You may have noticed as you walk into Blackburn’s cafeteria for dinner that the lines are shorter, and there are less students serving food. Your dorm may have more vacant or empty rooms and you may be wondering why so many of your former colleagues are gone. On December 23, 2014, Dr. John Comerford, President of Blackburn College, sent out a letter to the faculty and staff addressing the low retention rate. While 23 students did graduate last semester (compared to 13 graduates the previous fall semester), there were 16 students that withdrew mid-semester (whereas last fall semester only 10 students withdrew). This was not the only concern; 91 students were identified as being “at serious risk” (compared to only 46 students the previous year). According to the same letter, that would be fewer students than were enrolled in the previous spring semester and could result in a budget revenue shortfall of $200,000 to $300,000. There is still concern in regards to why so many students are dropping out or doing poorly in their classes.

By Bryan Bethel

A convocation was held in Bothwell Auditorium last month in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. All students, faculty, staff and community members were invited and several gave presentations. Among them were poems read by President Comerford, musical performances by Macoupin Station and the Blackburn College Choir, original works by Hope Coston and the Rev. Erica Brown, a praise dance by Charnee and Lavash Frazier of House of Faith Ministries and an original speech from Director of Diversity and Inclusion Jarrod Gray, who also served as master of ceremonies.

By Karlee Brimberry

If you are an avid user of social media, you may have seen all the hype for senior women’s basketball player Briana Rae in the run for Gem of the Week during winter break. Rae discovered her passion for basketball at a young age. She has been a part of basketball programs for eleven years. From averaging 21 points per game and 13.2 rebounds, Rae has not only drawn attention from SLIAC, but also from Division III’s Gem of the Week.

Although Rae stated that there have been ups and downs to the season, such as getting double-teamed in numerous games and staying fit, she has not let any of those things discourage her. Rae has continued to work hard and has even considered transferring to a college closer to home, which was convenient, and there was a slight issue with this college: the cost of being prorated. Heleine could understand getting prorated for having someone clean up a mess, but she was upset by the cost of a propped door ($50.00), characterizing it as “ridiculous and expensive.”

By Jess Willard & Keragan White

Heleine told The ‘Burnian that she considered transferring last year for a couple different reasons. The college she considered transferring to was closer to home, which was convenient, and there was a slight issue with this college: the cost of being prorated. Heleine could understand getting prorated for having someone clean up a mess, but she was upset by the cost of a propped door ($50.00), characterizing it as “ridiculous and expensive.” Jenay Casper-Birdwell, a freshman business major, says she will be leaving the college soon. She said one of her reasons for leaving is due to family issues but she

A Gem in the Gym

By Karlee Brimberry

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Gas Money

By Jordyn Smith

While most of us aren’t going to complain about the recent plunge in gas prices, the sudden change has some Americans wondering what will happen next.

Fox News explains that oil prices have dropped because of changes in world supply and demand. New technology, such as hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, has allowed for “an astounding shale oil and gas revolution,” said Fox. Confirmed by businessinsider.com, U.S. gasoline prices dropped dramatically along with oil prices when shale production surged nationally.

According to GasBuddy Senior Petroleum Analyst Gregg Laskoski, “What occurred in 2014 was nothing short of a paradigm shift in favor of North American energy producers and consumers.”

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is based in Vienna, Austria. OPEC, which was founded by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, was later joined by nine other countries. The US is not a member. As companies compete with each other, lower prices when shale production surged nationally.

Also according to GasBuddy, “the potential for springtime spikes is greatest in Illinois and the Great Lakes region.” From February through April, refineries are expected to make the usual switch from “winter-blend” gasoline to the cleaner and thus more expensive “summer-blend.”

Gas prices are expected to rise in the next few months but will remain steady for the rest of the year.

New Year, New Laws

By Jon Griffl

With every new year the state of Illinois unveils new laws. In 2013, Illinois made it illegal for employers to ask potential employees for their Facebook passwords. This component of the recent privacy rights of all people, especially college students. In 2014, Illinois banned the use of cellphones without a hands free device while driving. Previously, the use of cellphones was only banned in construction zones.

Here are the top 12 new laws for Illinois in 2015 that you should know.

