

Fly-fishing the Tigris to the sound of mortars

One woman helping women in war-torn Iraq

ALICIA HARGER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Eileen Padberg hardly cuts an imposing figure. She looks like the type of woman who would be at home on a tennis court with other retirees comparing photographs of their adorable grandchildren. Now erase that image and place her in fly-fishing gear, add the Tigris River and hear mortars sailing overhead and landing with a crash of destruction. This is the image to prepare you for the truth of Eileen Padberg.

Padberg has campaigned for women's rights across the globe, including an 18-month stint in Iraq from 2004-2006 and ongoing work with homeless women in Orange County, consulted in Washington D.C. on the formation of democracies, and worked as a political campaigner and advisor throughout her career.

Padberg was the guest of honor and keynote speaker at a Center for Public Policy (CPP) breakfast event on-campus the morning of Feb. 12. She shared with a small crowd of local government leaders, university employees, professors and students her experiences working with the American government on a project designed to train Iraqi women to participate in the new economy of Iraq.

One immediately asks how a successful Orange County political consultant ends up with a necklace and earring set made out of crystals from the fallen chandelier at Saddam Hussein's

palace. The story begins when an American company bidding for government funds for Iraqi reconstruction asked Padberg to write their portion of the plan that was about the inclusion of women. Padberg's philosophy on empowering women is simple. "Women everywhere need the same things: opportunities and a somewhat level playing field to make the most of them." The company Padberg consulted with won the government bid and asked Padberg to travel to Iraq to follow through on the plan.

Following this call from the spirit of adventure, Padberg put her successful consulting firm on hold and traveled to Baghdad. For Padberg, the trip was a chance to help a fledgling democracy and serve her country. She also got to put into practice her belief that women need to have a stake in an economy in order for democracy to succeed. This was not the first international venture for Padberg. She has previous experience with democracy building in Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. However, this was Padberg's first experience in a war zone.

The conditions in Baghdad while Padberg was there were, frankly, unsafe. Mortars

monplace; the familiarity was more worrying to Padberg than when she flinched at the militant sounds. Travel was also incredibly difficult at this time. US army caravans that Padberg utilized would shoot indiscriminately at anyone who got too close to the vehicles.

The work she was doing with the Iraqi women gave Padberg enough resolve to endure the warlike conditions. Among the work the US government was doing in Iraq, women's issues were low on the priority list. However, Padberg refused to let a joke be made of her cause and those who needed her help. She waited on airfields for days for her turn for a helicopter that allowed her to reach women and put on conferences where they were. Padberg's work with Iraqi women included symposium classes that focused on job training and career building. Since resources were scarce, Padberg would find curriculum online that were similar to her needs and then adapt them for the Iraqis' situation specifically. More than getting them a job, Padberg stressed the importance of women developing a career. Many women who went through Padberg's program found work as mid-level government officials.

Some of the training Padberg did focused on helping women compete for and win US government rebuilding contracts. Padberg trained and tracked 500 women who went on to win government contracts. Part of the challenge in this training was helping the women understand what the contracts even said; the dense English material was never published in Arabic for local people to understand. For those women who completed the training program, Padberg made them promise to hire and train other women in order to continue a cycle of empowering women in the workplace.

"The highlights of my experience were the Iraqi women who live such incredibly tragic lives," Padberg said. "We would laugh about the same things, laugh about men. Women are the same all over the world." Although she grew close to many of the women she helped train, there was always risk involved for the Iraqi women. Those who dared travel into the Green Zone, American occupied areas, for training

"Pushing democracy is wasted. We should push freedom."

would fall every night near Padberg's lodgings, an empty high school. Those residing in the abandoned cement schoolhouse spent two hours a night in bunkers. The constant booms of car bombs, guns and mortars became com-



Padberg at Concordia on Feb. 12, wearing her necklace and earrings made from the crystals she recovered from a broken chandelier out of Hussein's palace.

programs became instant targets for the insurgency. Women were dragged from their homes in the night and shot in front of their children and husbands as a lesson against working with Americans.

