PROCONIAN

Happy holidays from Stanfa Claus!

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Prayers for Paris

French classes send letters to victims of terrorist attacks

MILLY AMES

In response to the coordinated attacks on the city of Paris last November, a number of Chapel Hill High School students wrote letters of condolence and created artwork for students living in the city.

The project was introduced by French teacher Christen Campbell, who wanted it to serve as an outlet for her students and others to express themselves in a nonviolent way and offer support to those directly affected by the events. Her classes participated in a similar project after the Sandy Hook shootings in 2012.

"There's a TED Talk about writing more love letters, so that was probably the source of inspiration for doing this," Campbell said. "I had a lot of students who were asking, 'What do we do? How can we make a difference? We don't have money, so what can we do?' So I thought: let's write love letters."

Freshman Megan Zelasky, a student in Campbell's French III class, participated in the project, creating a French flag with a drawing of the world in the middle. The flag reads, "Vous n'êtes pas seul," which translates to "You are not alone."

"I learned a lot about how people can come together in a tragedy to mourn regardless of different nations," Zelasky said. "In the end, we are all people."

The package, weighing two pounds and 11 ounces, was sent to a friend of Campbell's working as a teacher at a secondary school in Paris. "It cost like 30 bucks, but it's worth it and I know it will go a long way," Campbell said.

See **PARIS**, PAGE 4

'The importance of having seats at the table'

LGBT community leaders lose local elections, leaving Chapel Hill without an openly gay leader in office

JARED WEBER

For the past three years, Carrboro mayor Lydia Lavelle and former Chapel Hill mayor Mark Kleinschmidt had the unique opportunity of working together to further LGBT rights and awareness in their neighboring towns.

The two leaders, who are both also members of the LGBT community, collaborated often at various landmark events, including giving joint speeches after the United States Supreme Court affirmed same-sex marriage as a Constitutional right June 26.

Lavelle said that she and the Chapel Hill mayor made a good team.

"We did work very well together," Lavelle said. "Not only do we get along well and share the same political philosophy, but we could advocate together about a number of issues, including those related to LGBT rights."

Kleinschmidt and Lavelle no longer have the same political opportunities, though, after the Chapel Hill mayor's bid for a third term was denied by challenger Pam Hemminger on November 3.

Kleinschmidt was not the only Chapel Hill LGBT representative to be voted out of office on Election Day. Town Councilman Lee Storrow fell short in his first re-election campaign, finishing in seventh place overall.

The election results leave Chapel Hill in a position it has not been in since Kleinschmidt took office. After the newly elected Chapel Hill Town Council swore in Hemminger at its first meeting on December 2, the city is not represented by any openly gay leaders.

No substitute for experience

"[Chapel Hill] is an extraordinary community that appreciates diversity inclusive of LGBT people. It always has been," Kleinschmidt said.

PHOTO CREDIT: JARED WEBER

Former Chapel Hill mayor Mark Kleinschmidt poses for a picture with his partner Matt DeBellis at the Chapel Hill Town Council Meeting on December 2. The meeting was Kleinschmidt's last as mayor of Chapel Hill.

Kleinschmidt, an openly gay man, has been a strong advocate for the town of Chapel Hill and all of its ethnicities for the last six years. He served as an honorary co-chair on The Southerners for the Freedom to Marry campaign and wrote open letters to the community after the passing of Amendment One in 2012.

He does not feel that the inclusive culture of Chapel Hill will change anytime soon, expressing hope in the new mayor and town councilpeople.

Lavelle feels that the new city government will need to do more to prove its support to the LGBT community, as they are not members themselves.

"Having policy makers present who live day-to-day as members of the LGBT community has been very important," Lavelle said. "With no gay members on the council for the first time in several years, the current council members will need to work much harder to be aware of and speak about issues facing the LGBT community."

Kleinschmidt hopes that his friend Lavelle's statements will reflect reality. The former mayor emphasized the importance of "having seats at the table."

"The difference is, when you actually have someone who reflects that group, you don't have to ask," Kleinschmidt said. "You live the experience, and it's hard to substitute for that."

An increasing trend

While a complete lack of LGBT political representation is a recent reality for the Chapel Hill community, the change reflects an increasing trend across several liberal areas of North Carolina in the past few years.

The LGBT community was left without a voice in the state legislature last November, as the lone openly gay house representative, Guilford Democrat Marcus Brandon, chose not to seek re-election.

After this year's local elections, nine openly LGBT North Carolinian political leaders remain in city, state and national government, four fewer than the 13 politicians who were in office following the 2013 elections, according to LGBT rights advocacy group Equality NC.

English teacher Danielle Cohen feels that political misrepresentation for LGBT people "never stopped being a problem."

"Hatred of queer people is ingrained in some people's psyches in a way they might not even be aware of," Cohen said. "You can't just isolate it to North Carolina. Let's be real: prejudice towards gay and lesbian people is worldwide."

What comes next?

Kleinschmidt plans to focus fully on his professional life as an attorney.

The former mayor did leave the door open for a potential return to politics though.

"I will always consider opportunities to serve, and I will always be someone who is in service to this community," he said.

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The ongoing history of Chapel Hill High School's Thanksgiving Dance	*Nobel Prize winner Aziz Sancar discusses his award, chemistry and life experiences*	*New mayor Pam Hemminger is already thinking of ways to better Chapel Hill*	Proconian's *Paul McLaughlin and Jenna Nicotra offer their winter style tips*	*East Chapel Hill should have acted in homophobic graffiti scandal*
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SCHOOL NEWS

Delving into the Chapel Hill tradition of the Thanksgiving Dance

PHOTO CREDIT: JARED WEBER

Sophomores Julia Ziaee and Eric Xu and seniors Nick Hebert, Paige Haskins, Hannah Cable and Nick Young (left to right) all attended the Thanksgiving Dance November 21 at the Sheraton Hotel in Chapel Hill.

GILLIE WEEKS

While dancing the night away on November 21, students were likely not thinking about the history behind the Thanksgiving Dance. The dance is "Sadie Hawkins," meaning that girls ask their male dates, the opposite of the societal norm of guys asking girls.

Chapel Hill has held a Sadie Hawkins Thanksgiving Dance for decades, though it was not always inclusive of the entire student body.

Donna Gates, administrative assistant for Chapel Hill High School Student Services, attended Chapel Hill in the mid-1970's, when the dance was invite-only.

"If you didn't get an invitation, you didn't get to go. It was usually done by a group of girls. It was like a small society clique," Gates said. "The ones that didn't get an invitation got their feelings hurt really bad. It was really sad."

Currently, the dance is planned by a committee of girls from all the high schools in the district and is open to anyone.

Gates feels that the new system is an improvement.

"I always thought it was really not a good thing," Gates said.

Senior Reagan Roeber, one of the committee's presidents, appreciates the Sadie Hawkins style.

"It's always nice to have a little change. Besides, it's tradition," Roeber said.

Although the dance may be more inclusive than before, some are concerned that it ignores students of the Queer community.

"It'd be great to see students and our school take the spirit of Sadie Hawkins—of turning societal gender norms on their head—even further and be inclusive of all sexual orientations and genders," junior Maddie Wiener said.

Others worry about an implication that it is the only dance where it is okay for girls to ask guys.

"If we don't want a girl asking a guy out to be abnormal, then we need to stop pretending it necessitates its own special occasion," Wiener said.

Traditionally, with Chapel Hill's other annual dances, Prom and Winter Formal, most dance proposals involve guys asking girls.

Sophomore Charlotte Macdonald was happy that the November dance proved an exception from the norm. She asked a guy to the Thanksgiving Dance this year.

"I probably would not ask a guy to a dance unless it was Sadie Hawkins," Macdonald said.

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The T-Dance then and now

1983

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY SEAGROVES

Chapel Hill alumnus Mary Brooks Rice Seagroves, class of 1984, poses for pictures with Chris George before the 1983 Thanksgiving Dance. The Thanksgiving Dance is Chapel Hill's only Sadie Hawkins dance, meaning that the girls ask the guys to be dates.

2015

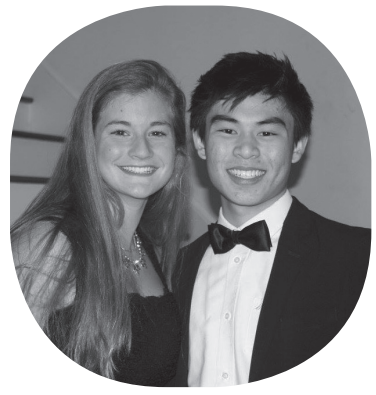

PHOTO COURTESY OF TED HENDERSHOT

Seniors Claire DeSelm and Deil Cho take photos at a friend's house before attending the Thanksgiving Dance November 21. "I think everyone had a good time. It was a really welcoming environment," DeSelm, who was a dance committee president, said.

Game clubs set aside sleep for Extra Life video game marathon

PHOTO CREDIT: SAM NIELSEN

Social studies teacher David Bennett and students play different board games.

SAM NIELSEN

Chapel Hill students played games for 24 hours straight in November—not only to have fun, but also to raise money for children's hospitals.

The gaming marathon, organized by the Tabletop Gaming and Video Game clubs, featured computer games, console games, board games, card games and live-action roleplay.

"I liked the variety of activities that people did—people who were analog tabletop gamers played tabletop games; people who were PC gamers played PC games. There was kind of the whole gambit of opportunities for students to do something that they wanted to do," Chapel Hill digital design teacher and Video Game Club sponsor Garrison Reid said.

To participate in the marathon, students had to donate money to Extra Life, a program that organizes and promotes gaming marathons as a way to give money to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (CMNH). CMNH provides funding to children's hospitals in the United States and Canada.

The clubs hold the event each year. This year, students raised $1,670 for the program.

Reid thinks that the marathon was a good experience for the students involved.

"We know that this is a population that needs socialization and needs to think about the broader impact," Reid said. "Meaning that it's not just them in a room playing games; but, that it tethers to everyone else. There's a wide world of people and we need to make sure that we're considering that as we play our games."

Video Game Club President and junior Jacob Williams enjoyed the event, but plans on making improvements for next year.

"It was fun," Williams said. "But we want a bit more organization in setting up people's computers, because, while it was good this year, we did have a lot of computers, so getting them set up in the right areas was annoying."

Williams also hopes to raise more money next year, as the club shoots for a goal of $2,000.

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Ken Stewart travels to Kazakhstan

Spanish teacher Ken Stewart has travelled the world, visiting remote destinations including Machu Picchu, Tahiti and Croatia, as well as many other Spanish-speaking countries. Recently, Stewart went to Kazakhstan as part of an effort to help spread the AP Spanish Language program in schools outside of the country. Proconian's *Dan Kleissler spoke with the 2006 National Spanish Teacher of the Year to learn about his travels.*

DAN KLEISSLER

Many believe him to be an international spy, while others argue that he's ex-CIA; however, everyone can agree that Spanish teacher Ken Stewart always seems to be up to something big.

After being invited by a local school, Stewart travelled to Kazakhstan in November. He left with the intention to make personal connections and discover another culture while developing a curriculum with the school.

"I had the opportunity to work with about 30 teachers. I did a two-day workshop for them. I got to spend two days as well getting to know the city and the school," Stewart said.

Stewart travelled to Almaty, Kazakhstan, a city in the southeast part of the country with a population of about 1.5 million.

Before departing, Stewart was concerned about the safety of such a trip due to inconsistencies with airlines. Nevertheless, he decided to make the trip and successfully arrived at the school.

The journey involved 17 hours of flying, not including an unexpected change of plans.

"It was not easy," Stewart said. "The airline of Germany was having a flight attendant strike. I ended up avoiding that on the way over … It took me about ten hours."

Stewart was sent on the trip by the educational organization College Board.

"I've been working with College Board for over 20 years," Stewart said. "Teaching teachers is something I really enjoy doing."

