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Main Street renovation improves safety

By Mike Delaney
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Although construction went by almost completely unnoticed, the sidewalks along Main Street between 5th and 9th Avenues have recently undergone a successful renovation aimed at making the campus safer. The installation of over 20 lamp posts, complete with LED lighting, was made possible with the cooperation of the Ursinus Facilities Department, the Borough of Collegeville, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). It is hoped that the school is happy with the extra illumination these lights have provided along Main Street, making students much more aware of their surroundings whenever they walk up and down the sidewalk or cross the road, and also making their presence known to passing drivers.

Andrew Feick, the Facilities Director, shed some light on the history of this project and how it benefits Ursinus College. “This was a humongous job,” he explained, “because there were no wires in the ground so we had to run power lines, build concrete bases and erect the light poles.” On the student-housing side of Main Street, lights are distributed on every other telephone pole, while on the main campus side, a new light pole had to be installed every 60 feet. While Ursinus owns and maintains these newly installed lights, all other light sources along Main Street are owned and maintained by the Collegeville borough. A project "Main Street" is continued to News, page 2.

Community brings down crime at Ursinus College

By Katie Callahan
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On Jan. 27 Campus Safety, the Ursinus Community, and the surrounding college communities came together to stop a few thefts on campus.

Kim Taylor, Director of Campus Safety and Assistant Dean of Students, said recent thefts on campus showed how community matters in all aspects of student life.

During a pick-up basketball game between faculty/staff members and outside community members, a smart phone was stolen out of a bag. The community member reported the theft to campus safety later that day.

The theft was not only reported to the Collegeville Police Department, but also to the Campus Security Directors of Delaware Valley (CSDDV). CSDDV is made up of colleges within the Delaware Valley, including but not limited to Swarthmore, Cabrini, and LaSalle. The members compare notes and give suggestions to other safety programs to help strengthen the said programs.

After Haverford heard of the Ursinus theft, they contacted Taylor with an unusually similar story. During a pick-up game of the same nature, an iPhone had been stolen at the college. Two men came to the game together, one was playing while the other was tying his shoes. Another player noticed the man tying his shoes was going into a bag. Before he could confront the two men they were out the door.

Haverford video tapes caught the two men on camera. After "Community" is continued to News, page 3.

Annual Scottish Irish Festival this weekend

By Maryanne Berthel
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Looking for something different to do for Valentine’s Day this year? Whether you’re single, coupled, or complicated, the Scottish Irish Music Festival at Valley Forge Convention Center is where you want to find yourself this weekend. This three day festival starts Friday, Feb. 12 and ends on Valentine’s Day, Sunday, Feb. 14.

Never been to an Irish festival? Well if you don’t leave with a full belly and a smiling face, there is something wrong with you, because Irish Festivals like this one keep you laughing till your sides hurt and you’re dancing into tomorrow. This festival has been running for 18 years now, and they’ve mastered the art of showing people from all around the world a good time; no matter who you are or where you come from, there’s something at this festival for you.

At the very least, they have vendors selling things that range from jewelry and handmade books to handspun sweaters and baked goods. And don’t worry about the food- they don’t force haggis down your throat. While they do serve traditional Irish and Scottish dishes such as soda bread, colcannon, Sheppard’s pie, fish and chips, meat pie, and indeed haggis, they also have plenty of food for the less adventurous at heart including chicken fingers, friess, and much more. And what kind of Irish festival would it be without some beverages? Of course you “Annual” is continued to News, page 3.
International News with Lisa: Pirates, China-U.S. tension

By Lisa Jobe
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**SOMALIA** — A British couple kidnapped by Somali pirates have issued another plea for help, saying that their captors are not treating them well. Paul and Rachel Chandler were taken off their yacht on Oct. 23, en route to Tanzania. The couple has since been brought ashore and is being held in separate locations in Somalia. Their captors demanded a ransom of $7 million for the safe release of the couple, but the British government, in line with a “long-standing policy,” has refused to pay. A recent video taken by the French news agency AFP shows a doctor examining the Chandlers. He told the agency that Paul appeared to be feverish but in better health than Rachel, who was disoriented and calling out for her husband. On Sunday, a spokesperson for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office said that, “We are monitoring the situation very closely and doing everything we can to help secure a release.” (CNN.com)

**PONTOISE, France** — A trial for an airplane crash that killed over 100 people ten years ago in France began on Tuesday. Continental Airlines, as well as five individuals, are accused of the manslaughter of 113 people who died when an Air France Concorde crashed in July 2000. A Concorde is a type of supersonic passenger airliner that was retired in November 2003. According to official reports, the plane crashed immediately after takeoff because it hit a strip of metal dropped on the runway by a Continental jet. The report claims that the 17 inch piece of titanium shredded one of the plane’s tires, and a piece of rubber debris ruptured the fuel tank, causing the plane to ignite. However, “French aviation officials and Concorde engineers are also accused of failing to correct faults on the supersonic jet.” Furthermore, lawyers for Continental claim that over the course of the trial, they will prove that the plane had ignited before hitting the piece of metal, thereby absolving Continental Airlines. The trial is expected to last four months and to cost the equivalent of $4.2 million. (BBC News Online)

