Dance Marathon reaches $1 million milestone

By Lauren Madison

With over 650 participants from nearly 30 organizations represented in this year’s Dance Marathon, the air was buzzing with aspiration.

But the results of the 24-hour event were even more legendary than expected. The total raised was $92,444.32, bringing the 13-year cumulative total to $1,003,599.60.

The “million-dollar-milestone” reached on Saturday represents 13 years of organizing, fundraising and dancing through the night of organizing, fundraising and Saturday represents 13 years of organizing, fundraising and dancing through the night.

“The event began at 7 p.m. in the Dow Center on Friday, coming to a close when the fundraising totals came in at 7 a.m. on Saturday. Throughout the evening, a line dance was taught to morale shift workers and dancers – both to serve the purpose of a dance event and keep tired minds alert. Coordinating with the hospital all year, each student organization is paired with a family to connect before the event. The trademark phrase “it’s for the kids” is used as motivation in fundraising efforts, reminding participants and sponsors of the real help the marathon provides.

Local businesses also join forces with Hope student organizations to contribute to the marathon, which is affiliated with the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital, the largest of those in the network, recently relocated to a 440,000-square-foot facility which cares for more than 7,600 inpatients and 190,000 outpatients annually.

The proceeds from the marathon go straight toward the programs that help the Dance Marathon kids deal with their illnesses more comfortably. “The millionth dollar became important to me because the goal was challenging but attainable with hard work and dedication,” Voorhorst said. “The marathon drew more participants, visitors and attention than years previous, and I feel so blessed that I was able to be a central part of it,” she said. ”I think we all understood that it was all for the kids. It was brilliant.”

Hope’s spring break immersion trips: Where are you going?

Caitlin Klask
Editor-in-Chief

“Dream Team begins planning and preparation in the fall semester with some minor fundraising, team bonding and theme brainstorming,” said Katherine Voorhorst (’12), co-director of the marathon. “We plan fundraisers for groups to do and essentially try to get the Dance Marathon name out there as early as possible.”

Daniel Marathon participants consist of dancers, who remain in the Dow Center for the full 24 hours, and morale shift workers, who take eight-hour shifts to maintain the optimistic spirit of the dancers.

“Dance Marathon provides a 440,000-square-foot facility which cares for more than 7,600 inpatients and 190,000 outpatients annually. The proceeds from the marathon go straight toward the programs that help the Dance Marathon kids deal with their illnesses more comfortably. “The millionth dollar became important to me because the goal was challenging but attainable with hard work and dedication,” Voorhorst said. “The marathon drew more participants, visitors and attention than years previous, and I feel so blessed that I was able to be a central part of it,” she said. “I think we all understood that it was all for the kids. It was brilliant.”

Hope’s spring break immersion trips: Where are you going?

Lauren Madison
Assistant Editor

East Palo Alto, California

“This trip is all about being immersed in another culture, understanding more about injustice, and growing in our faith.”
- Amy Gagliardi (’13), group leader

Jackson, Mississippi

Members of this immersion trip will be spending a week at the John and Vera Mae Perkins Center for Reconciliation and Development learning issues of race and social injustice in America.

Larche Mobile, Alabama

Members of this immersion trip will be living in an intentional community where adults with or without disabilities live together.

Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota

Members of this immersion trip will help out on the Pine Ridge reservation, providing manual labor while also learning about the culture of its residents.

Southeastern Kentucky

“My hope for this trip is that the students on the trip become more aware about the problems that coal can cause both the the environment and the people surrounding coal.”
-Nate Erber (’12), group leader

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Members of this immersion trip will be working with an organization called the Association for a More Just Society.

Blue Fields, Nicaragua

Members of this immersion trip will be administering lice treatment and pesticide medication to Nicaraguan schoolchildren.

Detroit, Michigan

“We will be traveling to different urban farms throughout the city of Detroit while learning and working with the citizens that run these farms.”
-Michael Atwell (’14), group leader

Newark, New Jersey

Members of this immersion trip will focus on urban ministry and partner with church-organized soup kitchens.

Washington, D.C.

Members of this immersion trip will participate in prison ministries, visiting a D.C. jail, sitting in on courtroom conversations, and meeting with ex-convicts.

