Advent brings an attitude of service

Gretchen Baldwin
Staff Writer

Every Christmas, we are bombarded with advertisements, sales and opportunities to buy into the commercial Christmas. This results in the true meaning of Christmas being lost in translation. Somewhere in the hustle and bustle of the festive season, the focus on giving and sharing among loved ones is lost.

From the administration’s decision to not allow “Milk” screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event to the administration’s decision to not allow “Milk” screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event to the administration’s decision to not allow “Milk” screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event to the administration’s decision to not allow “Milk” screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event, the administration failed to send a message to students that their lives and experiences matter.

The November faculty meeting was a chance for professors to learn more about the administration’s decision to not allow Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event. The meeting was a model for civil discussions and showed that people with various viewpoints can disagree in a respectful way.

Faculty and administrators have taken action to promote constructive conversation about homosexuality since the controversy erupted surrounding the administration’s decision to not allow Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable-sponsored event.

In addition to the faculty meeting, an ad hoc study committee was formed and met several times during November.

The purpose of the committee was to gain historical perspective on sexuality programming at Hope, to review the facts concerning the Black situation, and to make recommendations that will assist our community in working together when dealing with difficult issues.

The recommendations are pending approval by Bultman. The recommendations are pending approval by Bultman. The recommendations are pending approval by Bultman. The recommendations are pending approval by Bultman.

Other Hope Christmas events include 30-Hour Famine and Green Christmas. The 30-Hour Famine began Dec. 4. Those involved raised money and went without food from noon on Friday until 6 p.m. on Saturday in order to remind ourselves of the needs of the hungry around the world. Green Christmas is being supported by Hope’s environmental group. Keep your eyes open for recycled signs around campus with suggestions for how to make this Christmas a green initiative.

Most of all, however, our attitudes are what will affect how Christmas is presented in our culture. Reclaim a Christian Christmas by participating in service events like these as well as simply by seeking meaning in our holiday and refocusing your attention. Celebrating Christmas in a Christian way doesn’t mean throwing all of our modern traditions out the window, but it does mean keeping our hearts in the right place as we celebrate.

Black to speak in Holland

On Wednesday, Dec. 9, a group of students will meet at the DeVitt flagpole at 5:45 p.m. to hop on a bus and go caroling at senior citizen homes around Holland. If you can’t make it to this event, encourage your friends to gather a group together and contact a nursing home or hospital to go caroling or to bring cookies to residents.

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Advent brings an attitude of service

Gretchen Baldwin
December 9, 2009

Every Christmas, we are bombarded with advertisements, sales and opportunities to buy into the commercial aspect of the holiday season. This makes it hard for many to experience a loving, giving, Christian Christmas. Luckily, for those of us who want to get involved in a more traditional Christmas, Hope College is bursting with volunteer opportunities, awareness events and ideas to make the holiday season less corporate.

As early as October, students were preparing for the Christmas season by participating in Operation Christmas Child. Hope’s Campus Ministry team distributed shoeboxes to be picked up at various campus locations. Participants then had until Nov. 19 to fill the boxes with small gifts like toys, hygiene items, school supplies and personal notes. The boxes were shipped by the parent organization Samaritan’s Purse to needy children around the world so that they would have an opportunity to experience Christmas for perhaps the first time in their lives.

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Study Committee issues recommendations on sexuality programming

Robert Gulmond
December 9, 2009

Faculty and administrators have taken action to promote constructive conversation about homosexuality since the controversy surrounding the administration’s decision to not allow “Milk” screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to speak at a Sexuality Roundtable sponsored event.

A Nov. 24 faculty meeting was designed to discuss sexuality and recent campus events. Short presentations were made by Presi dent James Bultman, Provost James Boelkins and Professor Steven Hoogerwerf. Hoogerwerf provided an overview of the significant programming that has been done in recent years related to homosexuality. Provost Boelkins responded to questions submitted by members of the faculty followed by a period of interaction.

“Milk” controversy erupted surrounding the administration’s decision regarding Dustin Black ... The meeting was a model for civil discourses and showed that people with various viewpoints can disagree in a respectful way,” said psychology professor and faculty meeting moderator Scott VanderStoep. “I walked away from the meeting proud to be a Hope faculty member.”

In addition to the faculty meeting, an ad hoc study committee meeting was formed and met several times during November.