Padberg found justification for putting women's lives at risk through her program "in building the character and courage of the women I worked with. I gave them the courage to go out and stay out on their own." There was risk involved for Padberg as well; she narrowly missed bombs several times and had a \$300,000 bounty on her head.

Besides detailing her personal experiences in Iraq and speaking about the work she did for women in the Iraq economy, Padberg was not quiet about her firsthand opinion of the way the American government handled itself in Iraq. She criticized the way the United States government treated Iraqis with disdain. Rather than investing in and hiring Iraqi workers for rebuilding projects, the government shipped in workers from third-world countries like the Philippines. Materials were imported, not bought in-country. Even supplies for American troops, like food, were imported from overseas.

Padberg also found fault in not putting more into development programs for women. "We needed to do more for women. I truly believe that if we invested more in women, they would have helped ensure their fathers, sons and brothers were not willing to go out and plant a bomb for \$300," Padberg said. She drew a connection between economic or financial security of individuals and collective willingness for peace—desperately poor people resort to desperate measures.

Although openly critical of American policies in Iraq and other countries, Padberg acknowledged that it is a complex situation and that there are many challenges still faced by the Middle East, even 10 years after she arrived. The tensions caused by a Shiite minority government are only compounded in Iraq by the influence of Syria, where insurgents train before returning to Iraq to recruit more insurgents.

"Pushing democracy is wasted," Padberg said. "We should push freedom."

You can find out more about Padberg's work in Iraq and her consulting business by visiting eileen.padberg.com.



Padberg (bottom right) poses with Iraqi women activists during her time working for women's rights in occupied Iraq.

Basketball memorial endowment fund

**SARINA GRANT
ON & OFF CAMPUS EDITOR
& JOSE ALATORRE
STAFF WRITER**

An endowment fund in honor of Paige Armstrong-Maltos was created to provide scholarships for future members of the Concordia Women's Basketball team. Armstrong-Maltos' parents, Pamela and Tom Martens, made the initial investment for the endowment.

Armstrong-Maltos came to Concordia as a freshman during the 2010-2011 school year, and was a much-loved player on the Women's Basketball team. She tragically passed away in a car accident on Jan. 9, 2011.

"Paige was the most charismatic person I knew. She was always smiling and laughing. Even during the hard and bad times, she found a way to love others through the bad times," said Rachel Stephanik, senior and close friend of Paige. "She loved her family more than anything and never let anyone forget that they were number one."

The endowment fund was officially created in August 2013, with a principal donation that will accrue interest to fund the scholarships. These scholarships will be given to future members of the Concordia Women's Basketball team.

Kurt Krueger, University President, an-

nounced the endowment with the Martens on Jan. 16 during the men's and women's basketball games.

"Paige was very popular, very social, very funny and a joy to be around. The loss of any young person or student is a terrible tragedy for the family and for the Concordia community," Krueger said. "The strong Christian faith exhibited by Paige's family and friends at the news of her death should be comforting to all who have been redeemed by Christ. We miss Paige but we know that we will see her again."

