

THE CONCORDIA

COURIER

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

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As fires ravage Los Angeles County, Concordia's community responds

MADISON ZUNIGA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
& KIARA AZUMA
CAMPUS EDITOR

As three major fires continue to burn through massive swaths of the northern Los Angeles metropolitan area, accounts emerge regarding both the destructive impact of the fires, as well as the outpouring of support that has arisen in response. Departments across campus reflected on how the Palisades, Hurst and Eaton fires have affected Concordia's community.

Though the fires are thankfully far from Orange County, locally people on and off campus are considering how to better prepare for fire danger in OC. Concordia's Campus Safety team offered preparedness recommendations for students to keep in mind.

"Concordia's fire response plans include evacuation of the campus or sheltering in place depending on the nature of the wildfire and weather conditions," said Raul Morales, Director of Campus Safety. "The university will make decisions and provide notifications based on information received from local authorities."

If a student observes signs of a fire near the campus, they should first contact 911 and Campus Safety, and then identify important items that will be needed upon an evacuation such as extra clothing, medications, laptops and important documents. Students are also encouraged to identify those who might need assistance in an emergency evacuation and plan to assist them or contact Campus Safety for help.

"The Department of Campus Safety has worked with local agencies in wildfire planning," Morales said, noting that though the Orange County Fire Authority

has relayed that the fire severity risk on Concordia's campus remains low, smoke and other factors might impact campus life.

In response to those affected and displaced by the LA fires, senior Sofia Dominguez, a member of the women's water polo team, spearheaded the coordination of volunteer and donation efforts from the Golden Eagle sports community. "On behalf of the WWP team and as a member of the student athlete population, we'd like to give a huge thanks to the athletic administration for helping us and making this all possible," said Dominguez. "A special thanks to Glory [Fung] and Brittany [Pereda] for immediately jumping on this idea and helping out in any way they could."

"For CUI students, the easiest way for them to help is simply by donating! There are currently two orange 'pods' or containers behind the gym where students can leave their donations," said Dominguez. "Donations will be collected Monday through Friday and taken to drop off locations this coming Sunday." The donation effort is specifically seeking clothing (shirts, pants, new underwear, new socks, jackets, shoes (new or gently used), hygiene products, food and water, blankets and bedding, as well as comfort and entertainment (books, puzzles, playing cards, or games).

"We will simply be taking as many donations up until Friday and then loading up a U-Haul on Sunday to take to multiple donation spots," said Dominguez. "[These] will be intended for current students and their families displaced by fires, the Pacific Southwest District LCMS Pastors and Congregations and first responders. We are looking for all hands on deck to load up the U-Haul with donations before heading up to LA."

As potentially dangerous situations

persist, it's important to monitor emails and text messages for emergency alerts which will provide instructions and updates from the university. "Have the phone numbers of family members who are out of the area who you can communicate with to inform them of your location and safety," said Morales. "For local emergency alerts, sign up for AlertOC.org by going to ReadyOC.com/text-alerts. Download the Titan HST app and log in using your Concordia Google email account as a means to report fire and other concerns to Campus Safety."

Individuals within Concordia's community have been directly impacted by the danger of the fires, and all are encouraged to support them through prayer for physical safety, emotional wellbeing and material support. "The fires have affected my family personally as my sister had to evacuate her home in Sierra Madre," said Natalie Annunziato, senior and ASCUI president. "She was definitely one of the 'lucky ones' as her house was untouched, but had the fire spread two blocks south, she would have lost everything. I remember her

calling me and telling me she could see the fire from her house, and she grabbed a few items, knocked on her neighbors doors to evacuate and left. If she did not see the fire, she would have been trapped and stuck in traffic after the evacuation mandates went out."

"The fires have affected my mental and physical health, as the anxiety got in the way of my work and my sleep," said Annunziato. "I was afraid to wake up every morning as I worried the fires would spread more and more out of control. My heart goes out to anyone affected, especially those who have lost homes, pets or loved ones."

Micah Rippon, Professor of Anthropology, shared concerns about the affected areas. Rippon faced potential evacuation from her home, and also worried about an elementary school located in Pacific Palisades that she worked closely with.

(Continues on p. 8)



PICTURED ABOVE: Fires across Los Angeles County have displaced more than 100,000 people. Photo courtesy of: Shutterstock



PICTURED ABOVE: Detail of the campus prayer wall for the victims of the fires Photo courtesy of: Rebekah Michel



PICTURED ABOVE: The campus prayer wall display outside of the gym Photo courtesy of: Rebekah Michel

ASCUI Letter

Welcome back, Golden Eagles! I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable break. Many emotions are involved when gearing back up for another semester, and whether you are nervous for your classes or excited for the memories ahead, we are grateful you are back on campus with us! Hopefully this spring semester brings you opportunities for growth and countless memories you will take with you beyond Concordia. One of those memories can be made at Family Feud! ASCUI is once again hosting a Family Feud night in the

cafeteria on February 7 from 7 to 9 p.m. We hope to see you there! Student leadership is also a great opportunity for personal and professional growth. Applications for student leadership positions are officially open! This is a great way to get involved on campus and looks great on any resume. We hope that you join us for events to come and have a fruitful spring semester!

Sincerely,
Emma Agronovitz, ASCUI Secretary

Letter from President Thomas

Students,

I hope and pray that your spring semester is off to a terrific start. The faculty and staff speak highly of your engagement in classes, clubs, residential life and athletics. There is excitement in the air as construction of the CU Center for Worship and Performing Arts and the Golden Eagles Athletic Complex is now well underway. We know there has been some disruption, but you've handled this with grace and forgiveness. Thank you! It will definitely be worth it as we look forward to the opening of these buildings in the fall of 2026! If you haven't heard, we're adding another project - a complete renovation of the Nelson Amphitheater. When completed, it will feature a permanent stage with a truss system holding audio and visual equipment, individual seating for 350 spectators,

and additional on-the-ground concert seating. It should prove to be an outstanding outdoor theatre and concert venue that will also host worship events. Our alumni, donors and friends of the university continue to support all these projects, which are dedicated to improving the campus experience for each of you. And we are so very blessed that philanthropic gifts - not tuition dollars from you and your families - are funding all of these projects totalling \$50 million. Thanks be to God who works through the generosity of our donors! Over the last few years, we have built or renovated many locations on campus, from the Paul and Cathy Schroeder Library and Learning Commons to the Golden Eagles Stadium (softball), from new lounges in the residential halls to the newly renovated science labs in Founders Hall. We're so happy that you are using all these new spaces! Most importantly, I want to say "thank you" to each of you! One of the great joys of serving as President is inviting alumni, donors, supporters and friends of Concordia to campus. These visits always include an impromptu introduction of students. Unlike other universities, none of this is scripted. Sometimes I just stop you to introduce our guests, and you are always gracious, kind, respectful and loving. Our guests palpably feel your genuineness. And often they deepen their commitment to supporting Concordia due to these moments with you! Thank you! My prayer for you this semester is that our Lord will bless and keep you. Thank you for leaning into your education here at Concordia! Go Golden Eagles! For His Students,
Dr. Michael Thomas
President



