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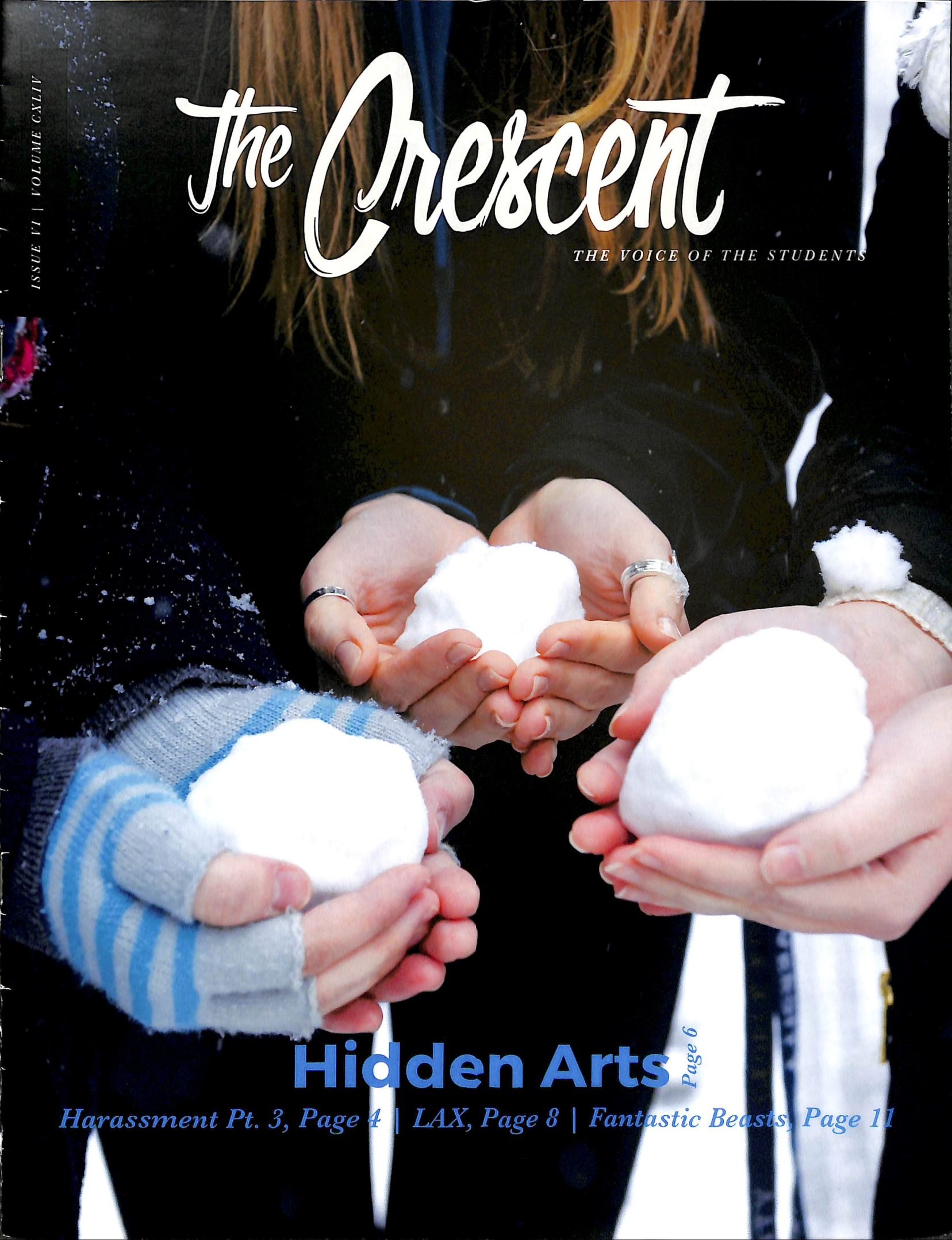
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The Crescent

THE VOICE OF THE STUDENTS



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Looking Back

Common Ground Denied Chance at Application

By Courtney Bither

On Oct. 17, Common Ground was denied the chance to apply for official club status with George Fox University (GFU) in an email from Vice President of Student Life Brad Lau, which cited that the decision was due to discomfort among the Board of Trustees.