**BEIJING, China** — In a statement on Tuesday, the White House stated that President Obama still plans to meet with the Dalai Lama, despite China’s warnings that such a meeting will further strain U.S.-China relations. Tensions between the U.S. and China are already present because American companies have been sending arms to Tibet. Other sources of tension are commerce, “Beijing’s jailing of dissidents,” and control of the Internet. Google has decided it will no longer cooperate with the Chinese government’s Internet censorship efforts, in the aftermath of a cyber attack on Google that originated in China. China objects to meetings between foreign leaders and the Dalai Lama, especially since violent protests erupted across Tibet in March 2008. The Dalai Lama has said he wants a higher amount of autonomy for Tibet, which China rejects as a request for outright independence. Officially, the United States recognizes Tibet as part of China but wants the two countries to sit down and attempt to resolve their differences. (Reuters.com)

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**“Main Street” is continued from front page.**

being referred to as the Main Street Plan, which is responsible for the new lamp posts on the corners of 2nd and 3rd Avenue, will hopefully be adding similar lighting schemes all along the street. The decision to install more lighting comes in conjunction with a request by the college, through the Collegeville Borough, for PennDOT to reduce the speed limit on Main Street from 35 mph to 30 mph. However, speed limits are usually decided based on the average speed that cars tend to travel at on a particular road.

“We requested a year and a half ago to drop the speed limit to 25 mile per hour,” said Feick, who explained how the Collegeville Borough questioned whether the change was warranted. “A change in the speed limit will not change drivers’ behavior when it’s only based on numbers.” In an attempt to change driving habits and to have their speed limit request approved, Ursinus has begun a series of traffic calming measures which will psychologically induce motorists to drive slower.

The lighting on Main Street, for one, not only illuminates the road but draws attention to the campus, which may convince drivers to slow down for others’ safety. Future endeavors may include hanging Ursinus College banners from the light poles along Main Street, or installing decorative crosswalks which will stand out better than painted lines in the road.

Main Street, though, is a state road, and therefore controlled and maintained by PennDOT, meaning that Ursinus must ask the Borough of Collegeville to request that PennDOT allow the new crosswalks. “We’re in negotiations,” Feick said regarding the crosswalk situation, “but we don’t know if or when that will happen. We have to sign with the borough, who then signs with PennDOT. Ursinus can’t just sign with PennDOT for new crosswalks to be made.” Although Ursinus has the option of paying for the construction of new crosswalks on their own, the school will become responsible for their continued maintenance, and become liable for any road-related accidents. Ursinus and the Collegeville Borough continue to look for a way to move the project ahead.

In the meantime, although it is hard to measure just how effective new safety measures are, Feick and other faculty members are pleased with the lighting system and the new level of awareness it provides for students and for drivers. However, many members of the Ursinus community are anxious for the drop in speed limit to be made official, despite the continuing research by Collegeville and by the state. Until such a rule takes effect, it is up to the students to remember that whenever crossing Main Street it does not hurt to be a little extra cautious.
“Annual” is continued from page 1.

The year the lineup is truly something you wouldn’t want to miss out on, with Albannach, Brother, Rathkeltair, Seven Nations, Paddy’s Well, Screaming Orphans, Seanson, The Tartan Terrers, Cluidan and much more. It is continued

himself, you can just be yourself, have a blast and even meet some new faces. Even if you don’t know if you like Celtic Music, give it a try, you might even end up liking it! The Irish and Scottish cultures are fun loving and heartwarming and they certainly know how to have a good time. It’s a fun local event, and you really don’t have to drive far right down 422, off the First Ave exit, and there you are! So get some friends together, and get ready to have a Valentine’s Day weekend to remember.

Although not yet connected, campus. Taylor said, “We need to look out for each other...we all have to work together and take care of our community.” One piece of advice Taylor would like to press upon the Ursinus campus is that we are an open campus. Leaving valuables lying around, including laptops, is leaving ourselves open to crime. To protect ourselves we have to do simple things like keep our valuables with us, locking dorm room doors, and hiding money and other small objects in safe places. As Taylor said, “crime is out there and we have to be careful.”

“Community” is continued from page 1.

sending the photos to Taylor, US safety officers circulated the photos in the field house where two other smart phones had been stolen. The community member, whose phone had been stolen at Ursinus, identified the pictures as the men at the game.

Then, on the day of the arrests, a student worker in the Fitness Center recognized the two men walking around. The worker called Campus Safety where the officer had the Desk Assistant call 911 while he went to the Field House to detain the men in question.