“The purpose of the committee was to gain historical perspective on sexuality programming at Hope, to review the facts concerning the Black situation, and to make recommendations that will assist our community in working together when dealing with difficult issues,” said Boelkins. “The ad hoc committee consisted of 12 individuals: six from the faculty, four from Student Development and one from Campus Ministry; I chaired the group. Each member of the committee offered special competencies that would contribute to the current situation.”

According to Boelkins, the following recommendations have been made by Bultman to the committee:

- Reappoint a Sexuality Programming Committee similar to the one that operated between 2001 and 2007.
- Change the new Programming Committee with designing sex education into curricular and extracurricular programming.
- The integration of sexuality education into curricular and extracurricular programming would be best addressed by the Academic Affairs Board and the Sexuality Programming Committee.

In addition, the ad hoc committee offered the following suggestions for dealing with the other topics discussed utilizing existing boards and committees:

- The Campus Life Board should address the future of the Sexuality Roundtable;
- The integration of sexuality education into curricular and extracurricular programming;
- Policy Advocates should address problems that may arise in the workplace related to sexual orientation;
- The recommendations are pending approval by Bultman.

Black to speak in Holland

There will be a question and answer session with Dustin Lance Black after a showing of “Milk” at the Park Theater on Thursday Dec. 9. Black is flying from New York City specifically for this event. The off-campus event is sponsored by Hope is Ready. Tickets are sold out, but the organization is considering holding a second showing on Friday, as there have been hundreds of requests for tickets.

For more information, email hope.is.ready@gmail.com.
**Student Juried Art Show**

The opportunity to discuss their work. This year, the juror is invited to submit a piece of any media.

**Student Juried Art Show Continues**

The annual juried student art show at Hope College continues through Friday, Dec. 18, in the gallery of the DeVos Fieldhouse.

**Students and Faculty End Semester with Prayer Vigil**

Prayer stations available in Graves Hall’s Schoon Chapel for 12:12 Prayer

**Always boarding. Never bored.**

When the walls close in, it’s time for a road trip. And there’s no better way for getting around Holland than riding the MAX. Our 3 fixed routes go everywhere - to the malls, stores, bowling and movies. You don’t have to be a finance major to know that riding MAX saves big bucks. One way’s fare is still just $1. Or buy a Special Semester Pass for $40 for unlimited rides on the eight fixed bus routes all semester long. Visit www.catshammax.org for bus routes and schedules or to purchase a bus pass online.
President Barack Obama, in an address to West Point Military Academy cadets on Dec. 1, outlined his long-awaited foreign policy decision regarding the future of the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

The two major policy decisions announced by the president were the addition of 30,000 American troops to the Afghan theater, along with the setting of a withdrawal date in July of 2011. Obama also reiterated the goal of war in Afghanistan, which he stated was to “disrupt, dismantle, and destroy al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.”

Obama also stated in his speech that, “I make this decision because I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of the violent extremists practiced by al-Qaeda if I didn’t think that the security of the United States and the safety of the American people were at stake. In Afghanistan, I would gladly order every single one of our troops home tomorrow.”

A number of world leaders offer support for the addition of troops but are wary about the set timeline. Many Democrats are pleased with the withdrawal date, but unconvinced that more troops should be sent to Afghanistan. Senator John McCain, R-Ariz., speaking for many Republicans, said that although he supports the addition of troops in a mini-surge, “A withdrawal date only emboldens al-Qaeda and the Taliban, while dispiriting our Afghan partners and making it less likely that they will risk their lives to take our side in the fight.”

John Kerry, D-Mass., the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, supported the goals of the president, especially the date for withdrawal. He said, “I believe the president’s decision is a narrower mission tonight, not an open-ended nation-building exercise.”

The foreign response from NATO allies was positive, with countries including Great Britain and Germany pledging to send more combat soldiers to Afghanistan in support of the United States. The Taliban also responded to Obama’s decision, but in a far more negative manner. A spokesman for the Taliban said, “Obama is sending more troops to Afghanistan and that means more Americans will die.” Another Taliban official added, “Obama will witness lots of coffins heading to America from Afghanistan.”

Hope College political science professor Jack Holmes said, in regard to Obama’s speech: “I like the idea of sending more troops. I am not convinced in a military position that you can put a firm withdrawal date on it. It think it makes more sense to aim for a date and then be the date based on operations on the ground.”