- **Higher Speed Limits—** The speed limit for all Illinois interstates and tollways will be increased to 70 mph.
- **Traffic Stops—** There is no longer a ticket quota system for police officers, meaning that they are not held accountable for a specific number of tickets per month. Also, if you get pulled over and ticketed, officers cannot hold your driver’s license as bond, which means that you will retain your license throughout the ticket process.
- **Public Transportation—** The Illinois Department of Transportation began to receive complaints about the Illinois State Police, which has made the public transportation system for the state.
- **Medical Marijuana—** Medical marijuana is now legal to be prescribed to children as an oral medication for seizures.
- **Crime Victims Privacy—** There will be an enhanced system to notify victims when their offenders are released from police custody.
- **New Illegal Drugs—** Makes it illegal for minors to own Khat plants, which create opiate like effects when consumed.
- **Animal Permits—** Pet owners are required to have permits to own cold blooded animals that are labeled dangerous or venomous, such as venomous toads and snakes.
- **Cyber Bullies—** School administrators now have the ability to discipline students for committing acts of cyber bullying off of the school’s campus.
- **Hunting Bans—** It is now illegal to own or hunt gray wolves, coyotes and black bears.
- **Dr. Shelly Peffer, Professor of Criminal Justice at Blackburn weighed in on the new laws “It is noteworthy that the majority of the laws appear to have the purpose of protecting the public from being harmed, the glaring exception to that is higher speed limits.**

For more information and a complete list of the new laws visit www.illinois.gov.

Blackburn students to compete at the National Student Advertising Competition

By Lindsey Becker

Blackburn students from multiple disciplines will take part in the 2015 National Student Advertising Competition. The NSAC is an annual competition in which groups of students from colleges across the US develop a marketing plan for the event’s sponsor and compete for a chance to have their plan implemented by the company. This year’s sponsor is Pizza Hut.

The competition was brought to Blackburn by business professor Dr. Chris McCurley, who participated in the event at other colleges. McCurley, along with communications professor Natasha Casey, are leading business, communications and graphic arts students on the project.

The students have worked on the campaign since last October and will compete at the district level in April in Indianapolis for a chance to advance to the semi-finals and eventually the finals at the American Advertising Federation’s National Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Even if students aren’t able to make the finals, it still gives them valuable real-life experience working in the field. “It’s a comprehensive marketing plan. It’s doing market research, understanding the data, how to reach the target market, how to develop new and creative ideas—just getting an idea of how businesses really work,” said McCurley.

All Blackburn students, faculty and staff can help the team by filling out a survey about their preferences at Pizza Hut restaurants at https://www.surveymonkey.com.
The Never Ending Aftershock

By Jon Griffel

On Jan. 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake decimated the island country of Haiti. The earthquake killed 220,000, injured another 300,000 and left more than a million people homeless, almost 25% of their population. This tragic event triggered a significant international response. More than $13.5 billion was donated to relief efforts, with the United States responsible for almost $9 billion. Today, many of these people (85,000 people according to PBS News) have been unable to rebuild after the destruction and are still living in tents and temporary housing. The economy was decimated along with the buildings. Many businesses were destroyed and when the businesses crumbled, so did the jobs. More than 40% of Haitians remain unemployed and the majority of them live below the national poverty line.

The slow progress of the rebuild has led many people to question where the donated funds went and what is hindering growth. One of the first reasons that the rebuild has been so slow is that 10 months after the earthquake, a cholera outbreak struck the country killing 8,592 and sickening more than 700,000. The outbreak was attributed to the contamination of drinking water by overflowing septic systems. Money is another issue that is impeding the rebuild, as much of the donations were not specified for any particular purpose. According to CNN, over 60% of the United States recovery funds were labeled as “not specified.” The most recent roadblock Haiti has endured is the dissolution of their parliament earlier this year, which led to mass protests. Many citizens are calling for President Michael Martelly to resign. It appears as though he has no plans of doing so, as he recently appointed a new cabinet.

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5 years after the earthquake, Haiti is still struggling to recover.

By Jess Willard

Multiple changes have been made in Blackburn’s cafeteria, Ding, thanks to a listening session between Sodexo general manager, Tim Lucas and a group of students. One of these changes involved the introduction of two new meal plans, the block 200 and block 220 (both come with $75.00 in flex dollars). A lot of students were upset that they ran out of meals so early last semester. Freshman Phillip Johnson said, “Last semester, I ran out of meals because the [block] 175 isn’t designed for people that stay on weekends and rarely eat out or do not have money for groceries. I am quite happy they now have a larger meal plan.”