PICTURED ABOVE: Dr. Michael Thomas
Photo courtesy of: Concordia University Irvine

Getting involved with the spring club rush

KIARA AZUMA
CAMPUS EDITOR

The club rush, formerly the involvement fair, took place on Wed., Jan. 15, from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Clubs lined up along the Breezeway, advertising their clubs to students for the spring semester. There were over 30 clubs in attendance.

Students can participate in many clubs on campus, including small groups and recreational clubs. Clubs like Delta Sigma Pi (business fraternity), Phi Epsilon Kappa (kinesiology fraternity), TriBeta (biological honors society), COMM-unity and Women in Business connect students to different networks and professional opportunities both on and off campus.

Senior Madeline Hernandez is the president of Delta Sigma Pi. Regarding upcoming events, she said, "We have Meet-the-Chapter, night panels, and a student-faculty mixer. Our favorite part of being in this club is the community and the networking it provides us."

"[Delta Sigma Pi] gives professional development with your peers, so you are not doing it alone," said Liana Nguyen, junior and senior vice president. Delta Sigma Pi hosts different guest speakers throughout the year to give an insight into the professional world for business majors. For more information, check out @rhophidsp on Instagram.

Concordia students take their engineering skills to compete against other schools in clubs like CU Robotics and CU Baja. "Right now, we're a really small club, and we really want to expand," said Caden Merrill, junior and president of CU Robotics. The club is not limited

to those with experience in robotics; they would love to teach other interested students. Merrill can be reached by email at caden.merrill@cui.edu.

CU Robotics is planning to construct battle bots, self-made robots that fight each other. They ordered parts to make small battle bots and hope to compete in the fall. "Our goal is also to make four robots and try to make a competition on campus," Merrill said.

CU Baja is a new club on campus that focuses on building and competing off-road vehicles.

Sophomore Matt White explained that there are three competitions a year, one in the fall and two in the summer and spring. "About 100 teams are participating, with 35 on the waitlist. These teams come from schools across the nation, including teams from Mexico and Canada," White said.

Recreational and sports clubs like intramurals, CU Judo, Surf Club, Run Club, Ultimate Frisbee Club, Pickleball Club, eSports, and Birdies allow Concordia students to engage in casual sporting activities outside of class.

For students looking to interact and connect with cultural and social clubs, Nuestra Voz (Latino club), Step-One (first-generation club), Black Student Union, Student Veteran Alliance, Eagles4Life, ASL, and Ka Pu'uhonua (Hawaii club) host different events throughout the year.

Joining a club is a great way to meet other students with similar interests and get involved on campus. Visit www.cui.edu/studentlife/student-leadership/clubs-and-organizations for a full list of the clubs on campus and to sign up.

Courier Career Tip of the Issue!

DEVELOP A WORK WARDROBE THAT WORKS FOR YOU.

Finding a wardrobe that meets employer dress codes but still grants you the confidence and comfortably you need to be yourself is crucial in any environment. The clothes you wear not only express your personality to fellow teammates, but it also reflects your professionalism and dedication to your job.

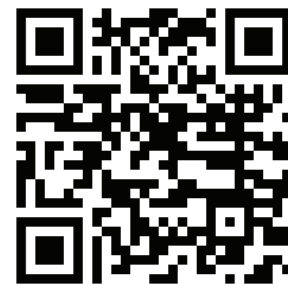
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“What Can I Do With This Major?” Finding success at the Career Studio

AUDREY KAUFMAN
STAFF WRITER

What’s the best career for my major? What am I supposed to do with my degree after I graduate? Many students have asked — or will ask — themselves these types of questions throughout their college career. On Fri., Jan. 10, the Center for Career & Vocation hosted its first workshop of the spring semester titled “What Can I Do with my Major?,” emphasizing the importance of informed decision-making.

The event consisted of a presentation on postgraduate options, a personalized worksheet about potential career outcomes and an introduction to an online resource called “What Can I Do With This Major?” provided by the Center for Career & Vocation.

“Normally, you would have to pay a fee to use this resource,” said Katherine Olea, Assistant Director of Career Development. “But it’s free through Concordia and the Career Studio.” Within the resource, students can select from 106 different majors and see a list of career options, typical employers and even tips for how to excel in the specified major.

Jun Sohn, a senior studying Biology, attended the workshop to hear about possible postgrad career options. Sohn was surprised to learn that there are numerous job opportunities available with a bachelor’s degree in Biology that don’t require postgrad education. “There are [...] so many options for a career! The keynote speaker highlighted that every major plays a role in our community, and there will be a job for you,” said Sohn.

Junior Lili Jones, a graphic design major, said

she attended to validate her current major and degree plan. Some jobs may not seem necessarily related to a major, “but you somehow have a connection in your own abilities and skills that could qualify you for that position. My major, for example, may include combining my graphic design skills with other fields such as business or marketing rather than just graphic design or an art profession itself,” said Jones.

From a student’s perspective, the more information available, the more prepared and the less stressful life after graduation will be. “Hearing from those who’ve experienced postgrad future and are successful makes me feel less intimidated about my future,” Sohn said.

“I’d say this workshop would help me become a better student because not only would I have to be successful in being prepared academically to pass my classes, get good grades and graduate,” said Jones, “but also by planning ahead of what my future career is going to look like and what it takes to be successful.”

Along with using the Career Studio’s resources, Olea suggests performing informational interviews to better understand the options for success within a major. “Conducting informational interviews with professors or other individuals in their industries allows students to ask the nitty gritty questions to get a real feel of what that job would look like,” Olea said. “Another resource when researching the job market for specific job titles is ONet. This site provides students with a career outlook as well as pay range and suggested skills.”