According to Common Ground's mission statement, "Common Ground is a student-run organization that represents and serves the LGBTQ community at George Fox University. By creating an environment in which students feel safe to discuss spiritual, cultural, social, and political issues pertaining to the LGBTQ community, we reflect and cultivate the diversity of our campus."

Officer of Common Ground Cassie Hwa shared

that the dismissal of the chance to apply was especially disappointing this year because numerous faculty and staff had expressed support for Common Ground becoming an official club.

Typically, when a group applies for club status they must fill out an application and submit a constitution to the Associated Student Community (ASC) Staff. ASC then votes on the application. However, Common Ground was not simply denied club status – The board denied them the chance to even apply for club status.

"I asked Brad for a reason," Hwa commented, "Why is the Board of Trustees uncomfortable with our application for club status? I was told the Board has issues with what we believe about this. I want

to know – who is the 'we'? What denomination are they appealing to? If we are Quaker, we aren't decided on this right now."

Technically, the Northwest Yearly Meeting oversees GFU; the Northwest Yearly Meeting is a local governing body for evangelical Quakers. GFU's affiliation with Quakers enables the University to hold a religious exemption from Title IX, allowing the University to deny housing to transgender students.

However the Northwest Yearly Meeting is currently divided over issues of LGBTQ inclusion. In fact, last Friday and Saturday a meeting was convened about LGBTQ inclusion and the meeting was unable to reach consensus around LGBTQ inclusion.

"Quakers are in discussion about this. At the very least, Common Ground deserves the chance to be included in the discussion," Hwa said. "Common Ground seeks to provide a safe place for students at this University. This year, even attending Common Ground feels like an act of bravery."

Though denied official club status, Lau has offered funds for Common Ground to use. Common Ground declined this offer both presently and in the past. "It just feels a little too much like separate but equal," Hwa responded, "We say thank you, but no thank you. We want to be recognized as a club."

A Time for Change



By Evangelina Montelongo

Photo by Shelby Bauer

On Aug. 1, 1980, Merrill Johnson was hired by the George Fox College (later GFU) library onto their staff as a reference librarian.

Now, 36 years later, Johnson is the Dean of Libraries and has made the decision to retire, leaving behind a staff grateful for his hard work and a role hard to fill.

Johnson began working at GFU when there was a need for change and growth on campus. With less than half the number of students now attending the university, Johnson began the process to improve the existing library, making it one that would emulate GFU standards.

"As what the job requires

to keep moving forward," said Alex Rolfe, current Technical Services and System librarian, "he has kept us moving so we don't get stuck with what's comfortable. He's been ready and willing to do what needs to be done."

Rolfe has worked with Johnson for 15 years, forming a relationship that evolved past the workplace and into a lasting friendship. As Rolfe reflects on his years of working alongside Johnson he notes his motivation, forward thinking, and supportive attitude.

"As he gets ready to retire he leaves behind a daunting role," Rolfe said. "He really cares about everybody here and the success of the libraries. He feels accountable to George Fox as a whole and he's been trusted to fulfill a

real responsibility to not waste their money."

From technological advances to academic resources, Johnson has helped the library expand to meet the needs of the community.

"I really couldn't think of anywhere else I'd rather be," Johnson said. "I didn't see any reason to move. I never had to opportunity to get bored as things grew and evolved."

Drawn to GFU for its Christian education and positive environment, Johnson is now ready for a new change. Joining his wife in retirement, they have many things they plan to do together. From volunteering, to traveling, and even tracking his own genealogy, the two are eager to start checking things off their list.

