holleran said.

Although he went on a hiatus for over two decades because of his business, he continued his art career in 2001 by taking water media classes.

Holleran doesn’t have a particular favorite when it comes to his finished pieces. All of his works are of equal importance to him. “They are all like children,” he said. “They are quite delightful when you look back at them. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder in the art world.”

Aside from his hiatus, Holleran has been practicing with oil pastels and watercolors for quite a while. “Just follow your muse,” he says to prospering artists. “People with artistic talent opt one way or another. Find an opportunity to release the genie from the bottle.”

Holleran has completed numerous paintings during his long artistic career. While he has sold some of his paintings, his interest in art is not primarily about producing sale pieces. In May of 2006, Holleran had a showing at the Yocum Institute for Arts in which he sold over 50 paintings, donating all of his proceeds to the Institute.

“I’m not only interested in selling my work. I enjoy art for the joy of art itself,” Holleran said.

“He’s very charitable for the arts,” Bruce Becker, Alvernia art professor said. “He’s had a lot of support throughout the community for many years.”

Alongside creating his art, Holleran is a member of the Berks Art Alliance. Every Thursday, the group runs workshops to help artists find places to display their work. He also has a hand in Goggle Works and other art organizations.
The Mighty Bats of the Lady Crusaders

By Precious Dennis
Contributing Writer

Alvernia students may know less about the women’s softball team than its baseball team, but Crusader softball is just as spirited. The softball team’s record is 6-4 after their most recent game against Washington College. The Crusaders won both their games against Washington College with a score of 2-0 and 4-0. Last year their record was 24-15. The coach of the softball team is Kathleen DeJulio. Coach DeJulio was hired as the softball coach in January 2014. Previously DeJulio worked at Wilson High School for three seasons as the head coach. At Wilson High School she led the Bulldogs to a 41-19 record and their first Berks County Championship. She received the Lancaster/Lebanon Carpenter Gap Coach Award in 2012 and was named 2012 Berks County Coach of the Year. Coach DeJulio was a 4-year starter at Lebanon Valley College. She was a NFCA-All Start Scholar Athlete from 2007-2009. She was a three-time member of the MAC Academic Honor Roll. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education with certification in Special Education, and is finishing up a Master’s in Classroom Technology from Wilkes University.

The Crusader softball team is hopeful about their season. Shannon Grim, a senior who plays first and third base, knows that the MAC is competitive, but thinks the Crusaders are up to the task. “Our league is very competitive,” Grim said. “We are ready for this competition. We worked and worked really hard.”

“I hope that the team finishes with a winning season,” Grim said. “The team goal is, as it always is, to win the MAC championship. We have a lot of potential, despite the vast competition in our conference.”

Alvernia College softball is being consistent at the plate, said one of the runners is really important, but is also one of the challenges of softball.”

Katy Lutz, a pitcher for the team, said one of the challenges of softball is the mental aspect of the game. “A challenge of softball is being consistent at the plate,” Grim said.

Taylor Malinish, a sophomore second baseman, thinks the key to victory in college softball comes back to fundamentals. “You have to work hard on your fielding and batting to make it consistent for competing at the collegiate level,” Malinish said.

Cracked Crusader Courts to be Caulked

By Rebecca Perkins
Editor

The cracks are a problem for the players because they add randomness into ball bounces. When the ball hits a crack on the court, the crack can cause the ball to bounce unpredictably. In matches, the ball hitting a crack can be annoying for the home and away teams. Senior marketing major, Julie Seidel, has played tennis for three years for Alvernia’s women’s tennis team.

“When you are playing a match and the ball hits a crack, you have no idea where the ball will go, but this is something you have to be prepared for when you play at Alvernia,” Seidel said.

There are also fewer tennis courts at Alvernia than at other MAC schools. Most schools in Alvernia’s conference have at least five tennis courts at their home facility. Alvernia’s women’s and men’s tennis teams play their home matches on these four tennis courts in Angelica Park.

In one tennis match, nine matches make up the whole score. When the Alvernia teams play at home, they have to fit nine matches onto four courts. Because of this shortage of courts, home matches can last long into the night because everyone has to wait around for a court to open up.

Seidel is not a fan of her home courts. “I actually prefer playing away matches at other schools because our home matches take forever on the four courts,” Seidel said.

“The women’s tennis team is good this year too, so it would be nice to have courts that legitimate and add to our program.” Fortunately, there are renovations for Alvernia’s tennis courts in the future. Alvernia’s Athletic Director, Bill Stiles, is excited for the renovation plans that will be taking place in the near future.