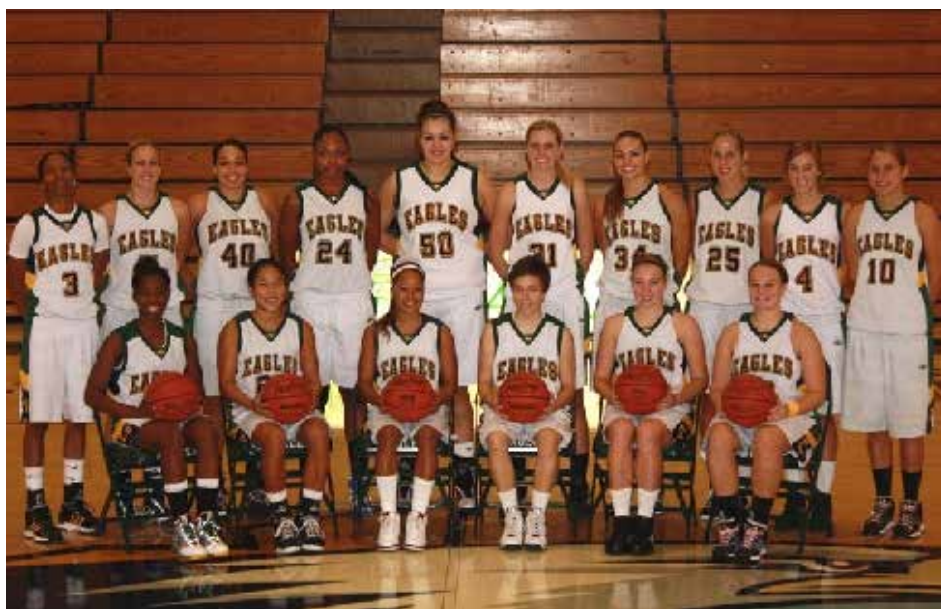
According to Pamela Martens in an interview published on cuieagles.com, the endowment was established for three reasons. "One, it gives a young woman who excels in basketball a chance to play the sport she loves while obtaining an awesome Christian education at Concordia University; two, it will keep our daughter Paige's memory alive; and three, it will glorify and exemplify our compassionate God," Pamela Martens said.

"Being so close to Paige in my freshman year, I think the message behind the endowment is great," said Christine Gonzalez, senior. Her parents are still involved and come speak at basketball games. Many people don't really know about the endowment, but it's a great way to support young female basketball players. This endowment holds a special place in my heart."

Asia Auberry, '13 and current MBA student, has fond memories of playing basketball with Paige. "She was one of those people where, when you saw her, you couldn't help but smile. I think happiness describes her well. The endowment is

passing on her happy spirit to future members of the Women's Basketball team."

To make a donation to the Paige Armstrong-Maltos Endowment, visit <https://cui.site-ym.com/donations/fund.asp?id=4571>.



#50 Armstrong-Maltos posed for her team picture as part of the 2010-2011 Women's Basketball team.

Artist Spotlight: Michael Miller

My name is Michael Miller, and I'm a senior clarinet performance major at Concordia University. I study under Dr. Margaret Thornhill. But that is not all I play-- I also play saxophone, flute, handbells and I sing. I am in six music ensembles on campus: Con-

cordia Wind Orchestra (principal clarinet), Concordia Sinfonietta (principal clarinet), Concert Handbells, Concordia Choir (choir president and bass section leader), Clarinet Ensemble (Outreach Leader) and Flute Ensemble (Outreach Leader).

I have many aspirations for my life. Among the usual getting married and starting a family, I'm hoping to dazzle the cinematic world as a movie/television studio artist. I've studied with teachers that have done many movies and commercials, and it has fascinated me

for years.

I am lucky enough not only to be studying music but to be working in the music industry as well. I work in the handbell office with colleague Marissa Carnahan, give private music lessons and also perform at various venues. I've also been the woodwind instructor and performed in several theater events at my alma mater Lutheran High of Orange. I will be the woodwind instructor this coming summer for the Orange County Lutheran Youth Band, a summer elementary/middle school band camp.

I am fortunate enough to be able to attend graduate school. Among the schools I'm applying to and auditioning for are the University of Southern California, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Fullerton, and University of Redlands.

I definitely love what I do, and even when it gets absolutely crazy, I would never change my major. After a successful senior recital, I'm even more revved up to praise God in any way I can, especially through music, "making a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation!" (Psalm 95:1).



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Swimming the final laps

LIANNA JORDAN
COPY EDITOR

Last weekend, the Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving teams competed in the Pacific Collegiate Swim and Dive Conference (PCSC) Championships at Splash! Aquatic Center in La Mirada, CA. In this final meet before the National Championships, 11 universities were represented. Concordia's Men placed second, Women placed seventh, and Concordia placed second overall.

