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Cedars, December 2016

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CEDARS

The Award-Winning Student News Publication of Cedarville University

December 2016

Campus Christmas

PEACE

Also Inside: Learn how Cedarville students from abroad celebrate Christmas
See also the editors picks for Best Entertainment of 2016

- Cedars



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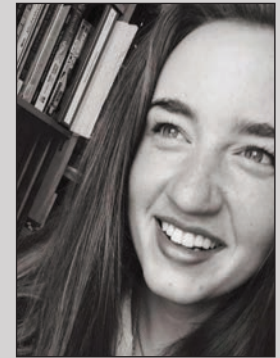
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Cover: Design by Amy Sririntrachai
Photo by Naomi Harward

HOW CAN STUDENTS RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL THIS MONTH?

“Christmas is my absolute favorite time of year! During the Christmas season there is an openness to spiritual things, Christ and the significance of his life. How epic is it to see America stop its business for a day to celebrate an overtly Christian holiday?



For the believer, keeping Christ in Christmas is obvious in a sense, but how is it affecting our lives in the Christmas season? Am I using Christmas as a door to deeper discussion? Am I missing the chance to plant a seed in this fertile ground? Evangelism is the clear implication for keeping Christ in Christmas. Finish the story! Tell the world what happened after Jesus was born — his life, his death, his glorious resurrection!

Make Christmas a season for the gospel!”

Rachel Rowland
Senior Women's Ministry Leader

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)



Resound Studio dedicates new studio

Our media partner Resound Radio got an upgrade this summer with the help of university administration and the department of communication. Dr. Thomas White, Gen. Loren Reno and communication chair Derek Green visited the station to dedicate the updated studio. You can watch Dr. White's prayer for the station online at ReadCedars.com.



Women's basketball team opens season well

Cedars has been tracking Yellow Jacket sports for you with current coverage online at ReadCedars.com. The Women's basketball team opened strong this year with two wins right off the bat. We can't wait to see what happens next and tell you about it.



International Christmas Traditions

International students share their favorite Christmas memories

by Paulo Carrion

With Christmas just around the corner, Cedars took a moment to ask some students about their favorite Christmas traditions.

Cedarville has a diverse student body from different countries and cultures. To celebrate that, Cedars interviewed some students of MuKappa, the international students' organization, to learn a little about how they celebrate Christmas.

Honduras

Carlos Barahona's favorite part of Christmas is illegal. On Christmas Eve in Honduras, everyone dresses up and stays up late to watch the fireworks. "Even though fireworks are illegal in Honduras," said Barahona, a freshman IT management major.

Families will either set off their own fireworks or go to a fireworks show. "Honduras likes to burn things," Barahona joked.

At midnight, Hondurans usually have a big meal before opening their presents, according to Barahona. "But I'm half-American, so we'll go to bed and wake up at noon."

Maury Funez, a freshman computer engineering major who is also from Honduras, will usually spend a week with his family at a rented house in Nicaragua. They have to bring their own fireworks. He especially looks forward to the special meal his family eats once a year on Christmas Eve.

Brazil

The best part of Christmas for Daniel Garcia, a freshman computer engineering major from Brazil, is spending time with family.

"It's usually one of the few times when my dad's side of the family is all together," he said.

His family usually spends Christmas Eve with his dad's side, he said. "We'll divide the time between both sides of the family."

On Christmas, Garcia's family spends time with his mother's side of the family. They'll exchange presents under the Christmas tree then spend the rest of the afternoon together. "It's pretty chill," he said.



Photo Courtesy of MuKappa

Members of the international students org, MuKappa, gather together to share stories from their home countries.

During the rest of the year his family splits the time between both sides, so Garcia enjoys seeing his entire family back-to-back. "I know with Christmas, it's a guarantee that I'll get to spend time with both of them, so that's really nice."

Manipur, India

While Garcia's Christmas is very family-focused, Priscilla Songate celebrates with her extended family — her church family.

"It's not a family thing anymore, it's like a church thing," said Songate, a freshman nursing major from Manipur, India.

For her, the celebration with her extended family also lasts an extended amount of time — two days and three nights.

On the night of Christmas Eve, her family goes to church and worships until midnight before going home. On Christmas day, they have another worship service in the morning at around 10.

Afterward, Songate returns home with her family to grab some food. Then they go

back to church.

While some members of the church cook for the congregation, everyone else enjoys a third Christmas service. Afterward, the church eats together, and everyone goes home to change clothes. Then they return to church for yet a fourth service that goes on until midnight.

"We don't really get enough sleep," Songate said with a laugh.

France

Americans are familiar with hanging stockings on a fireplace to hold small presents. Emma Burgess' family does something similar, except they use wooden shoes, or sabots.

Burgess is a freshman mechanical engineering major from France. Some of her favorite parts of the holiday season are the ice cream and cake logs. These desserts aren't just shaped like logs; people will put little decorative mushrooms and designs to make it look like an actual log.

Papillotes are another French Christmas treat. The small chocolates come in a variety of flavors and Christmas-themed wrapping.

"Everybody gives them to everybody, and they have little inspirational quotes kinda like fortune cookies," Burgess said.

Another tradition Burgess looks forward to are the Christmas markets.

"It's like a whole section of town that's blocked off, and people set up little shacks and sell Christmas items," she said. The shacks sell locally made goods such as food, decorations, candles, jewelry and quilts.

Portugal

Similar to Burgess's experience, Tamar Marques also enjoys visiting the Christmas markets.

"December 1st, that's when we go all out Christmas," said Marques, a freshman Computer Science major from Portugal. "We put on Michael Bubl  — we make little cookies — we decorate it all."

On a specific day in Lisbon, Portugal's

capital, there's a huge Christmas tree her family enjoys visiting.

Throughout the month of December, Marques and her family will occasionally eat dinner with close friends; this is also when they give and receive Christmas gifts from other families. But they don't open the presents until Christmas day.

When they open presents on Christmas day, Marques' family gathers around the Christmas tree and takes turns opening gifts so they can see what everyone got.

Her favorite part is the Sunday before Christmas, because that's when her church has its Christmas service. Often the church will put on a play. Even families who aren't Christian will come out to see it. "It's a really nice environment," Marques said.

St. Lucia, Caribbean

When they were younger, Brittany Ferguson and her siblings tried to wake their parents up early for Christmas. "But they'd get mad," she laughed. "So we typically wake up for Christmas as late as humanly possible."

Ferguson, a freshman linguistics major, has family in St. Lucia but was raised in America.

On Christmas day, her father reads the Christmas story from Matthew, then her family opens presents.

"We tell each other what we want for Christmas," Ferguson said. "It's not a surprise."

Because her extended family is in the Caribbean, her immediate family celebrates Christmas by themselves, but they make sure to Skype with their extended family in St. Lucia.

Ferguson said if she lived in St. Lucia her Christmas experience would be very different.

Christmas in St. Lucia is very family-focused, she said. On Christmas day, after exchanging presents with immediate family, they visit extended family's homes to deliver and receive presents.

"It doesn't matter how distantly related they are to you," Ferguson said. "Let's be real, St. Lucia is a tiny, tiny island; everybody is related one way or another."

Paolo Carrion is a freshman journalism major and campus news writer for Cedars. He enjoys drinking hot chocolate, reading comic books and making animal crackers watch as he devours their family.

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Visiting the Beloved Bard

Cedarville Students travel to Kentucky to see the works of Shakespeare

by Callahan Jones

A group of 30 Cedarville students went on a day trip Nov. 11 to learn more about the beloved Bard, William Shakespeare. The students were led by English professors Peggy Wilfong and Scott Calhoun.

The students went to view the “First Folio,” which is currently housed in the Frazier Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, and learn more about Shakespeare himself.

The First Folio is the earliest known collection of Shakespeare's plays. It was published seven years after his death by a duo of fellow actors who wanted his work to be remembered. Without the First Folio, 18 of Shakespeare's plays would not be known today, including “Antony and Cleopatra,” “As You Like It” and “Macbeth.” The Folio is an excellent example of how important and influential Shakespeare was, even during his own life. Out of the 750 copies that were made, only 235 are still known to exist. Of those copies, many of them exist in one collection, including the copy on display in the Frazier.

Along with the First Folio, there were also several other exhibits featuring the importance of Shakespeare in the past and in the present world we live in.

