



Martin Luther King Jr. board that was vandalized

PHOTO BY RACHAEL CHONG



Education professor Dr. Nicole Lofton resigned rather suddenly after winter break

PHOTO COURTESY OF PR

Campus Vandals

By RACHAEL CHONG

It seems January was a particularly eventful month for vandalism at Blackburn College. Three confirmed and one rumored incidents of vandalism were reported. Two incidents are suspected to be racially motivated. Trash cans were removed in residence halls across campus. It was widely rumored to have been a result of trash can vandalism in a residence hall, but Campus Services (CS) supervisor Torry Grady disputed the claim, saying in an e-mail, “The trash cans were removed from dorm bathrooms for maintenance (sic) and cleaning.” On Feb. 1, trash cans were restored to residence halls, having indeed been cleaned.

In North (Challacombe) Hall, a

vent on a CS closet was kicked in on the second floor while on the first floor the words “F--- you” were written on a board North Resident Director John Esparza describes as “brand new.” The residents were ordered to pay the cost of replacing the vent and board and informed that if the hall is vandalized again, residents will pay \$50 each, which Esparza believes “will really knock some sense into people before they vandalize something again.” In Jewell Hall and Hudson Hall, two Martin Luther King Jr. themed boards were ripped down. On the bulletin board outside of Tech services, a board celebrating King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech was vandalized.

Camdens Without Wine?

By CHRISTOPHER BEST

Early last month, Camdens, located on the south side of Carlinville’s square, officially closed their downstairs portion for business. Over the course of its mere 14 months of operation, the wine bar and tapas restaurant slowly established itself as a favorite hangout spot for many Blackburn College students and locals alike, leaving many stunned by the sudden announcement. “Camdens was so classy. I wanted to take my parents there,” said Blackburn senior and former Camdens patron Luiza Myslinska. When asked for comment on the decision, co-owner Peggy Denby explained, “We told ourselves we were going to give it a year and then evaluate it, and upon a year’s time, financially, it just wasn’t doable.” While the restaurant and bar will remain closed for the foreseeable

future, there is hope on the horizon for local wine enthusiasts: “It will be re-opened. I’m almost... let’s say I’m 75 percent sure,” Denby affirmed with a laugh. But a re-opening will not occur without changes. In addition to new management, a revived Camdens downstairs would likely open to the public only on weekends and place more emphasis on hosting private parties. Denby also indicated a desire to host occasional game nights, though all plans remain tentative at this point. Despite the closure of the restaurant and bar, Camdens upstairs shop remains open for business. The shop sells art and crafts made by local artists including photography, wood carvings, glasswork, jewelry and stuffed animals. Other merchandise, including wine-related items, are also for sale, though no wine is available for

Lofton Resigns

By GARY LOWDER

First-year education professor Dr. Nicole Lofton resigned rather suddenly on Jan. 13. Lofton’s Blackburn email account was promptly removed from the server and she could not be reached for comment. Some students in the education department were not happy with Lofton’s teaching style. That, coupled with the suddenness of her departure, led some to believe that she had been formally dismissed. Provost John McClusky dismissed these rumors as false. “We aren’t trying to hide anything. We were surprised and very disappointed that she decided to leave,” said McClusky.

In an interview with The ‘Burnian before the holiday break, Lofton said, “One of the biggest things that I try to instill in the students that I work with is to be self-directed learners, because they can’t rely on their professors or their administrators to give them all the knowledge...if they can learn to take advantage of the resources that are available for them to learn on their own, then they’ll just be that much more successful.” Lofton’s style forced her students to be more independent, with which some of them disagreed. However, senior elementary education See **Lofton**, page 3



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER BEST
Camdens is making some big changes

purchase at this time. Camdens welcomes all Blackburn students, and recently introduced a 15 percent discount on all regularly priced merchandise, excluding artist creations. Denby added that this discount would extend to the restaurant when it re-opens for business, “[Co-owner Pete Denby] and I both know what it’s like to be in college and on a budget, and we would like to cater to that clientele.”

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What the Obamacare Repeal Means for Blackburn Students

By GRACE ALLEN

Over 18 million citizens in the U.S. are expected to lose their insurance if the Affordable Care Act, popularly referred to as Obamacare, is repealed. It was one of the promises on which President Donald Trump rode to office and on Jan. 20, he issued an executive order to seek its prompt repeal. On his official website, Trump cites “runaway costs, websites that don’t work, greater rationing of care, higher premiums, less competition and fewer choices” as reasons for the repeal call and promises to implement several reforms for a better solution. His nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Tom Price, also strongly opposes it and has proposed plans to dismantle it, per his official government website.

Whether you agree with Obamacare or not, a great deal of people rely on it, many students at Blackburn included. Psychology major Tyla Ross uses it to visit the doctor and dentist. If the policy is repealed, she doubts she would be able to receive care from either. “I would have to take out a lot of loans if I needed something, so I’d probably just ignore the problem.” Ross, who also has asthma and works as a crew head in Campus Services, feared she would be unable to do her job properly if incapable of getting medication. But



PHOTO BY GRACE ALLEN

Blackburn student and psychology major Tyla Ross is currently covered by Obamacare

because Blackburn is such an open and community-driven campus, she said she believes it would not be hard to find assistance. “Anyone here would want to help,” said Ross.

Similarly, freshman chemistry major Abigail Gathard receives her attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

and birth control medications through the program. Freshman theater major Jacob Dunskis has asthma and can get his inhalers, nebulizers and treatments for free under the Affordable Care Act as they qualified for Medicaid.

Gathard said she would have to get an off-campus job to pay for what

she needs and believed the worry of not knowing what she would do in a medical emergency would take a degenerating toll on her. Dunskis expressed concern about how often he would be able to afford a new inhaler. Because his asthma is so severe, there is no doubt it would hurt him. “I love Blackburn so much already, but if I have to choose my health over college, I will.” Ross, Gathard and Dunskis admitted they would be much more hesitant to go the doctor, as they would not be able to pay for it, and agreed it had the potential to negatively affect their classes, jobs and social lives at Blackburn.

The Affordable Care Act does have its share of problems and critics. Freshman business management major Dylan Newell called it “a socialist and un-American program that oversteps the government’s bounds.” When asked what he believed the best alternative solution was, he said all the rules and regulations that caused the high prices need to eventually be repealed, but for the time being suggested a voucher system. “Let the people pay what they want to pay,” he said.

Professional Development Changes

By GARY LOWDER

Some massive changes have been made to the professional development program that first year students are required to complete. An email notice was sent out by Associate Dean of Work Robert Weis on Jan. 20, which said, “In the past week, the Work Committee has reviewed allocation of work hours and staffing for all departments across campus. For a number of reasons, the Work Committee is reallocating eight hours (half) of the Professional Development work requirement for First Year Student Workers. These hours will be allocated into the respective departments where each worker has been hired...The remaining eight Professional Development hours may be fulfilled through scheduled programs offered through Career Services, Student Life, Technology Services and the Work Office.”

This plan is very different from the one originally pitched to returning freshmen. The original program required students to “job shadow” in campus services, Snack Bar or dining and hospitality departments for four hours. It also required freshmen do two hours of community service outside of Blackburn. When asked why so many changes had been implemented to the program, Weis said, “Well we learned a lot from our first year using the policy. Our desire for flexibility kind of created an unstructured environment...This coming spring we felt like we should refine the work load. We felt like the best way to rectify this was by moving some of the professional development

hours over into work hours...This has allowed us to focus more intentionally on the hours themselves instead of how many hours students get.”