At the school in Almaty, Stewart led a workshop on how to build their pre-AP program. Stewart has garnered a reputation over his years of international teaching and is often invited to travel to such schools.

The school that Stewart visited is part of Quality Schools International, a coalition of 38 schools spread across the globe.

"It was neat to see how other teachers approach their discipline of teaching," Stewart said.

Connections between people became one of Stewart's favorite aspects of his journey. The relationships he formed, including his friendship with fellow teacher Thomas Shearer from the State Department, will allow Stewart to bring the lessons he learned to a global community.

"It was an honor to get to do something like [this]," Stewart said. "There is no substitute for being able to understand [the world] around you."

Stewart enjoyed his trip, specifically the opportunity to see a unique country. He now plans to return to Kazakhstan, a country he knew very little about before his trip.

Shortly after returning, Stewart took a weekend trip to Peru. He brought his students back keychains and trinkets as gifts.

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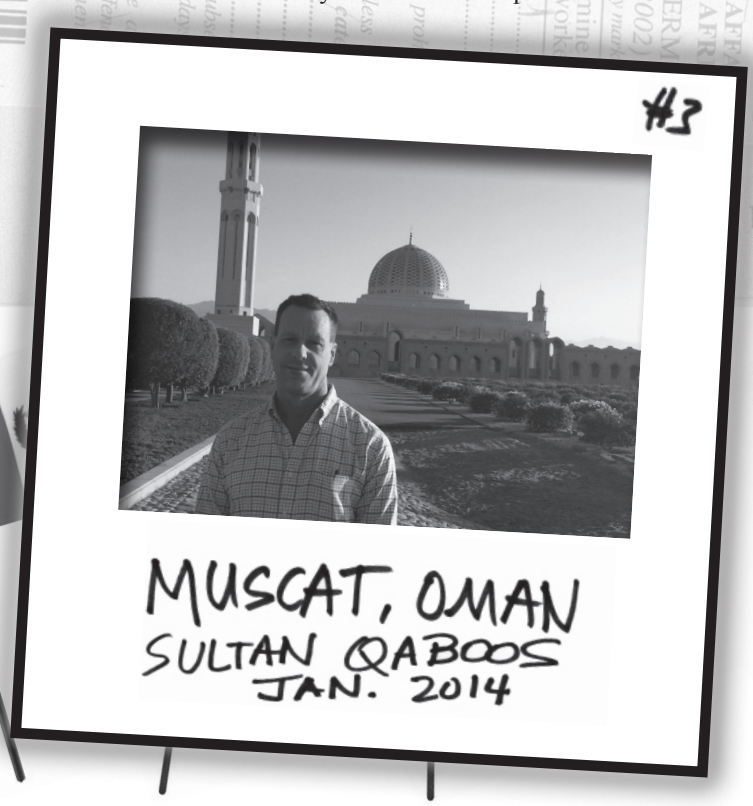
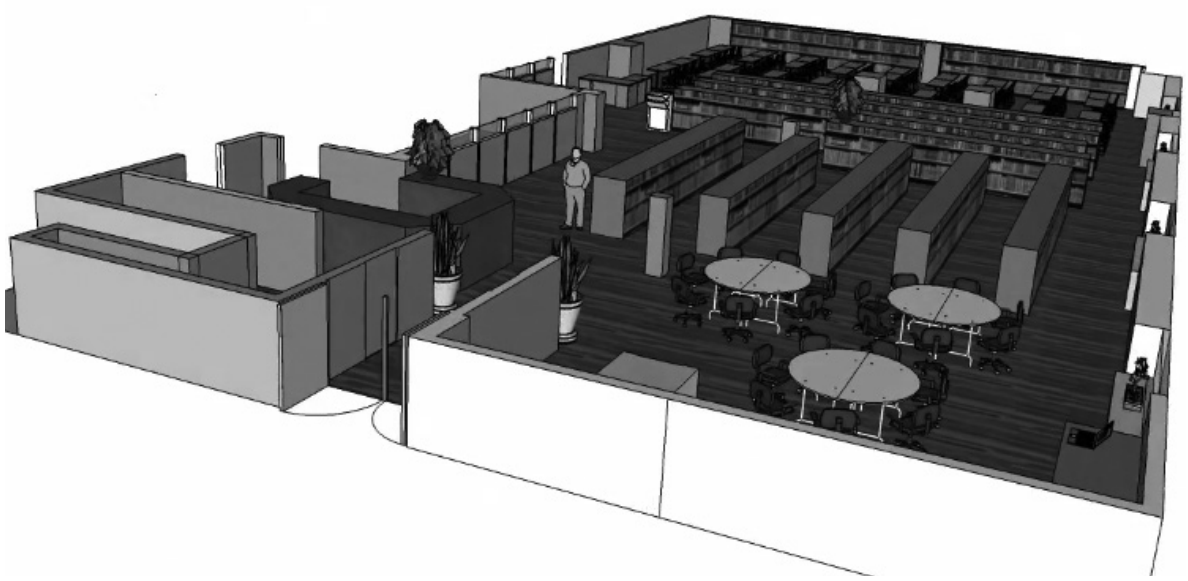


GRAPHIC DESIGN: JARED WEBER

Architecture class redesigns library



GRAPHIC DESIGN COURTESY OF JACK SCHAPPELL, IVY SMITH, ANDREW BAICEANU AND ALBERT NYAMAYARO

Students used computer aided design and drafting (CADD) software to design their floor plans before presenting them to Library Media Specialist SaCola Lehr and Principal Sulura Jackson.

SARAH TAEKMAN

Visitors to the library noticed a change in the room's layout in October, as drafting teacher William McSwain and his architecture class began renovations, following floor plans they developed.

The library and media center were already undergoing renovations, in which a new computer lab was created. However, the company hired to do so only created layouts for the classroom, leaving half of the library undesigned and empty.

School Library Media Specialist SaCola Lehr recruited McSwain to complete the other half of the library floor plan.

McSwain sees the project as a chance to give his architecture class real-world experience in measuring spaces and designing layouts.

"With real-world projects, it's great because you actually have to measure," McSwain said. "You have to be accurate and get measurements on the actual existing building."

Students split into groups of four to take measurements of the current library and create ideas for new layouts.

McSwain also put a job-applicable spin on the project, having students create video tours of their designs and pitch them to Lehr and Principal Sulura Jackson.

In the end, the librarians decided to take different aspects from all of the designs presented and incorporate them into the final library floor plan.

Sophomore Nadiya Farrington saw the decision as another lesson to be learned.

"You're not always going to see your final project built up when you present an idea. You have to meet your client's needs," Farrington said.

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PARIS,
from PAGE 1

"I lived in Paris—in the neighborhood where the Bataclan hall is—for three years and in France for 5 years and had all these people and all these connections. I just felt like it was really important for my students to be able to support our French compatriots, and to do something," Campbell said. "I feel like it's part of the grieving process for everyone."

The students' work took many different forms, including long letters of support, posters and other crafts.

Senior Thilini Weerakkody expressed how gratifying it was to see her fellow classmates and citizens band together to show their sympathies for the people of France.

"The solidarity amongst the people in both France and USA was beautiful," Weerakkody said. "I gained a lot of respect for my peers because they showed how much they cared about the people in France."

The letters and artwork created by students expressed messages of comfort for the victims rather than anger towards the perpetrators of the terrorism. Although some people, especially over social media, had the blamed the events on a generalized group of people, Weerakkody and others recognize that it is not the appropriate way to react to the situation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTEN CAMPBELL

"All the hands of the Chapel Hill community embrace you with love, hope and condolences," reads one student's message. The artwork was sent to citizens of Paris, France after November 13 terrorist attacks killed 130 people and countless others injured.

"I think that it's important not to blame the masses, but identify the minority. The people who did these bombings and shootings aren't representative of a religion, ethnicity or economic status," Weerakkody said. "We need to ensure that none of the backlash goes to the immigrants or Muslims."

In addition to Campbell's students, volunteers and students from Kristen Morgan's Spanish classes convened to express their sorrow and sympathies creatively.

If any more students express interest in the project, Campbell is prepared to work with them in the coming months to send another package to the victims.

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New history course invites veteran visitors to speak at Chapel Hill

SARAH TAEKMAN

Most students would consider a man decked out in a full helicopter pilot uniform in their classroom unusual, but such guest lecturers have become standard for Chapel Hill's new Modern Global Conflicts course.

As part of the history teacher Holly Loranger's class's unit on the Vietnam War, multiple Vietnam War veterans came in to share their wartime experiences with students.

Loranger has brought guest speakers into her classes for over ten years, originally doing so in her U.S. History and Comparative Religion courses.

"It's a model that I've known for a really long time is very effective and powerful for students," Loranger said. "To me, it was a no-brainer to incorporate that model into a class that's focused on contemporary issues and conflicts."

Students heard about a variety of Vietnam jobs and experiences, ranging anywhere from comforting troops as part of the Donut Dolly girl's group to piloting combat helicopters.

Senior Katie Hollowell is a student in the Global Conflicts class, and has found the speakers informative.

"They helped me understand the war better because it actually felt like I was there," Hollowell said. "Because [I get to hear it] firsthand from someone who lived it, I can get those little details of what happened."

Following guest presentations, students wrote letters thanking the veterans for coming to speak and reflecting on aspects of the presentation. But composing the letter also served a purpose in the students' learning.

"I think it shows gratitude to the veteran for what they did, but also for their time and their willingness to share their experience," Loranger said. "It's also important for the students to step back and reflect on 'What did you learn?' from this, 'What stands out to you?' and 'Why does this matter?'"

Phil Beane served in the Vietnam War as part of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. He shared his extensive knowledge of battle tactics and combat experiences with the class.

"Well, it's part of history and I'm a history buff," Beane said. "And because it's something like

PHOTO CREDIT: SARAH TAEKMAN

United States military veteran Mary "Larry" Young Hines presents before the Modern Global Conflicts class as history teacher Holly Loranger looks on. Hines was one of multiple veterans to speak to Modern Global Conflicts classes.

Vietnam, which is still somewhat controversial, it's important for me to come out and do these things."

Following the Vietnam War unit, Loranger plans to bring in more guest speakers to discuss a range of topics such as Israel and border disputes.

The class currently has plans to complete a service project at the end of the school year that will benefit veterans in the community.

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UNC professor Aziz Sancar wins Nobel Prize in chemistry for DNA repair

Nick Elston of *Proconian* sits down with the University of North Carolina professor to discuss his life and scientific accomplishments.

