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The Advent Conspiracy: The most wonderful time of the year

LAURA SPOELSTRA

It's that time of year again. There's holiday music pumping over the radio, long lines in every department store, and eggnog has made its return to the shelves of your local grocery store. It's the season to be jolly; Christmas, and all that goes with it, is officially here. So, in light of that good news, let's take a quick quiz to kick off this holiday season:

1. What was the first Christmas present you opened last year?
2. How about the fourth?
3. What did you get that you didn't even ask for?
4. On a scale of one to ten, how stressed did your family get during the meal and get-together preparations?
5. How much money was spent on gifts, food, and other Christmas related items?

Let's review. Personally, I have no idea what I opened first, let alone fourth. I'm sure I got more than a few things that I didn't ask for, but I can't remember what they were, or exactly what I had asked for in the first place. Christmas is always somewhat stressful, from the big family gatherings to hustling everyone off to church in time on Christmas morning. And while I don't know just how much money my family spent last Christmas, I do know that the average Canadian spent just over \$1300 last holiday season. I also know that most of this money came from credit cards and that there are articles dedicated to helping people pay off their Christmas debt.

I don't know about you, but I found this to be a little unsettling. When I really thought about it, my Christmas didn't have too much to do with the real reason behind it: the birth of Jesus, my Saviour. Without consciously realising it, I'd been caught up in the Christmas frenzy that our culture loves so much. Now, don't get me wrong here; I'm not a jaded, fist-shaking, Scrooge type. I love Christmas and everything that goes with it. Decorating the Christmas tree, eating candy canes, and singing Christmas songs are things that I always look forward to. But it's time to find a way to make sure that all the aspects of Christmas are lining up with where it came from.

A few years ago, a couple of churches started a movement called "The Advent Conspiracy." They boiled their Christmas ideas down into these four main goals: worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. The first, primary goal is to make sure that Jesus is our focus. The beginning of God's ultimate love-promise being fulfilled, the birth of his son, is something so crazy and radical that it should be the centre

of our celebrations. We need to worship through the Christmas season, whatever form that takes.

As for spending less, that doesn't mean you don't give gifts in the name of saving money. Rather, it means giving things that are meaningful. Giving a friend a hat you've knitted for her in her favourite colour, taking your little brother out for a day where you let him make all the calls; these are the gifts that have memory attached, and aren't forgotten once the wrapping's been torn off.

The third goal, give more, may seem to contradict the one right before it. But giving doesn't necessarily mean spending; time is a gift in and of itself. And when it comes to giving of yourself, no one did it better than Jesus. He knew how valuable it was to sit down and eat with people, listen to their problems, and help in whatever way he could. So don't let holiday preparations eat up all your time. Hang out with friends and family. Volunteer at a food drive or a soup kitchen. You can give as many presents as you want, but if you only ever spend money--and not time--what your money might get isn't going to mean very much.

This ties into the last idea of loving everyone. The gift of Jesus extends beyond your friends and family; it reaches out and covers the world in its entirety. So why limit that to such a narrow view? Fill a shoebox with gifts for children who would never be able to afford them. Send warm clothes and blankets to a homeless shelter. Buy a few chickens for a farmer in the Third World. Lastly, model a Christ-like attitude when you're out with the holiday masses this Christmas season. Holding a door for someone, greeting them with a smile and a "Merry Christmas!" is a sharp and welcome contrast to the stressed out business of a commercial driven Christmas.

We all want Christmas to be meaningful, a time of relaxation, of family and friends, and, most importantly, a time to honour and celebrate the birth of Jesus, the ultimate gift. My goal this holiday season is to take time to make every gift I give meaningful. For me, that means literally making most of what I am giving, or tweaking certain gifts to give them a personal flair. It also means making sure that the money saved by not overspending goes to a charity of my choice. I'm not saying that what I'm doing is a good fit for everyone's Christmas experience, but if this article struck a chord with you let me extend my personal challenge to you as well. Let's turn Christmas on its head this year. Give more, spend less, and keep love central. That sounds like a winning formula to me.



Contributed Images

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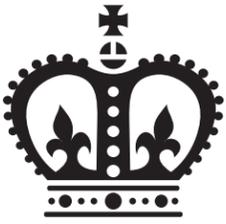


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The real meaning of Christmas

MICHAEL EMMANUEL

Christmas is coming, and that means controversy. Controversy, because our secular culture doesn't like to be reminded that its "holiday season" has explicit Christian roots and explicit Christian meanings. Today's secular culture would rather pretend "the holidays" are a time when man can create meaning outside of God. It's times like these that always remind me that the only meaning in anything comes from God. Yet, to the secularist, this immediately raises the debate over God's existence.

How can we resolve the debate? There seems to be compelling arguments on both sides, but can we leave it at that? Imagine a hunter in a dark forest with a target in his bow's range. This hunter has compelling reasons to believe he is aiming at a deer, but equally compelling reasons to believe he is aiming at a man. Should he take the shot? I think we would all agree: no—at least not until he resolved the issue. God's existence is a far more important issue than this hunter's dilemma. It decides everything man is to believe about knowledge, reality, and morality.

Let's assume that the debate cannot be resolved. What then? If our hunter could not resolve his dilemma, should he take a shot in the dark? The cost of shooting a man outweighs the gain from shooting a deer. Conversely, the gain of sparing a life indefinitely outweighs the cost of losing some game. Our hunter should not shoot. Similarly, regarding the debate over God's existence, the cost of eternal damnation far outweighs the gain of... nothing, while the gain of eternal paradise far outweighs the cost of... again nothing. If the debate cannot be resolved God's existence is the more rational option. That was Pascal's wager. Still the discussion cannot end here, especially considering that many say the debate has been resolved. It would be foolish and cowardly to disregard their claims.

Some atheists claim all of the arguments put forward in defense of God's existence have failed. Let's assume they are correct. Should we relinquish our belief in God? No. In fact believing in God is still the better choice. Nobody can show that there are no arguments for God's existence. Only an omniscient being could. Atheists can only deal with the ones they know of. And if all the ones they know of fail, that still leaves a potential infinite amount of arguments that don't. Atheists must have faith that there are no other arguments. Yet this faith could be mistaken. We're still up against Pascal's wager and the cost of being wrong still outweighs any possible gain. Like our hunter in the forest, it's still dark. It

would be unwise to shoot.

Yet now God has been reduced to an unfalsifiable claim. While there may very well be no argument against him, there is no plausible evidence in favor of him. He's no more real than celestial teapots floating between Saturn and Jupiter or invisible pink unicorns, to reference some of the analogies made by Dawkins and his ilk. Once again, I'll indulge your attention and ask that we assume that this is true. If we have to choose between "reality" and God, the unfalsifiable claim, guess what? God is still the best choice.

Most unfalsifiable claims don't have any real impact on life. Assume invisible pink unicorns exist. What would change? Assume celestial teapots exist. How would our lives be different? Assume God exists. Suddenly life rearranges. God is the only unfalsifiable claim that has this impact. Any other unfalsifiable claim that came with a cost or gain like God would have to be God because God is the only infinite being.

In any case, God is the only being who can bring meaning to anything, especially Christmas, whether he exists or not. Supposing he doesn't, what could possibly bring meaning to Christmas? Our secular culture hides behind connotation words like togetherness, giving, and peace. But what is togetherness if not a representation of our relationship to Christ? What is giving except the giving of thanks to Him who gave us everything? What is peace except the gospel of Christ's birth and death? Unless you can suppose a deity of some kind, you cannot have meaning. In corollary, why celebrate Christmas unless you suppose any God but our own?

I'm always reminded of Puddleglum in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*, who, when he was presented with the option of choosing Aslan and Narnia against his strongest reasoning or choosing the so-called reality of the green witch and her underworld, said this:

"Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things... Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one... I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia... it's a small loss if the world's as dull a place as you say."

Assume God doesn't exist, and it's still better to live life as if he did. Peace on earth means nothing without the Prince of Peace Himself.

Earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes - Oh my: Coming to terms with natural disasters

LEAH SCHEITEL
THE CAPILANO COURIER
(CAPILANO UNIVERSITY)

NORTH VANCOUVER (CUP) — With the recent earthquakes on the West Coast and superstorms in the east, the world is starting to look like the set of an apocalyptic Steven Spielberg movie. While climate change may be one of the major culprits behind the increase of hurricanes and tropical storms, it has no effect on earthquakes and volcanoes, or disasters made by the earth rather than the atmosphere. Even though hurricanes are unrelated to earthquakes, and Vancouver's potential for natural disasters is totally different than New York's, witnessing disaster in another urban centre can be alarming nonetheless. If such a big, powerful city that personifies modern urbanity can be the site of such ruin, how might the rest of the world look when the plates are shifting under our feet? Taken together with the recent coastal earthquakes, these catastrophes have people wondering what the cause is, if they'll become more frequent, and how they might change what our urban futures look like.

Storms on steroids
The warming of the planet does have effects on the weather and climate, and as Simon Donner, a climate scientist and UBC professor, explains, humans have a direct effect on global warming.

"The difference between climate and the weather is basically statistics. Weather is like the noise and climate is like the signal. If we add up enough weather events and look at how they occur over time, we might notice that the climate is changing because more weather events of a certain trend are occurring — and so if we study that for long enough, we might have statistics that change."

Donner says that the connection between climate change and hurricanes will never be direct; therefore global warming can never be fully blamed for the increase in hurricanes.

"We're never going to be able to say that 'This storm was caused by climate change.' But we can say that these storms are expected to be more common in a warmer future," Donner explains. "We can also zoom in on what a storm does, and say 'Wow, those impacts are probably worse because of climate change.' With the example of Hurricane Sandy, if the same hurricane had struck New York and New Jersey at the exact same point in the tidal cycle — same high tide, same time of the month, same time of the year — 100 years ago, the storm would have been smaller."

Another factor in the rise of hurricanes is the fact that today's technologically evolved society is noticing storms more than in previous times.

"Whoa it seems like there are a lot of

storms,' is influenced by what we hear about. We might hear about more storms now because there is more media now than there was in the past," says Donner. "One of the challenges in trying to say, 'Are hurricanes becoming more common?' is that 80 years ago, if a hurricane formed and never struck land, no one would know ... these days there are satellites monitoring all of this stuff, so we know."

Changing climate change
Climate does have an effect on the intensity of hurricanes, and humans have a direct effect on climate change and the progression of global warming. These "superstorms" are causing people to look at global warming in a more serious manner. In a National Geographic article, scientist Christopher Landsea said that our growing population alone is reason for concern.

"When you double some vulnerable populations every 20 to 30 years, that's what's going to cause disasters. We've got a huge problem, even if hurricanes don't change at all," Landsea told National Geographic. But there are steps individual people can take to lower their impact on the environment. Donner says that there are three main ways for a person to take action against climate change: Professionally, politically, and personally.

"I think the most important thing to recognize [is] that this is a problem, that for the most part, [this] generation... did not start. It started a long time ago. But ... this generation is largely going to be tasked with solving it," he says.

"Another [thing] that could reduce emissions would be looking at what you eat. A bigger thing than where it comes from, is what you actually eat ... how much energy went into producing it," he continues. "One of the biggest things you could do is to eat less meat every week because it takes a lot more energy to grow crops to feed one animal than it does to grow crops to feed people. You're pulling one step out. I'm not advocating for vegetarianism, I'm just saying that if you want to reduce greenhouse gas emission from your daily life, driving less or driving more efficiently and eating differently are probably the biggest things you could do."

One of the bigger points Donner makes is that young people don't have to become climate scientists or activists to have a positive effect on the climate. Protecting the climate can be brought, in some kind of aspect, to every profession available.

"If you think of any profession that you go into... you can focus your work in that profession on addressing climate change. The fact is that they'll all need to contribute," he says. "If you think about it, that is what the world is certainly going to need. Not to create a profession of climate activists or sustainability professionals, but sort

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A Beer Market Goes Untapped



BEN REID
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Imagine knowing everything you know about food and only eating Kraft Dinner everyday. Seems silly doesn't it? If we don't do this with our food, why on earth do we do it with our beer? Ontario is home to a bustling and growing craft beer industry filled with micro-breweries and brewers that are constantly innovating and perfecting beer, and yet many beer drinkers still opt for the low quality Molson Canadian, Coors Light, or one of the plethora of other mediocre beers out there. While these beers are good every once in a while there is a huge market that is going untapped.

Micro-breweries are simply small-scale breweries operating under a certain threshold which varies from country to country. They are often dedicated to producing high-quality products and experimenting to develop new ones. Within the last 20 years micro-breweries have become much more popular.

The greater Hamilton area is home to a growing micro-brewery. Nickel Brook Brewery sits just off the 403 in Burlington. Nickel Brook currently brews more than 10 different beers. (However, many beers are seasonal and are only produced in small batches, thus the real number is somewhere between 15-20.)

Many micro-breweries focus on fresh and local ingredients. These beers are naturally carbonated and are generally free from preservatives. When is the last time you noticed an expiry date on your Canadian or Bud? Probably not too often. Large breweries pump their beers full of preservatives and other chemicals to make their beer last longer. In fact, a ten-year-old case of Canadian is just as clear as the day you bought it a decade ago.

So why have we been settling for less? The beer market is extremely competitive and is largely controlled by the big players like Anheuser-Busch and Molson, which control almost everything about the beer industry including shelf space. Marketing dollars are big in the beer industry; without

them you often get shoved, out which is making it difficult for micro-breweries to make a name for themselves.

So next time you head to the LCBO or The Beer Store, I encourage you to try something new. Try something from a smaller independent brewery. You might be surprised how good it tastes. Here are my suggestions for over the Christmas break:

Muskoka Winter Beard -Double Chocolate Cranberry Stout (Lakes of Muskoka Cottage Brewery): 8%; rich and sturdy with roasted dark chocolate malts, real cocoa, 70% dark chocolate, and freshly harvested local cranberries.

Black Oak Nut Brown Ale (Black Oak Brewing Company): 5%; favourite enjoyed in winter or year round, this satisfying and robust Nut Brown Ale will pleasantly surprise you.

Stock Ale (Mill Street Brewery): 5%; you'll detect a light aroma of hops and taste a light malt flavour in perfect balance with hop bitterness.

Hobgoblin (Wychwood Brewery): 5.2%; Traditionally craft brewed with chocolate & crystal malts

and a blend of Styrian, Goldings & Fuggles hops to produce a full-bodied, ruby beer that delivers a delicious chocolate toffee malt flavour, balanced with a rounded moderate bitterness and an overall fruity, mischievous character.

Spark House Red Ale (Lake of Bays Brewing Company): 5%; Spark House gets its deep mahogany hue and distinctive taste from a unique blend of domestic and European hops and dark-roasted speciality malts.

Premium Organic Lager (Nickel Brook Brewery): 5%; Brewed using only premium, certified organic malts and hops. The result is a full-flavoured lager, copper in colour, which is balanced with classic German hops.



LIVE IN THE CITY: WHAT'S ON IN HAMILTON: OCTOBER 2012

The Casbah

Forgotten Rebels End-of-Year Bash. Saturday, December 8, 2012.

