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Wolf to deliver Commencement Address; wife, mayor, playwright to be honored

BY STEVEN VIERA
Senior Editor

Tom Wolf, the governor of Pennsylvania, will deliver the Commencement Address on Saturday, May 7. In recognition of his achievements, Wolf will receive an honorary degree from the College at Commencement, as will Frances Wolf '96, his wife and a member of the College's Board of Trustees; Rick Gray, mayor of Lancaster, and his wife, Gail; and Nilaja Sun '96, an acclaimed playwright and actress.

"It's certainly an honor to know that my wife and I will share degrees from such a prestigious institution as F&M," Wolf said, according to [this article](#) on F&M's news website. "Frances and I believe that a liberal arts education is something as important today as it's ever been."

Wolf, a Democrat, unseated Tom Corbett, a Republican and the incumbent of the state, in November 2014; at the time, he had never before run

for elected office. Wolf has fought for greater environmental protections in the state and become embroiled in a months-long political battle to pass a budget for the state during his tenure.

Prior to assuming Pennsylvania's highest office, Wolf spent two years in a small village in India as a member of the Peace Corps before earning degrees from Dartmouth College, the University of London, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. For 25 years, along with two cousins, he managed the Wolf Organization, his family's lumber distribution and building company. A native of York County, Wolf still lives in the home where he grew up.

His wife, who holds degrees from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, F&M, and Bryn Mawr, joined F&M's Board of Trustees in 2004 and is now a vice-chair.

Other recipients of honorary de-



photo courtesy of fandm.edu/news

Tom Wolf, governor of Pennsylvania, will deliver the Commencement Address on Saturday, May 7 for members of F&M's graduating class.

grees include Gray, mayor of Lancaster since 2005 after a long career as a public servant, his wife, Gail, and Sun, an Obie Award-winning playwright and author of "No Child..." who has appeared in acting roles in film and

television productions.

Stay tuned for continuing coverage of this story in *The College Reporter*.

Senior Steven Viera is the Senior Editor. His email is sviera@fandm.edu.

Student Leadership Fair calls attention to opportunities on Diplomatic Congress

BY STEVEN VIERA
Senior Editor

On Tuesday, Mar. 22, the Diplomatic Congress (DipCon) hosted its first-ever Student Leadership Fair to encourage students to run for positions on DipCon as well as other student government bodies, including the College Entertainment Committee (CEC) and college house governments. The Student Leadership Fair precedes the elections for both DipCon's executive board (Apr. 5) and class presidents (Apr. 12) while more specific information sessions will be held one week ahead of each election.

"The Elections Committee this year decided [that] we needed to really make an effort to spread the word about DipCon and how people can get involved," said Molly Cadwell '16, vice president of DipCon. "Last year, a lot of the elections were uncontested; while it made campaigning easier for some, ideally, we would have lots

of students running."

To encourage students to run for positions, DipCon's Elections Committee decided to host the Student Leadership Fair. They established and delegated a set of tasks, like reserving the atrium of the Steinman College Center, conducting outreach and public relations for the event, and more.

Representing DipCon at the Fair was its executive board: Donnell Bailey '17, president; Charley Hagist '18, treasurer; Carmen Navia '18, secretary; and Cadwell. In addition, to highlight the range of opportunities available on DipCon, all four class presidents and several committee chairs were present, such as Shakeyla Flores '19, Community Outreach chair; Colleen Gallagher '16, Academic Life chair; and Shelby Sawyer, Sustainability chair. Zoe

see FAIR, page 2

New program enables students to spend Spring Break serving local community

BY BETTY PHYU SIN
Contributing Writer

During this spring break at F&M, the Ware Institute initiated a Local Alternative Spring Break Program which integrated learning and community service components. During the program, which lasted from Wednesday, March 16 to Friday, March 18, students served, explored, and learned about the Lancaster community. The program activities included site-visits to rural neighborhood community service organizations, presentations by practitioners in the field of public health, and community service.

The first morning trip was to the New Hope Ministries, a Christian social service agency, which serves parts of the York County and the West Shore area of Cumberland County. The Ministries focus on mental well-being through crisis assistance, stability and workforce development, and youth development programs. The visit

provided an introduction to the rural Lancaster neighborhoods as well as the prevalence of such community organizations. The next trip was to SOLANCO Neighborhood Ministries, a non-profit faith-based organization that provides food assistance as well as heating assistance and other emergency assistance. At SOLANCO's food bank, F&M students were actively involved in packing Easter gifts for primary school students.