Offering another perspective, political science professor Allison Bryan (11) believes his decision was a “result of various pressures” from different sources including, the public, the military and congress and that, “Obama was caught between wanting to commit the extra resources for the current war and bringing the war to a conclusion.”

Photo courtesy the Associated Press

Dubai economic crisis shakes global markets
Amy Alvina
Guest Writer

On Dec. 1, the central bank of the United Arab Emirates decided to intervene in the Dubai debt crisis, in response to the deepening financial crash in Dubai (one of the seven emirates comprising the United Arab Emirates). The Abu Dhabi-based bank has offered to provide additional liquidity to all local and international banks in Dubai.

The tiny Persian Gulf emirate of Dubai, a frequent center for financial dealings, was caught between wanting to send more combat soldiers to Afghanistan in support of the United States, and wanting to send more combat soldiers to Afghanistan in support of the Taliban.

In an effort to achieve this goal, Dubai has long sought to build itself into a mini-surge, “A number of world leaders offer support for the addition of troops but are wary about the set timeline. Many Democrats are pleased with the withdrawal date, but unconvinced that more troops should be sent to Afghanistan.”

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**Life In Technicolor: Class’s journey through memoir writing with Dr. Trembley**

*Elena Rivera*

It’s a little scary to have people read what you write — that’s how it is with any kind of creative writing, but memoir especially. It’s so personal, because it’s about you. You really put yourself out there when you write memoirs,” said Kate Schramphier (‘12), a member of Dr. Elizabeth Trembley’s English 358 memoir course. The work the students put into the class culminated in the stage production of FML — *Fracture My Life*.

The show took place on Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. on the DeVitt mainstage at Hope College and was directed by Michelle Bombe, chair woman of the theater department. The script itself was chosen and edited by the class, and all students who had worked included; some were in various pieces throughout the performance and some are in large, full pieces.

Amanda Karby (‘11) said, “We came up with the title ‘FML’ — *Fracture My Life* for the performance because not only do we think it’s a humorous pun on an already-popular Internet meme, but we felt that the theme of fractures and fragmentation was really important to our work.”

Raina Khatri (‘10) said of the process: “Writing on the script has been hugely rewarding. The whole class exudes talent. Reading everyone’s pieces and discussing what should go in the script and what order was a fantastic experience.”

Jacqueline Jara (‘10) said, “It’s a little scary (having personal memoirs read and acted out in front of an audience) but I think, as a whole, the script is really beautiful, and there is a lot of honesty, and I am glad I get to be a part of it all.” Luciana VanDort (‘10) was a little nervous, but “so happy that our stuff will be heard.”

Memoir writing takes a different kind of trust than, writing poetry or short stories. Jara said, “As a creative writer, I’m really interested in the relatively new genre creative non-fiction and memoir is really a strain of that. It’s really a challenge to draw from my own experiences and to write towards finding some kind of meaning in those experiences. And to also, in that process, find something that is more than just therapeutic for me, to find a way to share that journey with someone else through words.”

VanDort spoke of the therapeutic power of writing memoir: “Through memoir and waiting for those memories to pop into my head, I have discovered that there are a lot of stories inside of me that I don’t let myself think about. Memoir has helped me deal with some of the more difficult memories that I don’t even know where to start processing. It’s a constructive way to heal.”

Jara talked of the unique place memoir holds, that “it’s written to be read by others. Having it read a month after polishing it off is like instant gratification.”

Finally, the members of Trembley’s class are glad that their voices can be heard, through their memoirs and the theater performance FML. Schrampfer hopes that by putting her memoir out there people will gain “appreciation of life — the big things, the little things, everything in between. It’s so easy to focus in on the hard, fractured parts of our lives that a lot of times we forget to look at the beauty of life, forgetting that even those fractures can be beautiful.”

Similarly, Jara said, “Writing memoir is an incredibly freeing experience. In trying to make sad stories accessible, I found humor, and in humorous stories, I found deeper meaning. It’s like peeling away layers, there is always more there and sometimes you don’t see it until the retelling. I hope that in hearing our stories, people will find meaning in their own stories and maybe feel a connection to us through our stories.”

The tight-knit class’s experience can be nicely summed up by Jara: “One of the most beautiful things about memoir is that it forces people to be honest and to reveal themselves. I feel honored to have been given the opportunity to be a part of such an amazing group of writers and to be able to share my life with them and to have them share their lives with me.”

It seems like the effects of Trembley’s memoir class won’t be forgotten, living on in the hearts of this modern-day Dead Poets Society.

