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Light It Up

Anthem Lights Brightens the Howard Performing Arts Center



PHOTO BY JONATHAN LOGAN



AN ODE TO DIVERSITY
“Attendees affirmed how AU remains committed to celebrate diversity and acknowledge the beauty in different cultures.”
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THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS
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IT'S (ALMOST) THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR
“It’s a program, often put on by different churches, partnered with people to bring gifts to children with one are both parents in jail.”
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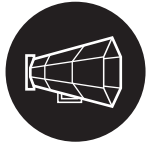


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News



Lisa Hayden
News Editor

Music Department Showcases Diversity



PHOTOS BY JULIA VINIZCAY

Alicia Dent | On Friday, Nov. 17, the Department of Music Voice Vespers ushered the Andrews University community into the Sabbath with songs of deliverance and faith in God.

The vespers, entitled “Faith of Our Fathers,” featured arrangements of traditional spirituals and hymn arrangements performed in a variety of timbres and ranges. This program was not only well received by the audience, but it also provided quite a unique worship experience.

Throughout the years, Andrews students have participated in this vespers program under varying themes such as Psalm settings from the 1930’s, Sacred Christmas Solos, Broadway, and Oratorio. This was the first year that spirituals and

hymns were chosen as the theme.

Charles Reid, Associate Professor of Voice, Director of Vocal Activities, and Artist-in-Residence, expressed that the intention in choosing spirituals and hymns was to equip the students with beautiful arrangements that can be sung in various religious settings. In addition, such music allows the singer to interpret freely and enables the listener to resonate with what they are hearing more strongly.

The music not only resonated with the audience, but with the singers as well. Some mentioned that their piece helped them to better understand cultures different from their own, as music is a universal language. Katharina Burghardt (junior, music education) was one of

the many soloists of the evening.

Burghardt chose to sing the traditional spiritual “Steal Away” and stated that “To find the emotional feel of the piece I went through and analyzed it line by line, assigning meaning to each stanza. I saw each of the stanzas as having three distinct emotions: escaping the trials of the world to spend time with Jesus, joy/relief at having found time to spend with Him, and the more contemplative final stanza as the quiet time with Jesus at the end of the day.”

Each singer clearly took to heart the lyrics they portrayed to the audience. In addition to resonating with fellow voice majors, the vespers also made an impact on other music majors.

Warren Garrido (senior, music) articulated his experience this way: “As a piano major, I came to appreciate and support other music vespers and recitals such as this. It was wonderful listening to a wide range of singers with different musical styles, interpretations and timbres.”

The numerous reports from this program indicated that people were truly blessed by the work invested by each of the voice students and teachers to make this program possible. What is probably most impressive is that this program served as proof that music is truly a universal language.

Not only were music majors blessed, but students of other disciplines expressed that the

program served as an excellent transition into the Sabbath hours.

Deandra Joseph (sophomore, speech pathology, language and audiology) said that “The music vespers was a great program! I enjoyed seeing my friend and other music majors perform under the teaching of Professors Reid and Zork.”

Many in attendance expressed how they were blessed by giving countless affirmations following the program. A lot of attendees specifically affirmed how Andrews University remains committed to their efforts to celebrate diversity and acknowledge the beauty in different cultures.

AU Theatre Wing Teaches a Lesson In True Beauty

Christina Mercado | Andrews University Theatre Wing held three performances of “The Ugly Duckling” at Newbold Auditorium over the weekend of Nov. 17-19. The play tells the story of a king and queen who believe their daughter, Princess Camilla, is not beautiful. Her parents plan to marry her to Prince Simon from a faraway land who has never seen her before. They force Camilla to trade places with her more beautiful but ditzzy maid, Dulcibella.

However, the prince also believes he is not handsome and has the

same plan as the king and queen. He trades places with his servant, Carlo. While the entertaining and silly “royals” meet each other, the real prince and princess meet, exchange secrets, and fall in love. The play ends with a riddle that Carlo the “prince” must answer before he can wed the princess. The correct answer was “cat” but Carlo answers “dog.” Prince Simon explains that in his country, that dog means cat. This hurdle overcome, they are pledged to be married.

Cast member James Jackson (freshmen, architecture) said,

“Originally we were going to (perform) ‘Much Ado About Nothing’ but we didn’t have enough people for the production. We started looking for other plays and came across this one. Everyone liked the concept. We should never judge someone by their looks alone because that’s not where true beauty lies. Beauty lies within and that’s more important.”

The Theatre Wing is a non-profit organization fully funded by the student body. Director Benjamin Koch (senior, political science/business) said that the club uses the money to put on bigger productions

with better costuming and lighting. He emphasized that theatre is for every kind of student and the club is flexible for student schedules.

In addition to actors, the club is always looking for makeup artists, hair stylists, technicians, singers and dancers.

In past years, the club has presented plays and musicals, such as “The Importance of Being Earnest,” “To Kill a Mockingbird,” “Pygmalion” and “Fiddler on the Roof”. With the funds collected from “The Ugly Duckling”, The Theatre Wing hopes to produce a spring

musical next semester.

Actress Kazumi Hirata (sophomore, psychology and criminal justice), who played Dulcibella, first fell in love with the art of theatre in her home country of Japan, in middle school. She said that even though participating in college theatre is sometimes hard because of the language barrier and cultural differences, it is a dream. Hirata said, “I’m so glad to be a part of it.”

The Power of Encouraging Conversation



PHOTO BY IMC

Lisa Hayden | Students, faculty, and staff filed into Chan Shun Hall on a brisk Saturday evening to engage in Free Intelligent Conversation (FreeIC). Presented by the office of Diversity & Inclusion and the Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Action Council, this event encouraged dialogue and interpersonal growth between individuals of different backgrounds.

Co-curricular credit was provided and the program began promptly at 6:30 p.m. on the evening of Nov. 18. After participants engaged in some conversation warmups, Clifford

Allen, a recruiting coordinator for International Business Machines (IBM), moderated a panel on discussing challenging topics. The panelists were AUSA President Jessica Yoong (senior, business), Andrews University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA) President Mark Reid (Master of Divinity, third year), and Andrews University faculty members: Chaplain Jose Bourget, Professor Krista Cooper and Professor Marcella Myers.

Founded and directed by Andrews University Alumni Kyle Emile (BS '14), Free Intelligent

Conversation is a non-profit organization started with one goal: to encourage conversation. According to the official FreeIC website, "the movement has spread beyond Chicago—we've made it into 15 major US cities, and have even stretched internationally into Canada and Italy."

Mark Reid, a panelist for the event, affirmed this.

Reid said, "I had heard about freeIC in Chicago but I was never able to attend; having FreeIC on campus was a great opportunity to have conversation with individuals I normally wouldn't. I appreciate UP

Nixon and his office for organizing this event. It highlighted the need for conversation. We are all different with different experiences and different opinions and different rationales and the only way to experience all of that is through conversation."

Now, the organization sets out to accomplish three objectives: to celebrate each other's differences, to create places where you can talk about anything, and to encourage meaningful face-to-face conversation. The questions posed by the moderator aligned with these objectives.

During the panel discussion, panelists were given the opportunity to answer these guided questions. Audience members recounted their favorite questions and topics that surfaced during the discussion.

Autumn Goodman (sophomore, photography) said, "One of the questions they asked at the FreeIC thing was, 'if you could change one thing about yourself what would it be and why'. They also talked about safe spaces and the purpose of creating them as well as the conflict that comes with having safe spaces for people to discuss issues, but not having safe people in the safe spaces."

While the questions certainly touched on important topics, individuals felt they were also relatable, which resulted in

responses from people with varying backgrounds and experiences.

Crystal-Anne Tan (sophomore, documentary film) said, "The Free Intelligent Conversation event was a really positive experience. I think a lot of the questions asked could definitely be applied to everyday conversations with your peers just to get different perspectives."

The moderator lead the audience in breakout sessions before and after the panel discussion. During these sessions, audience members formed groups of 4-5 and participated in conversation prompted by FreeIC question cards. Attendees resonated with the importance of group discussion and expressed the need for Andrews University to continue these events.