That afternoon, Berwood A. Yost, director of the Center for Opinion Research at F&M shared his research on the public health sector, especially of Amish and Mennonite communities in Lancaster. Nurse practitioners from Lancaster General Hospital (LGH) then shared their field experiences for developing public health awareness in these communities. Presentations from Lancaster

see PROGRAM, page 2

Inside this Issue...

Opinion & Editorial
Writer criticizes racism following Brussels attack
page 3

Campus Life
Opal Tometi talks race at 'Take Back the Night'
page 4

Arts & Entertainment
Something Rotten skillfully, yet sillily spoofs Shakespeare
page 6

Masthead
Editors discuss the need to listen in spite of emotions
page 3

Hunt's Crime Watch

Saturday, Mar. 19, 11:46 a.m.— Officers from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) responded to a fire alarm in New College House. A student pulled it accidentally.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 1:05 a.m.—DPS received a call of an intoxicated student at College Row. The student was transported to Lancaster General Hospital (LGH).

Saturday, Mar. 5, 1:34 a.m.—DPS received a call of an intoxicated student in Weis College House. The student was transported to LGH.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 2:20 a.m.—An intoxicated student on West James St was transported to LGH.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 2:00 a.m.—DPS received a call of a student being harassed by another student yelling and banging on their wall in Bonchek College House.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 2:13 a.m.—DPS responded to a fight in progress on the corner of W Frederick St and College Ave.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 10:56 a.m.—DPS performed an alcohol-related medical assist in Thomas Hall. The student was transported to LGH.

Monday, Mar. 7—Custodial reported a hole in the wall of a first floor men's restroom in Weis College House.

Monday, Mar. 7, 5:10 p.m.—A student reported being harassed by an ex on campus.

Tuesday, Mar. 8, 10:47 p.m.—DPS responded to a drug violation in Thomas Hall.

Wednesday, Mar. 9 7:34 p.m.—A theft was reported on Hartman Green. A laptop was stolen from a student's backpack.

Thursday, Mar. 10, 12:54 a.m.—DPS responded to a call of students talking loudly on the Residential Quad.

Thursday, Mar. 10, 2:36 a.m.—DPS performed an alcohol-related medical assist.

Friday, Mar. 11, 8:24 a.m.—A complaint of loud music was reported in Thomas Hall.

Saturday, Mar. 12, 1:42 a.m.—DPS received a loud music complaint at College Hill.

Tuesday, Mar. 22, 3:08 p.m.—A student reported being harassed by text message.

Tuesday, Mar. 22, 11:12 p.m.—DPS responded to a noise complaint on the 400 block of North Mary.

Wednesday, Mar. 23, 2:00 p.m.—A student reported being harassed by a former student.

Thursday, Mar. 24, 10:09 p.m.—DPS received a call of a loud party in Ware College House. When they arrived, there was no party, just loud music.

The College Reporter Corrections Policy

The College Reporter welcomes comments and suggestions, as well as information about substantive errors of fact that call for correction. Contact us via email at reporter@fandm.edu or at (717) 291-4095.

The College Reporter Story Idea Submission Policy

The College Reporter welcomes story ideas from the college community. If you have or your organization has an idea for a Reporter story, email it to us at reporter@fandm.edu with the subject heading "Campus Story Idea" by Monday at noon the week before publication. Story ideas will be accepted at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

Sexual Misconduct: Questions and Answers

Question #20: The Title IX Coordinator's role requires them to gather data on reporting at the institution. This same person is in charge of overseeing the adjudication processes. Does this create a conflict of interest, whereby the Coordinator faces institutional pressures to make reporting "look better?"

The answer to this question hinges on what one perceives to "look better." Colleges with very few reports of sexual misconduct are perceived, by those who study this issue, to have a problem with responsiveness to students. In other words, it is assumed that a low reporting rate indicates that the college has not communicated to students that their concern or complaint will be heard, believed and responded to effectively. F&M, in 2006 formed a Task Force to look at why our reporting rate was not higher. After spending a year educating themselves about the issue, the Task Force made recommendations to the Dean of the College that would improve student understanding of the College's strong desire to create a safe environment by responding to sexual misconduct as well as the process for reporting it. F&M's reporting rate has climbed every year since then and exceeds that of many much larger colleges.

Fair: Cadwell encourages students to run for office to strengthen the F&M community

continued from page 1
Peace '16 represented the CEC, Josh Hoffman '17 represented Club Council, and James Galasso '18 and Kate Carrier '18 represented the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council, respectively, while Ignacio Picado-Fallas '17 represented the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. A handful of students also appeared on behalf of college house governments.