Cold Specks. Sunday, December 9, 2012.

Monster Truck. Thursday, December 20, 2012.

4th Annual JR Digs Acoustic Christmas. Sunday, December 23, 2012

8th Annual Young Rival Boxing Day Bash. Wednesday, December 26, 2012

Hamilton Place

Shatner's World: We Just Live In It. Saturday, December 8, 2012. 2:00PM and 8:00PM

Canadian Orpheus Male Choir. Friday, December 14, 2012. 8:00PM

Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra: HPO Gala. Saturday, December 15, 2012. 7:30PM

Colm Wilkinson. Tuesday, December 18, 2012. 8:00 PM

Stuart McLean Vinyl Café Christmas. Wednesday, December 19, 2012. 7:00 PM

Molson Canadian Studio at Hamilton Place

Rik Emmett with Dave Dunlop. Saturday, December 8, 2012. 8:00 PM

The Trews. Thursday, December 13 & Friday, December 14, 2012. 9:00 PM

Jason McCoy. Thursday, December 20, 2012. 8:00 PM

Steel City Rovers. Friday, December 21, 2012. 8:00 PM

Hamilton Convention Centre

The Sheepdogs w/ Yukon Blonde. Thursday, December 6, 2012.

Copps Coliseum

Jeff Dunham. Friday, December 7, 2012. 8:00 PM

Alexisonfire w/ Moneen. Sunday, December 30, 2012. 7:30PM

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The Commuters Lounge: To Sit or Not to Sit?

BECKY CONNELL
CROWN REPORTER

Commuters. They're that group of people you see in the lounge above the main stairs whom you may or may not know. Often loud and frequently playing chess, the lounge has served its purpose by creating an environment where commuters can socialize between classes and relate with tales of off-campus experiences. The commuter's board is often pegged with notifications and invitations to commuter-exclusive events. But it wasn't always this way...

Over the last couple of years, the popularity of the commuter's lounge has grown exponentially. I remember the dust-ball quietness of this very same lounge in my first year; a place where I would go to nap in between classes if I was too lazy to walk to my dorm (because let's be real, those couches are pretty comfy!). Now there is rarely a free space in the lounge, let alone a quiet spot to sleep. Even fellow commuters feel the same way. "I don't use the commuter's lounge. It's always packed with people and it's too loud to get work done," says fourth-year student Ashley Cameron who doesn't mind the commute. "It's nice to go home at the end of the day."

While the community of commuters certainly is strong, it seems almost impenetrable to the outsider. Funny, isn't it? For years it seemed that commuters hid in the shadows or their buddy dorm. Now there is an obvious group of commuter students who have claimed the lounge (rightfully so), but who often remain apart from the rest of the school. Just as commuters once had a hard time socializing with on-campus students, it seems that on-campus students now face the same problem with commuters.

Some commuters have shared the difficulties of making friends with on-campus students because they miss a large portion of social events, whereas others have had an easy time being integrated into the school or creating their own off-campus social activities.

One student commented, "I didn't find it hard to make friends but that's because I am outgoing. I had to make

the initiative to meet people."

So how can we bridge this on-campus/off-campus divide? Certainly we are not all going to become the best of friends with one another but, if Redeemer is truly to pride itself on making everyone feel a part of the community, the community should not be a place which fosters segregation.

The commuter's lounge has many

benefits for the off-campus student. It is a place to socialize, relax, and eat between classes. However, if this becomes the only place students find themselves, how will they meet other on-campus students? And what are on-campus students doing to be inclusive?

I offer no ready answers but rather hope to prod thought with these ques-

tions. If we are to celebrate being an inclusive community, let's consider how we can make that possible.

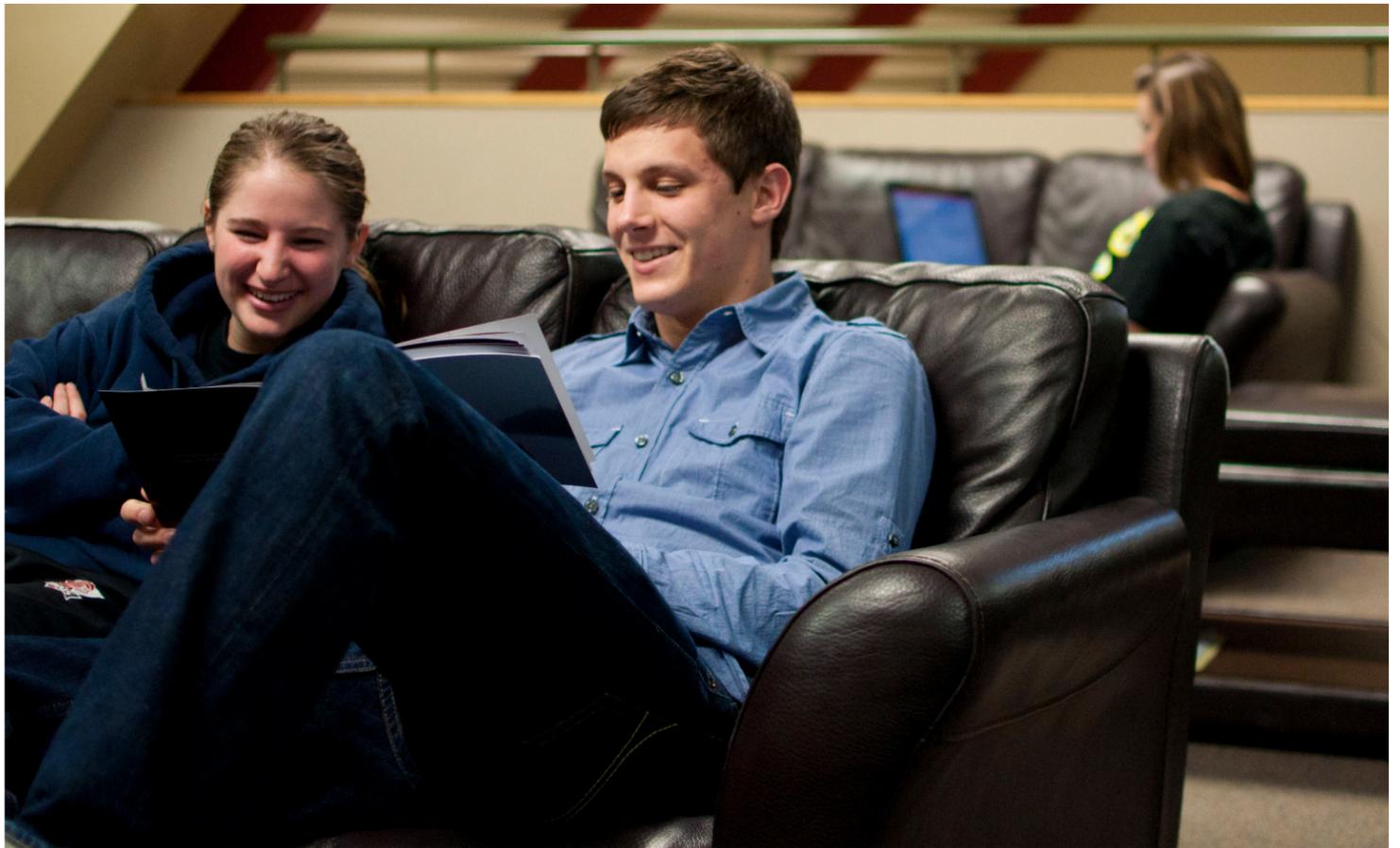


Photo by Ben Reid

Academic Symposium for Redeemer Students

BEN FABER

Not many students know that Dr. Deborah Bowen, from our highly esteemed English department, has been honoured by the Association of Reformed Colleges and Universities (ARCU) to be its lecturer for the year. Only the best and brightest are awarded this privilege, as Redeemer well knows: Dr. James Payton, from our highly esteemed History department, was ARCU's lecturer in 2009.

Dr. Bowen will be bringing two of her ARCU talks to Redeemer on January 23, 2013. We've decided to make this day a genuine celebration of academic teaching and learning at Redeemer, beginning with the chapel service and ending with an evening lecture. Dr. Bowen's message in chapel will relate our acts of worship to our calling as faculty, students and staff at a Christian liberal arts and sciences university. Her lecture in the evening will open up the rich possibilities of metaphor as a way of connecting our academic disciplines to the world at large.

Nestled between the chapel address and the evening lecture will be a multi-session symposium, "The World and

Our Calling," featuring presentations by students from across the disciplines on work related to the day's theme: interpreting our world. This symposium will start just after lunch and will finish with communal meal, with sessions slotted to fit our class schedule. Student presenters will be invited to have supper together with guests of the conference in the Executive Dining Room. Not only will students have the thrill of sharing their work, showcasing their research among friends, and padding their resumes and CVs—they will get a free meal. Served on tablecloths!

But we need your submissions. If you are working on a paper or project this semester that you're especially excited about (and that fits the theme of the day), ask your professor whether you should consider submitting it for the symposium. Students who are potentially interested in graduate studies would really benefit from the experience of submitting a paper, having it accepted, preparing it for presentation, and then participating in the symposium. We have set the deadline for submissions as late as possible (January 4, 2013) in order to include even the very-end-of-semester assign-

ments. We hope to select presentations and inform students by January 14.

Any questions? Send me an email (bfaber@redeemer.ca), drop by my office (239-B), or accost me in the hall. Submit completed papers electronically to Ellen Hallman in the Academic Office (ehallman@redeemer.ca) before January 4, 2013.

Unsung Heros of Redeemer

This Month: Irene Vanderlaan



Irene Vanderlaan has been selected as this month's Unsung Hero as she has been a support for many students and has served as an integral member of the Redeemer community for years. She has been an especial blessing to those who have had the pleasure of working janitorial/ custodial positions with her.

Irene is an exemplary character who offers a friendly face and a listening ear.

She has had numerous students nominate her for this title as she has caught the minds and hearts of many through her patience, love and humility.

Thank you Irene!

Obama pushback

BEN GOODWIN

The night the remnant of Hurricane Sandy hit Ontario, I left a rugby practice in the dead of night and went to work. The hurricane, as weak as it was this far inland, dropped trees onto roads and power lines; as an experienced arborist I was called in to run an emergency clean-up crew. I spent the whole night in the vicious wind and driving, sideways rain opening the roads and turning the power back on and keeping this country moving. Unfortunately, the hours I spent in defence of Canadian infrastructure coupled with a bottleneck of due dates in multiple classes meant that I didn't have time to write an American election article for The Crown, which I'd done in previous months.

I didn't tell that story to brag or to make excuses for not covering the election like I promised Ben Reid I would. I don't see it as particularly important that people acknowledge my role as the shadowy stalwart protector of Canadian society, always guarding against the ever-looming menace of...trees. I bring it up because I wanted to make the point that I write from a position of strength. When I was younger, I worked hard and learned a trade, and now I have money. I am not on the receiving end of any government money transfers (not even student loans) and in any honest application of the one-dimensional conservative way of assessing the value of human beings, I would be deemed a "maker" rather than a "taker." I favour the policies of people like Barack Obama not because I have a vested interest in seeing the expansion of social programs that conservatives seem to so despise. I don't use those programs. I pay for them. I support Obama because I believe that we as a society should pull together and take care of those people among us who need help, and I believe he was the best-suited election candidate for that job.

What I believe that help should look like and why I feel it's unlikely to come willingly from the private sector is beyond the scope of this article. This article is about last month's Crown, which, in lieu of the election article I never wrote, featured a wild anti-Obama rant by Michael Emmanuel. Disclaimer: I like Michael Emmanuel. He and I played rugby together and he's an upstanding young man. However, I think his article, peppered with points taken straight from Glenn Beck and other conservative American talk radio hosts, plays fast and loose with the truth. I don't see him as the purveyor of all this misinformation about Obama. I see him as a victim of it, and that's almost more of a problem.

I don't intend to do a full rebuttal of every point Emmanuel brings up. Many of the things he says are so un-specific that they can't be confirmed or denied. The ones that are specific are often contradictory or have long been refuted. However, a quick glance at a few of the most problematic points he makes is useful: The "bust of Churchill" rumour Emmanuel cites as evidence that Obama treats his allies with antipathy is truth-stretching. The real story there is that the White House had two Churchill busts prior to 2009. One was a gift from the British in the 1960s, and one was on loan to George W. Bush. When Obama was inaugurated, all of the art loaned specifically to Bush, including the Churchill bust, was sent back to its respective owners by White House

staff, as is the procedure at the end of every presidency. The other Churchill bust still sits on display at the White House and there's no real excuse for claiming otherwise given that it takes about 15 seconds to verify this via Google. More serious is the article's outright lie about nuclear weapons, which has Emmanuel claiming the Soviet Union is increasing their stockpiles. As it happens, the Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore. If you have to verify that via Google, you probably have some deeper issues that need attention.

While the truth-stretching is disappointing, the apparent lack of understanding of what Emmanuel wants from Obama is confusing. First he bemoans the President's failure to support democracy in Iran and then complains about his lack of support for the undemocratic Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

For all his highfalutin legal language, Emmanuel should probably know that guilt by association doesn't hold up in court. If he does, it didn't stop him from trotting out the same tired old tinfoil-hat insinuations that Obama is somehow a bad president because of things Bill Ayers did when Obama was six years old or things Jeremiah Wright said from his pulpit. In the case of his former pastor, Obama directly and thoroughly addressed the issue in a campaign speech titled "A More Perfect Union" which ought to be required viewing for American history classes as it was key in getting him elected in 2008.

That's right, 2008. Obama has won two elections since these supposedly shady associations were brought to light. It's been two elections, four years of Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly screaming into television cameras about how America is going to end up forsaken and destroyed, three years of the Tea Party demanding that Obama keep his government hands off Medicare, two years of a borderline-crazy US House of Representatives refusing to cooperate with anything Barack Obama did, one year of the most negative and needlessly personal election campaign ever, and despite all that, it's now been one month since the world learned that Barack Obama will serve another term in the White House.

The American people must have an extraordinary ability to resist propaganda. Those who don't and end up falling victim to the slick presentation and logically deficient ramblings of somebody like Glenn Beck are victims and, in a democracy, they threaten to make victims of all of us. Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Fox News, and their Canadian equivalents at Sun News represent everything that is wrong with the political process. I don't have a comprehensive solution for all the trouble they've caused, but I do intend to outline some social changes that put limits on the extremism they broadcast.

Strengthen and enforce legal requirements for truth in media and reserve the "opinion loophole" for actual opinion.

There's an old saying about freedom of speech: it doesn't include the right to yell "fire" in a crowded theatre. Unless of course there's actually a fire. Extrapolate that and you have something like "freedom of speech does not protect the right to use false information to cause needless panic." If there was legislation that said that, the right wing media would be fined into the ground for keeping people up at night worrying about America's Kenyan Muslim President who's going to let the Soviet Union nuke everything into the ground. Unfor-

Continued on page 12

Coming to terms with natural disasters

continued from page 2



✶ KIRA CAMPBELL

of bring it into whatever they do."