By taking advantage of Concordia’s Center for Career & Vocation resources, students can be better prepared and more confident in their future beyond graduation. ONet can be found at ononline.org. To access the “What Can I Do With This Major?” resource, go to <https://www.cui.edu/studentlife/career-services/choosing-a-major>.



Spring Events

January:
10th - What Can I Do With My Major?
23rd - Profile Power Up: Master your professional presence

February:
5th - Brewing Success with Resumes
7th - Camp, Ministry & Internship Fair

March - Life After College Week
3rd - Full-Time Hiring Expo
4th - Financial Literacy Workshop
5th - Career Closet Pop-Up & Grad School Fair
6th - HELP! I need a job! - Job Search Strategies
7th - Field of Education Hiring Fair
26th - Career Cuisine: Crafting a Savory Resume

April:
9th - Campus to Career: Your First 90 Days!
28th - May 2nd - Senior Walk-in Appointment Week



Student leadership hiring across campus

KIARA AZUMA
CAMPUS EDITOR

Applications for student leadership positions for 2025-26 across campus are now open until Mon., Feb. 3. Students can apply online on Handshake, where further details of each application and qualifications are listed.

There are six positions available in ASCUI: President, Vice President, Club Commissioner, Student Activities Director, Communications Director and Treasurer. In order to be the Vice President or President, applicants must win the student ASCUI election. This year also presents the new position of Student Activities Director which is focused on promoting and coordinating student campus events and traditions, like the Fall Festival.

“ASCUI is supposed to be the voice for students so I am always looking for applicants who love Concordia and want to continue to make it a better place for their peers. I want them to be passionate about building community, gathering feedback, and working with administration to make changes happen,” said Amanda Norris, Associate Dean for Student Life.

Norris added that students who apply to ASCUI can not only grow professionally and personally but also make real changes on campus. “It’s amazing what things can be done when a student uses their voice to bring about change. They

can truly make an impact on our campus and leave a legacy for students to come, whether that is physical spaces or new processes and procedures.”

The First Year Experience has positions available for Peer Advising Leaders (PALs), PAL Coordinator, Transfer Mentors, and Orientation Coordinators. While PAL and Transfer Mentor positions are voluntary and unpaid, they will receive a complimentary ticket to the WOW Angels game and to the FYE Disney Day.

Multiple positions are available in abbeywest. They seek coordinators to lead Battalion, Beloved, and Athlete Bible Study (ABS). There are also a variety of coordinator positions available including Connections, Marketing and Communications, Local Missions, Spiritual Care, Witness, Sunday Source Coordinator, Worship Tech, Shout! Coordinator, Chapel Coordinator, and Global Missions.

The Concordia Residential Staff are hiring Residential Assistants (RAs) for the next school year.

“We are looking for people who love Christ, love Concordia, and want to serve as a Christian role model and servant leader. We want students who have a heart to serve their peers as community builders in the

residential halls,” said Alexis Borland, Associate Director of Residence Life & School Spirit.

Borland added, “No other job gives you 12 hours a week of work and a free 10 meal plan. No other job gives you training in conflict resolution, crisis management and event planning. We believe that being a Resident Assistant in college is a great thing to have on your resume as so many people are aware of what an RA is and what they do.”

“I think students should apply to be an RA because it is the most fulfilling student leadership experience we have at Concordia, where you get to know so many people and build community amongst people who might not otherwise get to know each other,” said junior Hannah Austin. This is Austin’s second year of being an RA. “I

love helping others, and especially being a freshman RA, I get to be a huge help with that adjustment coming into college.”

CU Active positions are also available for Intramural Coordinators and a CU Rec Lead. The Hunt is looking for Hunt Coordinators and students to be part of the Flight Force. Last, The Unity Center also is hiring Student Success Mentors and First Generation Mentors.

“Being a student leader is not only a great way to make extra money, but it truly will help you get involved, make new friends and allow you to grow under the mentorship of some amazing professional staff,” said Norris.

If you are interested in applying for any of the positions, visit cui.joinhandshake.com or scan the QR code on the flyers across campus.



PICTURED ABOVE: Group photo of student leadership for 2024-2025
Photos courtesy of: Amanda Norris

The Schroeder Library unveils the newest resources and upcoming events

MADISON ZUNIGA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As studies kick off for the spring semester, students are encouraged to take a closer look at Concordia's Schroeder Library, and take advantage of its abundant resources, support and events.

"The library has made a ton of changes over the past year. I doubt students or even faculty know about them all," said Regina Powers, Library Director. "First, inside the library, on the lower level, we have added a rotating display of student artwork. Last semester we exhibited artworks that illustrated passages from scripture. Our next exhibit will highlight the artwork from Digital Photography students."

"The library has [also] made several updates that will improve the CUI online reading and research experience," said Powers. "For example, through our new CUI Boundless account (<https://cui.boundless.baker-taylor.com>), we have thousands of new ebooks and, even better, audiobooks. Also, students who have downloaded our new Lean Library extension won't be limited to researching only Schroeder Library's resources. Instead, they can search on Google Scholar, PubMed or another platform of their choosing."

Students can take advantage of the expanded and improved database research experience, and Concordia librarians are available for assistance if needed. "If we (the library) have the article they are looking for on that platform, the Lean Library extension will direct them to it or to the open access article," said Powers. "If the article isn't available through either one of these options, then the extension will prompt them to submit an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) request. Then we (librarians) will find and email the article to them — all from the same platform."

"We have a lot of pretty cool features, but I think my favorite part about the library are the private study rooms," said Mariana Ruiz, a senior student worker in the library. "I think it is great that students have a private place where they can study and do their homework without any interruptions. I highly recommend that students check them out, personally it has helped me a lot focusing and finishing my work faster."

"In my opinion, there are a lot of new resources that we have incorporated to the library in the past few months that are extremely helpful," said Ruiz. "We added a new 'Popular Section' with a big selection of people's favorite books about fiction, romance novels and many more. I think this resource is underutilized because not many people are aware it exists, but I have found very interesting and fun books to read there."

"While the majority of the library's collection is non-fiction and focused on academic curriculum, we hope this section will be beneficial to students who might need an escape," said Powers. "What better way to de-stress than to read a delicious print novel?"