The tennis courts have large cracks that can add unpredictability to the play. “When you are playing a match and the ball hits a crack, you have no idea where the ball will go,” Julie Seidel, senior tennis player, said.

The plan for new courts is already in place, but there is no timetable for the plan yet. “The Campus Master Plan and Athletics and Recreation Long Range call for the four existing courts to be rebuilt on their existing site with new sub-base preparation and grading,” Stiles said.

“It also calls for two additional courts to be built adjacent to the four existing courts” The tennis teams and coaches are excited to have six new home courts that they can proudly call their home courts. Head Women’s Tennis Coach, Jennifer Habecker is especially looking forward to the reconstruction as the women’s tennis team is growing and getting stronger each year. “I’m really excited about the plans for the reconstruction of the tennis facility,” Habecker said.

“It will be a great place for us to represent Alvernia University as we strive to become a prominent force within Division III collegiate tennis.”
Alvernia Wins Third Straight Conference Title

By Joshua Smith

Alvernia University (18-10) defeated Stevenson University (21-9) on February 28 at Stevenson to win their third straight Commonwealth Conference title. The Crusaders have now earned four Commonwealth titles in the last five years.

Senior guard Lamont Clark had a game high 22 points and led five MVP honorees in his last conference game in his collegiate career.

The choice as MVP came as a surprise to Clark. “I was shocked,” Clark said. “I felt that it should have gone to [Harrison Deyo] or [Charles Cooper] because they had amazing games.”

Clark has become one of the most decorated players in Alvernia basketball history. In four seasons at Alvernia, Clark played on three conference championship teams.

“He’s great to say that I won three conference titles,” Clark said. “This one is definitely my favorite one though because it is my last.”

While the Crusaders won the Commonwealth, they lost their first game of the Division III Tournament. The Crusaders fell on March 5 to the American College of America (23-5) 87-80 at the Cardinals’ home court.

Before the NCAA Tournament game, the Crusaders were on a seven game winning streak, all against conference foes.

Clark believes that the team’s winning streak at the end of the season was because of the teams growing confidence in each other.

“We began connecting with each other,” Clark said. “We grew closer.”

Senior forward Harrison Deyo said that the Crusaders tough early schedule is what helped the team grow together.

“We started off the year with a bunch of hard tests on the road and that made us stronger,” Deyo said. “We will take a lot of positives away from his four years on the Alvernia Basketball team.”

“I take a strong brotherhood first and foremost,” Deyo said. “This is my second family.”

The Crusaders will have to replace three important seniors on the team next season.

Thousand-point scorer and leading assist, Clark, and leading rebounder on the team, Deyo, are leaving in May, as well as senior guard Kirby Turner.

Deyo believes that the Crusaders will out play all of their expectations next season.

“The sky is the limit for them,” Deyo said. “It seems that everyone counts Alvernia out every year and in turn we play like underdogs.”

The fans are going to miss Harrison Deyo’s dunks when the other team least expects it.

She’s The Wanner

By Peter MacNamee

On Friday, March 13, Alvernia’s Heather Wanner completed at the NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Wanner ran a personal best time of 7.73 seconds in the 60 meter dash and placed 10th in the event.

Wanner was the first Alvernia athlete to compete at an NCAA Championship meet since the spring of 2013. It has been difficult this year to browse Alvernia’s athletic page without seeing Heather Wanner’s name or picture on the ticker.

The sophomore Health Care Science major from Fleetwood, Pa. ran a new school record six times in the 60 meter dash and four times in the 200 meter dash during the indoor Track and Field season.

In a sport where personal bests don’t always come easily, Wanner says that confidence is key when running in big meets.

“Track is obviously a physical sport, but it is just as much as a mental sport... You have to tell yourself you’re the best one there!” Wanner said.

Wanner has always been a talented runner in her time at Alvernia.

In her first year, she finished between 4th and 6th place in short sprinting events at the Indoor and Outdoor MAC Championships.

She reached the lower levels of the podium, but a coveted gold medal eluded her.

As a sophomore, Heather left the Indoor MAC Championships with 1st place finishes in the 60 meter dash and the 200 meter dash, plus a 2nd place finish in the long jump.

Wanner attributes her improvement to better-like style habits. “...as a freshman, I would always stay up so late and never get enough sleep. I would always be so tired the next day,” she said.

Another factor was time management. To help with getting more sleep, I decided to get all of my homework done during the day.”

Alvernia’s head Track and Field coach, Eric Bennett, says that falling short of a medal her first year motivated her to improve.

