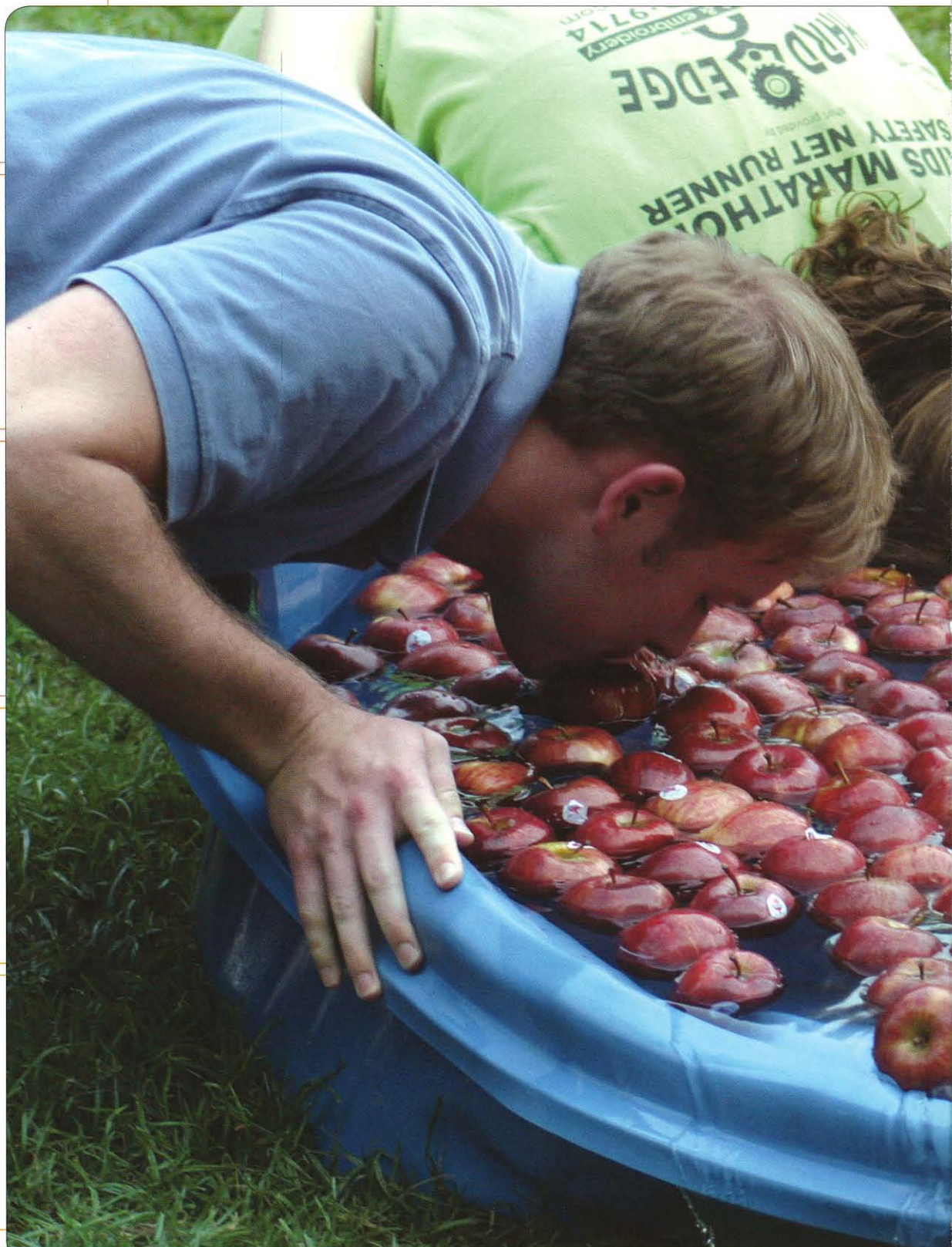


During the Student Association kick-off party Aug. 25, junior Scott Hannigan bobs for apples on the front lawn. The winner of the bobbing for apples contest won an autographed picture of President David Burks, also known as the "Basil Award." •Chelsea Roberson





CHASING AFTER student life

students aimed to achieve new experiences, activities and ministries, but became whole when they balanced God and life



alex smith
student life editor

Excited to see a dancing doughnut, sophomore Derek Tucker twirls senior Emily Smith during the Zeta Rho, TNT and Friends Spring Sing show April 12. "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff," the show's title, won the John H. Ryan Sweepstakes trophy. •Chelsea Roberson

UNSEEN

Importance of Spring Sing crew brought to light

After the house lights went down and the stage lights came up and a wave of light washed over the colorfully dressed hosts, hostesses and ensemble members, the magic of Spring Sing began. But as the audience watched the performers on stage, there was a group of students, and a few adults, who were working behind the scenes fixing broken platforms, making sure props were in their proper places and ensuring the more than 1,000 students who were in the show got on and off the stage safely. Although they were not seen by audience members — or even by performers — the show could not have gone on without the crew.

Before clubs were practicing, the Spring Sing crew began working on the show soon after Christmas break. Adam Sullivan, technical director for Spring Sing, posted applications and then hand picked the members of the crew who started building around the beginning of February. The members of the crew then spent around 20 hours a week to get the stage prepared for the show. As opening night approached, the crew spent many hours working in the Benson — sometimes until 6 a.m. — and then had to go to class or work the next day.

Despite the long hours, senior Seth Fish, who worked crew for two years, said one of the reasons he did Spring Sing was the experience.

"It is what we love to do," Fish said. "It's just fun building; it's my future. It's practical experience because building something like the [Spring Sing set] on such a massive scale is valuable knowledge."

The crew was split into two different groups: the build crew, who built the set, made props, worked on the fly system and did other various set jobs, and the running crew who worked during the performances making sure the performers did not get hurt running on and off the stage.

"[The running crew has] 800-plus people running on and off the Benson in under a minute multiple times so it's our job to make sure they get to where they are going, that they safely do, make sure they can see the steps, make sure that we know when to let them in, when to fly in cues for lights, when things need to fly in and out for clubs," Fish said. "We're basically directional."

One of the most important aspects of the crew was their work was never seen by the audience.

"The crew's goal is to keep the audience unaware of just how much is actually going on backstage,"

Dr. Steve Frye, director of Spring Sing, said. "[The crew] responds well to orders and keeps the flow of the show going so the audience thinks it's happening real easy, [when] it's actually a very large task."

Fish said not being seen was what they were trained to do.

"It's hard work and determination," Fish said. "We're the original ninjas. We're trained to dress in black and not be seen by the audience."

To be on the crew, Frye said members needed to have good people skills, good carpentry or painting skills, or something appropriate for the task.

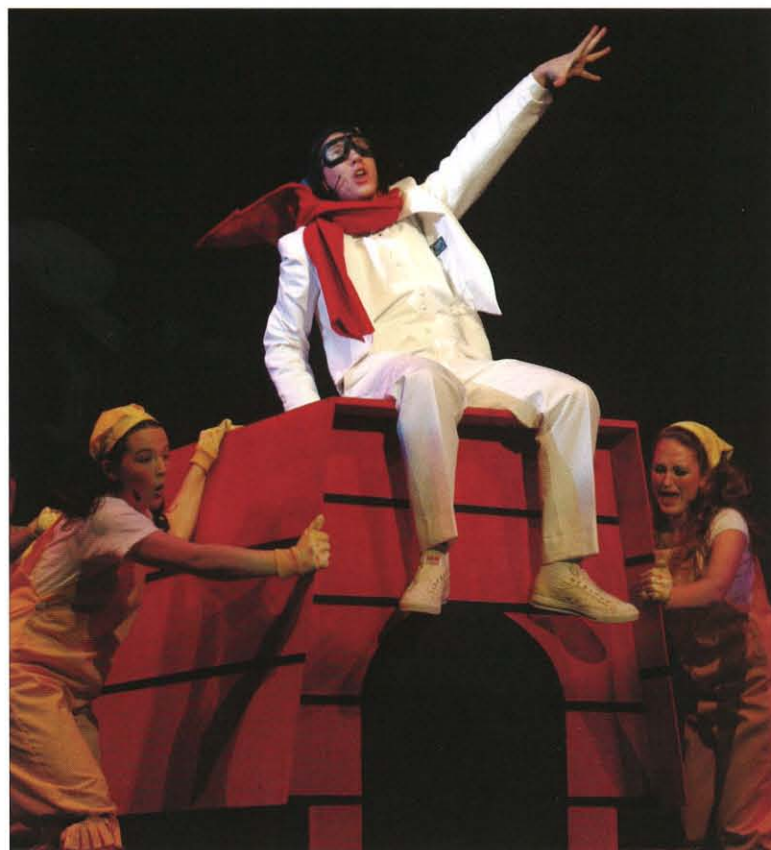
Fish said even though the crew did not get much recognition from audience members or from Spring Sing participants, they realized their importance in the show.

"It's kind of an adrenaline rush," Fish said. "[Because you are running] on stage, moving large heavy objects [while] the curtain is going up and trying to get [the cast] all there and knowing that you have thousands of people enjoying the show. They may not necessarily be clapping because they saw you, but you helped to become a part of something bigger."

•Cynthia Noah



Singing with the male ensemble, junior hostess Jillian Shackleford performs "I Need a Hero" from the animated movie "Shrek 2" on April 11, 2006. "Toon In" marked Shackleford's second consecutive year as Spring Sing hostess. •Chelsea Roberson



Performing his solo on April 11, 2006, junior host Travis Wisely, accompanied by ensemble members seniors Katie Casey and Anya Burt, sings "Snoopy" during Spring Sing's "Toon In." Wisely's song was taken from the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." •Chelsea Roberson



Striking their final pose, members of Gamma Sigma Phi, Iota Chi and Friends wrap up their re-enactment of famous childhood legends in their show "Hoe Down, Show Down" on April 11, 2006. Members dressed as tall tale characters such as Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan and Calamity Jane. •Chelsea Roberson

Moving in unison, senior Sarah Doty and sophomore Tiffany Allison prepare to escape a volcano on April 11, 2006, for the show "What Blows Up, Must Come Down." Regina, Chi Sigma Alpha and Friends were presented with the Spirit Award. •Chelsea Roberson

Dining in the cafeteria at the theme dinner Aug. 19, freshmen Chelsea Carr and Lindsey Mondich, sophomore Daniel Leder, freshman Lindsay Whittington and sophomore Ashley Buford dress as their favorite movie or television character. Student Impact activities during the weekend also included a hypnotist and an illusionist show. •Amber Bazargani

Participating in the limbo contest, senior Josh Lee jumps high over the limbo stick held by junior Jake Wood and sophomore Julia Nipper at the annual luau held at Harding Park on Aug. 18. President David Burks greeted each freshman as he handed them leis. •Jon Byron





Serving at the Searcy Humane Society, sophomore Chad Mynatt and freshman Kala Stidham towel dry a dog with their energy group Aug. 19. Other service projects included washing cars, cleaning houses and visiting Harding Place. •Amber Bazargani

DEVOTION

Students sacrifice summer vacation for Impact

About a week before classes resumed for the fall semester, an electric buzz was felt on campus. It was a time when the campus once again sprang to life, making it a stark contrast to the ghost town it became during the summer. It was a time when freshmen flooded the campus and the veterans, sometimes fifth or even sixth-year seniors, returned, inching closer to graduation. It was time for Student Impact.