“Doing nerdy things with fellow nerds is a really great way to kindle our common passion for literature and language,” English major Laura Ullom said in anticipation of the trip. “I do also look forward to being mere inches away from Shakespeare's work. That's gonna be cool.”

Part of Ullom's wish was granted on the way to the museum. However, she said the Folio itself didn't quite hold up to her expectations.

“On the way there, we got to have lots of nice, literary conversation, so I got my wish there, I was very satisfied with that,” Ullom said. “Once we got there, we saw the Folio. That was cool. It was a bit different than I was expecting though, there was the book and some quotes on the wall. ... A few displays. I would have liked a bit more.”



Photo by Laura Ullom

The Frazier Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, houses the earliest known collection of Shakespeare plays, known as The First Folio.

Brandon Best, another student who went on the trip, said he liked the Folio a bit more than Ullom did.

“I really enjoyed seeing the Folio,” he said. “Four hundred years after Shakespeare's death, it's meaningful to see how much English society prized his work back then.”

The Shakespeare exhibit also featured a question-and-answer session about the Bard and the First Folio with some experts, something that both students said they enjoyed.

The Cedarville group's trip included lunch and a tour of the rest of the Frazier Museum.

“I enjoyed the rest of the museum a lot more than I was expecting to,” said Ullom. “We saw different displays for different time periods and talked about them.”

Ullom said her favorite part of the trip as a whole was the community aspect of the experience.

“As a junior, I really enjoyed meeting

some of the freshmen from the department who decided to go on the trip, because I really like having the community aspect of getting to know everybody I'm studying with,” she said.

Best echoed this sentiment, also saying he enjoyed his time with the Cedarville community.

“I always love spending time with the English Department,” he said. “We love to engage each other in meaningful conversations.”

For all the community on the trip, there was also learning. As for Ullom, she said she was surprised with what she learned from the other exhibits in the museum.

“I wanted to learn a lot about Shakespeare but it was such a small exhibit,” she said. “What I really learned most about though was Pearl Harbor.”

She was specifically impacted by letters from family members about and to those who died in the horrific attack from World War II.

Best also said he enjoyed the Pearl Harbor exhibit, but mainly focused on the time he was able to spend in the museum away from campus with people he enjoys.

“I went for the experience mostly. We enjoyed a respite from our rigorous course load and a time to recreate ourselves as a department,” he said. “We were gone from 8 in the morning to 6 at night, so it was a nice break.”

Overall, the trip was an enjoyable time of learning, community, and new experiences and will be a favorite of those who went on it for years to come. Even though the Shakespeare First Folio wasn't the ultimate highlight some expected, it emphasized the importance of the Bard in the world of today and yesterday.

Callahan Jones is a sophomore journalism major and a writer and web designer for Cedars. He enjoys progressive metal, jazz, classical, various other kinds of music, and board games.

Ansen Lancaster: Worship Leader

by Kellyn Post

Ansen Lancaster, a senior worship major and the SGA worship leader, has a passion for music, prayer, encouragement and seeing people grow in the Lord.

He said his interest in music began with listening to Christian radio stations while he was growing up. This allowed him to enjoy music he did not hear much at the small churches he attended. In the sixth grade, he started playing the alto saxophone in band to avoid taking a fine arts class, and music has been an important part of his life ever since.

Lancaster's parents, one a biology teacher and football coach and the other a special education teacher, recognized his interest in music and encouraged him to pursue it, despite it being so different from what they had experience with.

"When I started to show an interest in music, my parents ... recognized I had a passion for that and really pushed that for me, so I could have every opportunity to succeed with music," Lancaster said.

His parents also paid for the various instruments Lancaster plays: drums, saxophone, sousaphone, guitar, bass and piano. He shared that his two favorite music genres are worship music and songs performed by their own writers because he appreciates the genuine emotion both genres can portray.

Lancaster began to play with the SGA band last year as an extra guitar player. This school year his friendship with Parker McGoldrick, a senior biblical studies major and the SGA chaplain, gave him the opportunity to take on the role of SGA worship leader.

McGoldrick and Lancaster met in the music lounge at the beginning of their freshman year. Because of their friendship and experience serving together in SGA previously, McGoldrick said it seemed natural that they should serve together on SGA.

"When I was thinking of running for SGA chaplain, [Lancaster] was a large part of my decision because if he wouldn't have done it, it would have been hard. We've worked together for three years, and we're

such great friends, and we think the same way, and we know what to expect in the same way," McGoldrick said.

Through SGA, Lancaster has used his heart for music to serve others by encouraging them to give glory to God.

"When we're leading worship in chapel, and I look out, and I can see people who are truly engaging with the Lord, and who are just having an encounter with God in that room — that is my all-time favorite part of SGA," Lancaster said.

Lancaster also enjoys the opportunity to encourage people who are outside of his normal sphere of influence.

"It spreads beyond SGA — I think that's part of why I love being a worship leader so much. Watching people fulfill the purpose for which they were created is one of the most fulfilling things that I have experienced in my life," he said.

Christian Frey, a senior broadcasting and digital media major, met Lancaster early in his freshman year through a concert at the involvement fair. Frey said Lancaster has a heart for encouraging others and for prayer.

"[Lancaster] is very good at affirming people with his words, and he'll do it in a very timely manner," Frey said. "Right after you play a show, or you do well on an exam, or something like that, he's very quick to — right after it happens — affirm you."

Frey also explained that Lancaster prays in group settings with a genuineness and honesty that impacts listeners.

"He's very gifted in the way that he's able to talk to God in front of people, and just the way that he's able to even encourage people through his prayers, whether he's praying directly for you or just praying for something you're a part of," Frey said.

In addition, McGoldrick emphasized Lancaster's sensitivity to others.

"He's good at sensing what's going on, and so whenever anybody is hurting, or uncomfortable, he's the first to go there and show them compassion and make sure that they're comfortable, or help them in their pain," McGoldrick said.

While serving in a leadership position



Photo by Naomi Harward

Lancaster said he has been encouraged by watching God work in the lives of his friends.

in SGA, Lancaster has also been challenged to look beyond his own personal goals and to help set the tone for the next generation of Cedarville students.

"Being a part of SGA really has given me a bigger vision for the school as a whole. The breadth of it is just something you can't really see when you're down close, just kind of focused in your own little part of Cedarville," he said.

Lancaster also expressed a hope to leave Cedarville better than he found it, so the incoming students will be equipped to step up and continue the vision of the school.

"This 2016-2017 SGA is trying to set the pace for the next four years of students who

are coming through Cedarville — really influencing the freshmen who are here now, so that by the time they're seniors, they will then do it again for the incoming freshmen," Lancaster said.

When Lancaster graduates in May, he said he will take his leadership experience from SGA with him and look for work as a worship pastor at a church, where he will continue leading worship and setting an example for others through his heart for ministry and service.

Kellyn Post is a sophomore English major and an Arts and Entertainment writer for Cedars. She is happiest when drinking tea, listening to music and reading old books.

Editors' Choice: The Best Entertainment of 2016



Josh Burris - 'Hacksaw Ridge'

I don't think I've ever recommended a movie more than this gem directed by Mel Gibson. "Hacksaw Ridge" is a film based on the true story of Desmond Doss. Doss (played by Andrew Garfield) was a conscientious objector who joined the US Army during World War II. Because of his beliefs, Doss refused to touch any weapon. Instead, he chose to join as a medic. He said he figured he would be saving people instead of killing them.

Doss was not accepted by his fellow soldiers at first. He was often teased, ridiculed, and even beaten by other U.S. soldiers. Despite all of this, Doss stayed true to what he believed and later earned respect from everybody he came in contact with. As a medic, Doss saved lots of people during the battle at "Hacksaw Ridge" and became the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

"Hacksaw Ridge" is a must watch for everyone. The movie gives viewers a new perspective on the sacrifices that were made for the freedom in the United States today. It also is an encouragement for Christians who may be struggling with perseverance in their walk with God. Doss stayed true to his beliefs and it paid off.

Viewers can also appreciate the fact that there are no sex-scenes and not as much language as most military movies. The movie earns its R rating for all the graphic and violent content in the film. Anyone who has seen Gibson's films knows he tries to depict what may have happened as perfectly as possible (eg: Passion of the Christ).

Amy Radwanski - Bethel Music and Hillsong Young and Free

Bethel Music released "Have it All (live)" and Hillsong Young and Free released "Youth Revival (live)" this year, catering to different audiences and worship styles.