Lucas suggests that if students are running low on meals towards the end of the semester that they purchase a commuter meal plan, which comes with thirty meals for a semester and $20.00 in flex dollars. To purchase this plan, students must visit Chris Beck, Accounts Receivable Supervisor, in Ludlum 116 located in the Business Office. Another change in Ding was the introduction of the continental breakfast. Instead of having breakfast from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m., it now runs from 7:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. to make it more convenient for late risers. The food itself has also changed. Ding now offers fresh and canned fruit, granola, two to three yogurt options (one plain and one or two fruit flavored), three to four different cereals (including whole wheat) and toppings for bagels and toast. The change in product allows breakfast to be open later, and there is less waste. According to Lucas, there are more students coming to breakfast than last semester. Now, forty students come to breakfast rather than twelve to twenty students each morning.

One final change made to Ding was the new to-go opinion, which is available for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You must go to the register in Ding and ask for a container. It is $10.00 for the semester— you can choose to pay with the flex dollars offered with your meal plan. Then, you will be given a container to fill. When you are done with your container, you must bring it back to Ding to be cleaned for sanitary purposes. You will be given a wooden token to get a new container the next time you wish to have a to-go meal. It is $10.00 to replace a broken or lost container. Lucas is excited about all the new changes and says his goal is to “communicate with the students.”
Blackburn and Compulsory Worship
By David Horn, Alum '65

Can you imagine compulsory Sunday chapel? Where you actually had to “sign in” as you entered Clegg for morning worship? That’s how it was as recently as the early ’60s. Of course there were exceptions. You were excused if your work assignment prevented you from attending church. And since Catholic students could not worship in a protestant church, they were allowed to attend mass in town, provided they returned with a note signed by the priest. In fact, any student could worship at his or her favorite church in town, but a note from the pastor verifying attendance had to be turned in by Monday morning. There was just one exception to this rule. Kids from Christian Science homes were required to worship on campus. There was a small Christian Science church at 238 E. 1st North St. but students could not worship there because the college chaplain decided Christian Science was not Christian. It was a cult. Why?

Christian Science is a “made in America” religion founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1866. It does not prohibit any form of healthcare, but (believe it or not) many members find prayer more effective than medicine. If ill, or near death, members might hire a Christian Science “practitioner” to pray with them.

But then everything suddenly changed. A coed from northern Illinois became seriously ill. Word spread that she was a Christian Scientist, and was not seeing a doctor. Instead a “practitioner” came down from Chicago and spent a week not seeing a doctor. Instead a Christian Scientist, and was fully recovered. The campus was buzzing, and that’s when the chaplain asked if he might re-evaluate a little book called “The Manual of The Mother Church” which defines the faith. After careful reappraisal, and in light of what happened, he decided Christian Science was Christian, and students could attend services in town on Sunday, provided they brought back a note from the “First Reader” who conducted the worship.

With this new freedom, about six students formed a “Christian Science Organization.” It was recognized as a campus club, and—irony of ironies—it was the only club on campus that held public services every Monday evening in Clegg Chapel.

Times have changed since then. The former Christian Science church in town disbanded for lack of members, and is now a private home, with a two-car garage added in the back yard. The organization dissolved after all the student of Christian Science graduated. But Principia is still a basketball rival, and the denomination has survived into the 21st century, one healing at a time.

Finally the student emerged, fully recovered. The campus was buzzing, and that’s when the chaplain asked if he might re-evaluate a little book called “The Manual of The Mother Church” which defines the faith. After careful reappraisal, and in light of what happened, he decided Christian Science was Christian, and students could attend services in town on Sunday, provided they brought back a note from the “First Reader” who conducted the worship.

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Bowlero Lanes Has Striking deals
By Rebecca Sprinkel

One of Carlinville’s well known attractions, Bowlero Lanes, is located west of Carlinville on Route 108. This bowling alley has 14 lanes available for bowling. Every Tuesday night Bowlero Lanes offers a $10.00 unlimited bowling from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This $10.00 fee includes the cost of shoes which normally cost $2.00 to rent. Blackburn environmental biology student, Ross Albert stated, “The bowling alley is a fun place to bowl for a great price. It is a good way to relax and have a little friendly competition.”

Every day except Sunday, one game is $3.75. Sunday they have a deal: $2.75 per game per person. Bowlero Lanes also has many items on the menu in the restaurant to enjoy a dinner or snack. The kitchen hours are 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, Friday and Saturday the kitchen is open for business 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.. Manager Donna Carty stated, “Some food items that are made in the kitchen are not on the menu, I make homemade every last bit of the pies and chicken and dumplings.”