Theard Pierre (freshman, theology) said, "I enjoyed the FreeIC's groups of different people talking about things we usually never get a chance to speak on. You not only got to hear the thoughts of others but also connect with people you'd never think you would or had the opportunity to speak to. Andrews should absolutely make more events like this. We need more intelligent conversations because the minds of the student body work and think differently!"

Honors Thesis Symposium: An Exploration of Intrigues and Passions

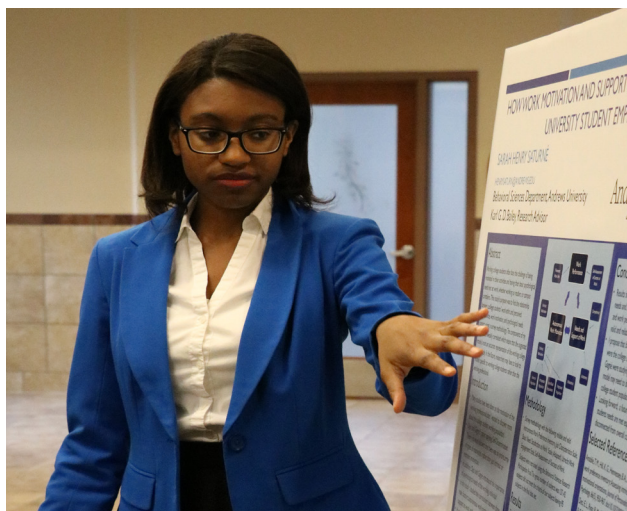


PHOTO BY KAYLA MINNICK

Joliana Lecointe | The Honors Thesis Symposium has been a part of the Honors program for more than 25 years. It is held twice a year, fall and spring. The event has two parts: a poster session to give a visual summary of participants'

research, and then a formal twenty-minute talk where the Honors Scholars give a more thorough summary of their project. After their presentation, the audience is permitted to ask questions.

The Fall Honors Thesis Symposium

this year took place on Thursday, November 16 and several students expressed their fondness for the event.

"Research Symposium Day is strangely one of my favorite Honors events. It's so interesting to see what all of my fellow Honors scholars have been researching. It also brings out the community aspect of Honors," said Ingrid Radulescu (junior, English, pre-law) adding that "it's a time where other Honors scholars, Honors council members, friends of Honors and family members can all come to support those presenting."

This fall, four seniors presented their research projects in the formal talks: Joshua Ahn presented on "The Effect of Graphic Organizers as a Note-taking Strategy in an Undergraduate Biology Classroom"; Sarah Henry Saturne on "How Work Motivation and Support Affect Work Ethic in University Student Employees"; Victoria Kim on "Prep-

HPLC Method Development to Isolate Potentially-Carcinogenic, Arginine-Based Heterocyclic Amines"; and Jatniel Rodriguez on "Humility in the Proverbs".

"The Honors Thesis presented by Joshua Ahn on the topic of graphic organizers impacted me on a personal level. I will continue to use matrix style graphic organizers as a tool for effective studying," said D'Shauna Edwards (junior, biology-neuroscience).

The students were given only three guidelines for their projects: their thesis must be within the bounds of their major field; they must work with a professor; and they must work towards presenting a fresh contribution to the research.

Students attending the event expressed their overall satisfaction with the various research presentations and the energy of the presenters.

"I enjoyed the fact that the presentations allow the Honors

scholars to share all the time-consuming research that they have been working on," shared Talisa Gonzalez (junior, psychology). "Even when I listened to presentations outside of my discipline, I could see the passion that the researchers had for their work. It's good to know that Honors is giving their students a way to develop professional research and presentation skills while also giving them the opportunity to explore something they love."

Ideas



Frentzen
Pakpahan
Ideas Editor

The Humble Babe and a Sword of Peace

Jatniel Rodriguez | As I walk through campus beneath a clear sky of stars, I wonder what it must have been like for the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth. The sky suddenly surges with light and angels invite them to witness the birth of a King. The angels burst into song, giving glory to God and declaring peace and goodwill to men. As the shepherds ponder the invitation with the fading notes of angelic choirs echoing in their ears, I find myself captivated by the words spoken to them: "Peace on earth and goodwill to men." With his birth, heaven drew near to earth, eternity to the finite. The gravity of the Incarnation and thus of Christmas's deeper meaning should not be taken lightly.

I have been surprised by the way Christmas celebrates the infant Christ but seemingly ignores the rest of his life. Though the angels declared peace on earth, Jesus himself would soon declare: "Do you think that I have come to give

peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division" (Luke 12:51, ESV). The angels declared peace, Jesus declared division, but perhaps the contradiction is not as jarring as it seems.

Much time, money and effort are spent during the Christmas season. As happy and peaceful as a time it should be, to some families, Christmas is such a significant time of celebration that it causes more stress than joy: gifts must be bought, the logistics of Christmas dinner planned, and lights and decorations put up. We heap importance upon this season—the time when we remember the birth of Christ. But a similar amount of attention is not awarded to the resurrection. Easter is almost a joke. Without tracing the history, is it not a bit demeaning to surround the resurrection of Christ—quite arguably the most significant moment in the plan of salvation—with bunnies and egg hunts? Easter coupled with Christmas provides a more complete picture of salvation.

The birth is beautiful, but without a sacrifice and a resurrection there is no hope.

I suggest that we have, however unconsciously, accorded Christmas its greater importance by our own preference. It is easier to accept a baby in swaddling clothes than the radical Christ who comes to divide the earth into the camps of the sheep and the goats. Christ the babe asks nothing of us beyond the modeling of gift-giving; Christ the risen demands our whole life, including the cherished sins. The world would prefer Jesus remain in humble obscurity, unchallenging, peaceful and non-rebuking. Few would say no to the thought of receiving presents. We admire Christ for certain principles (love, peace, goodwill) and forget the others (repentance and sanctification) Just as we do with other leaders, we admire their leadership but pick the qualities we want to observe and ignore the rest. Though this makes sense when dealing with human

leaders, it is dangerous to do so with the author of one's faith. One must accept Christ for all he is and represents or not at all.

It is ironic that we look forward to family reunions at Christmas even though Christ promised division between father and son. Among the topics generally not discussed at polite gatherings, religion is among them. Yet at a festival charged with such theological significance, we manage to ignore its implications. The change demanded in the Christian life does not require but often entails separation between the believer and nonbeliever. However, Christian division ends in peace, though few see it this way. They note the difficulty of the walk rather than the reward. This is why the song of peace sung by the angels is true only for those who please God. God's intervention in the dark affairs of this earth should be good news to all but it becomes good news to the few who accept it. The hardship of the Christian life is allowed to

obscure the peace; the temporary obscures the eternal.

The joy of the Christmas season brings a short-termed burst of goodwill, just as it did in 1914 for a few hours for a few thousand weary soldiers. But the hope of the resurrection is a slow-burning fire that keeps the tired Christian going. There are two sacrifices in salvation's history: Jesus came, died and resurrected. The secondary part depends on us. Christ came to bring division. He will divide our hearts and cast away the evil shell leaving a humble heart reflecting his glory. We can only reconcile the birth and resurrection of Christ in this way: that while Christ calls for us to share His great gift of love, it is not without a great personal struggle culminating in our own spiritual death and renewal.

Going Crazy Over Christmas

Teddy Kim | On my dorm room wall hang two sets of Christmas lights, one clear and one colored. My roommate has a vinyl player that will soon be playing holiday carols, hymns, and standards. I currently hang Santa hats on the wall next to my bed, and a reindeer stocking outside of my door (I actually planned to gift wrap the door only to remember that Andrews does not allow it, citing safety reasons). I have a \$20 ceramic mug from Starbucks that I bought during the holiday-cups craze last year. I have doled out countless peppermint barks and Ferrero Rocher chocolates to my friends and written about five out of my fifteen planned Christmas cards.

