

## CALVIN COLLEGE



ELECTION RESULTS PAGE 3



CHINESE EARTHQUAKE PAGE 5



'PITCH PERFECT 2' PAGE 7



ANT CAREERS PAGE 8

# Students awarded Goldwater Scholarships

BY DANIEL PAULSON  
Guest Writer

This year, Calvin has more Goldwater Scholars than Stanford, Princeton or Notre Dame.

Three Calvin students — Abigail Strelman, John Strikwerda, and Nicole Michmerhuizen — received the prestigious award this March.

Congress established the Goldwater Scholarship in 1986 in honor of former United States Senator and presidential candidate Barry Goldwater (1909-1998). The Barry Goldwater Scholarship Foundation awards about 300 scholarships each year to science, mathematics and engineering students across the country. Goldwater Scholars receive \$7,500 towards tuition, room and board and books. Competition for the scholarship, considered the premier undergraduate award of its kind, is extremely high.

Scholarship recipient Abigail Strelman described the application process.

"Schools can only nominate four students each year for the scholarship. So each science division department give[s] names of qualified students and from there a committee chooses the four nominees to represent Calvin."

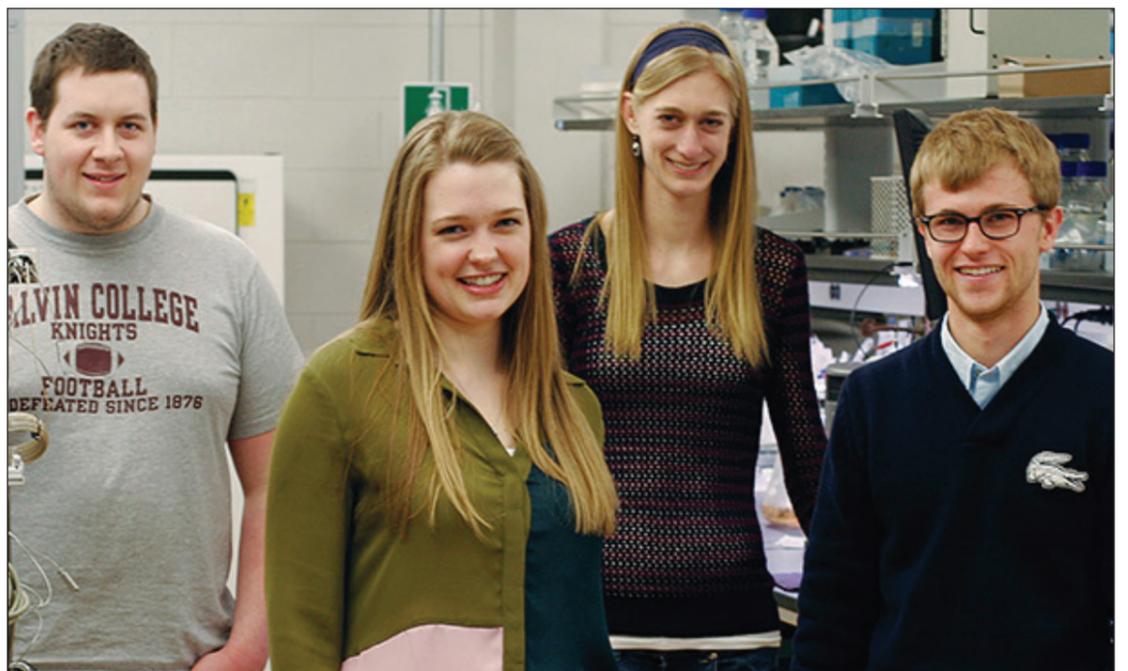
All four of Calvin's nominees were recognized this year; three received the Goldwater Scholarship while the fourth, physics major Jake Lampen, received an honorable mention.

Since 2008, 22 of Calvin's 24 nominees have been recognized: 14 as Goldwater Scholars and another eight as honorable mentions.

Over the last six years, Calvin has had more Goldwater Scholars than any other liberal arts college in the United States. Pomona College in California and Hendrix College in Arkansas tied for second, both with 11 Goldwater Scholars.

Calvin's success with the scholarship highlights the school's commitment to undergraduate research.

"Calvin has so many opportunities for students, espe-



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Calvin has more Goldwater Scholars than Stanford, Princeton or Notre Dame this year.

cially given its smaller size," Michmerhuizen said. "I think that the professors here do an

amazing job of providing students with good research experiences." Strelman agreed. "At big

schools most of the intensive

See "Scholars," page 3

# Baseball team's bats go cold in snow and rain

BY SYDNEY CHIPMAN  
Staff Writer

Calvin started their week with the home-field advantage, hosting the Adrian Bulldogs in a conference matchup. However, the Knights were unable to use their advantage and lost both ends of the double-header 7-0 and 9-1.

In the opening game of the night, the Knights were only able to scrape up three hits, while Adrian pulled out 12, including a pair of solo home runs. Sophomore Grant VanPutten, senior Ben Cok and freshman Jordan VanderWall take credit for Calvin's three hits. Sophomore Nate Schepers took the loss on the mound. Schepers struck out three and walked three in five innings of work. Sophomores Austin Juza and Tom Bouwkamp also saw time in relief.

Game two proved a little better for the Calvin bats, but the

Knights were unable to put their eight hits together. Junior Cory Laster took the loss at the mound. Laster struck out five batters in six innings of work. Junior

later in the game.

"Monday was a tough day against Adrian," says Cok. "We came in thinking we could take two from them, but they showed

ready to hit. They played a lot better than they did on Saturday. We outplayed in the first double header, they got us in the second."

The Knights then traveled to Mount Pleasant for a non-conference game against the Division I Central Michigan Chippewas, where they couldn't get in their groove and lost 10-0.

"Playing against Central, that was a fun experience," comments Cok. "Other than one poor inning we really hung with them. It was a good experience for our guys. I do not think that most of these guys have seen competition like that before in their careers so it was a good learning experience for us. It did show us though that we came really play with some good teams, even if they are Division I. We just need to continue to come out and play

our game, and we can compete."

Despite the awful weather Friday afternoon, the Knights still traveled to Alma and played some of their double-header. Calvin lost the first by a close score of 6-5, and the second was suspended with a tied score of 2-2 due to the weather conditions.

"Our game at Alma was the worst weather I personally have ever played in," claims VanPutten. "The three other MIAA games were postponed but our game was not. The wind, snow and bitter cold made it hard to focus on playing good baseball. That kind of weather takes all the fun out of the game and really is almost dangerous for the guys trying to perform."

Despite the rough week for Calvin's baseball team, the Knights plan on using what they've learned and experienced this week to grow and become the team they need to be to reach their goals.

"The games this week so far have been what we needed after how well we played the past couple weeks," claims sophomore Ben Wohl. "They've been a wake-up call for what we need to work on for the rest of the season in order to be the hot team going into the playoffs hopefully."

The Knights plan on hosting Alma in a double-header on Monday at 2 p.m.



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The Knights struggled through several dreary games, unable to get offense going.

Louis Hill Jr. and freshman Kyle Wasserberger came on in relief

up ready to play and we didn't. Bats were cold, and they were

are Division I. We just need to continue to come out and play

### Koninginnedag Festival to celebrate Calvin's Dutch heritage

BY LAURA DE JONG  
Guest Writer

The Dutch department is sponsoring a celebration of Koninginnedag (Queen's Day), a traditional Dutch holiday, on commons lawn April 30 at 3:30 p.m.

In the Netherlands, Koninginnedag is the biggest festival of the year.

People in every city take to the streets for games, food, a flea market and for two lucky cities each year, a visit from the royal family.

Calvin's festivities will begin with a rendition of the Dutch national anthem, "Wilhelmus," around the flagpole nearby Spoelhof center. Pastries and games on commons lawn will follow.

Herman De Vries, Frederick Meijer chair in Dutch language and culture, says Koninginnedag is the perfect Dutch festival to celebrate at Calvin because it wasn't kept up by the immigrants to Michigan. Therefore, he explains that it is authentically Dutch, not just American Dutch. He hopes celebrating it will allow Calvin to celebrate its connection to the

Netherlands just like we celebrate our connection to the other countries Calvin students come from.

In recent years, many have felt that Calvin's Dutch heritage was something to be hushed up, rather than celebrated. Some outside the Dutch community wish that Calvin celebrated the Dutch culture more.

Bethany Conway, a former student at Calvin, writes: "Sometimes I felt like the Dutch heritage was just taken for granted. When you've grown up with something your whole life, it is very natural and normal. So in that sense, I think I missed out

on learning about Dutch culture because nobody was outwardly teaching it."

While DeVries hopes to change that, he also acknowledges that the college's historical ties to the Netherlands have sometimes made the college feel exclusive to people from other backgrounds.

"We've often been parochial and exclusionary about such things," he says. "There was a time when Calvin was called 'onze (our) school' — they'd use the Dutch phrase even when speaking English. I'm aware that our Calvin community has too often been ethnocentric."

Calvin's historical ties to the Netherlands have led to two visits by Dutch royalty in the past: first by Queen Juliana and Prins Bernhard in 1952 and later by Queen Beatrix and Prins Claus on June 26, 1982. Beatrix visited West Michigan to celebrate 200 years of friendly relations between the Netherlands and America.

The queen was received by then-president Tony Diekema and hundreds of well-wishers in front of DeWit manor on a Saturday morning. The queen helped plant a tree there — a red maple that flames a fitting orange in the fall to signify the ties the college has to its Dutch heritage.

Koninginnedag is held to honor the woman that helped plant that tree at Calvin over thirty years ago: the queen. It was first celebrated in 1885 as Prinsessedag, in honor of Princess Wilhelmina and was changed to Koninginnedag when she ascended the throne. Her daughter, Juliana, became queen in 1948. Since then, it has been held on her birthday, April 30.

Although Queen Beatrix was born on January 31, she opted to continue holding the festival on her mother's birthday.



Koninginnedag was first celebrated in 1885 as a celebration of Princess Wilhelmina, who later ascended the Dutch throne.

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### Weekly Calendar Events

<p><b>26</b> FRIDAY</p> <p>8 p.m. - Dance Guild, CFAC</p>	<p><b>27</b> SATURDAY</p> <p>8 p.m. - Dance Guild, CFAC</p>	<p><b>28</b> SUNDAY</p> <p>8 p.m. - LOFT, Chapel</p>	<p><b>29</b> MONDAY</p> <p>7:30 p.m. - Handbell Ensemble, CFAC</p>
<p>TUESDAY <b>30</b></p> <p>3:30 p.m. - Queen's Day (Koninginnedag), Spoelhof Center campus side lawn</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY <b>1</b></p> <p>9:30 p.m. - Re-Ignight Worship, CFAC</p>	<p>THURSDAY <b>2</b></p> <p>7:30 p.m. - Symphonic Band, CFAC</p>	<p>FRIDAY <b>3</b></p> <p>8 p.m. - SAO Movie: Lincoln 8:00 p.m. - Woman's Chorale, Chapel</p>

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*Chimes is the official newspaper of Calvin College. The mission of Chimes is to serve the community of Calvin College in a variety of ways: we aim to reform, review, challenge and foster dialogue within the community.*

# Kuenzi, Smit elected with 71 percent of vote

RYAN STRUYK AND CONNOR STERCHI  
Online Editor and On-Call Writer

Juniors David Kuenzi and Alicia Smit, won the student senate executive team race with 71 percent of the vote Friday afternoon, defeating the last-minute candidacy of junior Osita Mefor and sophomore Aaron Ling. The student senate president-elect, is thankful for a smooth campaign, but is already looking forward to next year.

