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B8 Christmas in lights

www.LibertyChampion.com

A Christmas with no water
Art after God's heart: Lorena Palma
Student missionaries take "Next Steps"
Basketball Photo Gallery

liberty CHAMPION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2010 • VOLUME 28 ISSUE 11

School earns AA bond rating

Now ranked
among most
prestigious

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Liberty University sold \$120 million worth of tax-exempt education facilities bonds on Tuesday, which will allow the university to usher in a new era of growth and development.

fyi
◆ The \$120 million bond will pay for construction and other projects Page A2.

Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. and a contingent of Liberty officials traveled to New York City for the sale and pricing of the bonds at its initial public bond offering.

Liberty benefits from a recently acquired AA bond rating from Standard & Poor's, placing it among the top 44 S&P-rated colleges and universities for financial strength.

"It is very rare for any company to receive a AA rating as its initial credit rating," Falwell said. Recent examples are Microsoft and Google.

Liberty is the second private college in Virginia that currently holds the rating. Washington & Lee in Lexington is the other.

"Like other AA-rated universities, Liberty has chosen to take advantage of low interest rates and tax-exempt financing rather than spend its reserves

BONDS continued on A2

the road less traveled



RUTH BIBBY | LIBERTY CHAMPION

FAST PACED — According to the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association, over 1.6 trillion text messages were sent every day in 2009.

Driving impaired

Texting while operating a vehicle equals drunk driving

DEVIN FRANCIS
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Many teenagers use their thumbs nowadays to make plans with their friends on a Friday night. Since its debut in 1989, texting has become a phenomenon across the United States. According to the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association, over 1.6 trillion text messages were sent per day in 2009.

The key selling point of texting is that it saves time. In many cases, people are so eager to speed up communication that they have adopted the dangerous habit of texting while driving. Unfortunately, this short cut is an action that can lead to shortened lives.

According to a recent Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study, the reason for this may be linked to the fact that texting while driving is the equivalent of drunk driving, slowing a driver's reaction time to that of someone with a blood alcohol level of .08.

"The results don't shock me," Lynchburg Behind the



GOOGLE IMAGES

BEHIND THE WHEEL — In 2009, 5,474 people died from cell phone use while driving.

Wheel Instructor John Mann said, "I actually would have thought they'd be worse than that."

Mann, who has been teaching Behind the Wheel for about 15 years, has lost former students due to texting while driving.

TEXT continued on A2

Gov. seeks \$50M in higher education

McDonnell: We must reverse the trend of disinvestment in higher education

Jonathan Parker
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Governor Bob McDonnell proposed spending \$50 million on a wide-range of higher education initiatives Friday.

McDonnell announced the investment plan during the gov-

ernor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment meeting at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, according to a news release.

"We must reverse the trend of disinvestment in higher education," McDonnell said in the news release.



FALWELL



MCDONNELL

"We must do more to equip our students with the tools and reserves they need to compete with their

peers here in the United States and around the world."

Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr., one of eight college presidents on the 44-member commission, said McDonnell plans to enhance tuition assistance grants (TAG) for Virginia students attending the independent colleges and universities.

During commission meetings, Falwell stressed the importance of TAG funding and the money independent schools save the state.

"Liberty alone is saving the state

fyi
◆ McDonnell plans to enhance tuition assistance grants for Virginia students. For more information, see Page A2.

several million dollars a year," Falwell said.

Falwell said it costs Virginia \$6,600 per year to educate a student

GOVERNOR continued on A2



Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. and Liberty staff members meet with bond traders from Morgan Stanley (wearing Liberty hats and ties), one of the underwriters for the bonds, on Tuesday in New York.

BONDS

continued from A1

on capital projects," Falwell said.

For the past several years, Liberty has been paying for its major capital projects out of its cash reserves.

Institutional investors in Tuesday's sale included most of the major players in the national bond market, Falwell said. Bonds were also sold on the retail market Monday. He said there were more orders for bonds than were available.

Liberty's strong financial footing in recent years has contributed to the high bond rating. Net assets for the university have increased from \$100 million in 2007 to \$530 million today. Projections show the university's net assets will exceed \$1 billion by 2014.

"In just three years, we have achieved financially what we had hoped to achieve over a much longer time span," Falwell said.

Shortly before the Dr. Jerry Falwell Sr., the university's founder, died in 2007 he had announced the university was seeking to obtain a \$1 billion endowment in the next 10 years.

**Standard & Poor's
AA Rated Listing for Universities***

Agnes Scott College	Oberlin College
Bryn Mawr College	Smith College
Cornell University	Trinity University
Davidson College	University of Chicago
Denison College	Vanderbilt University
Emory University	Vassar College
Hofstra College	Wake Forest University
Johns Hopkins University	Washington & Lee University
Julliard School	Wesleyan University
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY	Yeshiva University
Middlebury College	

*Universities and colleges listed in alphabetically.

The rating was bolstered by Liberty's high graduation rates, and the success of alumni finding jobs and their ability to pay back loans.

As Liberty prepares to celebrate its 40th anniversary next year, Falwell said the sale of the bonds "will be used to pay for certain capital projects that have been completed in recent years and will finance the construction of a multitude of new facilities on campus that will greatly enhance the educational experience for students."

Expansion plans include a new lawn behind Arthur

S. DeMoss Learning Center and a new freestanding library to replace existing older buildings, as well as a host of other construction projects to beautify the campus and add parking facilities.

"These projects will revolutionize the look and the feel of campus," Falwell said.

"It is humbling for me to witness God's blessings of such magnitude on Liberty University. This is a wonderful Christmas gift to Liberty and its students."

- ◆ **PARKER** is a news reporter.
- ◆ **BIBLE** is with University Advancement.

TEXT *continued from A1*

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, drivers using hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes resulting in serious injury or death. Despite these disturbing results, the Governor's Highway Safety Association website revealed that only 30 of 50 states have opted to ban the behavior.

Amherst County Police Officer Art Pedigo said that texting while driving is one of the most dangerous driver actions because it distracts a person in three ways.

"They're visually distracted when their eyes come off the road to read that text," Pedigo said. "Then there's manual distraction when they take their hand off the wheel to type, and there's cognitive distraction during all of this because their mind is on the message being sent and not on driving."

Pedigo takes this combination seriously because he has seen it end in deadly results.

"It takes one second to cross over the road line and strike a mini-van with kids on their way home from little league practice," he said.

Nineteen-year-old Shelly Holmes did not collide with another vehicle, but she did damage her 1996 Jeep Grand Cherokee when she hit a deer this past October because of texting while driving. Holmes was texting a friend to tell him she had gotten off work and would be at his house soon when the accident occurred.

"I didn't even see the deer until it was too late to stop," she said. "When I got home, I saw some of the deer's fur in my front bumper and lost it. I really could have died."

Many people do not live to see the person they were texting. According to a September 2010 report from the Transportation Department 5,474 people died in 2009 from cell phone use, including texting and talking.

"Those numbers are going to keep going up if people don't unglue their hands from the keyboard," Pedigo said. "There's just no excuse for it."

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's third-annual Traffic Safety Culture Index conducted in September of 2010, 70 percent of the drivers they surveyed admitted to texting while driving.

"Everyone thinks they're invincible, and that it won't happen to them," Brookville High School Driver Education teacher Warner Dyke said.

Dyke, who has been teaching the course for 14 years, said he tries to get through to his students by role playing and bringing in a former student who was hit walking on a sidewalk by a driver who was texting.

"We try to get parental support too, but some of them are just as bad," Dyke said.

In fact, 2010 texting while driving statistics compiled by Pew Research Center revealed that 47 percent of adults text compared to 34 percent of teenagers.

"I see my mom text all the time," a 16-year-old Halifax County resident said. "Why would I stop doing it if she won't?"

According to Pedigo, another reason people continue to text while they drive can be attributed to the lack of harsh penalties and laws associated with the action. In states like Virginia, texting while driving is a secondary offense only resulting in a \$20 fine the first time and a \$50 fine if caught a second time.

"There's no severity in the punishment so everyone just ignores it and goes on their merry way," Pedigo said. "If we could slap them with a \$1,000 fine they'd start listening."

Various ads, programs and organizations have been put in place to discourage drivers from texting. Public Service Announcements are being released frequently, showing graphic dramatizations of possible texting while driving outcomes in hopes of emphasizing the severity of the action.

Celebrities like Oprah Winfrey have also gotten in on the movement. Winfrey launched a "No Phone Zone" campaign in 2008, while President Barack Obama also took a stand against this dangerous epidemic by signing an executive order in 2009 banning texting while driving for over 4.5 million federal government and military employees.

Text'n Drive allows drivers to stay focused by sending text messages without touching their phones by using a voice activated program to speak their texts out loud.

"Instead of complaining, we came up with an alternative to make roads safer," employee Hugo Hang Hong said.

The Coalition for Cellphone-Free Driving also runs ads reminding drivers of ways they can avoid distraction, such as getting a passenger to operate all of their technological devices or turning their phone off before even getting into the car.

Editor's note: Some names have been changed for the protection of the individual's privacy.

◆ **FRANCIS** is a news reporter.

reporter's note

◆ **Technology has provided people with many fun inventions to use, but when something such as texting while driving puts personal safety at risk, it is time to power down. After all, it only takes one second for two vehicles to collide, and there's no reception from six feet under.**

GOVERNOR *continued from A1*

at a state college, compared to a \$2,600 investment for independent schools.

"The amount of money the TAG program saves the state is huge," Falwell said.

Private colleges and universities surveyed students to measure the impact of the TAG program. Liberty also urged students receiving TAG to stress the program's importance

to state leaders.

"Every college student who is a resident of the state of Virginia receives \$2600 per year from the state if that student chooses to attend a private college in Virginia.

The grant is available to resident and online students," Falwell said.

The governor's commission applauded Liberty for operational efficiency because it is the state's only nonprofit college or university

to pay its operating expenses with tuition and fees, Falwell said.

"Liberty's use of online delivery technology along with its innovative and cost-saving management practices allow it to deliver education more efficiently and allow it to make education affordable for its students. That is the governor's goal — to make education more accessible and more affordable so, in many ways, Liberty has become a model for others schools to emulate," Falwell said.

Liberty is efficient in building new projects and renovating older buildings, spending \$60 to \$120 per square foot compared to \$150 to \$400 per square foot rate seen at many public colleges, Falwell said.

McDonnell plans to introduce the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 to the General Assembly next year.

The governor's plan incorporates strategies from the commission's three primary objectives — economic opportunity, reform-based investment and affordable access, according to a press release.

McDonnell has set a goal of graduating 100,000 more degrees in the next 15 years with an emphasis on urging Virginia residents with partial college credit to complete the program.

"Good jobs come from a good education and by graduating more degrees, Virginians will be able to better compete for the top jobs and high incomes of our global economy," McDonnell said.

The state will focus on strengthening science, technology, engineering, and math degree fields through a private-public partnership.

"It's a fact that many of the jobs of tomorrow will come from these core areas, and I am committed to ensuring our children have the necessary tools to compete for them," McDonnell said.

The higher education investment proposal also outlines initiatives in research and development, including tracking research and development projects in the state, adding increased funds for research and development, and creating a state income tax credit to promote private investment.

"Research and development remain a priority; therefore, I will also propose a research and development tax credit to boost Virginia's economic competitiveness," McDonnell said.

The governor wants the state to place excess revenue in a "rainy day" fund to curb tuition surges and maintain higher education initiatives.

The plan also calls for increased need-based financial grants and low-interest loans for low- and middle-income families.

"Over the past decade, college tuition has doubled, and that is simply not acceptable," McDonnell said. "The college cost burden has shifted heavily to tuition-paying parents and their families."

Other initiatives include utilizing state schools year-round, strengthening technology programs and instruction, and boosting dual-enrollment and advanced placement courses in high schools.

◆ **PARKER** is a news reporter.

www.LibertyChampion.com

LIBERTY CHAMPION

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Champion encourages community members to submit letters to the editor on any subject. Letters should not exceed 400 words and must be typed and signed. The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Letters and columns that appear are the opinion of the author solely, not the Champion editorial board or Liberty University.

All material submitted becomes property of the Champion. The Champion reserves the right to accept, reject or edit any letter received — according to the Champion stylebook, taste and the Liberty University mission statement.

Send letters to:

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Liberty University, Box 2000,
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or drop off in DeMoss Hall 1035.

CORRECTION BOX

The Liberty Champion reprinted its Dec. 8th edition because a photo of Evans Kigen ran on the Sports page in place of Sam Chelanga, who won his second NCAA cross-country championship last week. This edition correctly includes Chelanga's photo.

There was a factual error in the Nov. 16, issue of the Champion. In the story "Heroes remembered by candlelight," the names Jesse Shrout, Chrystal, Fabio and Ronald Rider were incorrect. The men and women's names should have read SGT Jesse Strong, SPC Chrystal Stout, Captain Nicholas Giglio and SFC Ronald Grider.

