



The last first day

by Madalynn Kack

Papers are flying through the air, and new pencils are plummeting to the freshly mopped floor. You can hear the chirping of the birds as they sing their joyous songs. The sound of children running, screaming, and laughing fills the air with a sense of peace. This isn't just a school, it's a place where lives are changed. People aren't just friends, they're family.

Many tears are falling down the faces of the parents who leave, knowing that next year their child will be heading to college. As friends greet each other with smiles and long-awaited hugs, there is something in the back of every senior's mind: "This is the Last First Day."

When people think "senior," they might think of things such as graduating, going to college, getting a career, or starting a family. Being a senior is the transition between being a child and becoming an adult. The next few years of life can be a struggle and everything you do will affect your future. Although these things may be interesting to think about, we must not forget that it's not over yet. We still have one more year to let the light shine. We can and will "Be the Change!"

It might have been our last first day of high school, but we can make a decision to let everyday be a new day to live for Christ. Let's make this year an unforgettable one. After we leave and new kids come and go, it sure would be nice if people looked back on our class and said, "They were the Change!"



Glowing in the darkness

Roylan Messinger

It is a Friday night. The fast-dying fire of the flaming sun has dipped ever lower in the sky as our hearts were warmed by the words that have flown from the front of the sanctuary. Now the lights are dimmed and around the pianoforte a small remnant of students gathers. Why? To experience one of the most satisfying activities here on this campus. Sometimes it is the moments when the sun has gone down that the sky is lit the brightest. It is time for afterglow.

As a fellow student, struggling through the hardship of the week, I know that this is the time when it finally hits me: It is Sabbath, and I can lean back and let myself worship for one whole day. The afterglow, for those of you who have not gone, is when the ball of worship is handed from the people up front to everyone else. It is when we can all join in and sing, play instruments, and pray. I would invite you to come, join and sing. We are there to praise from the heart. Yes, it is easier to worship under a plethora of chordal harmonies, but if you want to praise Him from your heart with something you have not yet mastered, then it is my prayer that we will welcome you with open arms. And if you do not want to sing or play, but only want to listen, then come and praise Him in your heart.

So when the fires of vespers dim, come enjoy the heat from the embers of afterglow. Come, Christians, join and sing, Alleluia Amen.

Snacks

by Meghan Spracklen

Its buggy little eyes looked at me in terror. Its desperate attempts to flee were hindered by my forefingers holding its torso. This small bug, this cricket, could save my life if I were lost in the wilderness, yet here I was taking his.

Putting this thought out of my mind, I plunged him into my mouth and crunched down with my molars. I made sure to chew him because of the plethora of horror stories I had heard: crickets swallowed too hastily by squeamish connoisseurs cling to the throat and attempt to crawl back up hours later. He tasted like popcorn and mold, which is not at all appetizing, but this was survival. I swallowed but, unfortunately, some hard crumble stayed wedged between my teeth. Thoroughly grossed out, I flung it out.

All you juniors, sophomores, and freshmen, this is your future. You will be reduced to devouring insects in the woods, smelling like smoke for days, and cooking food over fires.

Yet even cricket consumption could hardly hurt this incredible week. As any senior will tell you, it was more than you could expect.

So here's my advice: bite them before you swallow.

A week in the woods

by Megan Rasmussen

Some of you may have noticed a fairly empty campus on the week of September 15. If you didn't, let me enlighten you. The seniors were away on Senior Survival. It was a relaxing time for a lot of the seniors, not having to worry about homework and other distractions of regular life. Though they had to cook their own meals and didn't get to take normal showers, most of them were happy for the experience. It was a time for bonding and for getting to know each other on a whole different level.

The weather was nicer than expected. The only sign of rain was a little drizzle on Thursday afternoon. There were some cold nights, but those were balanced by warm days. Don't get me wrong, though. The air may have been warm, but the creek water was not. Screams were heard from the bathing areas almost every afternoon after lunch. Being somewhat clean came with a price: freezing cold water. Some were told just to wait until their feet went numb, and it would feel better. Nonetheless, it was a very chilling experience for those who dared test the waters.