Miami, Florida

The purpose of the trip is less about the things that we will be doing in Miami and more about immersing ourselves in the Haitian culture while also learning and serving.”
-Richele Ehardt (’13), group leader

Miami, Florida

“One of the main things we’ll be doing is working with migrant farm workers, but we also could do things like going to a food distribution center or go on a scavenger hunt to learn about the city.”
-Brandon Folkert (’12), group leader

What’s in store? Fine arts, fashion, tennis wins one and loses one this weekend during indoor play. Art and music reviews.}
Celebrating female empowerment at Hope

Lindsey Wolf
Arts Co-Editor

Students, alumni, faculty and administration members gathered in Maas Auditorium March 6 to commemorate women’s studies at Hope College. This celebration would not have been possible without the passionate, dedicated work of Dr. Jane Dickie. Dickie, former director of the women’s studies program and professor of psychology, presented her lecture “Love and Everyday Rebellions: 20+ Years of Women’s Studies at Hope.”

Dickie began her presentation with a quote from one of her heroes, bell hooks: “Love only exists when everyone has rights.” For hundreds of years, women in the U.S. have struggled with inequalities such as the right to vote, equal pay and higher education. And for several decades, Hope failed to recognize the reality of sexual discrimination on its own campus.

In the 1978-9 school year, Dickie, a few faculty members and two students were determined to make Hope aware of its sexual biases. After collecting research, they constructed a report about the status of women at Hope. Dickie and her fellow researchers found that only 15% of faculty were women, none of whom worked in administration, no minority women faculty were hired on campus and only two full-time women worked in the entire science center.

The report also pointed out inequities for female students. While fraternities had houses, sororities had to meet in dorm basements. Male athletes were able to dine at nice restaurants after their games while female athletes ate at McDonald’s. In terms of the curriculum, Hope offered zero courses focusing on women.

Current director of women’s studies, Dr. Jeanne Petit, commented on the inequities female students faced at the time: “It took the activism of faculty, staff and students to point out the inequities of these situations and to fight for them to change,” Petit said.

“We wanted to show current students that fighting for social change is difficult but ultimately rewarding. In the moment, those who struggle to change hearts and minds, to make our community a more equitable, accepting and loving place, can get frustrated by the slow pace of change. But it is worthwhile to look back and see that positive changes have happened.”

As a result of Dickie and her colleagues’ work, Hope College experienced significant changes over the next couple of years including the hiring of more female faculty, changes in housing and the establishment of the women’s studies minor in 1991. Fourteen years later, the women’s studies major was launched at Hope.

During her presentation, Dickie explained the purpose of women’s studies: “The purpose of the program is to transform the sense of self by identifying multiple structures that define us and to transform our sense of relationship with the world which encompasses complexity, diversity and difference,” Dickie said.

Women’s studies explores sexism, racism, classism and cultural issues. The program encourages caring for others and embracing differences. At the end of the presentation, a handful of women’s studies majors shared how the program has helped shape their lives.

Petit is thrilled about the changes the women’s studies program has had students from pretty much any major you can think of. “I love hearing suggestions from students about how to do this!” Petit said.

“I would love to see more double majors and minors in the professional programs, such as business and accounting, education and pre-med,” Petit said. “Those programs are very intense and it is hard to fit in other classes, but we are willing to work with those students to find a way to include women’s studies in their education.”

Petit is thrilled about the direction the women’s studies program is headed. “Like the previous directors, I want to keep educating our majors how the study of women and gender is an essential part of a dynamic Christian education. I also want to build more of a sense of community among our majors and minors outside of the classroom through intellectual and social activities,” Petit said. “I love hearing suggestions from students about how to do this!”

In addition to building community, women’s studies attributes to an academic, social and spiritual well-being. “Without Jane Dickie, there would be no women’s studies department, and without that, I don’t think I would have stayed here at Hope for all four years,” Bull said. “She’s helped create this safe place for us to listen, grow and challenge each other. Women’s studies has helped me become a more whole human being.”
Terror struck Brazzaville, the capital city of the Republic of Congo, in the morning hours of March 4 when a series of large explosions tore through the city after a fire erupted in an arms depot.