“Athletic year, having not earned a medal at the conference championships, Heather recognized that more needed to be done in order to get to that level,” Bennett said.

“She began dedicating herself to lifting regularly and heavy, committing to running at the prescribed paced in workouts, and improving her lifestyle outside of practice. She has seen great success from an individual standpoint. What cannot show up on the results page is the sprinter’s positive impact on her teammates.”

Wanner has seen great success from an individual standpoint. What cannot show up on the results page is the sprinter’s positive impact on her teammates.

Senior teammate Erin Verdon elaborates on how Wanner’s energy extends beyond herself.

“She is a great training partner,” she said. “She pushes her teammates to practice and compete at their best. She demonstrates the definition of a student-athlete. She is humble of her accomplishments, but knows she will do her best in any competition.”

Coach Bennett believes that when an athlete succeeds as an individual, the entire team is responsible.

“While track is an individual sport, you need the support of the team to perform at any level,” he said. “Each and every member of the team is a part of Heather’s record-setting season.”

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Is 2TRU for You?

By Genesis Ciriaco
Contributing Writer

Kyle Kopervas, Alvernia alum, has a saying, "Staying true to yourself, that is what life is about." Kopervas said.

"Everyone wants clothing to match their shoes, so it's only right," Kopervas said. "Pretty successful too." Kopervas had 2TRU under development for many years. He began developing concepts for 2TRU during his last year at Wyoming Seminary Prep School with the help of his close friends.

He made several shirts with varied designs and began wearing them around school.

Kopervas began working at the Villa in August 2013 as a sales associate. He enjoyed working, communicating and networking with customers and his coworkers.

The Villa helped Kopervas learn about making sales and pushing new designs. He aspired to put 2TRU alongside his favorite brands.

Kopervas was thrilled once the Villa put his brand in their stores. Customers have responded well to the brand.

Kopervas hopes to have 2TRU eventually sold in other local Villas. Such as Lancaster or Harrisburg, but is satisfied with the first release.

Kopervas is working on another line of 2TRU. He also took on a student intern, Genesis Ciriaco, to help promote the clothing line and events through advertising, social media, posters, videos and more.

"The 'sneaker villa' was opened in downtown Reading, PA. It's a day where villa employees and customers can connect and trade shoes or just hang and feel the realness of the room," Kopervas said.

"This event is a community party for all to enjoy. At the end of the day it all ties back to the fact that we're doing which started in 1989 when the first Villa opened," said Kopervas.

Preparing for Spring

By Christopher Casciotti
Contributing Writer

Have you had a Franciscan Friday?

Franciscan Fridays are daylong service projects that Alvernia students can take part in once a month.

The most recent Franciscan Friday was on March 13. Alvernia students helped at Amanda's Garden, located on South 10th Street in Reading.

Amanda's Garden provides opportunities for local residents to grow their own vegetables, herbs, and flowers. This allows the people in the community a chance to make their own foods. Sometimes people living in the city do not have opportunities like this to plant and grow their own food or flowers.

Dr. Ryan Lange helps to keep the community together and gives them a chance to meet new people. Plus, keeping the garden clean and in use is good for the environment.

Alvernia students worked with the Berks Conservancy to clean up the garden.

29 students and three workers from the Hollerman Center helped prepare the garden for people to plant flowers or produce. Students prepared the beds, as well as taking down one that was around some of the beds. The students also put down fresh topsoil to help new plants grow.

"I would say the service we provided was very much needed in the city of Reading. We helped prepare one of the city's community gardens so that some of the residents may grow vegetables," Kevin Shanlise, senior theology and psychology double major, said.

The Berks Conservancy gives area residents access to the garden. Some people may not understand that healthy, fresh, and organic produce can be hard to come by and expensive in the city.

This project helped some residents to be more prepared to grow the food they need.

"It was so inspiring to spend a beautiful late winter's day working at Amanda's Garden," Director of the Hollerman Center, Jay Worrall, said.

He also got a visit from a friend who has not seen in a while.

As a Community Organizer in the City I had worked with Pete along with Larry Lloyd of the Berks Conservancy and Mike Stralo, Principal of Amanda Stout Elementary School to create Amanda's Garden almost exactly 10 years ago."

Worrall still has three plots that are used for Amanda's Garden.

Beyond the benefits to the Reading community, working on the garden also helps Alvernia students connect with the world around them.

"It was exactly what I was expecting. I mean this in a good way. I was expecting to get dirty, to have fun, and to work hard and this service did that," Alex Roche, senior biology major, said.