By the end of the week even those who had bathed in the creek were dirty and gross. Everyone was fairly worn out as they loaded back into the bus. Despite the challenges of nature, it was a great experience that brought the senior class of 2015 closer together.

The privilege of senior life

by Tyler Warren

It is late afternoon. The room is dimly lit by a few fluorescent light bulbs on the ceiling. The air smells thickly of sulfur. Physics notes and textbooks are sprawled out on the desk, the couch, the floor. Six seniors yell everything from "Goat!" to "Demons!" to "Fermi estimation!" Burnt matches, pieces of paper, and random senior pictures fly to and fro. One senior calmly asks, "Guys, can I light another match?" Another senior pokes her head in the room, rolls her eyes, and leaves. Match smoke billows as another granola bar wrapper falls to the floor.

Now, this may sound like a terribly immature event. It was. And I promise, those matches never lit anything. This description of a senior study party is extremely similar to most of senior life.

One of the most coveted and anticipated parts of being a senior is senior privileges. In fact, when the senior class of 2015 was kept late in assembly to discuss these privileges, not a single complaint was heard—only cheers. Some senior privileges include a continental breakfast until 8:30, the ability to go into town once a week, and not coming back from the weekend until Monday morning. However, despite these privileges, some seniors complain about their lack of privileges. "The seniors my freshman year got a worship skip each week!" grumbled a four-year-senior. "Can't they leave the breakfast line open longer?" said another disgruntled senior. "Why can't we go to town *twice* a week?!" asked another. What they don't realize, however, is that the greatest privilege is senior life itself.

Most seniors get up, munch on a Pop Tart, do a little homework, and go to class around 9 or 10. Many of them have only four or five classes. The majority of seniors are comfortable with who they are, already know how UCA works, and have a pretty good idea of what is going on. Seniors always seem to glide from class to class, smiling and having a good time. All the other students seem to want to be around them, laugh at their dumb jokes, and generally just stare in awe. But, seniors, before you mount your high horse, remember that not only do you have the stresses of college applications, but you also will be back to freshmen next year—the college version. And, underclassmen, don't worry. You are all closer to senior year than you think, and many of you have just as much influence as any senior. And for all the ones looking forward to senior privileges, just remember that the best privilege of senior year is the year itself.

2015

Fall getaway

by Darla Morgan

On Tuesday, September 2, students got to hang up their backpacks and leave their textbooks on the shelf. It was time for the annual UCA Fall Picnic up at Camp MiVoden. Students met at the flagpole for a short worship and then piled into various vehicles bound for Camp MiVoden.

The bright side of MiVoden being almost an hour drive away is that you can get to know the other people in your vehicle. In our van we played get-to-know-you games. They were entertaining and, surprisingly, lasted for what seemed like forever. And then there it was: the fresh air, crystal water, and vibrant trees. It was none other than Camp MiVoden.

Students rushed out of the vehicles, excited to get the day started and grinning ear to ear. There were plenty of options for activities to be enjoyed by all. There was a beach volleyball competition, swimming, canoeing, paddle boarding, boating, and knee boarding. Even if the active activities weren't your favorite, it was still fun to hang out and talk with friends on the front lawn. Anything we could have possibly done at MiVoden was more exciting than fighting off sleep during a 7:15 a.m. class.

Fall Picnic was a nice and leisurely getaway for both staff and students. Seniors who have gone to Fall Picnic four times throughout their high-school career claim that it still never gets old. Fall picnic will definitely be a highlight out of all the memories we make together this year.



Water pipes

by *Niolas Ruud*

The occasional clank of metal upon tile, or a slight squeak, like that of a loosening screw—sounds like these just happen to be common near the beginning of the school year here at Upper Columbia Academy. A senior this year, Jonathan Fitch said of the spectacle, “The meager trickle of water which flows from the many orifices of the shower head, simply does not compare to that of the torrential downpour which flows from the bare pipe.”