About students’ reactions to the professional development program Weis said, “Some of our casual feedback has been more blunt and others have offered more constructive criticism on the professional development program as a whole.” Students will undoubtedly be glad to move to a eight hour system, but even with these changes some people are dissatisfied with the program as a whole. Freshman elementary education major Sarah Boulch said, “I honestly think the 11th hour altogether is kind of a waste of time. I get doing it the first semester but not the second, too. I haven’t really gained anything from it. Just lost a lot of time I could be doing homework or my other job.” Education major Samantha Cranmer agreed and said, “I don’t like it because it feels like a waste of my time. It’s difficult enough to get 160 hours, let alone 176 last semester. I was still behind half an hour.”

Other students like freshman biology pre med major Jayden Foote were still confused on how the professional development hours even worked. “It is very inconvenient,” she said. “Especially because it seems like no one knows about it. I’ve asked managers, students who work in the Work Office, and many others what it was exactly and no one properly explained it to me. How I managed to get all 16 professional development



PHOTO BY GARY LOWDER

Associate Dean of Work Rob Weis implemented the new professional development policies

hours and still fall behind 16 hours, while I never missed a shift... I couldn’t tell you,” said Foote. “I get the need for resume building, interview practices and Microsoft efficiency, but to make us do 16 hours worth is a little

excessive since we all work on campus and a bunch of others participate in clubs, sports or have other jobs outside of campus. Eight hours sounds more reasonable.”

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“ I think some students
borderline ‘bullied’ her into
leaving, and it’s a shame.”
Erin Huff
Lofton

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major Erin Huff defended Lofton: “I thought she was an insightful professor that gave up a great deal just to educate us. Did she do things I didn’t agree with? Absolutely! But it was her first year teaching at a college level and I hope people wouldn’t judge me off my first year of teaching! I think students were WAY too hard on her and she deserved a fair chance. I think some students borderline “bullied” her into leaving, and it’s a shame. Students were fueled by so much hate that they couldn’t even see all she was trying to do for us. As a teacher and teacher candidate I think we need to be empathic and be slow to judge.”

It remains to be seen if Lofton’s absence will affect the education department although students and staff seem confident that it will not. For now, the remaining education professors and adjuncts will teach the classes that Lofton was scheduled to teach.

McClusky said, “A search is going right now for her replacement...We’ll have someone here by next fall. Some of the preliminary looks at applicants show some good, strong candidates.” When asked if the resignation had affected her at all, Interim Chair of Education Dr. Cindy Rice said, “In regard to other staff, I am not comfortable with discussing this with anyone. I defer to Dr. McClusky and thank you for asking me.” Students, however, were more direct. Huff said, “I think Dr. Lofton’s resignation will not affect the education office. Throughout the years we have lost and gained many professors. In fact, I have had a new professor every year for at least one of my classes, so I am used to the change. The education office is strong and the professors still with us care a great deal. They have always made sure we are the top priority, even if they are short-handed.”

Utilization of K-9 Units
on Campus



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MACOUPIN COUNTY ENQUIRER-DEMOCRAT

Carlinville police officer Tyson Probst and K-9 officer “Hawk” offered their services to Blackburn in order to decrease marijuana usage on campus

By JESS WILLARD

The Carlinville and Macoupin County police departments utilized their K-9 units on the Blackburn College campus during the latter part of January. Two city officers, one county officer and the K-9s made rounds through three residence halls and three parking lots. They took approximately an hour and a half to

complete their search and no policy violations were cited during their visit. Director of Campus Safety Morrison Fraser explained why the K-9 unit was used.

Fraser noted that the K-9 units were not available last school year as the dogs were still in training. However, the college now has access to the city and county K-9 services and it will not cost the school to have them search the campus. Fraser added that the searches are being conducted for “reactive and proactive” reasons. “This is in response to the reports of marijuana usage on campus,” he said. “Our hope is that students get the message to not bring it here.”

Assistant Dean of Student Life and Director of Residence Life Abbey Hardin elaborated on how it might impact campus life. She said that students should expect to see the K-9 units on campus again during the semester. “We will be employing their assistance if we notice a spike in reports of suspicion of drug use on campus,” she said.

Blackburn is not the first college to make use of local police services. In a 2010 report titled “Fighting Campus Crime: Perceptions of Police Canines

Academic Suspension
Clarified

By JESS WILLARD

Consider this scenario: you have just started winter break after a lengthy fall semester. You check your Blackburn email account and discover a message from the registrar. As you read, you discover that you have been academically suspended from the spring semester. This was the reality for many students earlier this year. Provost John McClusky said, “10 percent more students were suspended for academic issues this past semester compared to the previous year.”

Former junior communications major Denzel Smith was one of the students that faced this situation. He said, “The email told me that I had the opportunity to appeal the semester-long suspension.” He clarified that he was asked to write a letter that stated what happened this semester to get him academically suspended and how - if he were to be accepted back - he would change for this not to happen again. He added that he would not know if the letter was accepted until Jan. 10.

Smith acknowledged that failing one class this past semester contributed to the suspension. “If I had been informed that failing the class would cost me my Blackburn education, then I would’ve dropped the class,” he said. He felt like there should have been more of an intervention process prior to the suspension. Smith said he will be attending a different college in March and will not return to campus.

According to the Blackburn faculty and staff handbook, students can become academically suspended if their grade point average (GPA) drops below a 2.0 in a given semester and if their cumulative GPA drops below a certain point. Students of junior and senior standing must maintain a 2.0, while sophomores and freshmen have more leeway. A freshman must maintain a 1.0 in the first semester and

a 1.4 in the second. A sophomore must maintain a 1.6 in the first semester and a 1.8 in the second.

McClusky outlined the process of academic suspension. He said that students who decide to appeal due to extenuating circumstances can either be granted approval or denied. If they are denied, then they are recommended to take community college courses during their suspension to rebuild their GPA. They can then petition for readmission.

The committee on academic standing (CAS) considers petitions of appeals; however, their impact on campus is not commonly known among students who have not gone through the process of academic suspension. Chair of CAS Dr. Edward Zalisko discussed the purpose of the committee and their overall goal.

ZaliskocitedRegistrarandAdvising Services Coordinator Dianna Ruyle as doing the majority of the legwork when it comes to notices of suspension and giving general advice on petitioning. CAS makes recommendations to the Provost after reviewing student appeals in addition to making sure the Provost follows campus policy when making final decisions on approving or denying them. “At the college level, you can be suspended from attending an institution, which is different in comparison to high school,” he said. “But all we want is for students to be successful.” He believed that giving voting power to the three faculty members (one from each division: humanities, natural sciences and social sciences) that are a part of CAS allows for the committee to make the most informed decisions about the students who apply for an appeal.

If students are looking to find out more about academic suspension and support, they can refer to the course catalog on pages 52 to 54.

	First Semester Minimum Requirement	Second Semester Minimum Requirement
First Year	1.0	1.4
Second Year	1.6	1.8
Third Year	2.0	2.0
Fourth Year	2.0	2.0

GRAPHIC BY JOHN HUMMER

If a student earns less than a 2.0 average in a semester and has a cumulative grade point average less than the minimum stated above, the student shall be suspended from the College unless granted readmission by the Faculty Committee on Academic Standing

at a Metropolitan University” by assistant professor of criminal justice at the University of Central Florida Ross Wolf, former law enforcement officer and K-9 handler and trainer Charlie Mesloh and independent executive researcher for Advanced Research Solutions Mark Henych, campus crime such as use of illegal narcotics can be found at all types of schools (metropolitan, suburban and rural). “It is apparent that campus safety can no longer be provided through unarmed uniformed security in many locations,” they write. “Campus policing has evolved to provide police officers

that have the training, investigation capability, and patrol tactics and practices often found only in the most progressive police agencies in the United States.”

Overall, Fraser said students will not have to worry about the K-9s searching campus if they do not have anything to hide. He used a speeding analogy to illustrate his point: “If you’re driving over the speed limit, expect to be caught. It’s the same with this situation. You know what they say, ‘He who walks crooked paths will be found out.’”

