

The forgotten gift

by Polly Nicole Officer

Crystal white snow covers the ground in soft blankets. Bundled children in down coats slide down hills on wooden sleds. In the shop windows are glass globes in various shades of red, green, and gold; and glittering silver paper snowflakes dangle from white strings. Familiar old-fashioned songs, filled with comfort and cheer, replace modern-day drizzle on the radio stations. Family and friends gather to celebrate the season. All around, Christmas is seen as one of the most wonderful times of the year.

Christmas, however, has become too infatuated with material things. Businesses hold huge Christmas sales in order for their customers to have everything on their lists. Children, instead of playing with their imaginations out in the winter wonderland, are filling their brains with longing for the next cheaply-made Iron-Man helmet or Olaf stuffed animal. The media insures us that the only way to have a fabulous Christmas is to wear the newest style. The mindset "What's in it for me?" has taken over. Yet, the real meaning of Christmas is so much more than what you look like or what you receive.

So many have forgotten about the precious baby born in a barn to a newly-married couple and witnessed only by the animals taking shelter there. They have forgotten that the first gift ever given on Christmas wasn't one that could be wrapped, but was offered to all . . . and still is. It doesn't cost a thing. This Christmas, as you unwrap your decorated boxes full of all your earthly wishes, don't forget to look up and thank God for the one gift no one could ever top.



Winter banquet goes historic

by Breanna Daley

December 6, 2015, was banquet day for Upper Columbia Academy students. After having spent the afternoon attempting to ice skate, watching the Nutcracker, or hanging out in the mall, the guys picked up their dates up in the dorm lobby and escorted them to the cafeteria. Having been transformed into a 1920's banquet hall, the cafeteria was covered in black and gold decorations. To help set the mood, the windows had been covered with random facts about events that took place in the 1920's. The students enjoyed an Italian soda booth with 1920's inspired drinks, a Spaghetti Factory catered dinner, and a photo booth.

The photo booth was open the whole time and was quite popular with the banquet attendees. They were encouraged to head into the Fireside Room for pictures at any time. There they arranged themselves in front of the painted black and gold backdrop. Some chose to jazz up their photos by using props such as fake mustaches, feather boas, fedoras, and umbrellas. For some, the photo booth was not enough, and they decided to become their own photographers. The halls were lined with banquet-goers posing in front of their own personal phone cameras. In the end, The Roaring 20's Banquet was a success, enjoyed by all who attended.





Groups share music

by *Thalia Tomarere*

Even on the cold winter nights, hundreds of people queue up to see a replica of the Journey to Bethlehem at the South Hill church. Although some wait out in the brisk night air, others wait in the sanctuary. To help the waiting time pass more pleasantly, music groups are asked to perform in the sanctuary for set amounts of time. Three of these groups were from UCA: the String Quartet, Choraliers, and Octet, which were given 45 minutes of performance time but only had time to warm up their voices while they were on the bus.

The performances were not their best. Many said they could not hear themselves. The sanctuary was crowded, and it was not a formal concert, so the audience was chattering away. They did not come for a concert, after all, but to walk around Journey to Bethlehem.

The next day, the same groups went to the Central Spokane church, and, again, they had difficulty hearing and had little time to rehearse. The Choraliers were also missing a first tenor, so at the last second, Mr. Anderson had a second alto sing some of his parts.

Although these were not their best performances, they were appreciated and were beneficial for the performers as they got to run through their Christmas music before the big Christmas concert at the Fox.

Lady Lions start with a win

by *Amber Lee*

On Thursday, December 3, the UCA girls' basketball team won their season opener against Christian Center. This was the first win against Christian Center in the past five seasons.

Since it was the first game of the season, both teams were rusty and lacked endurance. Christian Center played hard as the subbed players in and out. They are having a rebuilding season because they lost five of their starting seniors last year. Nonetheless, UCA kept their starters in a persistently pushed the tempo to increase their lead. The lead never changed, and UCA was winning at the half with a score of 32-18.

Starting the second half, the Lions' bench subbed into the game and had an immediate 11-0 run. They stayed on the floor and continued to increase the lead. Christian Center's point guard led her team with 13 points, while Emma Tucker led the UCA bench with a career-high 8 points. Throughout the game, the lead never changed, and UCA won the game with a final score of 67-32.