Cadwell estimates about 30 students attended the Leadership Fair, and she pointed out that a few even took paperwork to participate in the upcoming elections. She also praised Bailey for his role in reaching out to students and encouraging them to consider getting involved.

"I'm happy with the fair," she said. "There is definitely a lot of room for improvement, but considering how packed the spring semester is in terms of programming and the fact that this is the first time we've done this, I'm definitely satisfied with the event."

Student government has been a foundation stone of Cadwell's time at F&M, and she cites some of her personal experience as a reason why students should strive to get involved with DipCon in order to improve both themselves and their community.

Program: Student thinks that community service initiatives enrich college experience

continued from page 1
Nurse-Family Partnerships highlighted how community health programs can transform the lives of vulnerable first-moms in rural areas.

These presentations were complemented by the following day's visit to the Clinic for Special Children, a well-structured active clinic serving a considerably large population of Amish and Mennonites. The program provided holistic understanding of public health by also including a visit to a Community Service Group (CSG)'s branch in Lancaster. There, students learned about Community Residential Rehabilitation Program (CRR)'s activities for mental health and intellectual development services. Moreover, they had the chance to hear first-hand experiences from a couple of individuals about their recoveries.

The last day's visit to the Factory Ministries that serve for the sustainable development individuals facing poverty offered more insights into rural poverty and its prevalence. The visit also helped students to actually relate and see the cyclical impact of poverty and its consequences as the members of the communities willingly shared their experiences with poverty. By pointing out the Factory Ministries' motto, "Because Everyone's Journey Mat-

"On a more individual level, it's a great leadership experience; you get to learn so much about how the school works, and you get to meet and work with some really incredible people," she said. "I really value the time I've spent on DipCon and a lot of that is because I've gotten to work with some really amazing people. On another level, it is important to be involved in student government if you care about F&M and want it to improve. There are lots of ways you can work to improve and build our community besides being involved in student government, but I think student government might be the clearest way to do that. You're representing the student body and working with the administration and faculty at the same time. This puts you in an interesting position to really understand what is going on at F&M and in a position where you can really make change."

Students interested in running for office or learning more about DipCon can attend one of its weekly meetings at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays in the Armstrong Room of the Steinman College Center, send an email to diplomatic.congress@fandm.edu or follow DipCon on its various social media platforms. Cadwell also encouraged students to reach out to her directly at mcadwell@fandm.edu.

ters", the community members made students realize the importance of a caring, supportive and non-judgmental society.

One of the participants Doug Benton '17, highlighted the importance of the educational component of the program.

"This program exposed an extremely important yet overlooked problem that exists so close to the place we call home," he said. "It was empowering and helped me reaffirm the direction I plan to take after college."

Beyond his personal experience, Benton discussed the merits of F&M not only continuing this program, but expanding local community service programs for students.

"Adding a local community-based learning component to the general graduation requirements would certainly help inspire more of the study body to serve the Lancaster community and the other communities they will inhabit after graduating," he said. "I believe that Franklin & Marshall has a valuable asset in this program. The school could continue to expand this program--into the curriculum of a broader class or even making more programs that are similar."

First-year Betty Phyu Sin is a contributing writer. Her email is lsin@fandm.edu.

Staff Writer Commentary

After Brussels attack, writer pushes back against xenophobia, racism

BY NICK RIEBEL
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In the wake of the tragic terrorist attack in Brussels, Belgium on March 22, which ISIS (or ISIL, or Daesh, or the Islamic State, or so on) claimed responsibility for, it is easy to want to seek violent revenge and turn toward xenophobia. We see this in the rise of Donald Trump, who has been able to use the racism and xenophobia latent in the Republican base to propel himself to the undisputed GOP frontrunner status to the point that he is the presumptive nominee of his party. Ted Cruz, although perhaps not quite as "bad," did call for the police to patrol and put surveillance on Muslim neighborhoods and communities in the United States. Cruz's call contained an irony that was not lost on President Obama, who rightfully condemned the Texan senator for calling for the United States to adopt more of the dystopian policies of Cuba, which his father escaped from to go to America.

I think we can say, without causing great offense or umbrage, that the Republican party and its base seem prone to anger, hatred and fear. Those emotions and passions reinforce a sort of positive feedback loop. Trump and Cruz know this cycle and are manipulating these emotions for their own political advantage, seeking the White House at the expense of immigrants and Muslims. It is shameful, in my opinion, that the Grand Old Party has so vociferously rejected the original, founding principles of Lincoln's Republican party. The Southern Strategy has reached its climax. The recent terrorist attack in Belgium has only fueled the self-destructive tendency of the

GOP to agitate and enrage their voters, and cynically turn their supporters' hatred, fear and anger into political support.