In addition to bowling and food, Bowlero Lanes also offers video games, a jukebox, gambling machines and dart boards for entertainment. Blackburn psychology student, Jeanette Kelly stated “The jukebox typically has a wide variety of music to be played. You can download particular songs if you cannot find them in the music library. At many of the CAB sponsored free bowling nights in the past, the music was always played by the student’s choice and it was really fun!”

Admissions Welcomes Chicago Based Rep, Em Jospeh
By Karlee Brimberry

If anything new was noticed last semester it was the large size of the freshmen class. However, class sizes are not the only thing expanding. Last semester there was an addition to the Blackburn Admissions office. Emmalya (Em) Joseph, the new Chicago regional admissions counselor, has high hopes for new student enrollment this year.

Joseph has lived in Chicago for just under twenty years; which is where she will start her new career for Blackburn College. She received her Masters degree in Human Services and Counseling from DePaul University and brings many years of experience to Blackburn. Joseph has worked at a variety of universities and private schools, including Ripon College in Wisconsin where she held the Regional Director of Admissions position.

Joseph’s motivation to become a successful admissions counselor was in part due to not having the best school experience. “The individualized attention given to students was one quality that attracted me to Blackburn,” said Joseph. “I enjoyed taking time to go through the process with students. Working with a larger pool, you’re almost forced to do the bare minimum and move on.” Another quality Joseph loves about Blackburn is the family environment the students, faculty and staff provide.

Although Joseph is not physically on campus everyday, she does visit Carlinville at least once a month. According to Joseph the hardest part about is that she does not get to participate in many campus activities, “Being in Chicago, I feel sometimes students may not realize I have a campus connection. They often times think I don’t visit campus and don’t participate in campus events, but I do.” According to the Director of Admissions, Alisha Kapp, Joseph is exactly what the Blackburn Admissions staff needed in order to grow their enrollment.
ALONZO NELSON:  
BLACKBURN LEGEND

By Noah Daum

Alonzo Nelson, 1984 graduate of Blackburn College, was a two-time National Little College Association All-American, and took the 1981-82 basketball team to the National Small College Athletic Association National Championship. But to Nelson, the experience helped him have much more than on-court success.

In 1979 after graduating from Lincoln High School in East St. Louis, he came to Blackburn College where he became close with then assistant coach Bob Staff. “He treated me like a son,” Nelson stated. “That made my stay at Blackburn more memorable.” Nelson recalls staying in the same dorm as some of his teammates including Ike Dodd, Mike Pauline and the Chatman brothers. “We were real, real close friends,” he said.

After graduating from Blackburn in 1984, Nelson got his start as a math teacher in his hometown of East St. Louis. He coached both girls and boys basketball until 2004 when he became athletic director. In 2009 Nelson earned his master’s degree from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. In 2014 he became the principal at James Williams Learning Center, an alternative high school in East St. Louis.

Success in the Nelson family doesn’t stop with Alonzo. Nelson’s wife is also a math teacher. Following in his father’s footsteps, Alonzo Nelson Jr. is a math teacher in East St. Louis and in 2013, married Olympic gold medalist Dawn Harper. Nelson’s daughter Knetra is the head volleyball coach at Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis and Nelson’s youngest son Dominic is attending the University of Missouri and plays on the football team.

Nelson Sr. was a 2014 inductee into the Blackburn College Athletic Hall of Fame and at the ceremony he was reunited with his former Blackburn coach Bob Staff. “He took me in and made me feel like family,” Nelson added. “So that was just an honor to be reunited with him.”

There are a lot of successful alumnus that graduated from Blackburn College, and if there is one word that could describe Alonzo Nelson Sr., it would be successful.

What is the funniest pick up line you have ever heard, and what face would you use while saying it?

Amber Campbell
Freshman
Psychology Major

“Does that dress have a zipper? Mind if I try it out?”

Dr. John Comerford
Administration
President of Blackburn College

“Why is the sky so gray? Because all the blue is in your eyes. My eyes are brown.”

Mary Chamberlain
Senior
History Major

“It hurt? When you fell from heaven?”

Taylor Critchfield
Senior
Accounting Major

“What does a polar bear weigh? Enough to break the ice.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACKBURN ARCHIVES

Alonzo Nelson Receiving NLCAA All-American Award: 1982

PHOTO BY MIKE ESSON
DR. DEBORAH YOUNG, an Adjunct Business Professor, began her journey to Blackburn College when she earned her Bachelor of Science in radio and television. She also earned a Master’s degree in education in the area of human services management and her Ph. D. in management and administration in educational technology.