Student Impact was a time each year when new friendships were made and old friendships were rekindled. "This is Your Life" was the theme of Student Impact 2006. Energy group leaders came back to campus Aug. 13, four days before the freshmen arrived, for a dinner and kick-off meeting. Even though this student-run activity only lasted for four days, the behind-the-scenes work began months in advance.

Senior Betsy Glover and junior Ryan Davenport were chosen as co-directors and began preparing in the middle of the spring semester 2006.

"Student Impact is a huge undertaking by all participants, and I was thrilled to be a part of the action this year," Glover said.

Many students were equally thrilled to be a part of Impact; more than 100 students came together to help lead energy groups and 20 people participated as part of the Steering Committee,

which planned all of the Impact events. Luke Watson, a junior scheduled to go to Harding University in Greece during the fall semester, returned during his summer break to help out.

"I mainly wanted to be there for my sister, since it is her first year at Harding," Watson said. "It was also really nice to see my friends before I left the country for several months."

Watson had much responsibility during Impact. In addition to serving on the Steering Committee, he was given the title "Technical Guru" as he created videos documenting the daily activities of Impact.

"Luke is incredibly talented with video," Glover said. "He would film during the day in addition to his other responsibilities and then stay up almost all night editing to get the videos ready."

Junior Jake Wood, another student who attended HUG during the fall, also returned to campus so he could contribute to Student Impact.

Wood participated in Student Impact 2005 and wanted to help out this year. Like Watson, Wood also wanted to say a final good-bye to his friends before leaving for the fall semester.

"I wasn't really on the Steering Committee, so I just showed up early to see if help was needed,"

Wood said. "I realized I wouldn't be able to tell everyone bye-bye before I left so Impact was the answer."

Glover said she thought Student Impact was a success this year.

"The biggest evidence came directly from the incoming freshmen, who we were doing this for," Glover said. "This year was extra special in that the Steering Committee became very close. At the close of each night, we would get together and sing, and we truly loved spending time together."

Other highlights from Student Impact 2006 were the devotionals on Friday and Saturday evening and the messages brought by guest speaker Jonathan Stormont.

"The singing as a whole group was awesome, and Jonathan Stormont absolutely hit the theme on the head," Glover said.

Davenport said he felt personally gratified that he had been able to introduce the freshmen to the spirit of Harding. However, he said the ultimate goal of all those involved in Impact was not a feeling of accomplishment for themselves.

"We were not there for our own personal gain, but to impact the freshmen," Davenport said. "This was for them, not us."

•Jordan Dyniewski



After receiving her Homecoming crown, senior Katie Casey is greeted by President David Burks, 2005 Homecoming Queen senior Erin Reese, and attendants Caden Burks, Anna Goode and Ann Clayton Beason on Oct. 28. "I was so surprised when my name was called; I felt incredibly honored," Casey said. •Chelsea Roberson



Gathering around the bonfire Oct. 27, students show their school spirit at the Bison Bash, which was held the night before the football game. The Bison Bash also featured a car bash, the band Sweet Action and a beat-box competition. •Jon Byron

INTERACTION

Musical brings students, faculty, families together

The 2006 Homecoming musical, "Fiddler on the Roof," was a little different than past productions; instead of having a cast made up of only students, the show featured several members of the faculty and their families in some of its lead and chorus roles.

Dottie Frye, instructor of communication who played one of the leads, Golde, said the family-like nature of the show was appealing along with the musical's script and music.

"I love the show," Frye said. "It is one of those rare musicals where the script is as strong as the music. So when I was asked if I would be willing to play Golde, I jumped at the opportunity."

Not only did the script offer faculty a chance to participate in the Harding revival of a Tony Award-winning show, but it also gave them the opportunity to interact with some of their students in a setting outside of the classroom.

"Some of the students [in the musical] I have in class, and we go from having class in the day and then we're on stage that night together," Ross Cochran, professor of Bible,

said. "That's fun, and it's a great reinforcing opportunity."

Cochran said the large cast focused on community and togetherness in rehearsals, which added a touch of realism to their performances. He said the diversity helped in bringing audiences on a personal level into the fictional town of Anatevka.

The families of participating professors were able to have the experience of working with college students as well. Wendy Neill, wife of Assistant Professor of Music Kelly Neill, said working with the students was a wonderful experience for her and her children.

"My girls love being around the college students, and I like for them to be around such great role models," Neill said. "The students have been so good at loving on my children."

Dirk Smith, regional director of advancement whose family participated as cast members, said the backstage element was an added bonus to the experience.

"We enjoyed meeting new people, creating a family memory and seeing a true behind-

the-scenes look at what it takes to put on a production of this caliber," Smith said.

Junior Anna Dixon, director of props for the show, said the atmosphere for this show was unique because of the dynamics between the college students, the professors and their families.

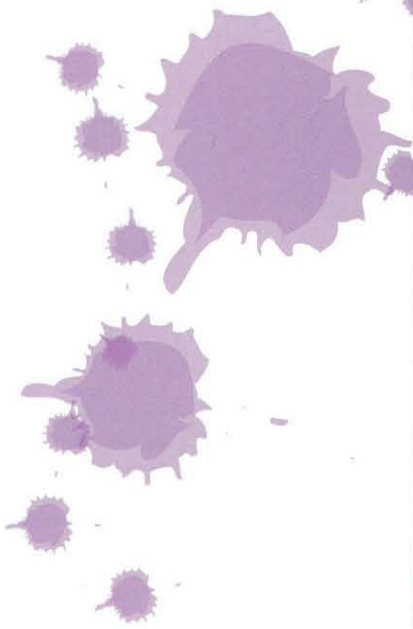
The environment backstage was also affected by the show's limited number of crew members. Dixon said cast members of all ages were required to be responsible in such matters as making sure they had the right props for each scene.

"Everyone really had to work hard and together and pitch in since there was not a big crew," Dixon said.

According to Frye, the varied cast helped make working on the musical a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

"Working with such a varied cast is a very rich process," Frye said. "We have cast members as young as 3 years old to mid to late fifties or older and everything in between. Such a wealth of experience and talent to blend and meld is exciting."

•Brooke Light



In the song "To Life," sophomore Jerry Lafevers, freshman Logan McLain, junior Daniel Chalenburg, sophomore David Walton, junior Caleb Keese and Bryan Phillips, associate professor of kinesiology, strike a final pose during the Homecoming musical "Fiddler on the Roof" on Oct. 26. "Working with such a varied cast was such a rewarding experience," Dottie Frye, instructor of communication, said. •Chelsea Roberson



Members of the Good News Singers, juniors Travis Wisely, Rachel Wheeler and Joel Cox, and senior Sarah Whitehouse, sing in front of the McInteer building Oct. 27. The Good News Singers performed for many of the families visiting campus during Homecoming weekend. •Chelsea Roberson



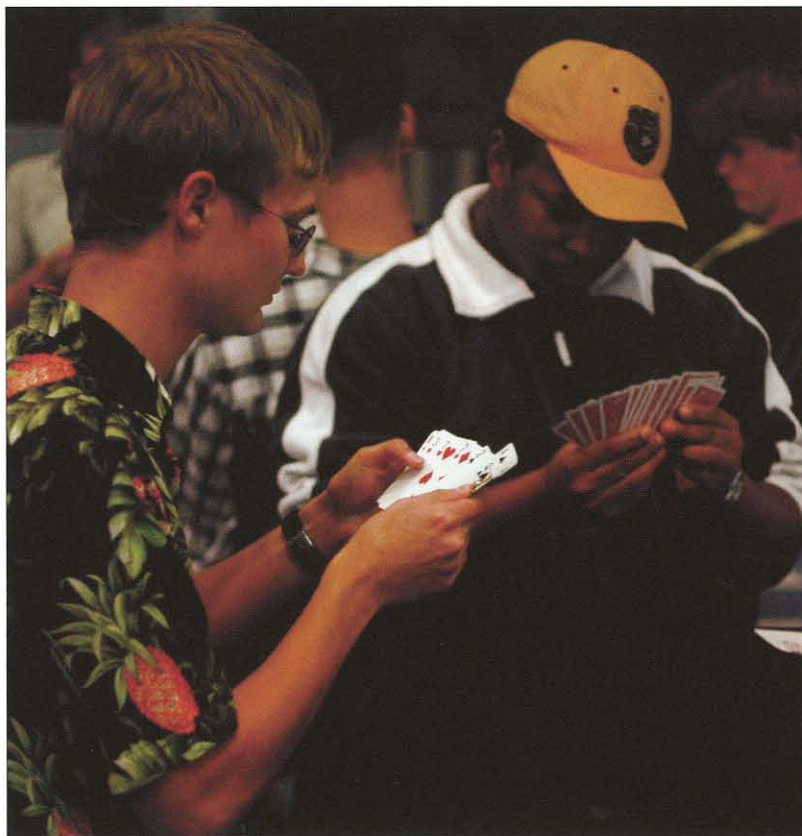


Cutting upfield, junior defensive back Cam Clark runs the ball while juniors Hayden Cruce, running back, and Michael Solano, tight end, look to block during the Homecoming football game against Henderson State on Oct. 28. The Bisons won the game against the Reddies 38-34 in overtime.
•Chelsea Roberson



Performing the "Home Show" on Oct. 28, Pied Pipers juniors Sadie Bullard, Jodi Pittard and Matthew Perring, sophomore Keith Fisher, seniors Ian Thomas and Megan Gilbert, junior Andy Frye, and sophomore Brian Bullard tell the story of Tyler Toad to former Pipers, friends and family. "It's neat to be able to perform with Pipers from past years because once they come on stage it's like they've been rehearsing and performing with us; it's like an extended family," Gilbert said.
•Chelsea Roberson

Concentrating on their hands, seniors Erik Schramm and Dejuan Patton participate in the spades tournament Oct. 13 in the student center. The Student Association gave the winners of the tournament a cash prize of \$100. •Chelsea Roberson



Trying to beat their opponents to the buzzer, sophomores Trey Rickman and Claire Austelle and senior Timothy Michael compete in the game Thinkfast on Sept. 28 in the student center. The game show asked the contestants trivia questions and the winner received a cash prize. •Jon Byron



ENTERTAIN

New director of campus life brings variety to school

There was a new face this year in the Office of Student Life. Zach Neal, director of campus life, took over the position left by Dustin Vyders after a career in youth ministry. According to Neal, the Campus Activities Board members helped him ease into his new role.

"Experienced students in CAB have made my transition fairly smooth," Neal said. "The whole staff and faculty have helped me grow into the position. Dustin Vyders also left me a very detailed guidebook of everything expected. The deans have also been golden in helping me."

The CAB sought to offer students a wide range of entertainment options this year.

"Our goal is to provide as many types of entertainment as possible," Neal said. "During the course of the year we strive to have different styles of music offered in bands, novelty acts like jugglers and hypnotists, game shows, movies of all kinds, and then entertainment mixed in that will cost the student nothing."

CAB members had different avenues to choose which activities would be the most popular with students.

"We check the pulse on Facebook, post a sign-up sheet in the office for suggestions and listen to general feedback after any given event to make sure we are meeting as many needs as possible," Neal said.

According to Neal, one popular event this year that elicited a positive

audience response was comedian juggler Mark Nizer's performance. The CAB also purchased a karaoke machine, which many different groups on campus used for events.

Senior Corey McEntyre, director of CAB, said CAB members this year tried to have activities that students would want to stay on campus for and be excited about.

As CAB director, McEntyre said he worked with Neal and fellow directors senior Mary Beth Mortland and junior Chris Fulks to plan events. He also helped put calendars together, designed The Pass and marketed products and ideas to students.