As buildings and homes fell to the ground and burning debris fell from the sky, many residents of the city immediately feared that the destruction was the result of a new military conflict. It has only been two years since the country’s devastating 1997 civil war, and the horror is still fresh in their minds. While Defense Minister Charles Zachariellowao quickly put these fears to rest and explained the true cause of the destruction, his words did not bring much comfort to the frenzied city, as early reports suggested that around 200 people were killed in the explosions, and even more were injured. The government denied that Brazzaville was not the only city to fall into a chaotic state after the initial explosions. Across the Congo River in Kinshasa – the capital city of the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo – many residents felt the impact after several buildings were damaged due to the force exerted from the blasts. As in Brazzaville, many civilians feared that a war was breaking out and panicked. Although none were as severe as the initial blasts that took place Sunday morning, the explosions continued for two days. During this time period, Brazzaville ran into numerous obstacles as it tried to provide help to the city’s residents.

Radio Free Asia reported last week that Western China had seen two separate suicides by self-immolation. Both victims were Tibetan women. One, a student from the Maqu county of the Ganau province, died Monday, while a mother of four died over the weekend in Aha, in the Sichuan province. Over the past year there have been about 25 self-immolations in the Tibetan portion of China. These numbers cannot be verified, RFA activists say, because security is tight for the anniversaries of the deaths, and foreign journalists are either being sent away or detained. March, according to activists, is a month when Tibetans are supposed to do more than the usual number of immolations. The month marks the anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s exile in 1959.

There were two immolations in February, a 19-year-old monk and a currently unidentified nun. Four immolations occurred in March. One monk took place in January, the Tibet Sun says, and of the four, three called before their deaths for the return of the Dalai Lama and spoke against the Chinese rule of Tibet.

Following the death of one monk, the Guardian says that hundreds of Tibetans swarmed the local police station, smashing windows and doors. The body of the monk was released to them, and they paraded through streets. Radio Free Asia quotes a source as saying that the man who committed suicide was working “not for his personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans.”

For example, continuous explosions thwarted several attempts to rescue those people who were buried by debris. Hospitals ran low on many supplies and were unable to assist the injured. In addition, many individuals feared that the fires might spread to other arms depots and cause further destruction. Once the blasts stopped, Brazzaville faced a horrible truth – 246 were dead, over a thousand people were injured, and thousands were left homeless. The government also informed the press of rumors that explosives may still be laying around the city that have not been detonated. Now, with the city in the process of planning a mass funeral for those lost in the accident, which has been attributed to a circuit fire within the depot, many people are still in conflict with the government for placing an arms depot so close to residential areas.

In 2009, the Republic of Congo experienced a similar incident, when an arms depot exploded within Brazzaville. Although no one was killed in this occurrence, in the aftermath of that event the government promised to move all arms depots out of the city to prevent tragedy. After the March 4 explosion, many are wondering why the government never lived up to its word. However, the government may have learned its lesson: it has once again rearranged the statue of arms depots within the city would be removed. Brazzaville now faces an uphill battle toward reconstruction. Only time will tell whether the city can rebuild and ensure that an event like this never occurs again.

Tibetans protest through self-immolation

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Chinese officials, according to the Guardian, released a statement alleging that all of the suicides were “outcasts, criminals, and mentally ill.” The top administrator of Aha, an ethnic Tibetan named Wu Zegang, says, “They all have criminal records of suspicious activities. They have a very bad reputation in society.”

The Chinese paper Xinhua claims that some officials say this is the work of Dalai Lama. The officials are claiming that he used his influence to manipulate his followers, and that the suicides are not due to any inside unrest. The Dalai Lama denied such claims.

Perhaps if they do, the weaknesses in Pakistan security and border control might be made plain to the entire world.
Lindsey Wolf
Arts Editor

De Pree Art Center has been home to a variety of artistic mediums: oil paintings, wood and iron sculptures and digital prints, to name a few. But the current exhibit is unique. “Reading Between the Lines: The History and Production of Books Highlighted by the Hope College Rare Book Collection” provides a historical context in addition to the art and technique of printing books.

The exhibit was curated by nine Hope students who took an advanced art history seminar last fall. Dr. Anne Heath-Wiersma, assistant professor of art history and De Pree gallery director, explained how hard her students worked.