"Have it All (live)" was recorded during worship services at Bethel Church, based out of California. This is their first service live recorded album since "For the Sake of the World" in 2012. The title track off the album, "Have it All" is incorporated with popular worship songs including "Be Enthroned" with Jeremy Riddle and "The Lion and the Lamb" as performed by Leeland Mooring. Bethel Music said the album is meant to encourage unhindered worship.

"Youth Revival (live)" is Hillsong Young and Free's second album, with songs including "Where You Are" and "Real Love." The album also has a live version of one of their more popular dance songs, "This is Living." In the United States, "Youth Revival (live)" peaked at 45 on the Billboard top 100 and then No. 2 on the Billboard Christian charts this year.



Jen Taggart - 'Life Screams'

After a few years off from Flyleaf, Lacey Sturm is back in the music business. Her solo album "Life Screams" is sure to bring memories of her hard rock sound from the late 2000s. Two of the most creative songs on Sturm's new album are "Vanity" and "Rot." "Vanity" is a conversation between Sturm and an evil entity, voiced by the rapper Propaganda. "Rot" is a heavy-hitting rock track based on the testimony of Annie Lobart, a victim of sex trafficking. The two songs are meant to be listened to together, as the of the song "Vanity" is found on the "Rot" track. "You're Not Alone" is a track with a strong message about God's promises in dark times. "Faith" and "Run to You" are beautiful ballads about what godly love truly looks like. Sturm's musical comeback has godly wisdom wrapped in passionate rock music that is well-worth a listen.



Naomi Harward - 'Hamilton'

I'm not going to lie. I was pretty impressed with Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical, "Hamilton." It's definitely not the most historically accurate depiction of Alexander Hamilton, by any means. But props to Miranda for creativity.

First off, the music is well-written. This musical combines hip-hop, classical and jazz with other musical styles in an entertaining way. It also incorporates certain musical aspects that are typical of hip-hop into the story itself – like the competition between Jefferson and Hamilton being depicted in a freestyle battle – which I really enjoyed.

I also like the way Miranda took historical characters that many of us know only as names in a textbook and breathed new life into them. It's interesting to see and hear Miranda's personal interpretation of each one – especially Thomas Jefferson. His "jazzy" number and purple suit are pretty out there. On top of that, I think Miranda also really reached out in the way he built the cast, depicting the story with black, latino, and female actors and actresses who historically would not have been in those roles.

Now, technically "Hamilton" was released last year. But I actually didn't hear about it until this year. And the musical also made significant waves this year when it was nominated for a record-breaking 16 awards at the 70th Annual Tony Awards, walking away with an outstanding 11 of them. It was only one short of the record 12 set and held by The Producers (2001).

It received awards for Best Musical, Best Direction of a Musical, Best Leading Actor in a Musical (Leslie Odom, Jr., Aaron Burr), Best Featured Actress in a Musical (Reneé Elise Goldsberry, Angelica Schuyler Church), and Best Featured Actor in a Musical (Daveed Diggs, Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson).

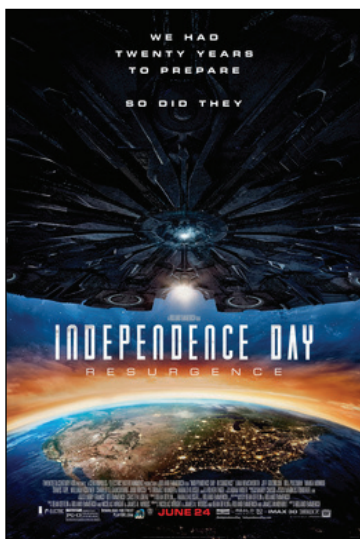
Rebekah Erway - 'The Crown'

"The Crown," a Netflix series released this November, is one of the best television dramas of the year. In the show, Claire Foy plays the young Queen Elizabeth II as she takes a throne that is affected by the lingering struggles of WW2 and the new desire for modernity and change. The series, based on true events, is not a documentary but a dramatic replay of a life. While the show does not match all historical events completely, the script as a whole clings to history. The audience may feel the tragic pain of reality after the final fact credits in certain episodes and the results of fact-googling. The show itself, being a drama, does not have an action-driven plot and may be considered boring to some viewers, but the actions of the actors (including Matt Smith and John Lithgow) are so subtly believable that they carry the audience from scene to scene with suspense. The historical drama has already earned a 95% rating by Google users and a 9.1/10 rating on IMDb.



Keegan D'Alfonso - 'Independence Day: Resurgence'

While a number of great movies have hit the box office in 2016, I have always been a fan of a good old-fashioned alien movie. "Independence Day: Resurgence" did not receive a glowing review by, well anyone. IMDb gave the most positive score at 5.3/10. But I felt it was exactly what I was looking for in an alien invasion movie. I loved the original "Independence Day" (1996), and "Independence Day: Resurgence" was true to form to the original. The movie was not afraid to spoof itself, even going as far as having Jake Morrison, played by Liam Hemsworth, punch an alien in the face; an iconic call back to when Will Smith "welcomes" an alien to Earth in the original movie. Quirky humor is found throughout the movie with often questionable reasoning behind the characters' actions. The characters are shallow and the storyline is far from innovative, but this is part of the charm for "Independence Day: Resurgence." If I'm going to a movie with aliens invading Earth, believability and story depth are not what I'm looking for. I want to see epic skirmishes, the lingering sense of defeat and super cool technology followed by a remarkable comeback where humans defeat the aliens and the Earth is saved. "Independence Day: Resurgence" delivered all of this in spades. "Independence Day: Resurgence" is tops in its class as a corny and action-filled, alien-mashing powerhouse.



Transfers Transition Well

Morlan and Bennett fill key positions on men's basketball team



Photo by Allyson Weislogel

Dazhonetae Bennett drives past a Truman State defender in the Jackets' season opener.

by Tyler Greenwood

We're all familiar with the transitions in life. The transition from high school to college is no different.

Freshmen have to adjust to a new place, a new schedule and, for athletes, a new level of competition. While Jonathan Thomas makes these adjustments as a freshman, Dazhonetae Bennett and Joey Morlan have to make many of the same adjustments, and more, as transfers on the men's basketball team.

For Bennett, transferring to Cedarville means coming back to the area where his basketball career began. He was born and raised in Dayton and graduated as the all-time leading scorer in nearby Trotwood-Madison High School's storied basketball history. He spent his freshman year of college at Missouri State University West Plains and his sophomore year at Indian Hills Community College, one of the top junior college programs in the country before transferring back home to Cedarville.

"I had the chance to go play Division I basketball, but I thought that Cedarville was the best place for me to go," Bennett said. "Being a Christian school, it offered me a chance to do what I was meant to do:

follow the Lord and play ball at the same time. I couldn't ask for anything better."

Morlan played four years of varsity basketball for Blackhawk Christian High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He graduated as the all-time leading three-point shooter in school history and was the third all-time leading scorer as a member of the 1,000-point club. During his senior year, Cedarville tried to recruit Morlan but he committed to Florida Southern College, the 2015 NCAA Division II national champions, instead. After a coaching change before his freshman season, however, Florida Southern turned out to not be a good fit for Morlan, so he transferred to Cedarville.

"I wanted to get back to an atmosphere that was centered around Christ and discipleship," Morlan said. "This was by far my favorite visit coming out of high school so the decision to transfer was really an easy one."

The current roster of Yellow Jackets has helped make the transition from one program to another a smooth one. Morlan had the opportunity to go to Italy with the team this summer on a missions trip.

"Having the opportunity to be with the guys 24 hours a day for 11 days in a foreign country was huge for me," Morlan explained. "Chemistry off the floor plays a big

role in how the team plays on the floor so it was a big deal to spend that much time with them as a new guy. While playing there I had the chance to feel out how they play and they had the chance to feel out how I play and we clicked pretty quickly. The trip brought the whole team together as a unit."

Bennett missed out on the trip to Italy, so he wasted no time getting with his new teammates once school started in August.

"The guys have made the transition really smooth," Bennett said. "They've allowed me to be myself and play the way I play. Getting the chemistry is the hardest part of transferring, but the guys are making that part easy, too."