Quake headache

Monitoring earthquakes proves to be much more difficult than monitoring storm systems and hurricanes. Because of how the guts of the earth move and shift to cause the earthquakes, science has yet to find a way to successfully predict the phenomenon. "Climate change, hurricanes... earthquakes, and volcanoes are energized by different sources. So the climate [and] things like hurricanes, all that has to do ultimately with energy that comes from the sun," explains Michael Bostock, a professor and earthquake seismologist at UBC. "Earthquakes and volcanoes are generated through energy that come from deep in the earth that basically is the residual heat from Earth's early formation." Climate change has nothing to do with the movement of the earth or the shifting of the plate tectonics that cause the earthquakes. And because the shifting happens under the earth's surface, it makes it difficult for scientists to know what's happening, and to warn people about potential earthquakes.

"At the present time, the best we can do is forecast. There is a difference between prediction and forecasting. Forecasting is sort of a longer-term thing and we can use our knowledge of seismicity in the past to say something about how likely the occurrence of earthquakes is going to be into the future.

"But predicting things into the daily or weekly basis is going to be very difficult. And the main reason is that it's very hard to. Unlike the atmosphere, which we can probe easily with satellites ... which allows us to predict weather a week in advance, the earth is much harder to penetrate for obvious reasons ... So the prospect for being able to predict earthquakes, at least in the short term, is not very good."

Not being able to effectively predict earthquakes can be detrimental to a community, as seen recently with the 7.7 earthquake that shook Haida Gwaii, B.C. in October.

"There was no warning before the quake hit," says Cherie Kalhofer, who lives in nearby Masset. "It was kind of wild - it felt like the room was swaying around, just like the plates below us in the ocean below us are said to do during an earthquake."

Although there were warning sirens and officials were trying to notify as many citizens about the ongoing earthquake, Kalhofer and her husband didn't hear the warnings because they live on the outskirts of town.

"My mom came over. She said that the police were driving around telling everybody to get out of town. She wondered why they weren't bothering with us," she continues, "I said 'I guess we don't matter.'"

The earthquake first shook the island around 8 p.m. PST, but it wasn't until three hours later that Kalhofer heard any official warning.

"I was watching the news and at 11:20 p.m. I noticed flashing lights outside. It was a police car who sounded its siren a couple of times. I stood at the window looking at the car wondering what it was expecting me to do. Then I thought 'Well I guess we do matter,'" she explains. "Two minutes later the news said that our earthquake warning had been lowered to an alert."

In the days after the earthquake in Haida Gwaii, many people questioned the province's ability to warn people of the after dangers, such as tsunamis, and how prepared B.C. actually is in the event of a catastrophe. According to CBC News: "Emergency Information B.C. issued its first tsunami warning on Twitter at 8:55 p.m. - long after the news stations had already begun reporting on the earthquake, and local civic leaders had begun evacuations based on the U.S. alerts."

Yet the province stands by its warning procedure. As premier Christy Clark said to CBC News: "If there are things to learn, then we'll go back and look at them, but here's the thing: no one was hurt, no one was injured. The system worked."

While no one was injured, this earthquake raised concerns about what will happen if an earthquake were to hit a more populated urban centre, such as Vancouver.

Can-quakes

Canada's own urban centre, Vancouver, has long been rumoured to be due for an earthquake, and Bostock explains that it's not a question of if it will happen, but when.

"It is inevitable. We know that they have occurred in the past, roughly every 550 years. It's not so regular that we can say we know when it's going to happen again because sometimes it's happened as frequently as every 300 years," he explains. "Sometimes it's been 800 years before these large earthquakes and the last one was actually 300 years ago. That tells you that we should be on our toes as far as being prepared for the consequences of an earthquake. It might not happen until our grandkids are older, but it might occur tomorrow."

Earthquakes, generally speaking, are the side effects of the core of the planet cooling down.

"Earth as a planet is gradually cooling. That transfer of heat from the deep earth to the surface is what gives rise to volcanoes and earthquakes, and eventually, deep into the future, gradually the earth will cool to the point where all those [processes] cease," says Bostock. "So Earth will eventually become a dead planet, but for the next few hundreds of millions, if not

billions, of years there will continue to be earthquakes."

One thing that both Bostock and Donner agree upon is that the geographical placement of Vancouver protects it from dangers such as hurricanes and tsunamis.

"You're never going to have a tropical cyclone in Vancouver, it's virtually impossible," says Donner. "We're too far north, and they don't generate on our side of the Pacific. It just wouldn't happen. So we're not at threat of hurricane Sandy ever happening if you live here."

Bostock says that Vancouver is protected from tsunamis because of Vancouver Island. "In Vancouver, because you're sheltered via the Strait of Juan de Fuca, by the time a major tsunami makes its way into the inland waters of the Georgia Strait its amplitudes are going to be diminished fairly dramatically," he explains. "Even if you get a 10-metre tsunami, like the kind we've been exposed to from the recent Japanese earthquake, even if it's off the West Coast by the time it moves into the inland waterways, it's not likely to be more than a metre or so."

Earthquake education

The City of Vancouver wants its residents to be ready for disasters, especially earthquakes, as they are the most prominent concern in this geographical region. To accomplish this, they offer free emergency preparedness seminars.

Jackie Kloosterboer is an emergency planning coordinator for the City of Vancouver, and she says that people need to be more aware of what to do in an emergency situation.

"We offer free sessions on emergency preparedness, and sometimes they're very lowly attended," she says. The sessions focus on "what you can do to be prepared at home, at work, and for your family. Teaching people what to do when an earthquake hits."

Kloosterboer believes that more residents are under-prepared because they haven't really experienced the trauma of a disaster - yet.

"I think people have become complacent. I think for a lot of us, you know, we have never felt a major earthquake here. We may have felt the odd small one, but we've never had a significant earthquake and we just don't think about it like we should."

"People are busy. They've got other things going on."

Fortunately, earthquakes and disasters in other areas act as a reminder for people in Vancouver. After the recent quake in Haida Gwaii, the demand for and attendance to the emergency preparedness seminars has increased.

"We notice that after every earthquake or after every event, that people do become aware of it, and our class numbers definitely go up," comments Kloosterboer.

Natural disaster can be devastating to any community, as seen in such recent examples as Japan, New Orleans and Thailand. If these, and the recent earthquake closer to home, can teach Canada anything, it's that a little education and being prepared can go a long way.



Christmas Recipes

An open letter to all-christmas music radio stations

Spending time over the holidays with friends and family? Enjoy these delicious recipes on a cold night or a snowy day over the break!

Chocolate Caramel Bars

Ingredients

For The Crust:

Heaping ½ cup butter
¼ cup brown sugar
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt

For The Chocolate Caramel:

2 cups milk chocolate, chopped
1 ½ cups sugar
¼ cup water
6 tablespoons butter
1 cup heavy cream
½ teaspoon salt

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Make the crust: Line a 9-inch square baking pan with parchment; butter parchment. Beat butter and brown sugar together until pale and fluffy. Add flour and table salt, and beat until just combined.
- Press dough evenly into pan and bake until lightly browned, about 30 minutes.
- Make the chocolate caramel: Place chocolate in a medium bowl. Heat granulated sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until amber, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat. Add butter, cream, and table salt. Bring to a boil, stirring until smooth. Pour over chocolate. Let stand for 2 minutes. Stir to combine, and let stand until cool, about 10 minutes.
- Pour mixture over crust. Refrigerate at least 4 hours, or overnight. Run a knife around edges; lift parchment to remove whole bar from pan. Cut into bars.

Hot Cranberry Apple Cider

Ingredients:

8 cups apple cider
6 cups cranberry juice
¼ cup brown sugar
4 cinnamon sticks
1 ½ teaspoons cloves
1 sliced lemon

Directions:

In a large pot, combine all the ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat once boiling and let simmer for 15-20 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove the cloves, cinnamon sticks, and lemons. Serve hot and enjoy!

JULIA SODERHOLM CROWN REPORTER

Dear All-Christmas-Music-Radio-Stations,

I'll admit I was upset when you disappeared after New Year's last year. I thought I could trust you; when I turned on the radio, I counted on you to be there. No matter the time or the place, you showed up, and that meant something. Sure, your sweetness was occasionally punctured by the odd advertisement, but still—we were a team! And then you disappear for ten months? What was I supposed to think when, idly changing stations around mid-November, I stumbled across you again? Waltzing back onto the airwaves all unannounced and as peppy as ever?

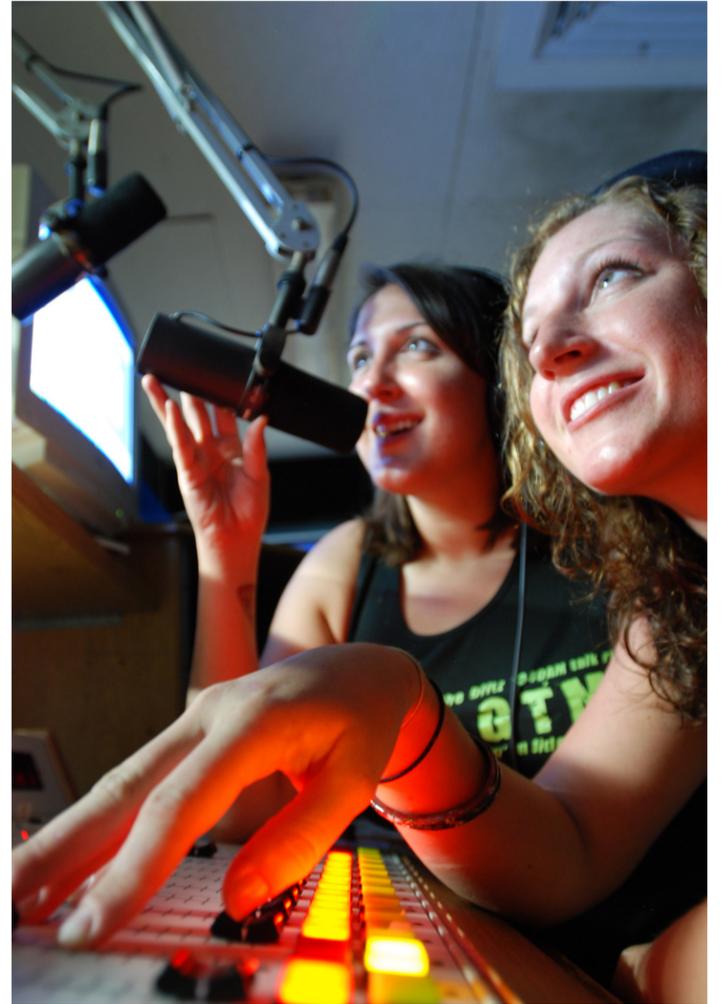
The thing is you always did know how to make the season bright starting from an inappropriately early date. I can pretend all I want that I prefer those clever indie artists and their weirdly ironic Christmas songs, but nothing compares to the feeling I get when the velvety tones of Josh Groban or Faith Hill's breathy rendition of Cindy Lou Who's personal anthem come floating through the car speakers. Sufjan Stevens can keep his cheeky rhymes and quirky renditions of the classics. Give me power chords! Give me gospel choirs!! Give me another version of "O Holy Night" that erupts into violent orchestral swells

on that second round of the chorus! If there was ever a time for a song to be covered by both The Indigo Girls and Cascada, it's Christmas time!

I hate how well you still know me: "Christmas Shoes"? "All I Want for Christmas"? That song from Love Actually that somehow makes it onto legitimate Christmas albums? You know all my weaknesses. From well-crafted synth solos on 80's renditions of "Silent Night" to those modern classics that never fail to make us ask, "Why?" (Read "Last Christmas" by George Michael), you always know how to choose the best music to usher in the Christmas spirit. It's enough to have me crawling back, year after year, mitten'd hand reluctantly turning the tuning dial every time I get in a car.

You and I both know how this will end. I'll get attached too quickly, I'll try to pick up right where we left off, pretend like nothing happened. We'll spend hours singing together, driving around the snowy streets, looking at everyone's Christmas lights the way we used to. But come January, it'll be the same old story. Alone again, with nothing but the dregs of the 2012 Top 40 to keep me company. You can keep Michael Buble and that Taylor Swift Christmas song that will inevitably come out and clobber all the other chart-toppers. This year, I'm making a CD.

Merry Christmas!
Julia



Contributed Image

Weird Holiday Traditions

BECKY CONNELL CROWN REPORTER

Bored of your holiday traditions? Looking for a globally aware, creative way to celebrate this Christmas? Forget hot chocolate, Santa Clause, and Christmas trees; read on to discover some of the world's most interesting and bizarre holiday traditions.

- If you fear gremlin-like creatures chasing and beating you up, well, you better ensure you have made Santa's nice list this year. In Austria (and sometimes Germany), Krampus, Santa's evil twin, is feared for his violence as he emerges every Christmas season to find and beat misbehaved children. On December 5th, men—who are often drunk—dress up in creepy, sinister costumes and run the streets hitting people with sticks.

- Why bother with a Christmas roast when you can have Kentucky Fried Chicken? In Japan, KFC has been so well marketed that it has become a common Christmas meal. In fact, it is so popular that some KFCs require a reservation on Christmas Day.

- If you are sick of Christmas trees, you will love cago tio! In Catalonia, children sing a song around a log decorated with a silly, cartoonish face and hit it with sticks on Christmas Day. Once the song is over, cago tio (meaning "defecating log") poops out presents and a blanket is uncovered to reveal magical gifts! I bet your tree doesn't poop out such surprises.

- Norwegians believe that evil spirits and witches attack heavily on Christmas Eve, so they place broomsticks against their front doors to protect

themselves. Let's hope there are no witches in need of a ride home or good luck cleaning up after Christmas without a broom.

- And now it's time to address North America's latest and potentially creepiest Christmas tradition: "Elf on the Shelf." An observer of this tradition promises to watch children throughout the month of December and report to Santa with a list of who has been naughty or nice. In other words, our consumer market has found a way to manipulate kids into good behaviour throughout the holiday season. Nothing says Christmas spirit like "that wide-eyed snickering elf is watching you!"

HOLIDAY SPECIAL

THECROWN.CA | DECEMBER 2012



Contributed Image

Christmas Tree Conundrum: The Angel or the Star?



Contributed Image

BECKY CONNELL
CROWN REPORTER

You've spent hours in the cold, white wilderness searching for the perfect tree: a fresh, sharp pine with a strong, sturdy base, and of large but transportable size. You casually take out your saw and cut the tree down. A single drop of sweat runs down your forehead but you continue to saw until that tree is yours, patting it gently as it slightly moans at your victory. You drag the tree to a waiting truck and tie it on top, crafting each knot with the utmost delicacy until you are sure it is safe to journey home with you. Excited, you bring your beautiful and well-selected Christmas addition to your home with the help of your high-spirited family. Or you effortlessly carry your well-kept plastic tree from the basement to the living room. Either way, it is time to put on some Christmas music, drink some eggnog, and decorate your tree.

Once the tree is shining with lights

and shimmering with tinsel the real holiday issue begins. It's time to choose what gets to go on top of the tree: the angel or the star?

Historically, the angel and star both represent the Nativity story. The angel is symbolic of the angels present at Christ's birth and is placed at the top of the tree to point to closeness with God. The star also originates from Christ's birth story as it was the star of Bethlehem that guided the three wise men to Jesus.