The Liberty Champion staff apologizes to the families of these fallen soldiers for our grievous mistake.

Dangerous decisions

Train track safety a major concern

CRYSTAL HEAVNER
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A few years ago in Virginia, a grandmother and her grandson walked down to the railroad tracks to flatten a coin.

They put the coin on the tracks and waited for the train to pass. When the train flew by, it shot the coin through the air and straight into the young boy's skull, killing him.

In the 1970s, some Liberty University students were crossing the railroad trestle near Riverside Park, walking from Lynchburg to Madison Heights. A train approached them crossing

the trestle. They had nowhere to go and gambled a jump. They did not survive.

"Since 1990, there have been over 5,000 people killed while trespassing on railroad rights-of-way and property," according to an Operation Lifesaver brochure

Sgt. Kathryn H. Allen of the Liberty University Police Department (LUPD) is passionate about railroad safety.

Allen, a seven-year veteran of LUPD, was honored this July with one of the annual Governor's Transportation Safety Awards for her outstanding promotion of rail safety

and volunteer service.

Allen speaks with students at Liberty Christian Academy (LCA) and Liberty students about the dangers of railroad crossing and hands out informative packets at the railroad crossing by Sonic.

She says her passion stems from her maternal nature.

"I have eight kids, many are college age or older. As a parent of LU kids I'd want someone looking out for them," Allen said.

According to Allen, the police department has received many e-mails and phone calls from concerned students, faculty, staff, parents and visitors to campus who see students zipping their cars around lowered crossing arms and crossing tracks illegally.

Allen believes the only weapons to combat students' violation of highway-rail grade crossings and railroad rights of way and properties laws that prohibit trespassing on tracks or crossing in undesignated areas are to inform students and enforce laws.

"The evidence of students being (on the tracks) is overwhelming. We won't catch everyone. It is their safety we are looking out for," Allen said.

Allen specifically mentioned

cars that are stopping on the tracks trying to get off campus and onto Wards Road.

Students apparently are unaware of the great risk posed by illegal crossing of train tracks, Allen said. Students who cross illegally flirt with the possibility of misjudging the distance of the train and getting hit.

Train tracks can be optically misleading and trains sometimes appear farther away and slower moving than they are, according to Allen.

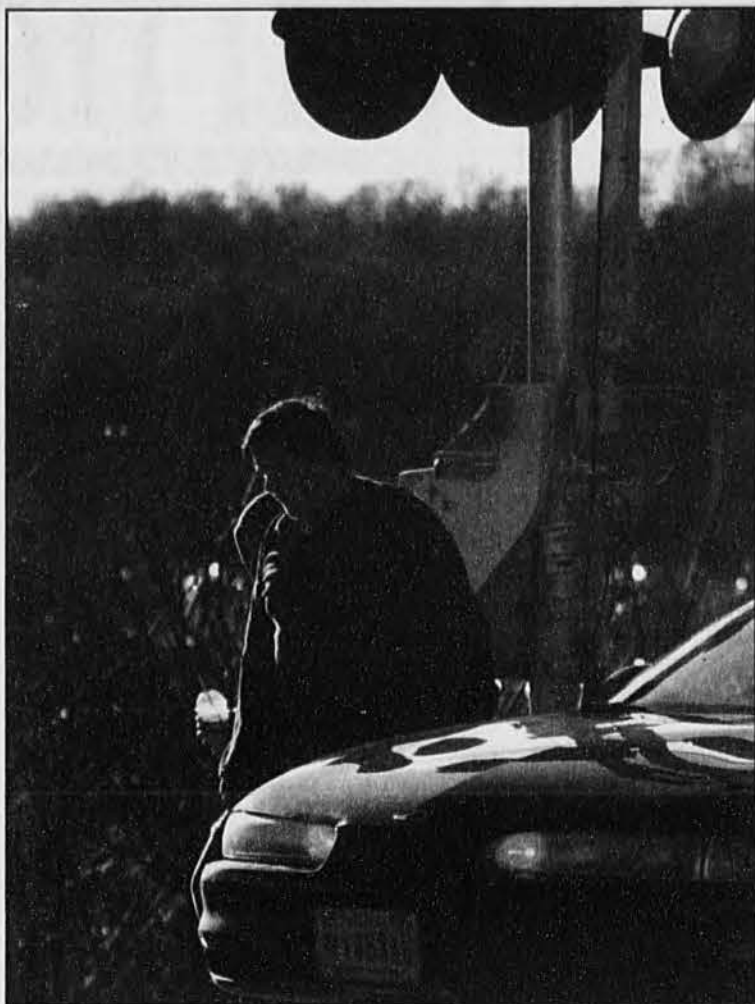
Pedestrians who walk between the tracks are often unaware that each train overhangs the track by about three feet, so it is also possible to be injured between passing trains.

"The laws are there for their safety. The biggest fear of engineers is someone walking on the tracks or crossing in front of them and not being able to stop," Allen said.

According to an Operation Lifesaver brochure, "A freight train moving at 55 mph, or an eight-car passenger train moving at 79 mph, can take a mile or more to stop."

Allen has clocked trains zooming by campus at 82 mph.

Often students will cross the tracks using their iPods or cell phones. Allen stressed that stu-



THE RISK — Sgt. Kathryn Allen has clocked trains zooming by campus at 82 mph.

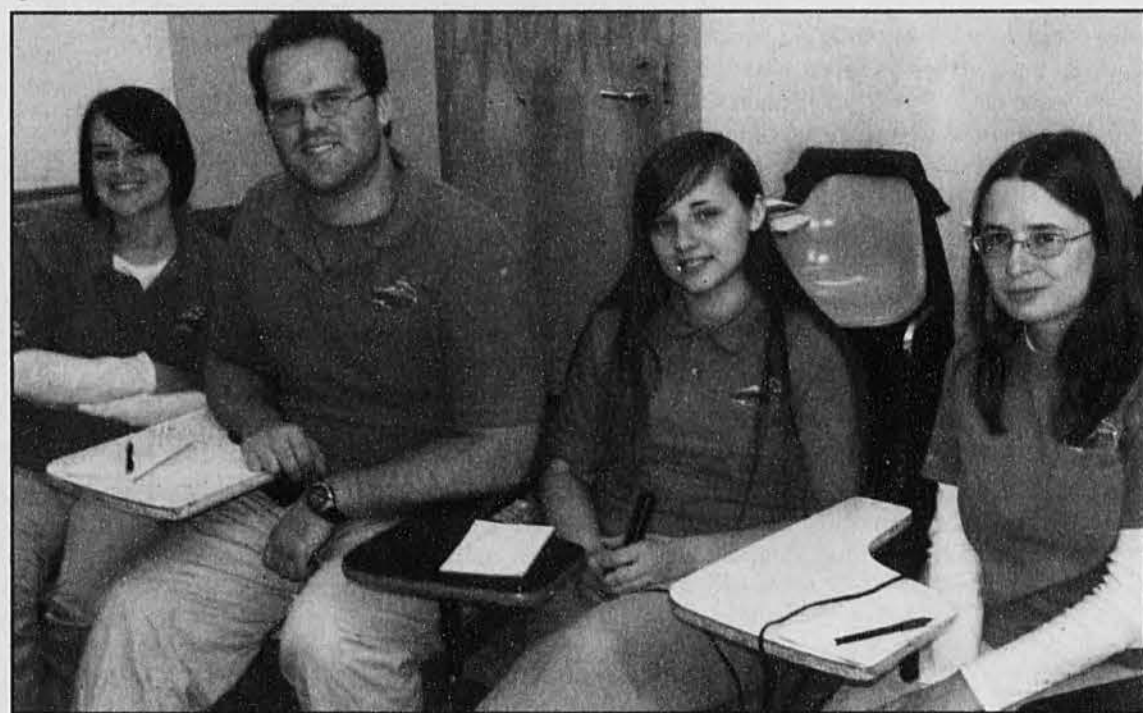
dents must be alert when crossing tracks or they will not see or hear a train approaching.

Allen informed students that if the crossing arms remain down for an extended period, there is a number on the post they can call

to contact a dispatcher. The dispatcher will find out why the arm has remained down and remedy the problem safely.

◆ **HEAVNER** is a news reporter.

quiz bowl



THE TEAM — (Left to Right) Catherine Hardee, Corbin Payne (captain), Andrea Teachout and Marissa Estep.

'Varsity sport of the mind'

Team claims six wins at last competition

TREY SMITH
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What is the pope's e-mail address? Who is the host of Extreme Makeover Home Edition? What part of a letter begins two lines below the salutation?

These questions can be found in the National Question Bank at skill-susa.org. These are also the types of questions that Liberty's Quiz Bowl team faces at competitions each semester.

According to its website, the Quiz Bowl team "has been called the 'varsity sport of the mind.'"

Each semester, the team participates in numerous competitions. At a competition, members usually participate in games that involve two 10-minute halves with a short halftime between, according to the team's coach, Associate Professor of English and Honors Director Dr. Jim Nutter.

"Usually you will hear about 10 toss-up questions per half, and then each toss-up has three bonus questions," Nutter said. "Students buzz in to answer the toss-ups and then teams confer on the bonus questions."

At the most recent and final competition of the semester at the University of Virginia (UVA) on Nov.

6, the team brought home six wins defeating North Carolina Wesleyan College (NCWC) once and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) once, and North Carolina State University (NCSU) four times.

"Our four wins over an ACC school, NCSU, was a first for our team after beating Duke earlier in the semester in Durham," Nutter said.

To prepare for competitions the team practice for 90 minutes every Thursday afternoon, according to Nutter.

The team captain, junior Corbin Payne, also has specific ways to not only help the team prepare but also to get himself ready to compete.

"As a team, our practices simulate real-life competitions in all respects," Payne said. "Individually, we do different things. I like to review fact sheets and also research topics I had not gotten in the most recent practice or competition."

According to Payne, on the day of competition the team focuses on relaxing and enjoying each other's company.

"On game day, we do not typically practice or try to recite trivia — we relax. I have found that with our team the best way to do this is to just enjoy ourselves. So we will just hang out with one another and talk."

According to Nutter, this year's varsity team consists of three male and nine female students, two of whom are graduate students. At competitions, any member can

compete, including freshmen. Freshman Marissa Estep heard about the Quiz Bowl team through the Honors Program.

"I decided to join the Quiz Bowl Team because I have always enjoyed answering questions," Estep said. "I have loved learning about God's creation through studying science since I was about two. As a science specialist on the Quiz Bowl team, I have the opportunity to be rewarded for answering questions about subjects I am passionate about."

For Estep most of her preparation for competitions comes from what she learns in her classes.

"Everything I learn in my coursework only improves my Quiz Bowl abilities," Estep said.

The Quiz Bowl team is open to new members. Interested students can stop by the Honors Office to speak with Nutter and to schedule a tryout or e-mail him at jhnutter@liberty.edu.

"If anyone loves Jeopardy, Quiz Bowl is like playing Jeopardy in teams of four against other colleges," Nutter said.

"Two areas where we could use more expertise are in the fields of art history and music, especially opera."

For those curious about the answers to the questions in the beginning and are still wondering, they are: benedictxvi@vatican.va, Ty Pennington and the body.

◆ **SMITH** is a news reporter.

Rist assumes new position

Role to offer support to Provost, Chancellor

SARAH STOCKSLAGER
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Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Boyd C. Rist, will serve the University in a new capacity beginning January 1, 2011, as Senior Academic Consultant to Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Dr. Ron Godwin. Additionally, the Board of Trustees of Liberty University upon recommendation of Chancellor Falwell named Dr. Rist Provost Emeritus.



RIST

Dr. Rist reflected on his many years of service to Liberty University in a statement released in mid-November. He observed, "Whether as a faculty member, as one who has served in a variety of administrative positions, and most recently as Provost, I have endeavored to accomplish the task God has placed before me with integrity, enthusiasm, and a consistent focus on the mission of the University."

Referring to his new appointment, Dr. Rist stated, "In my conversations with the Chancellor, I made it clear that at this point in my career I really had no interest in a title that was purely honorary or symbolic. My desire, rather, was to be able to offer substantive advice directly to the Provost and to the Chancellor on a range of academic matters vital to the future well being of the University." Rist made it clear that his counsel to Dr. Godwin and Chancellor Falwell will be given in "strictest confidence."

Dr. Rist also assured the University community that his medical prognosis remains positive.

"The treatments (for multiple myeloma) are going well — We take no aspect of this for granted, and continue to covet your prayers for Mrs. Rist and me as we walk this walk together," Rist said.

Reflecting on his time as Provost, Rist emphasized that significant elements of his legacy include: recruitment of a faculty

that in terms of its academic profile and diverse life experience is the strongest in the history of the University, significant improvement in faculty salaries, the addition of academic facilities that in number and sophistication have contributed to the quality of instruction,

tripling of the size of the library together with expansion of services provide, program expansion especially at the graduate and professional levels that have added an important dimension to Liberty University academics and working to assure that Liberty's relationship with accrediting agencies, especially SACS-COC, is strong and positive.