What is it about this time of year that makes many go fanatical? My personal enjoyment of Christmas stems from that "holiday feeling" that I developed during childhood: going shopping in the holiday-decorated mall, building snowmen on my front lawn, listening to Nat King Cole by the fire, getting tucked into bed in my reindeer PJs, drinking hot chocolate made by my dad wearing an ugly Christmas sweater. I could go on about what I enjoy about Christmas and this time of year, but I'll spare you all the details.

But setting aside my personal experience, I know that for many, Christmas is not so much a nostalgic return to childhood, but a time that signifies a moral turnaround. This is the quintessential season of good-naturedness, defined

by kindness and generosity. People suddenly reset their moral clocks and renew their feelings of friendship and outreach, all in good spirit with the holidays. In behavior contrasted from the other parts of the year, bosses hand out Christmas bonuses, neighbors help each other decorate, and everyone begins giving gifts to each other. The morality is especially preached to be one that is not just visible on the outside, but within us as well. Families begin to pull out moral tales like *A Christmas Story* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, reminding us of the selflessness necessary for a true Christmas experience. As some variation of the old adage goes, Christmas is not something defined by the amount of gifts given, but by the altruism of the individual. Hence, the number of volunteers that serve at soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other noble causes goes up, as we become interested in giving the most valuable gift of all: our time.

Until Thanksgiving, we are given allowances for our selfishness, rudeness and ingratitude throughout the year. But when the Christmas countdown comes, everyone is motivated to become a more benevolent version of themselves. We say that it's the ol' Christmas spirit, that it's a time everyone should be able to enjoy. Hence, we find ourselves being much more generous with our peers and those around us. We wear layers of human decency, show kindness to as many

people as possible, stretching our tolerance where actions that are usually annoying can be overlooked. In other words, we forgive and forget, constantly reminding ourselves that a better way exists, provided by the holiday messages of joy and cheer.

It is interesting that we try so hard to change for this span of the year. Clearly, we are willing to adjust our personalities because we find motivation in what Christmas stands for. But Christmas is intrinsically a façade. Its traditions are modified customs, passed down from generation to generation. Its messages of peace and harmony are but crafted attachments, ideas that some person decided to relate to Christmas at some point in time. We call for altruism, but we act in accordance with our own selfish nature still. Perhaps our altruism comes in response to external desires or pressures—we give to receive, whether it be material gifts or spiritual blessings.

And so if we are willing to change ourselves that easily, for something artificial and man-made, I wonder what it would take for us to embody the message of Jesus. Jesus has long preached forgiveness, kindness, and selflessness. He is the best earthly example of such traits. Billions are attracted to His teachings for the same reasons that so many celebrate Christmas. Even so, many refuse to change. We are rude. We are greedy. We wage war with our fellow man. And then we try



PHOTO BY PUBLIC DOMAIN

And purify ourselves for the sake of Christmas, using the holidays as our primary motivation to do so.

And I laugh at the matter; usually people say that the "meaning" of Christmas is lost among the commercialization of the season, or from the (despite our best efforts) still-present selfishness that prevails no matter how close we are to the 25th. But the true irony lies in how we superficially try to change ourselves in a temporary period, acting as if we realized something new about being

nice. But really, most of us have been taught these ideals since we were born, so why should it anything be new? Theoretically, Christmas should be a redundant time of year, especially to the followers of Christ, where none of its ideals should come as a surprise when compared to how we have been living..

Ideas

A Review of Facing Doubt: A Book for Adventist Believers

Frentzen Pakpahan | In the middle of my freshman year, I came to the point where it did not seem that theism was intellectually tenable. As a theology major, it was rather ironic. Here I was sitting in religion classes, in chapel, in vespers and church; here I was dutifully opening my Bible to the chapter and verse; here I was singing and reciting and moving my lips; and here I was wondering not whether my heart was in it, as it desired to be, but whether my head could be in it, too. After much soul-wrenching, pondering and guidance from a friend, I came to embrace God and to know Him more fully than I had known Him before. I can empathize with those who struggle to know whether God exists and whether He is truly good and loving as the Bible claims Him to be. I had felt the emotions, the awe that there was something Beyond ourselves, but I was never truly sure. It was not until I came to believe and know Him to be there that I began to have a relationship with Him.

When I was asked to review *Facing Doubt* by Reinder Bruinsma, I was slightly intimidated. While I grew up an Adventist, I was not steeped in our history, in Ellen White, or in the Fundamental Beliefs as much as I think I should have been. Even now, my understanding of Adventism itself is only starting to coalesce into a clear image as the various parts I have been taught are piecing themselves together. Therefore, I strongly encourage reading the book for yourself. Whether you are going through doubts yourself or know someone who is, it might be of help to you.

Bruinsma, a retired pastor and “church administrator” from the Netherlands, splits his book into two halves: the first half puts forward a litany of legitimate misgivings that believers may have that would understandably push them toward the exits. Among these are philosophical questions regarding theism as I had had myself, such as the age-old “Why does a good, all-powerful God allow suffering?”, to specific grievances about the Adventist church—a recent tendency toward fundamentalism, its virtual disavowal of women’s ordination at the most recent assembly of the General Conference, the elevation of Ellen White over the Bible, doctrinal issues on Creation and the sanctuary, among others. Bruinsma sympathizes with the postmodern who cannot find liberty within the church but finds only institutional,

doctrinal and ethical rigidity. As a self-admitted “progressive”, Bruinsma acknowledges that many of these doubts have been his own at some point in his life.

The second half of the book is devoted to addressing these doubts. Instead of writing bullet point style and answering all the questions one might have, Bruinsma suggests something rather unexpected. The best way to tackle these doubts, he says, is not to extract oneself from the church and to go through a period of isolated critical thought as Moses and Paul had done, but to embrace the church and lead a Christian life as best as one can, meanwhile exercising what little capacity one has to trust that God might be there. He counsels the reader to “immerse yourself in the language of faith” (italics his). The solution, according to Bruinsma, is not to blindly believe or to wait until all your questions have answers, but in the midst of searching to find and participate in a church that meets your needs, to read the Bible without regard to its historicity but its message, and to pray and believe that someone is listening (see chapters six and nine).

I appreciate this fresh take. The trap the church often falls into, Bruinsma notes, is to label doubters as unbelievers. He writes, “Doubt is not just a Christian problem, it is a human problem” (109). It is an inevitable and necessary part of the faith journey. Not everyone sees it this way. There will always be those in the church who immediately see doubt as an attack on the faith rather than an opportunity for growth, as it was for me. Only those who are unsure about their faith will seek to stifle doubtful voices. Only those whose faith is unshakeable will encourage the discussion, secure in the belief that their faith will stand the test.

I can testify that Bruinsma’s suggested prescription has worked for me. I came to realize after my own crisis of faith that my lifestyle had had an effect on my thinking. Though a theology major, I did not always live as one should. The mental dissonance it took to be a hypocrite not only troubled my soul but shook the foundations of my reason, something I treasure as an academic hopeful. In order to justify my own actions, I had to throw out God. That proved to be impossible—not due to the social repercussions but because of the equally valid evidence for his existence.

That brings me to one of the interesting ideas that Bruinsma sets forward in the book which is that of “foundationalism.” “‘Strong’ foundationalism” sets out to find “absolute and unassailable principles” (119). This is very unpopular in a postmodern society and I do not even believe that God is “self-evidently true.” Instead, the concept of “modest” foundationalism that intrigued me. For ideas that fall into this category there may still be doubts but the ideas themselves can be believed without sacrificing reason. I believe God fits into this category. Nature and logic certainly require him to be there—although there are many other explanations, none seem as strong. Further on, he introduces the idea of a “web” of “interdependent” beliefs. No one idea, such as the Sabbath, has legitimacy unless a number of other beliefs come along with it—inspiration of Scripture, Creation, the sanctuary, and so on. Bruinsma accurately sets forth the principles of the intellectual side of the Christian faith. The Christian’s mindset should be one of modest foundationalism since God has always left room for some doubt. Thus, the idea of God makes sense insofar as he/she/it concerns the mind, but there is still a chasm of reason that only a “leap of faith” can overcome; once this is reconciled, the rest of Adventism falls into place.