Last August, the library also hired Yvette Murillo as a new Instruction/

Outreach Librarian. "One of the library's goals is to help students have fun learning and exploring," said Murillo. "This semester, we are excited to provide students with a variety of workshops, book clubs and end-of-semester events to de-stress from finals!"

"First up, is our monthly 'Eagles Shelf Book Club' on Sundays where students can try out new books in the collection to discuss," said Murillo. "Our themes for the book club change every month. For January, the theme is Fantasy; February - Fiction; March - Mystery; April - Travel."

This library is also launching the 'Eagle's Path: Philosophy & Faith' book club for monthly discussion on religion and theology."

"This club will take place on Mondays and will cover a variety of topics with several book selections to choose from," said Murillo. "We are also starting a Digital Discovery Series of workshops that will take place virtually on various Thursdays. Students who attend the Digital Discovery Workshops will learn how to save a ton of time when researching, no matter their subject or assignment."

The library will finish the semester with fun events like an escape room, Team-Trivia, and Stress "Reduction." Students who participate in-person will be eligible for an end-of-semester opportunity drawing for prizes.

"Yvette has been working very hard on planning some fun events for students to be able to have fun and have a little break from all responsibilities," said Ruiz. "For more information about all of our fun events, students can follow the Schroeder Library on MyCUI app and our Instagram page (@concordiabiblio), where they can find all the information and details."

Spring 2025 Workshops

Digital Discovery Series

A little lost on the new EBSCOhost interface? Want to know where you can find more free reliable resources? Check out our Digital Discovery Series for virtual workshops on specific topics to help you excel in your research journey!

Virtual Meeting Times:
Thursdays
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Dates	Topics
January 30, 2025	EBSCO
February 27th, 2025	SciWheel
March 20, 2025	Govt Research Resources
March 27th, 2025	JSTOR
April 17th, 2025	Zotero
April 24th, 2025	Absolute Basics of AI

Please use the QR code to sign up for this and all other Workshops & Programs. For more information, visit cui.edu/library. We hope to see you there!



Spring 2025 Book Clubs

Eagle's Shelf Book Club

Come join us for casual, low-key discussions on books related to the theme of the month. Select a book from the physical collection or Boundless & explore genres of books that you wouldn't normally choose.

Meeting Times:
Sundays
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
January 26, 2025
February 16, 2025
March 30, 2025
April 27, 2025

Eagle's Path: Philosophy & Faith

Join us for a lively discussion on Religion and Philosophy as we explore different perspectives on Cosmological Ontology through suggested readings.

Meeting Times:
Mondays
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
January 27, 2025
February 17, 2025
March 31, 2025
April 21, 2025

Please use the QR code to sign up for this and all other Workshops & Programs. For more information, visit cui.edu/library. We hope to see you there!



Marty the Golden Eagle in: Upon the Winds of Change

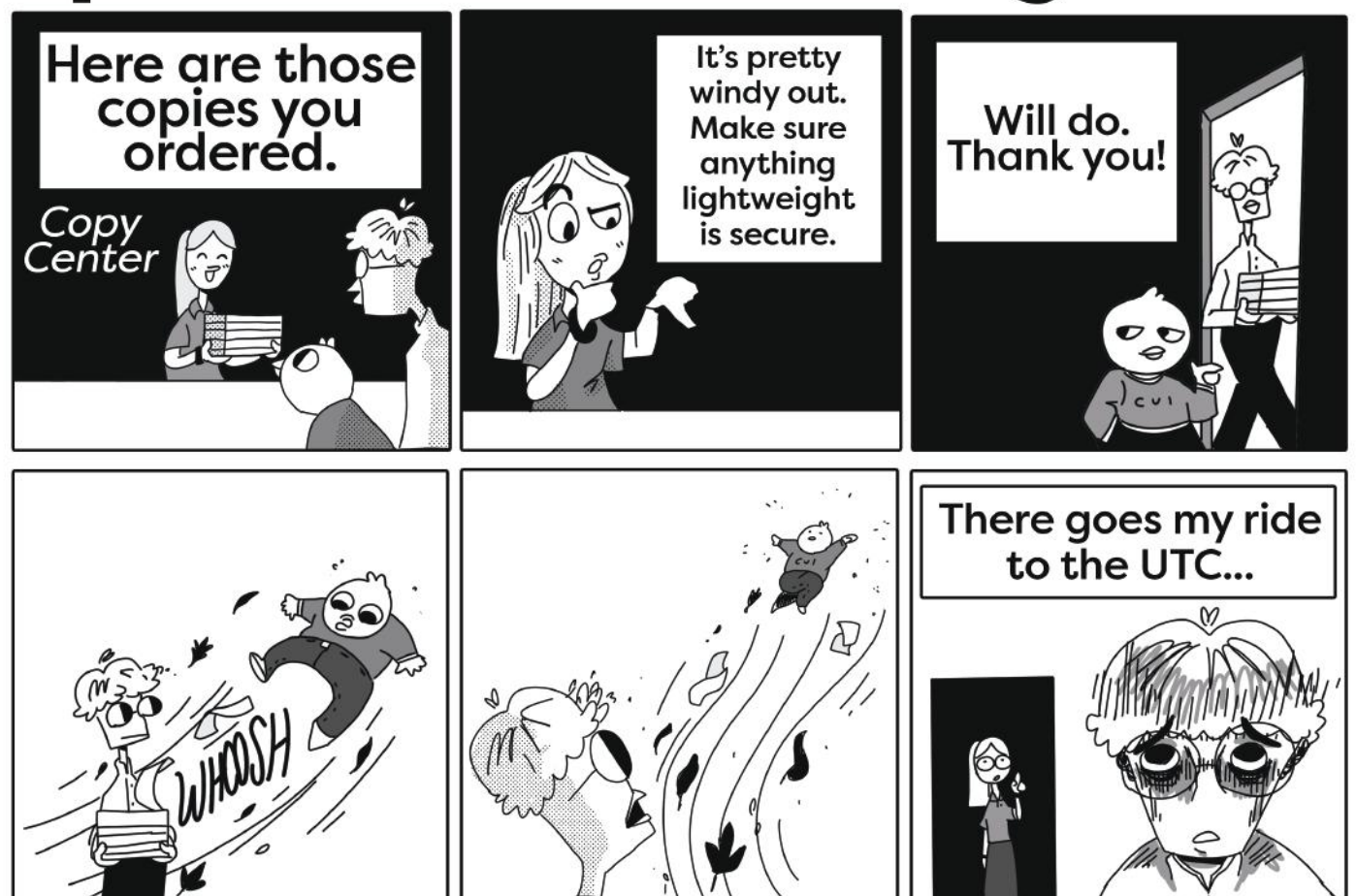


Photo courtesy of: Dylan Arant

“Over the River and Through The Woods,” to the Theatre we go

REBEKAH MICHEL
ARTS AND REVIEWS EDITOR

The laughs and heart of a Jersey Italian family will take the stage at Concordia with the Theatre Department's newest production “Over the River and Through the Woods” by Joe DiPietro. Directed by Tony Vezner, “Over the River” tells the story of four Italian grandparents who pride themselves on their weekly Sunday dinner with their son, Nick. When Nick, played by sophomore Matthias Bruggeman, is offered a job in the far away land of Seattle, matchmaking, laughs and pasta ensue.