"The people who helped me with my campaign were all phenomenal," he said. "My support and my friends were all wonderful and very hardworking. I'm really appreciative ... and I'm looking forward to not letting them down next year."

Smit agreed. "We really could not have done it without the help of our friends," she said. "I cannot thank them enough."

A Chimes pre-election poll proved to be accurate, as it showed 72 percent of the student body supporting Kuenzi and Smit.

Student turnout reached 31 percent, which is the same rate as last year, but down from 36 percent two years ago.

Kuenzi and Smit were previously uncontested until Osita Mefor and Aaron Ling entered the race Tuesday night.

"I don't think I could have asked for a better two teams," Kuenzi said. "We had a lot of mutual respect for each other. It was a really amiable race in general."

Mefor was glad to have the opportunity to run in the race

despite the defeat at the polls. "The past couple days have been really stressful, but also a very enriching experience," Mefor said. "It gave me the op-

portunity to reach out to the Calvin students who have shown me that they do have a passion to participate and really do want to be heard."

Mefor congratulated Kuenzi and Smit on their victory, and he hopes that the elected executive team will work to improve senate next year.



Kuenzi and Smit won the student senate executive team race, defeating Mefor and Ling. PHOTO COURTESY ALICIA SMIT

portunity to reach out to the Calvin students who have shown me that they do have a passion to participate and really do want to be heard."

Mefor congratulated Kuenzi and Smit on their victory, and he hopes that the elected executive team will work to improve senate next year.

"I hope that David, Alicia and the rest of the senate can live up to their promise and deliver. Student senate is not a self-serving entity;

old and were elected to next year's senate.

Ansley Kelly took 79 percent of the vote in the cabinet race, while Jerry Grieser and Connor Schmidt took 72 percent each.

"After two weeks of extensive planning and campaigning, I am very excited to have been elected to cabinet," said Grieser.

"We are poised to enter a new phase of senate that will focus on student representation, communication and transparency, and

seeking and answering student need," he continued. "I can't wait to be part of the team that will make those things happen."

The three students will be

assigned a specific role — vice president of operations, vice president of public relations and vice president of representation — at a later date.

In the senator race, Sung Hun Choi won 71 percent of the vote; Binny Chung, 69 percent; Ana VanLenKhuyzen, 66 percent; and Eresnara Utse-Oritselaju, 63 percent.

Because only four senate candidates ran for six spots, two upper-class seats are vacant. According

to senate's constitution, senate will appoint five freshman next fall — three for the traditional freshman senator spots and two to fill the vacant upperclass seats.

Within the upcoming weeks, elected students will prepare for their inaugurations and begin to transition into their roles.

"We're doing a lot of initiation this spring," Kuenzi said. "Alicia and I are ready to start talking about all of our plans for next year."

Current freshman cabinet candidate Jerry Grieser is eager to work with Kuenzi and Smit during the next academic year.

"I am really looking forward to serving under David and Alicia," Grieser said. "The two are very effective leaders and I believe they will lead senate with the drive that the organization deserves."

Kuenzi is likewise looking forward to working with the other student senators and cabinet members.

"I'm really happy about our cabinet and about our senators," Kuenzi said. "I have relationships with Connor, Jerry and Ansley and I think our cabinet couldn't have been more fabulous. I'm getting ready to know all of them."

## SCHOLARS: committed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

research is conducted by grad students so there are fewer opportunities for undergrads. Calvin's science departments have a big focus of giving students that opportunity so that when we leave Calvin we are really prepared..."

This year's Goldwater Scholars are making the most of Calvin's research opportunities.

Abigail Streelman, a biology major, is working with Professor John Wertz on new techniques for analyzing bacteria.

"My research is a mix between biology and computer science," Streelman said.

She is currently writing a computer program that communicates with Calvin's state-of-the-art \$279,000 MALDI-TOF mass spectrometer to analyze large data sets of bacteria.

John Strikwerda, a chemistry major, is working with Professor

biochemistry and engineering double major, is working with Professor Kumar Sinniah to research diabetes.

Michmerhuizen said, "In my research, I study a region of DNA associated with an individual's predisposition to developing type 1 diabetes."

Jake Lampen, who received an honorable mention, is working with physics and astronomy Professor Matt Walhout to research electrical charges and spark formation. His findings could be used to create new water purification techniques.

While Calvin professors have helped this year's Goldwater Scholars with their research, they have also encouraged them in their faith. "Calvin professors have helped me learn about math, science and engineering, but also about life and faith," said Michmerhuizen.

Streelman, like the rest of this year's Goldwater Scholars, has a lot to look forward to in terms of further research at Calvin and in graduate school. But for now, she's just trying to take it all in. "I keep getting emails and calls from reporters and writers for local publications which is kind of fun," Streelman said. "I'm like a really nerdy local star."



FILE PHOTO  
The Goldwater Scholarship was created to honor former United States Senator Barry Goldwater.

Roger DeKock to study the atom's electronic structure.

Nicole Michmerhuizen, a

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“... when we adopted a more sane, and may I say more sober policy for alcohol, we were better able to control it.

Jeff Irwin, “Bill to decriminalize marijuana”

”

## Bill to decriminalize marijuana introduced with bipartisan support

*Supporters hope Michigan will join other states in making marijuana possession a civil infraction*

BY JOSEPH MATHESON  
Local News Editor

Legislators have introduced a bill to decriminalize marijuana in the state of Michigan with bipartisan support. The bill was written by Democratic Rep. Jeff Irwin, and several Republicans have supported the bill, although not entirely without reservations.

The legislation would follow the path of several cities that have already decriminalized marijuana, including Ann Arbor (Jeff Irwin's district), Grand Rapids, Ypsilanti and Flint, and make possession of less than an ounce of marijuana a civil infraction rather than a misdemeanor offense, changing the penalty from up to a year in jail to a \$25 fine for the first offense.

Irwin and the other proponents of the bill criticize the current method of dealing with marijuana.

“Despite the fact that we're spending a minimum of \$325 million a year on arresting, trying and incarcerating marijuana users in this state, we know marijuana has never been more available,” Irwin said in a press conference Wednesday in Lansing. “We know that law enforcement has not been successful at keeping marijuana out of the hands of anyone in this state. We know, and the people here in Michigan know, that marijuana prohibition is not working.”

Irwin's co-sponsors include

Republican Representatives Mike Shirkey and Mike Callton. Although Shirkey has some quibbles with the current bill, specifically that it does not discriminate between adult and minor posses-

his bill, especially from law enforcement, but he argues that law enforcement officials seriously involved in the war on drugs may feel the same way he does. Neill Franklin, executive director

step toward a more humane and just criminal justice system in Michigan.”

Similar arguments were put forward by groups pushing for marijuana decriminalization in

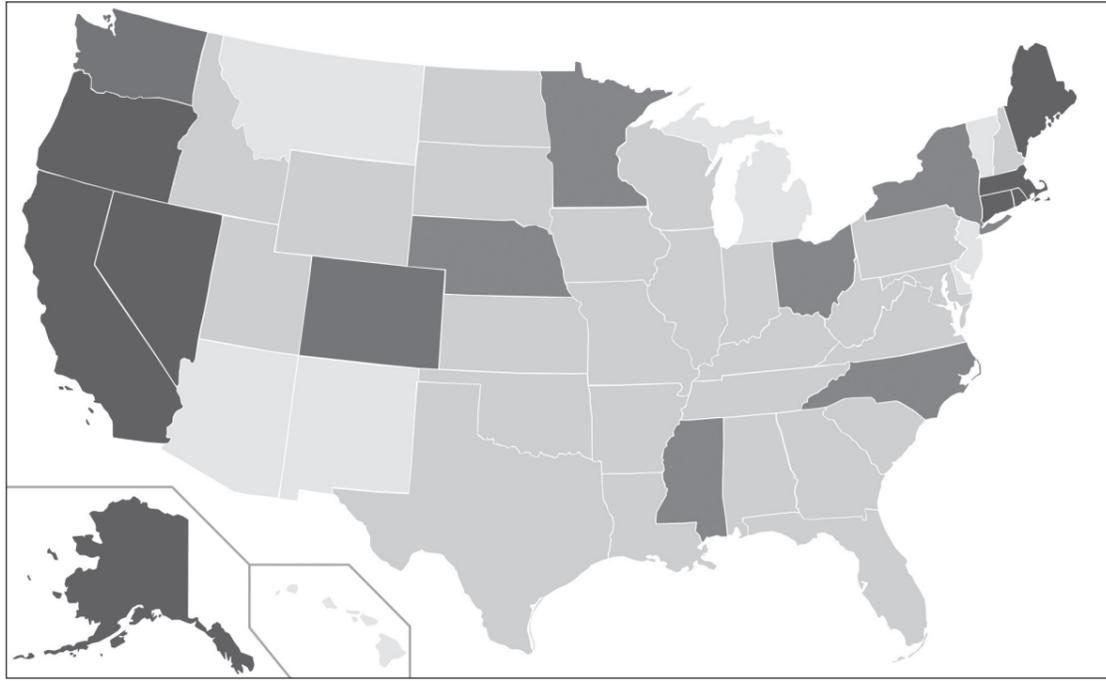
legal issues have been cleared up. However, a ruling Wednesday seemed to clearly indicate that the courts were inclined to uphold the legality of the Grand Rapids charter amendment to decriminalize marijuana. The legal concerns mostly revolved around a potential conflict with state law, which would cease to be an issue if Irwin's bill were to be enacted.

Irwin compares the current state marijuana policy that many cities in Michigan have rejected to alcohol prohibition in the early 1900s. “Alcohol prohibition didn't work, and when we adopted a more sane, and may I say more sober policy for alcohol, we were better able to control it and keep it out of the hands of our children.”

Many other states have already decriminalized marijuana to some degree or another, and a few have even legalized it, so there would be no worry of conflict with a higher jurisdiction, as in the Grand Rapids case.

“This is nothing radical,” Tim Beck, of the Coalition for a Safer Michigan, said. “We'd only be doing what a lot of very sensible legislators and voters have done in other states.”

Although several Republican lawmakers support the measure, it is unclear if they will push to get the bill actually voted on. A spokesperson for the Republican House leadership suggested that the GOP has other priorities at the moment, although they did not rule out debating the bill.



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Washington and Colorado currently have legalized marijuana; very lightly shaded states have legalized medical marijuana, dark gray states have decriminalized marijuana and the states shaded black have legalized medical marijuana and decriminalized marijuana.

sion, he agrees that “this is the right time to have this debate in Michigan.”

Irwin expects opposition to

of the group Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, certainly seems to agree with him, lauding the bill as “a sensible first

Grand Rapids, which was ratified by wide margins, but has been challenged in court. Police have refused to implement it until the

## Michigan budget in progress

*Hurdles should be easily surmounted*

BY JOSEPH MATHESON  
Local News Editor

Michigan lawmakers hope to pass a final budget for the state by June but face a few stumbling blocks, including education funding, transportation funding, film incentives and Medicaid expansion. The House budget is closer to completion than the Senate budget, and once completed, the two budgets will then need to be reconciled before being presented to Gov. Snyder to be signed.