One continuous cord running through the book has made me hesitant to give it full approval. Bruinsma repeatedly mentions the need for diversity of thought within the church but fails to make mention of the concomitant dangers. Whereas it is true that dogmatism often leads to legalism, it is equally true that too much creative space can lead to all sorts of problems—at the least erroneous interpretation, at the worst heresy. He argues that this is a slippery slope and a logical fallacy. So it may be, but only if Scripture is held up as the final standard by which all practice and new beliefs are examined. Though this principle is suggested and perhaps implied, Bruinsma makes no explicit mention of this in his beliefs. The Bible, he writes, “is an inspired book that tells the story of God’s involvement with humankind, and provides me with basic guiding principles” (189). Nowhere does he mention the need to hold up everything against the light of Scripture. Perhaps this should come as no surprise since he leaves room

for subjectivity in the hermeneutical process as well. He clearly rejects an exclusively literal reading (“plain reading” as he frequently calls it) and leaves Scripture open to self-interpretation.

Perhaps Bruinsma intended for Scripture to have the final say. However, in my reading of the text this did not come across. In several instances, Bruinsma states the need to allow the Holy Spirit to work. Concerning the “revival and reformation initiative” launched under current President of the General Conference Ted Wilson, Bruinsma writes that “perhaps too much is being orchestrated and too little left to the initiative of the Spirit himself” (50). Further on he notes the need for an openness to “new light” when it comes to doctrine (158). In attempting to provide the rationale behind Christianity, Bruinsma asks, “Why should we, for instance, trust reason more than perception or intuition? The choice to rely purely on reason is, when everything is said and done, an arbitrary decision” (123). Now I do not want to quote out of context or paint Bruinsma as a liberal (a label he does not adopt). Rather, these statements and questions come in response to Adventist rigidity in doctrine and practice. It seems as if we leave too little room for the Holy Spirit to work by the limits of our programs and the wording of the Fundamental Beliefs. Even so, I think it would be beneficial here for Bruinsma to clarify how one can know the Spirit is working and whether there is the risk of emotional illusion or self-deception. Surely everything has to be held up to the light of Scripture? The reason I make mention of this is because it is essential, even to “believers on the margins”, that if one takes the “leap of faith” he must do so with the understanding that his faith must abide by Scripture, or else his is a ship set adrift.

Overall, I believe Bruinsma has written a quality guide for the Adventist shrouded in doubt. I agree with him that it is important to stay with the church, even if one is not yet fully convinced of one’s faith, because I believe the Adventist message is the most in line with the Bible. I greatly appreciated the quotation of contemporary scholars, Adventist and non-Adventist alike, for the varying perspectives they provided. Too often I feel that Ellen White is a conversation-ender rather than a conversation-starter. I want to point out that Chapter 8, “What

Exactly Must I Believe?” will be of great interest to anyone who has ever entertained the idea that there might be a hierarchy of importance that can be applied to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs.

I should note that anyone who reads the first half of the book and has not dealt with the questions Bruinsma raises should skip to the second half and then read through the first. I was initially confused by why the author would raise so many questions and then leave them unanswered, but it became clear to me only in the second half that rather than encouraging division, the author attempts to acknowledge the myriad issues in the church he loves and has given his life’s work to.

Note: The author of the book reviewed above will be speaking on campus this weekend. “Why I Have Stayed with the Adventist Church,” presented by Reinder Bruinsma, at a special vespers on Friday, Dec. 1, at 5:30 p.m. in Newbold Auditorium, Buller Hall. He will also lead at Faculty Lounge Sabbath School on Sabbath morning, Dec. 2, and at 3:30 p.m. at Chan Shun Hall, as part of Michiana Adventist Forum.

Pulse



Carlye
Tagalog
Pulse Editor

Bomb Droppers End With a Boom



PHOTO BY JAY MARTINEZ

Torian Hill | On Monday, Nov. 20, two teams fought hard to claim a men's Intramural Football League Championship. The final featured MOB versus Da Bomb Droppers. Despite the mid-40s weather conditions, the fast winds made it feel a lot colder, creating an ambiance of adversity and suspense.

MOB started with the ball and made good progress down the field

with quick, short passes and a few handoffs; they scored a touchdown by quarterback David Sherman (sophomore, psychology) getting the option and running the ball from the 20-yard line. However, Bomb Droppers's defense prevented the one extra point attempt. Shortly after, the Da Bomb Droppers struggled to make their way up the field on offense and eventually turned over the ball on 4th down at

their own 20-yard line. When MOB was on offense, Sherman almost threw an interception to Bomb Droppers's player, Phil Jardine, but Jardine dropped it. A few plays later, Sherman attempted to throw a Touchdown pass, but Brandon vonDorpowski (senior, marketing) intercepted it.

When Bomb Droppers were on offense, they quickly moved down the field with runs by their

quarterback (vonDorpowski) and some passes to Jardine and Zach Mottley (senior, computer science), which helped them gain a lot of yards. With a minute left, Bomb Droppers were 10 yards from the end zone. On their first touchdown attempt, vonDorpowski threw a touchdown to wide receiver, Ben Ashton (second year, doctor of physical therapy). MOB was able to prevent the Bomb Droppers from getting an extra point making an even score of 6-6 at the half.

Bomb Droppers started the second half with the ball. Zach Mottley from the Bomb Droppers made a one-handed Odell Beckham-type catch to keep the drive going.

He said, "I lost the football in the lights and I couldn't see. I put my left hand across my eyes to shield the lights and somehow the timing was perfect enough that I could feel the ball in my hand."

On fourth and goal MOB player, Junior Orelus, made an interception off a balled tipped by a Bomb Dropper player. On fourth down of MOB's drive after the interception, Zack Mottley came up with a huge sack on David Sherman. This resulted in a turnover on downs because MOB got stuck within the 20-yard line and were not able to convert the first down. The Bomb

Droppers caused two false start penalties, which resulted in an extra 15 yards that pushed them back away from the end zone. Bomb Droppers quarterback Brandon vonDorpowski lobbed up a high pass to Amante Gonzalez (second year, clinical mental health counseling) in the end zone for the touchdown. The Bomb Droppers were able to convert the extra point attempt. This resulted in a final score of 13-6. Congratulations to the Bomb Droppers for being the league champions.

As Sherman said, "We missed three starters on the offensive side as well as four starting defense."

Because this game was close, it could have had a completely different turn out. It turned into a tough match with a few close calls, split-second decisions and mishaps that shaped the outcome.

Because the game took place close to the start of Thanksgiving break, star players Xavier Cameron (senior, engineering) and Cameron Burton (senior, engineering) were not able to play, which had an effect on how the team played and executed their game plan. Nevertheless, the game was exciting, mainly because of the amount of competitiveness.

Winter Survival 101



PHOTO BY APRYL BRILEY

Dana Wilson | The survival of the winter season, which encompasses the majority of the Andrews experience, is a treacherous journey. One must be wise in order to survive the vicious cold. For those unfamiliar with Berrien Winters, here are some simple tips to stay happy and warm despite the frightful weather.

Dress for Warmth

This is the most important! Don't just throw on a coat and slip on some boots—wear undergarments such as vests and tights under your sweaters and jeans. Layer up! Having clothes close to your body helps keep your blood circulation flowing, which also maintains your body heat. For outer garments, gloves and scarves are a must, but

don't forget to wear hats as well. Hair damage results from exposure to low temperatures over time! Also, not everyone has earmuffs, but headphones are equal substitutes. Your ears are covered and listening to music can distract from the cold. Despite not looking cute and snazzy all the time, you'll find that the added comfort is totally worth it!

Peel Off the Layers Indoors

After getting all cozy in your super warm outfit, you might not want to take off your coat and scarf when indoors, but it is important to do so. Your body temperature adjusts to your warm gear in the cold. After being in a warm classroom for a long time, the temperature changes and your body will be shocked when you go outside again. Truly surviving the winter means regulating your body temperature, so remember to peel off the coat, scarf and gloves when settling inside a warm place.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

You will witness some fellow students walking in shorts and flip-flops. What you see is a lie. Some people are more accustomed to the cold than others or acclimate to the cold in strange ways, but even so, such cases are rare. Cold weather

will get you sick if you are not adequately protected. Remember: warmth over style.