At the meet, 24 men and 22 women on Concordia's team qualified for the National Championships, which will take place March 5-8 at Oklahoma City Community College. There were four new Nationals-qualifying swimmers and 12 new Nationals-qualifying times. Since only 18 men and 18 women are allowed to compete at the National Championships, the coaching staff is now facing "some tough decisions" on who will be chosen to compete, said Jeff Boss, Head Coach. Although the decisions are difficult, Boss believes that since so many qualified, it "shows that our program is improving. To get a spot is competitive, which makes it more valuable."

The hard work of both the Men's and Women's teams throughout the season has brought them to this point. When asked to describe her swim team, one word kept coming to sophomore Mikala Nelson's mind: positivity. And clearly, that positivity is working for both her and the teams. In December, at the Winter Invitational in Commerce, California, Nelson's times in both the 100 Yard Butterfly (57.98) and 200 Yard Butterfly (2:06.39) were fast enough to break school records in both events.

The positivity has united the team as they all strive together to work hard toward excellence. "We are up every day for practice at 6 a.m. and we have doubles three times a week," Nelson said. "I couldn't get up on my own if it was just me. We practice together, we swim together, and we compete together. It's fun to watch each other succeed."

When asked what her favorite part of being a team is, Nelson began to tear up as she told a story. On Saturday night, the final day of the meet, sophomore Jessica Greenwald attempted her time trial for the Paralympic trial cut, something she has been attempting since her senior year of high school. She swam the 100 Yard Freestyle but was going for her time for the 50 Yard Freestyle. As she descended into the pool, the other swimmers gathered around the edge to cheer her on. But it wasn't just her own team-

mates; every swimmer and coach at the meet lined the pool to join in Concordia's team chant, "I believe that we will win," to encourage Greenwald as she attempted her time. "They had me pumped up," Greenwald said. Once she touched the wall after completing her first two laps, the cheering exploded. "I honestly didn't know what that meant. I didn't know if I had made the time, or if they were just encouraging me to finish the 100-free." When she got out of the water after two more laps, she understood what the cheer-

ing meant. Her time of 1:13.54 met the Paralympic trial cut of 1:14.77, and was under Greenwald's previous personal best of 1:15.88. For Greenwald, it was "a life-changing experience. My team proved to me that when we need to, we can come together as a family."

The team will remain on campus over mid-semester break to continue practicing and preparing for the National Championships. Follow the team's progress on cuieagles.com and naia.org.



The swim team qualitifed many swimmers for nationals and we're cheering for them on the sidelines.

Lady's LAX succeeds despite low numbers

Women's Basketball bouncing back

MIKALA NELSON
STAFF WRITER

Last weekend, the Concordia Women's Lacrosse team traveled to Santa Barbara to compete in their first games of the season against Sierra Nevada College, Sonoma State, and Minnesota University of Duluth. The women came home with two wins and one loss. In just their first season as a campus club, and after facing diversity in preseason with a coaching change and the loss of six players, the team is looking forward to the rest of their season with high hopes.

Since the start of the spring semester, the women gained two players, bringing their team to a total of 13. At any given time, there are 12 players on the lacrosse field, so the Eagles face the challenge of playing with only one substitute.

Freshman Emily Sanchez stated that although only having one sub during games is tiring, mentally the women stay tough because they want to leave it all on the field. "Not everything is going to be perfect the first time you try; you have to work hard for anything that you want," Sanchez said. As a freshman, Sanchez hopes to grow even closer with her team and looks forward to the next three years of play.