McEntyre said the CAB was always open to new ideas, and he hoped more students would offer their suggestions for which activities it should plan.

"We really will consider every suggestion," McEntyre said. "We'll always check things out to see if it's possible."

Neal said his goal was for the voice of the students to always be heard and for students to feel like they had a say in choosing activities.

"My door is always open, and I am always open to suggestions," Neal said.

Besides having Nizer, the CAB also hosted Tyler Hilton as well as Robert Randolph and the Family Band in concert, had movie nights in the Benson Auditorium and had game nights and tournaments throughout the year.

•Jennifer Merrill



Keeping his balance, sophomore Daniel Lee performs with juggler Mark Nizer on Sept. 29 in the Benson Auditorium. "I wasn't nervous at all; I just stood there and he spun everything on me," said Lee, who was chosen from the audience to participate. •Chelsea Roberson



Falling hard, sophomore Jeremy Watson loses grip of a mechanical bull Aug. 25 on the front lawn at the Student Association's Kick-off Party. The Student Association started the school year with the party, which included inflatable games and drivable toilets called "Gotta-Go Racers." •Chelsea Roberson



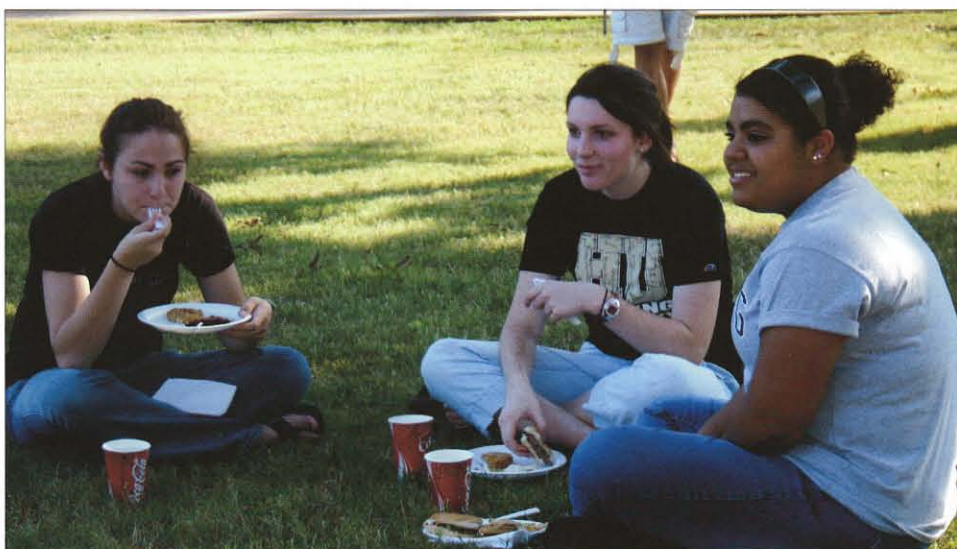
Jamming on the Benson Auditorium stage Jan. 26, junior Carson Medders plays with Robert Randolph and the Family Band. "Having the chance to play with those guys on stage was pretty amazing; that was a great show," Medders said. •Chelsea Roberson

Closing his eyes, Assistant Dean of Students Brian Bush does his best impression of country singer Garth Brooks on Nov. 7 during karaoke night in the student center. The activity was a student organized event that offered free entertainment and discounted food. •Chelsea Roberson





Competing for their dorms Oct. 10, senior Joe Morgan, junior Adam Parker, seniors Jacob Bevrige and Brandon Stone, and freshmen Antwan Thomas and Kent Sheldon concentrate during the Quiz Bowl competition of the HUD Cup Tournament. The HUD Cup was a competition throughout the year between the dorms with each competition adding points to each dorm, and the dorm with the highest number of points was the winner. •Chelsea Roberson



Relaxing in the shade, freshmen Jennifer Fedor, Kelcy Kitson and Ashley Townsend eat hamburgers and cookies during the tailgate party before the Bisons football game Sept. 9. Food was provided by Aramark and Foxfire Band played for entertainment. •Amber Bazargani

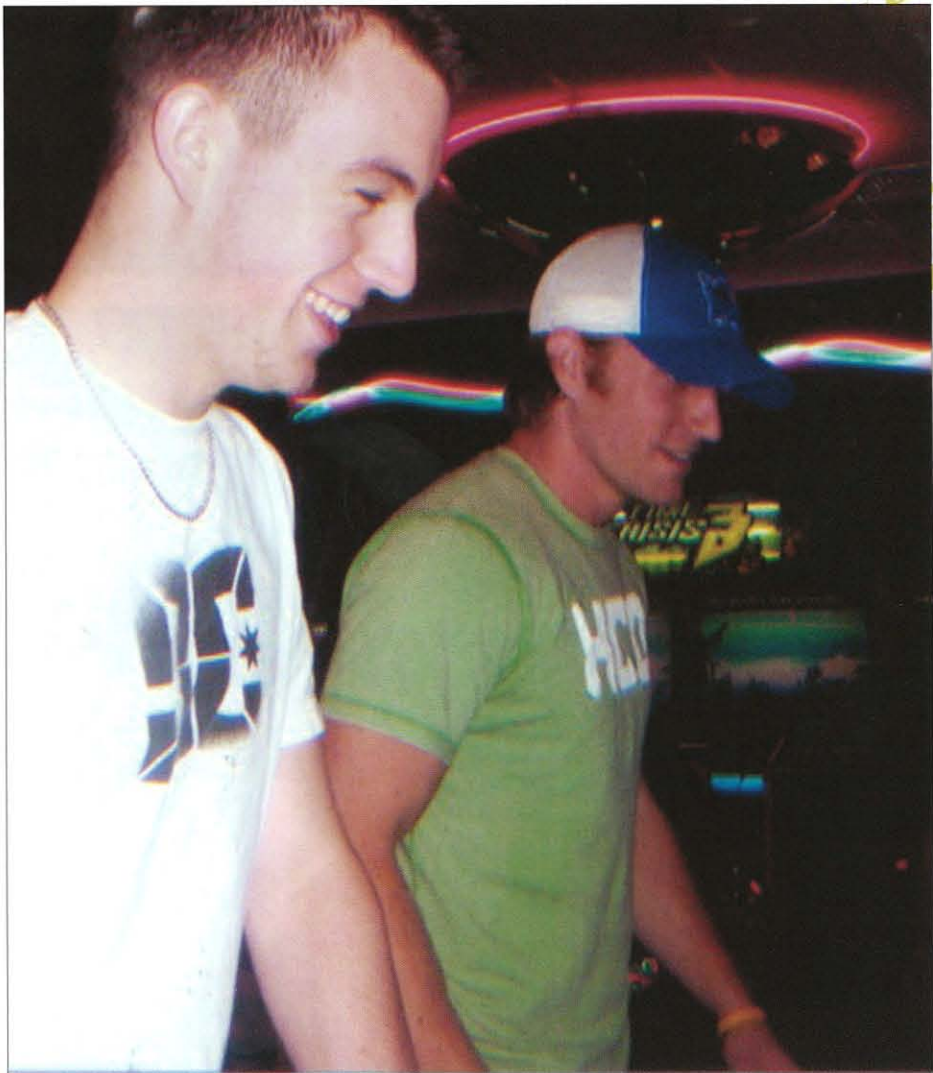


During the fall semester concert series, Tyler Hilton sings the song "Last Promise" on Aug. 25 for students in the Benson Auditorium. According to Zach Neal, director of campus life, between 900 and 1,000 people attended the concert, which started after the SA Kick-off Party. •Chelsea Roberson



Chatting before their meal begins, Walton scholars sophomores Beranguely Pagoda, Lucy Velasquez and Ulises Corona enjoy the dinner at President David Burks' house Sept. 28 that was held for Walton Scholars. Harding was one of three church of Christ universities that Walton students attended. •Amber Bazargani

Focusing on their game, freshman Michael Walker and junior Todd Sparks compete during a game of Dance Dance Revolution on May 28 at a local arcade in Northhampton, England. Walker, an international student from England, enjoyed visiting with fellow Harding students during their summer campaign to his hometown in England. •Courtesy of Erin Starnes



OPPORTUNITY

Christian education influences Chinese students

The East Asia Studies Program began with a group of 17 college professors from Hunan Province, China, and increased to 45 students the next fall. But with 83 students on campus this fall, the East Asia Studies Program was noticed on campus.

"Of all the programs in the state of Arkansas, our program is the largest program in number," said Dr. Thomas Peng, director of admissions and student services for the American Studies Institute.

According to Peng, the program expanded to not only include students from China, but from across eastern Asia as well. He said one reason for this growth is that China itself is in a period of growth and learning from advanced countries is very valuable to China's future. Second, in the past, Chinese families had not been wealthy enough to send their children to the United States to study, but now, because of China's economic growth, families were beginning to gain the means to do just that.

Many of the students who had graduated went back to China to apply what they learned here to their jobs. Of the 17 students who graduated, 14 of them returned to China. Most of the students, who were in their 30s and 40s, received sizable promotions at their companies when they got back because of their experiences in the United States.

There was a sense of community among the students as they participated in many activities offered by Peng and junior Wryland Reed, who organized church services and social gatherings for the students.

"On Friday nights, I and my wife get together a group of students to watch TV, sing karaoke or play cards for fun," Peng said.

Other activities included movies shown in the McInteer building and eating dinner in the homes of different families around town.

Reed put forth his efforts to form a ministry that helped the students develop their faith. He organized church services that met in Shores Chapel every Sunday morning. Wryland began carpooling the students to church, but soon after, they ran out of room in the van. They were faced with two choices: get a bus to carry all of the students to church or start a congregation on campus. After moving the group to Shores Chapel, there was an increase to 56 attendants.

Graduate student Yun Wang said his coming to Harding was because of a visit that President David Burks, Jim Carr, vice president of academic affairs, and Milo Hadwin, adjunct professor of Bible, made to China encouraging him to attend.

His plans were to go back to China where he could use his skills from the masters program in business. He said he appreciated that Harding taught ethics in business, something that classes in China lacked.

According to Peng, the education the Chinese students received at Harding could ultimately help shape China to reach its full potential as a country.

•Andrew Leeper

Selecting food for their plates, freshmen Xiouyang Zhou, Zhuxian Yang and Ting Liu attend the Festival of the Moon held on the front lawn Oct. 7. "It was neat to see the Chinese students getting us involved in their culture," senior Katie Moran said. •Chelsea Roberson



Working with the Dry Bones Ministry in Denver, freshman Sophia Smith takes a break from serving sandwiches to the homeless community March 16 to play with one of the children. The name "Dry Bones" was inspired by the story of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 37. •Courtesy of Kelly Boyett



REDEFINED

Dry Bones campaign reveals new Christian image

Spring break campaigners helped breathe new life into the homeless of Denver from March 4-12. A group of 10 students teamed with another campaign group from Abilene Christian University and worked with the Lakewood Church of Christ in Denver to reach out to the homeless teens and young adults in the area.

The students worked with Dry Bones, a ministry linked with the Lakewood congregation, which targeted Denver's forgotten youth.

Dale Coley, a senior kinesiology major from Abilene, Texas, was the leader of the campaign.

"I was drawn to Dry Bones because my former youth minister from Dallas now works with the Dry Bones ministry," Coley said.

The group's primary goal was to help the teens realize they were valuable.

"We weren't there to preach to these kids," senior Michelle Parrish said. "We were there to show them that someone wants to take time for them and that they matter in this world."