Young lived in San Diego for 18 years where she worked as a special projects researcher, analyst and technical writer for Navy Personnel Research and Development Center. Then she made the decision to go to Europe and lived there for six years. She traveled and visited more than twenty countries including Germany, France and Italy. When she finally returned to the USA, she came to Carlinville. She says it was a “tumultuous adjustment” coming to a smaller town after living in big cities. There are not as many things available here in town like there are in cities such as movie theaters or malls. However, she did admit that it has “been an interesting transition and journey coming back to a small town in the Midwest.” Young has now been in Carlinville for three and a half years and has grown to love the area, town and people. She said, “Carlinville are the friendliest people.”

Young is also a member of the Carlinville Writers Guild and Shop Local First. Her company, Action Digital Video, videotapes weddings and school events, and she is the co-owner of Cherry Tree Treasures & Gifts on the Carlinville Square. She has been teaching economics and human resources classes as well as international business at Blackburn since 2013. “[I] am honored and thrilled to be sharing insights with students. Blackburn students are perfectly positioned to take on lead roles in their [future] professions,” she said. According to Young, Carlinville is the ideal environment for a college since there are not as many distractions, which makes it easier for students to focus on their studies. All in all, she says, “[I am] happy to be here at Blackburn and part of the lives of Blackburn students.”

CRIME BLACKBURN COLLEGE BEAT

January 11, 2015

At 7:50pm, there was a false alarm in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

January 11, 2015

At 7:00pm, there was an infraction involving moving parlor furniture in a resident’s hall to a bedroom. Handled by Residence Life.

January 13, 2015

At 7:50pm, there was a suspicion of students using illegal drugs in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

January 14, 2015

At 10:59pm, there was a noise violation breaking quiet hours in a residence hall. Handled by Residence Life.

January 15, 2015

At 10:27pm, there was a car accident in a school parking lot. Handled by Campus Security.

January 13, 2015

At 7:00pm, there was an infraction involving moving parlor furniture in a resident’s hall to a bedroom. Handled by Residence Life.

January 13, 2015

At 7:50pm, there was a suspicion of students using illegal drugs in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

January 14, 2015

At 10:59pm, there was a false alarm in a residence hall and a fire incident was reported. Handled by Campus Security.

January 15, 2015

At 12:01am, there was a noise violation breaking quiet hours in a residence hall. Handled by Residence Life.

January 15, 2015

At 11:50pm, there was a personal cuts in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

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January 15, 2015

At 12:01am, there was a noise violation breaking quiet hours in a residence hall. Handled by Residence Life.

January 15, 2015

At 11:50pm, there was a personal cuts in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

January 16, 2015

At 1:37pm, there was a personal cuts in a residence hall. Handled by Campus Security.

THE TRUTH A RETENT

Craig Newsom decorates his office with books and other items. He decided to pass the torch on to his colleague Craig Newsom, who acquired his MFA in Sculpture at the Art Department, ceramics professor Bob Huber has decided to pass the torch to on to the optimistic view],” he said and admitted that the financial aid initiatives attracted students that were more “at risk.” He also noted but also acknowledged,
While sitting comfortably in his new office surrounded by books and his own artwork, Newsom had this to say about his new position: “There are definitely more duties appointed to me now, but this does not change the fact that I will still be looking for lots and lots of work from students.” Another change that resident artists can look forward to is the renewal of the Renner ceramics building. Without being burdened by the extra work as Chair of the Art Department, Huber will now be focusing his attention on the upkeep and restoration of Renner, where his office is now located.

“It simply makes more sense for me to be located in Renner rather than the VAC,” said Huber. “If I am to maintain the ceramics building it just doesn’t seem logical for me to be cooped up in a completely different building.”

Both professors seem to have a firm grasp on what is expected of them in the following semester and are eager to get to work and make lots of art.

University of Chicago, has been teaching at Blackburn for 8 years. He has worked with Huber in maintaining the Visual Arts Center and in teaching the art seminar classes.

Getting Back Into the Groove of College

By Jess Willard

For those who are new to a college workload or just want to know how to readjust to college life after a break, both psychology professor Dr. Kevin Karl and senior biology major Jacob Maag have some words of wisdom.

