



## Contest brings Christmas cheer

by Serena Cardwell

This year ASB decided to have a door decorating competition, which is a fun, festive way to celebrate Christmas.

It is fun to watch the ordinary doors in the Ad Building and other buildings on campus slowly turn into winter wonderlands. So much creativity was put into the doors by teachers and their student workers. Some are very beautiful and extravagant, and some are very simple. Christmas in the Ad Building should always be this fun.

Christmas in the Ad Building usually consists of some lights on the walls but nothing more than that. This year there are so

many Christmas decorations everywhere you look thanks to the competition. This, we hope, will become a holiday tradition at UCA.

Everyone had so much fun, and even the people who didn't get to decorate can enjoy the festive spirit.

## Change

by Charles Buursma

We live in the 21st century. What used to be a way of life in the 20th century has changed. We are a different people. The Internet is no longer a luxury, but a need; cellphones are no longer used by rich business men, but by the smallest child. Cars can drive themselves, large amounts of data can be stored on an incredibly small microchip, but the craziest thing of all is that we had Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton as the main candidates for the presidency, and Trump actually won.

This world isn't what it used to be. Whether you want to believe it or not, the world is changing at a fast pace. As it changes, just remember where you came from and don't forget about who God wants you to be. Put Him first no matter what. He only will give you the very best no matter who the president is.

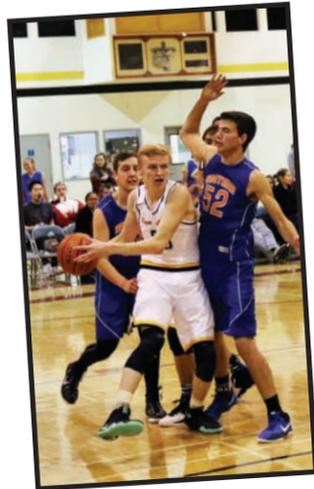
*On the evening of Tuesday, November 29, the annual tree-lighting was held on the cafeteria plaza. After worship and refreshments, students and staff moved outside to sing Christmas carols and see the tree illuminated.*



*Singing Christmas carols and giving away home-made cookies is a regular Saturday night activity at staff homes in December.*



**THE WORLD NEEDS  
A STABLE  
INFLUENCE**



## Ball is life

by Grady Dietrich

Basketball season has finally arrived. Men have been waiting impatiently, but others dread this season, knowing it will be the focus of attention and conversation for many months. But whether you love it or hate it, it must happen.

Basketball allows many people to show off their talents, impressing the amazed onlookers. It is a way to bond with people you otherwise wouldn't know: Many friendships come out of being on a team. Practicing hours with the same people builds trust and relationships. It is good friendly recreation, a way to just have a good time. Others go out on to the court and escape into a different world away from all the troubles of reality.

Basketball season has many benefits people may not have noticed. If you try, you may enjoy it more than you think.

## A new season dawns

by Jonathan Terry

After the soccer cleats and volleyball kneepads are laid to rest, they are traded for basketball shoes and headbands.

Tryouts began and there was a collective nervousness among boys and girls alike. The difference between JV and Varsity is small to some, but very large to others. Even before tryouts, shots were put up in anticipation for the coming week as people were trying their best to show their true potential and usefulness to the team.

But as quickly as it started, tryouts finished, the teams were decided, and it was time to get to work. Defenses were diagrammed and performed tirelessly. Offenses were run to hopeful perfection, and boys and girls did their fair share of sprinting up and down the court. The new jerseys were hung up, waiting to be put to use as the first game day neared. The final few practices went by with the teams focused on working hard and doing their absolute best, and now the season has begun.

## Making a team

by Shine Alvarado

The girls pile into the gym. Unknown to them, they form two groups: the group that is ready for basketball season and the group that is nervous and unsure. Everyone pulls on sport shoes and old t-shirts, ready for a night of sports. Some girls have barely played basketball while others have it in their blood.