"I think what separates us from other teams is never giving up," said senior captain Nicole West. "Even though we play teams that have multiple subs and we only have one, each and

every girl pushes themselves until they physically cannot go anymore." With the loss of the majority of the team's seniors after the fall semester, team captains Tracy Bonaccorsi and West are the only current seniors on the team. The two strive to keep the team thriving with their good leadership and strong knowledge of the sport. Sanchez enjoys the positive role models that both West and Bonaccorsi demonstrate on and off the field. "When you see them working hard, it makes the whole team want to work even harder," Bonaccorsi said. Both West and Bonaccorsi hope to build new traditions and create a team that brings in strong recruits in the future.

In addition to developing a team bond, the ladies have also worked to bond with a new head coach. Kelley Miller stepped up from grad-assistant to head coach just last semester, and the women of the team are thankful for her great leadership. "I truly believe that God puts people in difficult situations because only that person could really handle it. Kelley has done more for this team than we know and has risen to the occasion time and time again," West said, who has played lacrosse for over five years. "Coach Kelley is the best coach I have ever had."

Looking forward to the rest of their season, the team hopes to continue to get to know each other on and off the field and grow closer as a whole. The Eagles' next game will be held this Saturday at 11 a.m. at Loyola Marymount University.

TAYLOR DENNISON
STAFF WRITER

The Women's Basketball team is more than halfway done with their season, with a record of 10-12 as of press time. In order to bring that record above .500, Head Coach Trish Stafford-Odom relentlessly pushes her team to strive for the best and compete with fire.

Stafford-Odom has set high expectations for her team, trying to bring forward the leadership that the women are capable of. "I am an in-your-face type of person, so I get after them, I compliment them and I critique them as well," she said, "and I think the girls have learned to accept all the ways that I come at them."

Stafford-Odom and Assistant Coach Chelsea Pinkstaff try their best to create a high intensity and competitive environment for the girls each practice. "Eventually we want the girls to create that environment; we want it to just happen naturally," Stafford-Odom said. All in all, she is very pleased with the changes that have been made throughout the season so far. "We went from losing by 30 to only losing by 9, to a very good nationally ranked Master's College," she said. "I see progress, the gap is closing, the mentality is changing, and I am very proud of them."

The team has spent a lot of time together off the court this year compared to previous years. Hanging out away from the gym has definitely brought the team together and improved the chemistry. "When I watch them on the court or on the bench during games, I see a lot of energy, happiness and support, regardless of the score," said Kristen Pepperling, junior. Even though the girl's have a new coach, Pepperling sees how they are learning to work together and build

trust with each other.

"We have a diverse group of athletic players that want to get better and want to succeed," said Katie Ogdon, junior. After a loss, she said that the team re-groups emotionally and then changes the mindset in the next practice; focusing on what they need to do better, but also praising what went well.

"We can beat any team on any given night, I truly believe that," Ogdon said, "the conference is very competitive, but what we have to do is play 'Eagle Basketball'. What that means is having so much energy and heart defensively first and then executing what coach wants." The women all have individual talents, but they are still working on blending their skills together to make a stronger team.

Senior Asia Auberry is playing in her final year and only wishes she had one more year with the new coaching staff. "I knew that coming back from an ACL injury would not leave me the same," Auberry said, "but I also knew being timid or afraid wouldn't help me, so I just go out and give it my all because God has a plan for me and he has given me this second opportunity."

Consistency and rebounding are two things Auberry said could improve. "If we could all just buy in, be consistent and be willing to give 100 percent every single play and possession, then we will do just fine," she said. "I think we've struggled this season, but for anyone who is watching, it is definitely not over, and that is my mentality."

The women's final home game will be against Biola University tomorrow night at 5:30 p.m. This will also be the team's senior night.

Students humbled by Libretto's story

Surinamese guest performs at Harlem Renaissance Night and Core Convocation

RYAN MCDONALD
STAFF WRITER

Guest speaker Hermes Libretto touched the hearts of the Concordia student body at the Core Convocation on the evening of Mon., Feb. 10. Libretto discussed the history of the Maroon Tribe and the progression his native people have made through the years since their independence was granted by the Surinamese Creole people.