Studying for classes can be difficult after approximately four weeks of a break, but Karl has a suggestion: the SQ4R method which he teaches about in his PY 101 class. SQ4R stands for survey, question, read, recite, reflect and review. Step one is survey or skim the material, which can be either notes, worksheets or the book. This allows you to gather points and create a frame of reference to begin your studying process. Then you begin the questioning process. Give yourself questions to answer on topics you are unsure about before you continue on to the next step, which is reading through the material. Read for detail and to answer the questions you had previously. The fourth step is to recite the information. This can be done by repeating it in your head or typing it out. Proceed to reflect on the information by using critical thinking skills. Ask yourself what does this content mean to you and how does it apply to your life? These questions give meaning to the information and cue your memory. Finally, review the information. This should take place a few days before an exam, a test or a quiz, so you have the opportunity to engrain the information into your mind.

Karl said, “It gives you more experience with the material allowing you to learn [it] better.” This six step process should give you a good outline for how to study and gives the information you are learning a purposeful meaning. Procrastination may also hinder you when it comes to getting back into the groove of college studies. Karl advises students to come up with a plan that is “kind of like a new year’s resolution.” Having goals will give you the motivation needed to study. He suggests that you “keep track of assignments and schedule time to do [them].”

Jacob Maag has more suggestions for scheduling when to do your assignments—prioritizing will help the most.

He stated, “Make sure what needs to be done gets done and then, see where [your] free time is.” Schedule when you have classes and when homework is due. Then, you can add clubs and other activities to build your resume. He also recommends that you build relationships with professors. They can help you fully understand the requirements and structure of the class.

Studying for classes can

PHOTO BY JORDYN SMITH

2014 recipient of the MLK Student Leadership Award Hope Coston shares an original work.
One of the newest bands to hit the indie rock scene in the past few months, Catfish and the Bottlemen, have taken the scene by storm with their explosive sound. Comprised of lead vocalist Van McCann, lead guitarist Johnny “Bondy” Bond, bassist Benji Blakeway and drummer Bob Hall, Catfish and the Bottlemen’s sound is something new yet familiar, and Blackburn Radio’s Donovan Williams agrees. “I recently came across Catfish and the Bottlemen while scrolling through YouTube. I started to listen to their songs because their sound was different from what usual rock bands play and they had a sophisticated sound that reeled me in from the very beginning of each song. I’m officially hooked and can’t stop listening to their music.” If you’re looking for a new alternative band to add to your iTunes library then check out Catfish and the Bottlemen.

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Protesters rally outside of a prison.

By Lindsey Becker

If you’ve kept up with events in Ferguson, Missouri, you’re probably aware of the protests occurring across the nation.

Unrest has been fueled by the non-indictments of Officer Darren Wilson, shooter of 18-year-old Michael Brown, and Officer Daniel Pantaleo, who put New York man Eric Garner in a chokehold resulting in his death. Thousands took to the streets to protest police brutality and racial profiling, including myself.

As New York was overrun with an estimated 60,000 protestors at the Millions March (a mass demonstration demanding justice following the Garner decision), I was part of a smaller protest in St. Louis, Missouri. Meeting at Hickey Park, a group of about 100-200 protestors marched to a St. Louis medium security prison in objection to police brutality, mass incarceration, and the war on drugs.

According to the International Center for Prison Studies at King’s College London, the United States incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world—around 2.3 million, and Huffington Post says that over 50% of those inmates are drug offenders.

In addition to this, most of them are people of color, continuing the trend of racial profiling. A 2011 survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows that whites are more likely to use cocaine, marijuana, hallucinogens and methamphetamine—though a 2009 study from Human Rights Watch affirms that blacks are three times as likely to be convicted for drug offenses.

“The war on drugs is lost,” says criminal justice professor David Camp. “If we would treat drug problems rather than penalize them, it would be much more successful and cost a whole lot less.”

Led by an advocate group called Systematic Freedom, our protest called for exactly that. As we neared the prison and approached the barbed wire fence, I heard what I thought was an echo. It was jarring when I realized inmates were chanting back to us. As we yelled, “No justice,” they replied with “No peace.”

A man who was once incarcerated in the prison described to us, close to tears, the conditions there. According to him, inmates were starved and teared with food, there was a complete disregard for health and safety, no treatment of illnesses and many inmates piled into single cells. The prisoners themselves shouted out, “We’re getting sick in here, we get treated like shit.”

Unfortunately, this isn’t the first time such claims have been made. In 2009, the American Civil Liberties Union of eastern Missouri conducted an investigation which revealed instances of sexual and physical assaults and cover-ups of such events. In 2012, 30 inmates claimed that guards forced prisoners to fight gladiator style for their amusement.