Rist joined the faculty of Liberty in 1973, teaching history with a particular focus on political and constitutional history from the time of the American Revolution to the eve of the Civil War. During his career at Liberty, he has served as Chair of the Division of Social Sciences, Associate Dean and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Faculty and Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

Rist said he will miss the daily interaction with so many wonderful people who make up the faculty, administration, and staff of Liberty University.

Referring to the student body he added, "I have an abiding concern and love for the students we teach and whose lives we seek to influence."

Dr. Rist looks to the future with confidence. Emphasizing that he and his wife Norma Jean "have always considered it a part of our ministry to project a positive image of the University within the Liberty community and beyond," he noted that "we will continue to participate in the life of the University through many of the events that enrich the Liberty experience, and extend its influence."

◆ **STOCKSLAGER** is a news reporter.

We asked...

What is your favorite Christmas tradition?



"Every Christmas morning we have a tea party before we do anything else."

— Elizabeth Christy, freshmen



"My favorite Christmas tradition is stockings. My mom fills them with goodies and always includes an orange."

— Noelle Blankenship, senior



"Every year we go to Christmas Eve candlelight service at church. The congregation all holds hands and sings 'Silent Night.'"

— Carlee Ford, senior



QUESTIONS?

E-mail luchampion@liberty.edu with your questions. Check next week's edition to see if your question is featured.

Grace: A Christmas miracle

CAT HEWETT
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I have tried to write this story so many times, I have lost count. Every time words fail me, they seem so inadequate. The English language does not contain words enough to properly describe the Christmas of 2000, it does not even come close.

To describe Christmas of 2000, I have to start in June of 1996, the day my cousin was born.

Caleb Conner Battle defied odds just in being born. His twin had died in-utero and his brain appeared to be filled with fluid. Caleb was born one month early. A CT scan after Caleb was born revealed that he had very little physical brain and his head was almost completely filled with fluid.

When Caleb came home, he had a small portion of his frontal lobe and an underdeveloped brain stem, could not talk and had limited use of his legs and arms. My family never really learned how much Caleb could see, but he rarely responded to anything visual.

Someone in my family told me once that Caleb would never be able to smile, but whenever my uncle would talk to him, Caleb did just that.

Caleb also loved music. Every time he was sitting in church with his parents and the piano would begin to play or the congregation would sing, the corners of Caleb's lips would curl into a sign of sheer happiness.

Then, the Thursday of spring break my sixth grade year, the year 2000, I woke up much earlier than normal and my first coherent thought was "something is wrong." My mother, somehow knowing I was awake, came and got me from my room. She sat me down on the couch and told me



CHRISTMAS GIFT — Grace Conner Battle (left) pictured with her cousin Cat Hewett (news editor) during their Thanksgiving celebration in 2007.

that Caleb had died in the night.

I cried for a little while before venturing to the window in our dining room. When I looked out I could see my aunt and uncle's house down the street, blinking red and white lights covering the army of cars around it. My uncle was in the yard, staring at the back of an ambulance.

Caleb was buried with his favorite stuffed dinosaur and my family began to pick up the broken pieces.

We like to say that every cloud has his silver lining and God has a plan for everything. I can say that is true.

My aunt was pregnant. We prayed this baby would live. Then we prayed that God would bring the child, due Dec. 28, just a few days early, so my aunt and uncle would not have a Christmas without a child.

Christmas Eve came on a

Sunday that year. We went to church and then we went to my grandparent's house for food and presents. My aunt and uncle were with other family, at least for a little while.

We opened packages and right after dessert, someone, I think it was my dad, stood up and announced that we had to get to the hospital.

My aunt had gone into labor earlier that morning.

That Christmas, I witnessed a miracle that was not on 34th street and my Christmas was only as white as the hospital walls, but it was the greatest Christmas I ever had.

I cannot really remember many specifics of the night, but one thing I will never forget is walking into that hospital room with all the rest of my family and seeing Grace, all 7 lbs. 7 oz. of her, for the first time.

At the sight of that tiny head resting on my aunt's arms, I cried my first tears of pure joy. It was in that moment that real Christmas spirit came alive to me.

People can say that God is no longer in the miracle-making business, but I can just say, "God gave us grace."

Christmas can get overcrowded and materialistic, but we still have grace.

"Happy holidays" can replace the too religious alternative, but grace cannot be removed.

That is the true meaning of the season. It is not family, friends or time to relax. The true meaning, the real reason for celebrating Christmas is because God gave us grace.

Happy birthday, my dear cousin, and Merry Christmas.

◆ HEWETT is the news editor.



A new perspective on Christmas

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My desire to play Christmas music prior to Thanksgiving increased exponentially the past few weeks since the Lynchburg weather has turned almost frigidly cold — at least according to my Texas body temperature that balks at anything cooler than about 80 degrees. Although classes had yet to break for Thanksgiving, I still played my Christmas music in the office much to the chagrin of Champion office mates — my roommate made a strict "No Christmas music before Thanksgiving" rule when we signed the lease. She knows me well.

Well, now it is Thanksgiving break, and I am visiting my home in Texas — where the temperature has been hovering near a beautiful 80 degrees for most of the week. For as long as I can remember, the Christmas season has been lavishly celebrated in my family, so since it is Thanksgiving, and my parents have reached the stage in their lives where more of their kids live outside their house than in, the Christmas planning begins even earlier.

Many times when I tell my friends about my family's mild obsession with the Christmas season, I generally find myself defending our actions. Most of the time, my revelation elicits accusations of commercialism, meaning I am left saying something similar to, "For my family, it's less about buying into some commercialistic scheme and more about family and celebrating the birth of Christ." The sentiment is very true. Without Christ and my family, Christmas would not hold much value for me.

Although Christmas is a special time of year for me and my family, the season has not always been easy or even fun. These past three or four years have been filled with a few growing pains for my family and me as my dad lost his job — a



AMANDA SULLIVAN | LIBERTY CHAMPION

paycheck that put him in the top tax bracket — my freshmen year of college. My parents opened their own business only to be forced to declare bankruptcy on the endeavor two years later, washing their dreams, house and limited financial stability down the drain. For the next two years, my mom worked as a waitress at a local Mexican restaurant while my dad continued to search for work, and we lost our house. The only jobs that my dad could find was a waiter for a local Chili's restaurant and a store manager position at a local Little Caesar's Pizza. Essentially, my dad went from running a multi-billion dollar recycling company to making pizzas for a living.

I remember the first Christmas that was especially awful. I remember being afraid that I would wake up on Christmas morning and that the lights or water would not turn on. But they did. That Christmas was even more humbling because for the first time in my parents' mar-

riage, they could not afford one single Christmas gift or even dinner. Don't think about that last statement from commercial point of view, rather think of it as a mom and dad that are financially unable to provide some basic necessities — I'm not talking about the presents, here.

That Christmas my grandparents gave my parents enough money to buy food, ensure the utilities stayed on and make sure there were a few gifts for us kids under the tree. Christmas that year was particularly humbling, as I had always maintained that the season wasn't about lights, ribbons or bows. However, that Christmas season, I was forced to believe it. Although my family did not celebrate Christmas in our normally lavish fashion, we were still very blessed. The Christmas season in my house has always been very family-oriented, and we always set time apart to give back to the local community. I just never thought my family would be on the receiving end of some of those efforts.

I understood the importance of serving others on a very real level that Christmas. My grandparents' assistance and support allowed me to not only hear about their walk with Christ, but to experience it. My question to you is: In what ways are people able to see Christ's love through this Christmas season? After all, God first served us when he sent his son to earth. Shouldn't we exhibit some of that same love to those around especially at Christmas time.

Showing love through service is not a wild concept that came from my head, rather it is a command from Christ Jesus:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another," the Bible reads in John 13:34-35.

◆ SULLIVAN is a graduate assistant.

North Korea shakes world resolve

Attack has globe playing defense

ABBY ARMBRUSTER
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Ever since North Korea fired artillery shells on South Korean land Nov. 23, the world has been placed into the necessary defensive position.

While some parties are speaking up, mainly the U.S. and the UN atomic watchdog, other parties — including China — have remained sheepish in their response to North Korea's actions.

"I do not believe we should continue to reward North Korea's provocative and destabilizing behavior with bargaining and new incentives," chairman of Joints Chief of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen said, according to Reuters.

North Korea killed four people and burned down many houses in the attack Nov. 23, as North Korea stated that South Korea began attacks initially.

Now, both Koreas are gearing up for a battle in the Yellow Sea, as China urges emergency talks with North Korea.

"The Chinese government asked for South Korea, North Korea, the United States, Japan and Russia to convene what it described as emergency consultations in Beijing next month as a way to avoid a further deteriora-



GOOGLE

tion of the situation," according to the New York Times.

Citizens of the U.S. need to be aware of North Korea's deadliest attack since the Korean War of 1953.

While North Korea's actions are not taking place in America's proverbial backyard, the forward motion of erratic behavior by North Korea will jeopardize the safety and protection of America's families, through military and financial means, if it continues.

U.S. soldiers are already helping South Korea by allowing military observers to see the operations of Japan and America's armies, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. Over

40,000 Japanese and U.S. troops began joint training as well, according to Bloomberg.com.

The UN atomic watchdog said more attention is being focused on North Korea at this time, in response to elevated levels of nuclear activity in their area, according to AFP.

In addition, the European Union (EU) found North Korea trading and importing nuclear weapons without other countries noticing. With the new WikiLeaks.com documentation that was posted, one of the articles said that the U.S. has tried to get other international banks to cut ties with North Korea's regime for some time, according to Bloomberg.com.

The EU has told other nations to securely monitor the imports and exports with North Korea in order "to prevent a contribution to proliferation-sensitive activities," according to Bloomberg.com.

With money changing hands so frequently, other nations are single-handedly aiding in North Korea's attempt at making nuclear warfare a necessity.

If nations ceased all international banking with North Korea, many nations would be hurt from the lack of monetary funds their countries would be receiving.

With other nations taking a financial hit, international inflation would be on the rise, making things harder for America who is in the middle of a recession as it is, with unemployment rates rising to 9.8 percent, according to CNN.

"If they do (cut all ties), that'll just mean the deaths of oppressed North Korean citizens," Liberty University senior strategic intelligence major Matt Martin said.

If North Korea continues with its hidden agenda, the impact will be global.

South Korea is already walking on eggshells, and when America and North Korea get face-to-face, will America still stand up to the hidden motives of Kim Jong Il and company?

North Korea's actions need to be halted, but the means in order to receive that reality may come with bloodshed.

◆ ARMBRUSTER is the opinion editor.

WikiLeaks fiasco embarrasses journalism

KATIE BELL
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WikiLeaks has been the topic of much conversation since the web-based organization began publishing 250,000 confidential U.S. diplomatic documents for the cause of "good journalism" under the leadership of Australian citizen Julian Assange last week.



ASSANGE

Supporters of WikiLeaks are trying to make the act of espionage a matter of free speech. The problem with that argument is that divulging a nation's classified documents is not protected under the First Amendment. Additionally, as a citizen of Australia, Assange is not afforded the same rights and privileges as Americans. In the Information Age, not all information should be made public simply because people have the means to do so.

Bradley Manning, an Army intelligence analyst, is the prime suspect as Assange's informant. Manning is currently being held in a pre-trial confinement cell at a military base in Quantico, Va., according to Fox News.

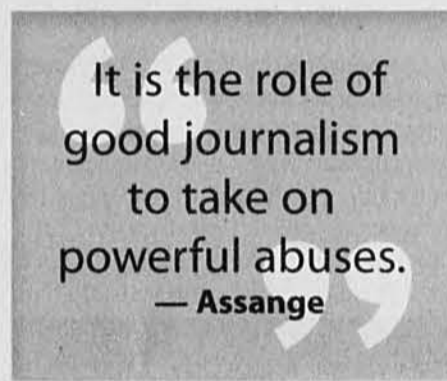
The illegality of the issue is quite obvious. "For Americans to reveal classified government information it is against the law. For foreigners to do it is an act of espionage," Kori Shackle, an advisor on the McCain presidential campaign said in an interview on CNN.

It is apparent that Assange has confused the responsible investigative reporting Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein did with the Watergate scandal with that of permissible espionage.

Releasing government secrets in the name of journalism is in no way an ethical journalistic practice.

"It is the role of good journalism to take on powerful abuses," Assange said according to the UK's Guardian.

There is some truth to this statement. However, compromising a nation's security and diplomatic relations with other nations



to advance the cause of transparency within government is blatantly outside the realm of journalistic responsibility.

A U.S.-based domain name provider shut down WikiLeaks on Dec. 3, but the controversial website announced hours later that it had employed a company in Switzerland and was back up and running. Amazon also boot-ed the site off its servers, according to CNN.

WikiLeaks has lost its payment service provider, an online payment service known as PayPal. PayPal's decision to back out from

WikiLeaks was a crippling blow since the website based on private donations, according to CNN.