“In only 14 weeks, these students accomplished the difficult task of learning a complex and interdisciplinary scholarly area that is book studies: conducting primary research grounded in unpublished primary sources, conceptualizing a cohesive exhibition from a wide variety of examples and writing a catalog,” Heath-Wiersma said.

The exhibit explores the stories behind the rare books including the production, the selling and the printing. The books in De Pree have been borrowed from Hope’s Rare Book Collection, located in Van Wylen, which contains over 1,000 rare volumes dating back to the 15th century. Works penned by Euripides, the Catholic Church, Galileo Galilei and Ralph Waldo Emerson are on display.

“A rare book is any book with relatively few copies and that is of interest to scholars, readers and book collectors,” Katherine Kirby (’12) said.

The exhibit runs through Friday March 23. Admission is free.

Can you imagine not being able to read the Bible on your own? In the 16th century, scripture was translated by the clergy who communicated passages to the people. Before 1539, translating the Bible into English was considered heresy in England. The Van Wylen Library is currently hosting “Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible,” a traveling exhibition for libraries around the country. The exhibit includes a section on misprints such as the “Wicked Bible” of 1631 which contains a crucial mistake in Exodus. The seventh commandment reads “Thou shalt commit adultery.” The church could not have been happy about that typo.

Visitors can read about the lengthy creation of the Bible, which took more than four dozen translators over six years to complete. The Bible is named after King James I because he was its royal sponsor, not because he assisted in its translation.

The exhibit concludes with a section on scripts inspired by the holy book. Works containing a scriptural text compiled from the King James Bible. Linus reads from Luke 2:8-14 in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" to explain what Christmas is all about.

Come celebrate the worldwide impact of the King James Bible— Above, “Manifold Greatness” is here until Friday March 30.

King James Bible— In Van Wylen. "Manifold Greatness" is here until Friday March 30.

Photos by Ann Marie Paparelli

SAFE THE DATE!

Thursday March 15
A Dark Speaking; English Translations of 1 Corinthians 13:12 and What We Can See in Them
Dr. Curtis Gruner, Van Wylen Library Rare Books Reading Room, 3-4 p.m.

Tuesday March 20
The Geneva Bible and the King James Bible
Dr. Eugene Heideman, Winants Auditorium, 1 p.m.

Monday March 26
Chapel Choir Concert
St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday March 28
Guest Artist: Fred Hersch, Jazz Piano
Wichers Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday March 29
The Bible and Shakespeare
Dr. John Gau, Winants Auditorium, 3-4 p.m.
Guest Artist: Robert Lunn, Classical Guitar
Wichers Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

WTHS Album Reviews

‘La Grande’ – Laura Gibson
Reviewed by Sara Sanchez

In 2010 I was exposed to both of Laura Gibson’s full-length albums: “Beasts of Seasons” (2009) and “If You Come to Greet Me” (2006). In those two albums, her fragile voice complemented the gentle folky melodies. Her new album doesn’t differ significantly from her previous works, but her increasing talent is evident. In “La Grande,” Gibson experiments much more with an array of instruments. Her songs are layered with percussion, viola, French horn and clarinet (among other instruments). Her heavy folk and blues sound is still very much present but with added complexities that have totaled to a richer sound. Finally her distinct and unique vocals deliver messages of living and loving uninhibitedly through here well-crafted lyrics. This will be a great addition to your collection of albums for the serene winter evenings upon us. Highly recommend: “La Grande,” “Skin, Warming Skin,” and “The Fire.”

‘undun’ – The Roots
Reviewed by Matt Costello

Though most know The Roots for being the house band on “Late Night with Jimmy Fallon,” the group actually has had a long, successful career as one of the most talented bands in hip-hop. In a genre based using samples, The Roots are unusual; they use live instrumentation. The result is just as much about the music as the raps, and “Undun” is no exception. A concept album about the death of a man told in reverse, the lyrics are cryptic, politically charged and emotional. The group’s MC Black Thought has a flow that’s smooth and rhythmic, and guests including Big K.R.I.T. and Dice Raw help tell the story. Drummer Questlove leads the groove-based band, and the result is sometimes beautiful, sometimes raw and funky. The album shows that the band is as creative as ever.