When students were asked which tree decoration they chose, the consensus seemed a fairly even split: "I choose the angel because it is a representative between humans and God. It's something everyone can relate to unlike the star. Not everyone saw the star of Bethlehem. If they did, the three wise men wouldn't have been the only ones to follow it" says Michelle Coghill. Dan Best, Redeemer alumni, takes a more literal approach for those who use the star instead of the angel: "I feel like putting a star on your tree is

like saying 'happy holidays'."

So have the star and the angel lost their original symbolism?

Nowadays the tree topper chosen is often rooted in visual preference but for some there is only one choice. My landlord was very firm in his choice of using the star and said: "Biblically, angels have typically been described as intimidating and male, not a soft-looking woman in a dress."

However, most are not quite as passionate. Some students say that they have opted to be democratic and switch between the star and the angel each year.

Whichever you choose this Christmas season I am sure the angels will continue to sing from high and the star will remain a guide at night.

A Victorian Christmas at Dundurn Castle

BECKY CONNELL
CROWN REPORTER

On Saturday, November 24th, Dundurn Castle opened its doors with a free tour to kick off its Victorian-style Christmas season, and there is plenty still to come.

Dundurn Castle is a national historical site, well-known for being owned between 1798 and 1862 by Sir Allan Napier Macnab. Completed by 1855, Dundurn (meaning "strong fort") was built by English architect Robert Wetherall as a Regency style villa, and was nicknamed "castle" by local Hamilton residents for its beauty and grandeur. Today, the house is maintained according to Victorian style and guided tours are available. Dundurn remains one of Hamilton's historical treasures and is particularly popular during the Christmas season because of its Victorian festivities.

During the holiday kick-off tour, excited guests lined up in the early winter frost for tickets, determined to enter the wreath-and-bow-filled Victorian home before it was too busy.

In the entrance, a grand staircase wrapped in garlands and bows greeted its visitors, making it easy to imagine what Christmas at the Macnab's must have been like. Victorian-dressed men and women scurried throughout the home, fulfilling their household duties and barely noticing the modern-dressed tourists taking pictures with their iPhones. In a place such as Dundurn, it is easy to imagine oneself as Lady Mary Crawley of Downton Abby, roaming the halls of the grand building in boredom, desiring scandal.

This free tour kicked off the Christmas season at Dundurn, as the castle offers various celebrations throughout the month of December. Dundurn Castle is currently offering evening tours. "Little Angels" is a popular holiday indulgence where guests can enjoy baking Victorian treats in the dimly-lit downstairs kitchen of the castle. If you have more of a craving for a roast than sweets, enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner served in the excessive dining room of the house. No New Years plans? You can party like it's 1855 at Dundurn, with music, an extended tour of the castle, and a sampling of assorted holiday treats, all for \$22.

If you're interested in baking your own Victorian treat try this recipe:

Christmas Plum Pudding

Note: You will need an 8 cup pudding container (a round metal bowl, a cover, steamer basket trivet or rack)

and a roomy soup kettle. Count on steaming pudding for at least 6 hours

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups Crumbs from good-quality white bread, lightly packed (about 1/2 loaf)

1 cup each of raisins, yellow raisins, currants chopped

1 1/3 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon each of mace cinnamon & nutmeg

8 oz butter melted

4 large eggs, lightly beaten

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

1/2 cup bitter orange marmalade

FOR SERVING:

1/2 cup rum or bourbon, heated slightly before serving

2 cups zabaione sauce

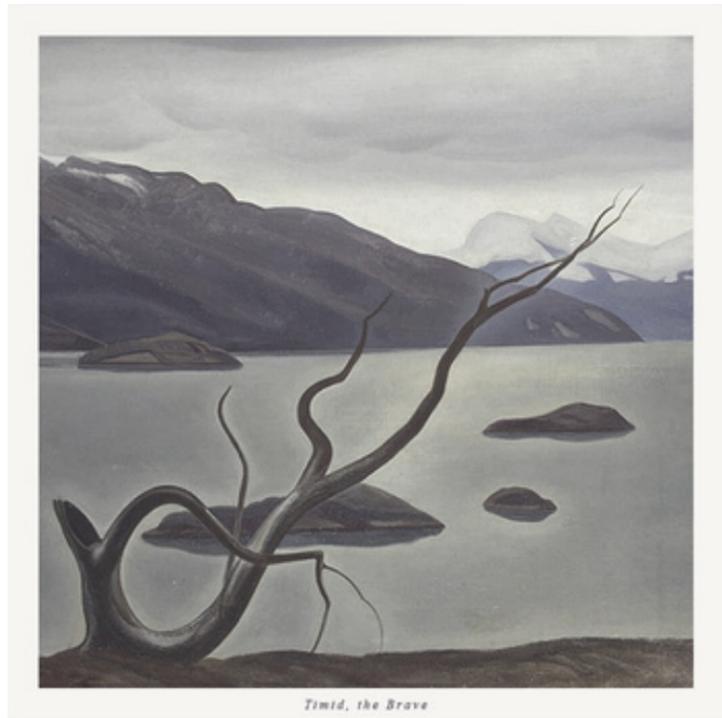
Holly sprigs to garnish (optional)

Toss the crumbs in a large mixing bowl along with the two types of raisins, currants, sugar, and spices. Then toss with the melted butter and all remaining ingredients except for the holly, rum/bourbon, and zabaione. Taste for seasoning and add more if needed. Pack mixture into the container and cover with round of wax paper and lid. Set the container on steaming device and add enough water to come up 1/3 up the sides of pudding container. Cover kettle tightly, bring to a simmer, and let steam for 6 hours, checking water level now and then. Pudding is done when dark walnut brown in color and fairly firm to touch. Let pudding cool and then store in a wine cellar or fridge. At least two hours before serving resteam the pudding. Unmold onto a hot, flameproof serving platter and decorate with the holly. Bring to table along with the warmed booze and pour booze around pudding. Ignite and let flame. Serve with the zabaione.

Here is the recipe for Plum Pudding taken from "The American Domestic Cook Book For 1868"

Plum Pudding - Take half a pound of flour, half a pound of raisins, stoned and chopped, and some currants washed picked and dried; use milk enough to stir easily with a spoon; add half a pound of suet chopped fine, a teaspoonful of salt, and four well beaten eggs; tie it in a floured cloth, and boil four hours. The water must boil when you put it in, and continue boiling until it is done. <http://www.biblicalquality.com/Christmas7.html>

Album review: Timid, the Brave



SIMON FALLON

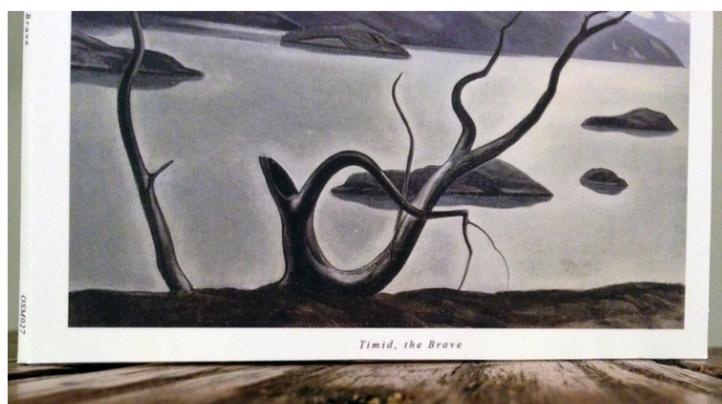
Timid, the Brave. With a name that folds in on itself like a wave, the self-titled album from local artist (and Redeemer Grad) Tim Selles was released earlier in November and, judging by the sophistication of the song writing and the undeniable soul-searching that the listener is forced to partake in along with Selles, it is clear that this has been a musical work-in-progress for quite some time. Those who have been staying up to date with Ontario singer/songwriter subculture will remember Selles from the trio Bruekke that drew heaps of attention from lovers of thoughtful lyrics and songs that made you feel like you were conceived and raised in a forest somewhere around Thunder Bay.

This new musical work from Selles is a thing set apart from his Bruekke days. One song that many Redeemites will remember is the tune "My Wolves" which Tim performed in 2010 at an infamous coffeehouse. The song is tried and true in his repertoire, but there is a new life given to it. A more gritty, dirt-under-the-nails kind

of life, but life nonetheless. The songs throughout the album are not only a story, they're a personal journey.

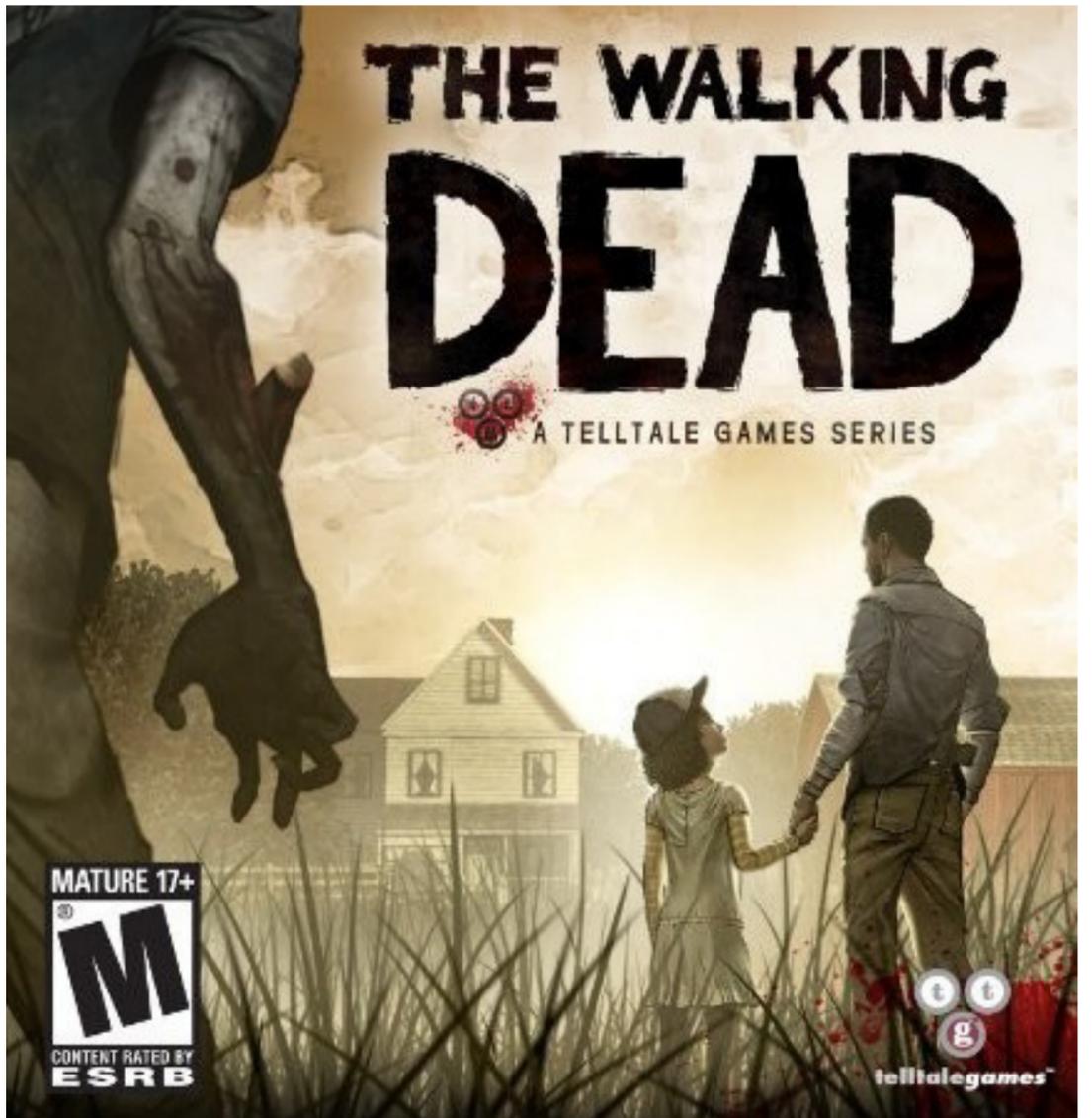
It's difficult to talk about faith and even more difficult to talk about faith struggles in communities that are populated primarily with people that have been born and raised into a lifestyle of faith. Selles' album is an avenue for those who have found faith to reflect on their walk and to see the beauty and despair that are enmeshed into each aspect. The musical structure and narrative of the story lets us walk the banks of a river, ponder in ancient oak church pews and ultimately leaves us with the taste of hope dancing on our tongues.

A digital copy of the CD can be picked up at <http://shop.thersongs-music.com/> or off of iTunes Canada where *Timid, the Brave* was featured on the songwriters page. If you want to hear some tracks off of the album performed live head down to Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton, located on James Street north this Saturday, December the 8th, at 8pm.



Photos from Other Songs Music Co.

We are the Walking Dead



Contributed Image

JARED VANHUIZEN

In terms of fictional portrayals of the zombie apocalypse, *The Walking Dead* is one of the more real-feeling universes. For those who don't know, *The Walking Dead* is all about characters trying to survive in an increasingly harsh and depressing world, one where nearly everyone has become a zombie. No one is safe from torment, not only because of the zombies but also because they must deal with other survivors in the world. While some of you might be familiar with the TV show or even the comics, there is another facet of *The Walking Dead* franchise that deserves attention. Telltale Games' *The Walking Dead* (\$24.99 on Steam, Xbox 360 and Playstation 3, Rated Mature) is an adventure game, split up into a series of 5 'episodes' that compose a whole season, with each taking about 2 hours to complete. It's easy enough that someone who doesn't play many games will have no trouble with it, but it still offers something to regular gamers.

The game focuses on a separate group of survivors, not Rick Grimes from the comics. You play as Lee Everett, a man who finds himself on his way to prison at the start of the series. Why he's going to prison becomes clear as you play the game, but it doesn't take long before Lee finds himself a free man, and one of the few remaining humans in an apocalypse. He soon encounters a young eight-year-old girl, Clementine. Her parents were on vacation when the zombie apocalypse began, so she's home alone. Her babysitter has... well, it wouldn't take a genius to figure out what happened to her. So Lee takes on the role of caring for Clementine, as both of them have little understanding of what is going on and are both alone.

Throughout the game you control Lee from a third person perspective, interacting with the environment,

solving some light puzzles, and talking with people. The game contains a dialogue system, where you can pick what you want to say to other people. You have options in how you treat others, and it will be reflected in turn by how they treat you. For example, do you tell people the truth, that you were on your way to prison and that you just happened to come across Clementine and become her guardian, or do you lie to avoid a tough conversation and potentially losing the trust of those around you? That's only the tip of the iceberg in terms of your relationships with the many characters you meet over the course of the game.