Although not yet connected, LaSalle, Arcadia, Harcum, and Haverford all reported thefts of around $25 is not much to ask for a day you won’t soon forget. And if you’d like to take the route I do, and buy a three day pass, it ends up costing you $60 dollars and you’ve got a full weekend of music, and a sore face from smiling and laughing so much. Doors open Friday at 7 p.m., with some of my absolute favorite bands kicking off the festival including: Jameson, Rathkeltair, Seven Nations, and Albannach. Saturday, the festival opens at 9:30 a.m. and goes right up until 11:45 p.m. While on Valentine’s Day (Sunday) you get to roam around with friends, loved ones, or even pick up a few new acquaintances from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. And for all you singles out there, this is one place you can go without being bummed out by couples everywhere, and you can just be yourself, have a blast and even meet some new faces.

By Joshua Walsh
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Last Wednesday, Feb. 3, UC Bonner students hosted the Annual Bonner Fair in Wismer Lower Lounge. Bonner, which is mentored by Professor Christian Rice, is a select group of students who elect to do community service in a variety of organizations.

Bonner functions as the center of every UCARE activity. Bonnerers get quicker access to the wide range of activities available via UCARE, as well as access to transport to various activities.

And the list of activities is a long one. You have probably heard of Wismer on Wheels, in which UCARE and Bonner Students take leftover food from Wismer Dining Hall and donate it to local charities.

Another service is the St. Christopher Children’s Hospital, where Bonner students go and participate in arts and crafts with patients. Bonner also participates in Head Start, which teaches disadvantaged kids in the local community and encourages academic growth.

There is also the Catholic Social Services (CSS), where Bonner students work with a local CSS branch to package food for the poor.

But Bonner is bigger than just that.

Its mission is to bring awareness to and alleviate social issues. To do this on a national and global level, Bonner organizes trips throughout the country and the world.

Bonner has traveled to Mississippi, California, Ohio, West Virginia, Mexico, and Madagascar. Bonner is currently planning a trip to Jamaica. As with local efforts, the travel excursions can be for a variety of reasons.

Bonner has worked with the Habitat for Humanity organization to build houses for the poor. During the recent MLK tribute week, UCARE member Ryan Collins talked about the importance of service in developing character and leadership.

He tried his own experiences in the Gulf Coast, combating racism as a trans-
What you should really expect from study abroad

By Ashley McComeskey and Helen Ann Coin

You know the drill: get your applications in, take the pre-requisite course and then have the time of your life living in another country, fostering lifelong friendships and building memories that you will never forget. Study Abroad is no doubt one of the best experiences a student can take advantage of during their college career, and we can honestly say that we do not know a single person who regrets their decision to experience another culture. But how do you know which experience is right for you, if any? And how do you prepare for the ups and downs that you conveniently do not consider until you step on board that international flight? It is true: study abroad is incredibly exciting and at the same time, frightening. It is a huge step to live in another country for three months. And no doubt, you will find yourself in situations where you are wondering “What the hell do I do now!?” Though it is impossible to prepare for every situation, we hope to open your eyes to the truths about study abroad, and give a little insight to what has, and does happen to you.

We realize that students now take a pre-requisite course before studying abroad. According to Assistant Dean for International Studies, Dr. Melissa Hardin, the class was established to help students “develop strategies for learning” while abroad, and to have an idea of how to react to certain situations, by learning about the culture’s values. For students who studied abroad without this prerequisite, it seems ideal. However, some of the most valuable advice you get for getting abroad is going to be from students who have already studied abroad. So what could go wrong? You might not like your host family, you might run out of money, you might miss a plane/bus/train and be stuck in a foreign place with no knowledge of the language. Your roommates might be dirty, you might not have any hot water, and your credits might not transfer if you study with an independent program. Step one to a successful study abroad: acknowledge that this stuff could happen to you.

One of the biggest problems for students who go abroad is that they are lacking information. In other words, many students agree to go abroad without truly understanding the facts and necessary information about their individual programs. Matt Nixon, a senior who studied abroad in London with CAPA, suggested, “Get details on your programs. Know what they actually include, and what most students get out of them. This way, students can make an informed decision.”

That being said, sometimes you don’t have options. For example, when studying in Florence, senior Abbie Cichowski explained, “I was under the impression that if I marked down that I don’t want to be with a smoker, I would live in a house sans smoking. I came back with black longue disease, probably. I had to have my clothes fumigated. It wasn’t guaranteed and they didn’t let me know that in advance.” Likewise, when studying in Ireland, many students didn’t realize that the option “would prefer to live with same sex/opposite sex/no preference” should have been marked off if you wanted any chance of living with members of the same sex. In certain apartment complexes, failing to specify meant that you were automatically placed in an apartment with members of the opposite sex. Small details like these are often overlooked, and most times, irreversible once you’re situated.