Struggling Lions resort to rebounding

by *Ryan Dieter*

Yes, you read that correctly. Though they have started the season undefeated in two games, the UCA Lions' coaching staff and players are convinced they could have started the season even stronger. The team's major flaw is its lack of interest in rebounding.

Now, don't be misled. A team can still pull off wins without leading in rebounding; however, it is a very tough challenge indeed. The shooting spectacle fans witnessed in the first game against Northwest Christian is a prime example: Although sharp-shooters Colton Fleck and Tyler Dalrymple (and a few late, yet important, threes from Ryan Dieter) were rarely missing, the game was still a nail-biter with the Lions winning by only three. NWC was out-rebounding the Lions by a very large margin. Just think of what could have occurred had the Lions rebounded just a bit more. And the case was relatively the same in the next game against Christian Center.

In the most recent practice, Assistant Coach Kyle Gladding helped the team improve their rebounding IQ. He mentioned a 90's legend, Dennis Rodman, the 6'7" center that led the league in rebounding thanks to his defensive hustle.

With the sudden emphasis on rebounding, Tyler Dalrymple, the team captain, says, "It's good and will really help us a lot." The fans at UCA undoubtedly hope so.

Girls' Club introduces new banquet activity

by *Nate Cheney*

This year, it was Girls' Club's turn to run the winter banquet. Typically, students are given two banquet activities to choose from: ice skating and bowling. However, this year students were given the choice between ice skating, a mall trip, and the Nutcracker ballet. Costing \$10 and occurring at the Fox Theater, the Nutcracker was the most formal of the three options. All spots but one were filled on the drive to the Fox.

Once at the Fox, the suited men and their lovely gowned dates hiked to their seats in the balcony. After the audience was settled and the orchestra was warmed up, the program began. The ballet itself was cut into two hour-long acts. One student said about the performance, "I enjoyed the music and dance, but I got sleepy during the second half." Many gentlemen left the theater with drool spots and droopy eyelids.

Overall, it was an exceptional performance. The Spokane Symphony played emotively and energetically through both halves of the program. The set designs were colorful, and the costumes were easily identified from the balcony. The dancing was well choreographed, and only one dancer messed up noticeably. In all aspects the performance matched the beautiful Martin Woldson Theater.

Although some thought the ballet sleep inducing, it made this banquet unique and memorable. Girls' Club has set a high standard for Mens' Club next year. But until then, we can only hope that the Nutcracker will return.

Couples break the ice

by *Geoffrey Urbin*

Normally, banquet activities come after the meal, but this year they were scheduled for the afternoon. So, at 1:00 p.m. on the day of the banquet, couples started loading busses to head to downtown Spokane for the banquet activities, one of which was ice skating at Riverfront Park.

As the busses were arriving at the rink, the Zamboni machine was resurfacing the ice. While waiting for the rink to open again, the students went inside to get their ice skates. There were two options for ice skates—hockey skates or figure skates. Hockey skates were very popular among the guys; whereas, the majority of the girls chose figure skates.

When the rink reopened, the students eagerly stepped out onto the ice to do some gliding, sliding, and falling on the newly-surfaced ice. After an hour's skating, the smooth surface of the rink was shredded, so once again the rink was closed for resurfacing.

Once the rink was smooth again, there was thirty more minutes of skating before it was time to return the skates, load the bus, and head back to UCA to prepare for the banquet.



Hairnets

by *Shasta Sequeira*

Those who work in the cafeteria know the absolute struggle of wearing a hairnet. They are just a straight up pain—especially if you are a girl. Wearing a hairnet with long hair can be one of the most frustrating parts of a person's day. Now, the reason for a hairnet is reasonable. It is a very sanitary thing to do that helps keep people from gagging on the hair of their fellow class members, but that doesn't take away the amount of irritation hairnets cause.

The way hairnets make you look is another issue that is rather frustrating. One day as the great people of UCA were going through line, Pastor Sid walked through, looked at a cafeteria worker and said in a hysterical voice, "You look like the modern day Ellen White." Although it was funny and said in a joking manner, those hairnets do make you look like Ellen White—not that there is anything wrong with Ellen White, but you can assume there is no one at this school striving to look like her. So, basically, hairnets make people look like they are from the 1800s.

As annoying as hairnets are, they do keep nasty hair out of the food, which can almost be guaranteed is very appreciated by everyone. Hairnets are really one of those things you hate but just have to wear for the sake of the people you serve. So next time you are getting your meal, look to the people wearing those dreaded hairnets and think, "Thank goodness that isn't me."