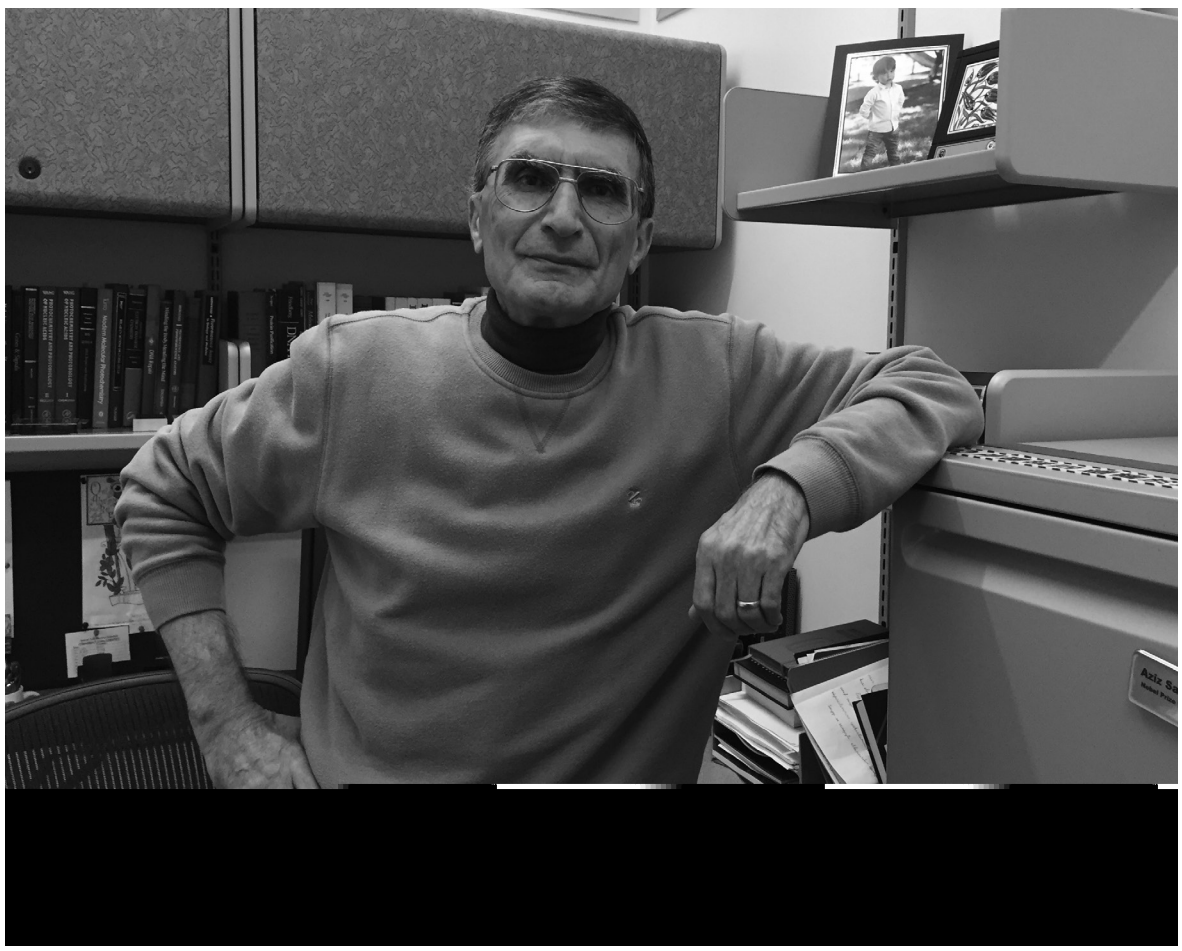

PHOTO CREDIT: JARED WEBER

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics Aziz Sancar was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work on DNA repair. Sancar received the award December 10 in Stockholm, Sweden, alongside Tomas Lindahl and Duke professor Paul L. Modrich, with whom he collaborated on the project.

Can you describe the moment you found out you had won the Nobel Prize?

It was five in the morning, and my wife was awake. [Gwen Sancar] took the phone call, and she's a Texan and an "in-your-face" kind of person. She told the guy who called, "Mister, do you know what time it is in Chapel Hill? And you're calling at this hour." Anyhow, he said it was an important call, so she woke me up and said it was from Stockholm.

Can you give an overview of the work that you did?

The work I did is under the general umbrella of DNA repair. In sunlight, there is a short wavelength, which is ultraviolet. It inhibits DNA replication or causes mutations, cancer and, eventually, death. So, my work has been basically on how cells repair this damage and prevent the harmful effects of UV light.

What applications could this have for humans?

We expect that humans would be more resistant to sunlight and skin cancer in the morning, so for sunbathing or for people who use tanning booths, morning hours would be better than afternoon hours. Having said that, we have not demonstrated it experimentally [in humans]. It is more difficult to do experiments with humans, so we are working on it right now. We are trying to see if we can apply our findings to optimize cancer treatment by cisplatin, so that you give the drug when the DNA repair capacity in cancer cells is lower and opposite that of normal tissue to increase the efficacy of the drug and decrease the side effects.

What brought you to the Chapel Hill area, and what do you like about UNC?

Basically, UNC was the only place that gave me a job. Having been [a graduate student] at Yale University, you develop this arrogant attitude of "Ivy League or bust." So I came here, and this is a very exciting place! Really fundamental medicine and endocrinology were developed at UNC. In addition to that, it's a wonderful place to live, and, of course, we have our sports.

Can you tell me a little bit about your background in Turkey?

I was born in a small town near Mardin called Savur. It's a farming town, so I grew up on a farm. I went to Mardin City for high school, and there I was the goalkeeper of the school team. Actually, my life goal was to be the goalkeeper for the Turkish national team. When the national team heard that, they autographed national uniforms for me.

How important is it to you to maintain your Turkish heritage?

It is very important—that's what I am. I think that when you go abroad, it gets re-emphasized. When I came [to America], I realized "Wow, Americans don't know anything about Turkey." … We are all human beings; every culture has its values and we should respect one another's values. That's what I'm trying to maintain here [at Carolina]. We have the Turkish House, Türk Evi—my wife and I established it—and we are trying to educate people about Turkish culture.

How important was your parents' influence in you becoming a scientist?

My father was the hardest working man I have ever met, so, he instilled in me a work ethic that made me work hard, but I don't think I ever worked as hard as he did. And my mother stressed education, so the influence came from both of them.

At what point did you know you wanted to pursue a career in science?

I had an outstanding chemistry teacher in my junior year of high school, and, at that point, I decided to become a chemist.

What advice would you give to high school students, especially those who want to pursue a career in science?

Most—80 to 90 percent—of experiments fail, so you should be really prepared to fail and keep at it; that's really important. … Science is not easy. Regardless of what you do, in my opinion, if you want to be the best in your field, you really need to work hard.

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About Aziz

- Aziz Sancar was born on September 8, 1946 in Savur, Turkey.
- Sancar attended the University of Istanbul to earn a Doctor of Medicine degree. After practicing medicine for two years in Turkey, he came to the United States, received a PhD from the University of Texas at Dallas and worked as a laboratory assistant at Yale University.
- Sancar is a cofounder of the Carolina Türk Evi—a center with private rooms for rent to Turkish students and to students desiring exposure to Turkish culture.
- He is an avid fan of UNC's women's soccer team and tries his best to never miss a game.

Online

Want to see more of our interview with Nobel Prize in Chemistry laureate Aziz Sancar?

Visit www.proconian.org, or our Facebook page, to watch the 11-minute video version of Elston's conversation with Sancar.

Guskiewicz chosen to be dean for UNC's College of Arts and Sciences

FORREST PRATSON

Kevin Guskiewicz will become the next dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) College of Arts and Sciences on January 1.

Guskiewicz, a neuroscientist and sports medicine researcher, has spent much of his time at UNC studying sport-related concussions. His work has shed light upon how head injuries can affect balance, cause long-term neurological issues.

In 2011, Guskiewicz won the MacArthur Genius award for his work on concussions. Later, in 2013, he was named one of 18 innovators and problem-solvers who are inspiring change in America by *Time Magazine*.

In his new role, Guskiewicz will still be involved in work related to concussions and athletics in general, but the new position will give him more freedom to develop the college to make it more competitive in the arts and sciences.

GUSKIEWICZ

"I want to bring a bold approach to reimagining the college and becoming more contemporary," Guskiewicz said. "But we're going to do that through strategic planning initiatives."

Guskiewicz is also the co-director of the Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center and a member of the National Football League's (NFL) Head, Neck and Spine Committee.

Along with his involvement in the NFL, Guskiewicz has ties to Chapel Hill High School.

All three of his sons attend or have attended Chapel Hill. Guskiewicz has also worked with Chapel Hill's football team by implementing accelerometers into the helmets of the players to measure impacts to the head players received.

The testing is now mandatory for all sports, contact or not.

Guskiewicz feels he is ready to take on his new job as dean.

"It's a big job and it's a job that takes someone with a lot of energy who also knows our campus and believes in the values that we've set forth," he said.

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Fall plays demonstrate tragedy in modern American high schools

SARAH TAEKMAN

Due to a delay in the state funding of the school's technical director position, the announcement of the fall play was postponed by several weeks.

Playgoers found that this year's plays covered much heavier, more mature themes than last year's play, *George Washington Slept Here*. Theater teacher Thomas Drago said that the purpose behind the switch was to provide material that was "more challenging for the actors."

"For these shows, I wanted to tap into social issues that students are faced with," Drago said.

The dramas showcase the darker sides of teenage culture: *Selfie* addresses mental health, relationships and body image; *The Day They Shot John Lennon* shows the aftermath of the assassination of a teenage musical icon; *From Up Here* touches on gun violence in schools; and *Fire Exit* covers the effects of a prank gone horribly wrong.

A difference in subject matter was just one of many changes this year, another being the drama department's production of four plays, rather than just one.

The last time the theater department produced multiple shows in one season—a system called "repertory theater"—was a number of years ago, when two of the shows produced were presented at the North Carolina Theater Conference High School Play Festival—the same play festival that *Selfie* was presented at in early November.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH LITZINGER

Senior Saane Chamberlin-Finau and sophomore Jack Davenport portray Caroline and Daniel in *From Up Here*. The play covered the repercussions of school gun violence.

The film festival was a selling point for many of the students.

"I was excited to go to the festival because I've never done that before," sophomore Sayali Gove, who played Laura in *Selfie*, said.

The move to repertory theater was meant to accommodate larger numbers of students in advanced acting classes and give students more opportunities to go onstage.

Additionally, *Fire Exit* was produced and presented entirely during school hours in order to allow students with other afterschool obligations to participate in a production.

The introduction of repertory theater had a few setbacks.

"Having enough time for the actors to rehearse is probably going to be the number one challenge," Drago said. "And I'm hoping that [in-class rehearsals] don't make them think this is going to be easy. The work still needs to be done, whether during a school day or after school."

Senior Abby Kameny, who played the part of Grace Barrett in *From Up Here*, noticed an increased amount of pressure in producing the plays this year.

"A drawback was memorizing lines—we had to do it a lot faster. In our play, we did pretty well with it; we were able to pull it together," Kameny said. "But half of the cast had never been in a play before, and I know it's hard to go from never being in a play to 'Okay, learn all your lines and do this and do that.'"

Auditions for the fall plays were restricted to students enrolled in Theater II, III and IV. Dwindling enrollment in the theater program and mandatory enrollment policies for other Chapel Hill arts programs factored into the decision. Drago also saw the new rule as a way to motivate students in his entry-level classes.

"I think it gives those in Theater I something to work for. I have 40 students in Theater I this year—they're awesome," Drago said. "And they know that, if they want to be in an afterschool play, they have to re-enroll next year as Theater II kids."

Kameny recognized both sides of the argument.

"There are a ton of really talented people who aren't necessarily taking theater, who would like to be in a play but couldn't this year," Kameny said. "The good news is the musical is open to anyone."

The spring play promises lighter subject matter in the form of *Spamalot*, a musical based off of the hit comedy *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The musical will be open to anyone in the student body, regardless of enrollment in a theater class.

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Not graffiti, but art: ceramics students try their hands at street art

MIGUEL RIVERA-TORRES

Various images have sprung up along the walls of Chapel Hill High School buildings. However, the creations are no ordinary graffiti.

The wall art is part of a Ceramics class project for students to try out new, creative art techniques.

"Some projects are creative experiments and [discuss] alter ego," ceramics teacher Kristen Morgan said. "And we tried to get them done for Halloween to show how people can have different personality traits or different things about themselves they don't normally show."

Many of the pieces resemble people, while others are focused on positive activism and bring positive attention to the school communities. They are all meant to give students a short diversion from the monotony of a normal school day.