Although Republicans control both the Senate, House and governor position, there are still disagreements between Republicans over a variety of issues. Luckily, the state's next fiscal year doesn't begin until Oct. 1, so lawmakers should have plenty of time to agree on a budget.

Some of the biggest hurdles are in Medicaid expansion. Governor Snyder wants to use the Affordable Care Act (often informally referred to as Obamacare) to expand Medicaid eligibility to 133 percent of the current federal poverty level, adding 320,000 uninsured citizens in the first year. Since the federal government has pledged to cover the cost of expansion through 2016, the state could actually save \$206 million, which Snyder wants to put into a savings fund against future costs.

However, the current House budget has no expansion of Medicaid, and the Senate currently doesn't have it on their plan, although they may add it later (they have yet to discuss the expansion). Most of the reluctance stems from possible future costs, although the federal government would continue to fund at least 90 percent of the expansion until 2020. Some reluctance also stems from Republicans

who are worried about affiliating with the Affordable Care Act, which is highly unpopular among Republican voters.

Other issues include road funding. Snyder has been actively pushing for an additional \$1.2 billion for roads and maintenance, but so far lawmakers have not been able to find the funds in their budgets for the proposed increase. Many lawmakers support transportation maintenance, but are leery of supporting the measures proposed by Snyder to raise money like vehicle registration fees and increased taxes, some on gasoline.

The current budget plan of House Republicans also cuts more than 1,000 jobs from the Department of Human Services and would close all of its juvenile justice facilities, which both Snyder's plan and the Senate's plan would keep. Snyder's plan and the Senate plan would also ensure that caseworkers would not be let go if cuts would interfere with the ability to comply with court-ordered agreements on child service.

Schools are likely going to receive a 2 percent increase in funding, which Snyder's plan and the House plan would allocate primarily to employee retirement costs, but different plans allocate the additional funds in a variety of different ways. Many schools not already on the low end of the budget spectrum, based on a per-student allowance, will likely see little difference in their budgets.

Michigan Republicans have recently slashed the state's once-robust film incentives program, to the current \$25 million. Most plans would keep that for next year, but the current House budget would completely eliminate the program and spend the money on local roads instead.

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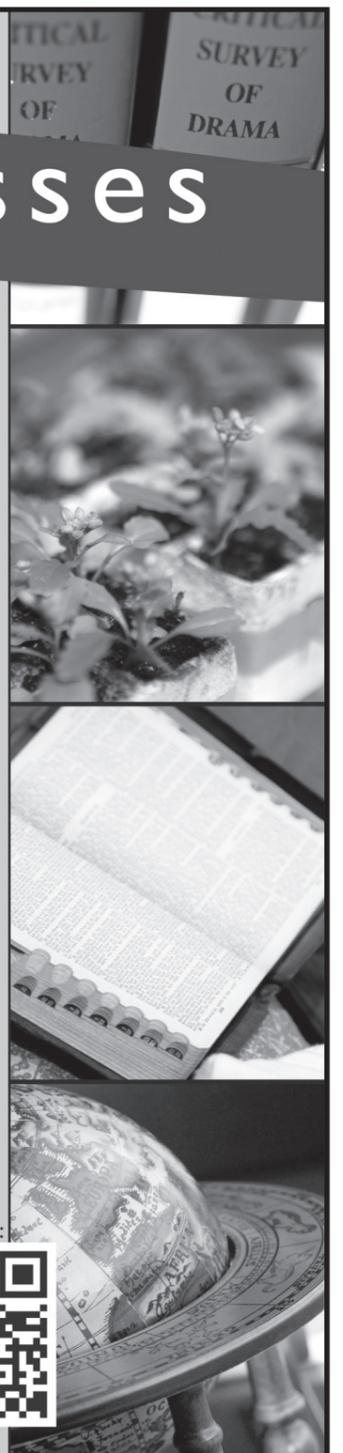
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“ The victims of the four year genocide are becoming impatient with the process.

Lauren De Haan, “Khmer Rouge Tribunal” ”

# Khmer Rouge Tribunal is in a race against time

BY LAUREN DE HAAN  
Staff Writer

Justice still awaits the citizens of Cambodia as the Khmer Rouge trial drags on with no end in sight. Only two leaders of Khmer remain on trial and the clock is ticking as the trial reaches a deficit and the defendants' health deteriorates. The tribunal thus far has chronicled a horrifying and detailed account of the atrocities of a regime that a prosecutor said was responsible for the deaths of one-fourth of the population during its four-year rule from 1975 to 1979.

The Cambodian UN-backed tribunal, which began in 2006, involves tens of thousands of documents and a roster of aging witnesses. Its aim is to find justice for atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge during its four years in power and the almost 1.7 million people who died from forced labour, starvation, medical neglect and execution.

The two defendants, Khieu Samphan, 81, the former head of state, Nuon Chea, 86, the chief ideologist of the group, are charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and other offences. A third defendant, Ieng Sary, the former foreign minister, died in a hospital from heart failure last month at age 87. The fourth and final defendant, the former social affairs minister Ieng Thirith, was deemed mentally unfit and set free. Both the remaining defendants were members of leader Pol Pot's inner circle responsible for Cambodia's "Killing Fields."

The defendants, who have both pled innocent to the charges, are accused of taking part in an "organized and systematic" bureaucracy with a "high level of

integration" that kept the them constantly informed of the actions of their subordinates at all levels.

"These crimes were committed in accordance with the Communist Party center," said Ms. Chea Leang, the co-prosecutor for the second trial which started in 2011. "The accused participated in the giving of these

agricultural cooperatives where many died of overwork, malnutrition and illness; and the use of violence to eliminate perceived enemies through a nationwide network of 200 re-education and security offices like Tuol Sleng, the main Khmer Rouge prison.

He also added that the prosecutors would focus on the targeting of ethnic Cham and Vietnamese

deserve some kind of justice while I'm still alive."

"It is a sad indictment of the Khmer Rouge tribunal that after more than six years, only one person has been convicted and only two others, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, remain on trial for Khmer Rouge-era crimes," Brad Adams, Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said in a report. "Cambodians now face the prospect that only two people will be held legally accountable for the destruction of their country."

Yet some argue that it is the process itself and not the verdict that is important. "The tribunal has achieved so much for the victims. They know their voice is being heard," said Youk Chhang, former Khmer Rouge victim and director of The Documentation Center of Cambodia. "It is all about recognition of what they suffered. The evidence in the tribunal is a vindication of what they [victims] told us 30 years ago."

It has been a full house when court is in session, with more than 76,000 people attending since the second trial commenced on November 21, 2011, 90 percent of whom are Cambodian citizens.

The tribunal is landmark case as it combines Cambodian and international lawyers and judges, operating under the auspices of the Cambodian legal system, with assistance from the United Nations. It is known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Inconsistent funding and charges of corruption have hindered progress. Swiss Judge Laurent Kasper-Ansermet quit the trial last year saying that his Cambodian coun-

terpart, You Bunleng, had thwarted attempts to investigate former members of the 1970s regime. The year before that, another judge, German Siegfried Blunk, resigned for similar reasons.

About 270 Cambodian employees at the UN court went on strike in March after not receiving a paycheck since December. Emergency funds were quickly raised but it still remains unclear where a further \$7 million, reportedly needed to cover 2013's costs, will come from.

The court has also created an important precedent in international law. It is the first-ever tribunal to allow the direct participation of victims as civil parties — providing them the right of cross-examination alongside the prosecution.

Despite the outcome, the Khmer Rouge tribunal has made it further than many Western politicians predicted. It took 18 years for the UN to even acknowledge that horrific crimes that had taken place under Pol Pot's rule. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 1997 to "examine the request of Cambodian authorities for assistance in responding to past serious violations of Cambodian and international law."

The question of time still remains in the forefront of the tribunal as the health of the two remaining defendants worsens. Rutgers professor Hinton said the court has gathered "an enormous amount of evidentiary material that will inform research for years to come."

But, according to Hinton, a judgement is still necessary: "If this doesn't happen, the international community will have to shoulder much of the blame, particularly for the 30-year delay for justice."



Nuon Chea, 86, is one of the leaders of the Khmer Rouge still on trial.

orders or were fully aware of the crimes. They failed to act in their capacity as superiors to prevent the crimes or to punish the perpetrators."

"None of the accused here ever soiled his hands with blood," prosecutor Andrew Cayley added, "but all set in motion a series of policies which unleashed an ocean of blood."

Mr. Cayley also further outlined the accusations. Among these are the forced evacuation of two million residents from Phnom Penh, during which many people died; the enslavement of people in work sites and ag-

and the crushing of the Buddhist religion, which are the bases for the charge of genocide; and the practice of forced marriage, involving rape and the abuse of women.

Just one person, chief Khmer Rouge jailer Kaing Guek Eav, has been convicted by the tribunal so far; he is serving a life sentence.

The victims of the four year genocide are becoming impatient with the process. "Justice for the victims is fading little by little," said Bou Meng, one of a handful of people to survive incarceration at the Tuol Sleng prison. "The court must speed up the trial. I

# Earthquake in China leaves over 179 dead

BY ALDEN HARTOPO  
Staff Writer

A 6.6 magnitude earthquake that struck China's rural southwest Sichuan province left at least 179 dead and more than 6,700 injured, the Huffington Post reports. The earthquake struck shortly before 8 a.m. Saturday while many people were still at home, sleeping or having breakfast.

In addition, more than 2,000 aftershocks have rattled the area since the quake, Fox News reported.

The tremors were felt in Chengdu, one of China's biggest cities and the capital of Sichuan Province. "I was working in the field when I heard the explosions of the earthquake, and I turned around and saw my house simply flatten in front of me," said Fu Qiuyue, a 70-year-old farmer in Longmen.

Rescue workers struggled to reach the remote corner of the country on Sunday as a result of the narrowness of the road and landslides as well as traffic jams, the Chicago Tribune reports.

According to Kevin Xia of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Supplies have had difficulty getting into the region because of the traffic jams. Most of our supplies are still on the way."

Two trucks of supplies from Chengdu's Red Cross arrived at 4 a.m. with one of the relief officers inside. Jiang Zhongfa stated that "we drove for 12 hours to bring in 106 tents and 100 quilts," Xinhua reports.

While aid continued to arrive, complaints were common among survivors, with some survivors pointing to family members in remote mountain villages who had received no help with shelter and were forced to live under Tarpaulins, reports the Associated Press.

Huang Mingxian expressed his frustration as he stated, "This morning is the first time in three days that we have gotten instant noodles, other areas have electricity and water, what about us?"

"Being without a home while having a child of this age is difficult," Cao added, cradling her nine-month-old baby. "We can only rely on the government to help us."

"I was scared. I've never seen an earthquake this big before," said farmer Chen Tianxiong, 37, lying on a stretcher between tents.

The government deployed about 7,000 soldiers and People's Armed Police officers to the

affected area. By Saturday evening, there were so many rescue workers in the area that the government asked volunteers to stop coming.

The New York Times quotes Xu Shaolin, a commentator on societal issues and politics who said on his microblog: "It is so sad to see how much a state-run char-

and tents, Li stated that "the current priority is to save lives" while also telling patients to "treat and heal your wounds with peace of mind, the government will take care of all the costs for those severely wounded."