A wave of insecurity washes over some girls as they watch confident players rule the court. Fancy dribble plays, tricky lay-ups, and killer shots impress the coaches. Their eyes scan over the girls, already picking out the best. And that makes the other girls question why they even try. Why do they come out and spend two hours getting sweaty and having the minutes tick by when they could be doing something else? Why do they try to do a three-man weave when they can barely run across the court and make a shot? The coaches won't consider them for the team.

But that's how a team is made. You want the best to go out there and grow. You want the best to make the wins. You pick the ones with confidence to lead and the determination to keep pushing.

It's okay for those girls who didn't make it because trying is better than nothing. When the names are posted on the UCA gym door, there's no real feeling of failure, and some have pride that such skilled basketball players are representing the school.

Basketball season has begun. Tryouts are over. Let the games begin.

## Preparing for the banquet

by Rachele Santee

There comes a time around the beginning of November when that one word comes out of hibernation. That one word happens to be *banquet*.

It starts out with just a few whispers of the word, but as Amateur Hour and the announcing of the theme grow near, the voices about banquet grow louder. Boys start planning whom they are going to ask and girls start match making.

Some people, though, try to ignore all the talk about the banquet and focus on school. Others have nothing better to do than help plan everyone's banquet evening and dream of their own. Yes, some people are really excited, others don't care, and another group are nervous about how it will all play out. A few just sit back and laugh at all the crazy drama.

Girls have different thinking on this whole banquet idea than do the boys. We try to convince boys to ask our friends while hoping to get asked ourselves, and plan all-girl parties for those who don't get asked. A small minority try to decide what to wear and how to show off their beauty if they don't get asked.

Boys, however, feel the pressure for how to ask in the most creative, romantic way. In the boys' dorm the war begins, and some surrender before it starts. They just don't have time for the drama, especially if they're swamped juniors.

All of this is just the pre-banquet drama. What will happen at the actual banquet itself?

## Class parties!



On Saturday night, November 19, all the classes got together for their annual class parties and enjoyed a good dose of games, food, and videos

## School siblings

by Belicia Jiao

If you were here last year you probably remember that we had a "Big Sis, Lil Sis" program in the dorm. Basically, upper classmen chose lower classmen to be their "little sisters." This built a special connection between girls that was especially helpful during the bad and stressful times throughout the school year. Last year, I was a "Lil Sis," and I loved it because I always knew I had a person to talk to about my problems and struggles.

At the reveal party this year, the lower classmen found out who their "big sisters" are, and most were very excited; at least, my "little sister" was. "I think it is a great way to break the ice between people you don't know," Svea Smith said, and I am just grateful that girls' club is continuing this program this year.

## Performance class

by Eliana Srikureja

That November day was a day of dread for some. Once a quarter, all the music students gather for what is known as Performance Class. Students from Mrs. Dalrymple's piano lessons, Mr. Anderson's voice lessons, and even some of Mr. Kravig's students prepared to show the skills they had been learning.

Arriving at the time of their lessons, students were filled with dread, anticipation, and some even happiness. The performances were awe-inspiring, making many of the bystanders long for such talent. Then, after the music-making, Mr. Kravig gave some tips for performing. He shared his ways of overcoming stage fright, dry mouth, and a shaky voice. Many funny stories were shared and new lessons learned. At the end, the best part came – chips, homemade salsa, and brownies! Overall it was a tasteful event.

## Winter blues

by Hailee Huenergardt

“Oh no it’s Monday! Oh no it’s Wednesday; I don’t think I’ll make it through the week!”

If we all look deep enough and admit to it, every one of us experiences some sort of depression or sadness. Now, we won’t get into all the details that cause those feelings, but there is a major one here in the PNW: THE SUN. We often don’t see the sunshine enough once November hits.

Standing in the sunlight for only 5-10 minutes does many wondrous things for your health. It gives you more energy, relieves aches and pains, boosts the immune system, and helps your skin. The biggest benefit is that it helps beat SAD (seasonal affective disorder). It beats the winter blues brought on by dark, cold and miserable weather.