Reroute through Buildings

Honestly, it would be great if the heated awning leading to the James White Library was connected to every building, but alas, such is not the case. Staying out in the cold too long causes some stinging in your fingers and toes, even if you're all geared up. A wise decision would be to cut through some warm buildings and have a less painful journey. No, you do not have to peel off outer layers when walking through buildings because the trip is short. Taking these shortcuts will keep you warm and energized throughout the day.

Stock Up On Food

Going outside is a hard thing to do when it's cold. Save yourself some trips by going to the store and buying some groceries to make meals inside, buying a to-go in the cafeteria and loading up on extra servings, or buying what you want in the Gazebo. Please do not depend on the dormitory vending machines. You know why.

Check the Weather

If you have a weather app on your phone, then you are saving yourself some trouble. Keep track of the weather so you know how to dress and what extra things you'll need to take outside your room. Potential rain or snowstorm will lead you to wearing rain boots or snow boots. You might need an umbrella or rain jacket. If you are accustomed to returning to your room before each class, you might need to reconsider on days with dangerous weather. Imagine doing your hair nicely but having to cover it because of the snow or deciding to wear your nice Timberlands and you find yourself walking through muddy or mushy puddles—yuck!

Get Cuffed

There is nothing warmer than snuggling with bae as you navigate through the cold. Holding his or her hand or sharing a hug is an easy way to stay warm. You will also feel warm and fuzzy inside with all the mutual love expressed. If you are without one, look for your options in the Cast soon to come or just ignore this last tip. You'll still be warm without a bae.

Stay warm, friends!

Making Finals the Best of Times

Tara Thona | “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Charles Dickens’s noteworthy opening of *A Tale of Two Cities* mirrors almost every college student’s experience during the end of each year, each semester. Returning from a Thanksgiving teaser of what the holiday season has in store, the sweet taste of freedom with family and friends still lingers in our minds as we come to the close of the semester—the best of times. Nevertheless, final exams, papers, projects and thesis defenses must precede before vacation. Some may consider this Dickens’s “the worst of times”—when our procrastination and neglect of academic responsibilities catch up to us. But there is no reason to add to this heavy burden of worry and stress. Prepare now for finals, in hopes that you get to experience the best of

times with no regrets.

Plan ahead.

Waiting until the last minute does not benefit the quality of your work or your sanity. Write out deadlines according to date. Then prioritize what needs to be done first. Manage your time by using a planner or an agenda—and check it often. Prepare for the morning the night before. Lay out your outfit, print out your papers and make your study guides before the morning, not ten minutes prior to class. Planned out preparation can conquer low spirits.

Treat studying like your job.

When asked “What is your profession?”, we say, “Student.” And honestly, with the amount of time we put into school, why don’t we act like studying is our profession? Take a few hours in your day to dedicate undivided

time and attention to studying. After every 30 to 50 minutes, take a break to increase effective productivity and focus. Similar to a job, studying will pay off.

Remove distractions.

In the study Facebook and Texting Made Me Do It: Media-induced task-switching while studying, Larry Rosen, Mark Carrier and Nancy Cheever of the California State University of Dominguez Hills say that those who had more technology available in the environment during their study period preferred task switching to unitasking. Thus, delete extra tabs of irrelevant sites or apps. Avoid readily replying to the immediate pop-ups of alerts and messages. Do not split the computer screen with Google Docs and Facebook. During intentional study time, silence your notifications and place

the phone on “Do Not Disturb” mode. Whatever your distraction may be, put it away when unitasking on studies.

Stay healthy.

Don’t skip meals, drink plenty of water and regularly exercise to avoid sickness and improve concentration and memory. Get restorative sleep, which may boost performance, improve memory and lower stress. If you struggle falling asleep, eliminate the habit of using electronic devices before and in bed. Meet with support groups when studying becomes overwhelming. In general, remind yourself that self-care time is as vital as study time.

Simple habits to succeed on the day of exams

Get a good night’s sleep. Wake up early. Leave to class on time. Fuel

yourself with good food. Study your note cards while walking. Dress with confidence and comfortability. Bring your iClicker, pen, pencil and eraser. Take deep breaths. Before anything, pray. You never know what miracle God can work for you.

Let’s finish the year with these final reminders to study hard so we can experience the best of times both after and during finals week.

Editors Sleigh Christmas

Andrei Wayne Kyrk Defino, Editor-in-Chief

If I could rank holidays in order of my top five they would be: My Birthday, Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and New Year’s Eve. The only reason why I rank my birthday first is because it comes a few days before Christmas and for some reason my family would only ever give me gifts on one of these occasions. Am I a little bitter about it? Of course not. Okay. Fine. Maybe middle school and angsty high school me would say yes, but now I realize that neither of these days are really about the gifts.

Being Filipino, my family forms into a confusing blob of several Uncle Boy’s, Auntie Iday’s, and cousins with weird nicknames like “Koks, Sash, Lan, and Jing.” For us, this time of the year is now always a chance to go on a new cramped long-drive adventure around North America, enjoy each other’s meals and company, and have the occasional arguments about fundamental beliefs and generational ideologies. Ultimately, the holidays are a chance for me to remember that at the end of the day, I’ve been blessed with this big mess of a loud, nose, extra and large family—both the chosen and the blood.

Scott Moncrieff, Faculty Advisor

Christmas for me means returning to my native “country”: California. It gives me a chance to sit in a traffic jam on the 10 freeway adjacent to Loma Linda as shoppers glut vari-

ous malls on either side and commuters return from LA. I can wake up in the morning and see mountains, go jogging in shorts (awesome in December), visit one of the wild animal parks that my brother supports, and renew ties with in-laws, cousins, and old friends. “But don’t you want a white Christmas?” Some people ask me. Don’t worry: I’ll be back for a white January and February.

Alexi Decker, Copy Editor

Let’s talk about Christmas food, shall we? My grandmother has this amazing/bad-for-my-health tradition of baking absurd amounts of holiday desserts. On any given Christmas, we’ll have tins stacked in the basement full of fudge, peppermint bark, divinities, chocolate chip cookies, coconut macaroons, and generally more food than we could ever hope to eat. Christmas to me means playing hand after hand of pinochle, running downstairs during breaks to bring up more fudge, and going to bed with a stomachache and a smile. It’s more than just the food though—it’s the hours of baking with my Grammie, the evenings trying to convince my dad to have just one more piece of fudge, the time spent with my family. That’s the sweetest gift of all.

Carlyle Tagalog, Pulse Editor

Thanks to moving around different countries so much, my family never had a set Christmas tradition or experience. Back in my child-

hood, I remember feeling enchanted by Philippine parol (star-shaped Christmas ornamental lanterns), watching the TV 100-day countdown to Christmas (I know right), dreaming that ash fall from stubble burnings were snow and singing multilingual Christmas songs in the international school choir. When I lived in Mongolia, I had my first White Christmas. It was great, except the snow was too dry for proper snow angels or snowmen. Obviously, I became more than ecstatic when I experienced my first legitimate white Christmas in Maryland—along with the discovery of snowball fights with my brothers, the Christmas radio, and holiday pies. Today, Christmas for me involves simpler things such as taking annual family photos, playing for Christmas cantata programs and sharing warm drinks next to the crackling bonfire. Although the Christmas spirit has altered now and then, a few things quintessentially remain the same throughout the years: joy, family and the food that connects them both.

Kaitlyn Rigg, Photo Editor

What does Christmas mean to me? It means absolute happiness! It means traveling always to visit my whole family, and I love every second of it. The Christmas spirit brings the out the best in us. I love the food, the soft yellow lights, setting up the Christmas tree and, my favorite, the music. My family always exchanges gifts with one an-

other and we always make sure to hide the stockings. Christmas time is a time to spend with family and to get all the Christmas shopping done. I love wrapping each gift, even though I cannot wrap them for the life of me. Honestly, Christmas-time is the best time and we all have the birth of Jesus to thank for it!