The earthquake which struck in Lushan was along the same fault line that a devastating magnitude 7.9 quake struck on May 12, 2008, leaving 90,000 people dead or missing.

The 2008 quake raised questions about poorly constructed schools that collapsed and killed thousands of students, the New York Times reports.

It was that earthquake that prompted an extensive official relief effort, but many victims criticized the government for sending rescue efforts to the wrong places or failing to muster the equipment needed to lift victims from underneath concrete and brick.

Helicopters have been an obvious presence in the latest rescue efforts, used to reach outlying communities, unlike in 2008 when bad weather hampered their use in the critical first 36 hours.

Fortunately, Xinhua reported that the Bifengxia panda preserve, which is near Lushan, was not affected by the quake. Dozens of pandas were moved to Bifengxia from another preserve, Wolong, after its habitat was wrecked by the 2008 quake.



Thousands of people have been injured as buildings in Sichuan province have collapsed.

While the quake has drawn in a flood of donations, many donors are looking toward private charity organizations rather than official groups who are known for corruption. This includes The Red Cross Society of China which in 2011 was struck with a scandal involving corruption.

ity organization is struggling; the Red Cross in China evidently has a very low credibility."

The Chinese Premier Li Keqiang arrived Saturday afternoon by helicopter in Ya'an to direct rescue efforts, reported the government's Xinhua News Agency. After visiting hospitals

# 2013 Spring Arts Festival

MAY 8TH AT 5 O'CLOCK ON COMMONS LAWN/ COMMONS LAWN/

As the year comes to an end, Visual Art Guild leaders Anna Hanchett and Megan Mccrary prepare for their last event. Installed in these miniature segments, both leaders explain what the festival means to them and what it can mean to others. As the event is located on Commons Lawn, Visual Art Guild hopes to extend the event and offer participation to artists and non artists alike.

BY ANNA HANCHETT  
V.A.G CO-PRESIDENT

The Visual Arts Guild is delighted to present this year's Spring Arts Festival theme, Fahrenheit/Celsius. The event is planned to occur on the last day of classes, May 8, on the Commons lawn at 5:00 p.m., if the weather permits. During the event, the Visual Arts Guild will display student artwork, sell handmade stoneware by current ceramics students who will donate all of the funds to Feeding America, and enjoy live music by local musicians.

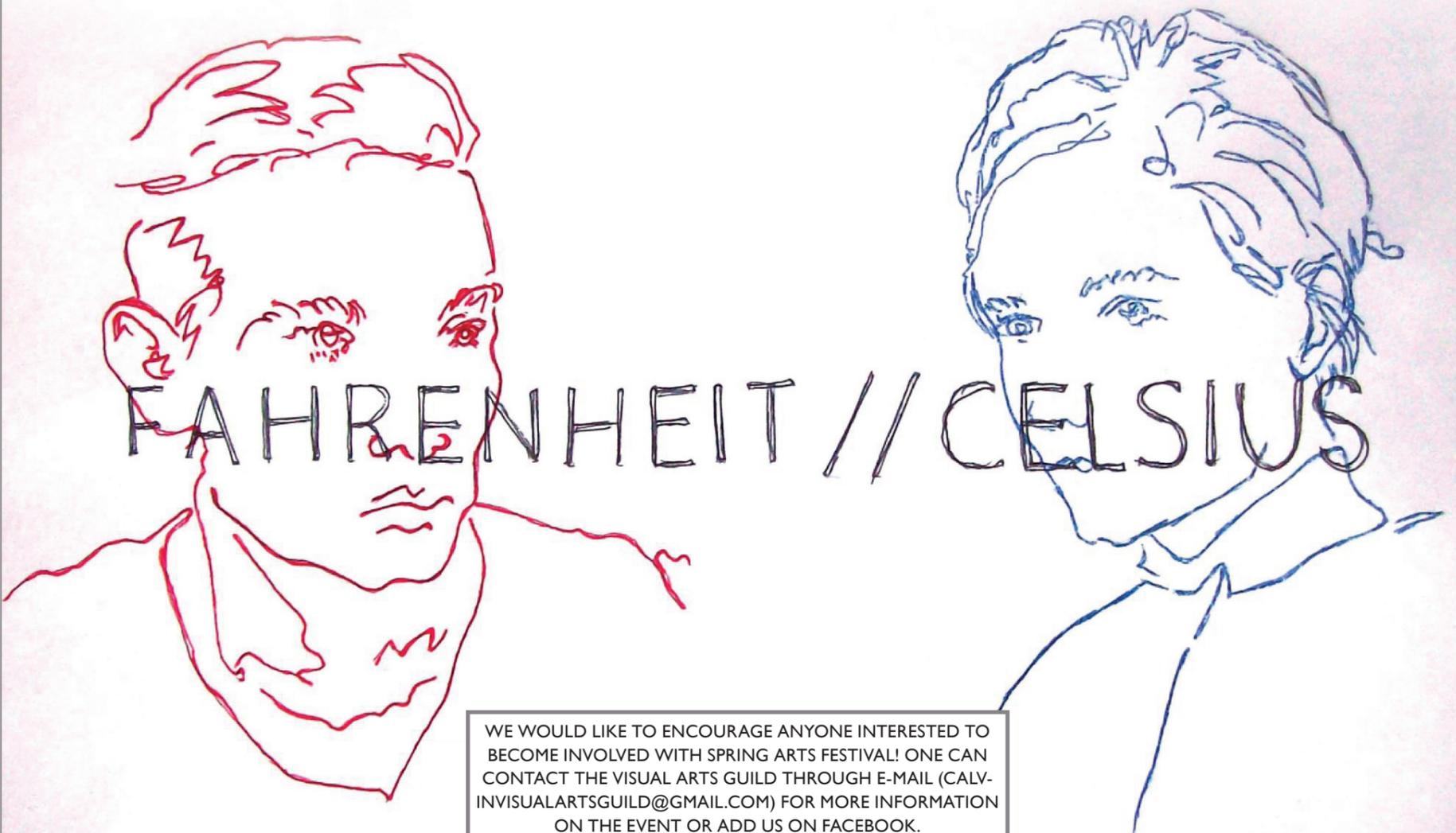
One of the main purposes of conducting a Spring Arts Festival annually is to bring awareness to the beautiful works that are being created by the Calvin community. Students are not given many opportunities to show off their creations on campus, and the Visual Arts Guild wants to encourage art-making, whether it be visual, performance or written. Spring Arts Festival also allows for students involved in a variety of departments to work together to celebrate a semester's hard work, which gives both creators and viewers the opportunity to enjoy art. The Visual Arts Guild really believes that art should enrich the lives of all (whether through creation or viewing), and as artists we take seriously the pursuit of cultural production.

I imagine Spring Arts to serve as a revelation of just a small portion of the art happening on campus during the semester that can finally be granted the celebration it deserves. I think I speak for most student organization leaders when I say that planning all-campus events is in no way a tranquil task. Though, as co-president of the Visual Arts Guild, I was humbled during last semester's Sub\_Arts show after seeing the incredible work being made by my fellow classmates and the support involved in the planning, setup and teardown of the event. I am already grateful for the enthusiasm not only students, but even professors, have shown for Spring Arts.

BY MEGAN MCCRARY  
V.A.G. CO- PRESIDENT

My first experience with Spring Arts Festival was exhilarating. I was volunteering, running around, throwing myself one hundred percent into the whole ordeal. I found it inspiring, as well as encouraging, as it was the first college event I was really ever a part of in such an official and committed way. Aside from eating up the entire experience like a piece of pie, selfishly delving into feeling a part of something, I noticed that the very way this festival was set up was begging for people's participation and laying out intentional unity amongst Calvin College students. I was a part of the Sumi Ink Club, consisting of a huge sheet of paper, buckets of Sumi ink and timid hands picking up paintbrushes one by one, as students, professors and visitors alike came to paint small sections of this greater mural of sorts, adding on to each other's doodles and sharpening each other's ideas via ink.

This hodgepodge of ideas and interaction is really what the Spring Arts Festival is about. It's a giant Sumi Ink Club: a massive blank sheet laid out and, with some guidelines, allowing for anyone to pipe in, to participate and to glean from the experience. This year, it looks a little different now that I am witnessing the process as a whole, from beginning to end. I have less energy to put in when the planning starts in January, as opposed to one day of running around and passing paintbrushes out to the masses. This time around it has been much more of a process, one that I have found to be incredibly rewarding, and it has allowed me to see the Festival with a fresh set of eyes. Each year Spring Arts shifts and changes; freshmen come, seniors leave, yet the heart of it stays the same: an evening filled with the opportunity to experience what you would like to gain from it, whether it be a light-hearted painting on a Sumi ink board, perhaps learning something profound and fascinating concerning art, or just enjoying a conversation over great food. It's a time of sharing and connecting, in beautiful and creative ways.



WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ANYONE INTERESTED TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH SPRING ARTS FESTIVAL! ONE CAN CONTACT THE VISUAL ARTS GUILD THROUGH E-MAIL (CALV-INVISUALARTSGUILD@GMAIL.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE EVENT OR ADD US ON FACEBOOK.

MAY 8TH AT 5 O'CLOCK ON COMMONS LAWN/ COMMONS LAWN/

“ I would still recommend the book, especially its first three-fourths, because it relentlessly breaks down some dangerous ideas about God.

Jon Hielkema “Idolatry of God”

## Just another sci-fi flick, ‘Oblivion’ fails to break ground

BY CHRISTIAN BECKER  
Staff Writer

A common theme when discussing a newly released science fiction film is how it pales in comparison to those that came before it.

People will often walk out of the theater saying that it wasn't as good, inventive or enjoyable as “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “Blade Runner” or “Star Wars.” I think it's just as cliché for people to compare today's sci-fi movies to those classics as it is for the movies themselves to borrow from them. But there is a big difference between making a tribute or homage to these sci-fi tales of the past and just flat out ripping them off.

It's hard to pull off a great sci-fi film. You need to have an intriguing story and emotionally driven characters, coupled with an impressive set of visuals, which is something the genre seems to lack. Everything that has been said about “Oblivion” leading up to its release sounded like it should have been a classic. A humans vs. technology story, directed by the man behind the visually impressive “Tron: Legacy,” should come with some level of intrigue.

“Oblivion” starts off as a live action “Wall-E,” as our hero flies his ship from place to place on Earth repairing the drones that have malfunctioned and he is confused by the past he cannot remember and the place that Earth used to be. Sounds good, right? Here we have one of the biggest stars working in Hollywood, a director who clearly has an impressive vision and a plot about the destruction of Earth. In short, all the pieces were there for this

to be remembered as a modern day sci-fi classic, but lazy ideas and tired writing made all the difference here.

The visuals of the movie are like a rich, chocolate cake. Really delightful when you first dig into it, but after a while you start to get a stomach ache and suddenly, you don't want anymore. One of my favorite shots takes place in the home of our hero, Jack Harper (played by Tom Cruise). It shows his house in the clouds from a distance, with a clear sky revealing the wonders of space. After spectacular visuals like this, the rest of the scenery just doesn't hold up. Sadly, is it more of the same with the script.