"When you've been here as long as I have," said Johnson. "Not everything goes as you like, but it's been generally positive. I feel really blessed, now as I'm leaving, to know that the people here are really good people. I'm leaving it in good capable hands."

Despite taking steps away from GFU, Johnson continues to have large hopes for the university, reflecting the kind of person Johnson is: thinking of the future in a positive manner while having a sense of humor.

"I will miss his sense of humor," said Rolfe, "having him around, and the wisdom he's accumulated over the years. It's been nice to talk to him and be mentored by him."

The Voice of the Students

The Crescent is George Fox University's student newspaper, a publication that has been part of the university and the Associated Student Community since 1891. The opinions and ideas presented in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of George Fox University.

Distribution

Issues can be found in the Student Union Building and are available upon request.

Letters to the editor

Letters are welcomed and will be printed on a first-received basis. They must include the author's signature, academic major, class standing or job title, department name and phone number. Letters are subject to editing for space and clarity.

Contact

Reach us with any comments or questions at georgefoxcrescent@gmail.com or online at gfcrescent.com

COVER PHOTO: MICK HANGLAND-SKILL

Editors-in-Chief

Adrienne Speer
Jade Becker

Art Director & Layout Editor

Mick Hangland-Skill

News Editor

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Ethan Saunders
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Courtney Bither
Evangelina Montelongo
Hannah Dugan
Heather Harney
McKenzie Young
Rory Phillips

Faculty Advisor

Melanie Mock

NOW WHAT?

By Courtney Bither &
Adrienne Speer

If you are in immediate danger or crisis, please call 911.

If you are in crisis, you may text the crisis text line at 741-741 anytime.

This semester, The Crescent published two articles addressing sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and assault as it relates to George Fox University (GFU) and Title IX. This is part three of the series. Assault and harassment affect people of all genders and sexual orientations. After meeting with local law enforcement and community services, our aim is to inform readers of local resources and provide further information on students' rights regarding these issues.

What is Assault?

Sexual assault is sexual contact that occurs without the explicit consent of everyone involved. This includes forced sexual intercourse, forced fondling, and attempted rape. Sexual contact without consent is assault even if the victim has had a physical relationship with the assailant.

What is Consent?

According to the GFU Student Handbook, "Consent is explicit, informed, voluntary and mutually understandable communication to willingly participate in specific sexual activity without pressure,

threats, coercion, force or intimidation." In other words, in order for a sexual encounter to be consensual, everyone involved has to give permission every step of the way. If one of you is sleeping, intoxicated, or otherwise incapacitated, consent cannot be given.

Why is Title IX Important?

Title IX intends to protect you from sex discrimination within the educational context of GFU. Title IX is a federal law that covers topics pertaining to gender-based discrimination, harassment, assault, stalking, and other issues. Guidelines within Title IX oblige GFU and other universities with state funding to protect you and to follow through when issues of sex discrimination and assault are reported at the university.

Suffering from assault, harassment, or any kind of unwanted sexual attention gets in the way of your goal as a student: to learn and live in a safe place. Under Title IX you are protected and have the opportunity to report your experience if you wish to.

Under Title IX, university employees are required to report information about assault to the Title IX coordinator; these are called "mandatory reporters." The exception to this rule are GFU pastors and the Health and Counseling Center.

Because Title IX covers a very broad scope, we encourage you to check out

websites like EndRapeoncampus.org and TitleIX.info for more information.

What About the Lifestyle Contract?

For anyone thinking about reporting to GFU, be assured that it is the school's priority to help you find a solution. If you decide to report to GFU, you will be granted conditional immunity. This means you won't be disciplined if an assault took place while you were drinking or if any other part of GFU's lifestyle agreement was broken during assault.

That being said, we recognize this fact is not widely known. When we spoke with Todd Baltzell, detective sergeant at the Newberg-Dundee Police Department, he told us, in his opinion, the lifestyle contract is a huge barrier to reporting.