Frentzen Pakpahan, Ideas Editor

Perhaps it was the ninety-degree weather. Perhaps it was the jungle pressing in on the freeway. Perhaps it was lunch at a roadside shack rather than at home. Perhaps it was meeting my paternal grandfather for the first time at his grave. Perhaps it was touring one of the state museums that continues to fuel false ideas about my country’s history. Perhaps it was visiting the hospital where I was born. There was something about being in Indonesia and returning to my roots that made that particular Christmas Day more meaningful than all the snowmen, than all the decorated evergreens, than all the ABC Family movies New Hampshire ever gave me.

Kelly Lorenz, A&E Editor

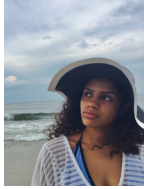
Holiday nostalgia is too strung out for me—there is no good reason to blast the same 12 songs for an entire month, and you don’t need to fill your home with tacky decorations—but I will admit, the best thing about Christmas is the lights. My current hometown has amazing Christmas lights; a yearly tradition converts the biggest park downtown into a glow-

ing beacon. Called Bentleyville, it’s a “Tour of Lights” with its own Wikipedia page. Highlights include: outdoor skating, free hot chocolate and light dinosaurs. Sparkling from a distance, it’s a warm welcome to see from the top of the hill after a ten-hour white-knuckled-snowy drive home.

Lisa Hayden, News Editor

Whenever my household stayed home for Christmas we watched Michael Curtiz’s film: “White Christmas” and ate traditional Jamaican Rum Cake. But for the past 5 Christmases, we’ve traveled to Florida to visit my Grand Aunt who is now 83 years old. Because of this, I’ve missed out on my usual White Christmases at home in Chicago. Now, I look forward to our tradition of setting lights on the large palm trees in the front yard of my Grand Aunt’s house and drinking ice-cold sorrel—with ginger—on her porch. We still gorge on Rum Cake though~

Humans



Adriana
Santana
Humans Editor

AU Christmas Traditions



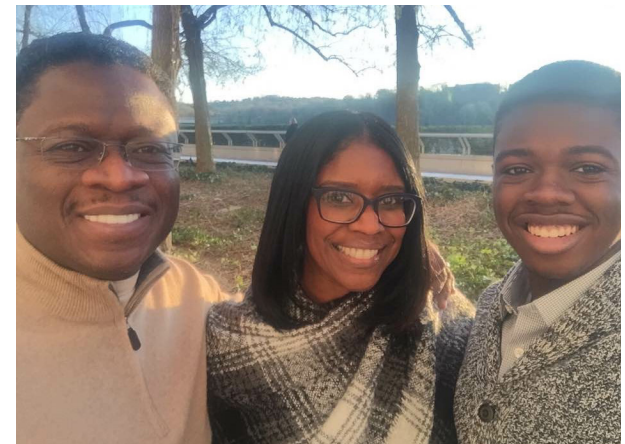
Adriana Santana (sophomore, psychology)

As a child my favorite traditions included: sledding down the big hill down the street from my house, begging my dad to make hot chocolate everyday and tiptoeing into my sister's room early Christmas morning because I was too excited to wait for my parents to wake up. Growing up, I still beg for the hot chocolate every day, but now I have a love for different traditions. We watch as many movies as possible starting with something like *Little Women*, and ending with *It's A Wonderful Life*. The whole break is filled with us rattling off as many movie quotes as we can, and seeing who can guess it first. Since I come from a big Hispanic family, we usually have to split our time with each side for Christmas Eve and Christmas day. On Christmas Eve we spend it with my dad's side of the family, and have a huge family dinner. Afterwards, we'll have a Yankee gift swap which ends in laughs, and sometimes hurt feelings because people didn't get what they originally wanted. Then on Christmas Day we go to the movies with my mom's side and watch a movie we all voted to see. We end the night by going to eat dessert at my aunt's house, and then finally end up at ours to watch the last Christmas movie of the season.



Josiah Everett (freshman, sociology)

My favorite tradition is every year on Christmas Eve, we make christmas cookies and watch *The Christmas Story* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.



Darius Bridges (sophomore, architecture)

Every year before Christmas we watch my family's favorite movies: *It's a Wonderful Life* and *White Christmas*. Also, before we open presents, we read the story of Jesus' birth, and then we go one by one and open gifts—usually starting with my parents. I give my presents last.



Autumn Goodman (sophomore, photography)

A Christmas tradition that we had in my family was every Christmas Eve my dad would go to the dollar store and get fake mustaches, and he would dress up as a chef to pretend to be a French baker. We would also make cookies from scratch for Santa. Another one that we started when I was in high school were videos. My dad was deployed, or away for work for most of my high school experience, so when Christmas came around we were never 100% certain if he would be home so we started making videos (vlogs). So we could update him on the process of getting ready for Christmas in the event that he wouldn't be there that year.

Dr. Liz B. Muhlenbeck (associate professor of management)

I try to spread a bit of the festive spirit all through the month of December. For starters, the Friday after Thanksgiving, I always get the kids some Christmas jammies—the cuddlier the better! Our most cherished tradition is when every Friday night in December leading up to Christmas, we have an Advent vespers at our house. The kids spend the week working on a Christmas piece on the piano, or learning a Christmas poem, or scripture to read. Each week has its own theme of Love, Joy, Hope and Peace. I have a nativity set and each week we add pieces that correspond with our readings and light a candle on our Advent wreath. Since we often travel for Christmas, we have a special "family Christmas" night where we light the last Advent candle, conclude our readings, including the Luke 2:1-20 account of the birth of Christ, and open our presents from each other. Our Advent tradition usually includes a community service project that we do together as a family, from serving at a shelter, participating in an Angel Tree, or sorting food with the Scouts, our kids love to volunteer and spread the Christmas cheer! Santa usually rewards the kids with filled stockings (that were handmade by Grandma) on Christmas morning..

Orlando Hernandez (pre-physical therapy)

We always open gifts at 12:00 am Christmas day, instead of opening them later on in the morning; then afterwards we go to Disney World, and sing.

Maya Nelson (sophomore, social work)

We usually watch all the movies we missed that came out that year during the Christmas break. Also, on Christmas day we go and see whatever movie we want that's in theaters.

Humans

AU Christmas Traditions Continued



Yasmine Siagian (sophomore, psychology pre-medicine)

I'm not sure if this is exactly a Christmas tradition, but every year during the break, my family will go take a short hike in Forest Falls. It's an area in the mountains of San Bernardino, California, and it's the only place close to home that gets snow. So we bundle up, drive out and take lots of pictures.



MariAlexa Holman (sophomore, sociology)

As I've gotten older, coming home for Christmas and plopping down right at the fireplace and taking a nap has become a favorite tradition of mine. My older brother and I both do it like clockwork. Another tradition I love is on Christmas morning we always have homemade cinnamon rolls that we eat while opening gifts. This one isn't a huge thing now, but when we were younger, we'd always wake up at like 5:00 a.m. for Christmas morning. So my parents would let us open and go through our stockings the second we woke up to hold us over until a normal hour when everyone else was up.

Benin Lee (sophomore, political science pre-law)

One of my family's Christmas traditions is to take part in "Angel Tree." It's a program, often put on by different churches, partnered with people to bring gifts to children with one or both parents in jail. A few weeks before Christmas my family would receive the name of a boy or girl, and a list of what they wanted. After everything on the list had been purchased we would wrap up the gift and send it back to the church. Once all the gifts had been collected my church would have a party where the kids could come and pick up their gifts. It was great to see how overjoyed and surprised the kids were to be receiving something from their mom or dad in prison. The kids were excited to know that despite being in prison, their parents still thought of them. My parents did more than just make Christmas special for me and my sister—they taught us to spread the love that the season brings and make Christmas special for other special for others.