"I enjoy working at community gardens because I know what we're doing is preparing someone to help feed their family with the vegetables they are going to grow," Brielle Gueley, senior marketing major, said.
What Does Lent Mean to You?

By Gabrielle Valenti

The season of Lent prepares Catholics for Easter Sunday. During Lent, people are supposed to engage in conscious penance and self-denial, as well as taking extra time to help others. When Easter Sunday arrives, participants should have taken the time to better themselves spiritually.

People practice Lenten penance in many ways. Some people believe Lent is a period to give something up, such as junk food or soda. Other people use Lent to do good for themselves or for others.

A few Alvernia students and faculty members have different perspectives on what Lent means to them.

Tyler Arnold, junior Athletic Training major, finds Lent to be a time of focused reflection.

"Lent is a time of self-sacrifice and reflecting on how blessed we really are. I think that Lent is suppose to help us realize that so many little things have a great influence in our lives and can distract us from the important things," says Erin McAleer, first year Occupational Therapy major, who decided that she would make this year’s Lenten season different from the others.

"This year for Lent I wanted to do something more than just giving up chocolate or soda. I wanted to do something that would make me grow in faith and in personal relationships, and I believe I’ve found something that will allow me to do just that." To grow in her faith, McAleer is writing a letter to a different person each of the 40 days of Lent. Each day she will pick someone from that list and write a thank you note to that person telling them how she appreciates all they do for her.

"I have compiled a list of 40 people who have taught me something, changed me in some way, or inspired me," McAleer said.

Kely Caddy, Director of Campus Ministry, uses contemplation to help frame her Lenten practices.

"When I wake up each morning, before I do anything, I allow myself to sit quietly for a moment, take a deep breath, smile and say ‘Okay, good morning, God. What are we going to do today?’ Caddy said. “This helps remind me that I am not in charge, God is. My job is to listen and be mindful of the ways I am to best follow with my given strengths” she said. “One way people can challenge themselves every day is by asking ‘How am I living Lent?’”

Sister Paula Nowak reminds students to approach Lent positively. “Lent is not a time of negative giving up, but rather a time of positive action,” she said.

“Lent is a great way to show your love for God and others. We have to help each other be the best person that we can be, so let’s make a difference together.”

Hypnotic or Psychotic?

By Alysse Caparoni

Is hypnosis real, or are its effects merely an illusion? Alvernia University’s Campus Activities Board brought hypnotist Don Barnhart to Francis Hall on Thursday, February 19. Students that attended Barnhart’s came to believe that hypnosis is the real deal.

Francis Hall was filled with students eager to see what hypnosis was all about. Barnhart gave any student who wanted to be hypnotized the opportunity to come up to the stage and be hypnotized.

Barnhart was able to put some students into a trance. Other students were not as receptive.

Amber Nikolaus, junior communication major, was unaffected by hypnosis but enjoyed the show anyway.

“All of my friends were hypnotized and it was hilarious to see them just be crazy and do things they would not normally do,” she said. “I could tell it was real because they did things that they would never do on their own.”

The student audience enjoyed the hypnotic show. Carla Brough, junior biology major was another one of the students who had the chance to experience being hypnotized.

“I liked how relaxed I felt during the hypnosis,” she said. “It cleared my mind and put me at ease.”

Beyond making people act silly on stage, hypnosis can help people battle addiction, achieve their goals, and even create a better memory.

Barnhart got started doing hypnosis in order to battle his stage fright.

“You can convert your fear into excitement,” he said. “In the relaxed state, or trance we use key words and NLP (neural linguistic programming) to lock in a new thought.”

“The catch is that a habit takes 21-30 days to build or break, so you have to repeat the process for a few weeks to create long-term change.”

Barnhart knows that some people don’t believe in hypnosis, but thinks his show helps to answer the criticisms of skeptics.

“I’m thrilled to do a show that is both exciting and empowering,” he said. “I love it when people come up after the show to ask questions, especially the skeptics that have changed their mind after the show.”

Barnhart wants people to give hypnosis a chance and realize that it is so beneficial to learn the skill so that you can help yourself benefit from it.

“People say, they ‘can’t’ be hypnotized which I think is funny,” he said. “They basically ‘hypnotized’ themselves with the belief system that they can’t be hypnotized.”

“Hypnosis is really just a deep state of focus and concentration very similar to guided meditation.”