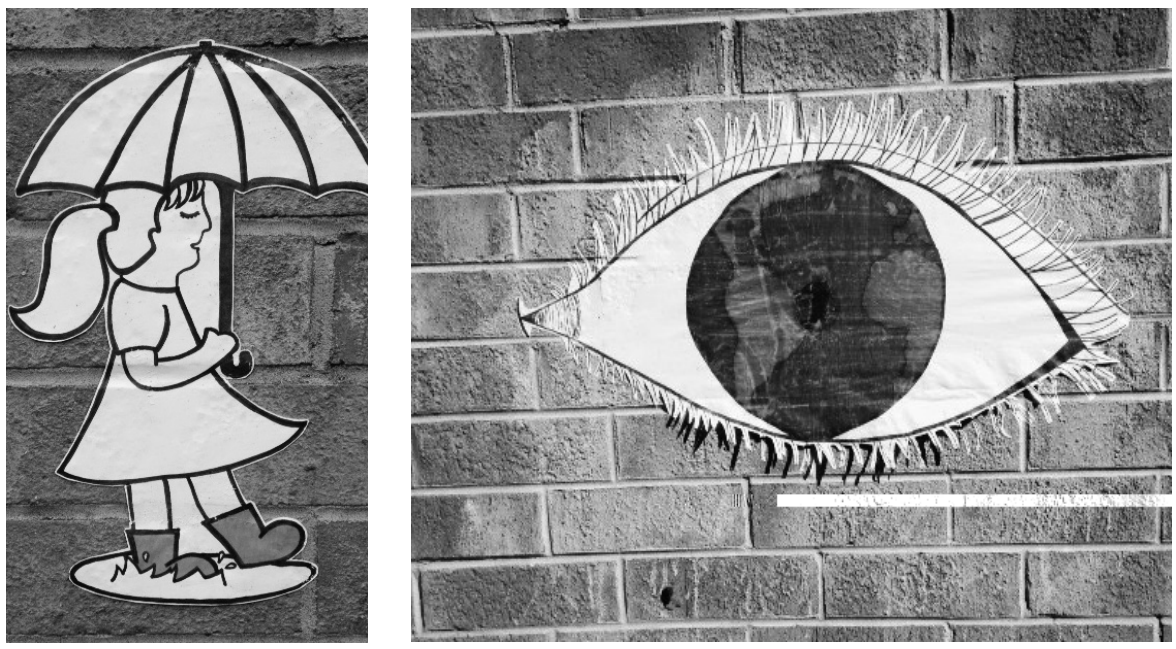

PHOTO CREDIT: MIGUEL RIVERA-TORRES

Freshman Ava Elliot's piece (left) and sophomore Charlotte Macdonald, freshman Katie Macdonald and sophomore Nina Early's piece (right) can be found on the walls of the D-building and C-building, respectively.

Morgan came up with the idea for the project after looking at the work of well-known artists, such as Banksy and Shepard Fairey, for inspiration.

Morgan commented on the way art can be used as both a positive activity and an act of resistance in difficult times.

Ceramics students enjoyed the project and used it to convey messages to the school and community.

Seniors Maxwell Sylvestre and Morgan Durant want to extend their project beyond school grounds by putting up their designs somewhere else in the community.

"The graffiti so far is pretty cool," Sylvestre said. "It's nice to be able to walk around the school and see some nice-looking art [where there is] normally a bad-looking brick wall."

Freshman Austin Cicale took part in the project and greatly enjoyed it.

"The project made me think about the past things that have happened to us in our lives," Cicale said.

The art was hung up with wheatpaste, making it easily removable to avoid damaging school property.

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Students 'face their fears' in school art exhibition

MILLY AMES

Honors Visual Art III and IV students expressed their creativity in a variety of mediums for Chapel Hill's "Face Your Fears" walkthrough art exhibition, held on campus October 30 during lunch.

With only eight people in both classes combined, the students chose to embark on a collaborative project. They created an exhibition focused on the interaction of two themes: fear and bodies.

"The fears that we're doing for the project are mostly fears that are kind of personal," senior Nay Chi Hlaing said. "When we think of fear, we think of monsters and stuff like that—but the fears that we actually have, for example, are vulnerability, or fear of opening up to people or fear of making mistakes."

Students and staff members interested in viewing the show were directed to a quieter hallway in the main building, the exact location of which had been left undisclosed until then. Hlaing says the combined classes chose the spot for its "creepy" appearance.

"Since our theme is about fear, we thought it would go perfectly," Hlaing said.

The media used in the artwork ranged from paintings on canvas to papier-mâché masks used in a video. Students worked on their pieces in and outside of class for about two months.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILLY AMES

Junior Yen Nguyen shows off her contribution to the Chapel Hill "Face Your Fears" walkthrough art exhibition October 30.

Junior Sarah Elliott, who created a series of watercolors, explored form by letting her paints bleed, an nontraditional technique for the medium. She described the focus of her paintings as "subjects that were restrained by their fears."

"I learned a lot about persisting with an artwork. This project took most of first quarter, which is a really long time to only focus on one set of works," Elliott said.

Junior Yen Nguyen created an acrylic painting for the show. Nguyen describes the work as "kind of a self portrait," but admits the subject has changed since she started the project.

"It depicts my imagery, or what I imagine helplessness to be, reaching out for help," Nguyen said.

Senior Kennan Staelin hopes that the exhibit was engaging and relatable for all the student visitors.

"While in high school, you are surrounded by people who are judging you or you think are judging you, so high schoolers tend to try to appear their best and any one of the tons of fears we have can potentially destroy our whole image," Staelin said. "All our fears are amplified because we care too much about what others think."

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Bond regresses as *Spectre* falls short of expectations

RYAN KLEISSLER, GUEST WRITER

KLEISSLER

This year has seen its share of international crime dramas and spy thrillers. From Tom Cruise's fifth outing as Ethan Hunt to Henry Cavill's first major role since *Superman*, both the summer and fall have been full of high intensity action. Neither the outlandish stunts of *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation* nor the cool humor of *The Man from Uncle* could outweigh the anticipation for the follow up to 2012's *Skyfall—Spectre*.

In the Bond franchise's newest film, a message from 007's past brings him to discover the existence of a sinister organization called SPECTRE. While hunting for the group's leader, the spy uncovers more of his own mysterious history.

The stage was set for *Spectre* to own the fall box office. The return of well-received Daniel Craig as Bond, and the introduction of Oscar Award winner Christoph Waltz as unknown villain Oberhauser helped bring attention and excitement to the 24th Bond film. Director Sam Mendes promised to continue the success of *Skyfall* and bring the audience deeper into Bond's mysterious past and character.

Unfortunately, *Spectre* falls short of the high expectations and fails to progress the series. Whereas *Skyfall* expanded on Bond's backstory and made him a more human and emotional character, *Spectre* enters the territory of nostalgic throwbacks and tropes that detract from the film.

While Sam Mendes incorporates beautiful locations and seemingly interesting characters, he does not draw connections between them that make any logical sense to the plot. Instead, Bond is shoved around from set piece to set piece, with characters popping in and out with no real affect on Bond or the overarching story.

What made Daniel Craig's earlier portrayals of Bond in 2006's *Casino Royale* and 2012's *Skyfall* so well-received by modern audiences is that they presented a new, more original look at the British spy. The physics-defying stunts, outlandish villains, odd gadgets and side character 'Bond Girls' were all dropped for a deep, emotional story that defined the Bond series.

Spectre, unfortunately, picks these tropes back up in an attempt to draw from the successes of both the new and classic films. Roles so heavily emphasized prior to the film's release like Monica Bellucci's Lucia Sciarra, a criminal's widow that serves as a love interest to James Bond, exemplify how the film promised so much yet delivered so little. Advertised as a role that would push past the misogyny of earlier films and present new relationships similar to that of Judi Dench's M, the actress instead appears in the film for less than ten minutes and acts as little more than prop for exposition.

As a stand alone film, *Spectre* provides cheap, entertaining action that is complimented by all the regulars of a Bond film: interesting locations, exciting action and—in the case of this year's film—incredible cinematography. However, all the elements brought together in order to call back to the past, while also trying to evolve the series, miss their mark and make this Bond a poorly conceived sideshow.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MGM

***Spectre* attempted to revive old Bond gags, while also taking a fresh look at the British spy. Guest writer Ryan Kleissler felt the change derailed progress made by recent installments.**

Ryan Kleissler is a guest writer for the Proconian *and a longtime fan of the James Bond film franchise. Kleissler looks forward to reviewing* Star Wars: The Force Awakens *in the February issue of* Proconian.

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Way lights the show

PHOTO CREDIT: BRENDAN HOLLY

New technical theater teacher Andrew Way started his new job in September.

GRACE NEWTON

Chapel Hill recently hired a new staff member to shine the lights on the seasonal drama productions.

The new hire, named Andrew Way, will help technical theater teacher Thomas Drago teach classes and will help run and prepare all performances in Hanes Auditorium.

Drago, who recommended Way for the position, said that Way has worked on several high-profile plays, including *Wicked* and *Phantom of the Opera*.

"We wanted a technical director with professional experience who has also worked in a classroom setting," Drago said. "He'll bring a strong work ethic and sound artistic vision to the technical theater program."

Way enjoys the artistic, physical, and mental challenges involved with running a show.

"When one works in any of the performance arts, there is the challenge to perform your job in front of an audience," Way said. "The rush that I feel is the same sort of feeling that I experience in any sort of sport that I have been involved in."

In his short time in the position, Way has already assimilated into the Chapel Hill environment.

"I like the atmosphere. It's a great campus," Way said.

Theater II student Claire Mink participated in the fall play *The Day They Shot John Lennon*, and has become familiar with Way.

"Mr. Way created the set for our fall show, and it was fantastic," Mink said. "I'm eager to see how he does *Spamalot* in the spring."

Theater Tech III student Donya Weaver, believes Way is doing well in the position.

"[Way] has faith in his students and is willing to teach them," Weaver said.

Way is projected to have a positive impact on the theater department, not only in plays, but also in everything else that happens on the Chapel Hill stage.

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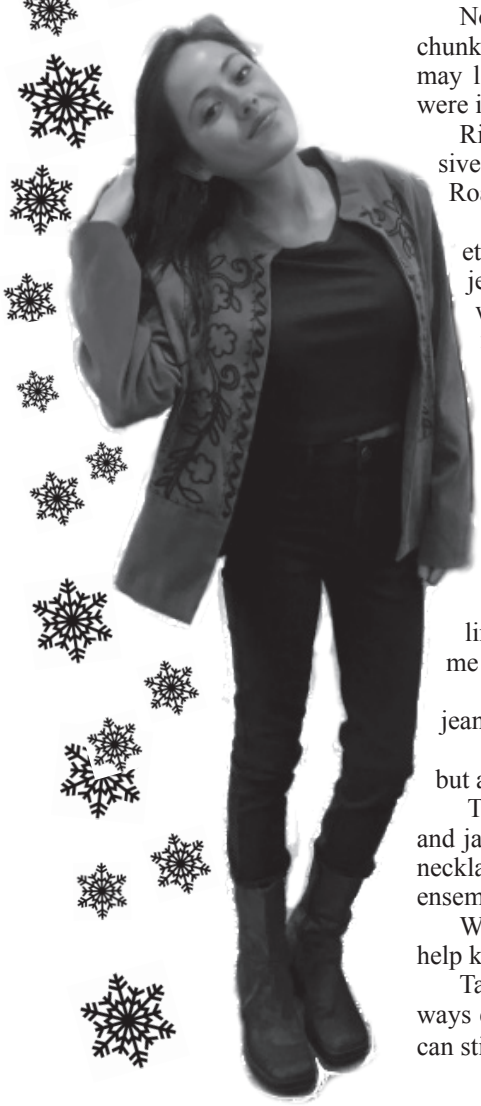
Keeping warm, staying stylish: A *Proconian* winter fashion expedition

With temperatures dropping fast, students are faced with a dilemma—sacrifice style for warmth or keep chilly and chic? Proconian's *Jenna Nicotra and Paul McLaughlin know the solutions to your problems. The two share their tips on combatting the cold while staying fresh.*



JENNA NICOTRA

Now is a good time to start perusing stores for chunky boots, big jackets, sweaters and jeans that may look like they were worn when your parents were in high school.

Rising trends do not always have to be expensive. I took a trip to the PTA thrift shop on Elliot Road to find retro-inspired apparel for low prices.