"Going into the presentation, I didn't know what to expect. I knew who the speaker was, but wasn't sure what the topic of interest was," said Hannah Bennett, senior. "After the speech I was able to take away valuable information about the history and lifestyle of Suriname. I admired the passion and pride of him being a member of the Maroon tribe; it was something very special."

Libretto enlightened the audience by describing the cultural norms that would be acceptable in approaching these rural tribe members. If an outsider was interested in interacting with the tribal chief, there would be absolutely no direct communication. Instead, the individual would require a mediator, or "Basha," to send any verbal messages to the chief; this shows the upmost respect and portrays traditional values that these people still cherish.

In 1986, Suriname went through a devastating time due to the civil war between the Maroon Tribes and the Creole-run military. Thousands of lives were lost under the unjust rule of the Surinamese Parliament. "During this time, I was the District Commissaris of the interior, and although I knew the villagers very well, it was very dangerous. I was forbidden to enter the

interior, so it was a hard time. A very hard time," Libretto said.

Prior to the war, it was tradition for a father to teach his son how to handle and shoot a rifle at the age of 18. It was for safety purposes to protect the women and children of the village that could potentially be ambushed by hostile outsiders. "I had seen young boys, 12- or 13-year-old boys holding assault rifles. These young children being exposed to such danger was very sad," Libretto said.

Today, Suriname has made significant progress in ensuring equal representation and civility amongst the interior and the city. One of the ex-rebel leaders of the Maroon tribe, Ronnie Brunswijk, now holds three seats in the Parliament, which was unheard of prior to the war. This shows the prosperity and the encouragement of integration in the political system of Suriname.

Libretto's last appearance at Concordia was inspirational and sentimental. He was the opening act at the Harlem Renaissance Open Mic Night on Feb. 12. He sang the Lord's Prayer in one of Suriname's native languages. "I cried. I was just sitting there crying. It was as if I understood their struggle. I felt a really strong connection with the things he had said. When he was standing up there singing, I understood their journey, from oppression to being free," said Nokukhanya Shabalala, sophomore.

Shabalala comes from Mandini, South Africa, a village with a lifestyle very similar to Libretto's. This village has a traditional culture that utilizes their collectivistic routines to survive. "We really rely on God for everything. I always tell my friends that where I'm from there are broken families everywhere; they wake up every day and wait for the Lord's provision," Shabalala said.

Each day, tribes around the world still struggle for freedom and survival. Libretto brought humbleness and a first-hand view of the global conflicts that challenge human rights. Libretto continues to advocate and represent the people of the Maroon Tribes.



SARAH TAYLOR

Students listen as Libretto performs a song in his native language.

Intramural basketball championship in March

JOSE ALATORRE
STAFF WRITER

The mayhem of March Madness is upon us with only one week left in the regular season of intramural basketball. The culmination of the regular season leads into the anticipated post-season. The playoffs begin the week of March 3 following our return from break.

The championship games will take place on March 5, with the Women's Championship Game at 9:30 p.m. and the Men's following immediately after. There will be chili cheese dogs and Frito boats, as well as a raffle to win a Buffalo Wild Wings gift card. The winner of the raffle will be announced during the half-time of the Men's Championship Game.

"I have not taken part in any intramurals this year, but I will definitely be at the Basketball Playoff games. Four of the best teams, free food and prizes? You don't have to ask me twice," said Aaron Van Korlaar, senior.

Following the conclusion of the basketball season, the premier season of the co-ed intramural Soccer League will commence. "I am a volleyball player, but I think I might have to come out and show some people my fancy footwork. I'm stoked; I can't wait!" said Matthew Anselmo, freshman. The games will be played on Friday nights at the soccer field.