Amateur Hour Winners

Skit

"A Classic Tale" by Kaelyn Plata

Piano

"Jamaican Rhumba" by Kari Rose and Kristi Rose

Vocal

"Solveig's Song" by Lauren Threadgill

Instrumental (tie)

"Passacaglia" by Kari Rose

"Concert Etude" by Cedric Merrills

Audience Choice

"A Classic Tale" by Kaelyn Plata

Amateur Hour entertains

by *Daniel Arlt*

Not so long ago, students had the opportunity to audition for and participate in UCA's annual talent show, Amateur Hour. This show is what all musicians on campus strive to be a part of, but only the most prestigious acts make it through the brutal audition night. That process is the sole reason why the show continues to be extremely enjoyable throughout the years.

Acts are classified in 3 different categories, and only certain numbers of acts from each category will be accepted. One of the categories is skits, which are generally humorous and lighten the mood throughout the show. Another category is instrumental, which is where extremely talented students show off their musical prowess by playing solo or in small groups without a vocalist. The final category is vocal, which is any act that has a singer. Many of the favorite acts come from this category. All of these acts together combine to create UCA's popular talent show.

I had the opportunity to audition for a vocal act with eight other students which ended up getting accepted into the show. It was extremely fun to be able to be a part of such a large group of talented people. With such a large group, we were able to create a very full sound and play like a true band.

As for the show itself, it was a huge success with an abundance of amazing performances throughout. For any new students this year, or anyone who's musically talented and hasn't yet tried out for Amateur Hour, I encourage you to step up. Get a group together and learn something cool so that when auditions come around next year, you can be ready to knock it out of the park.



Perfect attendance pays off

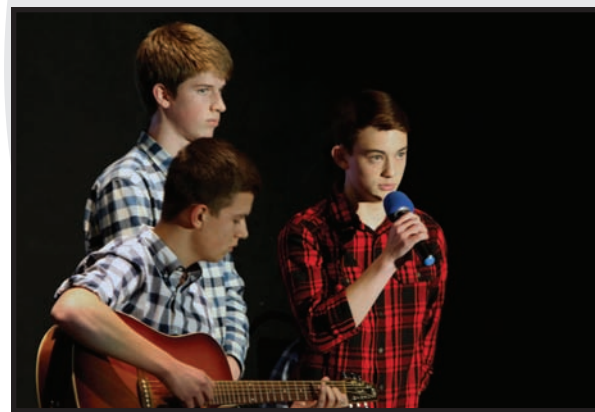
by *Geoffrey Urbin*

RIIIIIING!!! The second bell has just rung and in the halls of Upper Columbia Academy there is a mad dash. Students are frantically sprinting to get to their next class on time. About half the students in the halls burst through the doors at the last second. Unfortunately, the other half end up receiving tardies.

Upper Columbia Academy just had their perfect attendance party for the first quarter. Thirty six students achieved perfect attendance. At the perfect attendance party, the students were served pizza and root-beer floats. After the food was served, they could stay and play board games.

Getting perfect attendance takes commitment. In order to receive perfect attendance, you can't be late or have an absence to any class. Even if you're on sick list or take family days, you still don't get perfect attendance. Instead, you receive an excused absence, which ruins your chance of getting perfect attendance. The only way you can skip classes and still keep your perfect attendance is if you are involved in gymnastics, a music group, a sport, or a mission trip. If you are in class because of a tour or game, the school gives you an administratively excused absence, which doesn't hurt your perfect attendance.

So don't skip your classes and be on time. Try to stay healthy so you don't get on sick list and get way behind in your classes, and I'll see you guys for next perfect attendance party. Good luck.



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This issue's contributors included:

Polly Nicole Officer, Breanna Daley, Morgan Stanyer,
Adriana Smith, Christin Beierle, Amber Lee,
Katrina Santiago, Daniel Arlt, Geoffrey Urbin,
Nate Cheney, Shasta Sequeira, Ryan Dieter,
Thalia Tomarere, Logan Harter, Ashley Samuel,
Eva Wiggins, and Stephen Lacey, sponsor

H.O.P.E.