It was easy to find this beige, trending jacket for the upcoming holiday season, while the jeans, simple green crop top and suede boots were similar to what you could find in a department store.

Junior Lauren Alston publishes a blog where she writes about topics ranging from healthy living to the newest fashion trends.

"In Fall 2015, texture is really big, and the major trends include leather, suede and lace," Alston said.

If you are looking to get dressed up, lace dresses are the way to go.

Uniquities is a boutique located on Franklin Street. Tiffany Cole, the store manager, filled me in on some of the other incoming trends.

"Ruffled jackets, short skirts and boot-cut jeans will be very popular this year," Cole said.

For a typical day to day outfit, keep it simple, but add bold statements and accessories.

Try to pair casual jeans or tees with urban boots and jackets. Spice it up with accessories. A chunky necklace or bracelet can add some flashiness to your ensemble.

Winter can get pretty chilly. Wearing a scarf will help keep you warm and stylish at the same time.

Taking a risk and adding a punch of color is always exciting. During the winter, fashion decisions can still be fun.

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Winter is here, and it is time to get your wardrobe together to prepare yourself for the cold weather—not just to endure it, but to combat it with style.

First and foremost, you need to keep warm. Retro windbreaker jackets are definitely in style and, like their name suggests, will protect against the wind. Denim jackets also match anything. If you want a more formal look, try a leather jacket.

For headwear, any type of beanie works. My preference is the pom-pom beanie because it stands out and looks good.

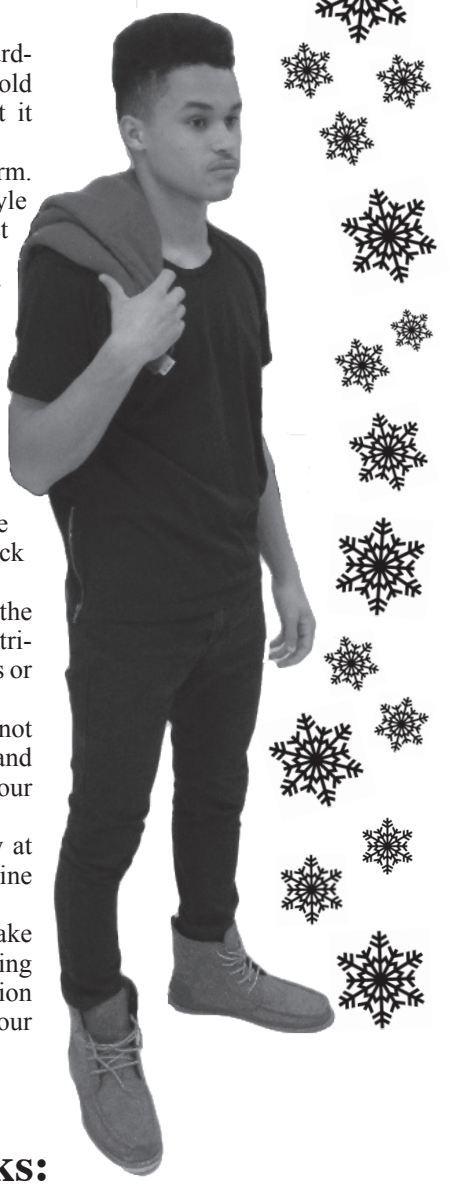
You have to consider the outfit under your jacket, too. Try flannel sweaters—especially Christmas sweaters—hoodies and long sleeve cotton shirts—it is my personal choice. Some pants that you can get are light wash jeans or black jeans, as they are versatile.

If you are a fan of rolling your jeans up at the ankles, make sure you get some colorful and intricate socks to go along with them—holiday socks or other fashionable socks are perfect.

For footwear, I recommend boots; they will not be ruined by rain, snow or the salt on sidewalks and roads. If you are courageous enough, go out of your comfort zone and wear men's Uggs.

Many of these items can be found cheaply at Stein Mart, Macy's or Forever 21 Men's, or online on websites such as ASOS.com.

Whatever you choose to wear this winter, make sure you wear what you feel comfortable wearing and that it fits *you*. Do not let society and fashion change your character or how you act towards your friends.



Jenna's picks:

Dark wash jeans
$20-40

Beige jacket
$30-40

Urban boots
$30-40

Light-wash jeans
$20-30

Paul's picks:

Pom-pom beanie
$10-20

Fun socks
$10

Star Wars: Battlefront III storms consoles with entertaining gameplay

BRENDAN HOLLY

Star Wars: Battlefront III, produced by the Electronic Arts Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment AB and released November 17, is the latest game to sweep through the gaming consoles of students. Battlefront has come out on the advent of the new *Stars Wars* movie, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

The game, a sequel to the hit game Star Wars: Battlefront II, has been hyped up for the past few months. Upon its release, it got the distinction of being the fourth fastest selling video game of 2015 and exceeded the sales of its prequel by 117%—making it the biggest launch of a video game in the *Star Wars* franchise.

"The game is fun to play," Chapel Hill graphic design teacher Kevin Schoden said, and, based off of the massive amount of support the game has received, it seems many gamers agree with him.

I got the chance to sit down and play the game with a group of Chapel Hill students in a set of online multiplayer games, a function on the Xbox One where you can play games with your friends through an online connection.

My first impression was of the quality of the graphics. The dry desert landscapes, blowing sand waves and rusted starships of Tatooine contrast beautifully with the lush forest moon of Endor, where the occasional Ewok will pop its head out of its hut. The diversity and sheer size of the 12 maps provide a different experience with every match.

The gameplay is much simpler than the battlegrounds themselves. The nine game modes range from 20 vs. 20 warfare to 4 vs. 4 shootouts, in which you can find yourself fighting for the Rebel Alliance or the Imperial Forces.

"You can become a Jedi or a Sith when you find tokens, and wreck havoc on the other team," Schoden said.

The weapons are disappointing because there are no modifications you can make to them to fit your play style. The shooting is very straightforward and the action is non-stop. The gameplay can be repetitive, and being picked off by a pulse cannon from across the map is commonplace—much to my annoyance.

The lack of a single-player campaign is also disappointing, as I have always found it entertaining to work through a storyline.

Overall, I enjoyed the gaming experience; however, certain faults drew my attention away from the beauty of the game. Additionally, its long term enjoyability is questionable, as is the case for most online-only games are.

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Star Wars: Battlefront III is a multiplayer first-person shooter that takes place in the *Star Wars* universe.

Practical measures are needed to reduce district's achievement gap

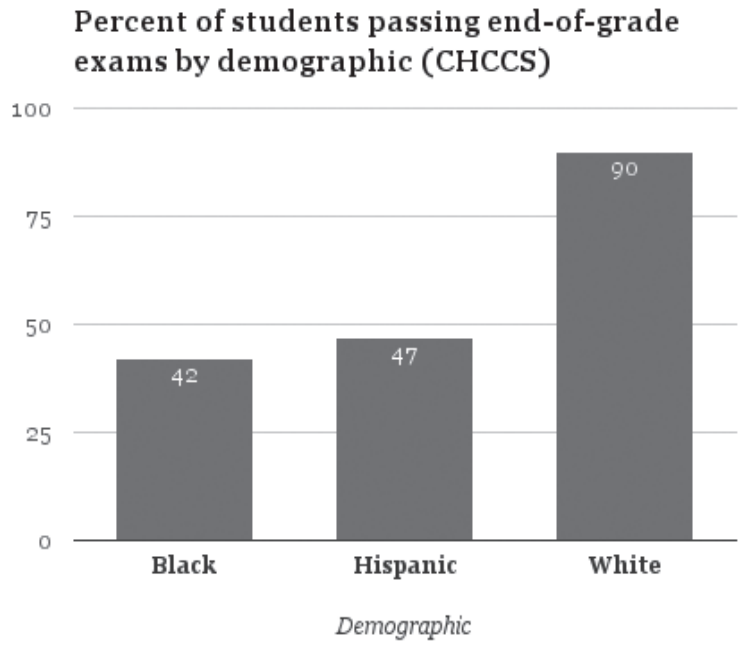
Project ADVANCE has the right idea, but changes must be made to make the initiative successful.

ELI ROSE

Policy Code: 4001 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) "affirms the principle that every student, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, cultural or economic background, sexual orientation, or disability, should be given an equal educational opportunity for educational development."

However, one group feels this district policy is not being fulfilled in the case of minority students: the Campaign for Racial Equity in Our Schools protested in front of Lincoln Center on October 28, calling for a curriculum that is race-conscious and the implementation of mandatory competency training for staff that would focus on racial and cultural themes.

The group is continuing a long-standing effort in CHCCS to close the achievement gap between white and minority students, which has led to a "crisis situation," group co-founder Stephanie Perry said.



GRAPHIC DESIGN : JARED WEBER

Statistics released by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) following the 2013-2014 school year showed that white students are more than twice as likely to pass their end-of-grade exams than a black student.

The group protested that black students receive suspensions at eight times the rate of white students, and less than half of them passed end-of-course and end-of-grade tests in the 2014-2015 school year.

Talking points at the protest included discrepancies between whites and minorities in percentages of students passing end-of-course exams and enrolling in gifted programming, as well as the higher rate at which black students are suspended compared to whites.

Superintendent Tom Forcella responded to the protesters by referencing Project ADVANCE, an initiative that focuses specifically on compensation for teachers' work.

In recent years, the district has hit schools with a steady barrage of initiatives, plans and other efforts to close the achievement gap.

The outlines of the programs, including Project ADVANCE, are littered with superlatives that blur the line between the plan and implementation.

According to the district website, ADVANCE is "a strategic compensation plan for teachers and support staff that ties professional learning to salaries."

But how can the student population, the most important part of the effort, work towards a goal that is specifically designated "for teachers"?

Perhaps, instead, the district should invest more in existing measures that have already made improvements and would continue to do so if reworked and given more support.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an organization that works to close the achievement gap and prepare minority students for college and other post-high school opportunities. AVID is active in 44 states, including North Carolina, and impacts over 800,000 students.

Of AVID's 36,481 seniors in 2013-2014, 99 percent graduated high school on time. By expanding the program to more underprivileged students, and, with the help of simple programs such as student-teacher tutoring, AVID could be made an even more effective tool to close the achievement gap.

In order to represent students of all backgrounds and allow every student an equal chance to get an education, the board must simplify and let the students do the work.

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East Chapel Hill should have acted in homophobic graffiti scandal

SARAH TAEKMAN

You are a queer 16-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School, and you are extremely excited to be attending the North Carolina Pridefest 2015 with your school's Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA) Club. It promises to be a good time, with a festival and thousands of other people who accept you for you.

Maybe it is the QSA club at work, but school feels safe. The teachers and students are accepting, flyers plastered around the school walls promote LGBT acceptance and you always enjoy going to QSA club meetings, in which you can talk to other students who share the same experiences as you.

The club agrees to meet early in the morning in the school parking lot in order to carpool to the event. But as you pull into the lot next to the other club members, you spot unfamiliar writing on the brick walls of the school.

It reads: "F*** gays."

Thus was the scene that faced the QSA club on September 26. Club members, who met in the school's parking lot to drive to the North Carolina Pridefest in Durham, found homophobic graffiti that had been scrawled on the wall hours beforehand. And, to the chagrin of students, East Chapel Hill Principal Eileen Tully did not take action on the matter.

Tully, in email correspondence with the president of the QSA club, junior Linnea Van Manen, that she was unaware that the QSA club was carpooling from the parking lot that Saturday and "thought that the graffiti was a random act of ignorance and hatred and not one directed toward East students."

Tully made a number of suggestions as to what could be done to address the incident, such as sending out an automated phone message saying such hateful acts like this would not be permitted, and promised to discuss it at the faculty meeting. However, neither of her ideas came to fruition.

Inaction seems to be a trend. An online petition asking Tully to condemn the actions received over 400 signatures from students and parents. Still no response.