But perhaps we should not be too hard on the Republicans. Perhaps they truly are concerned about illegal immigration and Muslim "infiltration" in a completely non-racist way. Although I think it is hardly likely that there is no bigotry in the positions of Trump and Cruz on these issues, I will admit that it is possible. Yet, in Europe, it is even more difficult to deny the tendencies of voters, angered and scared, to vote for xenophobic, right-wing parties. I fear that Trump and his candidacy are partially fueled by the reawakening of racism and xenophobia in the United States and partially inspired by extreme-right and xenophobic politicians such as Marine Le Pen, or those in Hungary's Jobbik party. This has been going on in Europe for some time, but has been accelerated (and these people and parties have seen political success) as a result of immigration from Syria, due to that nation's civil war. And, of course, the horrific brutality of ISIS has fueled this xenophobia even further.

But the thing is, ISIS is actually losing. If you look at what's happening to their "army" in Iraq and Syria, the objective truth is that they are losing. In Iraq, it seems as if their hold on Mosul is becoming increasingly tenuous, and in Syria they are losing ground in the Palmyra area (<http://wapo.st/1q4fCDX>). Indeed, at least in those nations, they are losing ground everywhere. While they may find more favorable areas to operate in other parts of the Islamic world, we will defeat them everywhere with international cooperation (especially from

our Muslim friends and allies), and they will eventually cease to exist.

In other words, do not let the terrorists terrorize you. If you are an American, or even a European, you should be more worried (at least for now) about the threat of growing xenophobia than an increasingly desperate and weak gang of criminals.

Full Staff Opinion

NFL Common Hour presented a chance for learning new perspectives, not lamenting

If you weren't actually at Common Hour on Thursday, chances are you heard about it. This past week, the lecture series featured Steve Almond, author, essayist, and contributor to publications like *The New York Times* and NPR. His talk centered around the main subject matter of his book, *Against Football: A Reluctant Manifesto*. His work-- and likewise, talk-- centered on the structural woes and worries of how the National Football League treats and sells its players. As its title alone may indicate, Almond's talk would be all but destined for controversy.

And boy, did controversy come. It arrived in the form of a student in the Question and Answer period. The student had typed up some (it bears mentioning, fiery) remarks and used (it bears mentioning, quite a bit of) time to say how angry he was to have a speaker brought to F&M who would speak out against a group on campus. The student said F&M would never bring a speaker to talk against a race or a religion. Are we not inclusive? This student had had a terrific experience in F&M's football program, and what Almond said did not fit his experience at all. Almond began to try a response, but the student would not cede the floor.

We bring all of this up for an important reason. Almond's talk and this student's reaction seem almost ripe to be framed in the ongoing "coddled college student" narrative. In a way, this student's reaction could inadvertently encapsulate that mythic college kid: this guy is preaching something I disagree with! Burn it with fire! No, we are not all like that. But at this Common Hour, it was sort of hard to keep our intellectual street cred.

There is hate speech out there, true enough. There are groups and statements and words and names wholly worth offense and opposition (read: Donald Trump). But critiquing the National Football League, pointing out hurtful systems and unquestioned narratives, really does not fall within that designation. Hate speech has no place on this campus, and no one would ever say it did. But critical thinking surely belongs here. Poking holes in logic and structure belong here. And that's all Almond really sought to do.

It should go without saying that we go here to learn. Right? We go here to have the things we think challenged. We don't go here to have all that we "know" reaffirmed. When someone has an opinion different than yours, it's your job to listen to that opinion. It's your job to take what that person says and see how it jives with what you yourself hold true. We really are not coddled college students, for the most part. So, let's start acting like it. When someone disagrees with you, don't type up your response before they even speak.



The College Reporter

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THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF
FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE



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The College Reporter was formed in 1964, as a successor to *The Student Weekly*, which was formed in 1915 by the union of *The F&M Weekly*, founded 1891, and *The College Student*, founded 1881. The crest of *The College Reporter* was designed in 2004 by Kim Cortes '05.

The College Reporter is a weekly student-edited newspaper, published every Monday except during exam and vacation periods. The website was created by Tim Jackson '12, Christian Hartranft '12, Joshua Finkel '15, and Lauren Bejzak '13. The subscription rate is \$51 per year.