Assange's whereabouts had been undisclosed since WikiLeaks began publishing the classified documents last week. There is a warrant for his arrest in Sweden on unrelated charges of sexual assault, according to CNN.

The empire of journalistic transparency Assange hoped to build is quickly crumbling around him.

After being in hiding since WikiLeaks broke, Assange turned himself in to police in Britain. He will remain in jail without bail until Dec. 14, the date of his next extradition hearing. He faces extradition to Sweden for allegedly raping two women, according to CNN.


Many have tried and failed to make the argument that WikiLeaks is an organization that is founded on the principles of free speech. It is merely a web-based version of espionage and should be blocked from servers across the globe.

◆ BELL is the opinion editor.

christmas carol conundrum



JOHN GUNSLER | J.GUNSLER@LIBERTY.EDU



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<p>#5</p> <p>One 1-Topping Pizza & Order of Breaksticks code 9605</p>	<p>#6</p> <p>One Oven Baked Sandwich & A Small Cheese Pizza code 9606</p>	<p>#7</p> <p>Two Small 2-Topping Pizzas code 9607</p>	

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The dangers of hiking: How to stay safe

Outdoor activities contain hidden dangers

LEVI WASHBURN
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The Virginian wilderness has become a recreational playground for adventure seekers, but in an instant that playground can become a prison.

Visitors and residents use Virginia's landscape for camping, hiking, canoeing and multiple other activities. Central Virginia alone offers an abundance of hiking trails and camping sites. The Blue Ridge Parkway, Shenandoah National Park, Panther Falls, Appalachian Trail and Devils Marble Yard are just a few of the public spots for recreation. These are all available for little to no admittance cost. However, with each activity there are dangers involved. One primary danger is getting lost.

"It's pretty hard to get lost," said Robert Speiden an expert in tracking. "Sometimes you really have to work at it. It also depends on the experience of the hiker though."

Park Ranger Don Holter said that October is one of the busiest months for missing campers and hikers. He said people venture out late and unprepared which results in the sun setting and darkness causing confusion that hinders their return. The largest demographic reported missing involve either young children or the elderly who have veered off the marked trail.

Virginia game wardens detail that when someone is reported missing, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management sends out an alert to various authorities and private search-and-rescue associations. Virginia, fortunately, is rich in search-and-rescue associations that are comprised of volunteers. These associations meet and train in search-and-rescue techniques. Due to the training, they are able to work in conjunction with emergency service personnel to locate the



THE PATH LESS TRAVELED — Hikers should take the appropriate precautions while on trails including hiking with others, staying alert and carrying a cell phone.

missing.

"It's very rare to not be found in under 12 hours, even more rare is for the search to go multi-day. If they were missing, we'd be lookin' for them," Speiden said.

Speiden has had many years experience in tracking people and finding the missing. He is involved with multiple search-and-rescue organizations including Black Diamond Search-and-Rescue Council, Angel Search-and-Rescue and the Southwest Virginia Mountain Rescue Group. With these groups he has helped find many missing people in Virginia. Speiden helped with two recent cases involving a 19-year-old who fell off a mountain and a lost blind man.

In September Koby Karuzis, 19 years old and a student at Central Virginia Community College, was sightseeing with friends on Poor Mountain near the Roanoke/Montgomery county line. He decided to stay longer on the mountain while his friends walked back to the car. While taking pictures the rock he was standing on slid out from under him

and he fell 15 feet down a cliff spraining his ankle on landing. Acting on advice from his grandfather Karuzis decided to follow a stream downriver in hopes of encountering a road. Instead he was led deeper into the Poor Mountain Woods.

Karuzis had a cell phone and spoke with the 911 dispatcher until his battery died. The dispatcher told him to light a fire if possible to help signal rescue crews of his whereabouts. Around midnight a police helicopter saw a glow in their night vision from the fire he made by burning his hat, shirt, water bottle, business cards and tinder. Crews decided to direct themselves toward that location at sunrise. After 24 hours of being lost Karuzis was found by search-and-rescue workers. He had survived a night in the Virginian wilderness.

"I've never been so happy to see an animal," Karuzis said about the search-and-rescue hound that found him.

Another recent account of a hiker gone missing occurred on the Appalachian Trail in Amherst county last May. Experienced hiker Ken Knight from Michigan was lost for six days when he strayed from the Appalachian Trail in Amherst County. To compound his difficulties, Knight is legally blind. Rescue crews were notified and began searching a 300 square mile area. Knight knew not to wander when lost, so he set up camp and waited for crews to find him.

Eventually, he set brush on fire to signal his location. Firefighters were notified of a forest fire and found Knight when they responded to the call. Multiple acres of forest were destroyed but Knight was found unharmed.

Even though the percentage of adventurers who become lost is small, park ranger Don

Holter says planning and prevention helps the hiker get home. He suggests that the hiker takes advantage of technology and carry a cell phone with them.

"It's not uncommon for the hiker to report themselves missing," Holter said, "Usually they wonder enough to find reception and then call 911, who then notifies us and we go get them."

Though cell phones are great tools, Speiden suggests being more prepared when going into the woods. He advises that hikers plan their route beforehand, notify a friend of their expected arrival, travel with someone and take the survival essentials.

Survival essentials include a change of socks, matches, flashlight, compass, map, fleece, tent, food, water and a signal mirror.

"Always plan on staying a night in the woods — pack accordingly. You'll be glad you did," Speiden said.

Virginia's woods are filled with dangers including rugged terrain, bears and snakes. It is easy to compensate for the terrain and bears by simple prevention. Hikers should research the area they will be traveling and be acquainted with the physical landmarks of the area. Bears are also simple to overcome by keeping food out of the campsite and sealed. People are able to avoid snakes, and if one is bitten treatment is simple in Virginia.

But expert search-and-rescue persons say that the most dangerous predators one can encounter is possibly another hiker. The reason: it is impossible to know what another person has planned.

"Be alert, be wary and be smart," avid camper Jennifer Auroux said. "Just because you are in nature doesn't mean you can let your guard down."

She also advises people to never hike alone, not just for safety from injury, but for safety in numbers.

"Little did I know that I would repeatedly respond to human fatalities, murders and scenes of child abuse," Bruce Bytnar said in his book about his 32 years of service on the Blue Ridge Parkway called "A Park Rangers Life".

Virginia is full of options for those who desire to enjoy the outdoors, but many people are not aware of the dangers involved. Safety is often overlooked resulting in harrowing situations.

Columnist and former Ranger Andrea Lankford suggest the easy access and remote locations make the Blue Ridge Parkway a convenient place for criminals to discard evidence or take victims. For this reason, the innocent should take caution when enjoying Virginia's wilderness.

Fortunately, recreationists are able to guard themselves against getting lost or finding themselves in harrowing situations by following the simple steps of preparation, caution and common sense.

◆ WASHBURN is a guest reporter.



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Merry Christmas

Happy New Year

libertyCHAMPION

OCC inspires hope in children

Liberty students donate more than 1,100 shoeboxes

ASHLEY BOLLINGER
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Resulting from the support of the Lynchburg community thousands of underprivileged children around the world have been given a chance to experience Christmas through the work of Operation Christmas Child (OCC).

Students across Liberty University's campus have shown an exponential amount of compassion through their actions this Christmas season, according to OCC representative Sherry Mcfaden. More than 1,100 shoeboxes were received from the Liberty donation centers, which is a 250 box increase from last year.

Each year hundreds of students join

together with the community to make the reality of Christmas come alive for children in need all over the world through the efforts of OCC.

OCC is a campaign of Samaritan's Purse that offers children the opportunity to experience Christmas, often for the first time in their lives, by empowering the community to join together and create shoeboxes that are sent across the world to the children in need.

"Since its inception (in 1993), OCC has delivered over 77 million gifts to children in poverty-stricken situations," Mcfaden said.

This Christmas season OCC partnered with Liberty and the Lynchburg community to make the dream of hope a reality for children worldwide.

"This year in the Lynchburg area, residents collected nearly 18,000 shoe box gifts, which is a 17 percent increase from 2009," Mcfaden said.

"Making a box is important because it gives children the opportunity to

receive a gift they may have never received before or ever will again in their lives," Liberty student Bethany Smith said after visiting the Samaritan's Purse warehouse in North Carolina where OCC sorts and distributes the Christmas boxes. "It gives us the opportunity to share the love of Christ with people who may never hear. It is our privilege to be a part of that sort of thing."

Thanks to the efforts of the Lynchburg community and communities across the nation nearly 2.6 million boxes have already been processed this Christmas season.

The boxes will be shipped to 130 different countries.

"Around the world, children's lives will be changed by the gifts they receive because Liberty University students chose to give this Christmas," Mcfaden said.

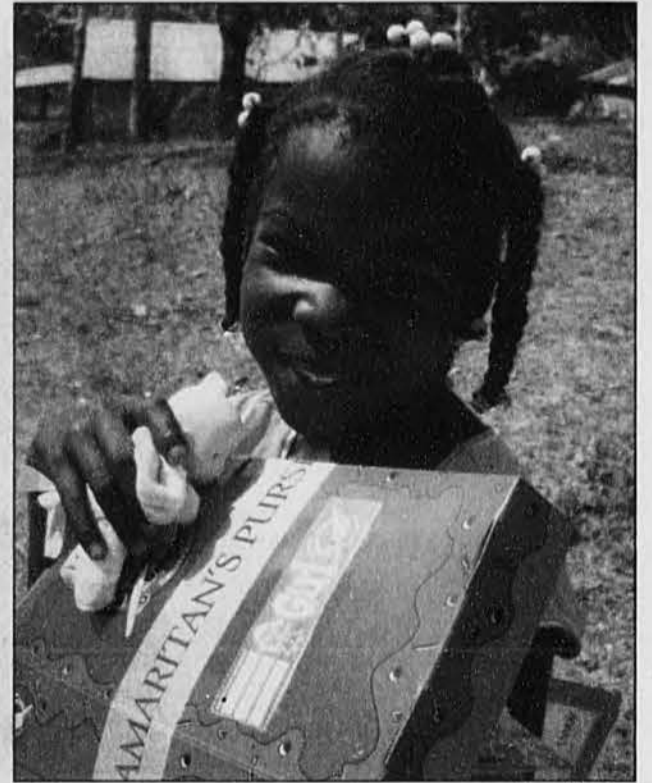


PHOTO PROVIDED

BOX BRINGS JOY — Underprivileged children receive boxes from Operation Christmas Child.

◆ **BOLLINGER** is the asst. news editor.

Nursing professor honored for service

CINDI FAHLE
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There have been many individuals who have left behind a legacy at Liberty University. These individuals are recognized and honored for their sacrifice, friendship and dedication to the university. Dr.



SPEAR

Hila Spear is being recognized as one of these individuals. She has been honored with receiving the prestigious award of Professor Emeritus, an award which

recognizes Spear for her long and outstanding service to Liberty.

Spear has been a professor in the nursing department for 21 years, making many contributions. She started the graduate nursing program and was the director of the program for 10 years. Spear played a major role in starting the masters program, developing and teaching courses and achieving the accreditation. Spear also contributed to the development of the online nursing program.

"Hila [Spear] was in the second round of faculty hired to teach in the brand new nursing program. She paved the way developing the community health course and re-

designing the research course," Dr. Linda Miller, the nursing department's first department chair, said. "We became much more than colleagues and have remained in touch over these many years."

Miller later returned to Liberty as an online professor.

"Hila was my student, my colleague and friend, and then my boss," Miller said. "She has been a blessing to me over these many years. God has used her at Liberty and in the profession of nursing."

Spear received her Bachelor of Science in nursing from Liberty University. She was among the first students in the program. She went on to receive her Master of Science

in community health nursing from the University of Virginia, as well as her doctorate degree.

Besides her work at Liberty, Spear has also made a significant contribution to the field of nursing. She has written 80-100 articles ranging from nursing theory to many different topics related to children's health issues. Many of these have been published in the Journal of Christian Nursing and other publications. Spear has also impacted the local community through her service with Centra Health, where she worked as their first nursing research consultant.

"Having her in the room brightens the atmosphere. She is bright,

fyi
◆ Senior nursing pinning service Dec. 17, at 7 p.m. in the Towns Alumni Hall

cheerful and funny without even knowing. God has used her at Liberty and in the profession of nursing. She has furthered the building of the kingdom for Christian nursing through her teaching, writing and testimony," Miller said.

◆ **FAHLE** is a news reporter.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES PRESENTS



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Working their way through school

Students juggle work and classes

KATIE BELL
kebell2@liberty.edu

James Berrigan refers to himself as a "victory-lap senior." Like many students he has had to stay in school an additional academic semester because he has been working his way through school.

From the onset of his college career Berrigan has worked at three different Applebee's restaurants and the Bahama Snow Shack. He was a server for two years and for the last four or five months he has worked as a manager.

Berrigan's parents paid for his first two years of college and he took over paying tuition and living expenses his junior year.