If you would like to bypass GFU entirely you may call Debra Bridges, director of Crime Victim Services at the District Attorney's office of Yamhill County. You may also call Henderson House, a local resource for victims of sexual abuse. Contact information is located in the sidebar.

I'm Not Sure if I was Assaulted. Can Someone Help Me Figure This Out?

If you are worried that you might have been assaulted, don't hesitate to reach out. Debra Bridges is available to help individuals in the community understand their op-

tions. "When in doubt, always call the office," Bridges said.

"Don't be afraid to reach out. Only one person in the world knows if they have been violated, and that is the person who feels violated. We are here to help survivors determine their options moving forward." Baltzell said.

Sometimes talking on the phone or in person feels overwhelming. If you're looking for someone to talk to either through text or on the phone, the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network (RAINN) may be reached via online chat or over the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Please remember that GFU employees, with the exception of university pastors and staff at the Health and Counseling Center, are required to report information to the Title IX coordinator.

I want to report but I am afraid of _____ (parents, faculty, GFU, etc.) finding out. Is there a way forward?

Yes. In each step below, we will outline how to best maintain privacy should that be something you desire. However, if you are under 18, both GFU and Crime Victim Services are legally required to share appropriate information with the authorities.

What are my options in terms of reporting? What if I don't want to press charges?

Harassment Part 3: Answers and Resources

There are three main avenues for reporting sexual assault:

Option 1: You can file a report through the Student Life Office. Information for filing a report through the Student Life Office can be found in the GFU Student Handbook.

Option 2: You can talk to Bridges or a member of her team at Yamhill County Crime Victim Services about different options moving forward without going through law enforcement. Bridges or a member of her team can also help you file a report with GFU or with law enforcement.

Option 3: You may file a report with law enforcement. Detective Sergeant Baltzell wants students to know, "We want to give survivors options every step of the way. Our goal is to give survivors some control back into their lives."

If you are unsure where to go, we recommend contacting Bridges at Crime Victim Services. If you are over 18, Crime Victim Services must keep your information confidential from both GFU and law enforcement unless you indicate otherwise. They can walk you through your options. What if I need to go to the hospital? What happens there?

If you have recently been assaulted (typically within the last 72 hours) and you want to go to the hospital, a sexual assault forensic exam may be administered there. The hospital will collect DNA, examine you for injuries, and may provide medication for follow up care. You may bring someone with you to the hospital. Should you desire, an advocate from Crime Victim Services can accompany you to the hospital.

This visit will not cost anything and you will not be billed through your insurance. If you do not want anyone to know about the exam or assault, you may ask to complete a "Jane Doe kit." This means that, though DNA evidence may go to the police, your identity will remain anonymous. For more information on sexual assault forensic exams, please contact Crime Victim Services or visit <https://www.rainn.org/articles/rape-kit>.

What if I was assaulted by someone of my same sex or gender?

All of the same options, resources, and protections apply to you. Should you feel uncomfortable with informing the university, you may bypass GFU completely by contacting Bridges at Crime Victim Services.

What can I do if I have been harassed by a GFU faculty or staff member?

If you were assaulted or harassed by a faculty or staff member at GFU, you have the same options for reporting and all of the same resources are available to you. We recommend that you contact Bridges at Crime Victim Services.

If you are in immediate danger or crisis, please call 911.

Crisis text line (available 24/7): 741-741

Sarah Taylor, on behalf of Student Life: 503-554-3841

RAINN website and chat: <https://www.rainn.org/index.php>

National Sexual Assault Hotline (available 24/7): 1-800-656-4673

Non-Emergency Newberg-Dundee Police Department: 503-537-1227

Debra Bridges at Yamhill County Crime Victim Services: 503-434-7510

Debra Bridges after hours cell phone: 971-219-1142

Henderson House 24-Hour Crisis number: 503-472-1503

Henderson House 9am-5pm number: 503-472-0244

If you find yourself to be a victim of sexual misconduct or assault, or any of the things we have discussed above, we are sorry. We believe you; know that what you experienced is not your fault. Asking for help, in whatever way you choose to ask, is an incredible act of bravery. We are here for you; we are in your corner.