Intramurals are a great way to get involved with non-varsity athletic activities on campus, especially for new students. Concordia has offered intramurals in flag football, volleyball, basketball, wiffle ball, dodge ball and capture-the-flag. The intramural program has been around for the better part of two decades, run by the LEAD Coordinators. The current coordinators are Dakota Voas, senior, and Josh Stockton,

sophomore. "Intramurals are important because it provides students with the opportunity to participate in sports at a non-collegiate level and keep the competitive nature students may have had in high school alive," Stockton said.

There is no cost to join or participate in the intramural sports. "We really would like to get as many students involved as possible, because we feel it is a great way to build community, relieve stress and create memories to look back on," Voas said.

The Concordia community seems to be answering the call, with about 1 in every 4 students having participated in an intramural activity last semester, an improvement on the participation from prior years.

"I had not participated in any intramural activities since my freshman year four years ago. I was glad to get back into it this past semester," said Jonathan Carrillo, senior. "Dakota and Josh have made some great changes, making it more enjoyable for those of us participating."

The LEAD Coordinators are hard at work improving the games and making changes that will increase participation and overall student satisfaction. They have currently changed the days Flag Football is played from Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights to Friday nights. "It isn't really difficult to get it done, but the amount of time needed can catch up to you really quickly," Stockton said. "In a couple years, I see Intramurals becoming much larger as the student population increases. I see many accommodations to be made to fit the needs and desires of the students."

For more information regarding CUI Intramurals stop by the CSLD or contact the coordinators at Dakota.Voas@eagles.cui.edu and Joshua.Stockton@eagles.cui.edu.

abbey west gives "the talk"

JASMINE BARRON
STAFF WRITER

Abbey west debuted the third annual open forum of Love, Sex and Dating on Wed., Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. in Sigma Square. The discussion forum addressed students' questions regarding the topic that had been left unanswered. In the discussion forum, students anonymously texted in their questions.

Four discussion panelists were invited to provide insight and answer questions. Pastor Mark Manning, '94, and his wife, Mrs. Heather Manning, '94, were joined by Dr. Roberto Flores, Professor of Psychology, and Dana Burkey, '11, to complete the panel. Manning is a pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Orange, CA. His wife of 21 years is on the Board of Regents at Concordia. They considered it an honor to discuss the intimate questions that students asked.

"It's our third year to do this kind of event on campus where there is a discussion panel allowing people to ask questions anonymously," Pastor Manning said. "It is a good way for people to ask questions that they don't have the answers to," Heather Manning said.

Shannon Alavi-Moghaddam, junior Beloved Coordinator, was involved behind the scenes, advertising the event around campus. "We had placed a big poster in the caf. Door decks were handed out personally by the care ministry also," Alavi-Moghaddam said.

Jonathan Ruehs, Director of abbey west, as-

sisted at the event by reading the anonymous text messages. He kicked off the discussion with an opening prayer and then jumped right in to the questions.

Flores gave his feedback from a psychological point of view. It was a different lens for students to relate to. "I was asked by Ruehs because he had heard from a number of my students who have taken my Human Sexuality class," Flores said. "At the event, students learned some interesting, provocative and relevant information, clarifying their thoughts and concerns."

In the end, everyone was surprised by the number of people that showed up, and the night seemed to be what the program expected. Questions kept pouring in, making the event go by very quickly. Even after the scheduled hour came to an end, many attendees stayed longer to enjoy the snacks and continue discussion with the panelists.

The abbey west staff got a lot of positive feedback. Students felt it was one of the best events so far. "It was a positive event and the speakers provided meaningful advice about the life God intends for us to lead in our relationships," said Jessica Schrank, sophomore. "The atmosphere of the event provided a safe place for people to ask questions and get some answers."

Currently, abbey west is in the process of planning a similar event that will discuss other topics. For more information, contact Ruehs at jonathan.ruehs@cui.edu, or visit <http://www.cui.edu/StudentLife/Student-Leadership/index.aspx?id=19507>.