So far this season, both Bennett and Morlan have played critical roles in the Yellow Jackets lineup. Bennett has started every game thus far as a slashing guard and Morlan has come off the bench and contributed significant minutes in each outing. Although they have different styles of play, both contribute something to the Yellow Jackets offense that would be lacking otherwise.

Bennett uses his quickness and athleticism to slash through the lane with the ball, creating shots for himself and his teammates. The Yellow Jackets have lacked a pure slasher in the past, so Bennett's fulfillment of that role has freed up others to play more of their true positions. His strength and leaping ability also make him an excellent rebounding guard.

Morlan, a self-described "pure shooter," currently leads the team in three-pointers made this season. Playing as a forward, his outside-shooting prowess stretches the defense and opens up the lane.

Both Bennett and Morlan said they are looking forward to finishing their careers at Cedarville and are hoping that they can help turn around what has been a frustrating past few seasons for the Yellow Jackets.

"I've seen a lot of encouraging things that point to us having a really good year," Morlan said. "We played well together in Italy and our seniors are doing a really good job of challenging us to continue get-

ting better every day. If we continue to do that then we absolutely have a chance to be the best team in the league."

If the Yellow Jackets win the GMAC tournament this season, they will also win the automatic berth to the NCAA Division II national tournament that comes with it. The men's basketball team has never advanced to the national tournament before, something that Bennett wants to change.

"I've always been a part of winning programs," he said. "I don't really like losing, so my goal is to help the team win and get to the national tournament."

With two years of eligibility remaining for Bennett and three for Morlan, the Yellow Jackets will look to these two transfers to help fill the cavity that will open at the end of this season, when three Yellow Jacket starters graduate. No doubt Bennett and Morlan will play key roles in the team's success for the remainder of this season and in those to come.

Tyler Greenwood is a senior mechanical engineering and a sports reporter for Cedars.



Joey Morlan

Position: Forward
Height: 6-5
Weight: 205
Class: Sophomore
Hometown: Fort Wayne, IN
Major: Sport Management



Dazhonetae Bennett

Position: Guard
Height: 6-3
Weight: 185
Class: Junior
Hometown: Trotwood, OH
Major: Communications

Higher Standards Draw Bennett

Bennett transferred to Cedarville because it required more from its athletes



Photos by Christian Cortes

Baylee Bennett brings the ball up against her former team Cincinnati Christian in Cedarville's home opener. Bennett has become a starting guard.

by Joshua Woolverton

The Cedarville women's basketball team added a new face to the starting lineup this season. Sophomore transfer student Baylee Bennett joined the team this season and became the starting point guard after Abby Wolford went down with an injury.

"When we heard that she'd be interested in transferring, we were really excited about bringing her onto our squad," said Kari Hoffman, Cedarville's women's basketball coach.

Bennett played basketball at Cincinnati Christian University last year, but she was looking for a school that provided her something a little different. She wanted to go to a school that ran smoother and required more from their athletes and students. Cedarville provided her a place close

to home that met her desires.

"There were several factors that played into my transfer, but mostly just school and basketball and the way this school is run," Bennett said. "You're definitely held to a higher standard here which I really love."

Bennett grew up in Springfield, which allowed Hoffman to watch Bennett play basketball for years at Kenton Ridge High School. She was also able to see Bennett play at Cincinnati Christian through team scrimmages. Bennett's skill and offensive ability is what really stuck out to Hoffman.

"She has a nice jumper, ability to finish over taller players and is deadly from the 3-point line," Hoffman said. "If you have those three levels of offensive skill you're hard to stop."

The transition between schools

has gone fairly well for Bennett this year. She was able to attend a basketball summer camp at Cedarville which allowed her to meet her new teammates before the year began. She made an instant connection with the team which has helped her to adjust to a new school and life.

"My teammates were definitely a big part of making it comfortable for me here," Bennett said.

Despite being new to the team and school, Bennett has stepped into a leadership role on the team both on and off the court. She's invited the team over to her house and has made an effort to integrate herself into the team.

"She was an instant fit with the team, and we are thankful to have her with us," Hoffman said.

Bennett is only 5 feet, 5 inches tall, but she does not let that keep her from performing on the court. Bennett puts in work in practice to make up for her lack of height. She is regularly practicing to help her team improve.

"She's put in the extra time and is always working on her game," Hoffman said. "She is highly motivated and is able to compete with anybody."

Bennett emphasized that her motivation for playing basketball comes from God. She is excited for the opportunity to play and credits her abilities to God.

"I am thankful that I am here and able to play basketball, it's just a huge blessing



"My teammates were definitely a big part of making it comfortable for me here."

Baylee Bennett

Sophomore, CU varsity basketball

for me," Bennett said. "I want to show the grace of God through me and my play here at Cedarville."

Josh Woolverton is a sophomore journalism major and sports reporter for Cedars. He hopes to get involved in sports reporting and analysis after graduation and enjoys watching sports, running, and spending time with friends.

Baylee Bennett

Position: Guard

Hometown: Springfield, Oh.

Class: Sophomore

Major: Multiage Health and Physical Education



Enjoying the Great Indoors

Cedars offers six ideas of how to have fun and stay warm in cold weather



Photo provided by Scene75

Scene75 features a large arcade with over 130 games, a Go-Kart race track, Laser Tag, and a number of other activities. Guests can visit the Snack Zone to recharge after a long day of fun.

by *Alexandria Henstchel*

Ah, winter — a beautiful time of year, with so much to look forward to: Christmas cheer, winter break, and time with family. However, after all the fun is over and it is still bitterly cold in February, it's often hard to find something to do indoors.

As the temperature outside drops, Cedarville students are going to have to find creative ways to spend those long weekends. To prevent mid-winter boredom, Cedars has found six locations within driving distance that are low-cost and unique.

Most of these locations are designed for a group of friends to get together and spend a Saturday. Instead of scrolling through

Facebook or doing yet another puzzle trapped in your dorm, try one of these fun indoor activities this winter.

Breakout Dayton

If you like to solve mysteries in your spare time, or often find yourself glued to shows like BBC's "Sherlock," Breakout is a perfect day-off activity for you and a group of friends. Located just a half an hour away in Dayton, Breakout is a thrilling escape game. Your group is sealed in a room, and your task is to break out using only the clues in your environment. The catch? You only have an hour to solve the mystery before time runs out. Don't worry, though — there are people monitoring your game who will feed you clues if you get stuck. There are

several themes to choose from, including a kidnapping, a heist, an island, and for the holidays, The Christmas Caper — a seasonal quest for Santa's hat. If you have fewer than eight people, your group will be paired with another group. A reservation is necessary, so call ahead. The cost is \$24 a person, but make sure to check out Groupon before you go: It sometimes has discount offers.

Dayton Art Institute

If you're looking to engage your inner art critic, there's a world-class art museum located a short 30-minute drive away. The Dayton Art Institute is a fine arts museum with a collection spanning about 5,000 years of art history. Highlights include outdoor sculpture, glasswork, and artwork from al-

most every continent, including Ancient Grecian sculpture and Monet's classic Water Lilies. In addition to its impressive collection, the museum has special exhibitions, classes, and events. Some examples of community events include jazz concerts and Yoga at the Museum. Current exhibits run through the end of January. Ravaged Sublime, an exhibit comprised of photographic landscapes from the 21st century, runs through January 8. It includes infrared pictures and other unique twists on traditional landscape photography. Water In Japanese Art is an exhibit of masterworks from Japan that highlight the importance of water in Japanese culture. It runs through January 29. The Institute also frequently offers lectures by experts and collectors on diverse topics — check out their

website to see what's upcoming. Admission is free for students.