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Campus Life

Opal Tometi talks Black Lives Matter movement at Take Back the Night

BY IZZY SCHELLENGER
Staff Writer

F&M's Alice Drum Women's Center and the Philadelphia Alumni Writers House hosted their annual event, Take Back the Night, on Thursday, March 24. This event is held nationally with the intent of starting a discussion about ending all kinds of violence that results from fear, ignorance, and hatred. This year, F&M's Take Back the Night was expanded to include the help and input of more organizations, such as S.I.S.T.E.R.S., IMPACT, the Black Student Union, and the local Lancaster chapter of Black Lives Matter 717. Student organizers said the increased amount of sponsors symbolizes a new format of group collaboration, which is necessary to fight adversity.

The speaker this year was Opal Tometi, a Co-Founder of the Black Lives Matter movement along with Alicia Garza and Patrisse Cullors. She created the popular Twitter hashtag, "#BlackLivesMatter," and organized the social media aspects of the movement. Tometi is a Nigerian-American writer and community organizer. She is the Executive Di-

rector at the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, where she organized the first ever Black-led rally for immigrant rights and planned the first Congressional briefing on Black immigrants. Tometi identifies as a transnational feminist who is passionate about connecting immigrant and human rights with the Black liberation movement. In 2014, she was named a new civil rights leader by Essence Magazine.

During her speech, Tometi asked the audience to reflect on our own personal experiences with violence. What are we taking back the night from? Tometi explained that the event is focused on reclaiming a lost identity and self from when others and society have tried to take away our race, religion, and gender. She said that Take Back the Night, like the Black Lives Matter movement, is about claiming what we deserve.

Tometi argued that we live in a multiracial society which we must recognize and accept. She believes that all lives matter, and said she would not have had to co-create the Black Lives matter movement if all lives truly and equally were treated as

though they mattered. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." By co-founding this movement, Tometi has chosen not to be silent. She said this is what makes this movement so revolutionary—people have dared to speak out against racial and human injustices.

The responses to this movement have included people substituting other words in for "Black," such as "All Lives Matter" or "White Lives Matter." Tometi described this as "erasure, or the push towards being colorblind." Some people believe that we do not have to worry about race anymore because we have a Black president and powerful Black public figures such as Oprah Winfrey. Tometi argued that bigotry, ignorance, and hatred are still permissible, and in order to combat this we need to take action—just our silent thoughts alone will not change the world.

Tometi encouraged the audience to not just sit on the sidelines, but to actively fight for justice. She said we can either work for justice or be inactive and passively support injustice;

there is no in-between. One way that we can fight racial violence is by using our privilege for justice. Tometi, a transnational Black feminist, recognizes her privilege as a resident of the U.S., and she tries to bend this privilege so others can benefit. Tometi believes that we need to begin to look at racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia as not only occurring at an interpersonal level but also from an institutional and systematic level. That way, we can understand how these institutions, such as the criminal justice system and the housing system, have shaped us and our beliefs.

Tometi ended her speech with another Martin Luther King Jr. quote: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Following Tometi's speech, there was a public march and a speak out that allowed students to voice their thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences with violence, race, and gender.

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Steve Almond talks systemic issues inside NFL at Common Hour

BYCHRISTA RODRIGUEZ
Campus Life Assistant

Author and journalist Steve Almond spoke at last Thursday's Common Hour and gave a talk entitled "The Eager Violence of the Heart: Re-Imagining America's Concussive Obsession with Football." His talk focused on the problematic aspects of the National Football League and the game of football in general. He shed light on the violent nature of football and the incentives that keep the NFL going. While acknowledging that there are positive parts of the football experience shared by many Americans, and discussed the problematic parts that complicate his and others' relationships as fans of the sport.

Almond is the author of eight books, both fiction and nonfiction, including *Against Football*, which was a New York Times best seller. In addition to books, his short stories have been in publications such as the Best American and Pushcart anthologies. As a journalist, his work has been published in the *New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, and other publications. He also cohosts a podcast titled "Dear Sugar" with Cheryl Strayed. He is a self-described "militant emotionalist" in his writing. His written work includes all different subjects while often including humor as well.

Almond began his speech with a personal anecdote: in August 1978, Almond watched football with his fa-

ther on TV, where they showed a play that "has haunted him ever since." In this play, a Raiders player was run to the ground, and instantly paralyzed. According to Almond, this is when the thrill of violence turned wrong to him. However, he kept watching football and said he has devoted thousands of hours of his life to watching the Raiders.

Almond shared a brief history of football. At colleges, games were truly destructive and participants occasionally died. Eventually the game was reformed and became less violent.

"Football started as a series of controlled riots... [with the establishment of more rules, there was a] creation of beauty and meaning from controlled violence," Almond stated.

What started as an "obscure collegiate hazing ritual" became a professional sport. According to Almond, it still remains a sport that values traditional masculine traits and is used to display manhood.