Changing the way MLK is recognized

By Jess Willard

According to President John Comerford, Blackburn College’s planning committee has been having a year-long conversation on whether to cancel classes or not on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The final decision has come down to the former. At the beginning of the 2018 spring semester, classes will not be held on the holiday.

Comerford said this decision has involved input from planning committee as well as Student Senate. “Basically, everyone came to the conclusion that there should be more focus on Martin Luther King Jr. Day,” he added. There were also conversations held between Blackburn’s peer institutions called the G-11 and Chair of Mathematics Chris Morin. Comerford learned that out of 11 colleges only one other (Principia College) did not offer a break from classes for the holiday. Despite the 2017-18 calendar not being released

yet, Comerford did confirm that classes are cancelled on the holiday, but there has not been an official decision on whether or not offices will be open.

In order to have the day off, the 2018 spring semester will have to start earlier but Comerford explained that there would be an additional day where classes will not be held. “There has been talk of using it for a campus symposium day where senior students would be able to display their seminars,” he said. “Another option is reintroducing reading day.” Reading day has been held in past years prior to finals.

Student Senate President Ajay Minton clarified that no official vote has taken place within this year’s Student Senate on whether or not they believe classes should be cancelled on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Essentially, they have not expressed

their final thoughts to the planning committee. Until this point, there was only one discussion within the senate on the topic. According to Minton, the group seemed to be in favor of the idea that those assigned to essential work positions on that day should continue with their jobs but classes should not be held and offices should remain closed.

In addition to changes being made with the holiday in regards to classes being held, Blackburn has also found a new way to honor the day instead of hosting a convocation. In the past, students would gather in Bothwell Auditorium to watch a presentation and see who received the Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership award. This year, students participated in a more interactive celebration. Sophomore political science major and Diversity and Inclusion student worker Deja Luckett assisted with the event and

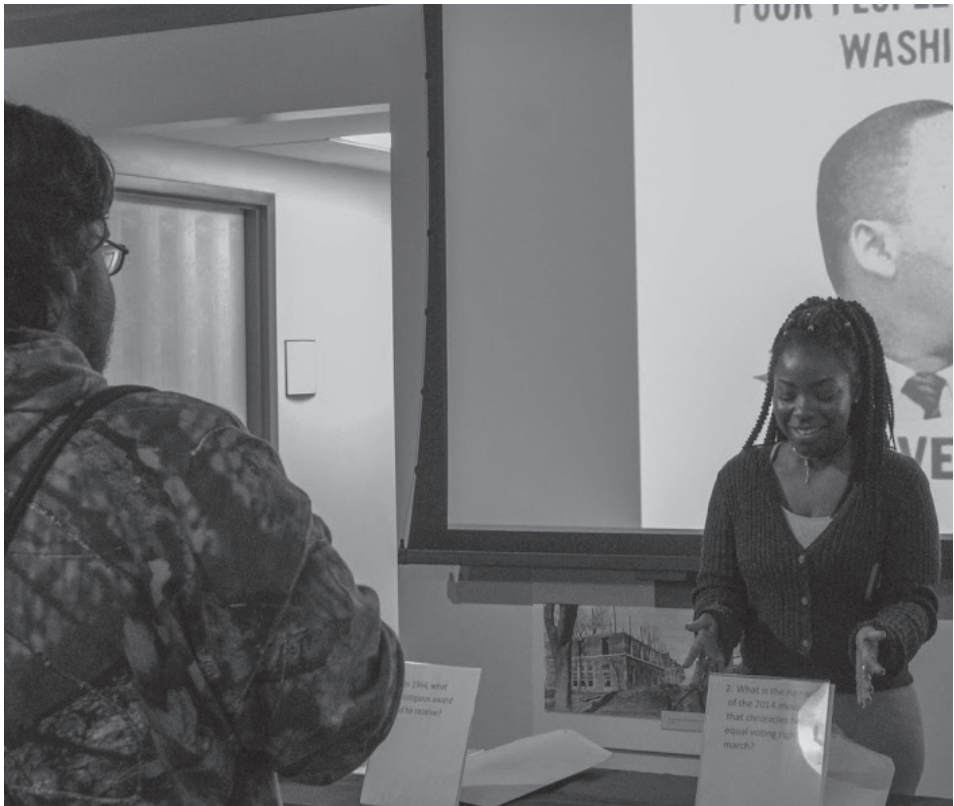
explained the differences that took place.

Luckett said there were tables set up in the Claire Jaenke Alumni Center where workers asked attendees questions about Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. Relevant movie clips were also shown. “There were around 65 to 70 people there,” she said. “It was effective in the volume of people that attended, but I think more can be done to best honor the day.” Luckett added that she would like there to be more discussion on African American history as a whole.

Blackburn continued the tradition of giving the Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership award to a student who exemplified the qualities of the honor’s namesake. Senior sports management major Christopher Stone was presented the award this year.



Christopher Stone (left) was presented with the 2017 Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership award by Jarrod Gray



Thomas Barksdale and Deja Luckett at the 2017 Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration

Dive into the World of Gaming

By Rachael Chong

When I walked into the Hudson computer lab after brunch on a recent Saturday afternoon, I thought I had entered the wrong room. It was dark and silent in the main lab but as I took a few steps in, I could see the programming lab lit and five men - programmers, I would later learn - hunched over keyboards, squinting at monitors. It was clear that this, as they say, was where the magic happened.

Global Game Jam is, according to its website, a place for “participants [to] rapidly prototype game designs and...help grow the game industry.” But according to every participant from Blackburn I interviewed, it’s also “fun.”

And they do not seem wrong. As I began to interview the programmers, a few other people began to filter in and out. Though clearly there to do a job, they were all friendly - laughing and carrying on conversations, occasionally interrupted by moments of focus or

frustration.

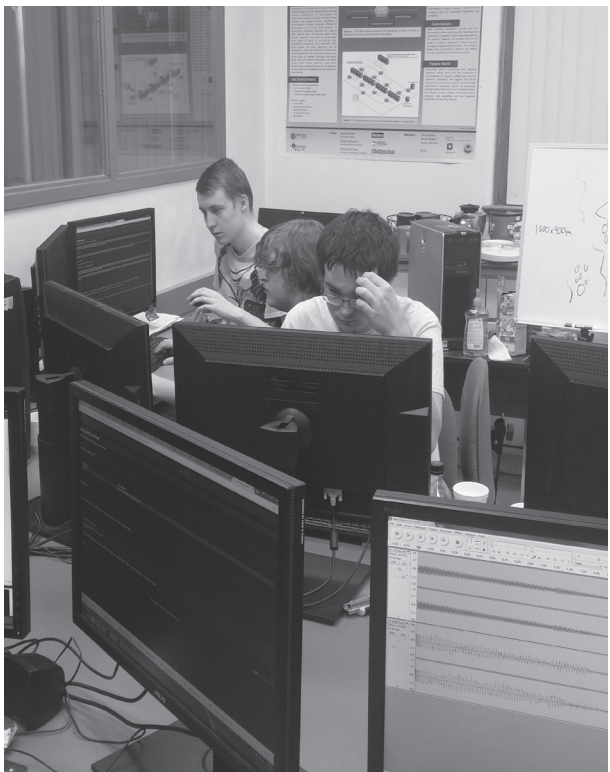
There is a clear vision here, and the art, writing, sound and programming departments work in tandem to bring it to fruition. Senior creative writing major Sara Lewis in the writing department said that as a fan of “story-driven” video games, she knows just how much flash fiction, which she describes as “shorter than a short story,” can influence the end result of a video game. “This story is told through seven lines of text...and that’s it, but it creates a complete story in those seven lines.”

By the end of the 48 hours, the team had a fully functioning game. Junior computer science major Lucas Burdell said earlier, “Nothing we’re doing is revolutionary or insane. It’s very easy to grasp and it’s fun.” He was right. The finished product, called “In Too Deep,” is a fairly standard diving game. You play as diver and collect fish for points to upgrade diving equipment

to dive deeper and explore your surroundings. But it works, and for one weekend, it’s not such an easy feat.