Scene75

If you're nostalgic about your childhood, Scene75 is the perfect day-off activity for you and a group of friends. Scene75 Dayton is the United States' largest indoor entertainment center, and far beyond what you ever could have imagined as a kid. The attractions include electric go-karts, two-story laser tag, hundreds of arcade games, virtual reality headsets, sand volleyball, black-light mini golf, bowling, bumper cars, a 4-D theater and the largest inflatable bounce arena in Ohio. If you're hungry after all that exercise, they have a full restaurant inside. There is no cost for admission. Instead, guests load a game card with however much they want. Activities range from 25 cents to \$8.50 a person, and you can spend at your discretion by reloading your card. There is also a Scene75 location in Cincinnati, but the bounce arena is only for ages 12 and under in Cincinnati while it is for all ages in the Dayton location. If you're planning a trip, be aware that the center is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

National Museum of the United States Air Force

If you're looking to check out some of our nation's military history, the National Museum of the United States Air Force is a top-rated museum. Located at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, it's the oldest military aviation museum in the world. This is fitting, as Ohio is named the "birthplace of aviation" after the Wright Brothers, who lived in Dayton. It houses over 360 aircraft and exhibits from almost every era in wartime aviation, including World War II and the Cold War. If you are interested in Holocaust studies, they have a moving exhibit called Prejudice & Memory comprised of the artifacts and photographs of people in the Dayton area. They also have a large theater where they show historical films in 3D. If you're looking for something more interactive, the museum has simulators which offer virtual reality, 360-degree experiences. One simulator mimics the path of an Air Force craft to the International



Photo provided by Eat Purr Love Cat Cafe

Guests get to play with cats up for adoption while enjoying a cup of coffee and snacks in a relaxing cafe-style environment.

al Space Station. Another called "Wings: Flights of Courage" puts riders in the cockpits of famous planes from the Wright Brothers' aircraft to modern-day jets. The museum is about a half an hour away in Dayton, and admission is free.

Eat Purr Love Cat Cafe

Every college student knows the hardest thing about leaving home is leaving our pets. At Eat Purr Love you can get a much-needed cuddle from a feline friend while enjoying coffee and baked goods. Eat Purr Love hosts cats from The Capital Area Humane Society. Their mission is to connect homeless cats with people willing to adopt. Last year, the Capital Area Humane Society placed over 2,000 cats in loving homes, many of whom were rescue animals. The cafe is a new business hoping to contribute to that number. You don't have to adopt a cat to visit the cafe, and can just go to play with them. The cafe recommends that you book an appointment in advance through their website to ensure that you will

be able to attend. They don't want to overcrowd the cafe for the sake of the cats. It is located in Columbus and costs \$10 per hour, a portion of which goes to help The Capital Area Humane Society. However, they run specials and discounts on weekdays. On Tuesdays, admission is \$10 for two guests rather than one. On Wednesdays it costs \$10 for two hours rather than one with the cats. On Thursdays you receive a complimentary beverage and baked good with the admission price. You should also ask about discounts for college students when you make a reservation. The cost is well worth it to meet some new furry friends.

Splash Cincinnati

The bitter Ohio cold can have you nostalgic for those days in a swimsuit by the pool. Luckily, there's a solution to the winter blues. Grab your friends and head to the only waterpark open in the winter. Splash Cincinnati is a 55,000-square foot indoor waterpark in the city. The park has pools, lazy rivers, slides, an arcade, and real palm

trees. A highlight ride is White Water Falls, a 300-foot long tube slide that goes both indoors and outdoors. If you're looking for something a little more relaxing, they have a giant indoor hot tub. They also have an indoor arcade to check out while you dry off. The arcade is also a fun place to host a birthday party. It's open most weekends — check the website's calendar before you go. A day pass is \$20, and there's a discount rate for 15 or more guests. There's no need to wait for summer to arrive — break out your swimsuit in the dead of winter. (Make sure you wear a coat over top, of course.)

With these six locations on your radar, you have no excuse for sitting around inside during the cold months. Solve a mystery, pet some kittens, look at some art, or check out some waterslides — whatever you decide, make sure to stay warm.

Alexandria Hentschel is a freshman International Studies major and an off-campus news writer for Cedars. She enjoys old books, strong coffee, and honest debate.

Serving Those with Addiction

by Naomi Harward

Her husband was waiting for her when she came home.

He went upstairs to run a warm bath for her and help her get cleaned up. When he came back downstairs, he found his wife talking to her children in the kitchen, convincing them to give her the money in their piggy banks.

She told them that “Mommy needed the money to feel better.”

She was a heroin addict, suffering from dope sickness and desperate for another dose. And she was one of hundreds that live practically next door, and that are calling for help.

A true story courtesy of Pastor Greg Delaney, Freedom Church, Xenia, Ohio

It's Getting Worse

Ohio's Clark County is the seventh highest county in drug-related deaths statewide, recording 55 heroin overdose deaths last year. Its county seat, Springfield, is only a 10-minute drive from a quaint little college town known as Cedarville.

Amelia Walker, a senior student at Cedarville University, is from Springfield. Through her church's involvement, she learned a lot about the growing heroin epidemic and its prevalence even in her area.

Though Cedarville itself suffers no adverse effects from the epidemic, 34 overdose deaths were recorded last year in Greene County as a whole. Neighboring Clark County is quoted as a “hot seat” for drug activity.

“[Springfield's] right around the corner from Cedarville,” she said. “This isn't just a big-city problem.”

One phrase often used to describe Ohio's heroin epidemic is that “it's out of hand.” The common misconception that heroin is only prevalent in certain communities is quickly being overturned as deaths related to accidental overdose continue to hurtle skyward in areas just outside the limits of Cedarville.

“It is everywhere,” said Grant Edwards, senior pastor of Fellowship Christian church

in Springfield. He said his church has seen an abundance of addicts from all walks of life in his community and walking through his doors. “Everybody's dabbling,” he said.

The epidemic started in Ohio in 1996, said Pastor Greg Delaney of Freedom Church in Xenia, which is dedicated to ministering to those struggling with substance abuse and addiction. It started when doctors started prescribing opioids for pain management. At the same time, black-tar heroin was being brought into Columbus through immigration from Mexico.

It was the combination for “the perfect storm,” Delaney said.

Once viewed as a “street drug” that even the most “hard-core” drug users were skeptical about using, heroin spread like a deadly weed as more patients began to develop a reliance on the addictive opioids many doctors were over-prescribing. When their prescriptions ran out, or their doctors took them off the pills, they found themselves seeking cheaper alternatives.

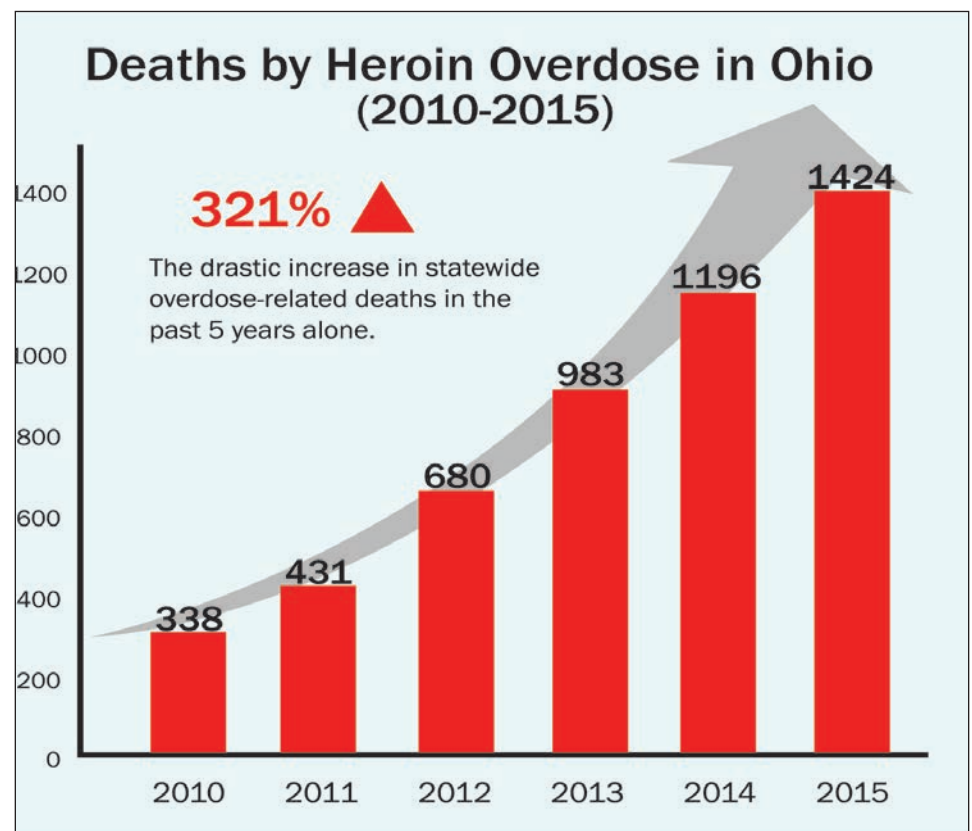
Not only that, but heroin's first-time high is “highly addictive,” said Linda Mortenson of Safe Harbor House, a women's halfway home for recovering substance-abuse addicts. “Once they do it, they love it, and there's no going back.”