The sun provides one of the most important vitamins, vitamin D. If the sun doesn’t shine enough, most of us will have vitamin D deficiency. Without vitamin D, our bodies are screaming and dying inside. So to make sure we get our needed amount, we either need to take an all-natural supplement or eat proper amount of fruits and vegetables. Without some sort of vitamin D, we walk around like exhausted soldiers. Taking a supplement in the morning will give you energy to get through the day and fight exhaustion, and when it is sunny and there are blue skies, go outside! God made the sun just for us. It’s a gift that can help us lead happier, healthier lives.

## The struggle of high school

by Kiara Welch

Be in music. Be in gymnastics. Be on varsity basketball. Be on varsity volleyball. Be in ASB. Be a class officer. Be an RA. Be a . . . . Be a . . . . Be a . . . .

Adults are always telling us to get involved in high school. Once we’re in college, we won’t have time to be involved, they say. They tell us to take hard classes. They say it will help us when we get to college. And I agree with them to a certain extent. I think it is important to be involved and take challenging classes, but there comes a point where enough is enough.

Is it too much when you are an RA, a band member, a varsity volleyball and basketball player, an ASB officer who’s taking AP Language and A & P DC? When should school involvement become more important than sleep? When do you have time for friendships or, more importantly, when do you have time for God?

In the craziness of life at UCA, make time for God. He’ll always be waiting for you. Even if you have three tests, take time to talk to God. It will be worth it.



UPPER COLUMBIA ACADEMY

**ECHOES**

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Upper Columbia Academy, Spangle, Washington 99031  
This issue’s contributors included:

Serena Cardwell, Grady Dietrich, Rachelle Santee,  
Charles Buursma, Madison Bartell, Danny Nesteruk,  
Hailee Huenergardt, Caleb Nelson, Shine Alvarado,  
Jonathan Terry, Katrina Santiago, Sarah Palacios,  
Eliana Srikureja, Belicia Jiao, Kierra Driggs,  
Adreana Ward, Kiara Welch, Emma Tucker, Summer Davis,  
Kyle Koberstine, and Stephen Lacey, sponsor

## Blame Game

by Emma Tucker

All too often, I like to play the blame game. I blame my friends for distracting me from responsibilities, my alarm clock for not waking me in time, and my dog for eating my homework. It’s all too easy to procrastinate and make excuses, accusing some inanimate object for my failure. And somehow I always get away with it.

When do we learn to blame others? Is it as a child when we point at our chubby fingers at infant siblings whom we blame for the messy room or broken toys? Is it as a young preschooler when the other kids “made” us hit them? Perhaps it is in high school when laziness is a way of life and excuses are a second language.

When do we learn to stop blaming others? Does it happen instantaneously upon graduation? Do we begin to own up to our mistakes in college? Perhaps it only comes with adulthood, once we reach the grand age of twenty-one. Or is it possible that some of us never learn to take responsibility?

It’s about time that I stop blaming my teachers for my lack of sleep. Then maybe I’ll quit blaming the bad weather for my tardiness to class. I won’t blame the professor for not reminding me of the due date. I’ll even put an end to blaming my roommate for the messy room, especially since I live alone.

It’s time to start owning my mistakes. If I don’t start now, when will I begin? Life is just around the corner, and I won’t always get away with my excuses. Although it’s my favorite sport, I need to stop playing the blame game. What will I say next time I’m late to work or when I conveniently didn’t hear the teacher’s test announcement? Perhaps it’s okay to give a half excuse . . . Unfortunately, I’m just too good at blaming anything but me. And, honestly, I can’t help it. My parents made me this way!

## Little things mean a lot

by Caleb Nelson

Ever felt kind of down? Just tired? Tired of school, homework, and the other numerous stresses of life? Ever wanted just to curl up in a quiet corner and take a long nap? Of course you have.