The film starts off with a voice over narration given by Cruise's character about what happened to our beloved Earth. “We won the war, but they destroyed half the planet,” he states while giving us backstory. Who he is referring to by “they” is never really made clear, but we are to assume it's another life form.

Just based on this premise alone, I was hooked. I love a good sci-fi story, especially one having to do with our planet. So you can imagine my disappointment when the bulk of the film's story did not live up to its promise. This is not an original science fiction story, nor will it be remembered in the coming years, so you had best just get those ideas out of your head right now, because that

is what the marketing wants you to believe. It's hard for me to take a movie's “twist” seriously when I've seen it done better in another movie. In the name of spoiler-prevention, I will not tell you the film I'm referring to, just know that when “Oblivion” thinks it's blowing your mind, it's really not.

The performances are serviceable, but just like the story,

sion control specialist. The other is a mysterious woman named Julia (played by Olga Kurylenko), who crash landed on Earth in a ship and may also have the secrets to unlocking Jack's past. We see moments where he gets close to both women, but a believable relationship is never formed. Julia is only written in so we can have information spoon-fed to us about

would have the substances worthy of him, but instead, anyone could have stepped into this character and it wouldn't be much different. He's also only in the film for a total of 10 minutes, so if you think you're going into this movie to see Morgan Freeman, you'll be as disappointed as I was.

Even after reflecting on all the negative aspects of this film, I have to give credit where credit is due. The visuals, while growing stale after a while, are beautiful to look at. The filmmakers do a wonderful job at pulling you into this world of a desolate and deserted Earth while making it beautiful to look at. This look, along with an original score from the M83, makes it feel authentic. M83's score fits the story and has a slick techno feel to it. I noticed how great the music was all the way through, which doesn't happen often when watching a movie. All of this, combined with some very well-made action scenes that make the heart pound, makes for a fun time if you aren't looking for a memorable movie experience. When comparing the positives and negatives, the film makes for a semi-fun, in-the-moment experience but not a very memorable one.

As much as I wanted to love this movie and talk about for days after I had seen it, there really isn't too much to say in terms of groundbreaking material. This is an average sci-fi flick that is possible to have fun with, but if you've seen a few other space or futuristic movies you'll be rolling your eyes at the things this movie thinks it's accomplishing. My suggestion: buy the soundtrack and rent the movie, but don't expect a masterpiece.

Grade: C+



FILE PHOTO

nothing spectacular is shown by anyone in the cast. Tom Cruise is quite good in his role and does what he can to keep the show on the road. Nothing to complain about, but he is just your average misinformed super soldier.

The relationships throughout the film that Jack has with two of the leading woman are very hard to buy. One of them is Victoria (played by Andrea Riseborough), who is Jack's partner on the mission as a mis-

who Jack used to be before Earth was attacked. She doesn't add anything to move the narrative forward.

Another character that is completely underused is Beech (Morgan Freeman), the resistance leader of a group of underground humans who are ready to fight and take back the planet. It really upsets me that Morgan Freeman didn't have enough to do in this movie. You'd think when Morgan Freeman signs onto a role, it

## ‘Idolatry’ deconstructs and provokes

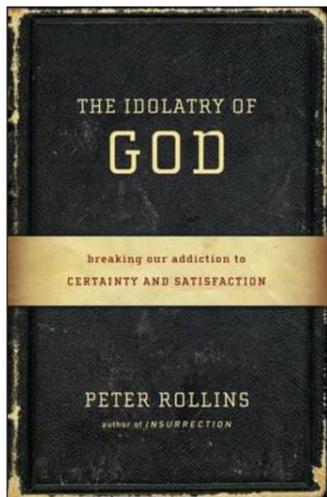
BY JON HIELKEMA  
Staff Writer

Peter Rollins' publishers have certainly found a branding image that works for them. The back of “The Idolatry of God” describes his message as “incendiary,” a plug for another book of his describes the author as a theological “firebrand” and Rollins himself co-founded a group dedicated to “pyro-theology.” Flames seem to spring up wherever Rollins goes, and both he and those responsible for marketing him seem to want to capitalize on this image and its radical connotations.

It remains to be seen if the latest crop of radical theologians, of whom Rollins is arguably the most visible, will be able to gain a mass following in the Western Church. “The Idolatry of God,” in about 200 pages, is positioned as a salvo against religious certainties of all stripes and affiliations. By engaging with and in some cases radically re-reading fundamental Christian doctrines, Rollins wants to expose his readers' faith to a fire that will purge idolatry. “Idolatry” here includes any material objects, aspirations or ideas that we believe will bring us ultimate satisfaction. This, naturally, also encompasses most traditional ideas about God and Christ.

Our desire for idols, according to Rollins, comes from an essential separation — what he calls “original sin” — that we believe exists between ourselves and our environment. We perceive that we lack something we once had, i.e. a sense of peace and wholeness with our surroundings, and that things can satisfy that lack. Out of this experience of a void, Rollins argues, the God/Idol

emerges. It is only by identifying with Christ's crucifixion, in which God gave up God's own identity and acknowledged God's own absence, that we can undergo a change of heart. After our conversion, instead of trying to find something to soothe our brokenness, we will instead



FILE PHOTO

embrace it as fundamental to our selves.

As in previous books, Rollins uses a mixture of conventional prose, including many citations from popular culture, and narrative storytelling that make him such an effective speaker. His language is conversational and persuasive, and tends to wander somewhat as he addresses a given topic. Like fellow cultural critic David Dark, his musings can take him on tangents that either fascinate or bewilder, depending on how well he can establish the connections between them and his main ideas. The book's argument is well-structured, though there is nothing particularly inventive about his use of language. Words

come plainly and this thoroughly academic writer tries to make himself as digestible as possible. It is clear that the book is only part of a larger project, so a reader will probably find herself wanting more information at the end.

One criticism that has been levied at Rollins and many others of his ilk is that their ability to deconstruct outstrips their ability to create. These arguments do find some purchase, because although he spends a quarter of the book outlining various attempts at enacting his ideas, they all fall within a narrow band. To be more precise, they are all examples hewn from projects and communities Rollins has either founded or been a part of. Many of them are perfect illustrations of his ideas, but I would be scratching my head if they weren't since he himself played a hand, however distantly, in their creation. A lack of attention to the church tradition as it played out historically might work against him as well. Drawing some concrete examples of Christian social protest or alternative liturgies from longer than ten years ago would go a long way toward legitimating his project in this reviewer's eyes.

I would still recommend the book, especially its first three-fourths, because it relentlessly breaks down some dangerous ideas about God. It also offers a way to embrace the doubts that are already a natural part of being a contingent, limited being while still drawing essential strength from Christian language and tradition.

It has a provocative edge, and beyond that the power of strong ideas to back them up, meaning it should function well as a conversation-starter for Christians of all persuasions.

## ‘Pitch Perfect’ gets sequel

BY SIERRA SAVELA  
Staff Writer

Last week, Universal Studios announced that they would release a sequel to the incredibly popular 2012 film “Pitch Perfect.” The release date is set for some time in 2015 with a screenplay written by Kay Cannon, the original head writer. We can assume that most of the cast will return, especially after last weekend's MTV awards, which were hosted by “Pitch Perfect's” rising star, Rebel Wilson.

The award show was opened by a “Pitch Perfect” reunion. Together they performed a brand new mash-up ranging from Miley Cyrus' “The Climb” all the way to Macklemore's “Thrift Shop” and much more in between. Actors Saylor Astin, Anna Camp, Ester Dean, Alexis Knapp, Hana Mae Lee, Ben Platt, Brittany Snow, Utkarsh Ambudkar and of course Wilson all took the stage. The only person missing from the stage seemed to be leading actress Anna Kendrick.

It is safe to assume that most of the original cast will be returning based on the show's opener. It is unknown whether Kendrick or Wilson will star in the sequel.

But are we really surprised? I mean, the first “Pitch Perfect” made Universal plenty of cash. This movie is still going strong even after being released back in early October. It made \$112 million worldwide, the album has earned over \$90 million and it is currently studio's third highest grossing film ever after “Ted” and “Bridesmaids.”

Kendrick released her own “Cups” music video to the song “You're Gonna Miss Me” by Lulu and the Lampshades. Her version of the song was made popular by her own performance in the movie.

The video was released last week, and although it might seem a little bit belated, it doesn't matter because it is awesome. Kendrick works in a diner and dreams of leaving her life behind to travel the world while she and everyone in the restaurant keep the beat going with cool cup tricks.

Comedy meets mainstream music — the combination is a recipe for a successful film. If the sequel is anything like the first, it will do just as well with the franchise's huge fan base. If the “Pitch Perfect 2” can match the first's comedic writing, impeccable acting, the rise of a capella music and endless quotes, it will be another smash hit. I look forward to a new set of quotes to go along with the oft-mimicked “pitch slapped” or “aca-awkward.”

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“ If Calvin College operated as ant colonies do, you’d likely not know anyone outside your major or department beyond a first-name basis.   
Natasha Strydhorst, “Ants’ careers” ”

## Ants’ careers tracked

BY NATASHA STRYDHORST  
Guest Writer

When it comes to workforce patterns and habits, it seems that human beings aren’t unique in our stir-craziness and “midlife crisis” behaviours. A recent study conducted by biologists at Switzerland’s University of Lausanne and reported by Nature suggests that carpenter ant (*Camponotus fellah*) workers exhibit career-changing tendencies throughout their lifetimes.

Excepting outliers, younger workers tend to be kept nearest the queen, serving as nurses. Ironically (to our species), the trend is for these to graduate to careers as cleaners in their later days, while hunting and gathering responsibilities fall to the most elderly ants.

The task of tracking six ant colonies was both lengthy and laborious: according to Rachel Reilly of UK Mail Online, the project was conducted over a six-year period and involved delicately tagging each ant with a unique, quasi-barcode sticker to track their movements via computer.

“It was a very challenging task to tag all the ants,” recalled Professor Keller, the University’s head of Ecology and Evolution. But the study yielded tangible results. Reilly writes, “honeybees go through similar transitions from young nurses to older foragers, but this study provides the clearest evidence that ants do the same.”

What’s more, socialization patterns divide along the same lines. The ants were observed interacting infrequently with those serving a different role in the colony’s business. If Calvin College operated as ant colonies do, you’d likely not know anyone outside your major or department beyond a first-name basis.

Researchers speculate that this social distancing is not so much an exclusion or superiority tactic, but more likely operates as a safety precaution in the event of disease so as to contain parasites and contamination — acting like a quarantine measure within the colony to protect the queen and her young. It is suggested that this also serves a role of convenience: it is simpler and more efficient to report foraging locations when

the hunter-gatherers can interact without disturbing the rest of the workers. Time is the bottom line in an ant colony, and strictly business relationships seem to be the norm.

Knowing the socialization patterns of ants may not lead to the next big technological innovation or cure any disease, but it certainly demonstrates the leaps and bounds technology has made to bring us to the point where such an extensive project is possible.

Though many of the study’s conclusions lead to further questions, the project opens the door for these to be answered via the technology that made the endeavor possible. The task was an ambitious one, and has made use of relatively new animal-tracking technologies to reveal what could previously only be

guessed at. Entomologist Anna Dornhaus of the

University of Arizona expressed her excitement about the research, reporting, “This is one of the first empirical studies that have come out as a result [of these new automatic tracking methods].”