"I'm the oldest of four children and it would have been selfish of me to let my parents foot the bill for my college education," Berrigan said.

In today's economy, many college students have had to work their way through school. Not all students are footing the entire bill like Berrigan. Some students work to pay for books and other fees that are associated with the costs of college.

Steve Long, a University of Maryland at College Park alumnus worked an average of 30 hours a week to pay for school.

It took him seven years to complete his degree in government and politics, according to Fern Shen of the Washington Post.

"It got so bad one semester that I had to drop out of all my classes. I was working 30 hours a week driving the bus and taking five classes," it is tough. I learned you can work so hard to pay for school that you don't do well in school," Long told the Post.

Long's story proves that academic success is often sacrificed at the price of a paycheck.

Berrigan's heavy workload comes at an academic and social price.

It has taken him longer to complete his bachelor's degree because he only takes two or three classes per semester.

"I don't really have a social life. Usually I hang out with people from work. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to hang out with coworkers since my promotion. Working has also negatively affected my GPA. I focus on tests and papers, everything else gets



WORK HARD FOR THE MONEY — (Left) James Berrigan and (right) Brandyn Dorman both work at Applebee's to support themselves while in school.

put to the side," Berrigan said.

It is not uncommon for parents and students to have discussions about who is going to pay for what and for how long, especially in the time of economic hardship. Since the recession many students have found themselves taking on more financial responsibility.

"The job market today is looking for people with experience which is exactly what I'm getting right now. I have learned a lot by working my way through school. I have learned to manage my time and budget. I have learned as much through working about the real world as I have by attending classes," Berrigan said.

Berrigan will graduate in May with a degree in government with a concentration in politics and policy. After graduation he plans to manage Applebee's for five years with ambitions for running for political office some day.

"I would like to run for a local office for one term," Berrigan said.

Berrigan manages another Liberty student who is working her way through school, Brandyn Dorman.

Berrigan and Dorman are in the same jurisprudence class taught by Dr. Michelle Craw-

ford Rickert.

"It's unique to work with Brandyn. She is very easy to get along with. We get along well at work and in the classroom," Berrigan said.

Dorman echoed Berrigan.

"I love working with James, he trained me," Dorman said.

Balancing work and higher education has proved to be a character building experience for Berrigan.

"Working through college has been an opportunity to grow as a leader and a person. When you are in authority over others you discover your flaws quickly because people let you know you when and how you are messing up," Berrigan said.

Brandyn Dorman is a junior majoring in speech communication and is pursuing a minor in western legal traditions. She plans on pursuing a Master's degree in communication and then attending law school.

Dorman started working at a Chick-Fil-A when she was 14 and has worked throughout college as a server at Applebee's. Dorman's parents are paying for her tuition and housing. However, she is responsible for everything

beyond that.

While Dorman enjoys the financial independence that comes with working, she acknowledges that working while in school is not the best option for every student.

"If your parents are able and willing to help you, let them," Dorman said.

Dorman is the only member of her immediate group of friends who works. Like Berrigan, working and going to school has negatively affected her social life.

"I do nothing but homework, work and sleep. I could not tell you the last time I went to the dollar movie theater," Dorman said.

Dorman has experienced the same academic struggles as Berrigan.

"I had to drop a class and I am very afraid of getting a C this semester. I've never gotten a C before," Dorman said.

Although managing work and school can be difficult, it is doable.

"Work is a healthy outlet, I go to work and I forget about the pressures of school for a little while," Dorman said.

◆ BELL is the opinion editor.

life, liberty & the pursuit

A SERIES LOOKING AT STUDENTS FIGHTING TO PROTECT AMERICA'S FREEDOM



News Editor Cat Hewett: Lasting impressions

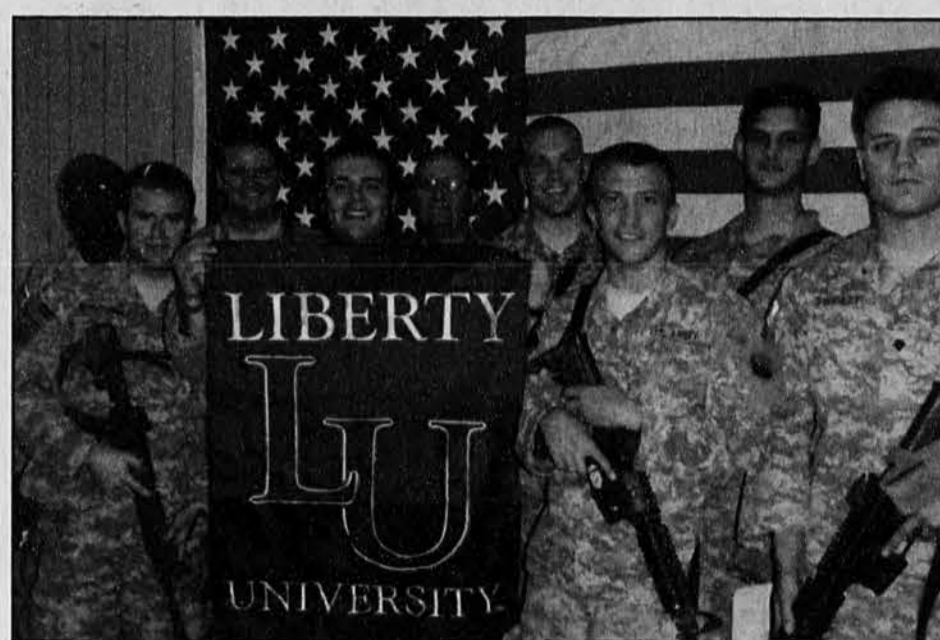
CAT HEWETT
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My articles about the men of the 1-116th Infantry Battalion have not been earth-shattering. They probably will not propel me to the height of the journalistic world or qualify me to win a Pulitzer Prize, but they are probably the most important articles I have ever written.

When I was presented with the chance to interview soldiers in Iraq, I am sad to say, I was less than thrilled. I had just gotten home from my internship and the only thing on my mind was rest. I am glad to say that I quickly got over it and I cannot imagine what my last semester at Liberty University would have been like without that static-filled and very long distance phone call.

Because of that interview, I have met eight of the greatest men our country has to offer. They are fathers, brothers, sons, boyfriends and students, and they are willing to put their lives on the line for millions of people they have never met.

While interviewing these men one of the things that struck me was how easy it was to forget they were more than ordinary. They sat and talked with me about their families



BAND OF BROTHERS — Nine members of the 1-116th Infantry Battalion pose after an interview with the Liberty Champion in July.

and friends, their classes and their lives. Only then did they mention why they had joined the army and their deployment in Iraq this year. Then they would talk about driving in convoys and operating machine guns, before going back and talking about how they have way too much reading for their classes or how their basement needs repairs.

The people passing by did not realize that

there was anything special about the men with whom I was sitting. Only the few people who were sitting close enough to overhear our conversation would know that there was something more going on and they would stare. It is hard not to stare when discovering the person sitting next to you in the computer lab, bus or classroom is more than what appears on the surface. I even found it hard

not to stare at times, and I have interviewed hundreds of people.

I guess the moral of my story is that heroes can come from any place. Like Moses or Paul, the most ordinary people can become extraordinary. It just comes down to the choices they make. The heroes I met this semester look like average people, but they have done extraordinary things most people have never imagined.

I have set forth the stories of these men as faithfully and unaltered as I could. The stories are simple and are for the most part straight from their lips. I have carried this mission with me during the entire semester and hope that I have passed on a little of my fire.

SGT Jonathan Born, SGT David Porter, SPC Curtis Davis, SPC Jocelyn Fenelus, SPC Gabriel Homer, SPC Nathan McMurray, SPC Mitch Roberson and SPC Ryan Sweatt: Thank you for letting me take a glimpse into your lives and thank you for your service. Thank you for being our country's heroes. I will be forever grateful for the gift you have given me.

Look for more Life, Liberty and the Pursuit next semester with Web Content Editor Omar Adams.

◆ HEWETT is the news editor.

inreview

Week wrap-up

Women's Basketball

Nov. 30 — The Lady Flames cruised past the Lady Pioneers of Glenville State on Tuesday 93-75.

Redshirt junior Avery Warley and freshman Jasmine Gardner each finished the night with a double-double.

The Lady Flames shot season highs in percentage from the field (50), steals (18) and rebounds (64). Eight of the Lady Flames posted at least six points, lead by Warley with 17.

The win takes Liberty to 3-4 on the season and 3-0 at home.

Men's Basketball

Dec. 2 — The Flames opened Big South play against Presbyterian in the Vines Center Thursday with a win, 70-61.

The Flames were behind for most of the game, but rallied in the final 10 minutes for the win.

Redshirt junior John Brown led the Flames in scoring with 23 points and 13 rebounds. He leads the league in double-doubles with five on the season.

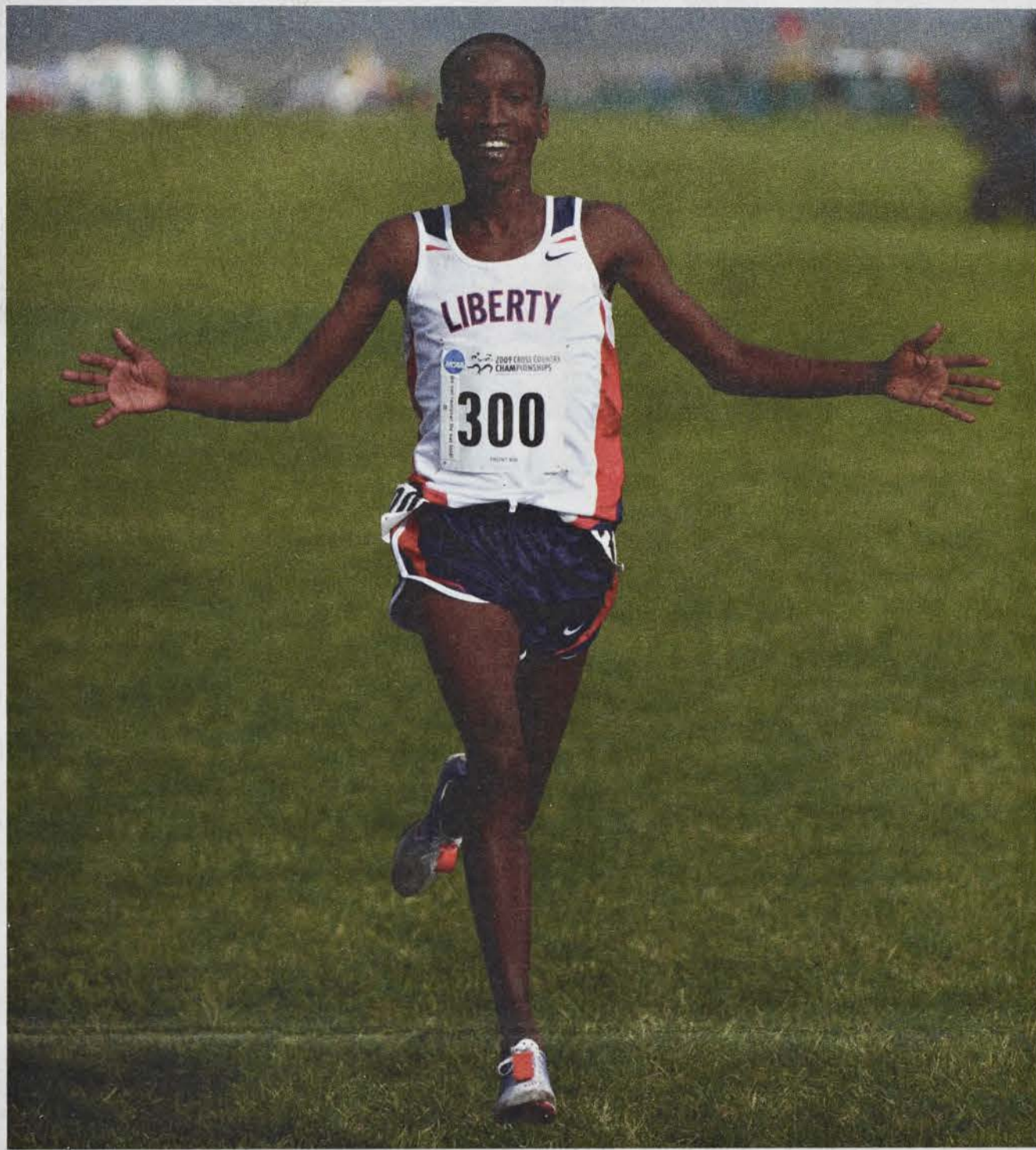
The win takes the Flames to 5-4 on the season and 1-0 in the Big South. Check out B4 for a frame-by-frame of a Jesse Sanders dunk.

Dec. 4 — The Flames won a nail-biter Saturday night as they continued Big South play against defending champion Winthrop.