Proverbs 17:22 says, “A happy heart is good medicine and a joyful mind causes healing, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Have you ever received a beautiful smile from someone that just warmed your heart and brightened your day? Perhaps you even found yourself smiling a bit afterward. Well, science has repeatedly proven the numerous benefits of smiling. Not only is it contagious, cheering up those around you, but it also helps lower stress and anxiety. Smiling also releases happy endorphins. But that’s not all: simply sharing a smile strengthens your immune system as well. As if that’s not enough to make you want to smile, it can also help increase your productivity and even kill pain! Maybe you have a hard time paying attention in class; well, smiling can also help with that! As an added bonus, smiling makes you more attractive and can increase your lifespan!

Next time you’re down, just try smiling. Don’t focus on the things that get you down, instead choose to focus on things that brighten your day, spend time with friends who cheer you up, and smile more! You will not only benefit yourself, but also those around you. A simple smile can brighten someone’s day more than you may ever know. Let’s share the love and joy this school year! Let someone know you appreciate them. Take a minute to stop and listen to someone. Write someone a note or give them a warm, friendly hug. Share an encouraging word or lend a helping hand, and always remember Matthew 25:40, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” You’ll not only bring joy to someone else, but also to yourself, and to God.



Dean Hess and Nathan Collins smile

## Knowing God

by Kyle Koberstine

I am very blessed to be at UCA this year. I have made so many new friends it is unbelievable. The beginning of the year was pretty rough because I am a “homebody” (I like my home and don’t like to leave for too long and get homesick very easily.) but I think that having a rough beginning helped me find God and rely more on Him and less of myself.

Finding a personal relationship with God is something you have to do for yourself. It is one of the biggest things God has taught me. I am a 4th generation Seventh-day Adventist, but it has taken me 17 years to actually start to get to know Him. My parents and grandparents always tell me about how great He is and how I need to have a relationship with Him, and I always thought I was ok. Now I know that there is never a stopping point with God. Every day is a new day and another opportunity to get to know Him closer, better, deeper.

## HOPE sign-ups

by Madison Bartell

Did you know that not every student signs up for HOPE? Crazy, right? You’d think that everyone would sign up because it gives them a choice in what they’ll be doing for around four hours. They could be scrubbing toilets for four hours, working in the café, or playing with puppies!

Some people simply never get around to signing up for HOPE, and there are a few reasons for why that might be. Maybe they prefer to let fate lead them to where they’re meant to be. Maybe they forget to sign up. Maybe they couldn’t figure out how to take the sticker off and place it on the HOPE project they chose. (It is pretty confusing, I know.) For whatever reason, please consider signing up!

HOPE is an extraordinary way to meet new people, experience new things, help those in need, or learn a new skill. HOPE is a way to get away from school, but, more importantly, it’s a way to help other people everywhere.

## Winter comes

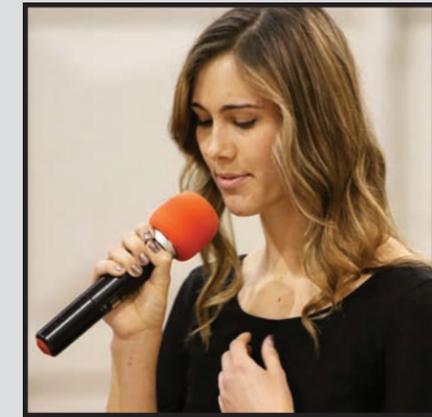
by Adreana Ward

With the carpet of yellow leaves on the grass signifying the end of fall, it was inevitable that the temperatures would start to drop. Winter was coming . . . but already?

Winter brings us to what feels like the hardest part of the school year. It seems we have tests in every class all the time, and with just about everyone being sick, it couldn’t get more stressful. Dorm rooms are cold, you get rained on during your walk to class, and your once white shoes will be white nevermore from all the times you stepped into the inch-deep mud.

Yet winter is sneaky: it comes on quickly and passes by so fleetingly that before we know it, it’s spring and the end of the year is upon us! It’s the time of year to hang on and persevere even when we’ve fallen asleep in every one of our classes. It won’t be long until we’re through and on our way into our next journey.

# Amateur Hour



# Parent Weekend

## One more hour

by Sarah Palacios

Sunday, November 4, 2016, is the day when time is given. Daylight Saving Time officially ended, signifying the coming of darker nights and lighter mornings.