Continuing on the topic of housing, Ursinus College tends to urge students to live in home-stays when they travel abroad rather than apartments. By living in a home with natives of the country, students receive a better understanding of the overall culture and environment. In some circumstances, students are told that Ursinus College likes to know that their students are safer and in the care of families rather than living on their own. However, home-stays are in no significant way that much safer than apartments. In many situations, the home-stays are located farther away from the school locations and not close to one another. For the Florence trip, Cichowski noted they “had to get the city but I felt restricted by my location. All of the guys were placed in home-stays close to the center of the city and near to one another, and girls were spread out.” Ultimately, the distance left the female students walking alone at night when returning back to their home-stays as opposed to students who lived in apartments who commute with roommates. Other home-stay dilemmas revolved around sparse portions of food, getting yelled at for actually going abroad, but you never thought that they would actually come true. Doesn’t Ursinus communicate with the families prior to our arrival and make sure that these problems wouldn’t occur? False. When asked if any relationship is formed between Ursinus and the host families, Hardin responded, “There are all kinds of families in the world, and so we allow all different family structures because it is just like the structure in this country. There are all kinds of different people in family units, and we can learn from all of them. We expect our students to be as open as our families. We aren’t trying to protect our students, we want them to learn from where we struggle.”

As Hardin emphasized, with each of these difficult situations, the students are left on their own to determine how to fix the predicament. This is typically when the wake-up call comes in: Who do I go to? Who is going to help me? Who can save me? The answer is YOU.

While you will not always be prepared for the situation you find yourself in, you can cope and learn how to manage without Ursinus holding your hand. This is especially important for those studying through an independent program. Students who study through programs like Butler and CAPA don’t necessarily have the advantage of an Ursinus liaison to confer with. When it comes to choosing classes and knowing credit transfers, you often find yourself on your own—sometimes without a fellow UC student who understands. It’s often discouraging to realize this, but Cichowski advises, “The [study abroad] office is a great resource, but talk to your peers. Talk to students who went there.” Often times, students who already studied abroad can answer your questions— they already had to figure it out themselves.

Hardin says, “Our philosophy is, if we can put you in that environment directly, then hopefully self with friends can detract from your overall experience. Like Hardin says, “Students have one really important misconception just because you go to a university overseas, doesn’t mean that you will be surrounded by locals.” Ursinus students tend to stick with other Ursinus students, which has its pros but also has some cons. She assures that when Ursinus students go in a group, you are going to get to know each other no matter what. However, that also keeps you from getting to know the locals.

“A lot of students come back and say that one of the truly valuable things was friendships gained... but all of their friends are also from the United States.” Most students agree that this is a major regret. Cichowski said, “Find places where native people go. Don’t hang out at American bars, or places that will speak English to you. That way, you get a true feeling for the place you’re at.” Hardin also advises students to take initiative in getting to know the country you are living in. “Stay put—students think ‘study abroad: I can’t wait to go travel!’ Statistically, you will travel again. You probably won’t have another chance to live abroad though. Don’t be in such a hurry to leave.”

Overall, the best thing that you can do when planning to study abroad is educate yourself, whether through pamphlets, information sessions or accounts from other students. Know about the program you are studying in, know what your university expects, and know what Ursinus expects. Study Abroad will be one of the best times of your life, whether it goes smoothly or not, but that does not mean you shouldn’t try to plan your stay, to avoid those moments of miscommunication. Hardin explained, “A lot of students come in and they have no plan. They have no goals. They look at it as more of a fun travel and fun, but it is something you really want to know. What do you want to learn? How will it fit into your four year college career, and how will it serve you in the future?”

Photos courtesy of the writers.
New Member Education starts up again and looks forward to positive change

By Katie Callahan
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Singing songs, partying, and colorful letters might be the public face of a lot of Greek organizations, but it is about the behind the scenes interworking of each organization that makes them special to a college campus.

On Jan. 29 New Member Education (NME), previously referred to as pledging, began on the Ursinus campus. The last couple years have brought big changes and are continuing to change in the upcoming years.

Chris Capone, member of Sigma Rho Lambda and President for the fraternities within the Inter Greek Council, outlined the process of New Member Education and what it means to be Greek.

From Jan. 29 to Feb. 21 students taking part in the NME process are with their soon-to-be brothers and sisters from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. each night. Before that can happen, though, Greek organizations for improvement, returns to Kim Taylor, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Campus Safety. Taylor then gives suggestions for improvement, returns the documents to the organization, and the organization submits their plans for the three week process. This may sound simple, but each organization needs to outline every minute of that six hour time period for every day they keep their new members.

Disciplinary action can be taken if new members are not where or doing what the organization said they would be doing.

Off-campus events are allowed, but the sorority or fraternity must not only get approval from the school, but also needs to have a document signed by the site supervisor saying the organization showed up and participated in the said activities.

During the process, new members are expected to learn who the sorority or fraternity is, what they stand for, and get to know individual members as well as possible. New members also participate in community service projects on and off campus.

There are mixed feelings about Greeks across the board, but Capone and Taylor agree that the campus needs to understand all of the positives that the Greek community has to offer. Besides participating in community service, members of Greek organizations learn time management, event planning, team work, and have the opportunity to become support systems for their members.