Sophomore Evan Gordon had a career night with 26 points and five steals. He also posted seven rebounds and five assists. Junior Jesse Sanders posted 14 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists.

Gordon sealed the win for the Flames in the final six seconds with two free throws. Liberty has a 2-0 conference record for the first time in team history.

Victorious again



UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

DOUBLE DIP — Senior Sam Chelanga captured his second consecutive 10k NCAA National Championship on Nov. 22.

Chelanga wins second title

PETER SAWYER
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Mkimbiaji is the Kinswahili noun for "runner." For instance, native Kenyan and Liberty senior cross country sensation Sam Chelanga is a mkimbiaji.

For the second year in a row, Chelanga was named national cross country Athlete of the Year after winning NCAA championships in 2009 and 2010.

With the combined efforts of Chelanga and former cross country runner Josh McDougal, Liberty won three of the last four men's national cross country championships.

Chelanga emphasized the importance of this accomplishment. He said the cross country team is competing with all the big schools in America.

"We are more announced now," Chelanga said. "When you win nationals you have something to be proud of."

Chelanga said McDougal has been his friend for years and

played a big role in his decision to come to Liberty. When Chelanga asked him questions about schools in America, McDougal told him about Liberty. Chelanga was attracted to Liberty's mission and beliefs.

Chelanga previously ran for Fairleigh Dickinson University his freshman year before redshirting during his sophomore "residency" year after transferring to Liberty.

"It was challenging," Chelanga said. "I (had not) competed before I came (to America)."

There was a lot to learn about Liberty, competing and balancing schoolwork and training. He had never competed prior to college, but Chelanga said he trained a lot. He said his relationships with friends helped him adjust to American culture and college life.

"(I have) met good people here," Chelanga said. "(That is) what keeps (me) at peace."

Chelanga's slender 5'7" profile does not epitomize most

CONTINUED on B2

BCS National Championship: On the hot seat

A discussion of ducks, tigers and horned frogs for the win

NATE BROWN
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Every January, the summation of a season comes to its climax in the pitting of the BCS No. 1 team and the BCS No. 2 for the NCAA National Championship.

After Saturday's action, the top two teams in the country were decided and the BCS championship

all but officially balloted. Auburn's steamrolling of South Carolina kept them in the No. 1 spot and Oregon outlasting Oregon State sealed their No. 2 spot.

In the hunt, TCU (12-0), Wisconsin (11-1) and Stanford (11-1) sweated out their Saturday and waited for the BCS rankings to be updated.

Monday night, Jan. 10 in Glen-

dale, Ariz., No.1 Auburn, led by controversial Heisman contender Cam Newton, and the NCAA's most prolific offense in No. 2 Oregon will most likely meet to decide the nation's champion.

But is this a national championship the country deserves? Is this a championship that the teams deserve?

Not even close.

Sports pundits and analysts have been calling for Oregon's national championship berth all season, and rightly so. Averaging more than 50 points a game, courtesy of a Rocky-like late-game tenacity, no one in the nation has been able to outpace the Duck's offense.

CONTINUED on B2

fyi

- ◆ The first BCS national champion was Tennessee in 1999.
- ◆ The SEC is the leading BCS National Championship conference with six titles and four championship teams.

Track and field kicks off season

BRAD HORNEFFER
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The Liberty Flames track and field team hosts a meet each December in order to prepare for the official season that will take off in January.

The purpose of the meet — which is not a scored meet — is purely diagnostic. The official spring roster is not set and the meet gives coaches one last chance to evaluate their athletes.

"We want to keep people motivated and keep them in training in November before Christmas comes," coach Brant Tolsma said. "After this meet we will cut the roster from 70 to 55 so I am expecting great efforts."

The mental aspect of track and field is just as important as having the physical

ability to perform. A well-conditioned athlete must be prepared for the season now to garner success later.

"Train now and perform now so if there is a bad individual performance it can happen now," Tolsma said. "I am just telling the team to go out there and give it your best."

Liberty finished 13th in the nation last year, but expectations for this year are higher.

"I think that we can crack the top 10 this year," Tolsma said. "I would love to eventually get into the top four yearly."

With that ambition in mind, the Flames will try to leap from the solid stepping stone set by last year's squad.

"Our goal this year is to be as good as you can be and to put trust in God to use each one of these kids to their full

potential," Tolsma said.

The men's squad features an experienced, upper-classman-heavy roster while the women's squad will field a younger demographic.

"I feel like the girls will have more of a challenge on their hands than the guys will," Tolsma said. "If the guys can stay healthy I think that they will dominate."

The Flames will have 15 returning Big South Champions on the team this year, nine men and six women. Sam Chelanga and Josh Edmonds will captain the men, and Rachel Houseknecht and Melinda Bendik will lead the women.

◆ HORNEFFER is a sports reporter.



JUMP START — The Liberty men's and women's track and field teams started their seasons off Friday and Saturday with the Liberty Kickoff.

BCS continued from B1

Houston native quarterback Darron Thomas and Texarkana native LaMichael James have combined for 4,200 yards and 49 touchdowns this year.

Defensively, Oregon has pitched two shutouts and is led by senior linebacker Casey Matthews.

Sound familiar? Reference Green Bay Packers older brother Clay.

For all of the balance and weaponry of Oregon, Auburn makes up for in one-man shows, scandals, and narrowly escaped wins.

Cam Newton leads Auburn in both passing and rushing yards, and is as leading Auburn in touchdowns with 28 passing TD's and 20 rushing. Running back



Michael Dyer has five. Minus Cam Newton, Auburn's offense is left with a sub-1,000 yard rusher and a lead receiver with only 9 touchdown catches.

No one can expect to outscore Oregon. Period. Twelve teams have tried to do it with 11 men. How can Auburn expect to do it with one?

Offense is out the window. What about Auburn's defense? Can the Tiger's D stop Oregon from putting up 50 so Newton has a chance?

Not statistically.

Auburn won five games decided by one touchdown or less, one of them to unranked Clemson in overtime.

Auburn's Swiss cheese defense versus Oregon's 50-a-game offense is a sword at a gun duel.

So who, if anyone, can compete with Oregon and give the country a legitimate national championship?

Texas Christian University. Yes, you read that right. The No. 3 TCU Horned Frogs.

The key to anyone hanging with Oregon long enough for viewers to keep watching past halftime is having a defense rigid enough to force Oregon to respect you.

TCU's defense has two shutouts on their record and has held opponents

to a touchdown or less in seven contests, one of which against a Utah team that at the time was No. 5 and 10-0.

TCU has the eighth ranked rushing attack in the nation, the fourth ranked scoring offense and the No. 1 defense in the nation.

Who do you pit against the No. 1 offense? The No. 1 defense. Simple.

A one-man, no-defense Auburn team should never have gotten to the National Championship. A shutdown-defense, punch-you-in-the-mouth rushing attack is the only logical contender for Oregon and is the team that the nation deserves to see play.

◆ BROWN is the asst. sports editor.

CHELANGA continued from B1

people's stereotype of a Division I athlete, but he has proven himself to be one of the greatest athletes in the nation.

He won his first national cross-country championship in 2009 and was able to defend his title this season in Terre Haute, Ind.

"This year was more challenging," Chelanga said. "It is always hard to defend a title."

Chelanga said defending the title is important to solidify his claim as champion.

"If you fail it looks like a fluke," Chelanga said. "Winning a second time sends a strong signal that you are consistent."

Beyond disciplining himself in what he calls the little things, Chelanga does not think of his daily routine as extraordinary.

Chelanga's exercise schedule varies depending on the time of year. During the warmer months, he runs a high mileage routine —

80 to 100 miles a week. He says he runs less during the colder months, but still hits 70 miles a week.

Besides his strenuous exercise schedule, Chelanga said he tries to avoid junk food, eats a lot of carbohydrates, and gets to bed before midnight. Upon his graduation in May with a government degree, Chelanga plans on running professionally.

"(I am) probably going to find a group in America that fits my training and join them," Chelanga said.

Next outdoor season Chelanga wants to come back to Liberty and try to run a mile in less than four minutes. He said it is hard for spectators to see his longer races but a race that lasts less than four minutes will give the student body a chance to see him run.

◆ BROWN is the asst. sports editor.

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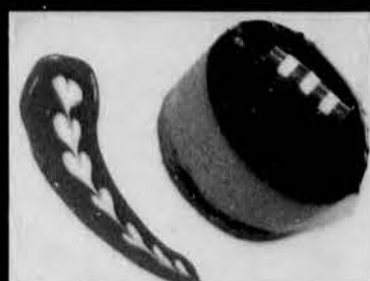
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Seasons of LOVE

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NATE BROWN

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The air is thick this time of year. Laughter. Good will. Carols. Snowflakes. And wedding bells.

In light of the recent engagements of Champion sports editor Kelly Marvel and assistant sports editor Nate Brown to their respective fiancés, the editors discussed the top five all-time marriages in the world of sports.



COCA-COLA COMPANY

5 Advertising and the Super Bowl
The number five all-time marriage is the marriage of two opposite entities, yet together, they create the single most-watched event on television today. Football fans just have to face the fact that not everyone likes football. Not every person wants to watch football. Networks realized this when creating the Super Bowl. The first airing of the Super Bowl in 1967 dwarfed the prior viewership record for the 1963 World Series with 60 million viewers. The game was aired on NBC and CBS for the first year and CBS won the rights to the second game. A one-minute commercial ran a company \$85,000. Now the commercials that debut during the Super Bowl bring as many people to the television as the game does, with 130 million Americans and 750 million viewers worldwide tuning in. Without Super Bowl commercials, we would never have been introduced to the talking frogs, the E-trade baby or Doritos Crash the Super Bowl commercials. And what kind of world would that be?

3 Hot dogs and baseball

Number three on the marriage list is the harmonious union of America's favorite pastime with America's favorite food. When coming into a baseball park, the smell of fresh hot dogs is one of the first things a fan encounters. The smell almost draws the fan into the concessions line, forces the money out of the wallet and puts the delicious hot dog into hungry hands. According to an article on mlb.com, the hot dog tradition of baseball started in 1893 with dachshund sausages. Legend has it that in 1902, the name "hot dog" was given to these sausages at the New York Giants baseball park on a cold day. Hawkers sold the sausages by saying they were "red hot" and the term hot dog was used in a cartoon in the next day's paper. Since then, the hot dog has become a ballpark tradition, so much so that some parks have world famous hot dogs that fans come to eat rather than to see the game. As Humphrey Bogart once said, "A hot dog at the ballpark is better than steak at the Ritz."



GOOGLE IMAGES



THE MARIAGE PHOTO ARCHIVE

1 The merger of the NFL and AFL

The single most significant marriage that American sports has been blessed to witness was the 1970 marriage of the National Football League, commissioned by Tex Schramm and the American Football League commissioned by Al Davis.

The National Football league, consisting of such teams as the Cleveland Browns, San Francisco 49ers and Baltimore Colts was the premiere football league in the country until the inception of the American Football League by Lamar Hunt in 1959. The American Football League boasted large salaries, TV contracts and iconic Joe Namath. The two leagues merged in 1970 and produced the one event that unites America every January — "the big one" — the Super Bowl. "Til death do us part.

4 Spike TV and the UFC

Number four on the all-time marriage list in sports is the marriage of a major cable network, Spike TV (a Viacom Inc. subsidiary) and mixed martial arts' most prominent label, the Ultimate Fighting Championship. When UFC was bought by current owner Dana White and his partners in 2001, the organization sold for a spartan \$2 million. The sport was unsanctioned in many states and was largely regarded as an unregulated, barbaric free-for-all. Under White's



GOOGLE IMAGES

2 College football and marching bands

In second place on the all-time marriage list is the combination of sports with music and tradition. Marching bands at college football games have been a tradition since the Notre Dame Band made the first appearance at a game in 1887. Large bands have become a staple at large football schools. Marching bands are as much a part of a school's tradition as the colors themselves.



MISSOURI MARCHING BAND

◆ MARVEL is the sports editor.
◆ BROWN is the asst. sports editor.



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AIR JESSE — Junior guard Jesse Sanders stands at just 6'3". Don't tell him that. Thursday night against Presbyterian, Sanders flew over defenders en route to a 70-61 win.

editorial

A slap on the wrist for a punch in the face

RYAN CARR
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If the 2010-11 NFL season had to be summed up in one word it would almost certainly be "controversy." Before the season was even under way, there were scandals brewing, and almost every week there was something to talk about that habitually had very little to do with the actual game of football.

The latest of these scandals came during the Nov. 28 game between the Tennessee Titans and Houston Texans. With just under eight minutes to go in the game, the Texans held a 17-0 lead over the Titans and had the ball.

On a running play to the right, Titans cornerback Cortland Finnegan struck Texans wide receiver Andre Johnson directly in the facemask with both hands as the play went to the opposite side of the field.

Johnson appeared to have had enough of Finnegan's antics and ripped his helmet off as the two began to wrestle. Finnegan removed

Johnson's helmet before being dragged to the ground. Johnson used his size advantage over the scrappy cornerback and delivered two quick blows to the face.