Those of you who live on the west side of campus may not be entirely familiar with this custom: the removal of the seemingly unnecessary shower heads. But for the men of UCA, it is a solemn custom and tradition. The customary response from a four-year senior (this time Jesus Montes) seems to wrap it all up. “I don’t like shower heads.”

And in truth most of the men’s dorm must agree, for out of the 25 shower heads in the dorm, only 20% still have the unappreciated shower heads in place. Where these shower heads end up is somewhat of a mystery, but “Rest assured,” says Jake Carlson, “they were unneeded in the first place.” So no worries folks. Case closed.

Let’s Move Day

by *Kristen Cottrell*

Sunday school is never anyone’s favorite, but we all agree that home leave makes all the pain of going to school on Sunday worth it. This school year’s first Sunday school was on Let’s Move Day. Let’s Move Day is a North American Division day set aside for getting as many people as possible involved in physical activity. To raise awareness of childhood obesity, they encourage schools, churches, and communities alike to organize 5k runs/walks or some other event that gets people moving. They also suggest doing a fundraiser of sorts for community projects.

Here at UCA we also participated in the division wide Let’s Move Day. After a shortened Sunday school day (which none of us complained about), we were given many options for physical activity and then had the whole afternoon to spend playing organized sports or running/walking a 1 mile or 5k. Another option was getting involved in a campus wide game of capture the flag. Some of the other organized sports available were football, volleyball, tennis, and basketball. Even if you weren’t good at any sports, you still had fun just getting involved.

While some students complained that it was too hot outside or that they had too much homework, most students ended up getting involved and having fun anyway. All around it was just a fun day to promote health and longevity.



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Taco Tuesday

by *Gary Jessop III*

The horror of taco day in the cafeteria is the worst. Everyone gets there only to find an enormous line. You are forced to either stand in line and wait or sacrifice the tacos and get cereal for lunch, but tacos are one of the best meals the café prepares, and they are just too good to give up for cereal.

The week of Senior Survival is always worse in the café because they always think that since the seniors are gone they need only one line. This one line for any meal backs up, but it is especially so for tacos.

The Tuesday of Senior Survival, I went to the café and realized the meal was tacos. I was very happy I had arrived early and so I wouldn’t have to stand in line. But when I stepped up to the serving station and looked across the room, I noticed something that had never happened before—the second line was open. Two taco lines with the seniors gone? This must be madness, a first in the history of UCA. I was delighted and enjoyed my lunch with others who were just as surprised and glad. One student said he was so amazed that he might faint.

For that week at least, the taco lines were almost nonexistent.



UCA student news

by *Madilyn Malott*

Have you heard the exciting news? UCA's Videography class now produces a student news video every week.

The videos are always informative as well as interesting. Many exciting topics are covered weekly, including upcoming events and coverage of past events, too. They feature a few different senior news reporters who are enthusiastic to bring the student body news reports weekly. The news reports are recorded in different places all over campus.

I asked one reporter, Darla Morgan, what she thought of doing the UCA News every week. She replied, "I am glad to have the opportunity to bring the student body as well as parents and family members information about what's going on at UCA. It's also a great learning experience because I'm getting to know a lot about cameras and videography." I also asked Darla what her favorite parts about reporting were. Her response: "My favorite part about being a reporter is interviewing students around campus about their experiences and learning so much more about them."

The Student News is still pretty new, so if you have any suggestions for the Videography class or have a story you think should be reported, don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Terry at yearbook@ucca.org.

The first of many

by *Josh Enjati*

Sunday, August 31, was the first note night of the school year. It was exciting, but it was also confusing for many of the new dorm residents. On that Sunday, Niko Pintos, the desk worker in the boys' dorm, called on the PA system for notes for the first time this school year. Confusion spread quickly throughout the dorm. New students went to their RA's to ask for guidance.

The guys in the dorm learned quickly but didn't quite understand the importance of notes. Note night is when a guy or girl sends a note and, usually, receives one back. This happens every Sunday of the school year. It is a tradition that has gone on since the early years of Upper Columbia Academy.