Hope in the storm

by Logan Harter

High winds, cold temperatures, and grey skies make for a crummy day, especially when you have to be out in it. It was HOPE day at UCA, and students were scattered around the area, mostly in Spokane, at various organizations, helping out with odd tasks or hanging out and playing games with old people at retirement homes. Others were on campus filling in for café workers or raking leaves for maintenance. A few seniors decided to venture into the mountains with Pastor Fred and Mr. Kravig to the senior survival campground behind Camp MiVoden.

The day didn't look good. It was cold, windy, and raining. Winds were reported to reach 77 mph in the area and in other parts of the Northwest they were even higher. So, the drive to MiVoden proved to be a bit hairy as the gusts pushed vehicles around, rocked semis side to side, and nearly pushed Pastor Fred's truck into the median barrier. Pastor Fred also forgot to stop for donuts, so he had to turn around.

Once at the destination, safe and sound, the group started work. They had to pick up random items like lots of plywood and a couple of old mattress frames. They worked on taking down the guys' shelters while Logan Harter and Sidney Allison pulled nails out of trees . . . or attempted to. A few came out easily, but the majority would not. A couple crow bars didn't work and blocks of wood to add leverage didn't make a difference either. Eventually, Pastor Fred brought some clippers and a sledge hammer. The nails at head height and below were clipped off, and the remaining nails were banged into the tree to keep people from getting impaled on them.

The wind started to get worse and the trees creaked and made ominous noises. A tree fell somewhere above the girls' camp where Logan and Sidney had been, and it was decided right then and there that the group would leave for Taco Bell for lunch with Pastor Fred a little disappointed that he didn't get to use his new chainsaw like he had hoped to.

Even though those of us that went on that trip thought it was going to be an awful day, we got a lot done and had the pleasure of enjoying Krispy Kremes and Taco Bell.

HOPE visits the ARC

by Ashley Samuel

It was a frigid, windy Tuesday morning when groups began embarking for their HOPE Taskforce projects. There were many mixed feelings among the students that morning: the students who had chosen outdoor projects regretted their decision; however, the students who had chosen an indoor project relished their wise choice.

There were several different locations that students visited, but one location that stood out was the ARC Community Center in downtown Spokane. This center offers several services for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults, providing a place for these adults to socialize in a safe and welcoming environment.

UCA has visited the ARC center several times in the past, and each time the students come back with great stories and experiences. During this visit, the group felt a bit uneasy about the fact that they had forgotten their craft supplies, but despite this obstacle, the group still had a great time. They made finger puppets, decorated cookies, colored, assembled puzzles, and just talked to the members. What UCA students really appreciated the most about the people at ARC was that they were so thankful and happy to have them visit and do crafts with them. The adults really enjoy having those interactions with such cheerful, lively students, and the students really enjoyed spending the day with such sweet people, who genuinely appreciated them.

The moving crew

by Eva Wiggins

Wednesday, November 18, a group of 5 students were blessed with the opportunity to go to Spangle to help those affected by the windstorm. Although the little town was not hit the hardest by this treacherous storm, there was considerable damage.

As we drove through town, we saw many trees down, most of which missed the houses whose properties they inhabited. We continued to scope out the damage, and a house was pointed out to us with the roof blown partially off. We went to ask if there was any way we could offer our help, and the resident of the house gratefully accepted. She was having to move all of her belongings to a storage unit and a friend's house. She said she could use 10 students, so we went and got some reinforcements.

After about three long, cold hours of packing and moving, we were able to move a majority of her belongings to different locations so they would be out of the danger of the weather. She was so very grateful that we would take time out of our day to help her, and for those that helped, it was a humbling experience that we were blessed to be part of.

Now that sounds like an extra-credit story

by Christin Beierle

"Now that sounds like an extra credit story."

Oh, how many times have the students of Mr. Lacey's English classes heard this phrase, and yet when it comes time to write their stories, those students who have procrastinated are drawing blanks as to what to write about.

Yes, there have been plenty of events happening around students: HOPE, giant windstorms, sports, and school events. But everyone will write about those. An article or two about the big events will be published the *Echoes*, but when Mr. Lacey is avalanched by half the junior class writing about the windstorm, it can be guessed that there will be more than a few disappointed writers.

But perhaps there's a lucky student who has their subject in mind but just has so much other homework and responsibility (and is most certainly not goofing off with friends during study hall) that there has simply not been the time to write their story till the night before due date. They work in a frenzied panic that night, staying up, draining their laptop battery's dear life so they can finish their story and get those few prized points to boost their grade up just a little higher . . . and then receive only four points.