Even though the teenagers were considered cast-offs by society, the campaigners were impressed by the faith these teens displayed.

"We were around people all week [whom] our society is quick to write off because they don't have homes or they might not be clean," senior Kelly Boyett said. "But I soon found out that these homeless teenagers are not people to dismiss. Most of them had a faith that was unwavering."

Some in the group noticed things that made them rethink their views on

what it meant to be a follower of Christ.

"Before, by default, 'Christian' was a middle-class, perfect citizen," Coley said. "But now [the term] 'Christian' has been broadened [for me]. I met many Christians who are more on fire for God than I can only hope to be, who smoke, drink and even curse in their prayers. But this doesn't make them any less of a Christian. It may make them more of a Christian because of their ability to be relatable."

Their new outlook of the term 'Christian' helped some of the campaigners develop a heart for this type of outreach evangelism.

"These are the people Jesus would have associated with," Parrish said. "As Christians we try to avoid people like this because they are robbers, drug-users or prostitutes. But that [avoidance] isn't what Christ is calling us to do."

Robby Goldman, one of the leaders of Dry Bones, read a passage from Ezekiel 37 to the group upon their arrival in Denver. He told the story of how Ezekiel was told to prophesy that the Lord would make breath enter dry bones, restoring them to life. This was parallel to the situation of the homeless teens, who were considered figuratively dead by some people.

"It's amazing that God put the desire in the hearts of [the Dry Bones ministers] to tell these kids that they are worth something and that [God] created them for a reason," Parrish said. "These kids, [whom] society ignores, feel they have no reason to live, but Dry Bones is there to tell them otherwise."

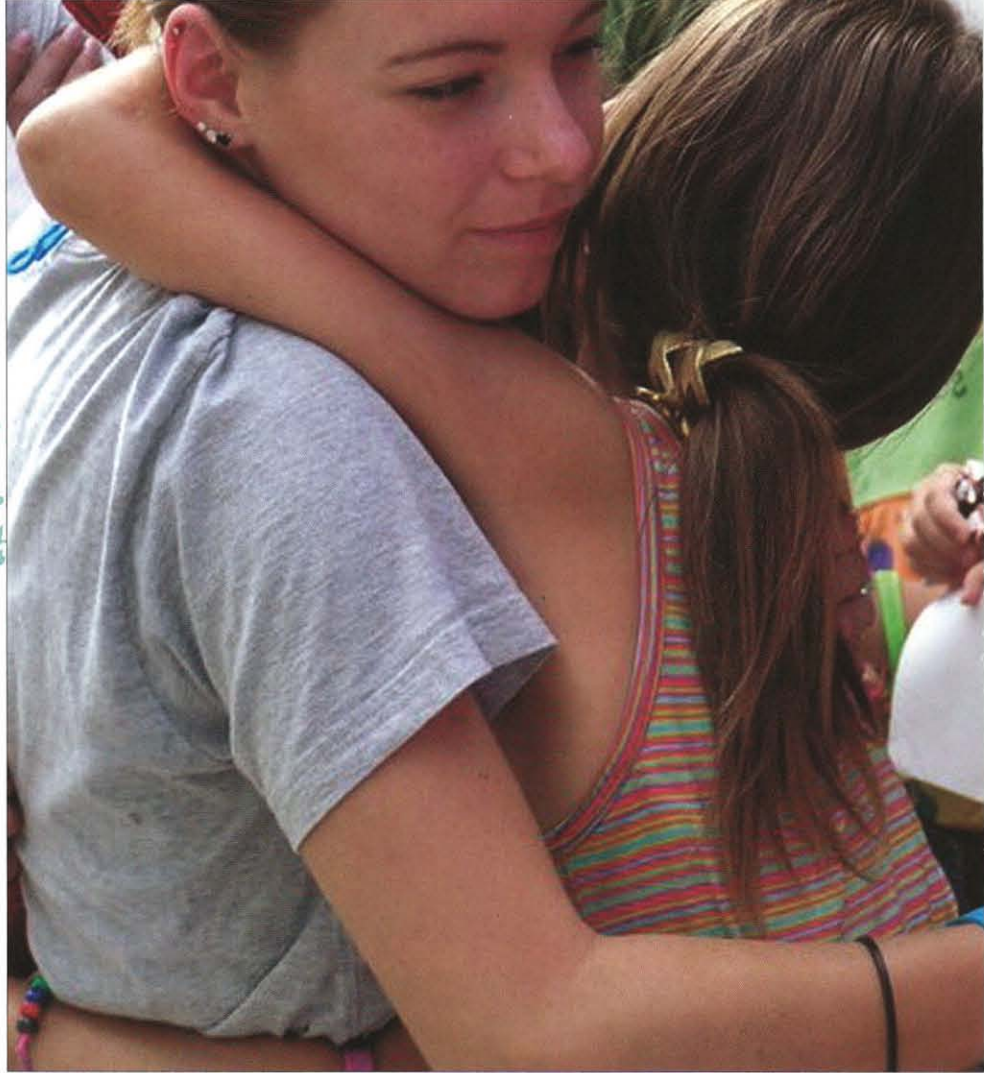
•Lindsey Lowe



In downtown Fort Worth, Texas, seniors Shannon Ellis and Jessica Brown and sophomore Kim DeRamus gather March 13 to reflect on the needs of the Fort Worth community. "Having seen the problems of the area, I could think of nothing else than to offer my concerns to God," DeRamus said. •Courtesy of Brian Jones



Reaching high, junior Nick May and senior Jodi Jordan paint the outside of a medical clinic on March 14 in Jinotega, Nicaragua, which also serves as the area's worship center. Along with painting, campaigners provided health care and spoke in local schools. •Courtesy of Nick May

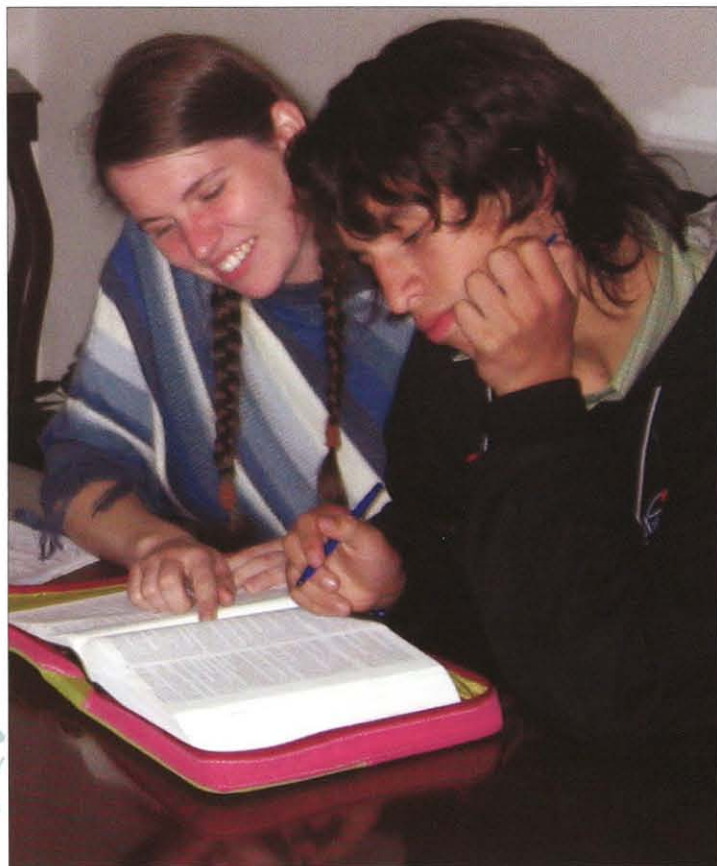


Finishing a Vacation Bible School lesson, senior Jessi Allen hugs a Ukrainian camper July 15 during Camp Smena, a sports camp. Campaigners faced a language barrier so a translator was used for the three weeks of camp. •Courtesy of Amanda Nowlin

Listening intently, sophomore Nikki Hopson visits with a patient at a local dementia ward in Brisbane, Australia, on March 28. The Australia campaigners also taught primary school children using skits and songs. •Courtesy of Morgan Booth



Reading the Bible, senior Caroline Prestridge shares the Word with a Peruvian on June 28 during a campaign to Peru. Students who joined the campaign were required to speak Spanish in order to teach the Bible. •Courtesy of Caroline Prestridge



Talking with locals, senior Tia Karasch and junior Chris Travis hand out World Bible School brochures to South Africans in the Capetown marketplace June 2. Campaigners held Bible studies using the World Bible School program, a free correspondence course that gave others the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ. •Courtesy of Tia Karasch



OVERCOME

Students defeat obstacles to continue missions

Harding sent students on overseas campaigns every year to spread the Word of God, but in July of 2006, a group of campaigners teamed up with World Wide Youth Camps to take a campaign to the Ukraine.

World Wide Youth Camps, an organization based in Atlanta, focused on teaching children in Russia and the Ukraine about the Bible. WWYC funded visitation to summer camps established overseas to interact with the children while teaching them about God. It provided an opportunity for the children to learn about Christ.

Sophomore Amanda Nowlin was listening to then International Campaigns Director Dwight Smith's presentation about this program during mission week in chapel in the fall of 2005 and decided she wanted to go. She talked to Dr. Michael Claxton, assistant professor of English, about doing missions work overseas. Claxton had been on the Ukraine campaign during the previous year and provided her with helpful information. Ultimately, Nowlin decided she would go on the Ukraine campaign in the summer of 2006.

Claxton had already made plans for the summer that would keep him from going to the Ukraine. Nowlin tried to recruit more people to go, but she struggled in her efforts to persuade students to sign up.

As the end of the semester approached, there were only two students, but the two had enlisted the help of Beverly Austin, professor of art, to lead the

campaign. After Austin joined the team, two more students signed up.

The campaigners then teamed with a mission group from Faulkner University in Alabama.

"The whole group met up in March for a short retreat to get to know each other before going overseas," Nowlin said. "The team really clicked well and we had fun planning lessons together."

The group traveled to Yalta, Ukraine, on the Crimean peninsula in July. Eastern European Missions provided the campaigners with Bibles by mailing them to the camps before the group arrived.

"We learned to wait until after we taught the lessons to give the children their Bibles because they were so excited about getting them that they would read while we were trying to teach," Austin said.

Not only were the campaigners responsible for teaching the children, but they also took the children to the Black Sea to swim and teach lessons there.

The children did not speak English, so WWYC provided five translators for the entire group. Nowlin said she benefited from the experience even though it was difficult working with children who spoke a different language.

"But when you are sitting there singing and listening to other people worship, it's so amazing to think that we are praising the same God," Nowlin said.

•Krystle Boise



Leaning in during a huddle, junior Jamie Castro, freshman Mallory Rhodes, juniors Mandy Finch and Heather Jumper, senior Carrie Coburn, and sophomore Melissa Young encourage one another during a volleyball game Nov. 8 in the Rhodes Field House. "We worked together and we had fun; we were a good team," Castro said. •Jon Byron

Attempting to block the ball, senior Justin Sanders and junior Casey McDonald defend their sides of the net in the Ganus Athletic Center on Nov. 6. Other intramural sports during the year included tennis, flag football and softball. •Jon Byron



SPORTSMEN

Faculty stay connected through intramural sports

Building connections with students, forming friendships with other faculty members, participating in wholesome recreation and enjoying a game they loved were all part of faculty intramural softball. The faculty intramural team was formed in 1946, and since that year, dedicated faculty members have chosen to participate and embrace their passion for athletics. Faculty members like Chancellor Cliff Ganus and Professor Emeritus of Bible Jimmy Allen were legends because of their participation and dedication to this Harding tradition. The fall semester of 2006 was Allen's 48th consecutive year to play on the team.