Still, sophomore graphic design major Ryan Kachuba said he would “like to see more faces [next year],” as did many others. They are not in need of programmers, though, so if you cannot program, do not despair. Lewis said they need more “creative types,” as did Kachuba, who added, “There’s something everyone can do here.”

You can play “In Too Deep” as well as other games from this and the previous year’s Global Game Jam at globalgamejam.org.



Cordell Stoker, Lucas Burrell and Joseph Schlarman collaborate to program “In Too Deep”

Blackburn Potterheads

By Blade C. Williams

Gryffindor. Hufflepuff. Ravenclaw. Slytherin. These are the four houses of Hogwarts named in honor of the four founders of the magical school from J.K. Rowling’s popular Harry Potter novels and films. The four houses represent characteristics such as bravery, loyalty, wit and ambition. Last December, Pottermore, the official Harry Potter fan website, created four Facebook profile filters to represent each Hogwarts house for fans to show their Hogwarts pride. Many students from Blackburn College participated in this new filter feature. What is it about Harry Potter that remains so appealing to fans?

These fans who have a passion for Harry Potter are known as “Potterheads.” Several Potterheads

attend Blackburn. Sophomore secondary education major Zane Crawford identifies as a



PHOTO BY BLADE C. WILLIAMS

The Pottermore filter lets Facebook users choose wizard houses

Gryffindor, representing “courage, bravery and determination” (as defined by Pottermore’s Facebook filters). Crawford believes the series remains appealing to fans due to “J.K. Rowling herself. She is so interactive with everybody, and it was more than a book series. It was almost a way of life.”

Sophomore communications major Sebastian Hitzelburger represents the Hufflepuffs who are “loyal, patient and fair” above all. Hitzelburger, who has read the seven books and watched the eight films, said “Fandom culture [is the reason the fandom has continued]. People continuing to create things,” he said. Harry Potter fanfiction and fanart are just two of the many examples.

Senior psychology and creative writing major Katie Payne delivered

some Ravenclaw enlightenment being in the house of “wit, learning and wisdom.” Payne is well-versed in the Harry Potter universe and is taking an independent study with Dr. Naomi Crummey on Harry Potter this semester. Payne stated, “Many grew up with the story. The series has a great storyline and has a very expansive universe.” The expanded universe includes “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them,” which was released in theaters last November.

Sophomore graphic design major Ryan Kachuba spoke for the “proud, ambitious and cunning” Slytherins. Kachuba explains the fandom continues because “There is so much content there. For a lot of people it’s a really big part of their creative lives.”

Jewell Not Freshman Reserved

By Grace Allen

Jewell Hall is the only all-freshman residence hall on Blackburn’s campus. This will change next semester, as it will be the first time non-freshmen will be allowed to room there. Current residents will be allowed to squat (reserve their room over break) and students of any year will be permitted to live in the building. “Percentage-wise, Jewell has had a lot of students choose not to return there after winter break,” said Director of Residence Life Abbey Hardin about the switchover. “We’re at a point in the cycle where we feel, and I think many students feel, first year students could be acclimated more easily to the community if they are interspersed around other students of varying years.”

Secondary education major and Jewell Hall Representative for the lower women’s side Samantha Cranmer said, “Sometimes, it’s a huge mess. I think that’s to be expected of any place that’s full of nothing but people who have probably just been cut loose from their parents for the first time in their

lives.” Despite this, Cranmer claimed that her experience in Jewell has been a positive one. “We’re all just one big family here,” she said.

Undecided freshman Jacob “Gilly” Gillis cited the constant barrage of excessive mess fees as his main source of annoyance. “I’m tired of forking over money every time someone puts cereal in the water fountain or urinal,”

he said. Gillis believes it would not happen as much if it wasn’t a solely freshman residence hall. Still, he agreed with Cranmer when asked if living in Jewell has been a positive experience, saying, “I love the people here and our family-like atmosphere.”

The same sentiment was echoed by Vice President of Jewell Hall Alex Bergschneider, a freshman computer

science major. “I work in Campus Services, so I’ve been to the other residence halls. None of them have the sense of community Jewell has. There’s hardly ever anyone hanging out in the parlors of the other halls. In Jewell, ours is almost never empty. Everyone is friends with everyone,” he said. He did agree with Cranmer and Gillis, acknowledging that “sometimes Jewell can get pretty disgusting.” Bergschneider also mentioned the numerous excessive mess charges and the kitchen that is perpetually closed due to the residents’ inability to clean up after themselves.

Cranmer, Bergschneider and Gillis agreed it would probably be a cleaner and less chaotic environment but worried Jewell may lose some of its family-like cohesiveness. “We all know each other in Jewell,” Cranmer said. “And I think part of what drew us together so quickly was that we were all thrown into this new situation at the same time together.”



PHOTO BY GRACE ALLEN

Jewell resident Jacob Gillis

A Farewell to Slightom and New Con

By Michael Troutt

For the past three years or better Blackburn College has been under construction. From renovations in Bothwell to the new fitness center in Woodward, quite a bit has changed on campus. By the end of February there will be two more changes to come: The New Construction (New Con) department will dissolve and New Con supervisor Michael Slightom will retire.

Functioning on a project-to-project basis, and with no immediate renovations underway, New Con will inevitably be closed when Slightom retires. Blackburn Vice President for Administration and Finance Steve Morris confirmed the department’s closing and offered further details on how it will affect the number of student jobs. Morris stated, “If you think about the new fitness center...and the Jaenke Alumni Center...each of those will require staffing, maintenance and

cleaning,” indicating that there will be jobs to replace those lost in New Con.

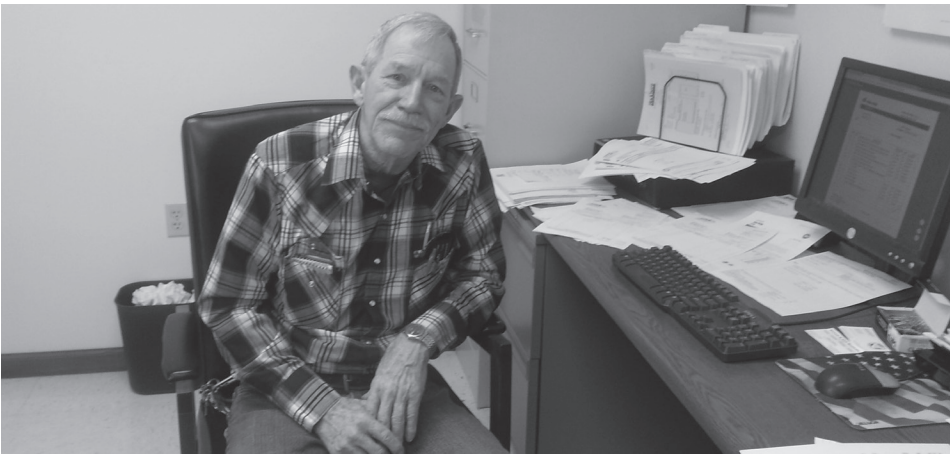
Morris also confirmed Slightom’s retirement and reflected on his hard work and commitment to Blackburn. Morris commented that Slightom is “very meticulous in the work that he does” and that he has always managed “construction to make sure that we finish on time, under budget and with a quality product.” Morris added that “he’s done a very good job for us, and we’ll miss him.”

Slightom began his career in construction in 1967 and started his own construction business in 1975. He has worked for Blackburn for nearly a decade and has overseen most of the renovations that have happened since. In October 2007, Slightom was hired to carry out the final renovations in the Mahan science building. Over the years, his strong work ethic has earned him the reputation of being an

old school, no nonsense supervisor amongst student workers. Sophomore computer science major Braydon Rekart agreed and stated that Slightom simply “expected students to give an honest effort.”