As the Theatre Department continues to work through their performance season, which covers many genres of theatre, there is a sense of joy that is unmatched when working on a comedy. “Compared to the Greek tragedy that started off the school year, this show is much more light and heartwarming... I love making the audience laugh and I'm so excited for them to see what they will find funny,” said sophomore Layla Triman, who plays the character of Emma.

The actors and crew have put in many hours to prepare this story for students, faculty and the community. “I hope this show's humor helps the audience fall in love with these characters as much as I have. Even more, I hope it speaks to the love that they already have in their own lives,” said junior Gracie Leininger.

Outside of learning blocking and

lines, students in “Over the River” have had to learn how to perform with Italian dialects. “I think working on the New Jersey and Italian accent has been challenging.... but it is also one of the most fun parts. There is a part of me that is channeling my inner ‘Goodfellas,’” said sophomore Liam Gilmore. Gilmore plays Frank, one of the four grandparents.

With college students playing the roles of the elderly, a special element of this show is the hair and makeup design. “I'm excited for audiences to see the makeup we have in store for our actors. Aging our faces is such a big part of this show for immersion and detail and I hope the audience appreciates what our makeup team is doing for us,” said Triman.

As we enter a new semester, the Theatre Department is ready to welcome students and faculty into this fun and loving Italian New Jersey family. For Gilmore, he hopes that audiences remember that, “Family matters. Hang out with your grandparents, more than you think you need to. Ask them questions. Learn about their childhood and you'll learn a lot. Lastly, tell them that you love them.”

“Over the River and Through the Woods” will play at the Studio Theatre on Jan. 24, 25, 31 and Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m and Jan 26. And Feb. 2 at 2 p.m. Concordia students can reserve free tickets for one performance by using the code CUISTU at checkout. For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit simple.tix.com.



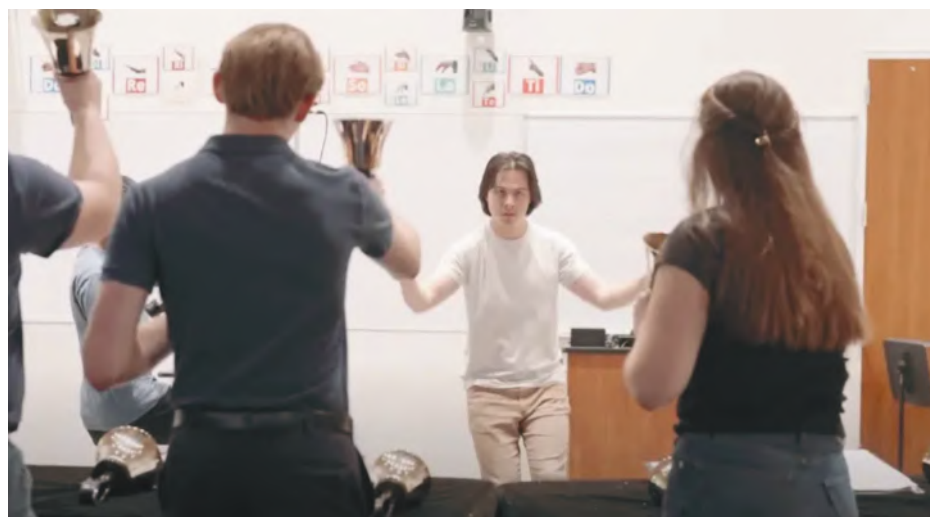
PICTURED ABOVE: *Over the River and Through the Woods* brings the lives of Jersey Italians families to Concordia.
Photo courtesy of: Rebekah Michel



PICTURED ABOVE: *The Theatre Department* is preparing to share laughs, tears and pasta with Concordia students and faculty.
Photo courtesy of: Rebekah Michel

Brass and Bronze: A concert of horns and handbells

KAYLA REED
STAFF WRITER



PICTURED ABOVE: *Daniel Ujifasa* leading handbells.
Photos courtesy of: Concordia University Irvine



PICTURED ABOVE: *Brass players* practicing.
Photos courtesy of: Concordia University Irvine

On Sun., Jan. 19 at 4 p.m., Concordia's acclaimed Music Department will hold their “Brass and Bronze” concert at Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana. Attendance is free and no tickets are required!

The concert will feature the Concordia Brass conducted by Dr. Jeff Held as well as Handbell Renaissance which is led by 2023 alum Daniel Ujifusa. Concordia Brass is composed of student musicians from the Concordia Wind Orchestra and the Concordia Symphony Orchestra, showing off the best of the brass family of instruments from trumpets to French horns. Handbell Renaissance is an advanced handbell ensemble featuring alumni musicians. The concert will also include Dr. David Holben, a tuba professor at Concordia.

“Brass and Bronze” is one of the Music Department's first events in 2025 and looks to be an exciting lead into the new year. Senior Communications major Matthew Cordrey, a member of the Concordia Symphony Orchestra and Concert Handbells, is eagerly preparing for his first brass concert, calling it “a privilege to be part of for my senior year.” He added, “I'm looking forward to debuting the piece we specifically commissioned for this concert from [Concordia alum and adjunct professor] Christian Guebert, called *Metallurgy and March*.”

Guebert's piece is a celebration of handbells and brass instruments, combining their distinct sounds into brilliant harmony with one another. Concordia's past concerts have been celebrated for both their renditions of famed pieces and premieres of new music, both of which will be showcased Sunday in the hour-long concert.