Television became the ideal medium for football, which made its violence "more intimate and abstract." Football has since become a regular part of American dialogue, and Almond pointed out that even politicians use football jargon in their speeches. People claim it has intellectual value, which to Almond, makes violence seem respectable. Almond said people spend a large amount of their lives as fans, and Americans spend more

time on football than any other cultural endeavor. Overall, more people watch the Super Bowl than vote in United States elections.

Almond emphasized that he is indeed a fan of football, and does not think it is all negative. He played football when he was younger and has experience enjoying the violence that football requires. He says people play to "see what you're made of." However, he does feel like he is a "recovering football fan." He argued that football is more than simple entertainment, and it needs to be critiqued as a moral activity.

"It doesn't just do things for us. It does things to us," Almond said.

While acknowledging that most players go unscathed, Almond noted that many still receive serious brain damage or other complications. Football does not have so much of a concussion or violence problem but rather "a physics and physiology problem." Diseases like CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy) do not occur from big catastrophic hits, but the buildup of many smaller hits over time. This is shown through studies conducted on football players who have never been concussed, yet still show diminished brain functions. Almond believes it is a moral problem to watch a sport in which players frequently get brain damage.

Additionally, the football industry is a multi-million-dollar product, which means that NFL franchise

owners are focused on profit above all other concerns. Almond pointed out that the NFL is a nonprofit and that taxpayer money often funds the creation of new stadiums, which people are unaware of. Consequently, Almond believes the NFL does not really contribute meaningfully to economic development when it expands or builds new stadiums. Almond stated that they are mainly concerned with winning and making money, although perhaps not in that order. He described the NFL as "capitalism on steroids."

Almond also relayed some problematic facts about college football. College football players do not get paid except in scholarships. Another problem Almond sees is that when people think of a college, usually the school's football team comes to mind, and rather than something concerning the academic quality of the college.

Almond did return back to the idea that football is not all bad. He cited examples of people who watch football with their family members and that connection holds a special place in their lives. He stated that he wants his book and his talk to be an honest conversation, and acknowledge the good as well as the problematic aspects of American football.

First-year Christa Rodriguez is the Assistant Campus Life Editor. Her email is crodrigu@fandm.edu.

As Pennsylvania Primary approaches, F&M Votes promotes civic engagement

BY ELLIE GAVIN
Campus Life Editor

With the Pennsylvania primaries quickly approaching and an important presidential election underway, F&M Votes has been working hard to promote voter registration, education, and turn out on campus. F&M Votes is a nonpartisan group on campus that encourages voter registration, education, and motivation. Professor Van Gosse, chair of the history department, founded F&M Votes in 2004 because he thought nationwide there was extremely low turnout among student voters, even during a time of national crisis and polarization.

"It seemed like a big hole that needed filling, and we could do something concrete at one college at least," Gosse said.

Gosse runs the organization along with student co-chair Emma Collins '16 and staff co-chair and F&M alumna Nicole Hoover, who joined F&M votes as a student in 2006. The group works to maximize voter registration and voter turnout, offers opportunities throughout the year for students to complete necessary voter registration paperwork, publicizes voter registration on social media, and encourages people to become informed about national and local politics.

According to Gosse, many students and faculty were interested in volunteering for and being involved with the organization when it was founded. However, that interest has since dwindled.

"When I was a student here, we had vibrant student participation in F&M Votes, the College Republicans, and the College Democrats. Literally dozens of students partic-

ipated in those groups in any given year," Hoover said. "I can't speak for the [other groups], but F&M Votes certainly doesn't have that student base anymore."

Gosse described the political culture at F&M as "intermittent, up and down, sometimes disengaged, periodically mobilized," and suggested that engagement seems to fluctuate from moderate interest to general apathy.

"Sometimes it's positive and exciting—in presidential election years," Gosse said. "Sometimes it's dispiriting, when a significant number of students express their lack of interest in even registering to vote. As if we're religious proselytizers to be avoided."

Gosse mentions that he did notice a relative increase in political activism on campus from 2004 to 2008, in response to the controversies regarding President Bush and the Iraq War and the excitement of the Obama campaign.

"Since then it's been up and down, not so intense," Gosse said. Collins says that declining interest in politics in general presents a challenge for the organization.

"One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that students understand why, regardless of who or what they vote for, voting is a civic responsibility that we should take seriously and not something that we can just take part in during presidential elections," Collins said. "Millennials now outnumber baby boomers, and yet we consistently have the worst voter turnout."

While Hoover admits that this phenomenon is complex, she suggests that, among other things, it may indicate a general feeling of

discouragement among young voters.