In the boys' dorm, notes were coming down fast. However, in the girls' dorm they were coming down faster. At 9:45, Niko did the last call for notes. A whopping Pringles can full of notes plus a few bags of cookies was produced by the boys' dorm. Niko Pintos, Niqolas Ruud, Brian Paredes, and I walked proudly over to the girls' dorm to deliver our notes. When we got there, we found three boxes overflowing with notes plus a few bags of food and random loose notes that couldn't fit into the boxes. The boys once again fell to the girls.



Freshman retreat

by *Nathaniel Srikureja*

During school's first month, each class has something exciting to look forward to. The seniors, Senior Survival; the juniors, a backpacking trip; the sophomores . . . envy. But the freshmen? They get Freshman Retreat, a memorable highlight of their high school journey held at the Union Gospel Mission's Tshimakain Camp.

The freshman class along with their sponsors and a small group of senior counselors attend this campout which lasts from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning. Packed with getting-to-know-you activities and evening worship talks, this trip is the first step in turning the individuals of the freshman class into a singularity. Few freshmen will quickly forget the human knot, obstacle course, or tarp.

The senior counselors designed an obstacle course just short of impossible, beginning near the chapel, winding through the mess hall, crossing over the fire pit, and even traveling through the bus. Teamed with a classmate, blindfolded freshmen navigated under tables, over logs, around benches, and away from potential danger by responding to non-verbal signals given by their "guides." As the freshmen progressed, the seniors complicated matters by giving their own distracting and misleading signals.

The first teams navigated quickly, but as time passed, the seniors became more assertive. Finally, after about 2 hours, the last team began their arduous journey. Left with nobody else to distract, the seniors surrounded the last adventurer, Stephen Wilkinson, and began harassing him. They quickly isolated Stephen and turned him off the course, his guide helpless. Then, from nowhere, Mr. Starr approached and said, "Stephen, it looks like you need a savior." "Yeah," mumbled the circumspect Stephen. "Take my hand," said Mr. Starr gently. Stephen reached out his hand, and Mr. Starr took hold of it and walked Stephen around the obstacles to the finish line. Stephen's face displayed relief as his blindfold was removed and he looked back over the course, the moment forever seared in our memories as an illustration of Christ's leading in our lives.

Backpacking

by Kristen Wagner

After an early morning wake up, you now have to endure 54 pounds placed upon your back. All of your items for the weekend are with you. Emotions of excitement, followed by nervousness, invade your entire body. Are you ready to conquer over seven miles of hiking uphill today? Are you ready for what's to come? There's no return, the only way is to carry all of the weight and push for the finish. Step by step the group marches on. The first portion of the trail is said to be the worst. Switch-backs happen quickly. Your legs are tired from bearing all of the weekend's supplies. Your shoulders ache from the movement of the backpack. All you want is a chance to take a break and take off the tremendous weight.

The trail to the lake still lies ahead. A noise from behind nearly scares you off the mountain. A horse! Intelligent people are riding up on a horse. The horse and rider quickly pass and disappear up the trail. Instantly, your backpack seems to triple in weight. Still, something in your heart pushes you to keep on moving and suddenly you hear noisy excitement from your classmates ahead. You have mastered the mountain!

Finally, the backpack falls to the ground and you are able to absorb the beauty of the lake. At night with no city glare in the sky, all you see are the stars above. Taylor Sims said, "You looked up into the sky, and all you saw was God's glory sparkling above."

For one weekend, a number of juniors carried the weight of all our supplies. God bears the weight of the world for each one of us daily. In Proverbs 16:9 it says, "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." Noticing God's simple beauty out in nature can give you strength and courage. It is through His strength that we can do amazing things. A weekend in the wilderness is uplifting because you can see God in each step of the journey.

by Polly Nicole Officer

Once a year, there comes a special time at Upper Columbia Academy; a time for those ordinary boys and girls of the junior class to step out of their average apparel and face the rigid world; a time of sweat, togetherness, and the mountains; a time known as the junior backpacking trip.

Those who are chosen after attending two preparation meetings are practically thrown into the abyss of the wilderness. Staring up at the trail head before them, with a 45-pound monstrosity strapped to their trembling backs and sweat starting to drip off their foreheads, they start to regret the teddy bear concealed within the folds of their packs or that watermelon they crammed in for a feast on Friday night.