*O Captain! My Captain!* Our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather’d ev’ry rack, the prize we sought is won…

Walt Whitman, “O Captain! My Captain!”

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**‘Rabbit Hole’: Play balances life’s harsh realities with refreshing humor**

*Callie Seay*

Love. Conflict. Loss. All the best qualities of a good drama are a part of Hope College’s newest show, “Rabbit Hole.” Winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize, “Rabbit Hole” balances the harsh realities of life with a refreshing humor. Writer David Lindsay-Abaire’s play is “contemporary humor. Winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize, “Rabbit Hole” is performed is the DeVos Fieldhouse, which is available at the Hope College ticket office located in the main lobby of the DeVos Fieldhouse, which is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, the theatre lobby ticket office in the DeVos Center will be open on performance nights at 7 p.m. The ticket office may be contacted at (616) 395-7890.

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**GRIEVING FOR THE BETTER GOOD** — Jackie Richards, Brittany Stock (above), and Alex Martin and Brittany Stock (below) share their methods of mourning with the audience.

*Photo by Michelle Bombe*
Finals are nearly here. Profs have been training for next week all semester. They aren’t putting up with sub-superior grades any longer; they’ve come to wipe your GPA clean.

You’re shaking in your Uggs. They’ve scared all those no-shave-No-vember hair remnants completely off your face.

They’re prepared to win … but it will not be this day! This day, WE FIGHT! Put on your armor. Our time is now.

How should you equip yourself, you ask? Simple. Take a look at the four categories of your life that you must nourish and keep strong!

**STAY HEALTHY**
To do well on exams, you’ll need to be sure your mind is working correctly. This is really a no-brainer. Don’t overload on sweets, but make sure you’re getting the recommended amount of grain, vegetables and fruit.

Thinking about pulling an all-nighter? Don’t. It can severely mess with your sleeping habits; instead, set a stopping point for the night and be sure to get your seven to nine hours of sleep.

Also, don’t forget to exercise! Not only does it promote better sleep, but it also improves your mood and boosts your energy level.

**BE SMART**
Finals week isn’t officially for five days. GET AHEAD (if you can)! Prioritize, find out which exams are when (if you haven’t already) and start locating all the study materials you’re going to need.

But here’s the kicker — be sure to limit yourself! Give yourself a 10-minute break after every two hours, if not sooner, of studying. Rest your brain, so it’ll be ready to store even more (useless?) facts.

**TAKE TIME FOR FRIENDS**
Don’t become a hermit. Make sure you’re still talking to the outside world (no, Facebook chat does not count). If you don’t have time to go out with your friends then start a study group! Get a group together and head to JP’s or the international lounge.

If you’re going to be miserable fighting for sanity amidst all these exams, at least you’ll be together (to complain AND encourage)! And, since you still need to eat … make a dinner date! Don’t forget the asparagus!

**NOURISH YOUR SOUL**
We are physical and relational beings, but don’t forget that we’re also spiritual beings. If you’ve found yourself sinking amidst others during the final(s) battle, you can always pray or meet with someone from Campus Ministries or the Counseling Center.

*Campus Ministries is located across from Lubbers on 10th Street; the Counseling Center is located in Student Development in DeWitt.*

Graphics by Emily Dammer
The holidays: a time for change?

The holidays are a wonderful time of the year. There’s just something about Thanksgiving and Christmas that brings people together and makes everything seem just a little warmer and cheerier. Perhaps it’s the way Christmas lights twinkle against a blanket of pure, white snow, or maybe it’s the soothing effects of listening to Christmas carols while sipping hot cocoa under a blanket.

Regardless, there is something special about this time of the year. However, for some, the holidays can also be a time when changes in family dynamics become glaringly obvious. For those who have experienced change, Thanksgiving and Christmas can be about as treary as walking across a bed of nails in sub-zero temperatures barefoot.

Maybe that’s a bit of an exaggeration, but for the first time in my life, my family experienced a serious shift in the family dynamics that caused us to dread the holidays. For 25-25 years, the Patterson family celebrated Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas brunch at Grandma and Grandpa’s house, where delicious food was served, gifts were exchanged and quality family time was spent. This year the house that served as the vessel of many fond memories stands empty and is for sale.