The concert comes three days after “Concordia Brass in Concert,” a showcase of the Music Department which took place on Jan. 16 featuring 23 of Concordia's musicians from the Brass Ensemble alongside Bakersfield Christian High School's Band. The “Brass and Bronze” concert will showcase many of the same pieces of music as the “Brass in Concert” event while adding in Handbells this time alongside Concordia Brass.

The concert has been a highlight for participants and attendees alike in past years, leaving a lasting impression on many of its musicians. Elizabeth Hicks noted that the Brass performers become “a very close knit group” due to the smaller size of the ensemble. Hicks is a post baccalaureate student studying Special Education and is a member of the Wind Orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra, and Concert Bells. She continued, “I am so looking forward to the Tuba Concerto! Dr. Holben is an amazing tuba player and I love playing with him!” The Tuba Concerto by Vaughan Williams is one of the most famous pieces of brass music, promising to delight its listeners especially with the expert touch of Holben on the tuba.

Come to “Brass and Bronze” and support Concordia's incredible musicians in one of their first concerts of 2025. The concert will be held at Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana on Jan. 19 at 4 p.m. It is free to attend, with no tickets required. Please visit <https://www.cui.edu/arts/music/events> for more information and to keep up with all upcoming events for the Music Department.

Q&A with men's basketball captain, Jackson Tucker

JOSE RODRIGUEZ

STAFF WRITER

Jackson Tucker is a 6'5" guard on the men's basketball team from Bakersfield. In his junior year, Tucker has spent the last three years being a crucial component and outstanding athlete for the Golden Eagles. Adding numbers to his stat sheet with every game this season, Tucker tallies a current total of 570 points, 70 steals and 66 assists from his career as a Golden Eagle.

Q. What inspired you to start playing basketball?

A. "Ever since a young age, even in the crib, I always had a little basketball in my hand, always playing on a 'Little Tikes' hoop. My dad played basketball at Cal Poly Slo, so I was always around basketball."

Q. Why did you choose to play basketball here at Concordia?

A. "Concordia was the best bet for me to be able to play and to be able to be around a team that I wanted to be around. I felt like the coaches had the same values as me, I wanted to play hard defense. They are just good guys and then also the team, it felt like they are what I wanted to be

a part of and the values that I kind of wanted to go into."

Q. What is your most significant basketball memory?

A. "Probably winning the Valley Championship with my high school team in my senior year, we just had a really special group of guys, great coach, great team and we went through a lot that season ... and the playoffs bracket was hard."

Q. Have you ever experienced a setback or injury that significantly affected your playing?

A. "At the end of my freshman year, I broke my right pinky when we had like three or four games left and I had to try to play on it for the rest of the season."

Q. What does it mean to you to be a good teammate?

A. "For me, to be a good teammate, I feel like it's being able to pick up your teammates but also be hard on them. You got to be honest with them if they are like messing up or something to be able to correct them but also provide that constructive criticism."

Q. If you didn't play basketball, what other sport would you like to play?

A. "Baseball— I used to play shortstop when I was a kid. I wasn't hitting home runs, but I was hitting some RBIs. Ultimately I had to choose between basketball and baseball, and chose basketball."

Q. What are you hoping to achieve this season?

A. "As a team, to be one of the top teams in the conference— hopefully, win the conference and then make a deep playoff run. Since I've been here, we haven't made a conference playoff. As an individual, yeah I want to say I want to improve my three-point percentage and make it to an All-Conference team."

Q. What advice would you give to a kid wanting to play basketball?

A. "Try it out, it's a fun sport ... just keep working."



PICTURED ABOVE: Jackson Tucker standing with his hands on his hips
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Jackson Tucker takes the ball up to the basket
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Teammates celebrate together during practice
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Samantha Gomez moving the ball on offense
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon

Women's lacrosse prepares for a winning season

EVA PREWITT
SPORTS EDITOR

endurance to ensure we're physically prepared to compete at a high level throughout the season."

Junior Riley Finch said, "Something that I admire so dearly about this team is our work ethic and love for one another." Gomez said, "Every team member holds themselves and each other to high standards, whether in practice, games or even off the field. The commitment to improving individually and collectively is unmatched, and it's evident in how we approach challenges and celebrate victories together."

The evolution of Concordia women's lacrosse has been an inspiring journey to witness as they make history every season. With a commitment to greatness, resilience and determination, the Golden Eagles are set for an exciting season this spring. Finch said, "We have such a strong team with such heart and love, that we will accomplish anything we are bound to face."

"It's been amazing to watch our team evolve into a close-knit, competitive group, and I'm grateful to have been part of this journey from the beginning. Whether through victories, overcoming challenges, or simply enjoying the journey together, I want us to finish this season feeling proud of how far we've come," said Gomez.

The Golden Eagles will begin their season in Santa Barbara on Feb. 7, and will host UC San Diego on Feb. 15 for their home opener. Visit cuigoldeneagles.com to view the women's lacrosse schedule and save the dates. You're not going to want to miss a second of it.

Start the countdown now, because in 21 days women's lacrosse will kick off their season, competing in the annual Santa Barbara Shootout tournament. After finishing last season with an impressive 12-6 record, placing third in the WWLL Conference Championship and eleventh at the WCLA National Championships, the Golden Eagles are looking to continue placing their mark on the program.

The green and gold are starting off the season with an upper-hand after not having to say goodbye to any graduating seniors last season. "It was nice to continue with the same girls and have a couple new freshmen who only add more character and light to the team," said senior Melinda Ibanez.

To prepare for the upcoming season, women's lacrosse has been dedicated to pushing themselves

physically and mentally. "Our team has been focusing on revamping our play book and including different skills to our plays," said sophomore Lexi Miner. "Something that stands out to me about this team specifically is each of the girl's abilities to be coachable and learn."

Samantha Gomez is stepping into her senior season, after being a crucial part of the evolution of the team over the last four years. "Clear and effective communication has been a major emphasis, whether it's defensive slides, offensive plays or transitions," said Gomez. "In addition, we've been working on conditioning and

Concordia sports stars honored at Hall of Fame and Alumni Night

EVA PREWITT
SPORTS EDITOR

The 2025 Hall of Fame and Alumni Night is tomorrow, Sat., Jan. 18 in the CU Arena at 7 p.m. during the men's volleyball game, and all alumni and families are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Hall of Fame Class of 2025 welcomes three new members, and one team to the "Kenneth A. Walker Hall of Fame," created in memory of one of the Concordia

Athletic Department's biggest supporters.