If you want more information on hypnotism and Barnhart, you can visit his website at www.donbarnhart.com. Barnhart also offers 15 dollar self-improvement CDs on his website for anyone who is interested in trying out hypnosis for themselves.
What Was All That Jazz At Francis Hall?

By Brad Vangel
Contributing Writer

The 25th annual Berks Jazz Festival began March 18, 2015 at Alvernia University with a performance by jazz vocalist Cyrille Aimée. This was the final concert of Alvernia’s 2014-2015 Performing Arts Series.

Aimée is a French native who grew up traveling the streets of Europe at a young age. It was during this time that she fell in love with music.

Although she fell in love with music so early in life, her dream as a little girl was not to be a singer.

“As a little girl I wanted to be an archaeologist, like Indiana Jones, or an astronaut,” Aimée said. “But then I just wanted to sing, and I kept going and it took off from there.”

She moved to America for a brief period when she was three years old, before moving back to France. She began learning English at a young age, and now sings in both French and English.

“In France, we learn English in school,” Aimée said. “I learned English when I was younger and then I fresned up when I came here [America] to live. I watched every movie in its original version, no subtitles. All the jazz songs I learned taught me English too, because they were all in English.”

Aimée took the stage with her band. The band is composed of four male musicians; a drummer, an electric guitarist, and two bassists. She played songs from her 2014 album “It’s a Good Day” which contains songs with lyrics in both English and French.

One song she performed in English was One Way Ticket. She and her band bought a one-way ticket to India and had no plans on when they would return. They ended up staying for a month. She was so inspired by her experience in the South Asian country that she decided to write a song about it.

“I remember as soon as I came out of the airport, the smell of the curry in the streets was like a slap in the face,” she said. “I’ve seen a lot of countries and to me, India was the most different.”

She won first prize at the Montreux Jazz Vocal Competition in 2007 and the Sarah Vaughn International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2012. Since then, she has been proclaimed “one of the most promising jazz singers of her generation,” according to Will Friedwald of The Wall Street Journal.

The New York Daily News also said of Aimée: “This French jazz singer’s voice has so much character that all her songs fly.”

“It’s difficult to really realize and grasp what it means,” she said. “It feels amazing.”

In America today, jazz is one of the least popular music genres. In 2011, 11 million jazz albums were sold, which represents only 2.8% of all music sold that year. That number has dropped to 2% in 2014.

Aimée realizes that jazz is unpopular to today’s youth. She believes the lack of availability children and young adults have to it is the main problem.

“The problem with jazz is not that young people don’t like it, it’s just not available to them like all the other stuff,” Aimée said.

“There’s many things to do so that it becomes available. Lady Gaga doing a jazz CD is great because then all her fans are going to look it up and come across Frank Sinatra and things like that. It’s not on TV or the radio enough.”

Gershwin on Broadway

By Ryan Weber
Editor

Alvernia honored Black History Month on Friday, February 27 with a performance by world-renowned pianist Leon Bates in the Francis Hall Theater.

Bates began the night by performing the music of one of the greatest composers in American history, George Gershwin, in front of a packed house.

Baritone Robert Sims and soprano Louise Toppin accompanied Bates.

Bates, a Philadelphia native, received a lifetime achievement award in 2007 from the National Association of Negro Musicians, as well as the Pennsylvania Artist of the Year Award in 2001.

Carol N. Schwaner, Associate Professor of Music, thought the performance was a wonderful opportunity for the Alvernia community.

“One of the missions of the Performing Arts Series is to bring nationally known artists to campus,” Schwaner said. “It’s for the benefit of the Alvernia community as well as for the regional community in general.”

Bates began the night with a piano solo called “Broadway Overture,” demonstrating his immense talent.

As the evening went on, Sims and Toppin joined Bates with a number of different tunes. They enhanced the show, making it more lively and exciting. Their duets were especially fun to watch, demonstrating good chemistry on stage.

Deborah Greenawald, associate professor of nursing at Alvernia, was in attendance for the Bates concert.

“The energy and emotion between the two singers was fabulous, and I loved the way they made so many classic Gershwin songs into a story-line,” she said.

After a short intermission, Bates continued his performance. He led off the second half of the show with a number called “Someone to Watch Over Me.” Sims and Toppin joined in during this lively rendition.

“Bates finished the concert with his own piano transcription and arrangement of the “Rhapsody in Blue”, I knew we had reached the pinnacle of musical excellence for an already wonderful evening,” Greenawald said.

“Nothing could top that!” A masterful performance like Bates’ requires special preparation. The university needed access to a nine foot Steinway piano in order to secure the Bates show.