Dr. Harvey Burnett (chair, Department of Behavioral Sciences)

When my kids were younger, during the Christmas season we did the typical Christmas activities where we wrapped the presents on Christmas Eve and put them under the tree that night. However the tradition we do that is dearest to me is that every year I used to make cookies for my children. The two kinds I had were oatmeal scotch and chocolate chip cookies, and always an edition of my choice depending on what came to mind.

Tramayne Knowles (senior, speech pathology and audiology)

My favorite Christmas tradition is staying up late on Christmas Eve with my little brother watching all of our favorite Christmas movies: How the Grinch Stole Christmas, The Polar Express and all the Home Alone movies. We also drink so much eggnog, and eat as much chocolate as we can.

Anna Gayle (sophomore, communications)

My family does 12 days of Christmas, so on Christmas Eve we open gifts from our extended family, but then we get a gift from my parents every day from Christmas until New Years.



Scott E. Moncrieff
Faculty Advisor



Marlon Perkins (junior, architecture)

Some of my favorite traditions are making Christmas cookies, and late night IHOP trips on Christmas Eve.

Arts & Entertainment



Kelly Lorenz
Arts &
Entertainment
Editor

How To Get Disowned This Christmas



PHOTO BY PUBLIC DOMAIN

Sarah Mackintosh

Christmas time brings family and friends together in a beautiful way. . . or in a cramped house without much to do because there's a snowstorm outside. On these

occasions my family has several traditions to put into play. We bake together, have a Christmas photo shoot, or play games. One of my family's favorite games is Scrabble. There are score bonuses, such as

"Triple Letter Score" and "Double Word Score," that you can get when your letters fall on that square. If we're at a loss for a word we search obscure ones up on Google or in one of our old dictionaries. I find that it's loads of fun and passes time on a cold Christmas Eve. Get cozy in front of the fireplace and be prepared to have a fantastic time.

David Dunham

When I go home, my family and I love playing games. When we aren't sleeping or catching up, games are our go-to activity. One of our favorite games to play is the classic old board game of Sorry! This pastime is not only one of the simpler games out there, but the stakes get invariably high. Sorry! encompasses the classic "go around the board and win" game model, but also includes quite a bit of luck. You draw cards to determine how far you move around the board,

with some of the numbers being bad such as "go back four spaces" or "teleport to someone else's location." I guess the only downside of this game is the fact that you may end up destroying all of your relationships. Landing on the same space as your opponent can lead to some pretty high tension as you all move around the board. This game takes about forty minutes (the perfect game length in my book), and I can't recommend it enough.

Kelly Lorenz

I avoid board games at all costs—being stuck around a table or huddled on the floor for upwards of forty minutes drawing cards and moving a tiny metal shoe a few squares further on a board is a nightmare of repetitive action. However, my competitive streak runs a mile wide for fast word games. My family's go-to has always been Boggle, a game in

which you build words from letters connected in a random grid. It has everything I look for in a game: speed (each game is limited to a three-minute timer), creativity (finding words other people don't find can be more beneficial than finding the most words), freshness (the combination of letters changes with each round), and I almost always beat my sister.

Holiday Literature: Not Just For Kids



PHOTO BY TAYLOR SCALZO

Adair Kibble | Many people have favorite Christmas movies, but few

have favorite Christmas books. For some reason, you are more likely to see an adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol playing on cable stations than you are likely to come across the book during your holiday festivities. As a result, I have taken a look at a few books set intentionally at Christmas time, to highlight the market of holiday

books that typically caters to children.

The first, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, by E. T. A. Hoffman, gave Tchaikovsky the inspiration for his ballet. If you are a fan of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, published about eighty years later, this whimsical piece of imagination will amuse your inner child in almost exactly the same way. Following the seven-year-old Marie Stahlbaum

one Christmas, the book's plot centers around her fascination with her favorite Christmas present, a little wooden nutcracker. Though her parents of course do not believe her, she becomes involved in a war between the mice who live in the walls of her house and the dolls the night after Christmas Eve. Unwavering in her affections for the Nutcracker and his involvement in the doll world, she learns the political intrigues of the doll and mouse world. Eventually she finds love and acceptance in bringing peace to them by helping the Nutcracker in his efforts to subdue the Mouse King antagonist.

Next on the list, meant for a slightly older audience, one of the most renowned young adult authors, John Green, teams up with Maureen Johnson and Lauren Myracle to write three short stories. The book traces the events taking place in the small American city called Gracetown, after an unexpected snowstorm affects three different groups of teenagers differently.

Written by Maureen Johnson, the first story, "The Jubilee Express," describes the journey of high schooler Jubilee, forced to spend Christmas without her family after her train crashes in Gracetown on

the way to Florida at night. After the train passengers wind up journeying to a Waffle House to sit out the delay, Jubilee meets a friendly local boy who graciously invites her to his house in light of her situation. The rest of the story involves her learning more about him and his family, and finding Christmas in the oddest of circumstances.

Then the next story, "The Cheertastic Christmas Miracle" by John Green, follows a trio of friends on a hilarious trip to the same Waffle House, which goes awry when they crash their car and must trudge for miles at night avoiding bullies and the cold. When Tobin finds himself developing feelings for his friend Angie, the story takes yet another turn.

Finally, the story written by Lauren Myracle, "The Patron Saint of Pigs," concerns itself with Addie, a local barista, and her attempts to reflect on her life and reconnect with her friends and her estranged boyfriend. She ponders all of this while finding a pig the size of a teacup to give to her friend Tegan on Christmas morning. A humorous and touching book, all three stories bring out the best in the YA genre with heartfelt scenes and three nuanced protagonists.

One of the few Christmas books

decidedly for adults, *The Christmas Shoes* by Donna VanLiere brings the holiday spirit to a more mature audience. Based on a well-known tune released in 2000 by the Christian group NewSong, the book expands the moment of the song: a man giving a young boy enough money to buy nice shoes for his dying mother for Christmas. Creating a dichotomy between a wealthy couple, the Laytons, and the lower income family, the Andrews, VanLiere explores the moral center of Christmas, the significance of maintaining relationships, and what those mean for the goal of life.

Though not a literary masterpiece by any stretch, due to its plodding narration and obnoxious moralizing at times, the novel tries to bring the reader's mind to a sentimental embrace of the holiday. Clearly, the genre of Christmas books needs new talent beyond the audience of children, but if you enjoy books for a younger audience, there are some that merit a place on your list this year.

Arts & Entertainment

Anthem Lit

Kelsey Rook | On Nov. 19, community members and students stuffed into the nearly sold out Howard Performing Arts Center (HPAC) to see Christian contemporary and cover group Anthem Lights perform. The stage was dimly lit, with a backdrop of white triangles that caught changing colors of lights throughout the performance, already creating a more modern feel than the classical concerts I've seen at the HPAC.

The members of Anthem Lights finally filed onto stage—Caleb Grimm followed by Spencer Kane, the newest member, then Joey Stamper and Chad Graham. They started off the concert immediately with their “Best of 2014 Medley,” a mashup of Ariana Grande’s

“Problem,” Charlie XCX’s “Boom Clap,” and several other songs from the year. It was an appropriate start to the evening as Anthem Lights is best known for their yearly pop hit mashups.

Anthem Lights proceeded with a Justin Bieber medley, followed by their most popular original, “Top of the World”. They then sang a cover of “Just the Way You Are”, inviting an audience member to come sing along. Next was Anthem Lights’s “Best of 2016 Medley”, a clever combination of 21 Pilots’ “Stressed Out”, Lukas Graham’s “7 Years,” and several other melodies. The audience was invited to get up and dance with a Taylor Swift melody, and when Anthem Lights moved into “Shake It Off,” they invited two

audience members to come up and have a quick dance-off. All in good fun, the audience cheered loudly for each dancer and even participated from their rows.

Continuing the “Best of” trend, the group continued with their 2012 mashup, followed by a slower, more romantic original, “Automatic Love.” They kept things calm for a little longer, singing a medley of several familiar hymns. The band transitioned into a worshipful segment, playing a K-LOVE Christian contemporary mashup and then a slow worship song, “Can’t Get Over You,” inviting the audience to sing along.