As with all new biological research projects, the study presents an exciting opportunity to discover behaviour outside our own species and shortens the void between us and knowledge of the world — even if it is by the merest ant’s stride.

## Kidney bean leaves snare bed bugs

BY GENEVA LANGELAND  
Staff Writer

Bed bugs, beware — the scourge of homes, hotels and hospitals may someday be defeated, thanks to a group of U.S. university scientists and a palmful of leaves.

Researchers in California and Kentucky recently uncovered the bed-bug-slaying secrets of the kidney bean plant; now, in the spirit of biomimicry, they’re attempting to replicate the plant’s defensive weaponry.

There’s a reason we’re admonished to “not let the bed bugs bite.” These stealthy insects thrive in human habitats, where the four-millimeter creatures emerge at night to dine on our blood. They leave behind itchy rashes, blood-smearing feces and heebie-jeebies.

Bed bugs are notoriously tough to kill. They can survive for days at below-freezing temperatures and withstand the evaporation of a third of their weight in water.

Adults can pass an entire year without feeding.

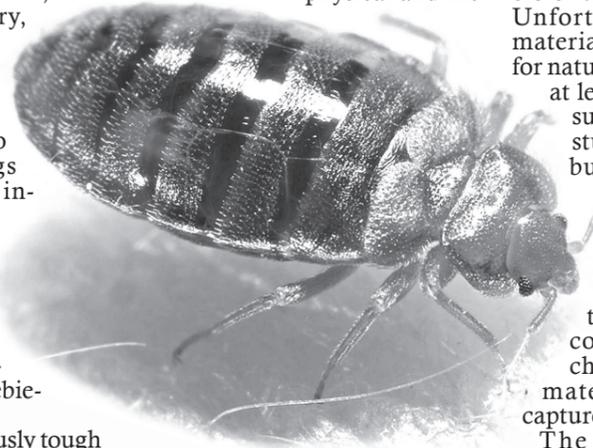
Many have developed resistance to common pesticides, much to their exterminators’ chagrin.

This increased resistance, combined with a highly mobile human population, has allowed bed bug numbers to skyrocket. Across the United States, bed bug exterminators increased 57 percent between 2005 and 2010. With many pesticides rendered unreliable, exterminators must vacuum, freeze or bake entire buildings to make sure all the bugs are killed.

But these methods are costly, imprecise and inconvenient. Now, scientists are seeking help from the creatures that have been quietly building anti-insect arsenals for millions of years: plants. For centuries, people in Serbia, Bulgaria and other parts of southeast Europe have relied on leaves from kidney bean plants as quick and easy bed bug control. Residents toss a handful of kidney bean leaves around their beds at night, and bugs wandering across the leaves are perma-

nently snared within a few steps. Remove and burn the leaves, and the bugs are gone for good.

Recently, researchers at the University of California Irvine and the University of Kentucky teamed up to figure out just how these kidney bean leaves work. They published a paper this month in the *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*, a journal dedicated to showcasing projects that link different aspects of the physical and life



sciences. Trichomes fabricated, the team tested the bug-snagging powers of their synthetic creations. Unfortunately, the synthetic materials proved no substitute for nature’s weaponry — not yet, at least. So far, the synthetic surfaces made the bed bugs stumble, but not stop. The bugs tended to slip their feet into and out of the trichomes’ arches without becoming permanently snagged. Even when wandering across the hybrid surfaces, encountering synthetic trichomes tipped in natural material, the bugs evaded capture.

The researchers double-checked their trichomes’ sharpness and durability; all was well. They began to suspect that natural trichome stalks are partially or completely hollow, allowing the trichomes more flexibility to drag along insects’ legs before catching and piercing the cuticle.

Despite this initial setback, the researchers are still hopeful that their materials and techniques can be honed to yield a successful product. There’s plenty of motivation driving this project forward—pesticide-free bed bug snaggers could do wonders for extermination efforts. Bed bug-proof floor mats, for example, could be shifted and reused; bug-snagging panels could be attached to door thresholds and bed frames.

Michael Potter is an entomologist at the University of Kentucky and a collaborator on the bed bug project. “Nature is a hard act to follow,” he told University of California reporters, “but the benefits could be enormous. Imagine if every bedbug inadvertently brought into a dwelling was captured before it had a chance to bite and multiply.”

“Plants exhibit extraordinary abilities to trap insects,” commented Catherine Loudon, entomologist at the University of California Irvine and the paper’s lead author. “Modern scientific techniques let us fabricate materials at a microscopic level, with the potential to ‘not let the bedbugs bite’ without pesticides.”

science fields.

The researchers included a doctoral student, three entomologists and a chemist. Using electron microscopy, the team surveyed the surface of a kidney bean leaf and discovered its secret: a field of trichomes, or microscopic hooked hairs. Imagine walking across a room where the floor is studded with inch-thick meat hooks that arch ankle-high, sharp points curving downward to aim at your bare feet. Then imagine that you have six feet, all slipping, sliding and snagging.

This, according to electron microscope images, is what bed bugs face when they stroll across a kidney bean leaf. Sometimes, an insect’s foot slides unharmed from underneath a trichome’s arch. Usually, though, a hook stabs through the bug’s armored cuticle within seconds of stepping onto the leaf. The bed bug can escape only by breaking the sturdy trichome or by ripping through its own foot.

Once they’d discovered the trapping mechanism, the team attempted to replicate natural trichomes with synthetic substances. They used a leaf to make a negative mold that contained a precise impression of each trichome. They then filled in the impressions with a positive mold, producing a synthetic surface studded with replicated trichomes, just as sharp and sturdy as the originals. A va-



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### SCIENCE SEMINAR SCHEDULE

#### BIOLOGY

“Electrophysiological evidence for normal proportions of inhibitory (GABA) intra-hemispheric synaptic connections following abnormal development of corpus callosum axons”

Student Josiah Sinclair, Professors Loren Haarsma (physics) and Paul Moes (psychology)  
Tuesday, April 30 SBI 10 at 3:45 p.m.

#### CHEMISTRY / BIOCHEMISTRY

Chemistry & Biochemistry Awards Celebration

Professor Mark Muyskens

Thursday, May 2 SBI 10 at 11:30 a.m.

#### MATHEMATICS / STATISTICS

Pizza, Geometry, and Awards

Student Kalee Ritsema, Professor Randall Pruijm

Thursday, May 2 NH 276 at 3:30 p.m.

Sam Kerk, “Hot Seat”

# Hot Seat: Aaron Meckes and Sam Kerk

BY JESS KOSTER  
Sports Editor

Sports editor Jess Koster sat down with senior thrower Aaron Meckes and junior distance runner Sam Kerk to discuss sports, life and other entertaining topics. This is hot seat:

**Koster: First of all, how old are you?**

Meckes: I'm 21.

Kerk: I'm 20.

**Where are you from?**

AM: I'm from Bay City, Mich.

SK: Hartland, Wis.

**How many siblings do you have?**

AM: I have four siblings, two older brothers, and then a younger brother and a younger sister.

SK: I just have a younger brother.

**What is your major?**

AM: Secondary ed with integrated science, hopefully going to be a high school science teacher.

SK: I'm pre-med with a bio-chemistry major and a Spanish minor.

**What brought you to Calvin?**

SK: A friend of mine from high school was a year older than me. She came here and I heard about it through her.

AM: Both my older brothers went here; they had good experiences. I talked to them a lot, and then the coaches were really nice. Just a combination of things.

**What is the best part about running?**

SK: I think it's just fun to compete. You get to match up against people. It's tough, distance running. Everyone's hurting in a race. It just gets to be who wants it more I guess.

**And the best part about throwing?**

AM: I think similarly, just to echo, that the competition is the best part. The tone of throwing is a little ... the atmosphere, the culture is a little different than any other sport. You can chat while you're practicing or between throws. Some people like to, but I don't like to talk when I'm throwing. But some people talk, you can do that, get away with those things, it's different. It's 50 percent social, I'd say, and the other half is competing. So it's just a little different.

SK: I did that with distance running too. The camaraderie with the guys, you go out on these long runs, and you're talking the whole time and joking around. You really get to know your teammates.

**What do you hope to do when you grow up?**

AM: Well, I'd like to be a teacher to start here soon, but eventually I kinda wanna get into school administration, maybe as the principal or something like that.

SK: Or the manager of a NFL team.

AM: Or yeah, if an NFL team wants me to come running, I'd do that too.

SK: I'd like to be a doctor. Pre-med I guess.

**Who were your influences growing up?**

AM: I said earlier that I always tried to emulate my older brothers and so I always just wanted to be like them and do what they did and so I did a lot of that. I think I learned a lot from

them and my dad especially. I think my dad and brothers were great examples and I try to do everything I can to move along, not the same path, but they've been inspirations to me.

SK: My parents were huge in my developing and just encouraging me to do anything and to live in a godly way. I try to take what they've taught me in a lot of circumstances. My high school track coach was big with running, pushing me and encouraging me to run against myself. Not compare yourself to others.

AM: And that answer that I said, I don't wanna say that I hate my mom or anything or my little brother or sister too. They all have meant a lot to me, my whole family.

**What advice do you have for younger track athletes?**

SK: Just have fun with it. On the distance running side, I hear about young kids whose coaches

push them too hard, they run too much and they get burned out. Just have fun, enjoy competing and develop a love for the nature of the sport. I think it will take you further.

AM: I think that would be the biggest advice I could give. Just to have fun with it and enjoy it. I feel like it sometimes becomes a little too much about performance but you can have fun without being great. I think that's important.

SK: You can still be super competitive.

AM: It's fun to win! Not saying that it's not. That's when I have the most fun but it's fun to just enjoy it for what it is and not just do it because you are good at it or because you feel like that is something you should do. It's important that you enjoy it.

**Describe one of your most embarrassing moments.**

SK: There's so many. AM: Sam is a clutz. Not to embarrass him. I've never met someone who stubs their toe, or walks into walls, trips over clothing, just everything. Runs into door knobs. Opens doors into himself.

SK: On runs sometimes we ... I think one instance my freshman year, being the punk freshman I was, we were on a run, we had our shirts off and went running by a few girls and I did the classic like, "Girls which way to the weight room, that way" and then flexed and they didn't respond. They weren't impressed at all. So I still get crap for that.

AM: Can you think of any for me? I can't think of any off the top of my head. I think people just understand that I'm just kinda stupid.

SK: I think that it's a good one that your All-American plack is a picture of you, you're putting the shot and your singlets way up. Your belly's hanging out.

AM: Yeah my belly's hanging out, my singlet's halfway up my chest in that picture. Yeah that's nice.

**What is the best Calvin dorm?**

SK: Schultze.

AM: Schultze man! Third Schultze shout out!

SK: Second Schultze. Shout out to Shawn Silva.

**If you were stranded on a desert island, which of your teammates would you eat first?**

SK: I knew this one was coming too!

AM: On the way here, we were reading old issues of *Chimes*, like all right! What questions are they going to ask?

SK: You go with a track athlete, I'm going to go with a distance runner I think.

AM: I mean I gotta assume it'd be Ben DeWaal-Malefyt. I don't know if you know Ben but he's huge. So he's got a lot of meat

on him.

SK: He's big guy.

AM: I'd gotta assume it'd be Ben. But I like him so but I don't wanna say someone I don't like to get rid of. So I'll just say Ben.

SK: Yeah, that's a good point.