When interviewed about his years of service at Blackburn, Slightom commented, “I hope that I have taught a lot of students not only how to do

things in the construction trade, but I hope that I have taught them some work ethics [because] your work ethic will benefit you in anything that you do.” When asked how he feels about retiring, he responded, “I’m ready” with a grin. He also added that he plans to spend his retirement doing what he has always enjoyed - fishing and deer hunting.



Mike Slightom just weeks away from retirement

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TROUTT

Why Blackburn Women Marched



Protesters gather to march on Indianapolis

By Rachael Chong

The 2016 presidential election was one of the most contentious in recent memory. Though fraught with issues from the economy, terrorism, gun violence, race and gender, often people threw their support behind one candidate out of distaste for their opponent rather than appreciation for their policies.

So when the election ended on Nov. 8, with Hillary Clinton winning the popular vote but losing the Electoral College, it was no surprise that things did not just go back to normal. They could not have. People were too mad, too upset, too afraid to just let things go back to normal.

It was from this anger, unhappiness and fear that people began to organize. On all seven continents people began to fear for reproductive and civil rights. So people who, according to the Women’s March on Washington’s official website, “believe that Women’s Rights are Human Rights and Human Rights are Women’s Rights,” began to organize what would become the largest protest in U.S. history.

Senior political science major DeArryka Williams spoke of having previously attended a protest in St. Louis the Saturday after the election with Blackburn alumna Lindsey Becker. She carried a sign bearing the slogan #notmypresident. “I just really want to get my voice heard,” Williams said. She feels hashtags are significant because. “Social media is...the pathway to the

future.”

When sophomore creative writing major Kaja Carter overheard Williams mention having gone to a protest she said she was jealous. She said, “When you feel like somebody is being bullied or that there is an injustice in a system or a process that it is your duty to...keep going no matter how many times you’re told no until a change is made [and] sometimes best way to see change is a protest and...as a broke college student we don’t have many other ways to say ‘here is a problem. I recognize that this is a problem. [Now] fix it.’”

English professor Dr. Karen Dillon, who attended a women’s march in Indianapolis, said “I’m fearful for the next four years.” She typically tries not to bring up politics in class because it “causes [her] anxiety to flare up,” but wanted a sense of solidarity. “I have very firm beliefs not just of women’s rights, but the rights of all minorities,” she said of why she attended her first protest.

While there, she said she was most concerned with “the police presence, or lack thereof.” The women’s march has been criticized as being mostly beneficial to white women, and Dillon saw that in her surroundings saying that she felt the police presence was much lower than that of a Black Lives Matter protest because the participants of the women’s march were mostly white. “The racial aspect of it bothered me,” she said, but overall enjoyed the experience.



What is your New Year’s Resolution?

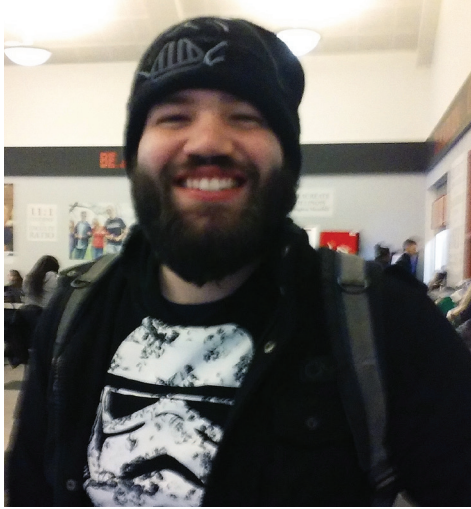
By Patrick Benedict



Elizabeth Orr
Junior graphic arts and marketing double major
“I don’t have one because I know I won’t keep one.”



Samantha Cranmer
Freshman secondary education major
“Stop being such an awful person, and stop roasting people daily.”



Benjamin Nichols
Senior biology major
“Quit smoking.”



Sam Becker
Sophomore accounting major
“I bought a new car and I’m not gonna total it.”



Jurassic Journalism

By Jess Willard

[Author’s Note]: “Jurassic Journalism” is a recurring column centered on previously published articles from The ‘Burnian.

“A Little Hope” was written by alumna Robin Huff, who graduated in 1995 with a degree in English and American literature.

Valentine’s Day -- let’s face it -- is not always the emotional thrill that it is supposed to be. Not everyone patiently

awaits February 14 -- the day that love is cherished and exploited. In fact some people dread the day worse than going to the doctor for major surgery. But whether you love Valentine’s Day or hate it -- it does make you think irrationally.

Suddenly, couples that never once did a romantic mushy thing in their lives are hanging on each other, and reciting poetry to one another in Ding. While your best friend down the hall, who

never cried once over a man to your knowledge, is suddenly renting Gone With the Wind and wondering why she doesn’t have a date to the Valentine’s Dance. She also frets about how awful she will feel if she is the only one on the floor who doesn’t receive a bouquet of balloons. Valentine’s Day alters our normal thinking patterns and the quest for love becomes the major goal for February. Why? Why do a few little red and white hearts, once a year, send us into this frenzy?

One just does not know. I too have had to stop myself on occasion from “ooing” and “ahhing” at all of the Valentine’s propaganda like little red teddy bears and hearts that say “I Love You.” But, then I have to stop

and rethink what it is I really long for. Happiness, Love, Security, and I realize that I can’t let Valentine’s Day get me down. Because Valentine’s Day is a celebration of love. Even if I have not yet found that love personally, I can still try to appreciate and understand other people’s need to celebrate it. And that someday, the beautiful love they are celebrating will touch me. Sure-- it might take me having to write a few hundred sad poems and watching Gone With the Wind for the entire 24 hours, but I might make it through the day; and even find a way to resist making gagging noises at every happy couple I see. Maybe I will somehow find a little hope in other people’s happiness.



Valentine’s Day comic strip that ran in The Blackburnian on Feb. 14, 1992

VALENTINE'S MESSAGES	
To The Big Banana: I need you-- I want you-- I have to have you! I love you too.	From: Pooky Bear.
To S.F.: Happy Valentine's Day.	From: The Bald Man.
To Karen Kowal: Through the thick and thin, I love you just the way you are.	From: Fitz.

COURTESY OF LUMPKIN LEARNING COMMONS

The Age of Misinformation



By Michael Troutt

According to a 2015 study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group, 80 percent of 7,804 students ranging from middle school to college could not differentiate between real news and fake news. Amidst growing concerns about the spread of fake news and the part it may have played in the recent presidential election, internet juggernauts like Google and Facebook have been motivated to act on behalf of the public interest. Both companies have openly stated their concerns in regard to fake news and have declared that they are actively seeking to suppress it. Google updated its ad policy to hinder the spread of fake news, and it states that “Google ads may not be placed on pages that misrepresent, misstate, or conceal information.”

While technology has become a dominant force of modern society, the internet has become the global river of information from which everyone may drink. With breaking news reports, viral videos and social media connectedness at the touch of a finger, living in the age of misinformation can prove to be difficult.

Here are some helpful tips to combat fake news:

Consider the source: When

confronted with a questionable news report or a sensational story that seems too good to be true, consider the source. Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets have implemented a blue checkmark to let users know that an account is authentic.

Although you may have to do a little more digging. Look for the author’s name and credentials and search the web to confirm that they are who they say they are. Look for links to their sources of information, click on them, and verify that they work and whether or not they have taken information from another bogus source. Even if the information is credible, check the date of publication. The information could be irrelevant and outdated.

Read closely: In conversation it is easy to pick up on things like sarcasm and humor. In writing it can be difficult to detect. Read about the author and the site posting the content to be sure the information you are reading is not a satirical piece, like a report from The Onion.

Identify claim and support: While reading an article, try to identify the overall claim and then look for the author’s support. Is it more opinion than evidence? Does it make sense at all, or is the author cherry picking evidence to suit their own bias?