Allen said playing on the team helped him relax and relieved the pressure from having to travel and preach all over the world and from teaching.

"I've played [all these years] because I like it," Allen said. "The serendipity of it all was the effect it had on my health. It has been a blessing physically. I'm convinced that if I had not played, I would be dead by now."

Allowing faculty members to interact with students in a non-traditional manner helped to form a bond between students and faculty that Allen said he did not find very often elsewhere. Allen especially mentioned Ganus, who until recently, had played alongside Allen for years. Ganus, who according to Allen was quite an athlete, participated in intramurals even when he became president in 1965.

"I'll tell you what [having a faculty team did]: it built something," Allen said. "It builds something when the president of your institution goes out and plays with the students. And it builds camaraderie, even within the faculty."

Steve Cooper, instructor of biology, who played on the team during the six years he taught at Harding, said when he attended Harding in 1989 he heard about Ganus and Allen. According to Cooper, they were intramural legends.

"Have you ever heard about the softball fields that used to be behind the Benson?" Cooper said. "I never saw Dr. Ganus, who was left-handed, play, but I heard about the time he hit the ball so hard that it hit the Rhodes Field House and landed half way down the roof. No one did that, except for him."

Cooper was inspired by what these men were doing and their ability to relate to their students. He respected people like Allen and Ganus who kept in shape and were spiritual leaders on campus.

"You can see somebody like Jimmy Allen rip a line drive and you have to have a little respect," Cooper said. "I'm still inspired by Jimmy Allen. I can't imagine how a 19-year-old might feel."

Students like sophomore Tony Randolph, who participated in games against the faculty and even played on the faculty team, enjoyed seeing a different side to their professors.

"It definitely brings us together," Randolph said. "I mean, any sport brings people together because they're working towards a common goal. When we're not up to bat [the faculty and the students] are on the bench together, and the same when we're out on the field. Working together brings people together."

Cooper recognized the fellowship opportunities as well. As a former student, he recognized what Randolph saw during games. Cooper wanted to impact students like Randolph the way Allen and Ganus had once inspired him.

"The feelings I got, those are what I want to give to these students," Cooper said. "It's also just fun fellowship. We always end with a prayer, which is nice. It shows that there are no hard feelings."

Dr. Phil Brown, director and associate professor of accounting, became captain for the team and Allen said he looked forward to working with him and having a new wave of professors continue with the tradition. Allen, however, said he did not plan on retiring in the near future and expected to play basketball in the spring if Director of Men's Intramurals Jim Gowen would let him.

"I'm glad we have an intramural program," Allen said. "I think it's good for our boys and girls. Now, I don't preach it's necessary for salvation, but I'm glad to have it."

•Rosa Colon



Handing the ball off, Steve Cooper, instructor of biology, and Dr. Jimmy Allen, professor emeritus of Bible, play intramural softball on the softball fields Oct. 2. Allen and Cooper were a part of the faculty softball team that competed each year. •Amber Bazargani

CONNECTED

HealthCorp offers classes, draws students to gym

The room was dimmed. The only hint of light came from the circular window in the corner of the room. All that could be heard was the sound of rushing waves hitting the shore coming from the stereo speakers. A soft voice instructed everyone to take in deep breaths through the nose and release any tension. The instructor took the class through a series of stretches, and then the lights came on and the music stopped. The people placed their mats back away and filed out of the room after another yoga class at HealthCorp.

Students had free access to the Ganus Athletic Center, but some still paid a \$145 membership fee for a semester at HealthCorp. The gym not only provided a weight room equipped with treadmills, elliptical machines and bikes, but it also had free weights and weight machines targeting the different muscle groups.

"HealthCorp has a wider range of equipment to target more muscle groups than Harding's gym," senior Jonathan Blansett said.

HealthCorp also offered a selection of exercise classes ranging from aerobics classes such as step, dance and aqua (in the summer), circuit training, and other classes involving muscle toning and strengthening including yoga, pilates and 20-minute abs. Classes like "Body Pump" incorporated barbell weight training. Ballroom dancing classes were also taught for an additional fee.

"I was interested in the classes they offered," senior Christie Collier said. "It was something different to add to my workout. I easily get bored with doing

the same machine all the time. HealthCorp gave me more options."

HealthCorp also provided a separate women's gym on the second floor for all female members to work out privately.

"The women's only room is nice to use weights because not only are they easy to use, but women have privacy and there aren't sweaty boys," Collier said.

In addition to the workout facilities, an outdoor swimming pool was open to members during the summer and there was a sauna in the locker room. Massages and tanning were available for an extra fee. Members could use the basketball or racquetball courts and had access to the "Around the Blend Café" selling smoothies, wraps and other health-related foods and beverages.

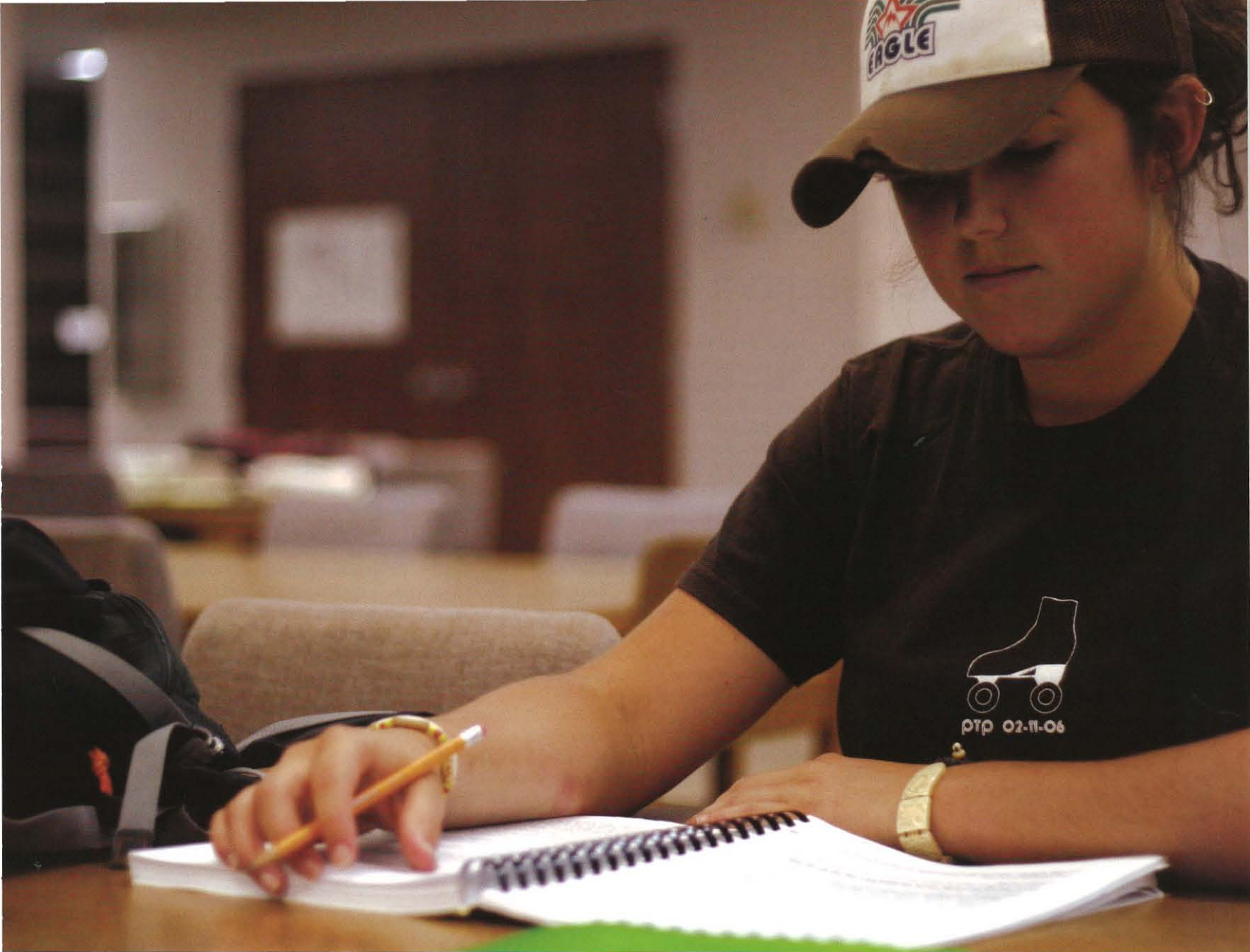
"Some friends and I found that because of our busy senior schedules, we didn't have time to go up to Heber like we usually do," senior Aubrie Meadows said. "Instead, since we were all HealthCorp members, we could just run over to the gym and relax by their pool."

Although not as inexpensive as the Ganus Athletic Center, HealthCorp supplied its members with variety, whether it involved more choices in the weight room or different classes to change up a routine. For some college students, maintaining a healthy lifestyle was not always the top priority so HealthCorp gave guidance and incentive for students to continue healthy living.

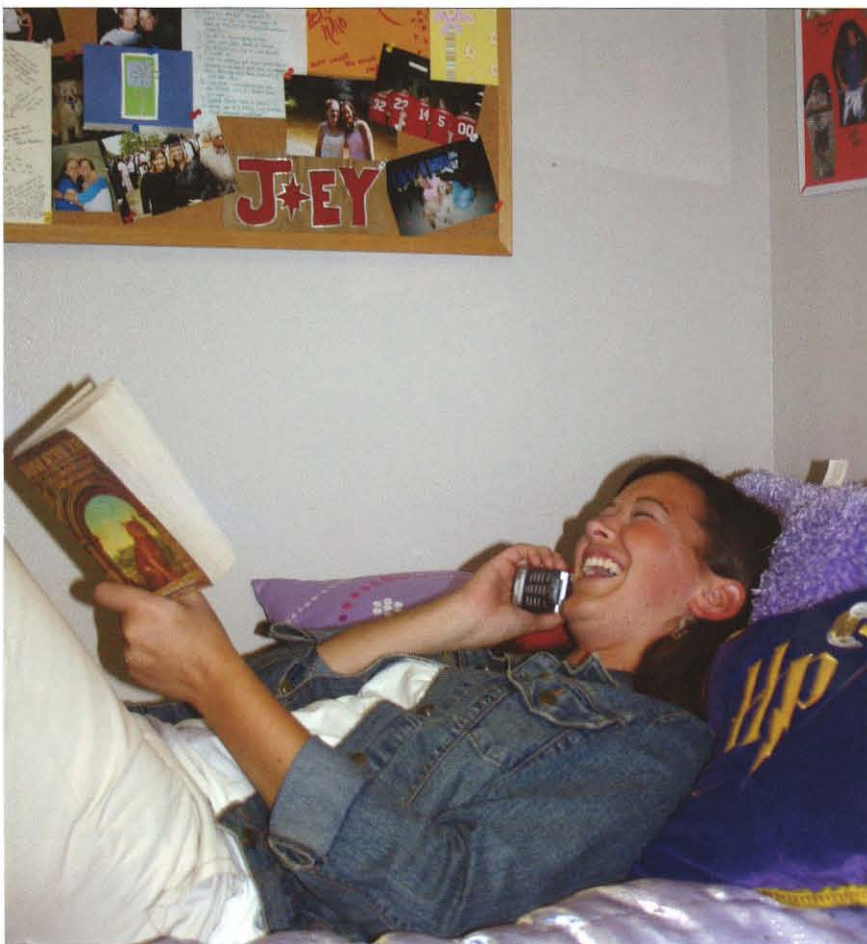
•Alexa Johnston

Staying in shape, freshman Jeremy Spillman works out in the Ganus Athletic Center weight room Sept. 13. Aside from the weight room, the GAC was also used for basketball, racquetball and swimming. •Jon Byron