He's gonna be mad at me for saying this but I'm going to say Dan. Kerr. But it's the same thing, he'd be such great company on an island but he'd also be so delicious. He'd contribute so much food for so long. I feel like you'd just have to eat him. Gotta take the hit.

**If you could trade places with any other person for a week, famous or not, living or dead, real or fictional, with whom would it be?**

SK: Boy, that is a very good question. Not gonna say Jesus on this one because he had a tough life.

AM: Yeah! That's a lot of responsibility.

SK: I would not be able to do that!

AM: I would probably trade spots with Martin Mayhew, he's the general manager of the Lions. I love football. I especially love the administrative side of it so NFL draft on Thursday, I'm addicted to studying and free-agency and stuff.

SK: He printed off a 100-page document about each player in the draft.

AM: Yeah, I have full scouting reports of every draft player.

SK: He sits there and reads them while the draft's going on.

AM: I'm a huge nerd about the draft. I love reading about the draft. I would really love to be in the NFL front office for a week and just kinda see how things went. That would be a lot of fun.

SK: For me I would say, the distance runner in me would say Galen Rupp, he's like the top American distance runner 'cause he has the cushiest life ever. Nike caters to his every need.

AM: 'cept for he runs 15 miles

a day.

SK: He's got the greatest coach. He's very successful. Other than that, I would say that Justin Timberlake has a pretty interesting life. He's just the man. He does everything. He's been on SNL. It'd be fun to see what his life is like.

**If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to see play you?**

SK: This is a good question. Brad Pitt. No just kidding. Zach Galifianakis would be yours.

AM: Me? Is that the guy who's Alan in "The Hangover"? These guys think I act like Alan from "The Hangover." That's probably right actually. He's a little chunkier in the mid section there. A little goofy. Kinda weird. That's probably a good fit for me.

SK: I can't think of anyone dorky enough.

AM: You ever see "Grey's Anatomy"?

Yes.

AM: The guy that plays George is very much like him.

SK: No. No. No.

**T. R. Knight?**

AM: Is that his name?

I think so.

AM: I don't know about that actor but the characters of George and Sam are pretty similar. It's very funny to me. That's the best I can come up with.

SK: The fact that you just admitted to *Chimes* that you watch "Grey's Anatomy" is pretty funny.

AM: Currently addicted to "Grey's Anatomy." I watch it on Netflix a lot. I'm on season five. Don't tell me anything beyond that!

**What is the best pizza topping?**

AM: Can I pick two? Can I pick a combination? K. Everyone thinks this is really gross but my favorite pizza is ham and green olives. Love olives, it's one of my favorite foods and I think that pizza is delicious.

SK: I'd say Canadian bacon, which is basically ham, and pineapple. We always had that back home.

Read more of the interview online at [calvin.edu/chimes](http://calvin.edu/chimes).



Aaron Meckes

PHOTOS BY CALVIN.EDU



Sam Kerk

## MIAA Standings

### Men's Lacrosse

1. Adrian
2. Albion
3. Trine
4. Hope
5. Calvin
6. Olivet
7. Alma

### Women's Lacrosse

1. Adrian
2. Alma
3. Hope
4. Albion
5. Calvin
6. Trine
7. Olivet

### Baseball

1. Hope
2. Adrian
3. Trine
4. Calvin
5. Olivet

### Softball

6. Albion
7. Alma
8. Kalamazoo
1. Trine
2. Alma
3. St. Mary's
4. Hope
5. Adrian
6. Calvin
7. Kalamazoo
8. Olivet
9. Albion

### Men's Golf

1. Calvin 304
2. Hope 311
3. Adrian 313
4. Trine 318

### Women's Golf

1. Olivet 330
2. Saint Mary's 353
3. Hope 361

### Women's Tennis

4. Calvin 370
1. Hope
2. Albion
3. Kalamazoo
4. St. Mary's
5. Calvin
6. Trine
7. Alma
8. Adrian
9. Olivet

### Men's Tennis

1. Calvin
1. Hope
1. Kalamazoo
4. Albion
5. Alma
6. Trine
7. Adrian

Rankings as of April 23, 2013

## Knights Schedule

### Friday, April 26

Men's golf hosts MIAA #2 at Watermark at 11 a.m.

Men's Tennis at Hope at 8 a.m.

### Saturday, April 27

Men's golf hosts MIAA #3 at Watermark at 10:30 a.m.

Women's lacrosse v. Olivet at 12:30 a.m.

Softball at Hope at 1:00 p.m.

Men's lacrosse v. Olivet at 3 p.m.

### Monday, April 29

Baseball at Cornerstone at 3:00 p.m.

Men's lacrosse v. Elmhurst at 6:00 p.m.



# CAMPUS SAFETY REPORT

4/15/2013

Campus safety took a report of a larceny of a bicycle east of North Hall. The bike was stolen sometime between April 4 and April 5. The bicycle, described as a red Magna Mountain bike, was not locked at the time it was stolen.

4/20/2013

A Calvin employee reported that a window had been broken on a college owned vehicle at an off-campus location. The employee was instructed to contact the Grand Rapids Police Department to make a vandalism report.

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1					7	2		

SUDOKU

## Super Crossword

### SWITCH UNITS

**ACROSS**

- 1 Requests at bar doors
- 8 Liquid-filled vessel in which to clean things
- 15 Map source
- 20 Smears with animal fat
- 21 Dish of soybeans boiled in their pods
- 22 Horse sound
- 23 Most valuable Scrabble square, reduced?
- 25 Fish store favorite
- 26 Peter of film
- 27 Dress edge
- 28 To that place
- 30 Impersonal little kiss, enlarged?
- 36 Celebs' rides
- 41 Summer, in Québec
- 42 Military order
- 43 Very quickly, enlarged?
- 46 "Casino" co-star Joe
- 51 Williams of tennis
- 52 Dog, often
- 53 Time-stamps anew
- 55 Jails

- 57 NHL trophy, enlarged?
- 62 Flight part
- 63 Airport transport
- 66 Tiny tot
- 67 ROTC grads
- 68 Alternate title of this puzzle
- 73 Exec's deg.
- 75 Food court pizza chain
- 76 With 44-Down, Kenobi of sci-fi
- 77 Cloverleaf components
- 80 Failure to act promptly, enlarged?
- 84 Now-rare skill
- 86 Frequent downhiller's purchase
- 87 Role-play
- 90 — Butter (Nabisco cookie)
- 91 Razz
- 92 Harvard or Yale, reduced?
- 97 Post-failure comment
- 99 "— you ready?"
- 100 Writer with morals

- 101 Walk around looking for work, reduced?
- 108 In proportion
- 109 Thumbs-downs
- 110 See 101-Down
- 116 White wader
- 117 Skeptically, enlarged?
- 123 "The Cloister and the Hearth" novelist Charles
- 124 "Free Your Mind" R&B group
- 125 Nation next to Georgia
- 126 Earnestness
- 127 Wanted
- 128 It has three-pointed antlers

**DOWN**

- 1 "Tell — the judge!"
- 2 Flit
- 3 Ad biz award
- 4 Fido's food
- 5 Drum effect
- 6 Uncool sort
- 7 Dallas-to-Laredo dir.
- 8 Visitors' first words
- 9 "— to the list"

- 10 Blue
- 11 Dr. provider
- 12 La — (city in Bolivia)
- 13 "Follow Me —" (Kipling poem)
- 14 Final bowling frames
- 15 Bit of hijinks
- 16 Zipper parts
- 17 Limber
- 18 Feel similarly
- 19 "Jaws" peril
- 24 "All right, I get it!"
- 29 Snicker bit
- 31 One-eighty
- 32 "— -di-dah!"
- 33 Western Amerind
- 34 Opposite of old, in Bonn
- 35 La Brea stuff
- 36 Talks like the cat Sylvester
- 37 Not reactive
- 38 2000 #1 hit for Santana
- 39 Infant's bodysuit
- 40 Spanish lady
- 44 See 76-Across
- 45 Some chess pcs.
- 46 "At once!"
- 47 — de vie
- 48 Deadlocks
- 49 Official doc.
- 50 Cause adherents

- 53 Fix, as a loose board
- 54 They blink
- 56 Swims with the fishes, maybe
- 58 A couple of runners at the corners, in baseball
- 59 — Lingus
- 60 Sci-fi skipper
- 61 Singer Lisa
- 64 Limp as —
- 65 Icy hazard
- 69 Lith. and Ukr., once
- 70 Workweek ender: Abbr.
- 71 Address of "Dr. No"
- 72 Infant's toy
- 73 Hit 1990s computer game
- 74 Scorch
- 78 Spaghetti sauce brand
- 79 Bug causing a sore throat
- 81 They result in two outs: Abbr.
- 82 "Lost" actor Daniel — Kim
- 83 Moo goo — pan
- 85 Artist Yoko

- 88 Raised a din
- 89 "Mother" of Calcutta
- 92 Mad feeling
- 93 Big name
- 94 "Truly"
- 95 Cato's 1,505
- 96 100-yr. span
- 97 Hairy sitcom cousin
- 98 Liquefied
- 101 With 110-Across, where divas deliver
- 102 Prodding person
- 103 Santa-tracking org.
- 104 Belief set
- 105 One feeding
- 106 Provide, as with a quality
- 107 Extensive, for short
- 111 "How stupid —!"
- 112 Not new
- 113 Lucid
- 114 Author Wiesel
- 115 Macy's logo
- 118 Suffix with Carol
- 119 Tellies
- 120 — polloi
- 121 Farming sci.
- 122 Taint

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#1,533 Average time of solution: 67 minutes.

Prof's Say The Darndest Things



"I know you are all Calvinists, but can you play a little more seductively?"  
- Professor Varineau, music

"If you grew up in Chernobyl, that wouldn't be funny."  
- Professor Vanden Bosch, English

"If you've only seen Disney films and Veggie Tales, this is going to be tooootally different."  
- Professor Romanowski, CAS

"If you teach at Calvin College, you have to have an attorney."  
- Professor Bratt, history

## Letters to the editor

**English department dishes unsustainable**

Dear Editor,

Since I first came to Calvin, Calvin has been known for promoting sustainability and stewardship of the environment. As a student, I was proud of the efforts on the part of students and faculty alike to promote creation care and continue to improve how we take care of our campus. However, when I joined the faculty of the English department this past year, I was shocked to find out that our break room not only has no recycle bins, but only uses plastic utensils and paper plates, cups and bowls! Why no communal dishes? We do have dish soap and sponges next to the sink! I don't know how other departments' break rooms look, but surely each one should at least have one of those nifty three-piece recycle/trash bins we see everywhere on campus. I'm deeply disappointed to find out that there is a discrepancy between what students and the community see the college doing to promote sustainability and what the reality is in the faculty break rooms.

*Julia Mason, '09*

**Editorial overgeneralizes**

Dear Editor,

The Apr. 19 editorial states "but it hasn't happened in my four years" in reference to students' willingness to vie for student senate seats. I would like to point to the elections for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 student senate executive team, both of which had five fantastic teams composed of strong and enthusiastic student leaders. Moreover, I feel confident in stating that a poll regarding the 2009-2010 student senate would cause the author to second-guess the broad assertions made in the article. I cannot speak for this year's student senate, but I can speak for a student senate that did great things less than four years ago. To that end, the author of this article should give pause before proffering sweeping language that generalizes over a large time period.

