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Students provide Christmas gifts for needy children

by Aaron Wegner
Bison staff writer

As the Christmas season and spirit slowly tiptoe near, one charity program is taking place on the Harding campus that truly exemplifies the selfless and weighty season often brings. For the third consecutive year, Harding students are conducting the Angel Tree Project, a program of prison fellowship that allows children of imprisoned parents to receive gifts from those parents.

The project was started at Harding three years ago by April Merriweather, and is presently being run by her brother Nick, who is a freshman at Harding, and senior Jeff Baker. Other volunteers who have played an integral role in this year's project are seniors Jamie Bruney, Andrea Miller, Allison Rector and junior Allison Spindler.

The project itself is actually very simple in nature. Parents in prison who want gifts for their children fill out an application and send it to Harding.

Volunteers then call the families with whom the children are presently staying in order to confirm the requests for the children. Upon confirmation, an angel hearing the requested gifts is placed upon a Christmas tree in the Student Center. Students and faculty then select an angel off the tree and purchase the designated gift for the child.

Last Christmas season, the Angel Tree project at Harding was able to tend to the needs of 75 percent of Arkansas children. The project itself is placed in the hands of the children. The scheduled delivery date is Saturday, Dec. 14, and many volunteers are still needed for this process. "Meeting the children whom the presents are for is undeniably the most rewarding part of the experience," Kennedy said. "I am amazed at how well Harding students turn out to help support this project, and I hope this year will be no exception," Baker said.

"We are able to show families that they are not alone," Kennedy said. "Our actions often help with the reconciliation process between a parent and a child. This project also allows Christians to share the Gospel with others and to do what Jesus would have done."

"When you see the face of a child light up upon receiving the gifts, you quickly realize that all of the time and effort are really worth it," Baker said.

Bonita Barton poses with her "little sister," Patricia. Barton was active in a number of service projects during her short life.

Bonita Barton, 18, was also a third Harding freshman, Amber Pilley, 18, was also injured in the accident and was treated at a local hospital.

Citizens of a small town are upset over an issue full of hot air. McKinney's hot-air balloon was stolen from his driveway shortly before noon last Saturday. The theft is a federal offense because the balloon is an aircraft.

The Harding Bison was usually quiet Tuesday, Dec. 3, as the photograph of a smiling, sweet-faced Bonita Barton was projected onto the large screen above the Benson stage. Students and faculty sat in somber silence throughout the service. Students and faculty sat in somber silence throughout the service. The event was a somber celebration of her life and a somber remembrance of her death.

The day began as a routine trip back to school after Thanksgivng break ended in disaster with the death of Barton. Barton was killed when the car in which she was a passenger hydroplaned on a rain-slick highway striking a telephone pole near Lynchburg, Va., approximately an hour from her home. Eighteen-year-old April Lewis, also a Harding freshman and the driver of the vehicle, received multiple internal injuries, including a punctured lung, three broken ribs and a broken collar bone. A third Harding freshman, Amber Pilley, 18, was also injured in the accident and was treated at a local hospital.

The final goal of this project is placing the presents in the hands of the children. The scheduled delivery date is Saturday, Dec. 14, and many volunteers are still needed for this process. "Meeting the children whom the presents are for is undeniably the most rewarding part of the experience," Kennedy said. "I am amazed at how well Harding students turn out to help support this project, and I hope this year will be no exception," Baker said.

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citizens of a small town in arkansas are upset over an issue full of hot air. mckinney's hot-air balloon was stolen from his driveway shortly before noon last saturday. the theft is a federal offense because the balloon is an aircraft.
Christmas at my house has always been a little on the strange side, though, I’m sure, no stranger than any other “normal” American family’s. Hand in hand with the beautiful star sitting only slightly crooked atop a bejeweled tree has always been Elvis Presley. My mother has been playing the same Elvis Presley Christmas CD” during the Christmas season for as long as I can remember. In fact, I vaguely recall there being an actual Elvis record that would spin and crackle and spin and howl those lovely Elvis tunes. Hearing Elvis dreaming of a white Christmas is just one of those things that is next to impossible to bury in one’s subconscious.

Christmas traditions are probably some of the strongest, most personal family traditions. In the Stark family, our Christmas traditions are deemed practically sacred. Take, for instance, the tradition my brother and I share: arguing over who will wear the presents. We continue this tradition just as faithfully and energetically today, at ages 27 and 22, as we did at the ages of 10 and 5. Oh no, we don’t let that stagnation of maturity stand in our way.

My brother, whom I call JimBo, has his own special Christmas tradition—one he has nurtured and developed throughout the years. This tradition involves the careful scrutiny of each and every present under the tree. He tests each gift for weight, size, texture and unusual-appearence-caused-by-gift-wrap.

He positions himself on his stomach underneath the tree, in a militaristic crouching position, so that he is on direct eye level with each gift being scrutinized. He then proceeds to tap, shake, rattle and otherwise observe the gift. Over the years, this tradition has grown from something rather cute for my mom to tell the neighbors about to something that causes all family members to tense up for fear of my now grown brother tipping over the tree as he maneuvers himself on his gift-scrutinizing mission.