Capone mentioned that right now, the administration has control over disciplinary actions when organizations fall off the designated path. He hopes that in the future, the USGA will allow a charter for an Inter Greek Disciplinary Board (IGDB) where the administration and the Greek community can come together, as Judiciary Board hearings do, to determine the correct punishment. Capone mentioned that this will give Greeks the chance to feel more responsible for all of the Greek organizations, not just their own, and it will allow individual cases to be treated as such.

Another new change is occurring next year. This is the last Spring semester of pledging at Ursinus College, determined by the administration according to Capone. Next year there will be dry rushing in the Fall followed by NME by students of sophomore status and higher. Capone worries that isolating freshmen who the sorority or fraternity is, the community has to offer. Besides participating in community service, members of Greek organizations learn time management, event planning, team work, and have the opportunity to become support systems for their members.

Capone also has bigger ideas on how to strengthen Greek life within the Centennial Conference, bringing together schools and presidents of Greek organizations to an open forum setting where all Greek life can become unified and better understood by the entire conference. He suggests discussing every detail of Greek life, including anti-hazing disciplinary actions.

"We are in this together, we have to protect ourselves within the Greek Community," mentioned Capone. He added that there needs to be Greek unity, not a rivalry.

Taylor said the Greeks are, "trying to change their image on campus, they want to be a positive part of the community...I'm really proud of our Greek organizations."

If Capone and Taylor could tell the UC community anything, it is that Greek life is changing to create a more positive experience for not just those involved, but the community it affects. They hope that these changes will create a better understanding of why Greek life is so important to so many students.

Are you qualified?
Laurence Boggess, a former independent school teacher and headmaster and author of "Everyone's Guide to Job Searching in Private Schools", has this to say: "The basic qualities that make a good teacher are universal. They are: love of children, communication skills, expertise in a subject or method area, and confidence."

If you are interested... register with one or more independent school teacher placement agencies. Put together your application materials - have your resume and cover letters critiqued in Career Services. Talk to potential references and write any essays that the placement agencies require. Get some classroom teaching experience - this can make a huge difference.

Volunteer for an after-school program or teach English to immigrants. UCARE can probably give you some ideas and options to gain experience.

For a list of independent school agencies and teaching fellowships, go to the Career Services Page in the Education section http://www.ursinus.edu/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?id=992 or talk with a Career Advisor who can help you with your search.

Happy Teaching!
Something funny happened to me on Tuesday of last week. I woke up in the morning, not through my morning routine, and I didn’t really care about the husband and wife sitting in front of my wake. Breathless, I plopped down in front of the screen by Hathaway and Academy President Tom Sherak. The subsequent announcements lasted ten minutes at most, but packed enough punch to keep Tinseltown talking until the big reveal next month.

It appears that the Academy’s doubling of the Best Picture nominees was not so much a move to include more quality films to the ballot, but rather to include the crowd-pleasers and box-office behemoths in order to draw more viewers to the telecast. I admit that “Avat-ar” deserved to make the cut, but if you’re going to talk about apartheid in South Africa, why not include Clint Eastwood’s “Invictus” as well, as opposed to “District 9”? “The Blind Side” is the only one of the nominees that I have yet to see, and from what I hear, it is a tearjerker, but does it really deserve to be viewed on the same scale as the heartbreak­ing film “Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire”? Personally, I did not care for “A Serious Man”, but I can see where the Coen Brothers have created a movie just bizarre enough to be considered good. As for “Up”, cartoons have their own category, and for the sake of other deserv­ing movies that did not make the cut, they should stay there.

“An Education”, “The Hurt Locker”, “Inglourious Basterds”, and “Up in the Air” round out the category, and I have no doubt that if the Academy had stuck to five nominees, these films and all have been on the ballot any­way. On awards night I will be pull­ing for “Inglourious Basterds” and Tarantino for best director, although I know that he will have some stiff competition from James Cameron (“Avatar”) and Kathryn Bigelow (“The Hurt Lock­er”). Bigelow would be the first female director to take home the prize, and she would also be beat­ing out her ex-husband, Cameron, apparently the two have an amicable divorce, which is good because I am still recovering from last year’s awkwardness that was the passing back and forth between Jennifer Aniston who was presenting and Brange­lina in the front row.

Actors generally like to tell reporters that they slept through award nominations, that they had no idea what day it was until they were dropping their children off at school and their ex-husband’s cousin’s stepmother called to congratulate them, and blah blah blah. Lies. All lies. I am sure that most actors (I know I do) share the sentiments of Kate Winslet, who proclaimed to Vanity Fair in 2008 before her double nominations and win for “The Reader”:

“Do I want it [an Oscar]? You bet your f***ing ass I do!” I can only imagine how first-time Best Act­ress nominees Sandra Bullock, Carey Mulligan, and Gabourey Sidibe are feeling right now, and although I think that either Mul­ligan or Sidibe deserve the award just want to get out of it! I, as re­spectively, realize that they are both still young, and that this may be Bullock’s only shot at gold. I could never be unhappy for Mer­yl Streep and Helen Mirren, but I am disappointed that Emily Blunt (“The Young Victoria”) and Abbie Cornish (“Bright Star”) were shut out of the category.