*Ben Shoemaker, Student Body President '09-10*

“ What I propose is that there is a kind of synaptic gap between the music and us, and it is there that God dwells, transforming and working through the music... ”  
Jon Hielkema, “God a mediator”

## FROM THE EDITOR



The cool light of your computer screen glows in the impending dusk of your bedroom. Squinting at the text, which seems to be getting smaller by the minute, you scroll through yet another list of qualifications you don't meet. You've been seated in the same attitude for the last hour, clicking through page after page, your heart jumping at the occasional listing that sounds relatively interesting or promising. The word “resume” has begun to look like another language. A feeling of darkness descends.

You're looking for a summer job or internship. Widely acknowledged as one of the banes of college life, this tedious annual process can really just take the life out of your eyes. It's exhausting looking for opportunities that will be physically and mentally tolerable as well as respectable additions to our ever-perfected resumes. The job market is tough for adults right now, so students are getting the particularly short end of the straw.

For many of us, the part of the process that's particularly difficult is when we are asked to talk about ourselves in essay format. “What are your strengths?” they ask. “What professional skills could you bring to this job?”

It gets even worse in face-to-face interviews. Getting a job or internship these days feels more and more like selling yourself each time you do it. You're being asked to present a completely competent and positive version of yourself, to hedge any weaknesses, to make yourself look good. It just feels dishonest.

Or does it? Is this unwillingness to boast universal? If I may venture a commentary on my own culture: I think it's a Calvin thing.

It might not be our fault. Although not all of us are Dutch or have been raised Christian Reformed (gasp, I know!), the classic hard-working but humble and understated persona tends to wear off. We are conditioned not to broadcast our accomplishments lest we sound like braggarts.

Anonymous donations, shared

authorship of documents, group paper editing sessions, attributing accomplishments to luck or grace, talking up others rather than ourselves — these are all common in the Calvin circle. Several professors have mentioned to me that Calvin students are loathe to tell you about their accomplishments.

It's like we're afraid to be good at something.

I'm here to tell you it's okay. Embrace that job application's personal essay about a time when you showed leadership in the workplace. Tell that interviewer that you are the most qualified candidate. It's unlikely someone will accuse you of lying or hypocrisy.

Sometimes when we shy away from talking about our strengths, it can seem like false humility. We can come off as unnecessarily self-deprecating or self-righteous. There is a way to broadcast our accomplishments without bragging. Sure, it's a fragile balance, but it's one worth working on.

Learn to advocate for yourself, because you can't count on others to do it for you. Don't let that Calvinist humility overcome you. Don't sell yourself short.

~ajz

## God a mediator for music

BY JONATHAN HIELKEMA  
Staff Writer

Friend and fellow cultural discerner Tom Speelman published an opinion piece in last week's *Chimes*. His article dealt with an Andrew Bird concert that happened last week Friday in the midst of the Festival of Faith and Music. As is usual at Calvin, little to no conversation happened because of it. While most of the article commented on the concert itself — I also enjoyed the concert immensely and would recommend you read his thoughts — it was the broader point of the article that caught my interest more. As he is about to conclude the article, he makes the following statement:

*While God is present in all genres of music, certainly, it seems that he is most visible right now within the genre of American roots music, and I think people see that. Why else would Mumford & Sons be a headlining act in 2013?*

Here are a number of claims that, outside of Calvin College, would seem audacious. To suggest that God is present in music at all would offend a certain camp, and going any further would only elicit greater resistance. The fact that this cultural discerner was able to embed such a claim in an opening clause, as if it would go uncontested, should be celebrated. Through what has now been decades of hard work, the ethos of Calvin's engagement with culture has become one that not only works but outshines Calvin's official engagement with almost any other issue. Cultural discernment remains a final hold-out, the last bridge I have retained with Reformed theology.

Let us move deeper into the statement. I want to work further with what Speelman writes, looking somewhat into how God could be “felt” through music and what role roots music plays in the conversation.

One word that the Festival organizers used to define how we find God in music is the term “music of epiphany.” An epiphany is a sudden, striking realization, usually meant in a positive way. It is the word for which a light bulb over a person's head became the graphic symbol. Therefore, to say that music can give us epiphanies or realizations of God's presence is to say that music can somehow show us something of God. While asking “can God be found in music?” to a group of Calvin students might give you a relatively positive response, I want to be more skeptical. If we think that we have found God in a Josh Garrels song, we can probably produce no proof that would convince someone else who did not already agree that God could be found in music.

I would also argue that you cannot “find” God in the form or content of the music itself. Parse sheet music, analyze instruments, drop a camera down the throat of a singer, analyze recordings or go to a thousand live shows and you will not find God. Look into yourself. Do you see God there? Is God at work in your brain? Pick apart the grey matter and look — just be careful. I skip over the possibility of actually finding something we could call God this way only because I find it to be an absurdity. We cannot find anything recognizable to a strong notion of God in the material world. Not yet, not with the tools we have, and probably never. Yet I believe and I agree that we can, in the experience of listening to music, discover something of

God. How could this be?

My initial thought, and the one I will briefly pursue here, is that what we call God can be found in a gap. Imagine those diagrams of nerve endings you had to study (or will have to study) in a psychology or anatomy class. You know that nerves do not actually touch. The electrical signals and chemical receptors have to cross a small connective gap called a synapse.

What I propose is that there is a kind of synaptic gap between the music and us, and it is there that God dwells, transforming and working through the music and through it binding us more deeply and lovingly to God's creation. In this scenario, God is not some factual or reducible element of “good” music or “true” lyrics. Instead, God is a mediator, a conduit for messages calling us to imagine new possibilities and act on them. The music harbors God, and it does its job well enough that you cannot find God by picking and criticizing. It is only when the work of criticism is finished and a new openness to surprise established that God can work on the music with us. If we try to encapsulate or formalize God's role in all of this, we will be constructing, and God is precisely that which is not constructed, that which calls us into deeper love of the material world in which we live.

How does roots music play into this theory? At the moment, there is a lively and commercially thriving collection of artists that appropriate roots music and play acoustic instruments. Mumford and Sons makes a good stand-in for the whole group. We cannot deny that this band is a headlining act in 2013. We know the band regularly addresses spiritual concerns in their lyrics and favour an uplifting and inspirational form in their songs. Can we, however, infer from those two facts that we and, more importantly, the record-buying public, can see God in Mumford and Sons in a special way? I think we can say that Christians in the United States do have an affinity for this kind of music, and they express that affinity in the act of purchasing many, many records. Commercial success — and here I suspect Tom would agree with me — is not indicative of divine presence. Nor, I would say, is the presence of spiritual content indicative of divine presence.

We cannot ever be sure of divine presence. God speaks to people in many different ways. Many of those who have bought Mumford albums have probably had some kind of epiphany. Most, I would wager, have not, and yearn for other aspects of that music. Let us never be too hasty to either exclude or include God from or in our actions. Overemphasize presence and we risk making something appear “safe.” Overemphasize God's absence from culture and we make ourselves either lazy consumers or the paranoid besieged. Here at Calvin we are privileged to be privy to all sorts of enlightening conversations and articles like Tom's. I hope that we can all tune our ears to them and find, not safety, but confidence in how we look into this sacred and wild world.



## Proper English has a proper context

BY REBECCA STOUT  
Guest Writer

Kevin: Happy Birthday Big Sis! You're basically a grandma now!  
Me: You're basically a punk!  
Haha. See you soon!

Me, a minute later: Also, you should probably reconsider any aspirations you may have had for a career writing Hallmark cards.

Kevin: Well you know! Haha I look forward to it! When I saw you commented again I was honestly scared my grammar was bad or something! I'm so relieved to know it is merely just another career path I am not headed down.

The above is a Facebook exchange I had with my brother on my 22nd birthday, and his response disturbed me. And then it got me thinking. I've spent the last four years studying English, but what does that mean for life after graduation? Do I have an obligation to the English language? If so, what might that look like? Do I want my own brother to be scared when he talks to me? The stereotypical English major caricature would suggest that my duty is to vigilantly preserve the integrity of English wherever I go because the fate of the world depends on the general population's ability to distinguish there, their and they're, its and it's, who and whom. But is that really the kind of English major I want to be?

Those sound like private questions, but I want to share my thoughts with you because that stereotypical English major caricature seems to have invaded Overheard at Calvin this year and I want to put in my two cents and maybe even play a small role in making the debate between correctors and “correctees” a little more constructive. I was surprised to find myself just as annoyed as anyone else about the grammar policing (as in, “Wait a minute, I'm an English major; shouldn't I be happy that people care about using good English?”), but now that I've figured out why, I hope my reflections can pro-

vide a thoughtful counter to the current culture on Overheard at Calvin, start some conversations, and encourage us all to think about the way we use language every day, because language is a powerful thing.

I want my use of language to be governed by respect, clarity and relationship-building, all serving the overarching goal of good communication. The ability to speak Standard English without error is important, of course. In formal situations and conversations with those in authority, speaking correct Standard English is a way to show and earn respect. Also, because such relationships tend to be structured and formal, adhering to the boundaries and protocol that support that structure allows for the relationship to develop. However, in informal and peer-to-peer situations, “proper English” does not carry the same respectful connotation, nor does it facilitate relationships in the same way. In these casual situations, the respectful and friendly thing to do is to focus more on what someone says rather than how they say it. I would consider constantly correcting friends' grammar in casual conversation to be disrespectful. And there is no doubt that such an approach has a strong tendency to inhibit communication among peers, which is poisonous to relationships. It's difficult to communicate and build relationships if your friends feel the need to watch their every word around you. I know what this feels like. During an intense card game with some English major friends, I finally managed to have a respectable hand. After counting up my score, I exclaimed, “I did good!” Almost immediately came the response: “well.” The correction wasn't intended maliciously, but I said very little for the remainder of the game. My embarrassment was probably heightened by the fact that having one's grammar corrected by a fellow English major makes one feel like a bad English major, but I suspect that when non-English majors are

corrected, they also feel embarrassed and like bad English speakers. This is not how I want to treat people with my words.

“But wait,” you may say, “you also said something about clarity a little while ago, and isn't good grammar critical for clarity?” Well, to an extent. But it is important to realize that “grammatically correct” and “clear” are far from synonymous. If you have ever tried to transcribe or read a transcription of an interview, you are already aware that we constantly and effortlessly process and understand very fragmented and error-filled speech every day. And if you've ever read high-level literary criticism, you are already aware that it is all too easy to write a flawless sentence that no one can understand. Grammar mistakes can, of course, obscure meaning, and in such instances, asking a friend to clarify what he or she meant is both appropriate and very different from being a grammar vigilante; such a request is marked by respect and a desire for relationship, to really understand what another person is trying to tell you.

Language is something of a miracle. We are able to understand not just perfect sentences, which would be miracle enough, but also all manner of irregularities — accents, slang, dialects, mistakes, new words, changing usage, the efforts of ESL speakers — without explicit training in how to decipher such things. Part of the beauty of language is its flexibility; English has successfully survived plenty of mistakes and changes over the centuries, and will continue to do so. So if you understand what your friends tell you, let the mistakes go. And have a little fun. Experiment with language even if it means making some mistakes. Make up some new words. Play. Just maybe not in your next job interview.