With a megaphone, an address was shouted to prisoners so they could write to the outside about conditions. As we left the prison, they called out, “Thank you, we love you.” If we accomplished something, it was bringing attention to these issues and giving victims a voice.

The problems with our justice system run deep. Do citizens deserve to be subjected to racial profiling and locked up in such conditions, even if their crime was a non-violent one? Offenders should not be forced to forfeit their dignity and safety for these offenses, and a system that unfairly targets minorities is a broken one.

If you or someone you know was a victim of the St. Louis prison system, reach out to Systematic Freedom at systematicfreedom@gmail.com.
Talk to Tim: How to Suck at School

By Tim Morenz

Greetings and Salutations Blackburn College!

My first column for the new semester will bring something different. Instead of answering a question, I wanted to tell you some things that I have been thinking about. I seek inspiration from lots of different places: from my meditations on Brazilian jiu-jitsu and yoga practice; from my wife and children; from nature; from cooking; from conversations with my colleagues and staff; and most of all from you, the students at Blackburn College. It is at this point where our story begins. I am facebook friends with Haley Welch, senior and writer for TheURNIAN. It is at this moment that really want to play without buffering are on YouTube.

Second, really slow down. When you share an internet connection with a dorm of 50 plus people there’s a good chance your Xbox 360 will not stay connected for very long and the only videos that really want to play without years type of stuff. It was practical stuff that was learned in the trenches. I am also a big fan of the comic strip, “The Oatmeal” and he has a fantastic piece entitled “How to suck at your religion.” Basically, it is a list of everything not to do, written in satire, but it also packs a serious philosophical punch. So in that spirit, I am attempting the list:

• Disconnect. Play video games for days after bombing a test. It’s not your fault. So…
• Do not ask for help. Keep every thing to yourself. (This list is based upon
• Take the credit or the blame for everything. For instance, if someone’s door slamming at 7 a.m. was a test. It’s not your fault. So…
• Allow for no adjustments. Everything has to be exactly the way you want it. But, the new student class was also more ethnically diverse, came from different areas of the state, and represented even more socioeconomic diversity than past classes.

I point this out for two reasons. First, these changes look like they will accelerate. Applications for next year are up across the state, but are way up in the Chicago area again. If that trend continues, imagine a Blackburn College in just a few years that has 700 students, with more from Chicago than any other region in Illinois, and 30% or more of them being students of color.

That’s a future that excites me, but I raise it for a second reason. Blackburn will need to evolve to support these students. Our student activities program, makeup of the faculty/staff, student services, and perhaps even the curriculum itself will need to change to match where the campus may be headed.

One thing is sure - it will be an exciting trip. And we will all need to contribute as Blackburn evolves. Start now - let me know how we can better support our students.

This is a great time to be at Blackburn and I’m so proud to be here with all of you.

Your actions don’t predict your results. When failure happens, think about what everyone else should have done rather than what you did.

• Disorganize. Clutter is your friend. Ignore your calendar.
• Stay glued to your cell phone at all times. The meal that someone posted on Instagram or the nasty joke on Twitter is much more important than your success.

You want to watch Netflix all day every day. Follow the opposite and I think you might be on the way to a decent semester. It is also written in satire. So without further ado, here we go:

• Spend all of your time thinking about yesterday and tomorrow. Spend no time connected to the present moment.

• Ignore your health. Eat trash and don’t sleep.

• Ignore all of the warning signs and give no credence to your instincts.

Finally, as soon as I got back to campus I quickly remembered all the things I did not miss about living in a dorm. Here are some of those things I did not miss.

First, communal living. You have to share everything including bathrooms. They can get pretty nasty really quickly. Also, some neighbors are louder than others. I certainly did not miss being woken up by someone’s door slamming at 7 a.m.