The world of *The Walking Dead* is unflinching in its portrayal of the world. People will die, and every action you make has consequences which sometimes do not become apparent for a long time. However, by the end of the 5 episodes you will have a reckoning for all you have done. You are presented with many choices throughout the series, but it almost never boils down to picking either the good or the bad option. A choice I feel is wrong will be rationally explained by someone else. In some places you have to choose who you will attempt to rescue out of two people in danger, but not all decisions are quite so binary. For example in the second episode you are given four pieces of food to feed your entire group of men, women, and children which totals 10 people. Making sure the children are fed might seem like a no-brainer but divvying up the rest of the food among the other survivors isn't so easy. *The Walking Dead* is all about your decisions and how the characters in your group react to what you've done. Someone might not die of starvation if they don't eat, but who you choose to feed affects the group's opinion of you. These characters all feel like real, multi-faceted human beings, Clementine especially. The game doesn't trick you into caring about Clementine by constantly plac-

ing her in harm's way; Telltale Games simply made her a believable girl that you can't help wanting to do anything in your power to protect.

While I was playing the game my natural tendency to straddle the fence was manifested in many of Lee's own traits. He always wanted to delay the conflict, avoid picking a side, and to tell both sides to calm down and figure things out. I thought that this would leave me in good standing on both sides of each conflict but I learned the hard way that if you don't have someone's back, they aren't going to have yours when the going gets tough. By the end of my game Lee had been through so much, and it was eating him up inside. When called on some of the bad decisions I had made, I could not defend myself; I could only express regret for what I had done, and wish that I had been able to do it differently. This is the real strength of the game, that I could feel these same emotions of regret and remorse that Lee was feeling as well. I'm not ashamed to say that the finale did cause me to shed tears. His choices don't often affect the overall plot of the story, but in a situation where almost everyone has become a zombie there really wouldn't be much you could do to change the circumstances you're in.

I can't say enough good things about this game. If you are at all interested in *The Walking Dead* or if you're a fan of interactive storytelling of the highest quality, *The Walking Dead* is a powerful, mature experience that demands to be played and talked about. It is easily the best game I've played all year, and a great showcase for what games should strive for in terms of story.

Fall Senior Art Exhibition 2012



Photos by Ben Reid

LAURA HEMING

American poet, Ezra Pound once stated, "Humanity is the rich effluvia, it is the waste and the soil, and from it grows the tree of the arts." It is the downfalls, the questioning, and the everyday revelations that make up the skeleton of truth-speaking art. The connections drawn between human concepts and human tendencies is rich and is uniquely able to create a bond between artist and audience. With a collaboration of reflections upon the meaning of Christian wealth and a celebration of relational life, the displays of *In God we trust* by Jenna Bos and *Comb* by Julia Soderholm dig from the concepts of this rich human exhalation of which Pound speaks.

On December 8th, at 8pm, Jenna and Julia will be displaying their final art projects in a Senior Art Exhibit in the Redeemer Art Gallery. Here, they will debut their pieces with the music of Miniver Sail accompanying them. In *In God we trust*, the first interactive piece done at a Redeemer student exhibition, is based upon the concept of Christian wealth. With sliding panels displaying gender-desire contrast, this piece highlights concepts based on German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of lifting the veil of sublimity (a reflection for those who would use an aesthetic to hide the selfish intentions of a person). A parallel is drawn between Nietzsche's concept and the prayer life of a Christian. Each piece will include the metaphor

of a cup, representing the middle-class tendency to continually ask God for more in sheer ignorance of our wealth—in all senses of the word.

Comb is a mixed-media celebration of relational life between families and the richness of tradition. The motif of a honeycomb is incorporated through each piece, drawing ties between all that a honeycomb has the potential to represent and human connection. The analogy draws upon the fact that our stories have many layers, and that our memories—and those of our relatives—are smaller parts that contribute to something greater. Human colonies tend to echo the same geometric symmetry of a hive. These pieces inspire questions regarding the strength of family, friend and community relationships and their potential to reverberate in the colony life of the bee. *Comb* was inspired by artists including Sabrina Ward Harrison, Aganetha Dyck and Michael Borremans.

This night of reflection on aspects of the human condition that are typically bypassed anticipates a rich renewal of the Christian ideology of true wealth and the importance of human relation. It is a display of the human state of brokenness as well as of connection.



Corb Lund's case of cabin fever inspires new album

MEGHAN O'NEIL
THE AQUINIAN
ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

FREDERICTON (CUP) — Corb Lund spent weeks at a time in the woods during the dead of winter before he released his newest album, *Cabin Fever*. The album is a much-anticipated follow up to 2009's *Losin' Lately Gambler*.

The Alberta-based country singer blames lack of time for the delay in releasing his seventh studio album. "I get ideas on the road and I record them but I don't have a whole lot of time to sit down and flush them out." Lund spoke over the phone from his seat in a New York cab on the way to the airport. After playing shows in the United States, Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans started their cross-country tour in Halifax last Friday. *Cabin Fever* was the product of spending many nights in a desolate cabin in the woods an hour outside Edmonton. Even though the cabin was remote, Lund didn't have trouble finding inspiration.

"To be honest, it doesn't matter where I am as long as I have room to myself it doesn't really make a difference," said Lund.

Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans are known for their out of the norm

country sound. They appeal to rockers and traditional honky-tonk fans. Their sound can't be categorized, nor can their fans. According to Lund's website, the band's listeners range from "goth girls to survivalists."

This makes sense when hearing how Lund developed his interest in music. Growing up, Lund was in a rock band and slowly began melding this genre with western music from his roots. When he began incorporating more country into his sound, Lund said he lost some fans but gained a lot more. "I liked both [genres]. I did both at the same time. It wasn't really a cold turkey kind of thing. Some of the older rock fans followed me over too." His family embraced Lund's music career when it took a turn towards the west. They supported his rock band, but were pleased when twang began creeping into his songs.

"My family is kind of cattle people and I grew up with that kind of thing, so yeah... My folks didn't like it but they were surprisingly supportive. Rural themes and western music they really liked."

Lund had built the cabin with his girlfriend and uncle from spruce and poplar trees. Since its completion, his relationship with his girlfriend of thirteen years ended and his uncle passed away. Influenced by his loss, darker themes crept their way into

Lund's latest album.

"I like dark themes, I guess. I don't know, I didn't really do it on purpose. We had an illness and deaths in the family and a couple of break-ups," said Lund.

Lund admits to contracting a case of cabin fever himself from spending so much time within those four walls.

This led to the album's name.

"You kind of get weirded out. I did a lot of writing there, so it seemed...

fitting. It's pretty fun to be all the way out there alone."



Contributed Image

Rucking Right

BEN GOODWIN

On November 17, the Redeemer Rugby teams played a double-header against Mohawk College. First on deck was the womens' game, with Redeemer going in as the underdog after suffering defeat by a large margin in the hands of Mohawk earlier in the year. Insurance issues dictated that the women could only play two games this year, so their second game against Mohawk was their only chance to vindicate themselves—not just against the Mountaineers, but against anyone.

They women found vindication. They didn't win, but their tough play was exponentially better than their first game. Rachael Loney, player/coach of the team, attributes this to an increased level of player involvement: "we had a commitment meeting early in the year. It got pretty intense, basically we said you're in or you're out." Apparently not ones to be lukewarm, the girls decided to be in, and the Mohawk game showed it. They won rucks and scrums, ran hard onto the ball, and generally gave the well-developed and experienced Mohawk team a fiercely competitive game that almost nobody expected. Nobody except perhaps the girls themselves.

According to Loney, the season wasn't about the scoreboard. "Women's rugby is different than men's. It's more about community and watching the girls grow together." Smiling, Loney tells a story about a quiet science student who joined last year. "She used to be all quiet and shy, now she's right in there, yelling and screaming and running into people. Seeing that change has been a lot of fun." It would seem rugby is just like any other activity at Redeemer, where people grow closer with friends and help each other grow. Rugby is better though, because you get to run really fast and crash into people.

The Mens' Rugby team faced off against Mohawk in the second game of the double header. Like the women, the men were winless going into the game, but they had been able to secure insurance and had played three games up to that point, all against GTA rugby

clubs. The Redeemer team welcomed the chance to play against students, having discovered that club rugby is generally the domain of European and South African immigrants who've been playing rugby since they could walk. Oh, and unlike Redeemer, club teams are made up of full grown men. An example that effectively illustrates the struggle Redeemer faced: the Oakville Crusaders' Rugby Club had a total of 140 years of rugby experience in their front three (the three players at the front of the scrums). Our front three had a total of 71 years of being alive. The sense of relief at not having to play a highly experienced team of full grown men was palatable in the Redeemer dressing room before the game.

Mohawk came out aggressively in the first half, treating Redeemer to the most desperate and violent game we'd ever played. The first half went by quickly and somewhat indecisively, with Mohawk scoring two unconverted tries and Redeemer's Chris Fothergill answering back with one that Luke McKee was able to convert for an extra point.

The second half swung in Redeemer's favor, with PJ Buys and Justin Roberts scoring tries, Luke McKee converting on one, and Mohawk answering back each time. Mohawk had managed 20 points with their four unconverted tries, but McKee's kicking had brought Redeemer to 19, setting the stage for a last-minute drive in which we scored tries twice. However, both times failed to have the referee award them. With their backs at the goal line and only a couple minutes left on the clock, Mohawk took a penalty, allowing McKee to kick what would become the game winning field goal. Up 22-20, Redeemer took the kickoff but quickly lost the ball to a desperate Mohawk team that pushed us to the same spot we'd had them just minutes before: backs up against the goal line with the game on the line. Rising to the call, our forwards closed down the Mohawk attack in consecutive scrums, making tackles and seizing up ball movement in a game that seemed to have fewer rules as the seconds ticked down. Af-

ter one scrum collapsed, burying the ball, the referee separated the teams and explained that while both teams were trying to win the game, it was a game that had to be won with rules. After the second scrum collapsed, he essentially threw up his hands and called the game, leaving Redeemer victorious by two points.

After some handshakes and some pictures, the team huddled together for the customary prayer and Man of the Match declaration. In previous games, it had been Luke McKee, as captain, that named the Man of the Match. This game was different in that McKee, having carried the team to victory with precision kicking, was the obvious candidate. I tried, right there in the huddle, to name him Man of the Match so he wouldn't have to just claim the title himself, but being all class, he wouldn't even accept that, and named us all Men of the Match. Lame. Fortunately, this isn't Luke McKee's article, and he can't stop me here: he was, without dispute, the Man of the Match.

In addition to the win over Mohawk, the one thing about the rugby season I was most proud of was our demeanor. It's not easy to get stomped game after game, especially, as in the case of the Brampton game, in front of your home crowd. Apparently we took it very well, or at least that's what the refs told us. Maybe we even put on a good display of Christ-like behavior. We definitely seemed to make a positive impression on our opponents. Rugby has this wonderful culture where, after the game, you go have a beer with your opponents. Or maybe you have a coke, if you go to Redeemer and are underage. After our games, one of our opponents would usually ask if Redeemer was "one of those Jesus colleges" and then observe that "you guys hit pretty hard for a bunch of Christian boys." Maybe we can't win club rugby games, but at least we managed to lose with smiles and break down a few stereotypes. Oh yeah, and we beat Mohawk in that legendary goal-line stand from two paragraphs ago.

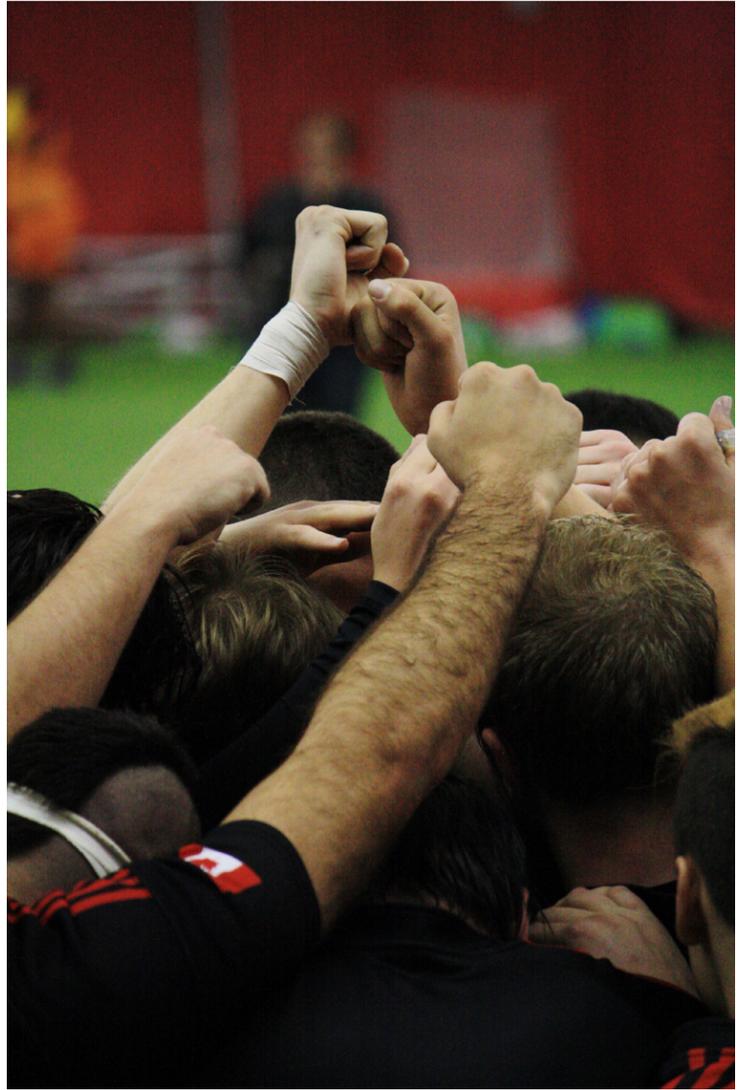


Photo by Sara-Ann Wijngaarden

Laval takes down McMaster in Vanier Cup rematch

BRANDON MEAWASIGE
THE SILHOUETTE
MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

HAMILTON (CUP) — It may have been a rematch of last year's Vanier Cup, but the results couldn't have been more different. Laval trounced McMaster 37-14, led by a dominant running game and a crushing defensive line.

The Rouge et Or came out firing on all cylinders. Without question, the nation's second-ranked team had not forgotten about their 41-38 loss from a year ago.

The first quarter of the game was scoreless for both teams, as neither seemed willing to give up the first points.

Running a strong ground game in the second frame, Laval went out to a 12-0 lead. It looked as though Mac was outmatched by their opponents. Suddenly, a drive was sustained, which ended in an all too familiar Kyle Quinlan rushing touchdown for Mac.

With less than two minutes remaining in the first half, Laval took possession of the ball to be promptly shut down by Mac's defense.

What happened next was unthinkable. Pinned to their own 14, Quinlan led his

team up the field for a 24-second, 96-yard scoring drive capped by a 52-yard Dhalin Brooks touchdown reception. The Maroon and Grey entered half time with a 14-12 lead as a result.

When both teams returned to play in the third quarter, Laval looked determined to take the Vanier Cup away from the defending national champions.

The Rouge et Or went up 18-14 and never looked back. It was not the day for Mac to repeat as champions, and Rouge et Or tailback Maxime Boutin made sure of that. The second-year player, who only recently moved into a starting role, rushed for over 287 yards, including an 84-yard run that marked the third-longest play from scrimmage in Vanier Cup history.