My dad, of course, has his own special tradition, one so secretive and sadistic in nature that I took him 14 years to even discover it. When my brother and I were very little, my father took it upon himself to record the sounds of Christmas, not the sights...just the sounds. Unlike most fathers who purchased some type of video recorder, my father was a visionary. He decided to use his tape recorder to record history. Dad used to turn on the recorder and hide it somewhere in the room while we all opened Christmas gifts. This whole recording process was unbeknownst to me until I was about 14 years old and I accidentally ran across some of Dad’s taped conversations in a drawer. With my curiosity pepped, I popped a tape labeled “Christmas ’79” into the stereo, and immediately, the sounds of a little black handheld recorder, little Andrea babbling about her new baby doll, her new Barbie—interrupted by high pitched squeals when her brother tried to run her down with his new Hot Wheels. To add to this humiliation, Dad had coerced me into singing an adorable yet painful rendition of Jingle Bells by saying something like, “Now Andrea, how does that Jingle Bells song go?”

Yes...Christmas at the Stark household. It truly is a treasure one hopes, each holiday, you are looking forward to your own special Christmas traditions as much as I am looking forward to mine. You know, I can’t wait to see Mom dancing around the house to Elvis again this year.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all...best of luck on finals! Rodna Beck
All I want for Christmas...

“I want rollerblades.”
Austin Nesbitt
Sophomore
Amarillo, Texas

“I want a man.”
Emily Fair
Sophomore
Meridian, Miss.

“I want good will towards men (and women too, I guess).”
Shelby Smith
Senior
Fort Smith, Ark.

“I want Will Smith.”
Jasmine Flagg
St. Louis, IL

“I want peace on earth.”
Dean Smith
Senior
New Braunfels, Texas

“I want a pony.”
Nicola Clark
Freshman
Calgary, Canada

“I want camouflage overalls.”
Alena Meadows
Junior
El Dorado, Ark.

“I want sleep!”
Renita Graham
Freshman
Fayetteville, Georgia

“I want a Daisy Red Rider BB-gun.”
Ryan Halford
Sophomore
Springfield, Missouri

“I just want to be happy... and get a dog.”
Kaylee Shirley
Sophomore
Mobile, Texas

“I want a new boat.”
Clay Midyett
Sophomore
Memphis, Tenn.

“I want clothes.”
Sara McClain
Freshman
Pocahontas, Ark.

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Campus Events

The S.A. movie, “Miracle on 34th Street,” will be shown tonight at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in the Benson Auditorium.

Final Examination Schedule
December 16-20

Classes meeting daily and Monday, Wednesday and Friday:
8:00-8:50 >> Tues. 2:40
9:45-10:35 >> Wed. noon
10:45-11:35 >> Mon. 8:00
11:45-12:35 >> Thurs. 2:40
12:00-1:15 >> Wed. 8:00
2:00-2:50 >> Mon. 4:30
3:00-4:30 >> Tues noon
4:30-6:15 >> Thurs 8:00

Classes meeting Tuesday and Thursday:
8:00-8:50 >> Thurs. noon
9:45-10:35 >> Tues. 8:00
10:45-11:35 >> Fri. noon
11:45-12:35 >> Fri. 4:30
12:00-1:15 >> Mon. noon
2:00-2:50 >> Wed. 8:00
3:00-4:30 >> Fri. 8:00

CHAPEL WILL NOT MEET DECEMBER 16 – 20.

Graduation exercises will be Saturday, Dec. 21, at 10 a.m. in the Benson Auditorium. Congratulations and best of luck to the graduates!

The Campus Ministry will be providing shuttle service to the Little Rock airport for Christmas vacation. The cost is $15 each way. Sign up in the Campus Ministry office and take your airline ticket with you when you go sign up.
Men's basketball off to tough start

by Paul King
Bison sports editor

Harding's men's basketball team has gotten off to a tough start this year with a record of 4-5. The team has been plagued by injuries, inexperience and buzzer-beating shots.

Tuesday's away game against Christian Brothers came down to the wire. Tied at the end of regulation, Christian Brothers came up big in the final moments of overtime to edge out Harding 79-78. This was the second loss at the hands of a game-winning shot. The first came against this Saturday's opponent, Arkansas Tech. "Without so many injured and new players, and without some last-second shots against us, we could be 7-2 now," Coach Jeff Morgan said.

"We had not had any injuries in the past three years, and we've had three this season."

In addition to injuries, Coach Morgan said his players have been looking for someone to step forward to fill the leadership role on the court. "Some of our consistent go-to players left and, offensively, the team has each been trying to make something happen instead of being more patient," Morgan said. "In the last couple of games, we've seen improvement in team chemistry."

Sophomore Cliff Miller takes it to the hoop against Southern Arkansas University in the Bisons’ last home game. Miller is one of the healthy few on an injury-laden Bison team.

Welcome, arm-chair quarterbacks!

This is a chance for you, the Harding student, to battle wits with The Bison Sports Editor and be eligible for a free medium pizza and four drinks at the same time. Cut out the entire entry sheet and drop it in the Bison Sports Challenge box at the Campus Mail window before Friday at 10 p.m. HAVE FUN!

Name
Phone
Box #

Sophomore Cliff Miller takes it to the hoop against Southern Arkansas University in the Bisons’ last home game. Miller is one of the healthy few on an injury-laden Bison team. Photo by Kami Wentz.

Larry Bisons jump off to 11-0 record

With 11 games played, including four tournaments, the Lady Bisons are undefeated. In the most recent season polls, the black and gold are ranked 13th in the nation.

Seniors Angie Dugger and Bridget Benson have led the team to win the Evangel Classic, Lyon Classic, Lady Bison Classic and Missouri Baptist Tournament. Victories over SAU and Christian Brothers helped to prepare the team for their home game next Friday against UCA.

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Athlete’s Choice

The Bison staff wishes each of you a safe and happy holiday season.