"I also believe that many people find the process just downright daunting and abrasive. Without knowing just exactly how they are individually affected by politics at every level, this age group seems to find it much easier to simply check-out," Hoover said. "I've heard many students express frustration with the current system and simply state, 'What I think doesn't matter anyway.' While I couldn't disagree more, I empathize with that statement and how it's derived."

The problem of low voter turnout among young adults is not unique to F&M's campus. The youth vote has been historically underrepresented in elections, especially in midterm election years. According to the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, about 45 percent of 18 to 29 year olds voted in the 2012 elections, and only 20 percent in the 2014 midterm elections.

"In terms of political knowledge and apathy, I believe our campus is fairly representative of campuses across the country. But that being said, I don't think our students know or care enough. Past big-ticket issues [such as] abortion, gay rights, privacy, etc., most students check-out of the political process," Hoover says. "And don't even get me started on local politics. It is one of F&M Votes lofty goals to educate the student body about the particular ballot in its entirety. We'd like to see more students express interest in political issues that don't make the national headlines. After all, that's

really where the magic happens."

According to Hoover, F&M Votes as an organization feels the impact of this lack of interest very strongly.

"While we see student participation in our group flourish during presidential years, we are often scrambling for a single student volunteer the year after," Hoover said. "And when the students on campus don't see other students taking a stand and making a case for this very important work, it's hard to establish credibility on campus."

Collins expressed a similar sentiment.

"In my experience, it appears to be the same groups of people that make the effort to be well-informed and active in politics."

But she expressed some hope that the upcoming election will inspire more political participation among students.

"With all the publicity surrounding this year's election I would be surprised if that wasn't changing a bit," Collins said.

Despite the difficulties the organization faces, Hoover continues to believe in F&M Vote's message.

"This is real life, folks," Hoover said. "Engagement with the issues, while cumbersome at times, is the only way to enact real change. And voting, I would argue informed voting, sits at the core of our American republic. I don't think it should be a question of if we will vote or if we will get involved in some civic way; it should be a question of how we will do so."

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Alternative Spring Break trip offers unique learning experiences

For many students, spring break is a time of rest—but, for the geoscience students enrolled in "Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology," it was a time of adventure. These eight students and Stanley Mertzman, a volcanologist and F&M's Dr. Earl D. Stage and Mary E. Stage Professor of Geosciences, spent their spring break on the big island of Hawaii exploring the slopes of volcanoes. The students visited several active and inactive volcanoes as well as calderas and cinder or spatter cones, including Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, Kilauea, Pu'u O'o, Pu'u Wa'awa'a, Kohala valleys, Kilauea Iki Trail, and Mauna Ulu. We spent the days hiking, observing, and placing everything into the 'larger picture' of Hawaii volcanology," said Leah Houser '16, a student who attended the trip. A highlight of the tour was an interactive tour of the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope, where, according to Mertzman, the current research effort is studying the planet Venus. "It was a huge learning curve and broadened my understanding of Island Arc mantle activity," Houser said. "Truly, one cannot 'geologize' indoors, and this trip gave us the unique opportunity to quite literally put our nose to the rocks and piece things together without the classroom guidance."

Photos Courtesy of Stanley Mertzman



Arts & Entertainment

Something Rotten skillfully, sillily spoofs Shakespeare Broadway musical presents a new take on the legendary bard



photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Scenes from *Something Rotten*, a daring Broadway play that gives Shakespeare and his contemporaries an eclectic, musical twist with plenty of style.

Musical Commentary *Something Rotten*

by Justin Hopkins '07

As the curtain rises, revealing the thatched roofs of Tudor houses, a bard (not The Bard, not yet) strums his lute and bids us, “Welcome to the Renaissance”—where science and art are exploding, and British culture is coming of age, “where everything is new.”

Well, maybe not quite everything.

On the one hand, *Something Rotten*, now starting its second year of what I suspect will be several, at least, on Broadway, revisits familiar territory, asking an age-old question: what if William Shakespeare didn't write the works that bear his name? (Anonymous, anyone?) It's probably not even the first time the authorship controversy has been explored through parodic song and scene. But surely Shakespeare has never yet been portrayed as part of a musical production featuring a dozen dancing omelets—yes, dancing omelets—and lyrics like “Don't be a penis, the man is a genius!” That must be a first.

And it's a blast. Director Casey Nicholaw's ebulliently absurd interpretation of creators Wayne and Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell's fatuous but fabulous pastiche of classical and contemporary (very melo)drama and comedy simultaneously celebrates and sends up all that is both splendid and silly about the theatre from the last 400 years.