The individuals who will be celebrated tomorrow night and inducted to the Hall of Fame are Bailee Blankemeier, Jeff Clark and Kara Vincitorio. Along with the 2013 men's volleyball team, who had a 25-7 season record and won the NAIA National Championship in their historic first year as a program. Blankemeier will be recognized from her time on women's swim and dive from

2014-2018. Blankemeier still holds the school record for the 400 IM and 200 Butterfly, and earned the NAIA All-American in the 200 Butterfly, 400 IM and 500 Free in 2015.

Clark was an unstoppable force for Concordia men's soccer from 2005-2008. Clark still holds the record for most career points with 126, most career goals with 50 and most game-winning goals with 19.

Vincitorio will be inducted and celebrated for her time on the 2010-2013 women's volleyball

team. Vincitorio set the school record in 2014 for most career digs, and holds it today by more than 250 digs. Vincitorio has also worked at Concordia for the last decade in the Sports Information department.

Celebrate these esteemed Concordia alum and their induction to the Kenneth A. Walker Hall of Fame at 7 p.m., tomorrow in the CU Arena, while you support men's volleyball.

Men's volleyball strives to be the best

EVA PREWITT
SPORTS EDITOR

Spring sports are defrosting, which means men's volleyball has officially begun. The Golden Eagles are currently 2-1 as they compete in their pre-conference matches, and will be working to refine their play before their first MPSF conference competition beginning in February.

The green and gold are making themselves known

as a force at the net. Graduate student Makua Marumoto is currently leading the team in kills with a total of 27. "These upcoming practices will be heavily focused on our fundamentals, improving our blocking and defense, working on our serving as a team and working hard to get some much needed big wins," said Marumoto.

Senior Clement Osahon Jr. has been a valuable weapon out of the middle

for the Golden Eagles, tallying 13 blocks and 22 kills. "This year, we are trying to establish ourselves as an amazing offense and blocking team, but we are also working hard on creating more opportunities for ourselves in serving," said Osahon Jr.

Junior Connor Dell said, "After this first week of games, we've determined that we can be a very good blocking team and beat a lot of teams that way. To fully take advantage of this, we will be focusing on serving consistently in the court and staying aggressive on defense to keep the pressure on teams to beat our block. We think we can have a lot of success if we formulate our game around our blocking system." With this defense forward strategy, the Golden Eagles look to shut down their opponents at the net.

Tearing down the Golden Eagles will be difficult this spring as they put up a united front. "One thing that stands out to me about this team is our unity. We are really close on and off the court, and it goes a long way towards our cohesion," said Marumoto.

Concordia will soon face some of the nation's best men's volleyball programs in the MPSF conference. Looking toward this challenge, the Golden Eagles have come together to collectively strive to be the

best they can possibly be.

Dell said, "I think the term that best describes this team is 'bought-in,' meaning every individual is committed to everything we are trying to achieve." The team unity is made very clear through their collective goal to pursue excellence.

"As a team, we plan to be the best ever Concordia men's volleyball team that has yet to come," said Osahon Jr. "We keep this goal in mind everyday during practice," said Marumoto. Dell said, "It's a difficult mark to achieve but we believe with this group of guys and our mentality, it is an attainable one."

Graduate student Kasey Clouet said, "I believe, as a team, we are capable of way more than anyone outside of our locker room expects."

The green and gold are hosting Springfield and D'Youville in the Eagles Nest tonight and tomorrow, Jan. 17 and 18, at 7 p.m. Pack the stands and be loud. For more information on all things Concordia men's volleyball, visit cuigoldeneagles.com. For game-time updates and behind-the-scenes, follow [@cuimvolleyball](https://www.instagram.com/cuimvolleyball) and [@cuigoldeneagles](https://www.instagram.com/cuigoldeneagles) on Instagram.



PICTURED ABOVE: Connor Dell, Kasey Clouet, Makua Marumoto blocking together at the net.
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Sophomore, Christian Galoppo, hyping up the team in the huddle.
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon

(FIRES, continued from p. 1)

"I would have my windows down when driving the area, looking at the nature and thinking about the history of the city. When I heard about the fire, the elementary school was the first place I thought about. The library where I used to study is now gone. I really feel like I am at the wind's mercy and where the wind will direct the fires."

"There have also been a lot of social implications with this," said Rippon. "The LA Fire Department was heavily defunded prior to this. What's also been huge is that fire affects everyone and insurance does not cover everyone. You are at the mercy of insurance companies and social institutions. I am hoping for change based on this."

The Concordia Symphony Orchestra also suffered a heartbreaking loss when the Palisades Fire destroyed the shipment of musical scores that they had planned to perform in April. Dr. Jeff Held, Music Director of the Concordia Orchestras, explained how Concordia's Music Department had rented out the classic score of Arnold Schoenberg's orchestration of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in Eb "St. Anne" from Belmont Music Publishing, which was located in Pacific Palisades, close to UCLA, where Schoenberg was an esteemed professor of music after leaving Germany before WWII. The house contained numerous original manuscripts as well as the exclusive published catalogue played

by orchestras in North America, and was tragically destroyed this past week during the spread of the fires.

"What is lost are all of the scores and parts distributed in North America, but more importantly, a great deal of manuscripts that scholars have studied for years," said Held. "Belmont Music Publishing has announced that they will regroup and start a digital contents library with the assistance of Schoenberg collections around the world. That will take a long time to set up, and I do hope that we can still access our music and perform this wonderful work, mostly because the music not only represents a historic 20th century composer's orchestration of Bach, but also because the music is based on a chorale that expresses the endurance of God."

"It is always difficult to process major tragedies like this. They can be so large that it is difficult to connect with them as reality, a connection that we do need and maybe is helped with stories like that of our music," said Held. In the face of the fires, he shared an excerpt from the original chorale: "O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. / Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home. / Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame. / From everlasting you are God to endless years the same."

Concordia students celebrate the "best day ever" with only Christian float in the Rose Parade

MADISON ZUNIGA

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Concordia students both prepared for and participated in the 136th annual Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade, which took place on New Year's Day in Pasadena. This year's theme was "Best Day Ever!" and featured the traditional procession of floral floats, equestrian displays and marching bands.

Lutheran Hour Ministries chose a Nativity design in response to the theme, and nearly 30 Concordia students traveled to an Irwindale warehouse to volunteer with decoration and construction. The floats take months to assemble, and over 3 million flowers were used in the 2025 Rose Parade. The Concordia volunteers worked primarily with glue and natural material to help complete the float's ornamentation.