Though it’s been nearly a year since the passing of my grandparents, it may as well have been a week since my family realized how different this holiday season was going to be. My family is not the first, nor will we be the last, to undergo change at the holidays, whether it’s a death in the family, a divorce or even a marriage. Change is a natural part of life, and in the last year I have been reminded more than in any other time in my life that I can neither run from change nor stop it from occurring.

If you find yourself in a similar situation — navigating the uncharted waters of changing family dynamics at the holidays — I encourage you to embrace the change rather than run from it. As the saying goes, “there’s no time like the present,” and let’s be honest, what do you really have to lose from allowing yourself to be stretched? At the very worst you might cry a little and miss the way things used to be.

The Christmas season is one of my favorite times of the year. The only thing that I love more than those gorgeous spring days when the sun beats down and finally warms you to the core, but 1 degree. This Christmas season is a reminder for my family of what we have gained and what we have lost. Do we miss our grandparents? Yes, every single day. But rather than choosing to pity ourselves, we’ve bonded together to rejoice in my cousin’s recent engagement to a wonderful man as well as the other good things that have happened in our lives.

This Christmas I hope that you choose to do the same: find the bright spot in what may be a bleak situation. And who knows, maybe this Christmas will be the one you remember the best.

Karen wants a pony for Christmas, a snazzy summer internship, and maybe a European country while we’re at it.

Grace & Peace

A reminder to myself when school seems extravagant

Last week, as I left Van Wylen with a stack of books for an art history research paper, I caught a glimpse of myself in a window. Nothing much extraordinary: a student in a green jacket leaves a library with a pile of books. But the books! Suddenly, I realized that such a sight is globally, a rarity. Who in the world has the luxury of studying for fun? Who says, “Yes, I think I’ll spend my afternoon researching the Dada movement?” Yet I get the pleasure of becoming a minor expert on Dada.

As I pondered this, I recognized how much of my life is a luxury. At Thanksgiving, I didn’t think twice about traveling home. I had no potentially fatal journey through enemy territory or over a minefield to fear. Not only did I have the option to travel, but I was able to choose my mode of transportation — car or train — a decision limited only by how much I cared to spend.

And I’m considering seminary next year; that I even have the option puts me in the 1 percent of people worldwide who have a college degree (or who will have one by May, anyway). On Maslow’s hierarchy, I’ve roasted vegetables for lunch, I’ve paid my rent and the heat’s still on and I’ve had coffee with a friend and now I can move on to determining whether or not seminary is “right for me.”

Of course, I hope my motivation is purer than that; I hope I’m learning to carefully hear God’s call to seminary. But still — my basic needs are satisfied and I get to make choices. Historically, and today worldwide, a person’s family occupation has determined the course of her life. If this were my case, I’d be tilling the fields of my great-grandparents’ Minnesota farm, but instead of inspecting soybean leaves and wondering if we’re going to lose the farm, I’m studying creative writing of all things, and planning to attend seminary.

Don’t get me wrong; I’m not suggesting that we quit college and revert to a world of blacksheets and tailors. Don’t carelessly abandon your spring classes and run off to Africa in the name of solidarity with the poor. While we should attend to and identify with impoverished people, I am convinced that we need our courses in order to do that well.

I believe that my professors are teaching me to think more carefully about the world and about my role in it. Art history not only exposes me to significant artistic movements, but it also teaches me to read both visual and verbal texts, a skill that proves its worth when I’m able to perceive the truth in a newspaper article. And if I don’t pay attention in global politics, I might ignorantly support companies with irresponsible business practices and contribute to the system that prevents Jamaican fathers from providing for their families and Malawian mothers from obtaining enough maize to feed their children.

So we need to go to class. We need to pay attention. We must learn. We must also be aware of our utter privilege, but we shouldn’t forsake that privilege hastily: that not everyone can afford college. Not every student in a green jacket leaves a library with a pile of books; there are lives with intention.

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JOIN US FOR OUR SUNDAY MEETINGS!

Where: Anchor Office Martha Miller 1st Floor
When: Sundays 6 - 7 p.m.
Grace & Peace
Grace Olson
Columnist

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So we need to go to class. We need to pay attention. We must learn. We must also be aware of our utter privilege, but we shouldn’t forsake that privilege hastily: that not everyone can attend college doesn’t imply that no one should. Instead, we must take what we’ve learned, consider it and live our lives with intention.