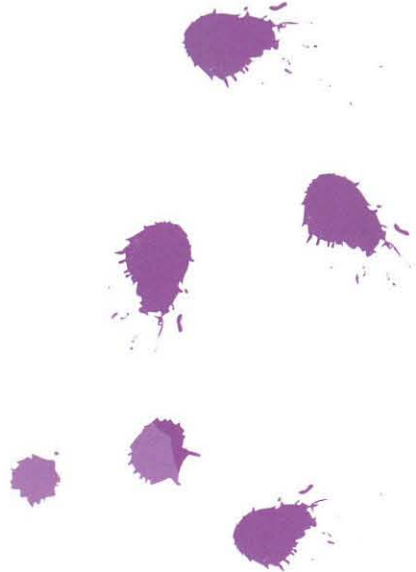




Studying for Developmental Psychology, senior Ashley Wiegand reads her textbook Sept. 4 in the Brackett Library. Students often found convenient locations to study on campus such as the front lawn or the Benson steps. •Chelsea Roberson



Talking on the phone, junior Joey Gates relaxes Sept. 5 in her Searcy Hall room. "Spending time in my dorm is a great way to get away from the stress of classes," Gates said. •Amber Bazargani



DOUBLE-SHOT

Students choose java from two local coffee shops

Searcy, like most college towns, housed popular spots where students could get away from campus and enjoy a chai, mocha or dozens of other drink possibilities. Along with a large menu of drink choices, coffee shops began offering other perks to attract customers.

Although there were several coffee shops around Searcy, two in particular emerged with widespread popularity: the Midnight Oil Coffeehouse and the Underground Coffeehouse.

While Midnight Oil was established in 1997 and had a long-standing reputation with students and Searcy citizens, the Underground Coffeehouse was opened in 2006 and offered an alternative for java junkies. In addition to the free Internet access which most coffee shops promoted, the Underground tried to distinguish itself in other ways.

Junior Brooks Gatlin had been working for the Underground since it opened. He said while it was the largest coffee shop he had ever been in, there were several other characteristics that made it unique.

"You can be loud without worrying about disturbing other people," Gatlin said. "It is an atmosphere where you can either be social with people or find

a spot to be by yourself. The Underground is also very conducive to study sessions."

Some of the noise created at the Underground was a result of the live music. The Underground hosted a house band every Thursday night along with various other artists.

"We try to have at least one musical guest every Saturday night," Gatlin said. "But we are always welcome to more playing. And we host karaoke every Tuesday night."

Senior Jonathan Whitt made numerous musical appearances as a solo artist as well as being a part of the house band at the Underground. Whitt said he enjoyed the opportunity to play in a coffeehouse environment.

"It is so easy to play at the Underground," Whitt said. "They already have all of the equipment set up, so you just go and play."

Just a couple of miles across town was Midnight Oil. Senior Rebecca DeRamus, who worked at Midnight Oil, said she preferred the cozy atmosphere where she could study and not be overwhelmed by music.

"While we don't have as much live music, we try to cater to the audience by playing music throughout

the day," DeRamus said. "We see a lot of people from all over town come in."

In addition to their drinks, Midnight Oil held art shows and displayed the work of freelance photographers. The coffee shop also had a smaller store in the gift shop of White County Medical Center.

"Even though the menu is slightly more limited, we offer different drinks and foods that seem to work for that crowd," DeRamus said.

It seemed as though the decision of which coffeehouse students chose came down to taste. Each coffeehouse seemed to have distinguished itself with uniquely named drinks. At the Underground, Gatlin said he loved making and drinking a spiced chai with mint and two shots of espresso. DeRamus preferred to make cappuccinos.

"I love to drink double tall honey breves, but I love making cappuccinos because I am really good at making foam," DeRamus said.

Despite the unique characteristics that make each coffee shop its own, one thing was evident: they made coffee drinkers almost anything imaginable in the coffee world, even with an extra shot of espresso.

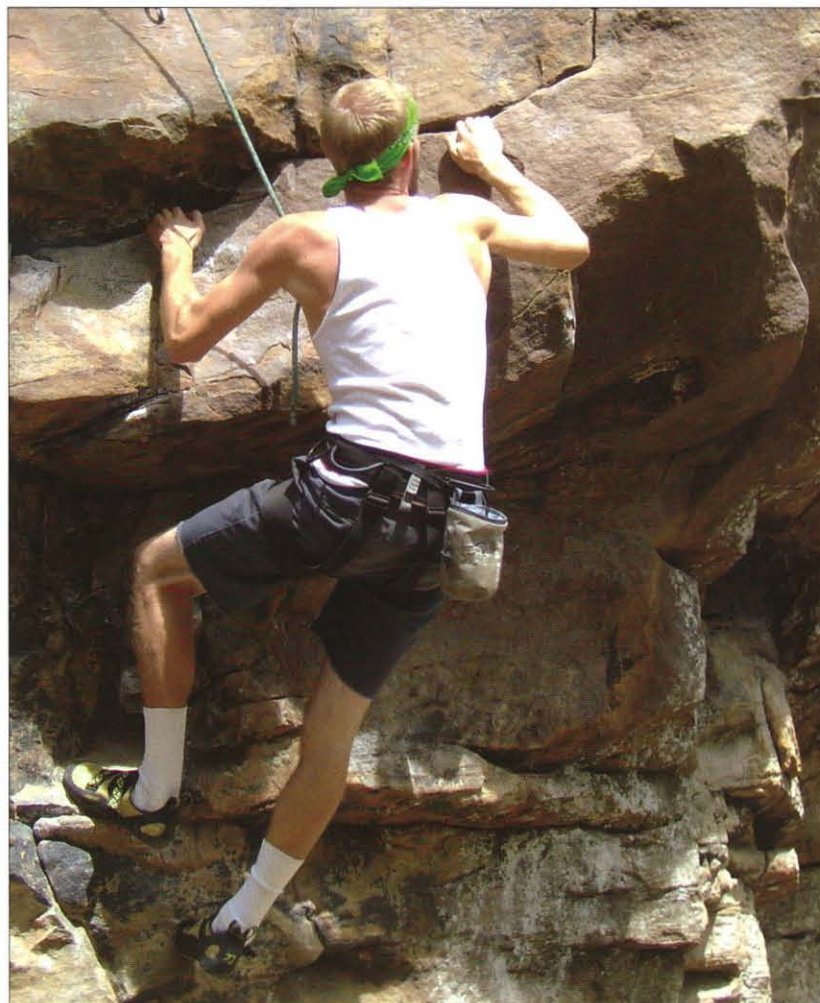
•Jordan Dyniewski



Cheering for the Lady Bisons soccer team Sept. 2, seniors Daniel Graves and Julie Akins, juniors Cole Sessions and Jedda Bragg, and freshman Caroline Maddox support the team in a game against Newman University. Attending sporting events was one way many students spent time during the weekend. •Amber Bazargani

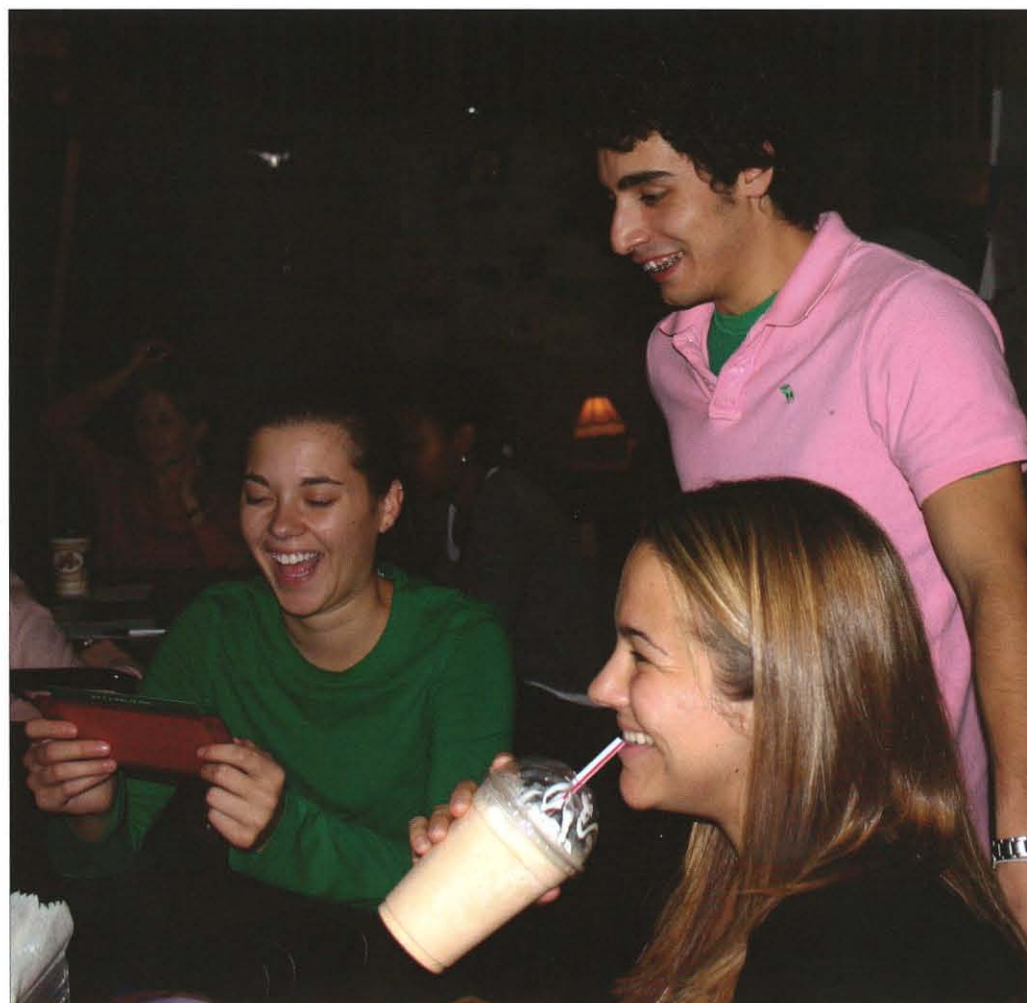
Scoping for the next foothold, junior Eric Mount climbs at Horseshoe Canyon Ranch near Jasper, Ark., on Sept. 30. "About six to eight students take a trip twice a semester; climbing is so much fun, and we love to be outside," graduate student Jo Ellis said.