"The Lutheran Hour Ministries float beautifully portrayed the Nativity scene with the mes-



sage, 'Behold, Jesus the Savior is Born!'" said senior Elise Schult. "Petal Pushers is an amazing organization of dedicated volunteers who help design and decorate many of the stunning floats in the parade. Thanks to their hard work, Lutheran Hour Ministries was able to participate with the only Christian float in the entire parade."

"I'm very happy that our church work students got to help decorate the floats for the Rose Parade," said Rev. Dr. David Loy, Dean of Christ College. "It's got to be a great feeling to watch the parade and see the floats you helped decorate. Plus, their work helped make it possible for Lutheran Hour Ministries to put its own float in the parade to share the good news of Jesus with everyone who watched the parade."

"I had the incredible opportunity to represent Concordia University Irvine as a float rider in this year's Rose Parade," said Schult. "I had the privilege of riding at the front of the float, representing Mary in the Nativity. The experience was absolutely unforgettable. As we made our way down the parade route, I was overwhelmed by the joyful reactions of the crowd as thousands of people were smiling, clapping, waving, and shouting as they saw the float. It was so impactful to witness so many people connected through the message of Christ."

"Being part of this simple yet powerful display of God's love gave me a fresh perspective on the impact of the Gospel and spreading God's love," said Schult. "If you're ever in the area next Christmas season, I highly recommend volunteering with Petal Pushers! It's a rewarding way to make a difference, meet incredible people, and spread the message of Christ through something as beautiful as a float."



PICTURED ABOVE: (Top) The float in procession on parade day (Bottom) The group of volunteers with the float
Photo courtesy of: Rebecca Duport

Don't know what to do in the winter? The Courier Staff recommends...

STAFF REPORT

Are you looking for activities to keep you busy during the cooler winter months? The weather isn't ideal for our favorite beachside pastimes, but thankfully Orange County has much to offer! Here are just a few of our editors' favorites:

Enjoy an evening of "Winter Wonderland"

For those yearning for the frosty and festive aesthetic of wintertime, stop by the "Winter Wonderland" community event hosted by Hilton Irvine. Don't miss the snow machine, s'mores, fire pits, live music and games happening Friday Jan. 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. Attendees can order food and winter-themed mocktails from the Aura restaurant menu offered at-location. The festivities are free to the public, with complimentary parking offered to guests. 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612

Make it Mexican

Mercado González is a bustling market and food hall filled with vibrant colors and flavorful delights. Popular stops – especially in these colder months – include Churrería El Moro for churros made to order with hot chocolate and flavorful Mexican dishes from Guisados Las Cazuelas. From sizzling street tacos to refreshing aguas frescas, Mercado González is a must to sample authentic Mexican cuisine. 2300 Harbor Blvd, Costa Mesa, northgatemarket.com/mercado

Bundle up and take on the (indoor) ice

Great Park Ice and Fivepoint Arena is a public ice skating rink that features free

skating time, lessons, hockey leagues and even freestyle sessions for more experienced skaters. Ice skates are available for rental for only \$8. After you're done, enjoy a bite to eat or a drink at Between the Rinks Restaurant and Bar. Admission for public ice skating is \$20, not including the cost of rental skates. Admission can be purchased online at <https://www.greatparkice.com/public-skating/888-Ridge-Valley-Irvine>

Commune with marine life

Take advantage of living in beautiful Orange County and venture out on our Pacific Ocean to encounter local marine life in person. Whale watching through 'Newport Landing' starts at only \$30 for an approximately 190 minute trip, and departs out of Newport Beach. With recent encounters of thousands of dolphins, seals and sea lions and plenty of gray whales, you're almost guaranteed an exciting experience. To reserve a trip or learn more, visit newport-whales.com.

Sing your heart out at karaoke

Plush Karaoke offers private rooms for groups starting at \$45 for 5-6 people. Located in the Diamond Jamboree, the karaoke rooms offer a wide variety of songs from either their list or you are able to connect your YouTube to the television in the room. While singing, you can enjoy some food or drinks from the menu. There are also restaurants in the plaza where you can eat before heading to karaoke. No reservations are required, and they open at 7 p.m. on weekdays or 3 p.m. on the weekends. 2710 Alton Pkwy, Irvine, <https://plushkaraoke.carrd.co/#>

Looking ahead to Inauguration Day 2025

HOPE YONEHARA

STAFF WRITER

On Mon., Jan. 20, President-elect Donald Trump and his administration will officially be sworn into office in an inauguration ceremony that marks the beginning of Trump's second term and the end of the Biden-Harris administration.

The day will begin with a historic moment as the president and vice president take the sacred oath of office, pledging to do their duties well and "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." This will be only the second time in American history when a president will be sworn in for a second, non-consecutive term—the first being Grover Cleveland in 1893.

Dr. Kathryn Galchutt, professor of history, explained the significance of the oath of office. "It goes back to George Washington, the first president," Galchutt said. "It is a formal ceremony letting everyone know about the president, who, by the way, is empowered to lead the country by the Constitution." This is not just a ceremonial act but a reminder of the responsibilities vested in the office by the people and the Constitution.

After taking the oath, the president traditionally gives his inaugural address on Capitol Hill to kickstart his term and outline what the next four years will look like. After capturing both the

electoral college and the popular vote, Trump has many promises to fulfill to the country that elected him into office for the second time.

As to what exactly Trump will do once in office, Galchutt points to his characteristically unpredictable nature. "Historians are usually unable to predict how things will go in the future but with Trump things are even more unpredictable... The people asked for change and that is what they are going to get," she said, highlighting that Trump's term will continue to challenge traditional norms of what it means to be a president in the United States.

She continued, "In his first presidential term, he was surrounded by traditional Republicans who challenged him in one way or another, but now he is surrounded by loyalists or people who are ready to do what he wants them to do." Trump's incoming administration includes many unexpected political figures, such as former Democrats Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, among a group of strong Republicans.

Despite his unconventional team, Galchutt said, "I think initially he might be more effective at pushing through what he wants to do... But eventually, there will be legal and political debates about what needs to go to Congress first."

After a contentious battle for the top of the ticket in 2024, the country will be watching as the incoming administration sets a new political tone in the U.S. for 2025.