Having finished her paper on Dada, Grace is dreaming of baking a batch of ginger cookies and cutting out paper snowflakes.
Before we begin, let’s get a small piece of business out of the way: I am a nerd. When I finished the Harry Potter books, I ran around the house in my PJs shouting spells with my toothbrush. There’s just something about a good book or film that gets me acting crazy. “Braveheart” is my favorite. I sometimes let grow uncomfortably long, strangely curly lengths — the case in this particular moment — tickles my ear. It makes my ear itch.

At this point, I sometimes think that bugs are trying to infiltrate my ear drum. I dream of earwigs. I have a friend that often talks about how she and her sister thought that earwigs crash into people’s head and eat their brains. I wouldn’t doubt it. Earwigs are gross, but I’ve never talked to one. So I don’t know their intentions when it comes to human brains.

One time, when I was a little gaffer, my sisters and I were eating Cheez-Its at my Grandpa Guimond’s house. He was bald. That’s my paternal grandpa, so I don’t worry much. Somehow, the box of delicious cheese-infused crackers toppled over. An earwig crawled out of the box. We stopped eating the Cheez-Its.

I swallowed a fly at my Grandpa Guimond’s house once, when I was lying in bed. I was 4 years old and awfully upset about my unfortunate late night snack. I spent the next couple of hours trying to remember what happened to the old lady in the song “There Was an Old Woman that Swallowed a Fly.” I couldn’t remember the song, so I composed my own. Most of the lines were, “I swallowed a fly, and I think I might die.” Eventually, the ballad awoke my sister, and she told me that I was being stupid. So I decided to fall asleep. And I did.

The room I slept in at my grandpa’s house was my dad’s old room. The wallpaper shows cowboys riding horses and lassoing various animals. It was yellow and faded and had not been changed since my father’s youth. He told me once that he wanted to be a cowboy when he was younger. Then, I did too. Now, I think I might want to own a carnival. I dig bumper cars.

A couple of years ago, my friend and I talked to a female carnie that ran the baseball throw booth. She had nice teeth, despite the stereotype. She was crabby, at first, but eventually became friendly. She told us about her life for the male carnie that ran the game three booths down, the dart throw. She also told us that the Skerbeck Brothers own two other carnival circuits. The other booth had the dice game. I love and miss the dice game, but it would not come back because the other carnival circuit had issues with the authorities — marijuana trouble.

The Popo was, then, harshly strict with the new carnival circuit. Our carnival friend was upset because she had to buy more potpourri to cover up her drug habits. Potpourri is expensive, and carnies earn a relatively small amount of money. I felt bad for her.

My ear itches, and I wonder how working for The Anchor will help me own a carnival someday. But it doesn’t matter much because the chairs in The Anchor office are comfortable. That might be what it’s all about, in life.

The cooks from Phelps walk by The Anchor windows on their smoke breaks. I scratch my ear.

This came from the depths of my soul. That was a joke.

Sincerely,

Julie Kocsis
Before we begin, let’s get a small piece of business out of the way: I am a nerd. When I finished the Harry Potter books, I ran around the house in my PJ’s shouting spells with my toothbrush. There’s just something about a good book or film that gets me acting crazy. “Braveheart” is my heartthrob of all time. When my brother and I used to watch it, we’d barely make it half-way through before we had to run outside or set up a wrestling match in the living room. Maybe it’s because I’m a nerd, or maybe it has something to do with being a boy — all I know is that I get pumped and can’t sit still whenever something epic is going on around me.

The thing about good books and movies is that the characters are caught up in something great, something epic, something bigger than themselves. Not only this, but people like Harry Potter and William Wallace have big parts to play. Their actions will change the lives of many. They are powerful.

As a kid, I was pretty disappointed when I realized that real life moves a good deal slower than the books. When you close the book or turn off the TV, you find that everything goes on as normal, and that’s okay. It’s important, and if we have a role to play in anything, it’s a minor one. The things we do don’t really make much of a difference. We, unlike the characters we love, are not powerful.

And then something happens that gives us all a shake. You find a friend in tears, or hear about a kid back home who committed suicide. In times like these the veil is lifted, and we see for just a split second that something bigger is going on. And guess what? Our role is no minor one.

This summer I got to see firsthand the immense power of human beings. I got to see how a few words from a sixth grade charactor can change a life forever. As a camp counselor, I talked to camper after camper who had been hurt — seriously wounded — by the words of another. I remember one kid named Alex who burst into tears as we went for a walk. “Is it wrong to hate somebody?” he asked. He then told me about a kid in his gym class who makes fun of his height and how it had really changed the way Alex acted in class. “I used to like school,” he confided. “Now I just keep quiet hoping not to be noticed.”