“Bates is known as a Steinway artist, which means in his contract you must have an excellent Steinway, the crowd knew they were in for something special. It was a night filled with a wonderful mixture of music and song.”

Oh prophetic bird so bright, Blossom-songster, cuckoo bight!

In the fairest time of year, Dearest bird, oh! deign to hear What a youthful pair would pray, Do thou call, if hope they may: Thy cuck-oo, thy cuck-oo.

Ever more cuck-oo, cuck-oo!

-- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “The Spring Oracle”
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You Need To Get Engaged At Alvernia

By Alex Harris
Contributing Writer

Some students might think the phrase “student engagement” involves a wedding ring. Fortunately, getting involved on campus does not require a lifelong commitment.

Alvernia offers student activities, intramural sports, Division III sports, study abroad and job opportunities. The majority of opportunities for students to get involved around campus are free, or included in tuition.

Abby Swatchick is the director of Student Activities at Alvernia. Swatchick said that student engagement is the norm. “86% of the undergraduate student population was involved in some type of group, sport or community service opportunity outside of the classroom this past academic school year,” she said.

It is easy to find out when events are taking place. Every student at Alvernia receives a calendar that shows all the scheduled events for a semester broken down by months. These activities vary from Late Night Bowling, Big Prize Bingo, Off to the Movies, Alvernia’s Got Talent, to a trip to Shady Maple. Another way to get engaged at Alvernia University is by participating in one of five intramural sports.

Intramural sports are available for all students and are a good way to stay fit and active. Intramuraills offered at Alvernia include flag football, volleyball, basketball, wiffle ball and soccer.

Junior double business major and the president of IAB, Peter Kee, likes to play intramural sports at Alvernia. “I believe that students who participate in intramural activities gain a better experience at college since it allows oneself to find new friends, blow off the steam, stay competitive, have fun and of course stay in shape,” Kee said.

Playing Division III varsity sport is another great way to get involved on campus. Alvernia has many varsity sports to offer, and many teams have winning records. Scott Dressler, junior communication major plays ice hockey for Alvernia. “I believe playing a club sport on campus is a wonderful experience that allows you to grow both on and off the ice,” Dressler said.

It also helps you to get engaged and grow your diverse circle of friends.” There are eight varsity sports and three club sports. The varsity sports include baseball, basketball, cross country, track and field, lacrosse, soccer and tennis. If this array of sports does not call to your attention, then maybe partake in one of three club activities such as a ice hockey, dance or the cheer team. All of these sports are a good way to avoid the Freshman 15.

Alvernia also has a vibrant study abroad program. Studying abroad allows students to internationally travel and learn during the summer, winter, or even a whole semester.

For more information on Study Abroad, visit http://www.alvernia.edu/student-life/education-abroad/planning/study-abroad/.

By Mia Capizola
Contributing Writer

The dress that went viral and began a debate that almost “broke the internet” has turned into the dress that is bringing awareness to women’s abuse and domestic violence.

This dress originated on Tumblr. Username Swiked posted the picture of the dress and said, “guys please help me - is this dress white and gold, ok? It’s okay. That they deserve domestic abuse is never okay. That is bringing awareness to domestic violence is never okay. That they deserve to be safe and okay to reach out for support and to know that domestic violence is a serious issue. We need to create stigma against domestic violence. We need to create awareness to the issue and brings it to light in the media.”

“This dress with large bruises on her face makes the phrase “student engagement is the norm” applies. Because they apply makeup. This caption reads, “Because they think it was her choice. One in six women are victims of abuse. Stop abuse against woman.”

Users have retweeted the tweet over 8,000 times, and it has earned almost 4,000 likes on Facebook. Another way of the dress sparkles with white and blue on her body. Below the image was this text: “Why is it so hard to see black and blue? The only illusion is if you think it was her choice. One in six women are victims of abuse. Stop abuse against women.”

Users have retweeted the tweet over 8,000 times, and it has earned almost 4,000 likes on Facebook. Another way of that student engagement is the norm. While many Internet users felt the debate was frivolous, other groups decided to take advantage of the attention the dress received to forward important messages.

The Salvation Army’s chapter in South Africa posted an image to their Twitter account on March 6. The image featured a woman wearing the white and gold dress with large bruises on her body. Below the image was this text: “Why is it so hard to see black and blue? The only illusion is if you think it was her choice. One in six women are victims of abuse. Stop abuse against woman.”

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Courses are accredited and readily transferable. Financial Aid may be available; please contact Student Financial Planning to discuss your options.