While the rest of the band set up for the remaining songs, Spencer Kane threw the audience for a loop

by telling several jokes—cringey for some, very humorous for others.

For example, he asked the audience, “Have you ever tried to eat a clock?” An enthusiastic audience member shouting out, “Yeah, it’s time consuming!” to which Kane insisted, “Hey, that’s my joke!”

Anthem Lights performed one more medley before announcing that they were coming to their last song, and the audience groaned. Caleb Grimm stated that he wanted the audience to leave feeling empowered, and the group closed with the audience clapping to their cover of Katy Perry’s “Roar.” Halfway through the song they transitioned into “Eye of the Tiger”, showcasing Chad Graham’s

incredibly powerful high notes and runs. The concert ended very abruptly, leaving the audience to line up to meet and take pictures with the members of Anthem Lights.

I haven’t listened to Anthem Lights’s music a ton, but I’ve definitely heard it before and they performed excellently live. Chad Graham stuck out to me because of his numerous powerful high notes, and although some of his singing seemed a bit breathy, his stronger notes were phenomenal. All of the other members performed well too, each holding the group together in their own way. I would highly recommend Anthem Lights for its unique blend of Christian contemporary, original pop songs, and cover medleys.



PHOTO BY JONOTHAN LOGAN

The Worst Thing Since Sliced Bread

Natalie Hwang | Hallmark movies are, at most, a staple of the Christmas season. They are drawn out plots, often accompanied by weak acting and cheesy romances. Whether watched for the overwhelmingly clichéd plots, predictable titles, or entirely white casts, the made-for-TV movies consistently rake in a disturbing amount of money. Every Christmas season, Hallmark television channel produces approximately thirty movies, each a derivative and/or variation of the same plot.

Boy meets girl, usually both are middle aged, and one is engaged. They fall in love despite circumstances x, y and z keeping them apart, and the spirit of Christmas solves every struggle they encounter. If they are both single, one hates the other, but after relentless pursuit by the

other person, they fall in love in an incomprehensibly small amount of time.

Nevertheless, I watched *Murder She Baked: A Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder*. Not for the redundant title, but because it sounded the most interesting out of a long list of Hallmark movies, most with the following format applied: “A x for Christmas.” Here, x could equal anything from “bride” or “boyfriend” to “grandpa,” or even “crown.”

The basic plot falls into the latter of the two categories of Hallmark movies. The protagonist is a fumbling Alison Sweeney as Hannah Swensen, a baker in a small town with a surprisingly high murder rate. Throughout the movie, Sweeney’s character is reinforced to almost ridiculous levels. Not only does she bring baked goods of some

sort everywhere she goes, but she wins the heart of her love interest through her passion for baking. Her character’s entire charisma comes from the fact that she is a baker, and furthermore, but otherwise does not like typical “girl” things. In a glaringly knockoff version of feminism, Hallmark presents Hannah Swensen as a tomboy who enjoys baking—a smart woman who knows she belongs in the kitchen. Basically, she is a Baker™ and the audience must be reminded of that in every scene, or the entire plot would crumble.

When she finds her best friend’s dead body in a van, Sweeney embarks on a thrilling journey to find the real killer, who the sexist and dense local detective would never find without her help. But Sweeney’s help is unwanted (because she is a Female Baker) and she has to fall

back on her own dawdling attempts to solve the murder mystery.

At times, the dialogue feels like a parody of itself, another hot take on the Hallmark movie genre. During an especially tense scene, right after Sweeney has a complete breakdown with glycerine tears shining on her face, she hears a knock on her door. Armed with a rolling pin, she peers cautiously out the window, yelling, “Who is it?” “Your mother!” comes the unexpectedly abrupt reply. After the sigh of relief, the mother and daughter have a talk about Hannah’s love life, as her mother is typically obsessed with her daughter’s love life. Consequently, *Murder She Baked* does not pass the Bechdel test. At all. However, Hannah eventually prevails, as all Hallmark protagonists do, and I found myself surprisingly comforted by the end of

the movie.

The main appeal of Hallmark movies is, in my opinion, their standard cookie-cutter shape. What would life be without the assurance that everything will be alright in the end? Despite its many flaws, *Murder She Baked* was tolerable, and at parts, even watchable. If you enjoy the camp movie genre, Hallmark movies may be for you. And if you enjoy watching white, straight people fall in love, Hallmark movies are definitely for you. They remind us that baking is not an extinct profession, and most importantly, as Hannah Swensen should have said, that “a life without love is only half baked.”

The Last Word



Alexi Decker
Copy Editor

The Treason of the Season

Christmas in my house is the most wonderful time of the year in every way. We bake copious amounts of sugar, deck the halls and the rooms and the trees outside with lights, put out a (frankly ridiculously large) collection of Christmas-themed snow globes and listen to nothing except Christmas music from the day after Thanksgiving to midnight on Dec. 25. Upon visiting my home during the holidays for the first time, a friend leaned over to me and whispered, “Why is everything so festive?”

I didn’t know what to tell her, really—except that Christmas for us had always been a kind of miracle, a time when anything could happen. As a kid, I used to sneak out of bed and pitter-patter down the hallway just to see the Christmas tree, glowing with a thousand lights, sparkling with a hundred ornaments. I would stand there, hushed, just outside the circle of light and breathe deeply as if I could somehow inhale the enchantment that filled the room. Christmas always felt like a time of miracles, yes, but the kind that came in dreams and angel whispers, not the kind shouted from the housetops. But I’ve found that Christmases

aren’t what they used to be. Dinners are dodgy—I have to navigate minefields in political conversations, ignore my grandfather’s occasionally sexist remarks, stress over spending money on the perfect gift. I find myself looking for the magic—for the way I felt when I found the Barbie I’d been wanting all year underneath brightly colored wrapping. I want to be that little girl again, slipping out from under warm covers to bask in the living room light. I don’t want to become jaded, but I watch myself each year, unwrapping socks and new boots and gift cards to bookstores because my family doesn’t want to accidentally choose a book I’ve already read, and I watch my wonder fade.

I know, I know, I’m starting to sound like Dickens’s Ebenezer Scrooge, yelling “Bah, humbug!” at children in the street. But Scrooge got his Christmas miracle. And I think that if the ghosts of Christmases past, present and future were to visit me tonight, I’d tell them to back off until I’ve finished finals. Bah humbug indeed.

So then maybe it isn’t Christmas’s fault. Maybe it’s mine.

Nostalgia is a heady drug. It repaints my past, smooths out the flaws and the hardships, bathes everything in a rosy glow. And I think I’m particularly susceptible to its siren call. I’ve always had a penchant to live more in the past than in the present, to analyze and re-analyze my memories for hidden meanings and clues towards my future. And if there were meetings for Romantics Anonymous, well, I’d be the first one there.

The more I romanticize the past, however, the more I criticize the present. “Why is everything so festive?” my friend asks, but I find myself asking it, too—why is everything so festive, when we’ve all done the same thing a hundred times and I already know what’s under the tree for me because I really need a new coat, and when our comfortable middle-class life hardly has room for wonder, much less miracles? Why do we still pretend that Santa fills the stockings? Why do we still make-believe that Christmas is about anything other than spending money and getting time off? We’re all adults now—and Christmas is never going to measure up to its past.

But then, does it really have to?

Maybe I don’t slip out of bed to soak in the Christmas tree lights anymore—but maybe that’s because my family stays up late playing pinochle and eating fudge, our laughter warm enough to heat the whole house. Maybe I don’t look forward to gifts under the tree in the same way I used to—because I’ve found that what I need isn’t always what I want. Maybe I occasionally have a hard time with dinner conversations because I’ve come into my own and I know what I believe. If growing up means asking why things are so festive, means recognizing that my family is flawed and the Christmas holiday is over-commercialized, and learning to love them still—well, isn’t that what the season is about, anyway? Expecting Christmas to still be the same would be like expecting me to be the same—and I’m not a child anymore. I don’t want to be.



Thank you for your readership. We hope you enjoy the holidays!

Cheers,
The SM Team

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