In what seems like years later, with limbs quivering and shirts soaked with perspiration, the worn-out backpackers heave a sigh of relief as they finish the trek up the mountainside to the picturesque peaks that will be their home for next 44 hours.

Throughout the weekend, the hikers learned true survival skills: purifying water, preparing edible food with only a tin can and a miniature camp stove, surviving without a proper restroom, securing food so the critters won't claim it, and sleeping in the frigid mountain weather. For many this was a time of hardships and struggles—living without the luxuries of the comfortable life they are so accustomed to. For others it was an escape from the wild schedules, never-ending homework assignments, and daily dramas of teenage life. It was a time to sit back and inhale the crisp mountain air and to relax and bask in the glory of God's nature.

The junior backpacking trips provided way more than a well-earned P.E. credit. They changed

lives for the better. After all, there's no place like the great outdoors.



Agape feast

by Zack Becker

The first Friday of the school year is always home to one of the favorite vespers of the school year: Agape Feast.

There are four main events during Agape Feast. It starts with the feast itself; consisting of bread bowls, soup, and an assortment of other edible items. We were able to sit anywhere in the café, and our tables were dismissed by staff members in order to prevent major congestion at the serving table.

The second event is worship. After we finished eating, we all went outside to the Plaza and sat facing the dining commons. Worship started with singing, followed shortly by a prayer, and finally the main event of worship: the speaker. This year's speaker was Mrs. Wickward with her topic being her trip to Africa.

The third event is closely paired with the fourth event. The third event is communion. Communion is a Christian tradition consisting of the consumption of communion bread and unfermented grape juice. The fourth event shortly followed communion and was foot-washing. Foot-washing is also a Christian tradition consisting of one person rinsing another person's feet to teach humility.

To wrap up Agape Feast there was Afterglow. Afterglow is an unscheduled event but almost always follows a special vespers. Afterglow is a gathering of students and staff in a circle in which they sing Christian praise songs. It usually ends with a prayer.

Agape Feast is one of the most looked-forward-to events of the school year and for no small reasons. Students who participate are united by a common religion and a common God. It allows the teachers to observe which students enjoy such traditions and which prefer a freer form of worship. All in all, it gives people a sense of unity.

Pride or chaos?

by Morgan Stanyer

It was Saturday night when everyone gathered in the gym with their random items in one hand and class spirit in the other. Then, all of a sudden, a voice shouted "air raid," and the entire population of the gym dropped to the ground as a silence rushed over them. It was no longer fun and games. The rest of the evening was for proving what your class could do. As usual, the juniors were the source of energy, jumping and shouting class and staff names. But running around inside the gym is not the only thing done at such an event. Just about the time it gets too cold to be outside, we head outside!

This is when the real fun happens. Mattress surfing, tug of war, class pictures, school pictures, and selfies all happen up on the field. Seniors, with the most experience, oftentimes own the mattress surfing, but the best event of all is tug of war. That is when the classes get the most intense. Ten of each class's most burly boys and girls are chosen to face the other classes. Once again, seniors usually take this one for the win, but not their girls—not this time. Junior girls proved themselves as the tug of war champions in the female category.

Overall, class night is a great way to express your class spirit and to get to know some new people. It is an opportunity to show who your class really is. It is when you get the full experience of UCA.

The fiery dragons

by Niko Pintos

One hot Friday afternoon, the UCA soccer team set out to face the Dragons. We left in our stylish UCA rental vans and arrived at our destination, the Dragon's Field, fashionably late. It was great.

After warming up and shaking hands with captains, we were finally able to take to the field. The long-awaited moment had finally come, the whistle blew, and the first game of the season began.

It was great . . . for the other team. The Dragons scored the first goal, and it all went downhill after that. A few minutes later, the Dragons came up with a mid-range shot a little too powerful for our goalie to block, and all of a sudden it was 2-0.