Penelope Cruz received a nomination for her Supporting Role in “Nine”, which surprised me for two reasons. First, if any actress from “Nine” should have been nominated, it is Marion Co­tillard, and second, Penelope was wonderful in Pedro Almodovar’s “Broken Embraces”, but neither she nor the film received any Oscar love. Vera Farmiga and Anna Kendrick are both nominated for “Up in the Air”, as is Maggie Gyllenhaal for “Crazy Heart”, but for her incredible portrayal of the abusive mother in “Precious”, this Oscar is Mo’Nique’s to lose.

Jeff Bridges seems the front runner for Best Actor, and although I have not seen “Crazy Heart” as of late, from the prev­iews it looks like this year’s “The Wrestler”, so it makes sense the Bridges would be this year’s Mickey Rourke, and with no Sean Penn standing in his way, he will probably take the award. Jeremy Renner could be an upset here, for his realistic portrayal of a soldier in Iraq, and it would be a pleasant surprise if Colin Firth won for “A Single Man”, and I know it would make my mom exceedingly happy as well. George Clooney and Morgan Freeman are like the Meryl and Helen of this category.

Matt Damon, Woody Harrel­son, Christopher Plummer, and Stanley Tucci are all great, but Christoph Waltz wishes to replace the villain of the year and win for Best Supporting Actor in “Inglourious Basterds”.

When I was in 7th grade, I made a bet with Matt Taylor that he would win an Oscar by the time I turn 30. I am too not worried yet. I am only 19, after all. I have plenty of time, and for right now, I will make do with practic­ing my acceptance speech in the bathroom mirror and tuning in to the Academy Awards on Sunday, Mar. 7.

Making good and bad memories on Valentine’s Day

By Zach Shambaerg
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It’s not like Christmas or Chanukah. You look forward to those holidays all year, and it’s practically guaranteed that you’ll be celebrating them. You can’t really compare it to Thanksgiving, because valen­tines can’t be ignored by watching football or a morning parade. And it certainly doesn’t resemble the Fourth of July, because even the blondest of blondes might end up with anything but fireworks.

Valentine’s Day is one of those holidays that you either love or absolutely despise. You’ve either had a great experience or it was the worst day of your life. He or she either said “Yeah, I love you too!” or “I’m sorry... but I don’t.” For me, it’s always been the latter. In high school, I was a romantic. “The O.C.” and “Dawson’s Creek” made me that way. I’ve held a grudge against both show’s writers ever since ninth grade, when I declared my eternal love for a certain someone who, apparently, did not share the same feelings of adoration. In tenth grade, I came pretty close to having the best Valentine’s Day in the history of the holiday, right up until the time my then-girlfriend told me, “Well, when I said we were exclusive, I didn’t really mean that it would just be you and I” (thanks for clarifying!).

Junior and senior year consisted of more of the same, only in those cases, my “girlfriends” were what the kids had coined “random hookups”, so it didn’t make much sense to stand on a cafeteria table and hand them a dozen roses and Hershey’s chocolates.

A part of me shudders every time I hear the word “Valentine”. Even in elementary school, I was the kid who gave out extrava­gant valentines cards to the girls I liked in class, only to be handed a cheap Bugs Bunny cutout that read something like, “I’m Loo­ney for you!” And most times, it didn’t even have my name on it (our teachers had made it clear that our valentines needed to be as generic and anti-sexual as possible). But I just never had any luck with girls. My first kiss occurred on Valentine’s Day, coinciden­tially, during an inconspic­uous game of hide-and-seek.

My girlfriend and I hid in a dark room (under a ping-pong table), looked at each other, kissed, and then im­mediately got tagged by whoever was “it”. In that exact order. So even when I was sucking face, it still sucked. My “seven minutes in heaven” usually lasted three. Girls would suggest that we play “spin the bottle” just after I threw out my 20 oz. Pepsi. I was the guy who always picked “truth” in a game of truth or dare. I was too young to drink when everyone else learned that opportunity to I swore off gambling just before the girls in my grade found out about “kissing cards”.

The truth is, those games were never for me. Making out in a closet never had any appeal, and accepting a “dare” to kiss someone always made me feel like a detained criminal in a holding cell (detective: “I dare you to do it”; me: “I just want to get out of here!”). As the years passed, the meaning of Valentine’s Day has lost in its character, and for right now, I will make do with practic­ing my acceptance speech in the bathroom mirror.

And there are painful memories of tear-eyed confessions and grand romantic gestures that failed miserably, leaving me standing in a crowded cafeteria or sitting alone in a cold automobile. How can I possibly deal with it all? Because, in the end, there have been triumphs. And no matter how bad some mem­ories may be, the real successes have helped me to pick myself up and face Valentine’s Day again. And again. And again.