The fight, which lasted just a few seconds, resulted in both players being ejected from the game, in which the Texans won, 20-0.

In all honesty, Finnegan got everything that he deserved out of this fight.

According to a poll of NFL players done early in the season by The Sporting News, Finnegan was voted the player with the dirtiest reputation. This is not the first time he got underneath someone's skin and certainly will not be the last.

This is not even the first run in he has had with Johnson. Last season, Johnson was fined \$7,500 for taking Finnegan to the ground.

This incident is extremely uncharacteristic for Johnson, who is often described by teammates as soft-spoken, but that does not excuse his behavior.

For as strict as NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has been since taking over, it comes as a complete shock that neither player was suspended. Each player received a \$25,000 fine for their actions during the game but will not be suspended for any games.

Fighting has never really been a part of the NFL, but over the past season or so there appears to be an increase in the number of scuffles that occur after the play is over. It looks as though these conflicts are becoming more regular. This incident could have been a great opportunity to take care of that for good.

Goodell and the NFL condemned helmet-to-helmet hits and also what they described as "devastating" hits earlier this season. So if a guy makes a tackle and it appears to be a big hit he might get fined or suspended, but if he rips off someone's helmet and throws a few punches it's only a small fine.

That makes hardly any sense at all. Why on earth should the guy who delivers a big hit, who

has a harder time of controlling his body on the play, be fined and punished more severely than a guy who should have just walked back to the huddle and prepared for the next play?

What's most alarming about this incident is how quickly it escalated. If Goodell does not address these types of plays there could be an even bigger fight.

In 2006, an all-out brawl broke out during a game between Miami University and Florida International University.

That play started much the same way but resulted in players being body slammed to the ground and stomped on. Players were also seen swinging helmets at opponents' heads as things spiraled out of control.

It just does not make sense that the NFL takes such a strong stance on off-the-field issues and helmet-to-helmet hits, and then lets a fight on the field get swept under the rug.

◆ CARR is a sports reporter.



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
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December 7
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- ◆ Pictures with Santa
- ◆ DJ
- ◆ Giveaways

Come and enjoy a traditional Christmas evening dinner.

figure skating



ICE COOL — Liberty's Collegiate Skating Club hosted the 2010 Liberty University Intercollegiate Competition Friday and Saturday at the LaHaye Ice Center. Eleven colleges from all over the country participated, including Boston College, University of Delaware, New York University and others. Over 130 competitors registered in 30 events over the two day competition. (At right), Liberty skater Sarah LaRoche graces the ice in the Juvenile Ladies Freeskate.



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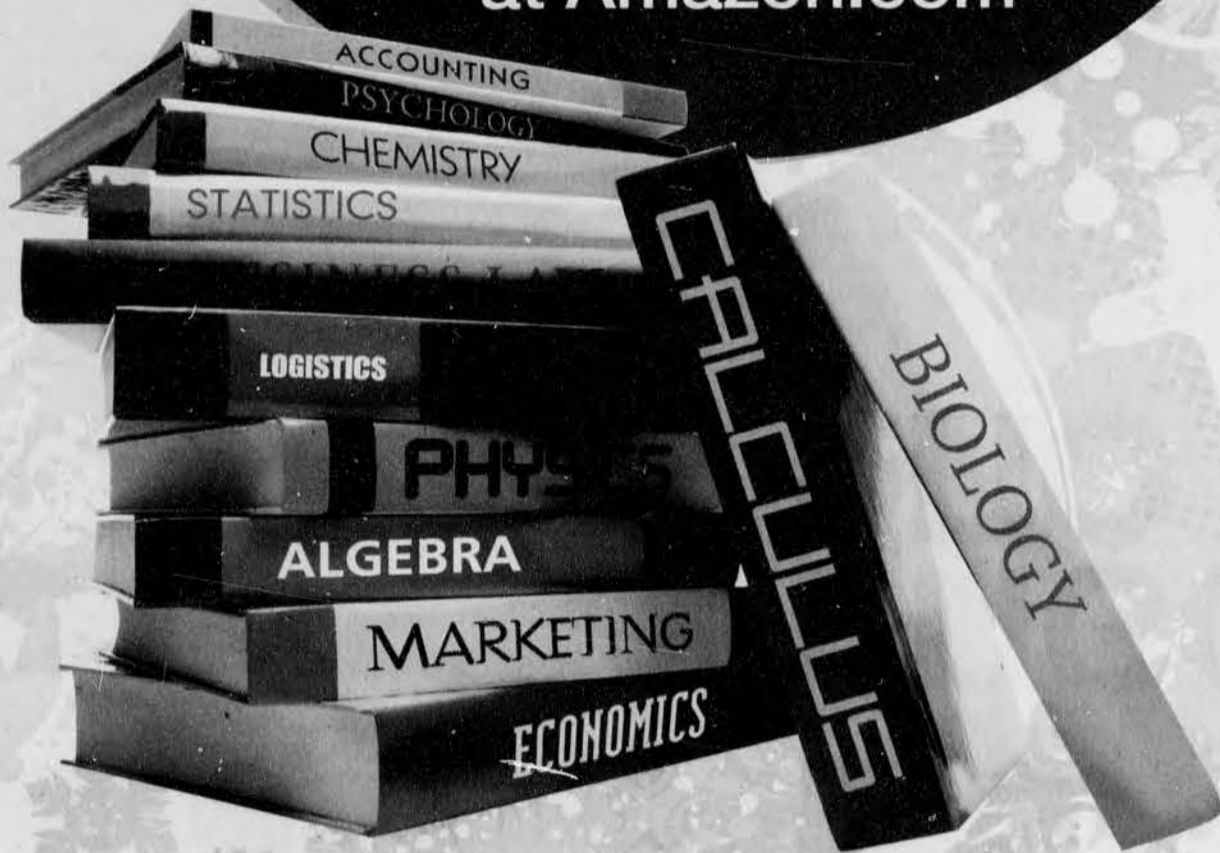
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A CLASSIC CHRISTMAS GHOST TALE - This year's production of 'A Christmas Carol' incorporates flying ghosts through the use of wire-and-harness systems.

Ghost of Christmas past visits Liberty

TIFFANY EDWARDS
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Snow fell, ghosts flew and townspeople danced and sang their way through the Liberty Theater Departments production of Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol."

The new Tower Theater's special capabilities faced a new challenge with the production, in which characters attached to harnesses "flew" through the air.

Assistant professor of theatre arts and play director Chris Nelson said that the production is staffed by 68 people, with two to three crew members needed to control each flying actor.

According to Nelson, the play's cast and crew had to come back to school early from

Thanksgiving break to learn how to operate the equipment as well as have harnesses fitted and practice basic mid-air maneuvers. The group spent the Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving practicing for 12 to 16 hours with the new equipment.

"We had the company 'Flying by Foy' set up the flying equipment and teach our crew and students how to use it," Nelson said. "Some of the actors caught on to flying faster than others, but now they're all showboats. They love doing flips and gliding."

The play follows classic Christmas anti-hero Ebenezer Scrooge, played by senior Jonathan Crabtree, as he "bahs" and "humbugs" his way through the day, scaring away Christmas carolers and scolding his nephew Fred, played by Timmy Williamson

who also narrates the play, for inviting him to celebrate Christmas with the family. Scrooge also terrorizes his impoverished employee Bob Cratchit, who baffles Scrooge with his upbeat attitude towards Christmas, despite his harsh financial circumstances and sickly child. Scrooge goes home to his large, empty house and is preparing for bed when his old business associate Jacob Marley, dead for seven years, visits him. Marley's ghost warns Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts of Christmases past, present and future, who will attempt to show Scrooge the error of his miserly ways. Scrooge scoffs at Marley's warning, believing the vision to be an odd dream, until the ghost of Christmas past visits him and whisks him off to revisit happy and painful memories of his own from his

early years. The ghost of Christmas present allows Scrooge a glimpse into the lives and circumstances of the people around him, and the ghost of Christmas future completes the night with a warning to Scrooge by giving him a look into the dire future that awaits him if he refuses to change his ways.

Sigma Tau Delta and the Department of Theatre Arts are hosting a free lecture on Dec. 8 at 5:30 p.m. in the Tower Theater, with Nelson and Dr. Emily Heady speaking about the play. Tickets can be purchased at the Vines Center box office, or by calling 434-582-7328, or visiting the Liberty Theatre Arts website.

◆ EDWARDS is the feature editor.

Look out & about

Events to LOOK OUT for in the next few weeks.

NOW



NOW-
Dec. 24



Dec. 8



Dec. 8



Christmas Convo: Don't forget to get a good laugh in before finals week. Christmas convocation, the most anticipated parody event of the school year, is Dec. 9 at 10 a.m.

Winterfest: Need something to do over winter break? Winterfest is back with food, fun and music Dec. 30 and 31. Featured artists include Lecrae, Humble Tip, Family Force 5, Newsboys, Fireflight, Kutless and more. Tickets are available online at libertywinterfest.com. CSER opportunities are available for students.

A Christmas Wonderland in the Courtyard: Free food, drinks and music for students sponsored by the Student Government Association Wednesday, Dec. 8 after Campus Church.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers: Liberty students, faculty and staff are invited to volunteer for the Salvation Army bell ringer position. CSER credit is available for students. Time slots to work are available from now until Dec. 24. For more information contact Darren Wu at dcwu@liberty.edu.

Christmas Coffeehouse: Christmas Coffeehouse is coming Dec. 10, in the Vines Center. Tickets are available through Student Activities' website and at the Vines Center

ticket office for \$3, tickets will be \$5 at the door. Floor tables are \$64, seat eight people, and can only be purchased at the Vines Center ticket office.

Virginia Christmas Spectacular: A Thomas Road Christmas Carol

The Virginia Christmas Spectacular's is in its 40th year of dazzling audiences of all ages. This year's performance will span 40 years of Christmas traditions and memories. For ticket information visit TRBC's event website at new.trbc.org/events/ or call 888-244-2178.

A Christmas Carol: Join the Liberty Theater Department in their musical latest production "A Christmas Carol," which opens on Dec. 3 and runs until Dec. 11. Tickets are on sale now at liberty.edu/theatre.

New Year's Eve Mad Hatter's Ball at City View Sky Top Lounge: Fall down the rabbit hole and head to City View for the Mad Hatter's Ball in downtown Lynchburg. Have a great time, while helping a great cause. Tickets for the Ball are \$50 per person. Proceeds will benefit Presbyterian Homes and Family Services and the Family Alliance. PHFS and the Family Alliance provide services and programs to help children, adults and families in the community, from credit counseling and

parenting classes to residential care for at-risk teens and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Senior Class Christmas Sweater Day: Show off your Christmas spirit and start a new tradition with SGA Wednesday, Dec. 8. Seniors, as well as students of all classes, are encouraged to wear Christmas sweaters, whether cute or cringe-worthy.

LAMP Literary Journal: Pick up your free copy Fall 2010 LAMP Magazine, available now at the Liberty Bookstore as well as local coffeeshops.

A Lecture on "A Christmas Carol": Sigma Tau Delta and the Department of Theatre Arts are hosting a free lecture on Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 5:30 p.m. in the Tower Theater. Dr. Emily Heady and "A Christmas Carol" director Professor Chris Nelson will be speaking and light refreshments will be served.

EXCLUSIVE AT WWW.LIBERTYCHAMPION.COM

Art after God's heart: Lorena Palma
Liberty reaches out to Fincastle Baptist Church
Student missionaries take "Next Steps"
Mini-miracles and 24 Blooms: Professor Monique Maloney
Liquid Life: Give the gift of clean water
Photo Gallery: Basketball

Dec. 9



Dec. 10



Dec. 31



Dec. 30
-31



Hark, hear the bells

Students, faculty, staff assist Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign

SHELANNE JENNINGS
snjennings@liberty.edu

Bells will be ringing this season as Liberty volunteers encourage all passerby to give in support of the Lynchburg Salvation Army.

"The great thing about Salvation Army is the Christian aspect of it. They are not shy of Christ and celebrating the season for what it's all about," Liberty's Salvation Army committee representative Darren Wu said.

According to their website, Salvation Army has been working across the world, putting their Christian faith into practice since 1865. The organization began the Red Kettle Campaign in 1891, in hopes that the change donated would feed those who could not afford a holiday meal, and has now become an annual event.

"Last year, Salvation Army served 29 million individuals in need, provided 64 million meals for the hungry and sheltered more than 10 million people with no place to go," the Salvation Army's website said.

Today, funds from the kettle drive support a number of community programs provided through the Salvation Army — such as, alcohol and drug treatment, emergency shelter, family counselling services and many others.

"(The funds) stay here in Lynchburg," Wu said. "Every Salvation Army location across the country runs its own campaign, so this is just for the Salvation Army here in Lynchburg."

The Salvation Army has set up kettles at 12 different locations across the city, including the entrance of J.C. Penney at River Ridge Mall, Walmart on Wards Road and Big Lots on Timberlake Road.