It spoke volumes when Superintendent Tom Forcella—and not one East Chapel Hill administrative member—addressed the issue. He said that, in the future, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) should focus more on teaching tolerance and that "the [East Chapel Hill High School] administration will dialogue with the students."

The reaction of East Chapel Hill's staff can best be described as tiptoeing; Van Manen and the QSA club's request for simple things, like home phone calls and assemblies, should supposedly reinforce the "safe environment" that the school boasts. So, what were they waiting for?

Hate is fueled and empowered by inaction: East Chapel Hill's administration cannot claim that their school is a safe place for LGBT youths when it fails to back up its stance on the matter. The school became unsafe when no action was taken on the matter—another act of homophobia swept under the rug. A lack of response to the incident simply opens the door for more hateful acts to occur in the future by showing students there will be no repercussions for their actions.

So, step into the shoes of a LGBT student at East Chapel Hill High School. Imagine watching your school struggle to tell students something as simple as "homophobia is bad" and "we will protect you."

Would you believe your school is safe?

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An East Chapel Hill High School year-in-review

In October, East Chapel Hill High School appeared in the news when homophobic graffiti was painted on one of its buildings. The incident was not the first time in 2015 that the Wildcats made headlines. In December, after Proconian *had gone to press, an East Chapel Hill mother reported that her special-needs daughter was "threatened and forced into performing sex acts" during school hours, garnering the attention of local TV, radio and newspapers. The following timeline details the other events that made up a hectic year at the East.*

May

Two senior female students at East Chapel Hill post a picture holding Confederate battle flags, captioned "South will rise."

June

Four students reportedly overdose on liquid ecstasy while taking exams.

October

The day before a QSA rally, unknown people spray-painted "F*** gays" on the facade of East Chapel Hill's main building.

GRAPHIC DESIGN : MILLY AMES

How to be a Happier Human: Show your affection

Social interactions are unavoidable. Whether with an old friend, pet, significant other or total stranger, positive ones can brighten your day. However, it is also important to keep your interactions school appropriate while at Chapel Hill. Proconian's *Milly Ames and Gillie Weeks encourage you to embrace your inner social butterfly and learn more about how commonly accepted gestures of affection can improve your morale.*

Milly: Giving someone a hug is one of the most socially accepted gestures of affection out there. It is a physical affirmation of the friendship you share with someone, and, after a long day, there is often nothing better.

For every hug you give, your brain releases a hormone called dopamine. Dopamine is often referred to as the "feel good" hormone, so if you do not consider yourself a "hugger," you may want to reconsider.

In my estimation, the average duration of a hug is about three seconds. Research suggests that the human brain operates in three-second intervals, so short hugs are the perfect, and likely most comfortable, length for any two people.

However, in my opinion, the best hugs are the long ones. These hugs should be reserved for the longest days. Research conducted at UNC-Chapel Hill claims that hugs become therapeutic at the 20 second mark, when the contentment hormone, oxytocin, is released. So, if you find a long hugger, never let them go—figuratively speaking, that is. You will probably need to release them at some point.

Gillie: Although humans are great and can give wonderful hugs, let's face it—humans can get annoying. Therefore, when looking for companionship, dogs are a stellar option. Curling up with your pooch can truly make you a happier human. I mean, they aren't called man's best friend for nothing.

If you are a person who loves your dog more than anything, science is on your side. Studies have shown that both humans and dogs experience an increase in oxytocin after mutual interaction. Like Milly said, oxytocin is a hormone that causes feelings of love and satisfaction when released. Studies also found that oxytocin levels were further increased when the dog and its owner exchanged lots of eye contact.

Plus, dogs are more attentive with humans than almost any other pet.

As someone who holds her dog very close to her heart, knowing the scientific reason my pup makes me so happy just makes me love her even more. So next time you are feeling down, just pet your dog and think about your rising oxytocin levels. Your four pooch will thank you for it too.

Milly: If you currently have a significant other, you are in luck. Hand holding has also been proven to reduce stress, not to mention it being a good way for you and your partner to showcase your relationship without losing all your other friends in the process due to excessive PDA.

The key player in raising your stress is a hormone called cortisol. Fortunately, studies have shown that hand holding and other affectionate touching can reduce the production of the compound. So, if you're trying to maintain a relationship while struggling under academic pressure, perhaps the solution to your problem could simply be holding hands more often.

But, coming from a girl whose longest relationship has been with her fellow runners on the cross-country team, I do not believe hand holding has to be reserved only for romantic commitment. Let's be real: given the standard duration of most high school relationships, the most important people in your life are your best friends, so why not hold hands with them and reduce some cortisol together?

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Gillie: Everyone knows that humans smile when they are happy, but few realize that it can be beneficial to smile when you are not. Even if you are not happy and fake a smile, that smile can actually make you happier to the point where you no longer have to fake it anymore.

Researchers have proven that even putting a pencil between your teeth—forcing yourself to smile—can make you happy. When the muscles involved in smiling are activated, they send a signal to your brain that stimulates your reward system, which increases your happiness. So, even if you are feeling sad, smile anyway.

Not only will smiling make you happier, it will also make others happier. Studies show that smiling is contagious, so you are not the only one who will benefit from the grin on your face.

In case you are not quite sold yet on the idea of smiling all the time, maybe science will convince you. It is estimated that the level of dopamine a smile can give you is equal to that of 2,000 bars of chocolate. Unless, of course, you dislike chocolate—then you are just crazy.

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Mass shootings are now the norm

JARED WEBER

On the morning of December 2, I was sitting in my first-period study hall when I got a text from a friend. He takes an 8 a.m. math class at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) three days a week, and Wednesday happens to be one of those days. He said there was a report of an armed suspect near the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps building, leading to a campus-wide lockdown.

Chapel Hill High School went into a lockdown of its own shortly thereafter. However, the threat was neutralized and we carried on with our days, thinking nothing of it. It was any regular morning.

A couple of hours later, two heavily armed assailants entered a medical center in San Bernadino, California with murderous intent. The two gunmen, whom we now know to be a married couple, shot and killed 14 people, wounding 21 others. Numerous lives were changed forever; families were torn apart. It was devastating news. It was also information that I was unaware of until 10:35 p.m. that night, nearly nine hours after the killings occurred.

I was connected all day, randomly checking social media and texting friends. The San Bernadino shooting never graced my newsfeeds and timelines; it never surfaced as a topic of conversation amongst my friends.

There has been a mass shooting nearly every day of this year. At some point, we need to ask ourselves: Is this the world we really want to live in? Waiting for one deadly threat to give way to the next one and thinking nothing of it?

The threat of mass shootings has become a part of our daily lives. Obviously, gun control is one possible solution. But given the polarizing political culture of our country and differing interpretations of the second amendment, it is unlikely that a compromise will be met any time soon.

We have come to expect tragedies such as San Bernadino to happen regularly, and social media reflects it. Looking back at my Twitter feed, I would have likely read celebrity headlines and basketball scores before I learned that 14 people lost their lives in a California massacre.

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IGNORANCE IS BLISS, BY MILLY AMES

PROCONIAN

The Pros and Cons of Chapel Hill High School –Volume 81, Issue 2

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Possible paving of trail meets opposition from cross-country runners

GRACE NEWTON

The Chapel Hill and Carrboro Town Councils have proposed a plan to pave over the Bolin Creek forest trail behind Chapel Hill High School.

The proposal has been brought up on several occasions in the past, but was shut down each time. It has been brought up again this year and has been met with negative response from the Chapel Hill community.

Chapel Hill High School's cross-country team will be directly affected by the paving as they use the trails for training. Cross-country coach Joan Nesbit Mabe believes that the paving of the trail will "reduce soft surface running and potentially increase injury," and also "discourage kids from running on that trail."

The paving would not only affect the cross-country team, but it could create environmental issues as well.

Mabe says she has always believed in "keeping natural spaces natural." She spent a lot of time fighting to preserve Carolina North, and was on the board of directors for the Trail Advisory Committee for six years.

"I'm very much an advocate for keeping green space green. The main reason [the town councils] wouldn't pave, obviously, is because they want to keep our world natural," Mabe said.

Mabe hopes to get cross-country team members more involved with the subject.

PHOTO CREDIT: GILLIE WEEKS

Members of the Chapel Hill women's cross-country run on the Bolin Creek forest trail December 7. Members of the team have expressed opposition to a proposal from the Carrboro Board of Alderman to pave over the trail's paths with asphalt.

Information on the town's trail paving meetings has been sent to her parent and athlete list serves, in case parents and students wish to protest the proposal. Mabe said she already signed the petition to prevent the trail from being paved.

Women's cross-country team senior captains Marija Crook and Anna Passannante plan to get involved as well.

"[The paving] is not an environmentally friendly plan and would prevent our team from running on one of our most used trails," Crook said.

The captains added that several teammates have already attended several town hall meetings to protest the paving and the whole team is generally opposed to the proposal.

Sophomore cross-country team members Scout Hayashi and Madeleine Mount-Cors listened in on a Carrboro Board of Aldermen's (BOA) meeting where the paving was discussed. Now, the two runners are recruiting a group of runners to attend the final hearing in April, where they plan on advocating against the paving.

"The goal [of our interest group] is to get most members to come to the public hearing in April," Mount-Cors said.

Passannante believes the Bolin Creek conservation area currently has problems with erosion, which will only become worse if the trail is paved over.

"I think it is nice to keep woods looking more like woods. So many of the wooded areas in Chapel Hill are being developed and dirt trails are becoming rarer," Passannante said.

Carrboro Alderman Sammy Slade, one of the board members determining the paving of Bolin Creek, understands the concern of community members who would like to preserve the trail. However, he also believes a paved path would be of great value to bikers, walkers and wheelchair users.

"In Carrboro, we recognize the significance of climate change, the degree to which the transportation sector is a major greenhouse gas source and that, by consequence, these modes of transportation that depend on fossil fuels are literally killing us, all forests and their inhabitants." Slade said.

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen plans to come to a consensus on the matter at the final public hearing for the trail paving in April.

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Women's cross-country wins state championship in undefeated fashion

DAN KLEISSLER

Months of hard work and preparation paid off for the women's cross-country team November 7, as the varsity runners captured the North Carolina 3A state championship.

The team accomplished the feat while also finishing its season with an undefeated record.

The team received a total score of 32 points, the lowest score of the day out of any division. Second place Marvin Ridge finished 44 points behind the tigers.

Crossing the finish line victorious at the state meet was always the goal for the team. Through each invitational meet and home competition, the girls remained focused on winning a state championship for the first time since 2011.

Many of the girls on the varsity squad, including seniors Marija Crook and Anna Passannante, had been working towards a state crown for four years.

The team was also motivated by the thought of sharing a first place finish with a team that they deeply cared for.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY PASSANNANTE

The Chapel Hill women's cross-country team takes a photo with its championship banner after beating out the rest of the 3A competition November 7 in Kernersville. The state champions also finished their season with an undefeated team record.

Since the beginning of last summer, the team trained together every day they could.

"Every practice is a hang out with our very best friends," Passannante said.

Practices in the adverse weather conditions and the pressure of racing only served to bring the team closer together.

Running in the rain and mud actually ended up helping the girls greatly, as it had downpoured in Kernersville the night before the state championship race. However, the team was still a bit nervous about the slippery state of the course.

"We were skating on the mud," sophomore Katherine Dokholyan said of the muddy conditions.

The Tigers' closest competitors, Marvin Ridge High School of Waxhaw, also posed a threat to the team's title hopes.

"I was worried that the Marvin Ridge pack would get in front of our second pack," said sophomore Grace Tate, "They have really good [personal records]."

But as soon as the gun went off, signalling the beginning of the race, all apprehensions disappeared.

"We attacked the race, we went out fast," junior Maeve Gualtieri-Reed said.

Junior Clare McNamara said the team "established a pack."