Artist Underground

By Rory Phillips

Photo by Katie Culbertson

Many students will wander into the library to see a Christmas wonderland: a tree central to the vast room and garlands hanging around the rails of the second floor. It's not Christmas yet, but it would seem that Santa has already come around to trim our Christmas trees. Kathleen Jones, the periodicals assistant, is responsible for this Yuletide cheer.

"I instigated all of it," Kathleen said. Without Kathleen's artistic nudge, we might not consider the library as cozy for Christmastime as we do now.

Kathleen's face may be recognizable, but students

don't often see her intentionally. From the morning until the afternoon, she works in her office on the bottom floor of the George Fox University's (GFU) library. By afternoon and night, she is a successful artist.

Kathleen is currently working on a two-part oil painting for the new private dining room in the Canyon Commons, which already features a broad, 20-foot table made of birch. Her paintings are incorporate birch trees; the swirling lines of wood are matched by her eye for detail.

Her work does not stop there. Outside of Newberg, Kathleen has shared her paintings in Seattle and Wyo-

ming, the latter of which she visits frequently. Always proud of her work and supported by her husband, not being able to work on her art during the day can be a challenge.

For artists of any craft in the midst of struggle or doubt, she suggests they simply allow themselves the space to be creative.

Kathleen is fortunate enough to work part-time with GFU, as oil painting is clearly her calling. To get unexpected, but no less affirming, advice of a creator, stop by the library to talk to Kathleen, a true and seasoned artist.

The State of the Arts

By Mick Hangland-Skill

Brouger Hall, home to the George Fox University (GFU) Department of Art and Design, faces south, allowing a full day of sun during the fall-through-spring school year. The morning awakens with the eastward windows of Brouger 1. The soft sun is diffused through the aging oak trees, colorfully filling the creative space. Ask any art major and their favorite part of Brouger is the light.

An artist is said to be more sensitive to their surroundings than most people. Subtle differences in temperature, sound, and, of course, light have significant effect on artists. The atmosphere of their space influences artist's work, mindset, and creativity.

The atmosphere of the department has been shifting; now two concentrations are in limbo and a vast array of unknowns are upon them. The artists have taken notice.

Earlier this year, Assistant Professor Eileen Celentano announced her retirement and subsequently the phasing-out of the department's fashion concentration. Just before the 2016 fall semester, Lauri Smith, professor of interior

design, resigned, leaving the concentration professor-less, and Mark Terry, department chair, is away on sabbatical.

In contrast, the art department is consistently one of the largest majors on campus, welcoming record enrollment each year. Growth can also be seen in the hiring of Luke Zimmerman and Jennifer Loop, both adjunct professors. Two more positions are currently open and listed online.

These opposing forces of shrinking and growing tend to reflect in student opinions. Some see opportunity in the change while others see Art as a disappearing and forgotten major.

"I see it shrinking," Emma Claire Delisle, junior art major, said. "I feel bad for the fashion and interior people whose promises were broken."

This pivotal time for the art department has introduced new obstacles for the students. For example, professor Smith usually taught the Color Theory course. In her absence, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art, Karen Bowdoin, has picked up the class.

Delisle's official concentration is graphic design within the art major. While not directly affected, Delisle said she's noted changes in the graphics concentration as well; her main concerns lying in professional portfolio development, class curriculums and the professors.

"If you really want to be prepared and successful, you have to take it under your own responsibility," Delisle said.

In graphic design, the industry is changing. David Kerr, assistant professor of art, said he sees the term "graphic design" evolving into "graphic marketing" as the demand for creative content grows in the marketplace.

Delisle wants to see the department move with the market by updating and refreshing its resources, curriculums, and professors. Delisle sees room for improvement across the board in the facilities and techniques.

The photography emphasis within the studio concentration has only three classes: beginning, intermediate and advanced. While the classes cover a wide range of topics,

the photography students see it as limiting.