Many people are content with these changes; others, not so much. Here at UCA walking to breakfast or your first class is easier with the help of the sun that is now out sooner. On the other hand, watch your step because in the afternoon going to dinner is quite dangerous in the darkness. Some students like Angelica Woodard say the more intense darkness makes them tired and sleepy. Another student, Belicia Jaio states, "I think it's good that we can be awake and go to class when the sun is awake. But it feels wrong to be out when the sun is gone after class." Students around campus have very similar opinions on this time change. Graciela Smith says, "Well I think it's absolutely fantastic to have an extra hour and to see the sunshine in the morning. The only sad part is how early it gets dark. We will all soon adjust to it I'm sure, but all in all I think it's a good thing."

Bright mornings and dark evenings are just something to get used to, but everyone certainly appreciated that extra hour on Sunday morning.

## Busiest time of the year

by Summer Davis

Upon looking at the phrase "the busiest time of the year," our minds automatically think of Christmas. But is the holiday season actually the busiest time of year for us?

It is the time before holidays and vacations that will likely be the most hectic. The three weeks at UCA before our Thanksgiving break is one of those chaotic times. Stacks of homework were being thrown to students, test after test and quiz after quiz were distributed one after the other. Yet, school work was not the only stressful element during this time. Sickness went around like a plague, helped by the frigid weather. Weak and tired students feebly tried to push through.

Students stressed endlessly about performances during Parent Weekend, including those for Amateur Hour, and to end this overloaded time before Thanksgiving, music students went on tour, getting back just in time for class parties . . . and Sunday School was the next day!

Amidst the chaos of school and work life, let us be thankful for the gift of the Sabbath and the gift of peace that God gives us. Even when Sabbaths seem busy, God somehow blesses those who seek Him with a peace that calms anxiety.

# Elections

by *Danny Nesteruk*

Every class was behind in their curriculum, teachers wasted away most of their class periods, and students watched and listened to the latest news. Although UCA is probably in the most remote location in the United States of America (besides somewhere in Montana), nobody lacked interest in the 2016 Presidential Election.

Some voiced their opinion more than others, some sat in silence . . . or fear. What started as an internet meme on Twitter ballooned into a race for the highest office in our country.

Well, the mess has come to an end. Or has it just begun? Before midnight of election day, the winner was announced. Donald Trump will be the 45th President of the United States of America. Coincidentally, that night, Canada's immigration website crashed.

At this point, there is nothing we can do to change the outcome. We can only rely on our only true foundation, Jesus. God puts rulers in place and takes them down, so worry not for what you will eat or wear, or what will happen tomorrow, for your heavenly Father knows what you need, and He will provide it for you.

# Science friends

by *Kierra Driggs*

A very sad day came when Mrs. Castrejón's classroom lost some very cheerful friends—the birds that so kindly scattered bird seed across the back counter and the floor, that chirped nonstop through Mrs. C's science classes, and scabbed with each other day and night. Classes will never be the same without those cheerful friends scattering birdseed all over and bickering with each other. The room is now silent except for the students talking with each other. Will Mrs. C. bring any new friends to the classroom?

# New Year's resolutions

by *Katrina Santiago*

When it comes to resolutions, most of the people I know find it extremely hard to keep them. There are a few people who are motivated and able to stick to their resolutions, but I never keep mine and honestly think it is because I fall into a routine and like my life the way it is. I also think we are too lazy to keep our resolutions.

Whenever we make resolutions, we get excited and motivated to improve our lives. Before we know it, though, our motivation is gone. We get accustomed to our routines and fall into patterns—bad and good. When we fall into these patterns, we begin to like them and don't want to change. Change would mess up our whole routine. I think this, and laziness, are the primary reasons for not keeping resolutions.

The New Year will be here before we know it, and that means more resolutions. I bet most of us haven't kept any of our New Year's resolutions from last year. This year, we should all put more effort into keeping resolutions. Honestly, if we all kept our resolutions, we could greatly improve our lives. Why should we pass up this chance because we're too lazy?