So what does this holiday mean to me? Every year, it’s a shot at redemption. It’s a chance to start over. More importantly, it’s an opportunity to start another bad memory with some­thing good. Even if it’s fleeting.

Happy Valentine’s Day.
"Mass Effect 2" brings bigger surprises

By Mac Kilduff
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Tuesday, Jan. 26th marked the introduction of a new threat to our galaxy, as human colonies in outer star systems began to disappear without a trace. And it’s up to one person to stop this threat... again... and obviously that person is you. Welcome to "Mass Effect 2." The storyline continues from the end of the first videogame and doesn’t fail to entertain. You can even import your "Mass Effect" character to continue the customization you gave him from the first game. You’ll constantly find yourself making decisions and immersed in danger. For those who aren’t familiar with the first, it’s not the kind of game you pick up and spend ten minutes playing. There are hours of talking, and action isn’t necessarily around every corner. But for those familiar, the action is intense and dynamic during this time around. Firefights are more limited in the sense that you can’t run out in the middle of the battle to kill everyone. The game switched to regenerating health and they included “heat clips” to limit the amount of rounds you can put through a gun before “reloading.” They also included heavy weapons, like grenade launchers, and submachine guns for some characters. The great part about "Mass Effect 2" and its predecessor is the universality of the main character. The character isn’t the “silent hero” of JRPGs and doesn’t bear the “implied” voice of games like "Dragon Age" or "Fallout 3," in which you have an option to speak but there is no voice to accompany you. You can’t be a man or woman, alter your first name and your appearance, but your character still has a voice and isn’t identified as "you" or "commander." You can mold "Shepard" in the way you perceive the character to be, or the way you would do things in his (or her) position.

In "Mass Effect 2," you have the freedom to emphasize on good and evil actions influencing their games, "Mass Effect 2," like the first game, is highly rooted in moral actions that affect the story. The game has included the addition of "Paragon" and "Renegade" actions during conversation and cut scenes. So, if someone is doing something that goes against your morals, you may have to stop them or let it go.

The game has a new repertoire of characters that you can choose to bring along. We see some of the same species from the first game as well as a few new ones, all with their own histories and traits. Throughout the game you’ll be able to build complex relationships with your teammates and delve into their histories. This adds more game and a deeper dynamic to the "Mass Effect" universe.

BioWare altered the space travel and it’s not necessarily for the better. You now have a little ship to fly around on a map instead of pointing and clicking to go somewhere. There’s really no point in the flying portion as it has the same effect of point and click but simply moves slower. You also have to buy fuel to fly in between portions. They also changed the “survey” option on planets into a manual action. As in you have to move a cursor up and down a planet and then listen and watch for signs of valuable metals to use for research. The research option is also a new feature, allowing you to increase the strength of you, your teammates and your ship, giving you more to focus on while playing the game.

Where the first game had issues with general gameplay, they tried to improve on them this time around. The first game had hundreds of items to pick up including armor for different species, all different kinds of weapons and upgrades for each. You could equip weapons on all characters and upgrade each of them. In "Mass Effect 2" you’ve lost this capability. There are only a few weapons for your character that you can run into as you progress. So instead of finding a new shotgun in a locker, and a minute later finding a better one after a firefight, you pick up an assault rifle in a mission, and four hours later you find a new shotgun.

You also can’t get new weapons for your teammates unless you “research” them by gaining metals from surveying worlds. This reduces clutter and awkwardness in your inventory and equipment though. The same goes for leveling up your skills; you have significantly less options but this allows you to be more dynamic with weapons.

Basically you lose customization for “cleaner” game play. They could have balanced it a little bit more though.

Overall the game is very different from the first one. Major tweaks here and there have made the game more action oriented over RPG oriented, without sacrificing story mind you. BioWare knows exactly what they’re doing, however, and the game is certainly one of the best modern RPGs out there. In the end, the game deserves a nine out of ten.

Top five Super Bowl ads

By Helen Ann Coin
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FloTV’s “My Generation”: While this commercial lacked any humor, I found it to be one of the most profound commercials displayed during the Super Bowl. First of all, the fact that the music was “My Generation” by The Who, the half-time performers that turned the commercials that did not revolve around the music with society and equity is embarrassing for women. So ladies, as long as he agrees to “carry our lip balm,” let the poor men choose the car they want to drive.

Google’s “Parisan Love”: It may be the fact that Valentine’s Day is right around the corner or the fact that it was one of the few commercials that did not revolve around men being “men,” but I found Google’s commercial absolutely adorable. As the man types in Google’s search different words such as “how to impress a French woman” and “churches in Paris,” the viewers cannot help but get attached to the character and his new relationship. Above all, the moment that sold this commercial for me was when he types “long distance relationship advice,” erases it, and then types “jobs in Paris.” It is in that moment that Google captures the meaning of love.