•Courtesy of Jo Ellis





Relaxing in the sun, senior McKenna Camp and junior Catelyn Horton take a break from intercession at Greers Ferry Lake in Heber Springs, Ark., on May 27. "Heber is amazing because it is so close to Searcy and it is free," Horton said. •Courtesy of Jessica Custer



Enjoying a game of Outburst on Oct. 21, seniors Jennifer Lloyd, Manuel Tourlay and Courtne Bristow gather at the Underground. Coffee shops such as the Underground and Midnight Oil offered students not only beverages, but board games, live entertainment and a relaxed atmosphere. •Amber Bazargani

While visiting the Gruyère Castle in Gruyère, Switzerland, on Feb. 27, junior Lacey Clarke sketches in her notebook. After touring the castle, students ate at a fondue restaurant and visited a cheesecake factory. •Courtesy of Rosa Colon

During the HUF/S group's second tour of France, juniors Amy Wiginton and Christy Duncan, and sophomores Nick Milner and Megan Dalrymple enjoy a visit to Chateaux du Chambord on April 24. The group traveled from Southern Toulouse to Paris. •Courtesy of Rosa Colon



BONDED

Letter writing helps build lasting relationships

In an age when snail mail was becoming a thing of the past, students found new ways to communicate across long distances. Today's technology made this process more efficient with e-mail, instant messenger, Facebook, MySpace and other blog Web sites.

Senior Mandi Kimberly found a way to improve her French grammar in January of 2005 when she found a pen pal who lived in France. Little did she know they would one day converse face to face. Kimberly was able to scan profiles of French natives who were also looking to correspond with an English speaker through the Web site www.correspondence-fr.org. The site led her to French native Vanessa Sonzogni.

"We have a lot in common," Kimberly said. "In our e-mails we discussed the same kinds of things that you would discuss with an English pen pal: what we like to do on weekends, our universities, the kinds of movies that we like."

One year later Kimberly attended Harding University in France/Switzerland, Harding's newest study abroad program. The two made plans to meet in Toulouse, France, Sonzogni's hometown, when Kimberly would be traveling through the area.

"We decided on a date to meet, and we met at Mandi's hotel," Sonzogni said. "We just did some shopping around Toulouse and went to a café and talked about family and my life in France and what Mandi had been doing in Geneva."

Sonzogni soon became friends with the rest of the HUF/S group, who encouraged Sonzogni to apply to Harding when there were problems in the university Sonzogni was attending at the time.

"Vanessa would sit in on our classes with us and go into town with us, and I was there when she applied to Harding," senior Kellie Schmalzried said. "It definitely didn't take much convincing since there was a strike at Vanessa's school in Toulouse at the time."

Sonzogni arrived in the United States in late August and spent a week in Kimberly's hometown of Murfreesboro, Tenn., before beginning the school year.

Sonzogni planned to stay in the States for at least a year. She, like Kimberly, was planning to major in international business.

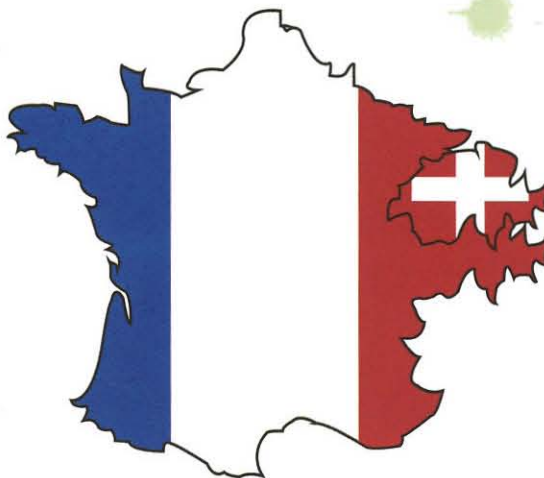
Kimberly and Sonzogni planned to stay in contact long after Sonzogni returned to France. Kimberly was offered a place to stay in France should she ever return.

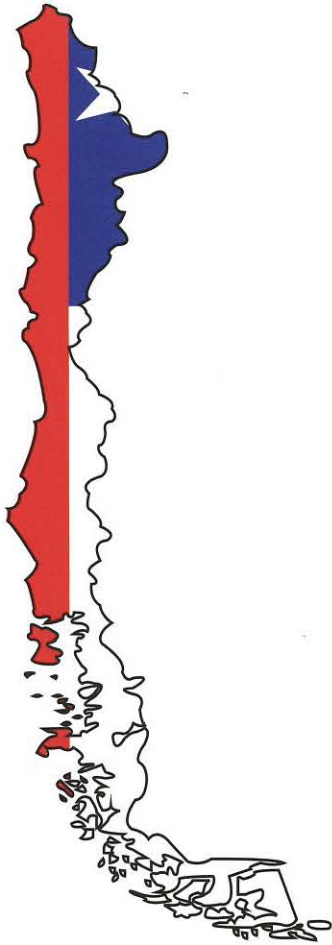
Twenty-three students were the first to attend the HUF/S program. It was the newest study abroad program that traveled to cities throughout France and Switzerland studying language and culture. Along with their studies, the students also went skiing in the Alps, sat in on a conference interpretation at the United Nations in Geneva and toured the beaches of Normandy, France.

•Katie Dear



Lying in the snow Feb. 21, sophomore Tyler Fitzgerald makes a snow angel during a ski trip to the French Alps. "From the top of the mountains we could see so much of the countryside; it was so peaceful," junior Amy Wiginton said. •Courtesy of Rosa Colon





On the way to Machu Picchu, Peru, on Oct. 14, junior Kristen Sober shows a Peruvian girl a picture during a group stop in the town of Cusco, Peru. In previous years, HULA students only stayed to see Machu Picchu for one day, but this year's group stayed for two. •Jonathan Lindsay



Getting her hands dirty, sophomore Vanessa Borsheim feeds a llama Sept. 26 in Toconao, Chile, while visiting the Atacama Desert. HULA students toured the Atacama region for five days and visited salt flats, geysers and Valle de la Muerte. •Courtesy of Vanessa Borsheim





While in the Atacama Desert, junior Meredith Harmon enjoys the sunset in Valle de la Luna, Chile, on Sept. 25. While in Valle de la Luna, students also sand boarded, rode horses through the desert and went mountain biking. •Courtesy of Vanessa Borsheim

ENRICHED

HULA students connect with local Christians

Harding University in Latin America students had the opportunity to live in the beach side resort town of Viña del Mar, Chile, for the duration of their stay in the HULA program. They braved the Spanish-speaking world daily doing grocery shopping, cooking and other everyday activities for themselves in a foreign language. They were fortunate to have a church family to call their own during their three-month stint in Latin America since the brethren of the church in Viña del Mar provided a semblance of home for the students.

Sophomore Heather Dozier said she was surprised by how welcoming the Viña del Mar church members were.

"They let us come into their church like we were already part of their family, which we actually were [in Christ]," Dozier said.

Sophomore HULA student Taylor Box said he was similarly impressed by the love and acceptance of the Viña church.

"I loved how friendly and excited they were to have us there with them," Box said.

Junior Kristen Sober said she liked how the members made sure to greet every single student with a hug and a kiss upon meeting them.

"I always feel so special when they greet me, but surprisingly, I don't feel uncomfortable at

all when everyone is kissing me on the cheek," Sober said.

Junior JD Sandoval lived in Viña del Mar since he was 12 years old, when his parents were missionaries to the people of Chile. He remembered when the first HULA group came four years ago and interacted with the church for the first time. According to Sandoval, the Viña church used to have close to 60 members, but in recent years, membership declined to around 30.

Junior Becca Milner said when HULA students attended church it seemed like they almost quadrupled the size of the congregation.

Out of the approximately 14 weeks of the HULA program, students attended the local church 10 of the Sundays. Services were conducted completely in Spanish. Despite the language barrier, many HULA students forged friendships with church members, friendships they felt were sure to outlast the semester.

Students felt they became closer to church members as the semester progressed, especially after the brethren hosted a picnic lunch after church in September. Junior Katie Anderson said HULA students and church members shared a meal together in a local park and played "competitive" team games to get to know each other better. The ladies of the church prepared an

array of side dishes while the men grilled steaks for everyone.

"I was very impressed by their serving attitude," Box said.

Other students had the opportunity to visit church members in their homes for meals and fellowship.

New relationships that were formed were not just with adult congregation members; children held a special place in some HULA students' hearts as well. Sober said she helped with the younger kids' Sunday school class and got to know many of them.

"I'm close to one little girl named Victoria, who is 8 years old," Sober said. "At first she was really shy, but as the weeks went on she started approaching me on her own to give me hugs."

HULA students agreed the semester abroad was not only an enriching cultural experience, but it also provided spiritual encouragement through the Viña church. In spite of the language barrier, both parties were able to convey the most important message of all: love in Christ.

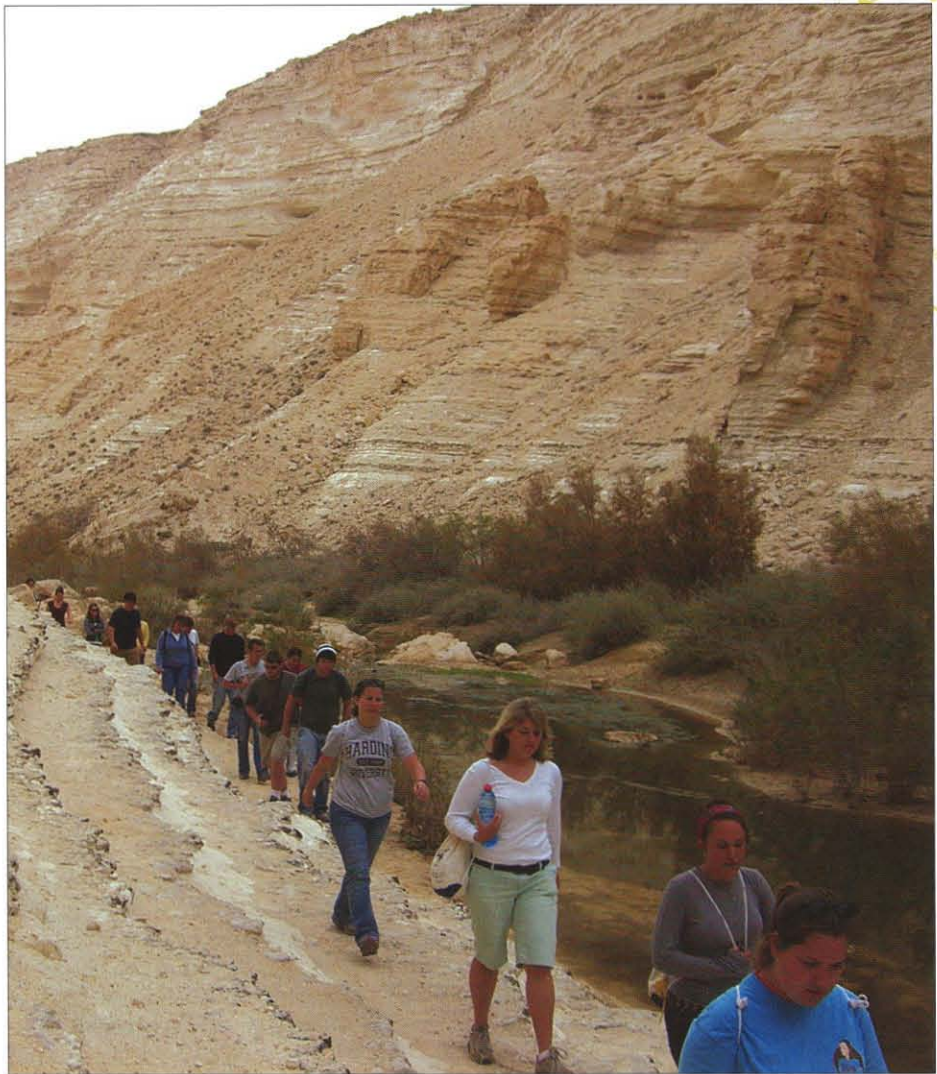
"It doesn't matter if we can't quite understand each other because the message can still get across," Dozier said. "Words aren't necessary when there is love."