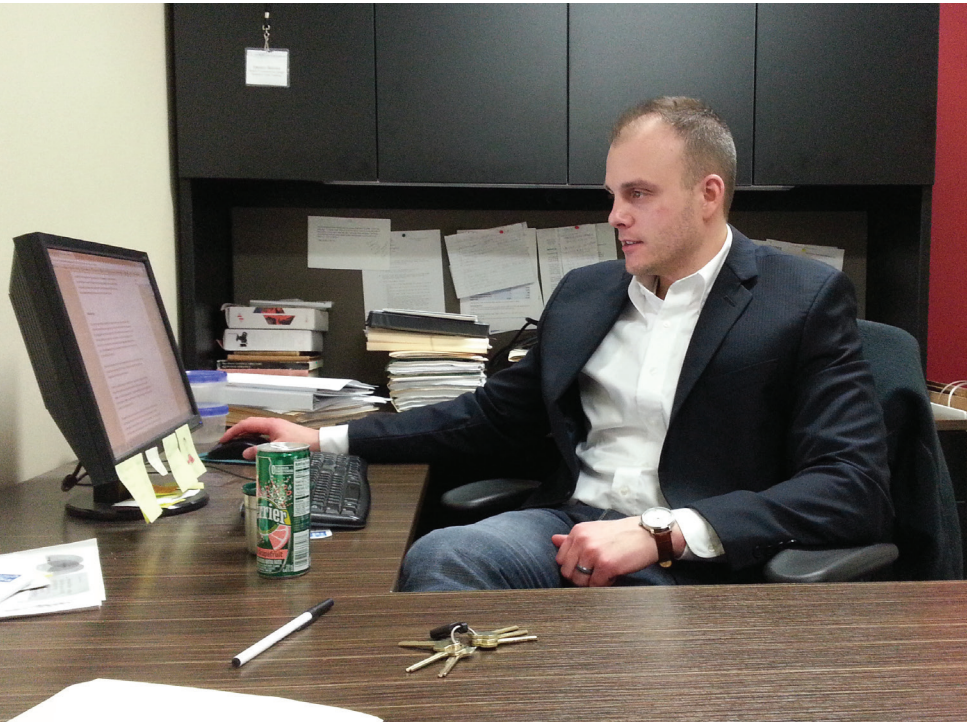
Remember the power of bias: Inherently, everyone is biased in one way or another. Whether it is political, religious or even cultural, everyone has strong core beliefs that shape their thoughts and actions. It is important to remember the power of bias because it can become the most

deceptive component to undermine your critical thinking. When you read any information that caters to your own bias, your own beliefs, you should be even more skeptical to accept it as true. Remain doubtful. It may be more convenient to trust a source that speaks directly to your bias, but that doesn’t make it true or credible.

Blackburn Director of Lumpkin Learning Commons and Head Librarian Spencer Brayton has advocated for information literacy for at least the last five years. Brayton compared cross checking information to a typical Google search, and stated, “We don’t want to look any further. To take the time to go past the second page. And we all do that.” He also pointed out the tedious nature of verifying sources as

individuals are constantly bombarded by information. “It’s not like there was always unbiased information before the internet, but the internet makes it a lot more difficult,” he explained.

While the spread of misinformation may seem like a harmless side effect of the information age, there exists certain dangers beyond just falling for fake news. Blackburn political science professor Dr. Laura Wiedlocher stated that “As an individual, it can alter your attitudes and beliefs towards either a group or individuals.” Allowing one’s views of others to be tainted by misinformation is what perpetuates dangerous ideologies that promote hate and discrimination.



Spencer Brayton discusses the tedious nature of cross checking information

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Slipping into Synthetic Melodies



Lead vocalist of The Flaming Lips Wayne Coyne performs at the Palace Theatre in Melbourne

By JESS WILLARD

As you are trudging through your drab day filled with desks covered in to-do lists, consider escaping for an hour to a strange wonderland. Earlier this year, alternative rock band The Flaming Lips released their album “Oczy Mlody,” involving psychedelic lyrics paired with immersive instrumentals. This new release takes the listener to a place where frogs with demon eyes and female dragon riders can be found.

The Flaming Lips originate from Oklahoma City and have been making music since 1983. They are known for their encapsulating melodic vocals and a sound that can be best described as trippy. Through the use of instruments like the theremin (an electronic musical instrument that can be played without physical contact), the band is able to create synthetic, trance-like tunes that dart in and out of the listener’s headphones.

Alumnus Bryan Bethel, who earned his degree in graphic design in 2016, self-identifies as a fan of the psychedelic rock subgenre, which includes The Flaming Lips. Although Bethel would not describe himself as someone with a diehard investment in the band, he was drawn into “Oczy Mlody.” “You see, I wouldn’t describe myself as a boring person but I’m not a crazy party animal,” he explained. “This album allowed me to escape the tethers of reality and end up somewhere a lot stranger.”

Bethel was drawn in by the song “There Should Be Unicorns,” which he described as a “weird, drug-infused, slow-paced melody.” The lyrics center on a place with purple-eyed unicorns and strippers, where problems are easily escaped through the guise of sex and money. “The album allows a safe outlet to explore the weirdness I would

otherwise be missing out on,” he said. “Oczy Mlody” may allow for the mind to drift along a dream-like, smooth rhythm, but The Flaming Lips are not a band for everyone. The lyrics do not have a hidden moral and are not obviously relatable. Additionally, the tune can seem random at times such as in “Nigdy Nie (Never No).” The song begins with a light, multi-layered synthetic sound and suddenly shifts to something heavier and rhythmic towards the end.

Overall, I found the album to be worth listening to despite having less familiarity with the subgenre than

Bethel. The sound was unlike anything I was used to hearing as it was more electronic and, in a sense, textured. I could feel the layers of keyboard-generated notes tapping my eardrums. I recommend that even if psychedelic rock does not traditionally show up in your playlists, you should give “Oczy Mlody” a listen and see where these mind-numbing tunes take you. For those who have been fans of the band or would like to experience The Flaming Lips for the first time, they will be performing at The Pageant in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 23.



The Flaming Lips light up the Palace Theatre in Melbourne with their signature confetti-filled performance

You May View When Ready: Rogue One



Official “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” poster

By JOHN HUMMER

Creating its own tone and identity while remaining familiar to fans of previous movies, “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” expands on how the rebels stole the schematics for the

imperial planet destroyer, the Death Star. Taking place between episodes three and four, “Rogue One” sits in an often unexplored area of the Star Wars timeline, with a few minor exceptions

such as the “Force Unleashed” series of video games which are no longer canon after Disney’s acquisition of Lucasfilm and Lucasarts. Old favorites such as Darth Vader and even Moff Tarkin, the general who orders the destruction of Princess Leia’s home planet, Alderaan, by uttering the phrase, “You may fire when ready,” make appearances in “Rogue One,” but this distinct placement in the timeline forces the movie to introduce and be carried by completely new characters. These characters prove to be unique - my favorite being the thankfully under marketed K-2SO, the new android companion of the protagonists. The movie plays with the idea that just because someone is a rebel does not mean that they are good, and just because someone is an imperial does not mean that they are bad. Reality is not black and white, and the movie reflects this well.

In a series first, “Rogue One” ditched the old school yellow crawling text that has appeared to give background to all seven previous movies. This movie does reference this tradition by having the title appear in a similar manner, flying across space in the same yellow font. I understand that this may be a divisive decision, but the movie does benefit from breaking

tradition like this. The way “Rogue One” presents itself without the text, it allows the narrative and characters to build the world while paying respect to the previous movies. “I don’t like the text very much,” said Butler Resident Director Nick Wagner. “It did a lot of world building, but there are better ways and better ways of writing.”

An interesting move by “Rogue One” is its use of CGI instead of casting look alikes to play Moff Tarkin and Princess Leia. Wagner described it as “it look[ing] a lot better than ‘Tron: Legacy,’” and that was my exact first impression as well. When Tarkin was at a distance, he looked like a flesh and blood human being. It was not until the camera zoomed in on his face a bit too much or he was with other people that things looked a little off. This use of technology is impressive, and I think we will be seeing more of it in the future.