We are powerful. Seriously powerful. As C.S. Lewis put it, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations — these are mortal, and their life is as ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals that we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit — immortal horrors or everlasting splendiders.”

But here’s the cool thing: our words can also impart life. This very minute you can use your words to positively impact somebody’s life forever. That’s why the Bible has so much to say about encouraging one another — it’s a big deal. Proverbs 18:21 says, “The tongue has the power of life and death.”

So what’s it going to be?

Bryant enjoys reading Narnia aloud with his glorious friends.
**Basketball teams approach conference play**

**Kael Kust**

Storm by 16

Both the men's and women's basketball teams are off to very promising starts for the season.

The women remain undefeated, and the men have already beaten their biggest rival, along with the number six nationally ranked team.

Over Thanksgiving break, in the 173rd meeting between Hope and Calvin, the Flying Dutchmen came out with a win.

The annual Russ DeVette Homecoming "DeVette-VanWieren Gymnasium" in recognition of DeVette

The main gymnasium in DeVette-VanWieren Gymnasium — for the team to get along well, so we expect more success during the rest of the season.

In the game considered Hope's first major test of the season, against Aquinas, the women set a fieldhouse record of 54 points scored in the first half.

Junior Carrie Snikkers recorded her 13th career double-double, and a total of 14 players scored while 15 grabbed at least one rebound.

"The past few games have been good," Snikkers said. "Our team has slowly started to become more confident and we are all starting to figure out how to relax and play."

**In Brief**

**SWIM TEAMS COMPETE AT WHEATON**

The men's and women's swim teams traveled to Wheaton College over the weekend for the Wheaton Invitational. The men's team took first place out of six teams at the meet with 907 points, while the women finished in third out of seven teams with 701 points, a mere 97 points behind Wheaton.

The men's and women's swim teams are off to very promising starts for the season.

The women remain undefeated, and the men have already beaten their biggest rival, along with the number six nationally ranked team.

Over Thanksgiving break, in the 173rd meeting between Hope and Calvin, the Flying Dutchmen came out with a win. The game had an unusual ending. After Calvin rallied from a 16-point deficit, the score was tied at 70 with 2:17 left in the game.

At 1:53, Chris Nelis ('10) hit a three to break the tie, and then free throws gave Hope the 77-70 lead with 20 seconds remaining.

Calvin, again managed to battle back and brought the game within three points with 2.5 seconds remaining. Hope inbounded the ball, but it was stolen by the Knights, who, with a buzzer shot from the corner, seemed to tie the score.

However, the Calvin bench had called for a timeout when the inbound pass was stolen, and therefore the officials waved off the three-pointer and put one second back on the clock.

The Knights missed the three-point attempt to tie the game, and Hope took the win. The Flying Dutchmen now have a three-game advantage in the all-time series.

Following the victory over Calvin, Hope earned another significant win Friday night by defeating previously unbeaten and nationally ranked Wheaton 77-72.

Each Hope player got in the game, with 12 players making it into the scoreboard.

Bowser (11) led the team with 15 points, followed by freshman Jared Mydlowiec with 13. Senior Chris Nelis added 10 points, along with team-high eight rebounds.

David Krombeen (12) led the team with five assists, and freshman Nate Snuggerud added three blocked shots, while junior Peter Bunn had three steals.

The Flying Dutchmen led by as many as 29 points and also outrebounded Wheaton 45-27. Hope shot a season-best 55 percent (29/53), including 9 for 13 from the three-point range.

The men's team will expect continued success, and according to Snuggerud, the Wheaton game was a big test for that.

"We are expecting a lot of things out of this team," he said. "We proved with a win over Wheaton that nothing is out of our reach."

**FLYING DUTCH UNDEFEATED**

The women's team continues their undefeated season (5-0) with a number one national ranking according to USA Today/ESPN. The Flying Dutch's upcoming games include Trine and Olivet, followed by the Hope Classic Tournament, in which they will face Finlandia the first night, and then the winner of Lake Forest vs. Chicago the next night.

According to junior Erika Bruinisma, the women expect for this success to continue.

"We look at the season as a marathon rather than a sprint," she said. "We have a very good team that gets along well, so we expect more success during the rest of the season."