RARE BOOKS— Above and left, numerous rare books on display in De Pree.
DANCE MARATHON

Features

© Courtesy of Hope PR, Alii Springett, Monica Dwyer
The void

Christopher Russ
Co-Editor-in-Chief

“The void is almost springtime and that means baseball season is fast approaching. Over spring break, I’ll be watching Ken Burn’s almost 20-hour long “Baseball” documentary and watching every inning of spring training baseball that I can manage to catch. Sadly it feels like me that increasingly so, at least in my generation, being a baseball fan is becoming more like being a soccer fan. And by that, I mean no slight against soccer. I just watched Arsenal kick a literally last-minute goal past Newcastle to secure a 2-1 victory and it was the most exciting thing I’ve seen in sports this year. What I mean, is that both sports are increasingly perceived as being boring and slow-moving. I find myself perfectly regularly defending the sport to NBA and NFL fans who crave touchdowns, three-pointers and alley-oops over sac-flies, double plays and pick-off moves. I’m suspecting that this might be the result of a generation accustomed to “Transformers” movies and clicking through YouTube. The thrill of baseball doesn’t come through constant numbing stimulation. Instead, baseball sets you up to be amazed. I sat in Comerica last season as Justin Verlander took a no-hitter into the ninth. Fans roared with increasing volume each time Verlander escaped unscathed and no one dared mention the words “no-hitter” lest they anger the baseball gods. The no-hitter eventually fell through, but that was no reason to not enjoy the exciting part of the game. The opposing pitcher Jared Weaver, was ejected and dragged off the field after he tried to crack a Tiger helmet open with one of his fastballs in the seventh. As I’ve been thinking about the upcoming season most obsessively, and in reflecting on my dedication to a pastime that I wish more people understood, I was reminded of a very similar relationship, my love of hip-hop. Similarly, I have an intense love of hip-hop that I find myself frequently defending. It is mischaracterized as mindless, non-musical yelling over a beat. Where I realize how big and small the world is. I lived in South America for a year, but the people were still just people. They went to sports games, they booed the opposition. Had coffee dates. Crammed the nights before. They paid too much for T-shirts and complained about rainy weather. They did so much of what we do here.

Because they are just people.

This spring break, wherever we go, there will be people. And the people will be just people. They may have funny accents. They may have year-round tans. We might say “sick” and mean it because they do and we don’t. Maybe they won’t know what “pop” is or why we point to our hands to show where we live. But even if they don’t, even if our Michiganian cool is lost on them, (suds), there is one thing that will never change—

It comes from Genesis, chapter one.

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

I hope you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Wherever we go this March, be it north, south, or to the quietness of our own homes, let us not forget the people that we will be among. These are the people made by God, made in His very own image. Let us glorify that, and let us glorify Him by glorifying each other. Happy spring break, Hope College.

Reading the news will change your life

Melody Hughes
Columnist

You are reading a newspaper right now, and I’d like to personally thank you for doing that. I have a confession. For a long while I did not read the morning news. I avoided it.

There were two main reasons for my avoidance. First, I was unwilling to make time in my morning schedule to even do a quick check online. This laziness was easily justified because I could collect secondhand news by word of mouth or from Facebook. If something really big happened, I’d find out before the day ended.

The second reason was what really stopped me though: I was just too much to bear. I found the news to be cripplingly depressing. I face my generation, being a baseball fan is becoming more like being a soccer fan. And by that, I mean no slight against soccer. I just watched Arsenal kick a literally last-minute goal past Newcastle to secure a 2-1 victory and it was the most exciting thing I’ve seen in sports this year.

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Lindy Melville (’12) studying in Chicago

Coming from an area like Holland, homeless people are not something you see every day. Sure there are people that are struggling, but there is no one begging for money on the streets like in Chicago. My first instinct when I heard that I was going to be taking a homeless person out for breakfast for one of my classes here at The Chicago Semester, I was not very excited. I have been brought up in a pretty ‘safe’ environment and being alone with a stranger that lives on the streets is not something one exactly thinks of as safe. To my great surprise however, it was not what I expected.

For class homework this past week it was our job to go out and find a homeless person and take them out to breakfast. To be honest it felt somewhat wrong to go scope out the streets and try and ‘pick’ someone to treat. I felt like I was window shopping which sounds terrible. Another girl and I came across this lady sitting on Michigan Avenue.