"I want to see more classes on more aspects of photography like lighting or film," Student Jessica Dick said. "If we're encouraged to choose a focus, we need more."

The new members of the faculty have made an impression on students in their short time here. Luke Zimmerman's drawing class is "very personal and focused on students' interests and talents," said Annabelle Wombacher, a freshman art major.

A strength of the art department is the opportunity for personal development alongside the professors, an opinion shared among the art majors, Dick said. "But I lack the focus compared to other schools."

"One day, I was drawing my favorite subject: bugs," Wombacher said. "Luke had been watching me and immediately gained interest. Luke now wants me to create a large scale drawing of bugs for my final. He dropped everything just to look up specific papers and materials."

In the art world, outside relationships are important as well. Associate Professor Jilian Sokso has been working to bring the department to the next level through professional development and networking, Dick said.

So while growth is needed, growth is also happening. Meanwhile, an air of uncertainty looms over the art department. Students ask, what now?

The sun has not set on the art department. Rather a passing cloud has cast its shadow in this time of transition. Though students are worried, they are ready for change and ready to meet it with the help of faculty and administration.

"The professors recognize the problem and the need to meet it," Dick said. "It's the higher-ups that don't see art as something of value and focus on sports. Portland is one of the largest growing art communities in the US and we will grow with it."



LAX: Anything But a Lax Affair

By Hannah Dugan

Photo by Gabriel Clark

Coming out of an undefeated season, the George Fox Lacrosse team has high expectations for themselves, but they don't have any disillusionments about the hard work required to remain successful.

Luckily for them, this team is the most experienced, and arguably the most talented, the school has ever seen.

"This is by far our most experienced group of players. Every year we have immensely improved and I expect the same for this year," said Natalie Harrington, the team's head coach.

Senior goalie Mikaela Easterlin added, "We got a lot of really good freshman and our team is going into its fourth year, so the seniors have grown together and become a lot stronger."

The strength of the team is only undermined by the fact that some of the recruits chose not to play due to the difficulty of balancing school and lacrosse.

"We don't quite have the numbers we'd like to have," said Easterlin.

Last season the Bruins tied Pacific Lutheran University for the Northwest Conference Championship after an undefeated run. This year the team wants the title all to themselves; however, Harrington knows that winning is far from the whole picture.

"My goals for the team include walking away from this season stronger as a team on and off the field, and for our seniors to be able to walk away from this program with a sense of pride knowing that they started the beginning of something really special," she said.

That 'something special' refers to the unique team dy-

namic the players have developed. Easterlin said, "We're all really close. We don't have a lot of drama, and we're all really weird."

"Her being our leader has rubbed off on us," Easterlin said of her coach. "We know how to have a good time but also when to be serious."

While the inclination of all sports teams is to claim that close-knit, family-like dimension, this lacrosse team can do so with no reservations and complete honesty. For example, the infamous 'Furby Award' goes to the player who does the klutziest thing during the game. The recipient then gets to babysit the Furby until the next game. They also have a train whistle for the MVP of the game. These are just a few of many ways the team keeps fun in the foreground of the sport.

"The best thing about my team is how much we love and care for each other," she said.

"They are not so much a team, but more a family," added Harrington.

Emphasis on leadership and personal growth are also hallmarks of the team.

To prepare for the upcoming season, the team currently holds captain-led practices, since the coach is not allowed to lead practices yet. In the past, captain-led practices have been more of a lax affair, "but this year we've really been pushing ourselves. We're not goofing off and we're actually doing the work," said Easterlin.

"I explain to players that the field is a reflection to life, and that how you act on the field should be the same to how you act off the field," said Harrington. "I focus on our team, my coaching, and players to always push 1% better than we are currently giving."