As the crowd thinned out and the clock wound down, it was clear that the spirits of Mac's fans had been broken. But the players on the field continued to battle, persevering through tough calls and plenty of time wasted by Laval injuries.

Laval finished the game on top 37-14.



Tailback Maxime Boutin put up two touchdowns in Laval's 37-14 victory over McMaster. (Photo by Sam Brooks/Canadian University Press)

A Tim Tebow update

BRANDON RICHARDSON

Talk to any NFL expert and they will tell you that Tim Tebow is not the greatest quarterback they have seen. Based on Tebow's on-field play, it is quite noticeable to fans and experts alike that he does not fit the traditional quarterback mould the NFL displays. Tebow may have been impressive while playing college football but it is apparent that he has his work cut out for him as he continues his career. None of this is to say that Tebow is not a good NFL quarterback; I tend to find myself on the side that does favour his style of play.

Before the commencement of the current season, Tebow was traded from the Denver Broncos (as a starting quarterback) to the New York Jets (to become a back-up quarterback) for legendary Peyton Manning. Since arriving in New York, Tebow has seen the cards stacked against him. Moving from starting quarterback to back-up behind Mark Sanchez has had its challenges, as have missed opportunities during his limited time on the field. And in recent weeks, Tebow has come under fire from anonymous teammates as well as anonymous former teammates who have offered comments on Tebow's gameplay.

Anonymous former teammates on the Broncos have offered comments like:

"When Tim was here we saw the issues up close. The Jets didn't, and now they are seeing the problems, too."

"I feel really, really bad for Tim. He's a good person, just not an NFL quarterback."

"This year we won the division with

four games left. That's all Peyton Manning. If Tebow was here, we'd still be squeaking out wins, or losing games we shouldn't be losing. The division would be coming down to the last game."

A current Jets teammate also offered an anonymous comment about how Tebow is "terrible."

Many, including Rex Ryan (the Jets current head coach), are calling these anonymous players out for their gutless behaviour. Regardless, Tim Tebow does find himself in a very interesting place. Not only mocked for his play on the field, he is also persecuted for his comments off the field. Continually under the spot light, even though he does not play nearly as much as he used to, Tebow still receives air time.

In the pressure of his current situation, what does Tebow have to say? "I guess one of my favorite quotes is, 'You don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds my future.'"

Tebow may be in one of the largest dilemmas he has faced since entering the NFL but his outlook still remains positive. Whether you love his gameplay, hate it, or even question if it can be called gameplay, Tebow remains a role-model for athletes everywhere. As we head into the New Year, our athletes at all levels have a chance to play with this same attitude while proving Redeemer proud. In many ways, this has been our unspoken drive throughout the years as a university. In the New Year, in "whatever we do," let's continue to play with this same mind of Christ. Let's go get some more wins!

Royals Extend Win Streak to 6 Games

Volleyball teams go the distance against Niagara with 2 thrilling wins

PETER REID

The Royals Volleyball teams sent their fans into the Christmas Break in thrilling fashion in an electric night at Redeemer last Friday. Both Men's and Women's Volleyball teams defeated the Niagara Knights in dramatic 5 set matches in front of the home crowd.

The Lady Royals (4-5) moved into a tie for 4th place in the OCAA West division with a 3-2 win over the Knights (4-4). Set scores were 17-25, 25-19, 15-25, 25-16, 15-13. Redeemer sits with 8 points heading into the Christmas Break however the two teams tied with them (Niagara and Mohawk) each have 1 game remaining this semester.

In the match, the Royals got a strong defensive performance when needed. They had a total of 60 digs as a team with 3 players; April Passchier (Kitchener, ON), Rebekah Wright (Burlington, ON), and Curtiss Straatsma (Brampton, ON), all recording in the double-digits. The Royals also out blocked the Knights by a 9-3 margin.

Curtiss Straatsma seemed to be unstoppable on the court as she recorded 18 kills, 1 ace, and 4 blocks for 23 total points. She added in 16 digs. April Passchier also had double-digit points as she had 4 kills, 5 aces, and 2 blocks for 11 total points. Passchier had 10 digs as well.

Every set was close as no team was able to win by more than 3 points until the 5th when Redeemer put the match away with a 15-9 win.

Redeemer completes it's set of first semester games on a high after an up and down start to the season. Their inconsistent play saw them come out on top with victories against Niagara and Sheridan College but dropping points to Conestoga College and Mohawk College.

The Lady Royals will look to ride their momentum over the Christmas break and into an exhibition tournament at Durham College before returning to play in the second semester against Nipissing University and Canadore College on January 11th and 12th at home.

In the Men's match, Redeemer (7-2) aimed to put a stop to Niagara's (5-3) recent run of 4 straight wins. They accomplished just that, but needed a solid 5 sets to do it. The game went back and forth all night with no team able to take control. It was feast or famine for the teams as the loser in each set was held to 19 points or less. Set scores were 17-25, 25-19, 25-15, 16-25, and 15-13.

Both teams proved they could score with 3 players on Niagara and 3 players on Redeemer each hitting double-digit points. David Klomps (Surrey,

BC) had 17 kills, 2 aces, and 3 blocks for 22 total points as well as 13 digs. Redeemer's tandem of middles, Aaron Vanderlugt (Burlington, ON) and Cameron Groenendijk (Chemainus, BC), had 11 and 10 points respectively with each player adding 3 blocks.

Niagara's Shayne Petrusma had a game high 22 kills and 26 points.

Strong defensive play once again proved to be the difference in the game as 3 Redeemer Royals recorded double-digit digs with Jesse Dykxhoorn (Holland Marsh, ON), Eric Heidbuurt (Waterdown, ON), and David Klomps having 13, 10, and 13 digs respectively.

The men's team extended their win streak to 6 games in which they have only dropped a total of 3 sets. The Royals moved into sole possession of 1st place for one evening before Nipissing University regained top spot with a win last Saturday and Sunday. Redeemer is the only team to have defeated the Lakers so far this season.

With such a strong first half of the season, the team will look to stay in form over the break and come prepared in January with some exhibition play over the Christmas Break. The Royals will need to be on their game as their first match of 2013 will be against the top ranked Nipissing Lakers at home on January 11th.

Royals Pushed Around on Home Court

PETER REID

The Women's and Men's Basketball teams entertained Humber College on Wednesday night at the Redeemer gymnasium. Both Humber Hawks teams came in to the contest Nationally ranked and they proved why with two convincing victories over the hometown Royals.

The Lady Royals struggled defensively in a 91-38 loss while the men's team had no answer for Humber in a 87-49 loss.

The women's game started in the right direction for the Royals but a lack in concentration in the 2nd quarter saw the Hawks take a 30 point lead into halftime. Humber outscored the Royals 31-6 in the 2nd quarter. From there Redeemer tried to play catch up but struggled to close the gap. The Hawks just cruised through the second half for the 91-38 win.

Jessica Brown (Grand Manan, NB) had a team-high 9 points for the Royals while Maria Suriani had a game-high 16 points for the Hawks.

Redeemer enters the Christmas Break with a record of 3-6 which places them in a tie for 7th, one position out of a playoff spot.

In the men's game, a slow start by

Redeemer had the Royals trying to fight back the entire game. After being outscored 13-5 in the 1st quarter, the men responded with 19 points in the 2nd and entered halftime down a manageable 37-23. Unfortunately for Redeemer, the Royals struggled defensively in the 2nd half conceding 45 points for the 87-49 loss.

Calvin Turnbull (Burlington, ON) had a game-high 22 points for the Royals while Gibson Eduful had 17 points for the Hawks.

The men's team now sits with a 3-7 record and tied for 7th place in the OCAA West Division.

Despite the losses, both teams end the first semester having made some positive strides over the course of the season so far. Both men's and women's teams are still in the playoff hunt and each team will have the opportunity to keep building on a number of key wins in the first semester.

The team will enjoy a long break over Christmas with a bit of exhibition play before returning back in January ready to go for the second half of their season.



From a Different Point of View



Photo by Chantel Schutten

KIMBERLY STEWART

While the “can of worms” is open again, I figured the recent article about modesty was worth a response from a member of the volleyball team.

To begin with, the picture that was chosen to accompany the article was unnecessary and inaccurately portrayed the team. Just so everyone knows, the author of the article did not choose the picture to go with the article. I have to ask, “What was the intention behind that photo?” It stereotypes the volleyball team by assuming we wear spandex to get attention. You talk about guys stumbling at volleyball games, but how many do you think stumbled at the sight of that photo?

The previous article stated that “we as Christians are in the world but commanded not to be of the world. Thus signifying that a visible difference must be seen between Christians

and the culture in which we live. As a Christian School I believe it is essential to take note of this.” I completely agree and think we as Christians in a Christian School should be setting ourselves apart from the rest of culture. I believe we can still wear spandex because that is the uniform of a volleyball player, while, at the same time, set ourselves apart from other universities in different ways. We decided as a team to change into our jerseys in a private location. We will make sure our spandex are covering what needs to be covered, and not stick our butts out unnecessarily like the picture oh-so-clearly showed.

I think guys also need to learn to bounce their eyes, to come support the game and defend us when others are making comments. It is a way to set themselves apart from others and live as an example. In talking with guys from Redeemer, I understand that females will never understand

fully how visual guys’ minds are and the impact that some of the things we wear have on men. The author mentioned time after time that he heard men say, “The only reason to attend the women’s match is to watch the women’s team play in their booty shorts.” I have to wonder if men at Redeemer hearing those conversations take the opportunity to defend the girls on the court and try to show others the importance of purity through those conversations. If you hear another Redeemer student making comments, it is a time to take a stand and hold each other accountable. If you struggle with this issue so much, please refrain from coming to our games, as our uniforms are not meant to bring about that type of attention and cause people to stumble.

Because the issue of spandex was brought up, I also have to ask why was there no mention of females wearing tight lulu lemon pants or

leggings each day around the school? The article stated, “My concern is that this type of sportswear is not contributing to the fight for purity in our school or outside of our school.” At our volleyball games, men have the choice to come and watch, whereas girls are casually walking around in similar attire each day. They shape your butt the same, and cause men to stumble each day.

I do believe Redeemer athletes can wear spandex and still be set a part from others. We will push to make it as modest as we can by putting on pants after the game, wearing spandex long enough to cover our butts, and presenting ourselves in the most modest way we can. As mentioned before, if it is a true struggle, please refrain from coming to our games as our intention is not to make anyone stumble.

Another thought: How would the Redeemer fans change if there was to

be a change in the uniform? Would the same people show up? Would it change the purpose of coming and help people focus on the game?

Please think about what you are saying before voicing an opinion or targeting a specific group. Keep in mind that when you make something so personal, it can have negative effects on the people portrayed. Modesty is a topic that needs to be addressed; however, it is a bigger issue than just the girls’ volleyball team. By pointing specifically to us, the point is made that we are immodest. This just personalized the topic of modesty to eleven girls who are striving to be good examples, to demonstrate love even while competing as volleyball athletes. We will continue to pursue modest actions, such as changing in a different place and portraying ourselves in a respectful manner, and we ask that the student body will respect and support us back.

Obama pushback

continued from page 5

tunately there isn’t such a law, but is it so unrealistic to have legislation in place that requires media personnel to tell the truth?

There are some laws like that, and to a certain extent they do work, but often times people use the guise of “opinion” as an excuse to spout off falsehoods. Bill O’Reilly is particularly famous for this, using the phrase “I’m an opinion guy” every time he gets busted in a lie. Requiring media to clearly differentiate between news and opinion would be a step in the right direction. Granted, it wouldn’t stop far-right media from proposing wildly unrealistic ideas, such as Herman Cain’s insistence that he wouldn’t sign a bill longer than three pages. There’s not a bill in US history that’s been that short.

Drop the requirement for “equivalence” in public discussion.

We’ve all heard it: We’ve all heard it: unchecked corporate power is a problem, but unchecked union power can be as well. While that’s technically true, it implies a level of equivalence that doesn’t exist and impairs our ability to genuinely discuss the issue at hand. This need for false equivalence pops up in politics all the time; Republicans think Barack Obama is a socialist Kenyan Muslim, therefore an equal number of Democrats must think 9/11 was an inside job. Paul Ryan lied in the vice-presidential debate, so Joe Biden must have lied a similar number of times. When it became obvious that Ohio would go for Obama, Pennsylvania was somehow a swing state. And when some crazy backwoods Republican like Todd Akin says something so idiotic it can’t be reprinted, it doesn’t receive the coverage it deserves because no

Democrat can be found saying something equally disgusting. Sometimes the assumptions about equivalence sneak into our political dialogue without us realizing it. After the election, mainstream media outlets picked up a story that said MSNBC mentioned Romney in a negative light more than Fox did the same of Obama. Excessive liberal bias in media, right? Sure, if you assume the two candidates are identical and are therefore entitled to equivalent treatment. When you consider that Mitt Romney is basically a modern-day robber baron, the notion that he’s entitled to the same positive treatment the media gives Obama goes out the window. So too should the desire to accommodate extremist viewpoints by creating this kind of false equivalency. Not being one to ignore my own advice, I should point out that the right has benefited from this equivalence construct a great deal more than the left. Fox News and the Tea Party have moved farther and farther to the right and used this concept of equivalence to demand that the left meet them in the middle. Too bad the middle isn’t the middle anymore.

Politics is not a team sport. We’re all on the same team.

This one is simple. Voters need to make it clear to politicians that the country comes before the party. That’s more likely to happen here than in America, where the aforementioned US House of Representatives just finished a session in which the main stated goal was “ensuring Barack Obama is a one-term president.” Unsurprisingly, the session featured a myriad of pointless arguments and directly resulted in the drop of the US credit rating due to investors recognizing that meaningful compromise on national issues is impossible as

long as this kind of attitude exists. No wonder investors are getting twitchy.

There is no salvation in politics.

The main point of Dr. Koyzis’ book *Political Visions and Illusions* is that all political ideologies promise some form of salvation. Look for this in media and you’ll see it as clear as day: if we could just get rid of onerous government, the free market would lead us to prosperity; if we could just get rid of all the foreigners we’d all have jobs and our social services would function efficiently; if we could only establish a dictatorship of the proletariat we’d all be free from bourgeois oppression; if we could just get those extremists on the right to tell the truth...we’d have a slightly less insane political culture but by no means would all of our problems be solved. We need to stop looking for comprehensive deliverance for all of our ills in single sets of ideas. When sanctifying political ideologies, we stand at the beginning of the same troubled path that Hitler and Stalin went down.