•Kristin Kelley



While in Aswan, Egypt, junior Heather Davis and sophomores Kathrine Baggett and Jon Austin play with a crocodile in a Nubian village Oct. 21. While at the village, Davis said several students also got henna tattoos. •Courtesy of Jonathan Austin

Being led by their tour guide, Yossi, the spring HUG group sight sees through a canyon in Neger, Israel, on March 8. "[The tour] was like the black and white Bible stories I knew turned into color," junior Mary Ashley Callaway said. •Courtesy of Jenny Johnson



PERSPECTIVE

HUG students have few fears over conflict in Israel

After preaching to a group of students in Nazareth, Israel, Dr. Neale Pryor, distinguished professor of Bible, said he could hear what sounded like thunder in the far-off distance. However, what Pryor and the students had heard was not thunder at all; it was actually the sound of artillery shells as the conflict between Israel and Lebanon broke out.

Pryor and the students were part of the group that attended Harding University in Greece during the summer. The group was given an option in July to take an 11-day trip into Israel, while the Israeli and Lebanese conflict was escalating. Despite the heightened security concerns, more than 30 students chose to participate in the tour while 10 opted to stay behind.

Many of the students who decided to make the trip said they felt they would be completely safe and did not know if they would ever get the opportunity to visit Israel again.

Junior Eric Smith said he did not have any hesitations about his decision to go, and in the end, knew he had made the right choice.

"It was amazing to see all the places in the Bible that we talk about here at school and at church," Smith said. "We got to see so many historical sites."

Dr. Jeffrey Hopper, dean of the Honors College and international programs, said the group's safety was always considered. When the fighting

broke out in Lebanon near the northern Israeli border, the tour changed its itinerary to stay in the south for the remainder of the trip.

"We would never knowingly put any student in harm's way," Hopper said. "Our students were never near any known danger or fighting of any kind. The picture presented in the news media does not resemble what you see when you are in the country. Our students only saw such images on TV while they were in Israel."

Pryor said because of the change of course, he felt secure and far away from the conflict.

"Personally, I didn't realize how big of a deal it was until I got home and heard the concerns of everyone back here," Pryor said. "I guess you could say it was blissful ignorance. I am just sorry the young people did not get to see more of Nazareth or the Sea of Galilee."

Senior Madison Orsburn said if he were given the choice, he would make the same decision to stay with the group.

"It changes how you think about Gethsemane when you have actually visited the Garden of Gethsemane," Orsburn said. "The time we spent in Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified, where we think he was buried, brought a real sense of what we read in the Bible."

•Brian Hall



Gathering under a tree, summer HUG students listen to Jerry Myhan, director of Harding University in Greece, on July 17 while in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem. Afterward, students were given an opportunity to meditate and pray in the garden. •Chelsea Roberson





Exploring a part of history, juniors Katie Witter and Morgan Garnett, Traveling Assistant and On-Site Physician Dr. Leslie Teague, junior Patrick Owens, and sophomore Ashley Horne walk along the Great Wall of China on Aug. 23. "When you're walking along the wall and looking at the view surrounding you, it was just breathtaking; it was just hard to believe that we were actually walking on something that great built by human hands so long ago," sophomore Julie Adams said. •Courtesy of Julie Adams



EXPERIENCE

Australia program offers new culture to students

Every year, students in the Harding University Australia program traveled Down Under for a semester abroad. Traditionally, the group stopped in South Korea for a little more than a week to see the sights and learn about the culture there. The group stayed in hotels and gained educational experiences by visiting ancient temples and ruins. They got a first-hand view of the culture of South Korea.

This year, however, the HUA group decided to visit China instead of South Korea, staying at Capital Normal University for international students while traveling around Beijing for nine days.

The group visited the Summer Palace Temples, the Forbidden City and even Tiananmen Square. For the students, though, the most popular part of the trip to China was the visit to the Great Wall.

Junior Katie Witter said the Great Wall was one of the most fascinating things she had ever seen.

"This was the best part of our stay in China," Witter said. "Because we were not on a guided tour, we could look around at whatever we wanted and take our time. I could not believe how long the wall was and how cool it was to be standing next to something I had only seen in schoolbooks before."

Students said another interesting aspect of the trip was the opportunity

to stay in a place where religion could not be openly discussed.

"They can't openly talk about religion so they have private meetings at people's apartments," Witter said. "If they get caught, they are in trouble; it was interesting to see that. It's such a different culture."

Sophomore Ashley Horne said the trip was fun, but there were some things that required getting used to; one of those was Chinese cuisine.

Some regional dishes the group dined on included whole fish, including the scales and eyeballs, chicken feet, pig intestines, duck neck and octopus. Horne said the students tried to eat the food regardless of how unappetizing it seemed out of respect to the Chinese people.

Horne said another aspect of the trip that took some difficulty adjusting to were street vendors who would constantly offer the students such items as scarves and souvenirs.

Witter said the trip was a good experience and said she thought HUA should take its groups to China every year.

"It was life changing for me because I did not realize how much I take life for granted at home," Witter said. "It made me miss the luxuries that I am used to getting everyday. It was a very, very interesting experience, and I hope that they will do the same thing next year."

•Erin Smith



While at an aboriginal show Oct. 14, sophomore Ashley Horne learns how to play the didgeridoo in Alice Springs, which is in the Outback. During the five days the HUA students were in the Outback, they were able to ride camels, hold snakes, play the didgeridoo and see Ayer's Rock and the Olgas. •Courtesy of Anna Justus



Bumping the ball, sophomore Anna Justus plays volleyball with some of the locals of the Island of Lifou while on the South Pacific Cruise, which took place during the beginning of November. "It was just an interesting way to connect with the locals; the only way we could communicate with them was to play volleyball," Justus said about the locals who only spoke French. •Courtesy of Anna Justus

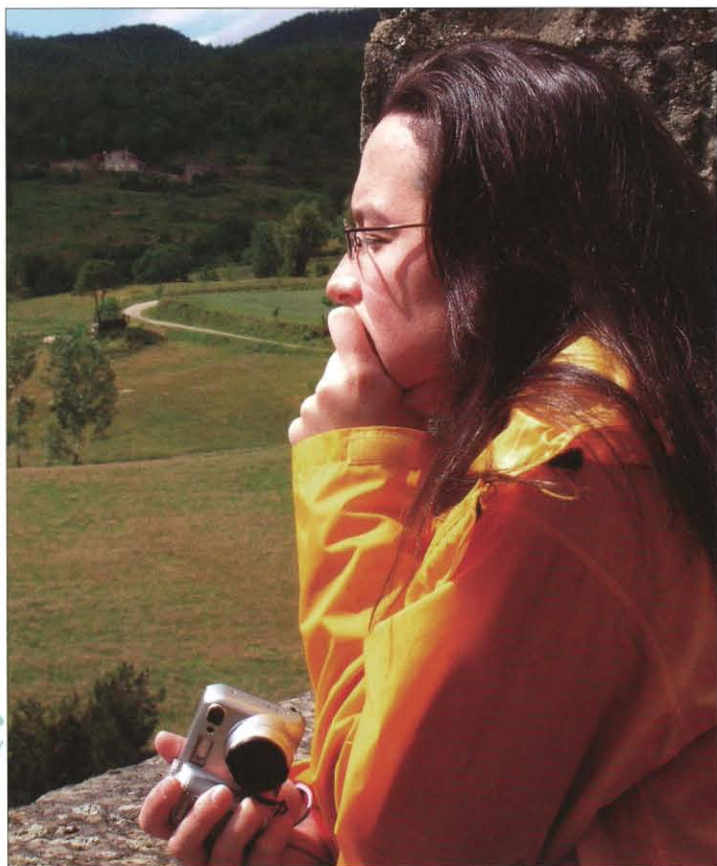


Taking a nap, senior Katie Owens relaxes on a hammock behind the Villa on March 29. HUF students spent their time between free travel at the Villa located in Florence, Italy. •Courtesy of Katie Owens

While on free travel in Venice, Italy, sophomores Sarah Keese and Katie Williams, junior Addison Weaver, sophomore Vicky Rech, and junior Tammi Rose feed the birds Oct. 12 in San Marco Square. "We decided to feed the pigeons just to say we did it, but, really, we all thought they were gross," Rose said. •Courtesy of Tammi Rose



During the summer HUF program, senior Katie Casey looks at the view from the Castle of Porciano on May 28 in the town of Stia, Italy. Students toured the early medieval castle and had a feast consisting of three courses in its banquet hall. •Courtesy of Linnea Jordan



Taking a break from hiking, junior Stephanie Watkins, senior Emily Woodroof, junior Michael White, and seniors Amanda Royse and Katie Casey gaze at the Swiss Alps of Gimmelwald, Switzerland, on July 8 during their second free travel. HUF students were given three opportunities to travel Europe independently. •Courtesy of Linnea Jordan



UNFORESEEN

Illness breaks out among summer HUF students

Many people associate the phrase “the plague” with the outbreak of the bubonic plague carried chiefly by rodents in Europe during the middle ages or the plagues God cast on Egypt during the time of the Israelites’ captivity. However, for the students of Harding University Florence’s summer semester, the phrase took on a new meaning.

The “HUF-onic Plague,” as dubbed by the students, began taking its toll on students about halfway through the semester. The cause of the virus was unknown.

“The ‘HUF-onic Plague’ is a stomach virus,” senior Katie Casey said. “I think about 35 of the 45 that went got it. I don’t know when we got it, but it started in Southern Italy; we started dropping like flies.”

With so many students infected, many on the trip found it difficult to stay healthy.

“The sick people sat in the front of the [tour] bus, and the ones trying not to get sick sat in the back,” Casey said.

Some students were only infected for a few days, like senior Laura Bullington, however, for others

like junior Lauren Roberts, recovering from the illness took almost two weeks.

“We were either on the bus or lying in bed,” Roberts said. “We missed half of the Southern Italy trip. If we weren’t getting sick in the bathroom, we were feeling sick and lying in bed feeling the after-effects.”

For Casey, going home a few days early was the ultimate solution.

In trying to keep the illness under control, directors purchased over-the-counter vitamin shots, which were administered by several nursing students.

“Nursing students who had never given shots before were giving us shots,” Roberts said. “It was really interesting if you don’t like needles, including myself, but we trusted them and were miserable enough to let them give us the shots.”

Roberts, along with two other students, had to have the shot administered twice to treat the illness.

Despite the plague, healthy students were still able to carry on with the tour. Those students, however, did not abandon their sick friends.

“I found that we were one big family,” Bullington

said. “We were trying not to get sick, but everyone really helped and didn’t think about it.”

Roberts said healthy students helped them find food their stomachs could keep down at the hotel, which sent them on extensive searches for Sprite and crackers.

According to Casey, despite the plague’s negative effects, it did create one positive outcome: bringing the group closer together.

“It’s one thing to travel with people you don’t know, but it’s another thing to travel with them and be ill,” Casey said. “You really get to see the caring side of people.”

Even though the “HUF-onic Plague” took a toll on the students in Southern Italy, the plague did not end there. More students became ill upon the group’s return to Florence and several others were sick during the first week of free travel. Yet, Bullington said, everything turned out for the best.

“Looking back on [the plague], it was a time when we were struggling together and helping each other through,” Bullington said. “It made our bond with each other stronger.”

•Lauren Mitchell