The Killer ‘Blue Drop’

The introduction of the synthetic opioid fentanyl is taking the already out-of-hand epidemic to new heights. Reportedly 20-30 times more potent than heroin, fentanyl is cheaper for drug dealers to obtain than pure heroin, and when laced with heroin gives users an even better high.

It's called “Blue Drop” heroin, and it's killing unsuspecting addicts across the state. Dealers lie to their clients about how much fentanyl is “cut” into the dose, if they tell them it's in there at all, said Lynn Oliver, manager of Substance Use Disorder Division at TCN Behavioral Health Services in Xenia.

“We've arrested people getting ready to shoot up with pure fentanyl,” said Clark County Prosecutor Daniel Carey. “They



Graphics by Amy Sririntrachai and Naomi Harward

would have died.”

The Ohio Health Department reported a total of 1,424 deaths last year caused by accidental heroin overdose, a little less than 50 percent of all Ohio resident deaths in 2015. Over 1,150 of those deaths were also fentanyl-related. “Blue Drop” has been a major player in the 321 percent increase of deaths by heroin overdose in the past five years alone.

“It's causing overdoses in such a way that I've never seen before,” Oliver said. “It's a whole different universe.”

And “it's only getting worse,” says Delaney, Mortenson, Carey, Oliver and many others.

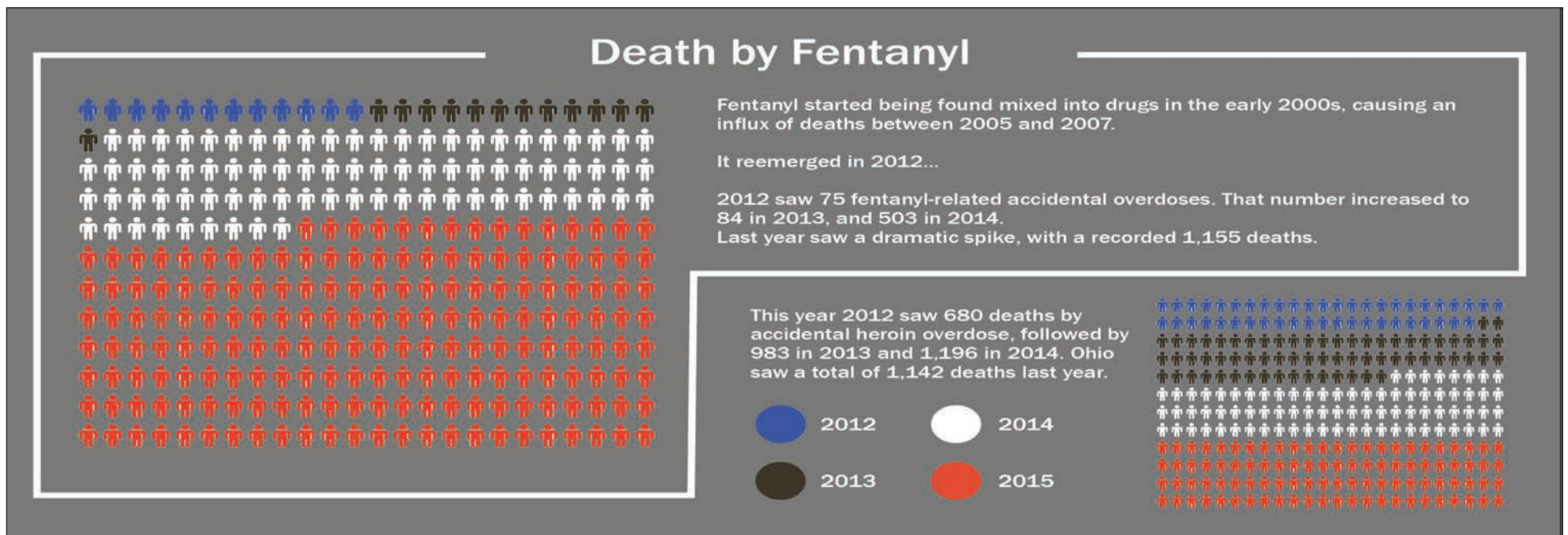
The Student's Part

Every year, students at CU are encouraged through Global Outreach to get involved in a local ministry. As this epidemic continues to grow wildly out of control, more and more leaders in fighting the epidemic are realizing

the potential of the church to play a powerful role in making an impact. They are encouraging more members of the church, and more young people, to step out and be the light that comes alongside these struggling addicts and helps guide them toward recovery.

Walker encourages students to get involved in programs like Safe Harbor House and McKinley Hall in Springfield, men's and women's homeless shelters, and Alcoholics Anonymous. These programs offer support and counseling for those struggling with different kinds of substance use, Safe Harbor being well-known for its faith-based focus on rehabilitation. They welcome volunteers, and many like Safe Harbor House and McKinley Hall are especially open to the help of students from nearby schools.

Beth Delaney, wife of Pastor Delaney and assistant professor of Nursing at CU, adds the importance of being actively involved in a local church and encourages



Graphics by Amy Sririntrachai and Naomi Harward

churches to reach out.

“Reach out to programs like Celebrate Recovery, poverty simulators, established shelters. Invite a speaker in to educate both you and your church,” she said.

Connection Before Correction

Ohio’s Attorney General Mike DeWine, who lives in Cedarville, and Gov. John Kasich began to discuss ways to combine law enforcement with faith-based involvement when the heroin epidemic began to gain traction, sometime between 2013 and 2014. They were beginning to realize that “without faith, we can’t fix this.” DeWine approached Delaney about reaching out to users through the church.

Delaney has been working with DeWine for the past year and a half to better understand the problem; and therefore, better equip churches with the education and tools they need to most effectively minister to those addicts in their communities and those that walk through their doors.

“Getting the church engaged” is key, both Delaney and his wife said. They encourage churches to open themselves up as a “safe house” for users, a place where users can walk in and feel welcomed into a real community.

“We need to meet these folks where they are,” Delaney said. “We need to com-

Bringing the addict into the church and making them feel like a part of a community is at the core of recovery.

pare the relationship with the drug to the relationship with Christ, by being understanding, by coming alongside them and being relational.”

In other words, he said, the church needs to focus on being a model for addicts to follow. “Recovery is caught more than it’s taught.”

Heroin is a disease of isolation, he said. It doesn’t thrive in a community setting, which makes bringing the addict into the church and making them feel like a part of a community is at the core of recovery. Opening the church equals tearing down the walls between the church and the addict.

Delaney cited the New Testament story of the woman caught in adultery that was about to be stoned and Jesus’ intercession

(John 8), as an example for how the church should be engaging those struggling with heroin – or any other – addiction. By stepping in and pointing out the others’ hypocrisy, “Jesus gave [the woman] the context to move forward,” he said.

“Ninety-two out of 100 addicts will fail,” he said. “And the church needs to understand that and not be quick to judge or give up.”

Delaney said it has taken a while for the church to realize its potential as a part of fighting this epidemic. As he sees more stepping up to the plate, he said he sees things “flattening” out in terms of how bad the epidemic is getting.

“I view [the addicts] as someone desperate for a safe, authentic, transparent community,” he said. And that is what the church has a potential of offering them.

The body of Christ becomes the hope that users are searching for, once it steps out and reaches out.

More Than Equipped

What many involved in treating or ministering to addicts said they have discovered is that a key to fighting this epidemic is establishing relationships. It is even more important to establish a relationship between the user and the church.

Church leaders are not the only ones

recognizing the importance of having that relational aspect. Prosecutor Carey is an advocate for establishing a specialized drug court in Clark County due to the more personal and relational methods used in working with addicts to reintegrate them into society as functioning citizens.

“We have found that [the offenders] really look forward to telling the judge where they are struggling, where they messed up, where they’ve improved, that kind of thing,” he said.

Mortenson at Safe Harbor agrees that faith-based programs are what will have a lasting effect on the epidemic in the long term.

Oliver at TCN said that their center focuses on interactive treatment because they recognize the need for recovering addicts to have someone to walk with them who understands what they are going through. Someone who has sympathy for them, but can also show them why they need to push through to recovery.