Second, really slow internet. When you share an internet connection with a dorm of 50 plus people there’s a good chance your Xbox 360 will not stay connected for very long and the only videos that really want to play without
Big 10 championship only to J.T. Barret led the team to the shoulder injury. Freshman Miller to a season ending lost star quarterback Braxton In the preseason, Ohio State their third string quarterback. and entered the playoffs on subpar Big 10 conference under much speculation State was the only undefeated 1 loss teams, and Florida and Oregon were dominant the bracket. While Alabama, and Oregon were dominant 1 loss teams, and Florida State was the only undefeated team, Ohio State’s bid was under much speculation as Ohio State came from a subpar Big 10 conference to be competitive always got shorted from the teams of the past system to be competitive and be in the discussion of best team in the country. I think they should still make it an 8 team bracket which would hype up the experience even more. Sucks that my Ducks lost though!” Senior education major Kate Alderman said, “I think it’s better than the poll system there was before. Teams from more conferences received more opportunities than before.” The Alabama fan added, “Although I’d like to see more teams than just four, it’s really not possible because college football season would be so much longer, which would have a major effect on the players. Because of that, I think I would keep the playoffs how they currently are.” Looks like the playoff experiment was a huge success for college football.

Tylor Klipfel plays center field during this year’s baseball season at Blackburn.
obstacles stop her. Rae feels it is important to stay focused and to have team chemistry. She said her motivation for all of her hard work derives from her teammates and coach.

You have to be nominated in order to receive Division III’s Gem of the Week. Although Rae is unsure who nominated her for this honor, she is very grateful and appreciative of not only that, but also all the support Blackburn College has shown by sending e-mails urging students to vote. Overall Rae received 49.3 percent of the votes going up against 12 other competitors, ultimately winning the title Gem of the Week. Rae’s advice for any athlete wishing to succeed is to “stay focused and be determined. When things get tough, look at the person beside you and know they are going through the same thing. You can go through any obstacle with teammates by your side.”

The Kentucky Wildcats have been the number one choice to win for the NCAA Championship so far, but that could change as the season wears on.

By Jon Griffel

The NCAA Division I basketball season has been a roller coaster ride. Many of the top teams have experienced bumps along the way, opening spots up in the top five for new teams. As conference play begins, many teams have seen their championship hopes dashed, as they have failed to live up to preseason hype. The biggest busts so far are Connecticut, Syracuse, Michigan and Florida. All of these teams entered the season in the top 25 and have since fallen flat.

At the season’s midpoint, my top five rankings have changed. In the preseason my top five teams were Wisconsin, Kentucky, Duke, Arizona and Kansas. The updated rankings are below.

1. Kentucky Wildcats—Kentucky played their first 12 college basketball games like the best team to ever take the court. They were beating teams by at least 20 points every game, including games against ranked opponents. However, as conference play has opened, the team has looked very vulnerable. Kentucky is still the favorite to win the NCAA championship, but they no longer look like a team that can go undefeated.

2. Virginia Cavaliers—Virginia has been the most dominant defensive team in basketball this year. When they run Coach Tony Bennett’s defense correctly, there are very few teams who can score on them. The main story this year has been their offense. With a heavy emphasis on passing and sharing the basketball, they have looked like the favorites to win their conference.

3. Villanova Wildcats—Much like Virginia, Villanova has looked like a great overall team. They don’t dominate the opponent with their offensive or defensive efforts, but rather beat them with a team game.

4. Duke Blue Devils—Like Kentucky, Duke is very reliant on freshman scoring, and they have gotten most of it from Jahlil Okafar. Okafar has been a dominant post presence and should anchor this team on a Final Four run.

5. Gonzaga Bulldogs—Gonzaga has continued their excellence as a mid major program. They have dominated lesser opponents and their only loss was on the road to a very good Arizona team. Look for this team to make some noise in the NCAA tournament.

A Gem in the Gym

Home Game Awareness

By Keragan White

Blackburn College has five men’s and six women’s athletic teams. Despite playing at home many times throughout the season, student attendance at home games is miniscule. This results in a lack of school spirit from the students attending Blackburn. A key reason for low attendance at home games is a general lack of awareness of when they are scheduled.

Many Blackburn students only find out about a home game the day of and therefore already have plans. Is this Blackburn’s fault or the students’? The answer is both. Many students do not have the motivation to look for when sporting events are going to be held, or they are unaware that the school website holds the athletic event calendar. Blackburn, on the other hand, does not want to reiterate the information that has already been placed on the website. All students have to do is “look at the athletic page as it really is simple to navigate around and they would find a lot of information on each sport,” states interim Athletic Director Mark Hopping. Go to blackburn.edu and click on athletics and there is a calendar on the right hand side of the screen that provides game dates, times and locations.

If the only excuse for not supporting the college and its athletes is lack of awareness, than it is time for change. The ‘Burnian is going to make the athletic schedule more accessible to students across campus. The schedule for upcoming sporting events is going to be published in the paper to bring further awareness at Blackburn while hopefully giving a boost to school spirit.

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