Over the years, Liberty has acted in service to the Salvation Army, with groups working in the local soup kitchen, helping with the Noah's Ark day care program and youth program, as well as ringing the bell at Salvation Army kettle locations.

"The great thing that I love about it is that it involves faculty, staff and students," Wu said.

This year there are over 20 Liberty student, staff and faculty taking turns ringing at Walmart on Wards Road.

Though the drive is meant as a means to give back this holiday season, volunteers say they cannot help but to feel the blessings serving offers.

"My experience in the last few years, everyone who has done it has left feeling like 'oh, this is a really great thing and I'd like to do it next year,'" Wu said.

Two resident assistants that manned the kettles on Dec. 3 shared Wu's sentiment.

"We are doing it to help support the Salvation Army and be a blessing (to the community)," senior Derek Walker said. "I would definitely (volunteer) again."

Walker and fellow resident assistant junior Dominique Martin volunteered on behalf of the Office of Student Leadership.

"It's been a lot of fun," Martin said. "I'm glad to be out here with this guy."

The Salvation Army kettle drive began Nov. 12 and will run every Monday through Saturday until Christmas Eve.

Students can volunteer with the Salvation Army to fulfill their Christian service requirements. Since the kettle drive is less than 20 hours of service, students are allowed to work at a number of Salvation Army locations over the semester.

To find out more information about CSER opportunities or how to help with next year's kettle drive, email Darren Wu at dcwu@liberty.edu. More information on the Salvation Army and their outreach programs can be found at salvationarmyusa.org.

◆ JENNINGS is a feature reporter.

concerts in Lynchburg



SCOTT HILL | LIBERTY CHAMPION

COFFEE FOR A CAUSE — The Muse 8:30 on Kemper Street held a concert featuring local talent to raise money for Freedom 4/24.

Brew the Noise

Lynchburg's newest concert venue raises money for freedom

SASHA BRAITHWAITE
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In a large room filled with people and lit mostly by Christmas lights and small candles, a warm ambiance of fellowship, holiday spirit and the desire to change lives managed to fill up any empty spaces.

The Muse 8:30 hosted its first charity event Friday night to raise money for Freedom 4/24. The event, Brew the Noise, was a collaboration of Freedom 4/24, Brentwood Church and The Muse 8:30, combining coffee, music and collecting donations to provide better opportunities for sexually exploited women around the world. It was \$5 to get in and by the end of the night, Brew the Noise had raised \$1,335 to go to Freedom 4/24's cause.

The Muse 8:30, which only allows Christian music to be performed at its venues and concerts, had more than 20 acts by individuals and bands performing Christmas and worship songs, as well as self-written songs. Allison Seaton, a senior, heard about Brew the Noise in her College Life group at Brentwood Church. She was one of the few artists who performed an original song.

"I like to perform so I thought it would be a good experience," Seaton said. "And I like coffee."

The Muse 8:30 facilitator Brian Wynn said that Brew the Noise was not the first time that musicians have performed there. However, it is the first time that performers have had the opportunity to showcase their talents in order to raise funds for a cause that they believe in and support.

Public relations representative for the Muse 8:30 junior Sarah Knudsen said that they recently announced that 51 percent of their daily profits will be given to the homeless in Lynchburg.

"Our goal for the Muse 8:30 is for it to become Lynchburg's premiere coffee shop and music venue that gives back to the community," Knudsen said.

Before most of the performances, "fun facts" were told about each artist. One of the bands had met only two weeks ago on Craigslist prior to the event, while another band, the Knights Before Christmas, had a drummer who could touch his shoulders together in front of his body, an act that collected gasps from the



SCOTT HILL | LIBERTY CHAMPION

FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM — The concert raised \$1,335 for Freedom 4/24's ministry to help sexually exploited women.

audience upon its display.

"Feliz Navidad" was sung, the classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" was read, espresso was brewed and a table of Freedom 4/24 merchandise offered bags, t-shirts, stickers and Christmas gift-tags for sale, with all of the proceeds going towards rescuing women from prostitution.

Brew the Noise is only one of many events to come that will serve as a way to raise money for charities and other worthy causes. This April, the Muse 8:30 plans to host another music event that will benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

"The Muse 8:30 is more than just a coffee shop or a place for great music," Knudsen said. "It is a way to give back to our community and fellowship with friends."

Updates and lists of events at the Muse 8:30 can be found on their Facebook page.

◆ BRAITHWAITE is a feature reporter.

Creativity is 'mediumless' at Riverviews Artspace

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Amid the snowfall of downtown Lynchburg, an art show was held at Riverviews Artspace Saturday night, featuring the work of three artists — junior Lauren Baker, senior John Gosslee and sophomore Jacob Siner — from Mediumless, a group of nine business-minded artists.

Mediumless seeks to provide clients with different forms of art to fulfill commercial production as well as contributing to the fine arts by displaying members' work in galleries, venues and journals. Siner's work consists of digital manipulations of photography, Baker's colorfully edited photography from her two-week trip to Paris and Gosslee's sketches were an accompaniment to a collection of original poems about the zodiacs.

"I like the colors," sophomore Justen Hyland said about Baker's photography. "I really like



KATE POWLEY | LIBERTY CHAMPION

FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE — Mediumless's gallery will be open to the public through the next week.

how (the pictures) are edited."

Siner's interest in graphic design and use of commercial advertisement stemmed from high school where he worked on the yearbook staff.

"I like to see something captivating and put it in a different light," Siner said. "This is my first stand alone show, so a lot of this is just stuff I've collected ever since I've started teaching myself."

Gosslee's sketches are done by a method he developed that uses conté, compressed charcoal, and connected strokes forming representations of the constellations. Gosslee's inspiration behind the sketches and book of poems was that he believed no one before him had succeeded in poetry about zodiacs.

"I like to do things that I want to do, not things that I have to do," Gosslee said.

Baker's photography series displayed vibrant colors reminiscent of candy in every day Parisian life. Her favorite photograph also happened to be of candy in Paris. She said this was not only due to her love of candy, but her love of color that involves a secret method she has for editing her photography.

"I see through the camera lens and I simplify

life and idealize it. I really enjoy color obviously, but right now my photography is focusing on beautiful things," Baker said. "I had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Being able to look through the camera lens made it easier to understand and help slow down the whole process since I was only there for two weeks."

The artists stood by their artwork and talked with attendants who tried their best to figure out any underlying artistic meaning was in the work.

Other members of Mediumless beside the featured artists were in attendance supporting and promoting the group. The show lasted from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and provided free refreshments as well as brochures and information on the artwork. According to Siner, the work should remain at Riverviews Artspace for at least a week.

◆ POWLEY is a feature reporter



RUTH BIRBY | LIBERTY CHAMBER

A Christmas to remember

TRBC celebrates 40 years of memories

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With more than 260,000 Christmas lights, Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC) is inviting audiences to come celebrate its 40th anniversary of the holiday production, the Virginia Christmas Spectacular.

More than 40,000 people attend this holiday tradition every year, experiencing the brilliance of Christmas lights in the Living Christmas Tree, new and old Christmas carols, and the story of one of the most significant events in history.

This year's production is called "A Thomas Road Christmas Carol," a spinoff of the Charles Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol." The tale revolves around a grumpy middle-aged man named Ebenezer Scroogs who finds himself stressed and disappointed with his life and nothing being the way he expected it to be. In his search for truth and in honor of the show's 40th anniversary, Scroogs and the audience revisit years of past Christmas Spectacular memories.

"(It is) a common story to find yourself not having accomplished any of your dreams or things have not turned

out the way you thought they would," production director Lorie Marsh said.

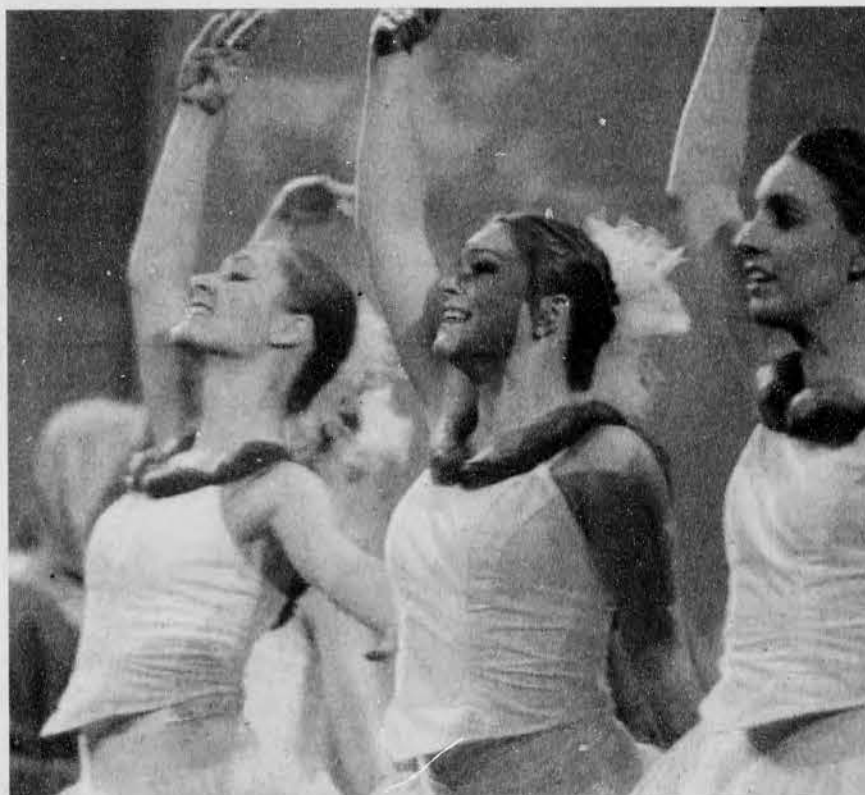
Charles Billingsley, executive producer and this year's lead role, said that the best part of doing the show is hearing stories from people e-mailing and calling about how it changed their lives.

"Being able to tell the story in a new way each year, and doing something that we pray will have an impact on people's lives is a great privilege," Marsh said.

This year, TRBC is teaming up with Gleaning for the World, an organization dedicated to reaching poverty-stricken people around the world, and local food banks by donating the shows' proceeds to help provide food for the families suffering from hunger in Lynchburg, part of the Feeding Our Neighbors project.

The Virginia Christmas Spectacular has one weekend of performances left to dazzle audiences and spread the hope of Christmas. TRBC is also offering a Christmas Dinner Buffet an hour and a half before the Friday and Saturday shows for an additional cost. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit newtrbc.org/events or call 888-244-2178.

◆ STEARNS is a feature reporter.



RUTH BIRBY | LIBERTY CHAMBER

A THOMAS ROAD CHRISTMAS CAROL — This year marks the 40th anniversary of TRBC's Virginia Christmas Spectacular. This year's performance, starring Charles Billingsley as Ebenezer Scroogs, revisits scenes from past performances. Proceeds from this year's Spectacular will benefit Gleaning for the World and food banks around Lynchburg.

Liberty celebrates Christmas in Lights

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Liberty students have many Christmas festivities and events to help relieve the stress of final projects and exams. The Advent season kicked off Monday, Nov. 29 with a new Liberty tradition called "Christmas in Lights," which was marked by the lighting of a huge Christmas tree in front of DeMoss Hall.

Attendees socialized with friends and enjoyed free hot chocolate as the Liberty University Chamber Singers and Concert Choir led students in popular Christmas carols.

Student Activities announced details of the campus-wide dorm decorating contest which began Monday night and also held an ugly sweater contest, awarding winners with tickets to Coffeehouse.

Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. spoke briefly, expressing his excitement to finally see decorations lighting up the campus. He said he hopes that "Christmas in Lights" will continue on for many years as a Liberty tradition



RUTH BIRBY | LIBERTY CHAMBER

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT — Liberty's newest Christmas tradition includes a 30-foot Christmas tree and thousands of Christmas lights in front of DeMoss Hall.

and that they can add more onto it each year. "We've always decorated a lot indoors, but we've never done any outdoor decorations.

This year we're also planning on installing a nativity scene so that the whole world can see how we celebrate the birth of Christ

here," the Chancellor said.

The Chancellor and his wife, Becki, then made their way to the center of the DeMoss parking lot, where a 30-foot tree had been adorned with lights, ribbon and topped with a golden star. Everyone counted down and after an enthusiastic "one" was yelled, the tree lit up.

Freshman Morgan Hutson said that the event was a great way to introduce the Christmas season and get students in the Christmas spirit.

"I think it's awesome. It's really festive and it's a good tradition that they should keep up. It also really brings us together as a campus," Hutson said.

Becki Falwell said that she hopes the students feel more at home because of the decorations.

"This is their home away from home. You can't feel at home unless you have Christmas decorations outside," Becki Falwell said.

The tree will be lit each night at dusk and will be up through the month of December.

◆ ABRAHAM is a feature reporter.