The night of the election, an American friend of mine came to visit, partly motivated by fears of civil unrest that might occur if Obama won. She explained that her worries were mostly due to skewed news coverage. Right-wing news outlets had been stretching the truth, painting wild pictures of the electoral map based on silly false equivalencies, predicting a Romney landslide. My friend worried that GOP supporters, given their penchant for believing in the holiness and salvation potential of their political ideas, were not likely to take defeat lying down. She arrived late so we watched the conclusion of the election in a pub. When they called Ohio for

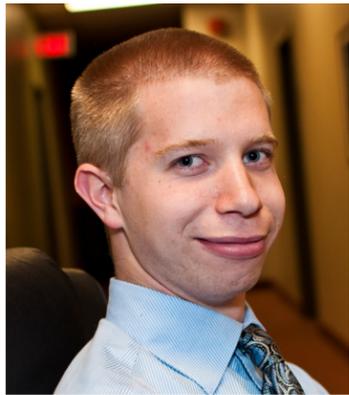
Obama, I wondered if the bar would serve me a shot of Republican Tears but suppressed the urge to ask for it, because while I do think Obama is the best man for the job, I recognize

that he’s not going to bring anybody salvation, and celebrating his win too aggressively would be a little silly. After all, we’re all on the same team.



Contributed Image

Editorial: Another year has gone by



BEN REID
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It seems like just yesterday that we said good-bye to 2011 and welcomed 2012 with open arms. Suddenly 2013 is dawning and we wonder where the year went and we wait in anticipation for a new year and a fresh start. Whether it was good or bad, what you expected, or the unexpected, I encourage you this Christmas season to slow down and reflect on the year that was. Time is a weird thing, when you want it to go fast it slows down, and when you want it to go slow, it flies by, and other times you just don't know what it is doing.

To put the year in perspective here are a few major events from 2012. Some are serious, some are interesting, but all are significant for a reason.

February 6 – The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II marks the 60th anniversary of her accession to the thrones of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the 60th anniversary of her becoming Head of the Commonwealth.

March 13 – After 244 years since its first publication, the Encyclopædia Britannica discontinues its print

edition.

July 27 – August 12 – The 2012 Summer Olympics are held in London, United Kingdom.

July 30–31 – In the worst power outage in world history, the 2012 India blackouts leave 620 million people without power

October 14 – Austrian skydiver Felix Baumgartner becomes the first person to break the sound barrier without any machine assistance during a record space dive out of the Red Bull Stratos helium-filled balloon from 24 miles (39 kilometers) over Roswell, New Mexico in the United States.

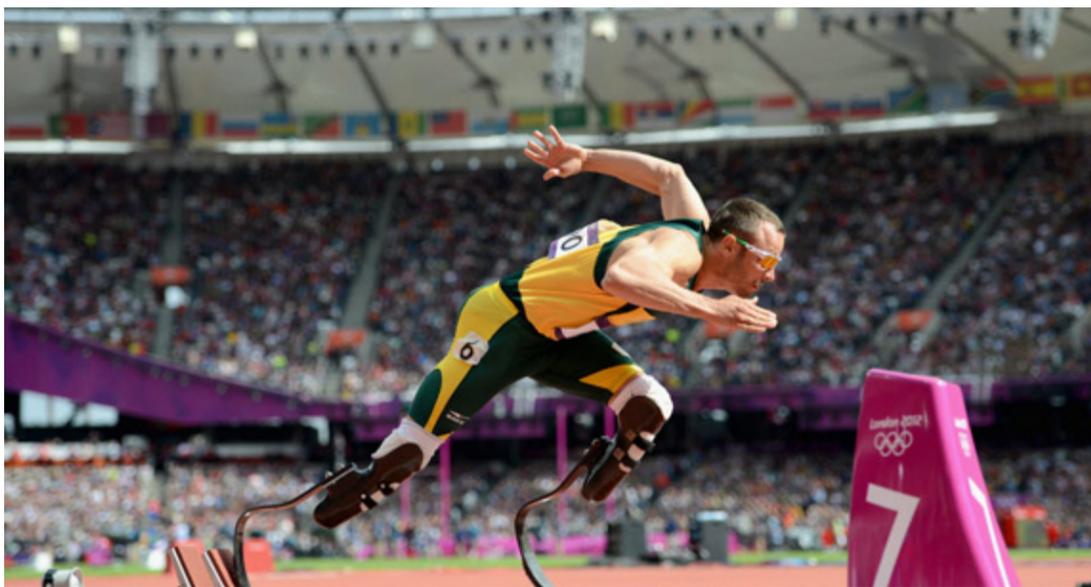
October 24 – 30 – Hurricane Sandy kills at least 209 people in the Caribbean, Bahamas, United States and Canada. Considerable storm surge damage causes major disruption to the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Nov 6th – Voters go to the polls for the US Presidential election with Barack Obama projected to claim an Electoral College victory

November 14 – 21 – Israel launches Operation Pillar of Defense against the Palestinian-governed Gaza Strip, killing Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari. In the following week 140 Palestinians and five Israelis are killed in an ensuing cycle of violence. A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is announced by Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton after the week-long escalation in hostilities in Southern Israel and the Gaza Strip.

As you enter into this Christmas season and reflect on the past year The Crown would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May your Christmas be filled with God's blessing and may God refresh and renew you for another semester of studies.

Merry Christmas from all of us at The Crown!



Contributed Images

Above: Oscar Pistorius at the London 2012 Olympic Games
Below: Felix Baumgartner jumps from space in October 2012

Capital Punishment

MICHAEL EMMANUEL

With Christmas fast approaching the topic on everyone's mind is capital punishment. Alright, probably not. But perhaps it should be. After all, isn't the point of Christmas to celebrate the birth of Him who came to pay for the ultimate capital crime?

That's a false analogy, my opposition might say. Yes, "The wages of sin are death." Still, we cannot apply that to our legal system. Goodness gracious, then everyone would deserve the death penalty! "For all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God." While God may judge sin with death, being God, He has that right. Being men, by what authority do we have to deliberate life and death? Human life is extremely valuable and for it Christ died. His death, far from being an example of capital punishment, testifies against it. Christmas is the celebration of our freedom from punishment, not a reminder of it.

Nevertheless, if God did ordain capital punishment in certain circumstances then it would not be wrong to equate the cross as our ultimate example of it. It's an issue of presuppositions. What do we mean when we say God values human life? Do we mean (a) that it has so much value that nothing man does on earth gives another man the authority to take his life or (b) that it has so much value that it needs to be protected from men who would try to take it, even if it means taking one for the sake of

the others? The answer hangs on this question: did God ordain capital punishment? The answer determines the meaning of ethics, justice, and even the meaning of Christmas.

I don't believe anyone truly believes the death penalty is wrong in absolutely every circumstance. Otherwise we would have to compromise other moral absolutes. Imagine a scenario where a blind girl, a lame boy, and you are all on a deserted island with a psychopathic killer who has just murdered another companion of yours. You have no reason to believe he won't murder again. Would you be justified in killing him? Sometimes moral principles seem to conflict; in this case "do not murder" and "protect the innocent." I once heard it aptly said that wisdom means knowing which moral principles to apply in a given circumstance. Besides, would we really say that taking the psychopathic killer's life in this circumstance is murder? That would mean moral absolutes could contradict each other, and then we could have no justice.

Yet if we are to have justice, then we must also have capital punishment. Justice is a matter of payment, of restitution for crimes. Hence it is represented by scales. Aristotle defined justice as giving to each what they were owed. Justice requires that a punishment must be equal to the crime. To Christians, there is nothing of this earth as valuable as human life except another human life. Therefore, if someone unjustly takes another's

life, they have nothing with which to pay for their crime save their own life. So, to satisfy justice, murderers must pay for their crimes with their life. This view of justice seems to be Biblically supported. The Old Testament calls for an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus died in order to pay the price for sin. God commands us to be just people. To be just we must repay murder with capital punishment. If we do not we are either being unjust, or we must pretend we do not know what justice means.

However, the Bible gives us good reasons to believe this is how justice works. Some people argue that capital punishment was only part of the Old Testament law that Jesus did away with. They run into a problem; God commanded it long before he ever gave Moses the law. In Genesis 9, God makes a covenant with Noah, reminding Noah of the cultural mandate. Then God extends this covenant by commanding, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed" (NKJV Gen. 9:6, my emphasis). It's significant that the call for justice follows the cultural mandate, the command which outlines man's purpose. God is saying that His demand for justice is foundational for a man to live out his purpose. In order to live as God intends, we must uphold capital punishment. That's far from how many in the church see justice today.

Too many Christians would rather ignore the Old Testament as irrel-

evant and look to the New Testament, which supposedly does away with God's earlier commands, as if God were somehow a God who changes and as if morality and justice were one thing one day and another the next. Yet it's in the New Testament where we most clearly see God outlining the role of capital punishment. Paul writes on the role of government in Romans 13, arguing, "If you do evil, be afraid; for he [the government] does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:14). How can this be anything but an outright statement that the government must execute those who commit capital crimes? The sword mentioned in the passage is a symbol of the government's power over the life of lawbreakers. Paul is urging Christians to submit to the right of governments to rule thusly. God has given them this authority and this command.

Christmas-time means thinking about peace on earth. Let us not forget that peace came at a cost. Christ was not Isaiah's Prince of Peace because He was born, but because he died. Our ultimate crime was paid with the ultimate price. Justice was satisfied. Christmas doesn't mean justice is over but that justice is restored. If we want peace on earth in our own times, we must obey the commands of Him who bears our governments upon His shoulder.

Thank You

AMANDA CURRAN

I was so glad to see how Redeemer students (even if it was only a few) were willing to work against complacency this month. As Christian students, aren't we being taught to challenge things and not shy away from raising questions? It was really exciting and interesting to read all the articles within The Crown this month, specifically the two that spoke out as challenges. Maybe the articles were hard for some people to read and take in, which is fine, but I was glad to see that challenge for our Christian walk. Both the article on alcohol and the one on modesty spoke about the calling and responsibility that we have as Christians to be salt and light to the world. I wanted to thank these two writers--and other students who have written articles such as these--as well as to echo these two students in their challenge for Redeemer students (and staff?) to take a look at their actions. I understand that not all students are comfortable writing for The Crown and raising a tough topic, but kudos to those who do!

The views presented do not necessarily represent the opinions of The Crown staff or the broader Redeemer community

Each "Letter to the Editor" intended for publication by its writer should be printed, providing that (a) there is space available, (b) that the letter does not contain erroneous or slanderous material, and (c) that the editor-in-chief does not deem the letter to be offensive to the Redeemer community. Letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

Chaplain's Corner



SYD HIELEMA

STUMBLING INTO ADVENT

"(In Narnia), it was always winter and never Christmas" (C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe).

We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (As we do), the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Romans 8: 23, 26).

"The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight" (from "O Little town of Bethlehem").

When I am weary and overwhelmed with deadlines, I practice what I like to call "holy procrastination." That is, I postpone absolutely everything in my

life that can be postponed, and focus on the immediate demands of each day. Often this means focusing on "urgent" things while letting "important" matters (like, for example, investing in a friendship) wait.

Why would I call this "holy procrastination?" Well, think Shrek for a minute. Our God-created humanness is somewhat like an onion that has layers. The outer layers are where we take care of the gazillion details and demands of life that each new day throws at us: sleeping, eating, daily assignments and deadlines, the small (but still important!) talk that greases the wheels of our social life.

As we peel back the outer layers and move on in, we uncover our joys and sorrows, our doubt and our faith, our gratitudes and our longings, "the hopes and fears of all the years," as the old carol puts it. Down beneath those outer layers we find the inward groanings that contain the tangled messes

that weave all over and through our heart and soul. When we get to the innermost layer of the onion, we find we've left behind the territory where words are operative; deep down in that muddled spot, the Holy Spirit kicks in "with groans that words cannot express."

I'm thankful that the beginning of Advent coincides with the end of our term. At this time of year we easily live in "outer-onion-layer-survival-mode," and our worship and devotional life becomes the Lord's double-edged sword that pierces through our holy procrastinations, challenging us to surrender our verbal and non-verbal groanings to Him.

That's the blessing and call of Advent. That's Christmas preparing to break into the winter of our discontent. That's "slo-mo" ordering our "over-drive" to stop and listen to the whispers that we've drowned out and ignored for too long. Listen to the

Spirit groaning within you:

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD...

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 139: 1-4, 23-24

Keep Christ in Christmas

ANTHONY RAMUSCAK

The nativity scene was created by St. Francis of Assisi nearly 800 years ago. He was concerned that the meaning of Christmas was becoming lost as most people were more focused with the ritual of gift-giving than they were of the true message of Christmas. St. Francis was determined to remind people of and help people get back in touch with the true meaning of Christmas, so he created the world's first known nativity scene. It was made in a cave in Italy and had real people and animals.

Today nearly 800 years later, we still hear the same cry from our church leaders that the true message of Christmas is fading. Fading from the noise and rush of people shopping, fighting over that perfect gift and maxing out their credit cards. What happened to that peaceful "Holy Night" when churches would be open and people would sit and enjoy that heavenly music of choirs singing "Fall on your Knees"? Be that as it may, we still see nativities displayed in prominent places in homes, churches, under the Christmas tree, and more.

In the 1300's Italian churches would have nativity scenes or sets displayed year-round. However, in the mid 1500's nativity sets were not only found in churches, but in the private homes of more wealthier citizens, despite a few religious groups in Italy wanting to turn away from this tradition altogether. Nativity sets became popular, however, and artists started to make them out of wax and wood, decorating them in beautiful clothes. Soon these nativities started to spread to other Christian countries, with each Christian religion adding their own unique style. The nativity sets for homes were greatly accepted by Germans, Catholics, and Protestant families alike. It is tradition in Germany not to display the baby Jesus until after Christmas Eve, to enhance the reality of the scene.

The Christmas Spirit in the Spirit of Christ

COLIN HAYES

This is the first year of my life in which my entire immediate family will not be in attendance for Christmas. Fortunately, no one in my family has recently passed away, only moved away--though I do hope that first sentence grabbed your attention. My older brother moved out West this past September to start a life of his own with his girlfriend. They aren't able to return home and so my family of five will be down to four. I've reflected on this and tried to prepare myself for the strange new situation presented to my family heading into the Christmas season. In one way or another we will experience some amount of grief from the separation and our Christmas morning will likely not have quite the same energy and joy as usual. My brother is the kind, joking glue that spreads between my family members and draws us closer together.

And yet he's gone. Well, sort of. He may not be physically present to join in our big Christmas morning brunch, but it's not as if I have to think of him as a memory. He can even sit at our table like a weird bobblehead thanks to Skype. Some don't have that luxury. Some family members really are gone. As I said, I've been reflecting on the change, pain, and differences this Christmas season brings. The greatest realization I've come away with is the simple fact that my first hard Christmas is in fact a pretty easy one. While the pain, sadness, and some amount of loss I will experience surely are difficult, they pale in comparison to what many other people are going through. There are many in our community whose Christmas seasons are plagued by difficult memories, situations, and the very real pain of lost family members. For some, this may even be the first occasion where this is the case. It's important to recognize that for a large group at our school the Christmas season does not bring only joy and celebration at the birth of Christ. This can be and likely is overshadowed by a looming unhappiness. And yet for many others this isn't

their experience. Christmas is a time of excitement, joy, happiness, family, gifts, warm fires, delicious dinners, and the celebration of the birth of Christ. And so it should be! If you don't find yourself in any unhappy situations this Christmas season, certainly don't feel as though you cannot express and enjoy yourself on account of others. That is assuredly not the purpose of the Christmas season.