The story is simple. Bottom brothers Nick (brilliantly crafted by Brian D'Arcy James) and Nigel (played with charm by John Cariani) need a new hit play to compete with the megastar Will Shakespeare, who keeps stealing their stories, and

even their specific words. The solution? Consult a soothsayer, Thomas Nostradamus (nephew to The Great, nimbly delivered by Brad Oscar), about what the future holds for the theater. First commenting on accommodations—“Things are very nice: cushy seats...a roof!”—then digging deeper, the seer sees...“Musicals!”

Incredulous at first, Nick is convinced at last, but still he needs to know more: what will be Shakespeare's greatest work? The prophet peers into the mists of time, and perceives “something Danish...with ham...a breakfast theme...” To what does it all add up? Why, *Omelet: The Musical!* Enter the dancing eggs, as well as a Gertrude who trills, “I could have daanced all night,” a Claudius who echoes the MC from Cabaret (“Wilkommen, bienvenue, welcome!”), and a Ghost who wears the Phantom of the Opera's iconic half-mask, not to mention a nun with a guitar, a fiddler on a roof, and a squad of chimney sweepers. It's a glorious, meta mess.

Of course, there are plenty of sub-plotlines to complement the main action. Nick struggles to contain his wife, Bea's enthusiasm for a woman's right to work: “by 1600, women will be completely equal!” she insists, and belts out, “Let me be your right hand man!” Kudos to Heidi Blickenstaff for managing the challenging, almost abrasive melody. Later Nick bumps into a disguised Bea, bearded and bearing bear feces in a bucket to make a buck because, it turns out, she's pregnant. “Are you sure it's not the Plague?” Nick queries, almost wistfully. Now he really has to have a hit.

Meanwhile, Nigel falls in love with Kate Reinders' pretty Portia (“Good name,” says Shakespeare,

meeting her), a Puritan who shares his passion for poetry. They compare how many times they've seen Romeo and Juliet, and then settle in for some sonnet recitation before they're interrupted by Portia's father, the furious Jeremiah (a delightfully dastardly David Beach), whose aggressive homophobia is obviously an over-compensation for his real desires: he promises to have Bottom “tied to a post, begging for mercy as I give you the rod!”

Then there's the stage-struck Shylock (Gerry Vichi, enthusiastically embracing every available Semitic stereotype), whom Shakespeare has promised to include in future work: “the really nice Jew.” And the stuffy Justice of the Peace (Edward Hibbert), who worries about being misrepresented: “I wouldn't want to look the fool!” “You shan't,” Shakespeare assures him, “...Lord Falstaff.” The script is as rich with allusions to Shakespeare's canon as to the body of Broadway history.

Still, most successful by far is the portrayal of the Bard himself, courtesy of Christian Borle, who won a (second) Tony for his turn as the great “Will of the people.” First seen striding a scarlet carpet as his fans stand behind a red velvet rope and pant and chant “We love him! We love him! We love him! We love him!” he is later rolled in on a wooden platform like a rock god—“The King of Couplets...The Man of the Lam in iambic pentameter”—from which he treats his cheering public to a medley of his greatest hits. “Shall I compare thee...” he calls out, gyrating like a cross between Elvis and Mick Jagger, and prompting the adoring throng, which promptly answers, “...to a summer's day?!” Shakespeare shakes his shoulders

and thrusts his hips, and the mob shrieks. Borle perfectly presents a Will well aware of his power, yet not nearly above filching Nigel's notes and passing them off as his own.

The show is not perfect. The songs occasionally verge on the stupid. I could skip the gospel-y “We see the light”: the choir croons, “We're wrong, you're right. Salvation is yours: You do what is true to you, and you do it with looooooove”—pass. But then they swing to the stupendous: “I don't have the luxury to hang all my hopes on some simplistic trope like ‘To thine own self be true!’” The choreography is clichéd but also kind of cool, from traditional palm-to-palm English courtly mincing, to disco, to can-can kicks, to competitive tap-offs, to full-on breakdancing. Scott Pask's extravagant design, along with Natasha Katz's loud lighting and Gregg Barnes' elaborate costumes, create a dynamic environment that shifts from period piece to art-deco backdrops illuminated by bright and flashing magenta and filled with chorus girls and boys waving feathery fans and wiggling white-gloved jazz hands.

If you like your Shakespeare pure and proper, or your musicals a little less self-conscious, you should probably skip this spectacle. But if you're up for some serious and sublime spoofing, you will want to witness a production-within-a-production that begins with a spotlight on a man cradling not a skull but an egg in his palm, murmuring, “Alas, poor yolk, I knew thee well.” Cue those dancing omelets.

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