E-Trade’s “Jealous Girlfriend”: I think many people would agree with me that E-Trade’s commercial is one of the most talked about commercials of the week. I mean, who doesn’t love those hilarious babies? There are plenty of couples who can relate to the argument between the two babies; a jealous girlfriend accuses her boyfriend of giving a girl her shirt. What makes this argument funnier than the one you had last week? His girlfriend calls the mistress a “milking cow,” only to have her mistress respond by popping in the screen in shock. Do yourself a favor and watch the commercial to actually see her reaction.

Kia Sorento’s “Joy Ride”: What makes this commercial so entertaining? Maybe it was just met, but I think the parallels of Kia Sorento’s commercial and the film, “The Hangover,” are uncanny. From the first couple seconds of the commercial, the viewers sense the special camaraderie between the different toys. Yet, it is when the toys are riding into Las Vegas where I immediately recognized the similarities, making me laugh all the more. As we later find that the toys imagine this journey while sitting in the backseat of the new 2011 Sorento, you can almost hear one of them mumble, “I guess that’s why they call it Sin City.”
UC Gymnastics is flipping through 2010 season

By Gianna Paone

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were back at petition sea on—especially be­ prepare for another eventful com­ action with their fir t meet on

Oldham-Curtis placed second in
the All-Around with a score of
190.025, while Freshman Jo War­ ren claimed fourth with a 9.450,
despite both having encountered
some injuries during the pre­
ceeding week! In a five-way tie, Oldham-Curtis placed first on
Floor with a 9.7, and her 37.675
All-Around score landed her in
fourth.

The team’s only All-Around
competitor this year does not go
unrecognized by the conference,
ECAC, for her success. In a Jan.
24 announcement on their Web
site, ECAC awarded Oldham-
Curtis the “All-Around of the
Week” title for Division III gymn­
asts for her accomplishments in
the quad meet.

“So far, the year’s highlights
include the performance of the
senior class, as well as the Bars
accomplishments of freshman
Johanna Warren, who scored her
all-time high of a 9.45,” says head
coach Jeff Schepers.

As of Feb. 1, the Bears are
ranked in sixth place
out of the fifteen
competing Division
III teams and
fourth out of
the seven in
the ECAC.

In order to qualify as a team for
the National Collegiate
Gymnastics Association
(NCGA) Championship­
ships—their National
competition—the Bears will
need an unquestionably
stuck landing among the top three teams at the
ECAC Championships, where
their strongest rivals appear likely to
be SUNY Brockport, Ithaca
College, and SUNY Cortland.

Although Springfield College
may also offer strong competi­
tion, they will be hosting NCGA
Championships this year and thus
compete as a team regardless
of their ECAC Championship­
ship performance.

With regard to the Bears’
capabilities of success,
Schepers explains,
“believe that the talent
and the potential are there,
and since it’s a one­
day qualifying competi­
tion, it’ll really determine who has
their game on.”

The team currently consists of 19 gymnasts—the most that they’ve had in over seven years—and their goals remain equally
packaged. “Go Big or go HOME”
reads their slogan, signifying the
team’s solid commitment not to
hold back on their efforts toward
making NCGA Championships

Moliken named new Athletic Director

By Katie Callahan

Laura Moliken, the Head Coach for the Women’s Field Hockey team was announced as the new Athletic Director this past December after serving as Interim Athletic Director for the last few months. Moliken, taking over for Coach Thomas, is excited for all the new chal­lenges that are coming her way.

Moliken originally did not expect that it would be her time to rise in the administration. In fact, the Athletic Department interviewed countless potentials, including Moliken. She stated that this was not the “time table” she thought would occur for her, but she recognized that it was something that she was ready for and that although she origi­nally did not want the position she was ready to take hold of the reigns. It would have been an easy no, said Moliken, if the Ursinus Community was not as great and supportive as they were and continue to be. She said that without their support, the decision would not have been considered.

Moliken’s goals include creating a more cohesive communica­tion style where members of the administration and athletic staff can communicate in a more collaborative style. There are also goals surrounding athletic facilities, staffing and student achieve­ment that are still in the planning stages.

Moliken is currently enjoying the opportunity of working with different members of the faculty and staff and finds fulfillment in working on different projects that she knows will make a positive difference for the students and Ursinus Community.

Chris Bayless, Head Coach for Cross-Country and Track and Field, said he felt as though he was Moliken’s biggest supporter. He said she is a strong commu­nicator, authoritative, quick to answer, and has tremendous orga­nizational skills. Coach Bayless also mentioned that he is thrilled that she accepted the position.

With all of the newfound res­ponsibilities the title brings, Moliken has found that her time is up as the coach for the field hockey team. 2010 will be her last sea­son as the Head Coach for the Women’s Field Hockey team. This will give her more time to work on bigger projects that require more dedication than she can commit to right now.

Goals and duties are heavy, and on top of these projects there are even more to-do lists that pile up. Possibly a little overwhelm­ing, Moliken seems to be taking everything in stride.

Moliken explained she is, “Extremely excited to build on the foundation that Coach T set in during the last ten years,” also adding that his positive influence is really helping pave the way for her future as the new A.D.