The next portion of the first half came and went without much excitement until a failed clearance gave the Dragons another goal and it was 3-0. Then, about 2 minutes before the half-time whistle, our captain/striker took control of the ball and crossed it into the middle for Grady to slam home. We were finally on the scoreboard.

Most of the second half was uneventful until a cheeky and clever spin and cross from a substitute Dragon landed right at the feet of another striker who shot a low goal. Then, about a minute from the end, a Dragon got his feet on a ball about 20 feet from the goal. It seemed there was no way for him to make a goal, but somehow he was able to turn around onto his right foot and curve the ball just past our goalie's fingers and into the bottom corner: 5-1 and game.

After the loss to the St. George's School Dragons, the team went on to split the next two games against Valley Christian and Northwest Christian.

Cacophony

by Elliott Fulbright

Noise. It is a place that is filled with noises all around. No matter if it's someone playing scales up and down the pianos, a clarinet that squeaks, a girl from third floor who's trying to hit the highest note she can, or someone in the band room seeing how loud they can hit the symbols together. When all these sounds join together at the same time it creates a chaotic noise that no one really has to handle—unless you are a music building monitor.

Being a music monitor has its perks. Technically, you get to tell people what to do and to hang out with the great Mr. Anderson. You can even get homework done, all while you're surrounded with that precious noise that everyone loves. So if you're ever in the music building, take a second to listen—you'll discover what I'm talking about.

Improving life in the girls' dorm

by Jennifer Pontius

Most of the students attending UCA know what it's like to live in the dorm. Many student here have gone to a boarding school for more than one year. Living in the dorm can be extremely fun at times and not so much fun at other times, but there are a lot of benefits to living in a dorm. You get to connect better with your classmates and other students in the evening because we are so busy during the day.

Something, though, caught my attention the very first night in the dorm: lights-out doesn't get announced. For those of you who may not know what I mean by "lights-out," it's when the electricity goes out at 10:30 to settle down the dorm and make sure we get a decent night's rest. The times flies by so fast when you have a test or quiz to study for and then, suddenly, your light goes out. A reminder before the lights are go out wouldn't give us a longer time to study, but it would definitely be nice to hear it and have it register that in a couple of minutes lights are going out. If it was announced, we would have a little time to just get our things together and neatly put away before we're left in the dark.

I got a lot of agreement on this issue. Ashley Long, a junior who lives in the dorm, said that would be a really nice reminder: "A lot of times I totally zone out while doing homework, and then suddenly I have no internet or power to finish it." Kristi Rose, another junior, added a few words. "It would definitely be nice even to have just a ten minute reminder to get us in the mind-set that we don't have much time left." It would be a nice reminder in the dorm to have every night.



Sid Hardy, Kyle Gladding, John Winslow, and Jon Weigley accept the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge during registration day while Jim Mann seems pleased with the results.

Registration day

by Sabrina Beckner

Registration day is always a hectic day at Upper Columbia Academy. Every new student is walking around campus with their parents trying to get the right signatures, walk to the right building, and not get too overwhelmed by the many people running busily around campus. Meanwhile, the returning students are busy running and jumping and screaming with the friends they haven't seen all summer. Teachers are signing, recruiting, and welcoming, trying to assure the nervous student that they will love their class and that it will be a great year. The WE-HAUL volunteers along with the dads and siblings are carrying in boxes, lamps, pillows and refrigerators while the mothers are making sure that the sink works and the room is clean enough to leave their baby in.

After everyone is all unpacked and settled into their rooms, they go to dinner put on outside by ASB. Some with tearstained faces after saying goodbye to their families carry their dinner out to the grass looking for some friendly faces. Pastor Sid gives a short worship talk about how the year will be the best one ever and how they can help by being involved and standing for Christ. Then handshake begins.

They call the freshmen up first to shake the hands of the staff, and then freshmen wait for the rest of the school to come by with sweaty palms to awkwardly shake their hands. Some are more confident and give you a nice firm grip while others shyly put out a limp hand that feels like you are shaking a baby's hand. Shrieks come from girls who are just excited to see each other's faces, and overall everyone enjoys themselves and will look back fondly on handshake later in the year.