Overall, “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” is a welcome addition to the franchise, introducing memorable characters and tying everything together. My only gripe with the movie would be some pacing issues: near the end it went from zero to 100 without much in between. Despite this, I would still recommend this film.

Keeping up with this Kraduated Senior

By BRENDAN RILEY LERSCH

I remember a conversation that I had with English professor Dr. Karen Dillon last spring. I asked her if she had any advice for me as a graduating senior. She said “get out of Illinois” and that’s what I did. I went from a place where I ran into my professors right after skipping their classes to somewhere where I was alone even though I was surrounded by eight million people. I am currently working as an AmeriCorps Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. I am helping to build affordable housing in New York City. It is probably one of the scariest, toughest and best things that I have ever done, and I blame Blackburn for it.

I graduated from Blackburn with an environmental studies degree. As you can see, I am not really pursuing a career in that field. However, Blackburn gave me the experiences that I needed to land this job.

Flashback to freshman year. I was taking an “Introduction to Teamwork” course with Rob Weis who was the Director of Counseling at the time and Dr. Sam Meredith who has since retired (from the Leadership, Law and Public Service department). One of the requirements of the class was to go on a trip to Joplin, Missouri, to rebuild houses after the 2011 tornado. During the trip, I met Blackburn’s Habitat for Humanity president Samantha Yoder who tried to get me to join the chapter. It did not take much convincing



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENDAN RILEY LERSCH

Brendan Riley Lersch graduated with a degree in environmental studies and is now working as an AmeriCorps volunteer in New York

since one of the cool things about Blackburn’s chapter is that they take a spring break trip down south each year. I was involved with Habitat all four years at Blackburn; I met a lot of interesting people and learned a ton of construction skills. During my breaks at school, I also worked for New Construction Supervisor Michael Slightom. Although he was one of the

toughest people that I have ever worked for, he taught me the importance of being a hard worker who produces quality work.

There are other things that prepared me for my current job, but I want to take the time to give current Blackburn students some advice. Freshmen: take time to befriend upperclassmen. They will leave you in the end but you will

make some memorable moments. Sophomores: if you want to switch your major, do it now. Starting over sucks but being in a major that you do not enjoy sucks even more. Juniors: don’t drink and drive. Graduating seniors: whatever you want to do, do it. But first, get out of Illinois.

Professional Development or Professional Headache?

By JORDAN WOOD

Everyone who knows about Blackburn College also knows about the work program, and every student quickly learns just how stressful it is - especially this year’s new students. The work program requires a total of 160 hours. That is equivalent to about 10 hours per week each semester.

In the 16 weeks that make up each semester there are 112 days, however, some departments are not open on weekends which makes workers only have around 80 days to complete their required 160 hours for the work program. This essentially breaks down to two hours per weekday. While this can be fairly manageable for some, I have found it very stressful as I try and balance two sports as well as the work program and classes. To make matters worse, this year, Blackburn has added a professional development program dealing with a variety of topics



GRAPHIC BY LUIZA MYSLINSKA

There aren’t always enough hours in the day

including diversity, resume building and interview skills. It also requires all freshmen and transfer students to complete an additional 16 hours per semester, making the required number of hours for them 176, compared to the 160 for other students.

While the idea of the professional

development program was well-intended, as it attempts to prepare students further for the workplace after graduation, the courses are repetitive and their scheduled times are more convenient for the person running the course rather than the students, especially athletes. The offered program

opportunities are almost always around the same time during the school day, which is impossible to attend if you have a class during it. Alternate times are given as an option, but if you are an athlete with practices and games, these times often don’t work either.

The best solution, if the professional development program remains a requirement, is to allow for more alternative courses online. The program had five options online last semester. I think that it would be fairly easy for a powerpoint, followed by a short quiz, to be placed on Moodle so students who are unable to attend may still be able to obtain the information. Regardless of the solution that is chosen, a decision needs to be reached quickly in hopes of reducing some of the stress many students feel revolving around the work program.

“Ghost in the Shell” and Hollywood’s Problem with Casting Asians

By GRACE ALLEN

In 2014 it was announced Scarlett Johansson would star as protagonist Motoko Kusanagi in the upcoming film “Ghost in the Shell.” The decision surprised and angered many people as Johansson - most famous for portraying the Black Widow in Marvel’s “Avengers” movie series - is obviously not Japanese. The casting choice is offensive, but the real problem extends beyond this specific decision. I doubt the controversy will be enough to stop the movie from becoming a box office success when it is released in late March. The trailers released so far have been met with overwhelmingly positive responses. The problem is this: people are willing to overlook the blatant whitewashing and culture erasure.

Whitewashing is an incredibly complicated and broad issue in the film industry. Other examples include Rooney Mara playing an indigenous native girl in 2015’s “Pan” and Angelina Jolie portraying Mariane Pearl, an Afro-Cuban woman, in “A Mighty Heart.” The purpose of this article is not to claim one race is more or less disenfranchised via media representation than another, but to criticize Hollywood’s failure to cast East Asians in its movies.

Obviously the days when Mickey

Rooney could tape his eyelids back and play a pidgin-speaking, bucktoothed Japanese man as he did in “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” are gone, but I have seen several white actors take on roles that should have gone to an Asian one with little to no backlash outside of communities of Asian actors and audiences. Emma Stone portrayed quarter-Chinese and quarter-Pacific Islander Allison Ng in Cameron Crowe’s 2015 box office bomb, “Aloha.” In the adaptation of Rick Yancey’s young adult series “The 5th Wave,” Ringer is played by a white actress despite Yancey’s claims that he told the producers in charge of casting she was Asian multiple times. Tilda Swinton was cast as the “Ancient One” in Marvel’s 2016 hit, “Doctor Strange.” In the comics, Swinton’s character was a Mongolian man and, despite the whitewashing, “Dr. Strange” was one of the biggest successes of 2016.

The problems do not stop with poor casting choices. George Lucas admitted that many of the inspirations for Star Wars were steeped in Asian influence yet “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” was the first movie to feature any Asian characters. Movies that take place in an Asian location unfailingly focus on the improbable white person



PHOTO COURTESY OF MORGUE FILE

Actress Scarlett Johansson plays a Japanese character in Paramount’s upcoming “Ghost in the Shell”

in its midst like “Lucy,” also starring Johannsson in 2014, and last year’s “The Great Wall.” “Doctor Strange” and Marvel’s upcoming Netflix series “Iron Fist” both rely heavily on East Asian mysticism for their stories, yet star white men. Every time a U.S. adaptation of an anime rolls around, it unfailingly casts white people in starring roles, most of the time refusing to even hold auditions for Asian actors—“Speed Racer,” “Dragon Ball

Z,” “Death Note” and now “Ghost in the Shell.”

It seems people want stories about Asia or the Asian experience or aesthetic - just not ones about Asians. This is bad news for a market where opportunities for actors are already depressingly sparse. It sounds like a ridiculous question, but I have to ask: When will Asians get the right to play Asians?

Discovering Hidden Figures

By RACHAEL CHONG

Two-time Emmy nominee for her role as Cookie from “Empire” Taraji P. Henson, Oscar winner for “The Help” Octavia Spencer and Grammy nominated singer-songwriter Janelle Monae are far from unknown, but their characters Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn and Mary Jackson, respectively, were virtually unheard of. That is, until the production of this year’s Oscar-nominated “Hidden Figures.”

The accomplishments of women, especially black women, are too often overlooked. We are taught the names of white men like Alan Shepard, the first

American in space, and John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth. We are even taught the name of Yuri Gargain, the first man in space, but also a Russian during the Cold War era. But we are rarely taught the names of the people who got them there, and we are almost never taught the names of the women who got them there.