Because of the importance of that relational aspect, Pastor Delaney said that this generation is “more than equipped” to meet that need.

Naomi Harward is a senior journalism major and the photography editor for Cedars. She is an avid photographer, and she loves horses and writing flash fiction.

Cedarville Faces Trouble Renovating Police Station



Photo by Keegan D'Alfonso

The American Legion building the village purchased is currently accessed through the white, lean-to section. The current renovation plans would make the side door (left) the main entrance.

by Keegan D'Alfonso

The Village of Cedarville is facing unforeseen difficulties in renovating the old American Legion building for police use. The building sits next to the village park, down the street from the fire station. The Village has been trying to find better facilities for the police department for years, and is now trying to find a solution to FEMA restrictions.

The village purchased the building in November of 2015 to serve as the new police station, but per Village Council minutes, it was discovered in March that the building rests on a flood plain. A survey completed by Luis G. Riancho & Assoc., Inc. in September determined the floor of the structure rests 1.5 feet below the flood plain projected in the event of a 100-year flood.

Council member David Brooks said FEMA guidelines

require emergency service buildings, such as a police station, to meet more stringent requirements than other buildings, which include sitting above flood levels. The council is hoping FEMA will allow for zoning variances that will let the project move forward. If not, the village will have to pursue other solutions.

"[It was] very frustrating for everyone involved in the council," Brooks said. "They were very disappointed. They had what they thought was just an excellent solution and ran into this."

Brooks joined the council in January after the old American Legion post was purchased. He was unsure if an inspection had been done before the purchase that would have revealed the flood issues. Mayor Robert Fudge, said he could not remember if any inspections had been done, but he agreed with the council minutes that the building's location being in a flood zone was not discovered until after

the purchase.

Fudge said the village bought the old American Legion post because the current police station, located in the back of the opera house, does not meet the department's needs.

"The current facility doesn't give us much room for expansion, so there are limitations with our facility as well as it's in poor condition," Fudge said. "The American Legion building gives us the opportunity to have our own building and provide more space, more updated space, for our police department."

The current location also lacks covered parking for the police cruisers, and the cruisers must park on the street. Both Brooks and Fudge said it would be ideal to have a better parking situation, preferably covered, for the cruisers.

Initially, the council saw no downside to purchasing the American Legion building. Fudge said the American Legion Post did not have enough members paying dues to

OFF-CAMPUS

afford taxes on the building and offered to sell the building to the village for \$37,000; well below the appraised value of \$75,000.

This included the approximate 1.59-acre tract of land the building rests on, according to the LJB survey conducted in October of 2015. Fudge said the land provides continuity with the village-owned park and provides room for the building of additional structures, such as, an overhang or garage for the police cruisers. The building provides more than double the space of the current police station.

“From what I can see, since coming on and looking into it a little bit, it was a good opportunity,” Brooks said. “Maybe more information could have been gathered. I can’t say for sure.”

Brooks said the village is seeking a variance from the FEMA guidelines to avoid restrictive zoning codes that would require lifting the structure above flood levels. Brooks said he thinks the FEMA regulation is overly restrictive for small towns.

“I don’t think they were thinking clearly about small towns in rural areas where even if there were an emergency and we had trouble at the police station we would still have the capacity to respond,” Brooks said. “That would not doom our town to disaster because our very small police station had three inches of water in it.”

Fudge said the village attorney, Steve Bogenschutz, and Zoning Administrator Harold Stancliff are working to determine what the village can legally do.

“We have FEMA limitations, we think there might be county limitations, and ultimately though, some of the decision is made internally because we have our own zoning,” Fudge said. “I would assume we would have a decision, one way or the other, probably early next year. February or March sometime, maybe sooner, but at the pace of government that’s realistic.”

If the village can proceed with converting the American Legion building into a police station without lifting the structure, Fudge said the estimated renovation cost was in the \$100,000 range. This estimate was provided by Walker Mitchell, a consultant with Brentwood Building, Inc., who has agreed to do pro-bono work supervising the project for the village when a decision is made to proceed with renovations. Fudge said he hopes to offset the cost by turning the renovation into a community project. If the building must be lifted, Fudge said the cost would increase, but he did not know by how much.

“I will say today, that will be a police department,” Fudge said. “The only reason we would not do it is if there is too much monetary risk for the village to do that.”

Fudge said he is confident that will not happen, but if it does, the property can still serve several village functions. The mayor said the village offices could be moved to that location and it could also be used by the new Parks Committee that is working on renovating the park.

“We didn’t throw \$37,000 away either way,” Fudge said.



Photo by Keegan D'Alfonso

The American Legion building is old and needs to be updated, but is much larger than the current police station. The open area will be turned into offices and a common working area.

Brooks agreed and said the building may still be able to serve some police functions. Both Brooks and Fudge said they believe the property can be used to park the police cruisers regardless. If the property was used for village purposes, village code would require the purchase price to be transferred from the general funds to the police-designated funds because the property was purchased through police-designated funds. Brooks said this would probably not be difficult.

“We’re not talking about a massive amount of money if you had to do that,” Brooks said. “So yeah you could, but then you would have that money spent. Plus, we would still have no solution for the police station. So, it would be a big hit. We’d be able to use it, but it’s not something we would have purchased otherwise.”

Despite the problems the village has encountered with the building, he said he likes the plan to turn it into a police station if the problems can be resolved.

“If we get it, there is really no downside to it,” Brooks said. “That’s why I’m in favor of it. I don’t see any negative to moving there once the cost of getting it ready is covered. It gives the village a much better facility than they have now. The chief of police has been saying it’s really necessary. I think everyone on the council thinks something needs to be done.”

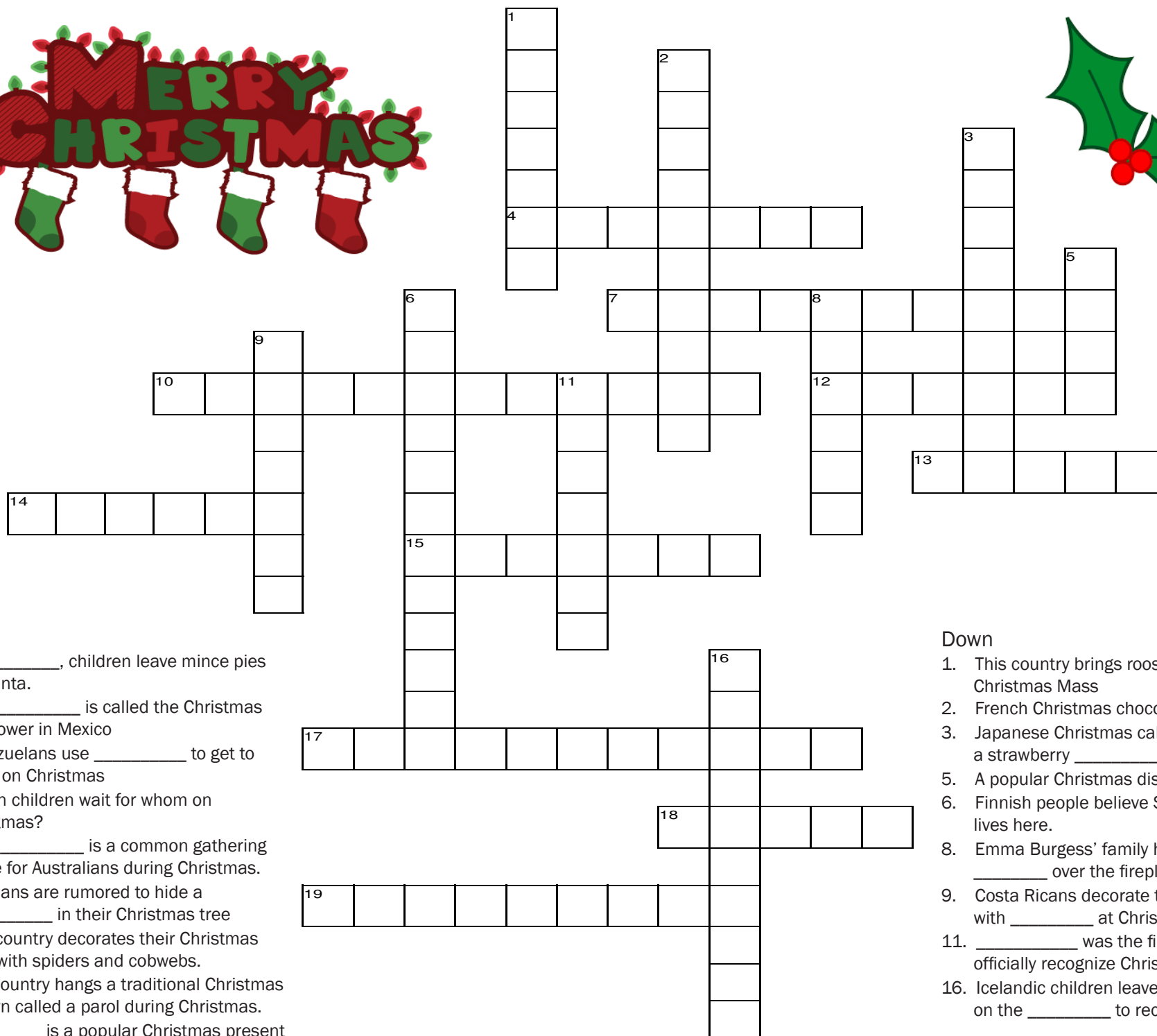
Keegan D'Alfonso is a sophomore journalism major and the off-campus news editor for Cedars. He was a sergeant in the Marines and enjoys learning about and experiencing other cultures.