The mud and rain initially affected the girls' race, the last of the day.

"At one point I was leading the race, but the mud was really hard," said Dokholyan, who finished as the individual runner-up.

Ultimately, the girls cross-country team accomplished their goal, defeating Marvin Ridge convincingly.

The girls largely credited the efforts of their coach, Joan Nesbit Mabe, for their success.

Mabe, who has coached the Tigers since 2014, owns a personal running history that includes five Olympic Trials, a medal at the World Championship and All-American honors.

Mabe feels that the team's work ethic made the difference in propelling them to a successful season.

"When talent doesn't work, hard work beats talent. They had both. That's why they dominated," Mabe said about the success of the team.

Two of the varsity team's five senior captains, Passannante and Crook, both plan on running in college. Passannante has committed to Williams College.

"Winning states was a great way to end my last cross-country season at Chapel Hill," Passannante said. "I've had so much fun running in high school."

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New field hockey coach reflects on season

In Anna Long's first year as varsity field hockey coach at Chapel Hill, the Tigers finished with a record of 15-6. The team made a run in the state playoffs as well, before losing an overtime heartbreaker to eventual state runner-up Myers Park on the road. Long spoke with Proconian's *Jared Weber to reflect on her first year as a head coach, as well as to discuss old high school memories and her expectations for the next few seasons.*

You are a Chapel Hill alum, right?

Yep, I graduated in 2010. I actually wrote for the *Proconian* also.

What were your impressions of four years attending Chapel Hill when you were in high school?

I actually only went here for two years. I went to East my freshman and sophomore years and Chapel Hill for junior and senior years, so that made it a little interesting.

Tigers over Wildcats any day though, right?

Always Tigers over Wildcats, any day, no doubt. Actually, my little sister played for East Chapel Hill this past year, so that made the matchup pretty interesting.

Did the sibling rivalry get intense at all when the teams faced off?

Definitely in a lighthearted kind of way. We're always competitive. In the first game between us and East, it was pretty late in and [my sister] got carded. So I was yelling at her from the sideline, and I just remember thinking, "There are way too many Longs on the field right now."

Did Chapel Hill have a big impact on you and make you want to come back?

Yeah it really did. As a student, I loved writing, and I took Mr. Head's classes junior and senior years. That's what really made me want to go into writing and write for *The Daily Tar Heel*. I was also

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA LONG

Field hockey coach Anna Long led the Tigers to a 15-6 record and playoff berth this season.

a history minor; I loved my history classes. There are just a lot of things at Chapel Hill I loved. I have a lot of memories and good friends that I'm still really tight with, and it made a big impact on my life. I wanted to come back and share that and, hopefully, the girls on the team are able to make the same kind of memories that I do and think back on it as a really positive experience.

Overall, how do you feel your first season went this year?

The playoff loss was definitely tough in overtime […] those losses always are. But I thought the season went really well. We finished 15-6, which is awesome. As a first-year coach, switching the girls into a new style of play—they also lost like eight seniors last year—we had a really great group of girls this year. Their team chemistry was awesome and I'm really excited about next year.

You mentioned a new style of play. Was it a different gameplan this year than the team had seen in years past?

I can't really speak for what the coach did in the past. But we basically just made them think differently, think as a team and focus on passing, rather than dribbling. I think working the ball around the back, using a lot of transfers.

I know coaches don't like to single out certain players in general, but who would you say were a couple of the standout performers for your team this past year?

I think our big strength was that we played as a team. We had some really good upperclassmen leaders like [seniors] Jane McMurry and Elizabeth McBurney in the back and [junior] Julia Grant in the midfield. It really was kind of evenly distributed.

Are there any memories in particular that are going to stand out when you look back on your first season as a head coach?

There are a lot of things. We had a blast; I know I did. [There were] a lot of funny moments definitely. Our first win against Durham Academy will stick out in my mind, because it was my first game as a coach and it was a really exciting overtime win.

Proconian alum Mick Mixon discusses radio broadcasting

Before he became the play-by-play radio announcer for the Carolina Panthers, Mick Mixon attended Chapel Hill High School. Chloe McNeal got to talk to Mixon in December.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is on gamedays being in the stadium and being around all the action. Inside the stadium the players are warming up and outside there's cornhole and barbeque, the Top-Cats are doing their thing. Those moments right before the game starts and I go on air, It's the closest you can get to being a player in the NFL. I'm getting chills just talking about it. Right before we go on the butterflies just start. This kind of adrenaline is like a drug that I'm addicted to.

What do you do, relating to your job, when you are not actually calling the game?

My personal job is to represent the Panthers in the best way I can. Just this weekend I was in Chapel Hill at the Ronald McDonald [House] where I made a speech; so it's things like that, just going around the Panther community and representing the team in a classy way. That's a very important element to my job.

How did your experiences as a *Proconian* writer help you in your future career?

It helped me tremendously. My teacher in that class had us focus on our angles, rather than just focussing on technical formatting in leads and things. She taught us how to get news and opinions across in a journalistic style.

How did you go from doing color commentary at UNC to working for the Panthers organization?

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICK MIXON

***Proconian* alumnus Mick Mixon is the official play-by-play radio announcer for the NFL's Carolina Panthers.**

Well I did color at UNC for a few years and then I moved down to Columbia, South Carolina. Right around the time that I was there, the Panthers were looking for a new play-by-play guy. I went through three separate interviews with them, and I thought that they must do that with all their candidates, but sure enough they let me know soon after that I had gotten the job. I can say first hand that the Carolina Panthers are a great organization.

Did you ever play football growing up?

I did, but I was not as good as I would've liked to be. For the most part I left the playing up to the other guys and I focussed on the things I was good at. All through high school I was just a nerdy kid who wanted to be a sports writer.

Mullet-mania: Wrestlers revitalize classic haircut

The Chapel Hill wrestling team has begun its season with a 7-1 record, notching a number five ranking in the state by The News & Observer's *weekly wrestling rankings. But the rankings are hardly the biggest news surrounding the team. Five members of the team have made waves around the school by growing out mullet haircuts. The mullet is a hairstyle that is short on the sides, long in the back and feared by mothers all across the world.* Proconian *asked four of the wrestlers who got the haircut, "What is the best part about having a mullet?"*

Senior Chris Volk

"Probably the fact that it increases my game on and off the mat."

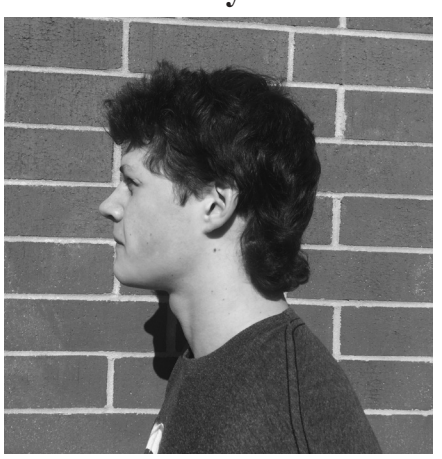
Senior Zach Allen

"The mullet gives me a rebel persona."

Senior Cam Bergey

"You have short hair in the front, but leave the back wild to show off the curls […] 'Business in the front, party in the back.'"

Junior Joey Cannon



"They call me 'Joe Dirt.'"

PHOTO CREDITS: BERRY RIGDON

Carolina football teams have breakout seasons, excite Chapel Hill fans

CHLOE GRILL

The University of North Carolina (UNC) football team gave its fans a thrilling season with one of its best records in history.

Fans at Chapel Hill High School are excited about the team's 11-1 regular season record as well.

Junior Anna Farmer, a UNC football fan, attended every home football game this season, along with the ACC Championship Game against Clemson. Although UNC lost 42-35 to the Tigers, she thinks that the team had the ability to win and had a great overall season.

"I feel really good about the season. We were undefeated at home and won 11 straight games after losing the first one," Farmer said. "This is the best the team has been since I've been alive."

Farmer attributes much of the success to the team's new coaching staff and the attitudes of the players and personnel.

"I think a big part of [the success] was the new defensive coordinator because our defense was hugely improved from last year," Farmer said. "We also just have really good guys who care a lot about the team, and the attitude of the coaching staff is much better than when Butch Davis was head coach."

New defensive coordinator Gene Chizik came to UNC, leaving Auburn, with the 2010 national title on his head coaching resume. Chizik works alongside head coach Larry Fedora.

Senior Blake Hirth also enjoyed watching the team win 11 straight games.

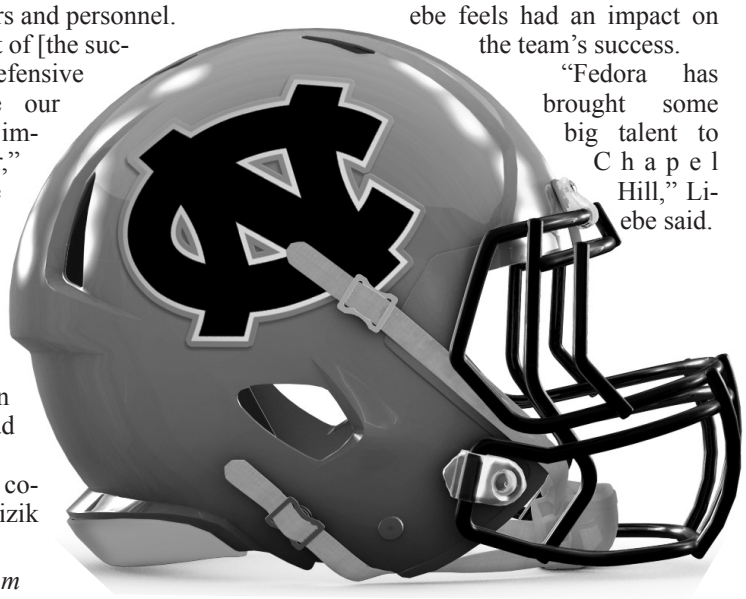
"When this team played, it was exciting to watch—unlike teams in the past—because everyone played together," Hirth said. "The defense played a lot better than last year, and the offense was great with Elijah Hood running the ball."

Junior Garrett Liebe thinks that, along with the hiring of Gene Chizik, the seniors on the team have been a big factor in bringing a new, winning culture to Carolina.

"Our senior leadership, Marquise Williams and Mack Hollins, have done a remarkable job mentoring our underclassmen," Liebe said.

This is the first year that the freshmen are Fedora's own recruits, something Liebe feels had an impact on the team's success.

"Fedora has brought some big talent to Chapel Hill," Liebe said.



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CHLOE MCNEAL

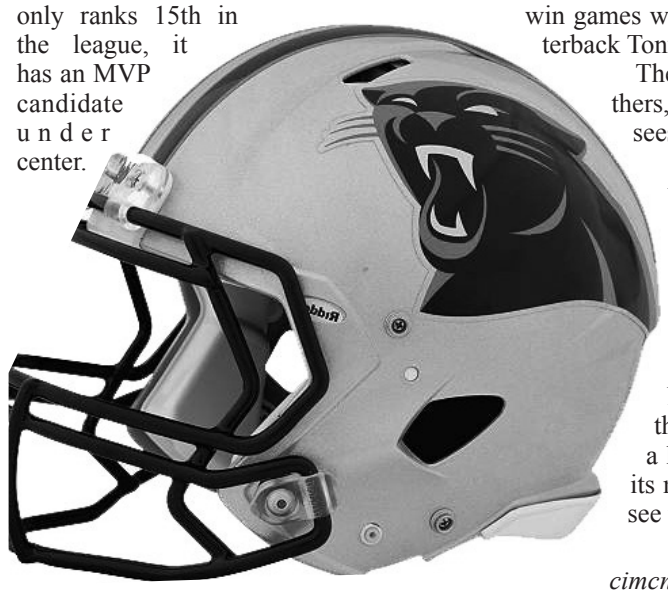
The Carolina Panthers have clinched the National Football League's NFC South division, and, with it, a spot in the playoffs. On top of it all, the Panthers are the only remaining undefeated team in the league, with a record of 13-0.