Kyle Degman Wins \$100,000 Dr. Pepper Scholarship

Three months ago, Kyle Degman saw an advertisement for the Dr. Pepper Tuition Giveaway. After a series of submissions, competitions, and chest-passes, Degman walked away from the nationally televised scholarship competition with a huge \$100,000 check and a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The competition involved a series of steps which culminated with two finalists facing off during halftime of the Pac-12 National Football Championship game on 2 Dec. Degman, a sophomore

microbiology major, entered the contest by submitting a brief 350 word biography and a video explaining his desire to become an optometrist who serves underprivileged communities in urban Portland and Africa.

Three weeks later, Degman received a call from Dr. Pepper Corporate during chapel.

"I was on speakerphone with 12 of them," Degman said. "They told me I was a finalist for the competition and they loved the video. I talked to them for a couple minutes, but I asked them to call me back after chapel."

Four finalists, including Degman, received an all-expenses paid trip to Santa Clara, Cali., where the Colorado Buffaloes would play the Washington Huskies for the Pac-12 title in Levi Stadium. More importantly, Degman would compete against three

finalists the day before the title game to whittle the finalists down to two.

The preliminaries were a mirror of the televised competition – the four threw 30 footballs in 30 seconds. The top two advanced to the finals and a chance to win \$100,000.

"I set the record and I got about 20," Degman said.

The final competition, aired on live television and in front of about 47,000 raucous fans, was not as relaxed as the semi-finals.

"To be honest, I was pretty nervous. It was nerve-wracking," Degman said of his emotional state while standing in the tunnel before halftime.

There were no warm-ups, but Degman handily beat his competitor 14 to 3. To the cheers of the crowd, Degman kissed his hand and pointed heavenward.



"I'm just so blessed by this opportunity, and God has provided me with everything I have," Degman said after receiving the check. "And I'm just so thankful for Dr. Pepper. It's just amazing."

Family, friends, and strangers alike posted on social media, congratulating Degman on his victory.

"It was cool to see how much positivity I was getting," Degman said. "I was kind of blown back and in shock."

Degman will use the tuition money to finish his undergraduate studies at George Fox University, and then apply to Pacific University's optometry school so he may obtain his optometrist license and begin serving typically underserved communities such as the homeless population of Portland.

Following his win, the dean of the College of Optometry at Pacific University emailed Degman and invited

him to tour the campus and answer any questions he had about the application process.

"It was really eye-opening that someone from such a small school nobody's ever heard of can win things on a national level," Degman said. "All the love and support from [GFU] has been awesome."

On social media, it was not all love and support – some Twitter users poked fun at Degman for his chest-passing the footballs into the bin and his flustered interview post-competition.

"One of my favorites was 'Did you get speech lessons from Miss Alabama?' or 'As long as public speaking doesn't have anything to do with what he wants to do, he should be fine!'" Degman said.

Degman was able to laugh with the critics, especially with the \$100,000 check propped up against his dorm room wall.

2014 Women's Basketball Championship Disqualification

On Nov. 15, the National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA) ruled that the women's basketball team of Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Ky., will have to vacate all 33 wins and their Division III national title during the 2014-15 season because the team used an ineligible player. This was also the season where the George Fox University women's basketball team had an undefeated season until losing the final championship game.

The root of the infraction was when the ineligible player, Sydney Moss, received certain perks from the Thomas More coaching staff during her time playing basketball in her sophomore, junior, and senior year.

Reportedly, after Moss received surgery for a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), she stayed at the former assistant coach Jerry Allen's house for seven to eight months with free room and board, free use of the car, and free meals.

There won't be any implications for the GFU women's

basketball program's record during the 2014-15 season. Head Coach Michael Meek said, "We're very happy with the memories of that season and what we accomplished. So we're at a point we move on and having enough to worry about with the 2016-17 team."

Other penalties for the infraction will include public reprimand and censure for the college, two years of probation for the college from Nov. 15, 2016, through Nov. 14, 2018, \$2,500 fine (self-imposed by the college), an outside audit of the college's athletics program, with an emphasis on financial aid policies and procedures, and staff members, including the head coach, athletics director and compliance officer, attending at least one NCAA Regional Rules Seminar.