Gifted as they may be, any student who procrastinates to the last night will be hard pressed to find an original subject as well as write a good story. So take a Senior's advice: don't wait to the last minute to get started on your extra credit story; otherwise, you might end up writing an extra credit story about writing extra credit stories.



Just one of the downed trees on campus after the windstorm

Helping other people

by Morgan Stanyer

With the changing of seasons comes the changing of outdoor equipment. Falling more frequently, rain is upon us. Normally you would pull out your umbrella at this time of year, but not on November 17. Historic winds of over 70 miles per hour gusted across Spokane on the Tuesday afternoon of HOPE Taskforce. Projects were cancelled, power was lost, and trees were demolished.

The following day, UCA students felt the need to help the town of Spangle clean up the damage. Ten students under the leadership of Pastor Amanda drove around Spangle helping those who needed it. Pastor Fred, Mr. Winslow, and 30 or so other students headed projects on campus with hopes to restore its beauty.

Classes were excused in the afternoon for those who worked. Sharing time and effort, UCA students represented the school well while sharing the love of Jesus with the community.

Dorm gets new vacuums

by Adriana Smith

The girls' dorm finally got new vacuums. The old vacuums worked backwards: they didn't pick up things but spat things out on to the carpet. The old vacuums kept the girls from vacuuming their floors which got them marked down on room checks. The old vacuums were always clogged and were sometimes hard to push and move around the floor. But finally, after 10 years, the dorm has five brand new industrial vacuums.

The new vacuums don't just pick up everything on the floor, but glide easily so you don't have to use any muscle to use them. The vacuums also are a better color, teal and gray, compared to the old ones. The deans and the whole dorm are excited to have new vacuums. With new vacuums the dorm can really be clean now. I hope they last awhile.



There was snow and then there wasn't snow and maybe there will be snow again. But when it's here, Josh McClosky takes advantage of it.

Peace On Earth



The annual tree lighting in front of the cafeteria

Big Sis/Lil Sis

by Amber Lee

Living in the dorm can be a blessing; however, students often wish they were at home. The drama and the stress from school can be overwhelming. Unfortunately, people don't talk about their struggles because they're not sure whom they can trust, so Girls' Club has initiated a program called Big Sis/Lil Sis.

"I love being a big sister," Ella Dieter said, "because without it, I wouldn't have this close of a relationship with other people." The aim is to build a sisterly bond that will help us support each other through the good and bad times. At the revealing party where the big sister's name was taped to their little sister's forehead, everyone found out who their sisters were and enjoyed a movie with doughnuts and nachos.

The day after

by Katrina Santiago

For some people the day after Halloween is an exciting day to look forward to. It is the day you can finally decorate for Christmas and mark the beginning of the holiday season. From this point on you can listen to Christmas music every day and not feel like it's not the right season.

My favorite part of November 1 is decorating our room. Elegant, twinkling lights are taken from their storage boxes. They are draped around the room, giving off a warm, holiday glow. Soft, empty stockings are hung on the wall, waiting to be filled with all kinds of goodies. Meanwhile, joyful Christmas music is playing in the background, increasing Christmas spirit. But, of course, the room wouldn't be complete without a tree. A mini, light up Christmas tree is the perfect touch to a dorm room, with tiny prancing reindeer dancing under the tree. Golden tinsel wrapped around the bed posts adds a shimmer to the décor. Little Christmas trinkets decorate the window sills and counters. But there is one last thing that you cannot go without: a sweet, festive holiday scent. This leaves the room smelling warm and cozy and very Christmas-like. Now, for the next two months you can enjoy the wonderful, happy, holiday spirit of Christmas.

Late night visitor

by Breanna Daley

It is about 9 p.m. and you finally are settling down to do the homework you've been avoiding when it hits. The disease that affects freshmen and seniors alike has found you. Giving no warning, it attacks when you least expect it. You are left distracted and unable to focus until you appease it. Just what is this terrible disease?

The late night munchies. Many think that if they eat an apple or munch on some celery they'll be fine. Maybe if they ignore their snarling stomach it will behave itself and quit trying to distract them from homework. Sadly, this isn't the case. The more you ignore the munchies the worse they become. Your stomach will growl louder the longer you ignore it. It might even start to eat itself. The cure to this terrible disease—the only way to appease the monster—is to feed it. Cheetos, Oreos, Ramen, and Mac-and-Cheese are the fastest cure.