However, when finding ourselves in a situation where this season is not particularly difficult or unsettling, it seems very important that we not assume that everyone we encounter is entering into Christmas exactly as we are. As stated before, there are a vast number who find themselves in a much darker place than those in the second group. It seems that there is contention to be found with how different people come into the Christmas season, and this contention has the potential to lead to pain and heartache.

Much of what I have experienced, observed, and been caught up in myself seems to point to a general attitude amongst most people to forget the pain others may be suffering around Christmastime. We forget that our joy is not everyone's joy, and it often seems evident in how we treat others at this time of year. In our excitement and delight we neglect to set aside space for others to grieve and reflect. We are kind and cheerful to everyone we encounter and spark many pseudo-relationships with very little depth. Worse yet, we can push a terrible expectation on those around us to join us in our cheer and merriment. It is Christmas, after all! And everyone loves Christmas and should act as though they do, especially those in the Christian subculture.

How would this impact those who find themselves struggling with grief, depression, bad living circumstances, and other general unhappiness caused by the brokenness of our world? Being kindly addressed and related to with surprising friendliness by people who otherwise do not speak to us would leave a bitter taste

in anyone's mouth. Hopefully this isn't too common, though, and many can recognize the happiness in others and enjoy that. But there is certainly a potential for harm that comes with the differences of people entering the season. This is the problem: our interest in others during the Christmas season runs the risk of falling away very quickly once the holidays are over.

The lack of joy, peace, and excitement in many of our brothers' and sisters' hearts can quickly turn to feelings of anger, hurt, and abandonment when we lose the Christmas spirit. When our niceness and habit of cheerfully talking to everyone fades away, people struggling during the holidays can look at those relationships and see unfortunate superficiality instead of genuine care. What are we to do then? Cast aside the Christmas spirit for fear of hurting others? No, certainly not. Christmas really is a joyous time of year that is to be celebrated and enjoyed.

We should look for opportunities to embody the spirit of Christ rather than only encountering others with the Christmas spirit. Where the Christmas spirit seems too often made up of momentary excitement that leads to superficial care for others, the Bible's teaching seems to point us to encouraging one another in all things, at all times. Two verses that come to mind in this situation are John 13:34-35, "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;" Similarly, 1 Thess. 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up." Here the Bible seems to clearly be teaching us to care for fellow Christians in a meaningful way.

The two challenges our community faces entering into the Christmas season have already been mentioned in passing, but it was my purpose to point these out and provide encouragement to offer growth and healing for those who are struggling. The first

thing we must all recognize is that this season is not the same for all of us. Notice that I don't say only those of us who are joyful at Christmas need to acknowledge this. As much as the onus is on those who are enjoying Christmas to appreciate that others are not, those who are unhappy also have a part to play. As much as possible, we should take joy in others' joy and rejoice with those who rejoice. Entering into the holiday season with a willingness to empathize with other people's situations is essential to our community having a fulfilling atmosphere.

In our joy and excitement this season, we should be as friendly as ever. I'm not condemning speaking to others we normally don't speak to from fear they are as excited we are. What Christ seems to hold us to achieve is not to avoid friendliness for fear of superficiality. Instead we should attempt to fill the relationships we have with others with an encouraging spirit to build those up around us. Rather than devoting our kindness and encouragement to a two week section of the year where we feel excited, we should all pursue intentional relationships that will benefit others. Don't let your kindness fall away after the season ends. Instead, follow through in the days to come by building up those we encounter at Christmas who are suffering. As much as the Christian world has made efforts not to be consumeristic with our spending at Christmas, we should also do away with consumerism in our relationships during this potentially difficult time.

Candle Lit Joy During the Exam Season

BRANDON RICHARDSON

I wake up to a cool draft coming through the aging window in the small, square, box of a room I share with my brother. In the dark I begin to search my memory as to why I have woken up to this chill. Surely it has already been a month of experiencing these frosty mornings. Before my still-waking mind can decide on the questionable wakeup call, I hear soft footsteps leading up to the dim light that peeks through the bottom of the wooden entrance to my room. Still bothered that I have lost a mere two minutes of sleep, I recognize the usual wakeup call unfolding.

A small squeak triggers my mind, and I watch the shimmering handle on the entrance to my fortress begin to turn. Whipping myself down from the upright position I find myself in, I once again rest in a still position on my bed. Listening, my mother slowly edges the door open so as to not startle me or my brother. Eventually she emerges from the lit backdrop framed by the doorway and, despite her best effort each morning to be quiet while waking us up, yells, "It's December!"

Normally an awakening of this nature would bother me; I tend to think I am one of those children who was born with a silver spoon in their mouth. My mom always woke me up with the softest of wakeup calls and had breakfast ready, which I ate while she prepared my lunch that I would grab from her as I ran out the door to catch the bus. This day was different though; in my house, Christmas began on the first of December. A wakeup call like this was most definitely welcomed.

As a child, I found myself with little worry and little care. During the Christmas season, the largest burden I carried was wondering whether or not our school Christmas parties would start on time and if they would last through French class. So the beginning of December meant I could enjoy chocolate and Life Saver Advent calendars, decorating the house, constructing gingerbread houses, par-taking of gingerbread men, making Christmas wish lists, having snowball fights, and drinking hot chocolate after coming in from a hard night of snow-fort building. With December came a host of traditions: December 1st we decorated the house; the closest weekend after, we picked up the Christmas tree and decorated it; the Christmas lights were turned on and family and friends were invited over most nights. Along with the start of our count-down to Christmas, my

brother, sister, and I began to collect gifts for our parents in the form of school-made crafts. December was a lovely time of the year.

Christmas Day would eventually come as anticipation hit its peak. Throughout the busyness of the season, the emphasis for my family was always on Christ. As kids we never believed in Santa (and trying to hold back on telling my friends they were believing a lie was the hardest part). Christ's incarnation was the single most important thing about the Christmas season for my family. Our family didn't celebrate many other holidays throughout the year but Christmas was a time to rejoice in Christ's birth. When Christmas came, we knew not a single present was opened until Dad read the Christmas story to us and we had discussed it.

Christmas Day was the most wonderful day of the year. But once, as I was waiting in anticipation for a holiday, my Poppy said to me, "Brandon, often the best thing about a certain event is the growing anticipation we experience while waiting." I'll never forget those words and, truly, when I look back on those awkward childhood days it really was the lead-up to Christmas that made it all worth it.

Fast forward a few years, now December looks a little different than it used to. Certainly it does for most of you reading this article. Instead of the delightful lead up to Christmas we once experienced, the Christmas season is now marked by other factors. Instead of putting up the Christmas tree, it's putting up final marks on assignments. Instead of meeting with friends and family, it's meeting in groups to discuss, last-minute, the presentation you have. Instead of warm hot chocolate while reading a book by the fire, it's coffee while pulling a near all-nighter to study for an exam. Instead of the joy of scavenging the malls, it's the intense research for your take-home. Perhaps I am creating too stark of a contrast, but the truth is the lead-up to Christmas now looks a lot different for us university students and, if you are anything like me, this can often impair our view of the true reason for Christmas altogether.

During my first year at Redeemer I struggled with the new reality of December. Things just weren't as festive. Luckily for me, diving into a bit of the Western liturgical tradition of Christmas illuminated the season more than any coloured bulb ever did. I will give you the shortened version, as I hope to bring more light to your situation and perhaps a new appreciation for the season.

Historically, December has been reserved for a more humble celebration. This historical tradition is still observed by many Christians today and is commonly known as Advent. Advent is all about expectant waiting, hopeful anticipation, and cheerful preparation. The season of Advent begins on the nearest Sunday to November 30th and lasts for about four weeks. Symbolized by the lighting of five candles (four prior to Christmas and one on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day), the purpose of Advent is to recognize the past, present, and future reality of Christ Jesus our Lord. Although Advent calendars have been used to give surprises each day to help Christians through the season, it is more importantly marked by expectancy, waiting, hoping and praying as we celebrate our living God. Many say that if those who participate in Advent are exhausted by the time December 25th hits, then they have not observed Advent properly.

If Advent doesn't sound like a worthy enough substitution for what December used to look like (and still looks like for many non-university students) then maybe it would be helpful to know that, according to observers of Advent, the Christmas season does not actually start until December 24th. This is especially good news for those who have exams on December 20th. The final lighting of the fifth candle on Christmas Eve marks the beginning of a twelve day Christmas season which ends on January 5th. Convenient that our holidays run during this same time period. Certainly Advent is beginning to sound a little better; instead of one Christmas Day you could have twelve, and you'd have a better understanding of Bob and Doug McKenzie's rendition of the "Twelve days of Christmas."

Throughout these twelve days you can still celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25th, which we all know was his actual birth date. You can add in an observation of "Watch Night" on December 31st which reflects more purposefully on the past year while focusing on your recommitment for the one to come. This night is particularly meaningful for African-Americans who remember that this night was when slave owners would settle debts for the past year by the selling off of slaves. Many families in slavery would see brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers for the last time on this night. This remembrance will perhaps dim the ball drop a little but nonetheless add more meaningful reflection to the Christmas season.

Of course the Christmas season in

the Western liturgical tradition comes to an end on January 5th, but one more observation would never hurt just before we head back to classes. Epiphany celebrated on January 6th remembers the wise men who visited Jesus to worship Him. Epiphany focuses on the purpose of Christ's incarnation and his mission. It is a time to recognize, in return, the mission of the Church.

In North America we can become so shallow in our understanding of this season, and as university students we can grieve over the loss of this shallowness due to our schedules. There is another option though, one that better fits into the "reason for the season" as well as the exams that have been so graciously bestowed upon us (even if you have late exams). Perhaps this is the year you could decide to mix things up a bit and observe the season of Advent which is followed by a more meaningful Christmas celebration.

I'm not saying that whatever you've observed in the past is wrong, but I am suggesting you make sure that in whatever you decide to observe this holiday season you reflect on the reason why your traditions exist. Whatever tradition you observe this holiday season, don't let exams water down your anticipation because "often, the best thing about a certain event is the growing anticipation we experience while waiting." This is a wonderful season and Jesus delights when we take joy in the things He has done for us. Take time to celebrate with friends and family, participate in the giving and receiving of gifts, cozy up to the fireplace with a good book and relax, and in all you do during this holiday season take time to reflect on the One who makes it all meaningful.

God bless, and MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Blanket Drive Success

ANTHONY RAMUSCAK

As many of you know, November 30th was the last day for the blanket drive. The blankets collected went to Micah House, a single mom with eight children, an abused women's shelter, and to the Good Shepherd Center. I am both happy with and overwhelmed by the generosity of the Redeemer community and other Hamiltonians for their contributions and support; the grand total of the 2012 blanket drive was 305! Great job to all, indeed.

I want to give a special thanks to those who worked with me behind the scenes, both staff and students, without whom none of this would have been able to run as smoothly as it did. Thank you for your help and guidance, but also for your patience when I would literally check up on the process every day.

Blanket drive 2012 is over for this year, but it is my hope to do it again next November. I look back on the journey we had in this event and I think to myself, "Maybe we saved a life this winter because of these blankets which you gave." That, my friends, is the greatest feeling one could have. This I believe is the message of Christmas; a Child was born 2000 years ago, Christ Jesus, in a stable, in the cold, among the poorest of the poor, to show us that true riches are to be found in Him. He brought peace and love. He told us to love one another as He loves us. Dear friends, thank you for answering that call.



December 16, 2012
7:00 p.m.

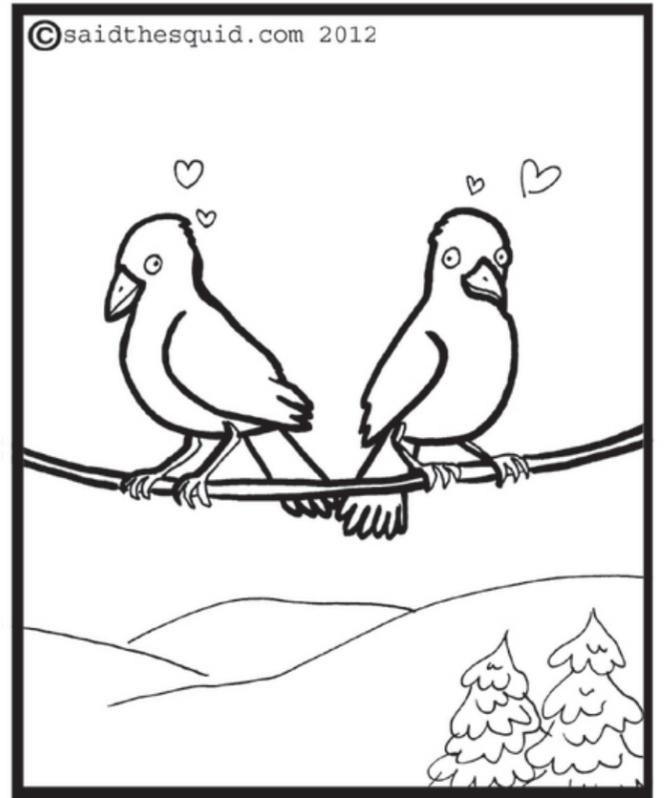
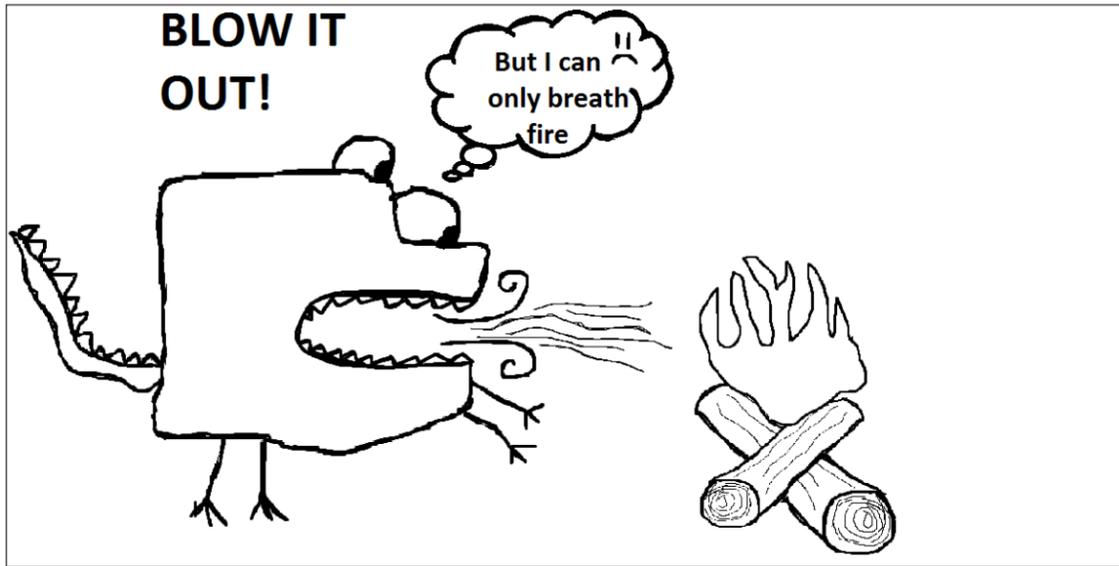
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last week's answers

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