Senior elementary education major Kimberly Frost is one of the four women who played in the championship game that remain on this year's team.

"I think the outcome would have been different if they had found out a year earlier, since she was on probation for a few games while she was under investigation. The team is good regardless, but she is a big part of that team and how well they do," she said.

However, the team is made up of a lot of new players, and is looking towards the future. Frost said, "We still lost the game in the end run, but it makes me feel a little bit better just because they technically didn't deserve it. But they had a great team; great coach, great players, great program."

Fantastic Beasts

Harry Potter and the Christian Faith

By Kathryn McClintock

Between the release of "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" in the format of a play and a script, to the newest Harry Potter movie, "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," this year has been big for Harry Potter fans, and has also opened up an old debate: should Harry Potter should be read or allowed in Christian circles?

The last movie in the franchise to be released was "Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows, Pt. 2" in 2011, so it's understandable that Potter fans would be excited for the new movie. Adults who grew up with the series flocked to see it, as did a new generation of eager admirers. Indeed, for many, Harry Potter is a part of their childhood in one way or another. There are, of course, differing views contending this shouldn't be the case.

A New York Times article, written three years after the first Harry Potter book was released, stated that "J.K. Rowling's series of books about a boy's experiences at wizardry boarding school top the list of most challenged books of 2000, as tracked by the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF)." The article goes on to postulate that "the

challenges seem to be objecting to occult or supernatural content in the books and are being made largely by traditional Christians."

So, that challenges us to ask ourselves: is there a place for Harry Potter in a Christian worldview?

Of course, parents have the right to censor what their children reads at home, but in response to the question itself, I would say that Christianity and Harry Potter are not mutually exclusive, nor do they have to be.

Madi Dalbeck, a sophomore at George Fox University (GFU), isn't shy about her feelings towards Harry Potter: the bulletin board of her room is decorated with wands and pictures of her trip to the Harry Potter theme park. When asked how much she liked Harry Potter, she responded with the classic, "On a scale of 1 to 10, probably 9 3/4."

Others wouldn't necessarily agree with either of us. "I guess I can see where people with those opinions come from," she said. "I guess Voldemort could be the devil or something, and different things like that, but I think you really have to dig to find those things."

The objection towards the witchcraft bent of the series has garnered much of the criticism it has received

"And even though it's magic...well, Narnia has magic too. It still has magic involved in it. And Lord of the Rings, people don't really get upset with that and it's still magic," Madi said. "I don't think J.K. Rowling wrote the book with those things in mind. I think it's just a fun book that happens to be about magic, and it wasn't supposed to be controversial."

Focusing on only one aspect of the Harry Potter series, though, isn't a thorough examination of its qualities. The overarching plot of the story carries themes of friendship, determination, love and acceptance. One of the biggest ideas expressed among the series is that racism is damaging and foolish.

Harry Potter isn't a 3407-page long glorification of witchcraft—witchcraft meaning the satanic practice that Christianity condemns. Instead, the story gives readers role models, quotes, and positive themes. It makes people think and dream; it's just another fantasy story, another fairytale.

There are five planned movies in the Fantastic Beasts story arc, so this debate might rage for a while longer. This shouldn't be cause for division, but discussion. "I don't think me liking Harry Potter makes me any less of a Christian," Dalbeck said. Everyone can make choices for themselves and for their children, but censorship isn't always the answer. Harry Potter has been a much-loved fantasy story since its release, and can open the doors to many conversations in the future.

The background is a collage of several images. At the top left, there's a circular portrait of a person's face. Below it is a drawing of a house with a chimney. To the right, a boat is visible on a body of water. In the foreground, there's a desk with a large container filled with various art brushes and pens. A pair of glasses is also visible on the desk.

Write to Us!

**Send your
photos, ideas,
and comments.**

gfucrecent@gmail.com