The Panthers' best record coming into this season was 12-4 in 1996, 2008 and 2013. With three regular season games remaining, Panthers fans at Chapel Hill High School and all across the state are ready to see their team go all the way.

"They have a real chance to be undefeated. Some games worry me, but they have a chance," Spanish teacher and longtime Panthers fan Davis Boyle said.

Many different factors have brought Carolina to its successful start.

The team's defense has held opponents' offense to the third fewest points overall, and, while its overall offensive production only ranks 15th in the league, it has an MVP candidate under center.



Quarterback Cam Newton has "dabbed" his way to a 59.1 percent completion rate, 28 touchdown passes and seven rushing touchdowns thus far. Newton threw for five touchdowns in a single game on two separate occasions, against the Washington Redskins and the New Orleans Saints.

His performance has made him a frontrunner, alongside Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, to win Most Valuable Player (MVP).

However, while Newton is the one making headlines, it takes more than just a quarterback to field an unbeaten team.

"My favorite player is Jerricho Cotchery. He's a great receiver, and he went to NC State," freshman Max Ring said.

The team's success has also prompted several fans of different NFL franchises to switch allegiances, at least temporarily.

Senior Zach Burkett, a fan of the Dallas Cowboys, has not had much to root for this season as the Cowboys have struggled to win games without injured Pro Bowl quarterback Tony Romo.

The more he watches the Panthers, the more he likes what he sees.

"I started liking them when they defeated the Packers because I knew it pushed them mentally and physically and tested their teamwork abilities," Burkett said.

Whether a long-time fanatic or a new supporter, NFL fans can recognize that the Panthers are in the midst of a historic season. The team and its many loyal supporters hope to see them go all the way.

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Sports Briefs

Accurate as of December 15, 2015

Swimming

The swimming team won its first meet against Corinth Holders High School led by captains **Niki Billman**, **Claire DeSelm**, **Lauren Taekman**, **Matt Cadena**, **Max Moore** and **Eli Rose**. DeSelm won the 100 yard butterfly by more than three seconds, while **Jordan Ren** came in first in the 100 yard breaststroke. The team also won its second meet of the season leaving the tigers undefeated.

Women's Basketball

The women's basketball team defeated both Carrboro High School and East Chapel Hill twice this month. Senior captains **Autumn West** and **Mariah Jacobs** have led the team to a 5-2 record to start the season. Junior **Ti'Mia Chaplin** and sophomore **Alliyah Chaplin** have also contributed to the team's success, with both players averaging 10 points per game.

Men's Basketball

The men's varsity basketball team has started its season with a record of 2-4. Both of the team's wins came against Carrboro. The Tigers are led by sophomore guard **Elijah Haynes**, who averages 15.0 per game, and sophomore guard **Max Conolly**, who averages 11.7 points per game. The team currently sits sixth place in the Big-Eight conference.

Wrestling

The wrestling team has started the season with a 7-1 overall record. It is ranked fifth in the state by *The News and Observer*. The Tigers also won the 2015 Mount Pleasant Invitational Championship in December and notched a win over ninth-ranked Carrboro. Senior **George McBurney** won his weight class at the tournament. Seniors **Cam Bergey** and **Hudson Price** also both notched their 100th career wins December 10 at home against J.F. Webb.

On the course with Duke commit Gina Kim

FORREST PRATSON

When it comes to golf—and life, for that matter—North Carolina 3A women's golf state champion Gina Kim tries to waste as little time as possible. She prefers to focus her productivity on golf.

Whether it is a weekday or a weekend, Kim, a sophomore at Chapel Hill, spends most of her time playing golf.

Her typical Friday practice does not usually start until 4:30 p.m. Kim does not "just start whacking golf balls out into the range," as she puts it.

Kim instead starts her practice without her clubs.

"I start by stretching for 10 minutes," Kim said. "Sometimes, I do pushups or jumping jacks. Some people find that weird."

Before heading out to the course, Kim spends some time touching up on the various parts of her game, whether it be at the driving range or the chipping green. Kim then moves to playing either nine or 18 holes.

"Pretty much, I keep practicing until it gets dark," Kim said. "I try to do my best saving time and getting as much practice as I can."

PHOTO CREDIT: FORREST PRATSON

After winning the state title, sophomore Gina Kim verbally committed to play golf at Duke University.

Kim tries to practice every day, including weekends.

"On Saturday, I am usually up by 9:00 and at the course by 10:30," Kim said. "That is pretty much where I practice until 5:30."

After she gets home and eats dinner, Kim spends her time doing whatever she needs to do, whether it is homework or relaxing.

"It's not really that interesting, but it is part of my routine," Kim said.

Kim feels that her practice time has been paying off recently.

"I am really dedicated to my practice time and being as efficient as I can," Kim said. "I really think that shows in my good performance, especially at the state championship."

Kim's parents introduced her to golf at a young age, but her dedication to the sport seems to stem from personal motivation.

"I was told at a young age that I had a natural talent for golf," Kim said. "I thought, 'Okay, I might as well do something with this.'"

Kim is currently ranked third in the nation for junior golfers and has stayed in the top 50 since she started playing high school golf.

Recently, Kim verbally committed to play golf at Duke University as part of the team's class of 2022.

While Kim is proud of her accomplishment, she knows there is still more work to put in.

"Since my routine has been working and helped me get into Duke, I don't think there is anything I really need to change," Kim said.

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Teachers recount Peace Corps adventures

For Chapel Hill teachers William Richards, Matt North and Braden Walsh, giving back is not just a holiday deed; it is a life passion. The three teachers were once Peace Corps volunteers, helping others in foreign countries; Richards in Ghana, North in Moldova and Walsh in Panama. Read about the memorable experiences abroad that shaped each of their lives.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM RICHARDS

Biology teacher William Richards takes a photo in Ghana with his friend Ernest. Richards's Peace Corps mission stretched from 2004 until 2006.

William Richards's experience in Piina, Ghana

JARED WEBER

The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is, as biology teacher William Richards described it, "the SAT on steroids."

"The exam essentially dictates what you can do in life. If you want to be a biologist and you don't do well on the biology portion of the WASSCE, you don't get to study biology," Richards said.

Richards, who served his Peace Corps mission teaching high school in Piina, Upper West, Ghana from 2004 to 2006, volunteered "to help people, but also see some cool stuff and learn about a culture."

He taught at Piina Senior High School, where he was one of four teachers. Because of the school's lack of resources, Richards taught all of the science classes, as well as some English and math.

Much of his time was spent preparing students for the dreaded WASSCE. One time, after a tense exam process, he remembers a student's parent wanting to talk to him.

"I had a student, Julian, who wanted to be a nurse, and to be a nurse, you have to get a certain score on biology, math and English," Richards said. "He passed all three, and, afterwards, his dad came up to me and told me his son had gotten into school and without me, he wouldn't have passed this thing. That was really cool."

Looking back on his time in Ghana, Richards's most meaningful experiences came from helping students achieve their goals.

"People ask me, 'Do you think it was worth joining the Peace Corps and going out there?' And I'll say, 'For Julian, sure. It was worth it.'" Richards said. "And I know it wasn't just him."

Richards returned to Piina in 2013 to find that the school now has specialized teachers, and the students still use the WASSCE Biology content guide he left behind in 2006.

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Matt North's adventure in Eastern Europe

SAM NIELSEN

The average winter day in much of Eastern Europe is frigid. However, conditions were not too dismal for history teacher Matt North to have fun.

"We were sledding on our behinds down these old mountain roads; it was really fun," North said, recounting a day spent in Brasov, Romania.

North stayed in the Eastern European country of Moldova from 2005-2007 as a member of the Peace Corps. During holidays, he and other volunteers would take long trips by train, spending time in multiple different countries along the way.

"We went to Budapest, Hungary for New Year's. They closed down all the city streets, and they had this humongous square where they have all the heroes of Hungary in this big line," North said. "All the streets that led into it had a different band or DJ, and there were people all around and people going crazy."

North noted some differences between holiday celebrations in Eastern Europe and the United States, saying that holidays in Europe tend to be more communal.

"It's a lot less about consumer goods—you don't necessarily exchange presents—it was more about having a big feast," North said. "The neighbors' houses would all have a big feast set up on their tables, and you would go in—they'd invite you in—and you would have food and drink, and then you'd say your pleasantries and go to the next house."

North recalled the Easter celebrations in Moldova, during which villagers would spend the night in their local basilica to have their offering baskets receive blessings.

"When the sun rose, the local religious leaders would go around chanting and stuff and they would bless all the baskets," North said. "Then, everyone would go home and, on that day, there would be a big party."

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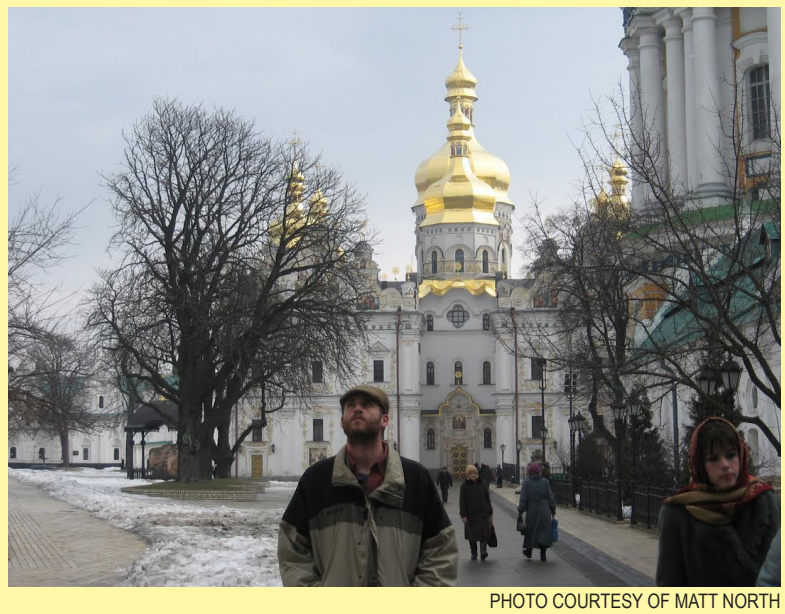

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT NORTH

History teacher Matt North stands in front of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, a monastery in Kiev, Ukraine, during his Peace Corps mission in Eastern Europe.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRADEN WALSH

Spanish teacher Braden Walsh poses with a Panamanian mother and children during her Peace Corps mission in Panama.

Braden Walsh's mission in the Republic of Panama

ELI ROSE

After graduating from college, Spanish teacher Braden Walsh opted out of a corporate job in favor of work with the Peace Corps in the Republic of Panama.

"I knew it was what I needed to do," Walsh said. "I had studied in Sevilla, Spain my junior year and knew I wanted to travel, help people and speak Spanish, so, I applied for Peace Corps."

Walsh worked in a variety of jobs throughout her of our years of service, mainly focusing on permaculture, or sustainable agriculture, and organizational duties within the Peace Corps organization.

"I was in an area of the country where ranching was a focus, so I worked with farmers and ranchers on improving pasture grasses, composting for use in organic agriculture, and reforestation," Walsh said.

According to Walsh, the people of Panama celebrate the holidays with family or community gatherings for El Día de los Reyes Magos, or Three Kings Day, which falls on January 6.

"People where I lived didn't have much money, so the focus was on family, community and food instead of presents," Walsh said.

Walsh's most memorable holiday experience during her service was during the holiday of Carnival.

"Most of the country shuts down for a week and people are in the streets dancing and celebrating before the beginning of Lent," Walsh recalled.

Looking back on her service, Walsh focused on the learning aspect of the work.

"I have a more open view of the world because of Peace Corps [...] I learned how to use my local resources, improvise, interact with different audiences and dance," Walsh said. "Every day I use something I learned in Peace Corps."

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