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This lady was sitting on Michigan Avenue and to be completely honest I was not very interested. I was just rotten and looking for an easy excuse to say that I was not excited. The reason I decided to go with her was because she was sitting on Michigan Avenue. My first instinct when I heard that I was going to be taking a homeless person out for breakfast. To be honest it felt somewhat wrong to go scope out the streets and try and ‘pick’ someone to treat. I felt like I was window shopping which sounds terrible. Another girl and I came across this lady sitting on Michigan Avenue.

I handed her some change and asked if she would be interested in joining us for some breakfast. Her name was Britney. She was in her late 30s/early 40s and had five children all within five years of each other. She said that they all live and go to school in Chicago but she rarely sees them.

Britney loved being in our company. She had so many questions she wanted to ask. One of the first things she wanted to know was if either one of us had any kids. When she found out that we did not, she said that she was great. Losing her children was something that burdened her life and considering that when she was our age she already had at least three, we were doing things better. She then asked us what we were doing in Chicago. We proceeded to tell her that we were taking a class and working in internships. We asked what she liked most about the city and she said that she loved it because there was always something going on. It was just as if she was a normal person like us but we knew when we left her she would go back to sitting on the street with all of her belongings stuffed in a bag.

I think the hardest part for me was deciding what questions to ask. I did not want to get too personal and have her get upset but at the same time I did not want her to think I was treating her differently than I would anyone else. One thing she brought up was how Whitney Houston just died. She said that it was sad but it was her own fault because she got into drugs and alcohol. I found this interesting because when you think of people on the streets sometimes you think of them as druggies and that they spend all of their money on this habit, but Britney was different. She said she could not understand why people did drugs because after their buzz was gone or when they woke up hung over, their problems were still there. She told me that people should look at God for answers instead of things like drugs and alcohol. I was taken aback at that point. I proceeded to ask Britney, where does she stay? She told me that she mainly stays right where I found her on Michigan Avenue and even though she is homeless, God still brings her to the right places every day and she has her trust in Him to lead her way.

This made me realize how small all my problems are in the world. We have to realize that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyone that the homeless are real people too. I would really encourage and challenge everyon...
For the past two seasons, the baseball team has finished second in the MIAA, just missing out on the NCAA tournament bid. This year, the team hopes to build on its success from last season and win the conference for the first time since 2007.

"We definitely have the goal of being conference champs, but we want to aim higher than that as well," co-captain T.J. Klein ('13) said. "We are shooting for a national title and we have the ability to do that. That’s what we have rights on and we have a team with the experience, confidence and talent to do that."

Over half of this year's roster has at least one year of collegiate varsity experience, and six players on the 2012 team were named to either the first or second All-MIAA team after last season.

"I believe we have a very experienced, talented team this year," co-captain Danny Detmar ('12) said. "We are going to take much more of the players’ experience to get us through those tough games." The team has won 20 or more games each season since 2008, including a 28-12 season in 2010 and a 26-14 record last year.

"When you look at the last two years we've been pretty solid," head coach Stu Fritz said. "Both of the last two years we've had one week where we haven't played well. We're looking at consistency. We want to make sure we stay away from the one week where we don't get it done."

This year, MIAA baseball, along with several other sports, switched to a four-team conference tournament to determine the MIAA's automatic qualifier for the NCAA tournament. This new format has an effect on the teams' approach to the season.

"This being the first year of the MIAA tournament I think we'll have a different focus because the tournament champion gets the NCAA bid," Fritz said. "While every game is important our goal is to make it into the tournament at the end of the season and then go from there."

The baseball team opens its home season on March 24 with a game against Adrian, who has claimed the conference title for the past three years. Last year, the Dutchmen went 2-2 against the Bulldogs, gaining both wins in the last game of the season.

Before the home opener, however, the team will travel to Florida for their annual spring break trip, where they will face teams from Iowa, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Wisconsin.

"We are definitely excited for spring break," co-captain Jon Ponte ('12) said. "We play nine games in seven days. It is for sure the most fun we have bonding as a team."

The softball team will also prepare for season play on April 4 against Alma.

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Baseball and softball prepare for season

Bethany Stripp
Siners Eaton

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