Photo by Keegan D'Alfonso

The police department shares space with the Village Council in the Opera House building. The only available space for parking the police cruisers is on the side of the street.

International Christmas Crossword



Across

4. In _____, children leave mince pies for Santa.
7. The _____ is called the Christmas Eve flower in Mexico
10. Venezuelans use _____ to get to Mass on Christmas
12. Italian children wait for whom on Christmas?
13. The _____ is a common gathering place for Australians during Christmas.
14. Germans are rumored to hide a _____ in their Christmas tree
15. This country decorates their Christmas tree with spiders and cobwebs.
17. This country hangs a traditional Christmas lantern called a parol during Christmas.
18. _____ is a popular Christmas present in South Korea.
19. Carlos Barahona's favorite Christmas activity.

Down

1. This country brings roosters to Christmas Mass
2. French Christmas chocolates.
3. Japanese Christmas cake resembles a strawberry _____.
5. A popular Christmas dish in Egypt.
6. Finnish people believe Santa Claus lives here.
8. Emma Burgess' family hangs _____ over the fireplace.
9. Costa Ricans decorate their houses with _____ at Christmas.
11. _____ was the first state to officially recognize Christmas.
16. Icelandic children leave their shoes on the _____ to receive gifts.

Just Sayin' ... On Home and the Holidays

by Adam Pittman



Every holiday season, nostalgia finds a place in our hearts and minds. We will often think back to past Thanksgivings and Christmases,

sometimes with fond but realistic memories, and other times jealous that our lives seemed so much more in order. Nostalgia, in fact, is derived from Greek, Latin and German words that mean homesick, but now nostalgia means an affectionate longing for the past. Although the meaning has changed slightly, I think homesickness and nostalgia are one in the same, and both affect the way a person approaches the present world.

In 1954 Perry Como sang “There’s no place like home for the holidays,” and while the general sentiment behind the phrase is agreeable, I question the exact meaning of the phrase and the multiple meanings it can take.

I had never moved before I came to college four years ago. But since then, my mom has remarried and I’ve changed houses. Even before physically moving, I was beginning to realize home is not just the physical space a person permanently lives, but an idea that lives within memories. The more good memories you have at a physical place or with another person, the more comfortable you will usually feel in that space or with that person.

For example, when you first get to college, everything is new and exciting, but you will most likely experience a feeling of

homesickness and miss something from back home. There were times my freshman year of college where my experience of homesickness was crippling. I needed to find solitary moments to refresh, often at the expense of social interaction. In these moments, I tried to distract myself in order to avoid the full brunt of my emotions. I would listen to old music I was familiar with. I would play video games. I would watch movies I had seen multiple times. I did not realize then, but in those times I tried to distract myself from my feelings, I was really trying to hide myself from feeling. To remedy my homesickness, I should have sought out other people to create memories, but instead I tried to turn off my mind in order to keep my sense of security. Over time, college became a more comfortable space for me. I knew people and I was comfortable in the physical space. However, during this time of transition, everything seemed unstable, but rather than searching for stability, I found comfort in the instability. Although my physical sense of “home” had changed, I realized that a person can never find stability because life is constantly in flux.

Acknowledging the presence of instability is important, especially during the holiday season because there are people around you who have tough family situations. Maybe a person has lost a parent or grandparent, maybe his parents are going through divorce, or maybe her family does not understand her faith. The holiday season only emphasizes the hurt and pain of these situations. While everything might appear great on the surface, there is an underbelly to the holiday season. I remember how empty the first Christmas felt after my father died, and I know there are others who feel that same emptiness every year at Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Years, or who might have never experienced a “normal” holiday season.

Rather than searching for stability, I found comfort in the instability.

However, the holidays are filled with constant distractions with sports, movies and music, but there is no greater distraction than Black Friday and Christmas. By Christmas, I mean the gift-giving side of Christmas, not the religious aspect. According to Statistic Brain, last year’s Black Friday spending was near \$70 billion between online and in-store, which meant the average person spent around \$400 dollars. While this spike in retail spending helps out businesses, as Christians it is important to question our involvement in the consumerism in American culture.

While many will pass around cliché sayings like “Jesus is the reason for the season,” our approach to Christmas seems relatively similar to that of the American culture. Instead of participating in American traditions around Christmas, Christians tend to replace those traditions with Christian traditions, Christian music, and Christian movies that focus on the importance of family, love, and kindness, but we are not acting any different than unbelievers. By filling our time with Christian holiday traditions, we are only distracting ourselves as well.

Hebrews 11 uses the words “strangers and exiles” to describe those who live by faith and says that the people who claim to be strangers and exiles on the earth are

seeking “a homeland” that is not the land of their birth. While this passage is mainly discussing the physical denial of a homeland for the purpose of seeking a heavenly country, it is important to acknowledge the repercussions of what it means to deny your homeland. Applying Hebrews 11 to the scope of this essay, we must understand what it means to be “strangers and exiles” during a time of the year that feigns Christianity.

The trap that is perhaps easiest to fall into is to argue that we must reclaim Christmas, or even the culture at large. This argument, however, does not remedy the issues at hand, because we only make the solutions more “Christian.” We make “Christian” movies, “Christian” music, and “Christian” items, but the problems of distraction and consumerism still remain; we have only added to the problem.

Perhaps there is no one solution to the problems of consumerism and distraction that exists within the Christian community, but maybe there is not supposed to be a solution, only a response. The problem is not in the giving of gifts at Christmas, but the manner in which we give gifts. The problem is not that we listen to Christmas music, but how we use Christmas music and Christmas movies to distract us from the harsher realities of the holiday season. Maybe our issue is not that we spend so much money for gifts on Black Friday or that we are kinder during the holiday season, but that we are not as free and giving the rest of the year. Maybe our problem is not that we are nostalgic and homesick, but that we are nostalgic and homesick for the wrong home.

Adam Pittman is a Senior English Major and Just Sayin’ Columnist for Cedars. Among other things, he avidly enjoys reading, the outdoors, coffee, and soccer.

Tell Adam what you would like him to write about. Send your questions, comments or concerns to adampittman@cedarville.edu

Christmas Chapel

Photos by Christian Cortes and Anna Pizarro



Assistant Chair of Worship and Associate Professor of Worship Roger O'Neel leads the audience in a standing performance of "Hark the Herald".



Senior nursing student Scott Eshelman impresses the audience with an elaborate organ solo. He opened his performance by playing solely with his feet, using the pedals on the instrument.



The CU Men's Glee Club was formed in 1992, and since its formation has "held a special place among the performance ensembles at Cedarville University through the presentation of frequent on campus concerts along with performance ministries for schools, churches and civic organizations," their bio says.



The Cedarville University orchestra performs "Sleigh Ride" during CU's annual Christmas Chapel on December 2.



Music Department faculty Beth Porter and Mark Spencer, accompanied by the CU orchestra, perform a duet number to bring the 2016 Christmas Chapel to a close. Porter is an Associate Professor of Vocal Music and Director of Women's Choir, as well as Chair of Music & Worship. Spencer serves as an Associate Professor of Music.