So when a movie like “Hidden Figures” showcases Katherine G. Johnson over John Glenn, it really matters. We know John Glenn’s story. It has been told over and over in history books, films and in popular culture. But no one teaches us about Katherine

G. Johnson. Teachers and textbooks just do not seem to care, but “Hidden Figures” has come along and suddenly someone does.

The subject matter of “Hidden Figures” may mean that if you are white, you might not care about “Hidden Figures” the same way a woman of color might. You might have brushed it off as just another space movie. You may have wanted to see it for the Hollywood stars like Kevin Costner, Jim Parsons or Kirsten Dunst. But for a person of color - especially for a woman of color - “Hidden Figures” is painfully significant. Oscar nominated

for Best Picture and a commercial and critical success, it really, really matters. So often the triumphs of women and of people of color go ignored, and when gender and race overlap, it is easy to feel invisible.

So do not let “Hidden Figures” be forgotten. Show this in your classroom, to your children, to your siblings, nieces and nephews. Show this to your proverbial racist uncle. You remember John Glenn’s name, now refuse to forget the names of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn and Mary Jackson.

The ‘burnian

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters under 500 words may be sent to burnian@blackburn.edu, or mailed to The ‘Burnian, 700 College Ave., Carlinville, IL 62626.

GUEST COMMENTARIES

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MISSION STATEMENT

The ‘Burnian is a student-run newspaper at Blackburn College. Our mission is to deliver accurate, interesting and timely news to the Blackburn campus as well as the Carlinville community in an ethical and professional manner.

Everyone Needs an Underdog

By JORDAN WOOD

In sports, the underdog holds a special place in most fans’ hearts and the reason is simple: it gives people hope. An underdog is someone that no one thinks has a chance to win, that has the odds stacked against them time and time again, yet prevails, and in doing so, inspires ordinary people.

At Blackburn College, people come from all walks of life and the athletes come from winless programs to state championship winning teams. But once an athlete arrives here, one thing becomes clear: Blackburn is the underdog. No one expects anything from Blackburn because “we’re just Blackburn.” Throughout the basketball season, Coach Fonseca urged her team to forget that mindset and flip it from “we’re just Blackburn” to “we are Blackburn” giving her players a desire to show people what they are truly capable of. With flipping the mindset, suddenly there is a greater sense of purpose and a belief that we are not just anything, but we are everything and anything that we chose to be.

Freshman biology major and basketball player Marcus Bryant described the inspiration he felt about

the underdog, saying that “it pushes you to go harder. In basketball, the satisfaction from a victory feels so much better because you may not be used to it.”

Bryant also said he likes being an underdog. “Blackburn is considered an underdog and teams take you lightly, but if you prepare and work hard, you can be really good and it’s more motivation,” he said.

Despite the corniness to the line “anything is possible if you just believe,” there is some truth to it. Throughout history, the underdog story has brought communities together and moved people to strive for more because it opened their eyes and allowed them to see that it is possible for them to have more. That they can reach for more. That they do not have to settle for expectations. That they can chase their dreams.

The 1980 USA men’s hockey team inspired the country by proving that brute strength and a decorated history is nothing compared to heart and passion when they pulled off the “miracle on ice” by defeating the Soviet Union on their way to winning an Olympic gold



PHOTO BY JORDAN WOOD

The 2013 University of Oklahoma softball team used the tragedies in their community to propel them towards a Cinderella run to the Women’s College World Series championship medal.

The Marshall University football team rose from the ashes after a plane crash in 1970 that killed everyone on board and almost led to the termination of the football program. Instead, the program was rebuilt to give the community - that had suffered

tremendous losses - something to believe in and root for again.

With a lot of hard work, heart and a common goal, an average athlete or team can come together and do something magical, and maybe, just maybe, replace that “underdog” label with “champion.”

Athletics Center Update

By ROBERT FAGG

In the spring of 2016, Blackburn College introduced plans to construct a new fitness center in Dawes gymnasium. It was scheduled to be completed by that August, but that changed with the late hiring of a contractor.

Director of Athletics and Recreation John Malin said that the contractor was hired in September of 2016 and that is also when the two phase process began.

“The new fitness center will cost approximately \$1.2 million dollars to complete,” said Malin. He also said that most of the money is coming from various donors, many of which who would like to stay anonymous, so their privacy is respected.

With the new renovations, Malin believes that “the fitness center will be an outstanding facility with excellent fitness equipment that will be appealing to most prospective students that visit our campus.” Malin also predicts that this new facility will help Blackburn remain competitive in the recruitment of new athletes.

The first phase was officially completed on Dec. 30. This included public restrooms, renovating the former athletic directors office and removing all of the offices that used to be in the main entrance of Dawes. The women’s basketball coach’s office, the women’s softball coach’s office and the

tennis coach’s office were among those that were removed. These offices will now be part of the new fitness center.

Athletic trainer Malia Murphy was displaced during the renovation. She was able to move back into the trainer’s room over winter break and could not be happier. Due to her office being a part of the hallway between Dawes and Woodward, she was displaced. “I couldn’t have enjoyed being in the infirmary any less. It was so far away from all of the practices and games. It was rough especially when it was really cold,” said Murphy.

Phase two of the project will be completed later this month, but it will

not be open for use until after spring break. This phase involves changing the former pool area into the new fitness center and also renovating the adjacent locker rooms. “Once renovation is completed, there will be a great deal of fitness and cardio equipment that needs to be installed. Once the equipment is installed the coaching staff and student staff in athletics will need to be thoroughly trained to properly use the equipment. Much of the training will occur during spring break and the facility should be ready for student, faculty and staff use after break,” said Malin.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PR

The finished fitness center will include new equipment and sectioned off areas for cardio and free weights

Getting Stronger with Jake Maestranzi



PHOTO COURTESY OF PR

Senior point guard Jake Maestranzi takes a moment to goof around

By Gary Lowder

Senior business major and point guard Jake Maestranzi was recently honored as the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) men’s basketball player of the week for the second week in a row. Maestranzi took home the title for the weeks of Dec. 19 and Jan. 3, making him the last player of the week in 2016 and the first of the new year.

Over break, Maestranzi procured the title by helping the Beavers secure a 90-70 victory over Fontbonne University. Maestranzi scored 19 points and had a season high of eight assists. Maestranzi followed this up by helping the Beavers defeat conference arch-nemesis MacMurray. He also scored 13 points, had eight assists and four steals. “It’s always nice to be recognized,” said a humble Maestranzi, “but [what] our team likes to say is that individual success comes with team success. I never would’ve been considered if it wasn’t for my team.”

Maestranzi has played basketball for nearly his entire life. “I started playing travel ball when I was five or six years old. I learned to love the game pretty fast,” said Maestranzi. He played basketball through middle school and into high school. Maestranzi played for South Elgin high school

for three years and then transferred to Notre Dame College Prep in Niles, Illinois, his senior year. During this time, Maestranzi recalls his favorite basketball moments. “South Elgin won sectionals while I was there. After that, I transferred to Notre Dame and then they won sectionals,” said Maestranzi with a smile. “I guess I’m lucky.”

At 5-foot-9 Maestranzi is not the tallest on the team, but he still manages to make some impressive plays. He believes his success is not due to natural talent, but his work ethic and the effort exerted by those around him. “If you wanna be a good basketball player you gotta hit the gym and get stronger,” said Maestranzi, “I’ve been constantly in the weight room. My dad has helped me alot and my coach and my teammates help push me in practice.

Head coach Steve Kollar was particularly instrumental in Maestranzi’s training. “If I had to pick a coach that helped me the most, it has to be Coach Kollar,” he said. “He helped me find Blackburn in the first place. He’s a great coach, we have a really good relationship. He definitely pushes me everyday and helps me be the best player I can be.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF PR

Maestranzi is guarded by two Greenville Panthers in the game on Jan. 19

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