Samson mosaics surface in Israel

Talk on Biblical findings in the Middle East takes place on campus

JOSHUA SUH
STAFF WRITER

Ruth Denault, President of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), facilitated a meeting on Sunday in the Denault Auditorium about some new findings in the Middle East. At 6 a.m. on June 20, 2012, an old Samson mosaic was found buried beneath the hot sands of Israel. Dr. Jodi Magness, Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has been leading a small team of students and other archaeologists to help further her research in Galilean excavations.

“Dr. Magness is one of our best archaeologists. She is very well educated and passionate about what she does. It is exciting to hear that she found so many mosaics,” Denault said. Magness did not expect to find any mosaics in the small desolate village of Huqoq, west of the Sea of Galilee. However, after several days in the ruins of a synagogue, Magness and her team found three pieces of mosaic flooring.

One of the mosaic pieces is believed to be a portrait of the biblical figure Samson. The mosaic portrays a time of war, where a man is tying burning torches to the tails of foxes, a similar depiction that is found in the book of Judges. “I think it is fascinating when artifacts surface that are tied to biblical accounts. There are so many questions and theories when it comes to subjects like history and theology,” said Alexander Lange, senior. “Finding these artifacts definitely validates some questions, but also gives us the oppor-

tunity to learn more.” Scholars believe that most synagogues were built around the second and third century. Magness’ recent excavation found coins that dated back to 5 B.C., the time she believes the Huqoq synagogue was built. The AIA believe the village of Huqoq had a high level of prosperity in agriculture because the mosaics of Samson have such high artistic quality for a late Roman synagogue.

Magness is still speculating why a portrait of Samson was found so far from the Tribe of Dan, Samson’s place of birth. Magness believes the people of Galilee, including the people of Huqoq, were disposed to the stories

of Samson and his messianic attributes. Based upon the archaeological evidence, she is not sure if the biblical character existed or not.

“Lutheran scholars are generally fascinated with biblical archeology. Archeology gives us historical background information on books like Judges,” said Steve Roberge, Professor of Theology. Matthew Lawler, junior, believes the story of Samson should be taken literally. Lawler said the book of Judges is very clear about the birth of Samson and his travels. Samson was a Nazarite set apart from birth for God to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines. The Bible ends the story of Samson in the city of Gaz, where the

biblical character regains his strength and tears down the temple walls on the Philistine rulers. Lawler finds it questionable as to why the mosaics were found at that particular location, but where they were does not question the authenticity of the mosaics nor the Bible.

Currently, all three mosaics are being left in the remains of the Huqoq Synagogue until a museum or private donor offers to purchase them. The AIA is hosting another event on March 23 in DeNault Auditorium. For more information, please email the AIA at aia.bu.edu.



MBA Capstone prepares students for workplace

JAMES ALLEY
STAFF WRITER

The MBA program at Concordia features a rich and diverse offering of classes that focus on the development of business professionals as they get ready to further their careers. This year, Concordia is introducing two new Capstone classes to the program.

A main objective of the MBA program is the development of the practice of business through actions and through dialogue with others. In keeping with this objective, the Capstone classes were established to engage students on a real world level with companies they might have the opportunity to work with in the future.

There are two versions of the Capstone classes offered to current students: MBA 695 and MBA 696. MBA 695 is based upon the completion of a publishable article that the student will write based on specific business practices and then present. The article then goes through several drafts, is published and at its completion is presented to the students’ peers.

Students taking MBA 696 are responsible for the creation of a business plan. In years past, business plans have been the traditional Capstone project within the Concordia MBA program. This class is an extension of that practice that seeks to offer students a chance to work towards the completion of a presentable business plan.

Both of these programs offer unique op-

portunities for students to interact with the business community in a meaningful way. The Capstone classes are a chance for students to share what they have learned during their time in the MBA program, with companies looking for innovation and new ideas. Portia Billings is in her final semester of the MBA program. “As MBA students we are required to take a Capstone class, which incorporates everything we have learned over the past two years of our Master’s,” Billings said.

Students are placed in companies that have partnered with Concordia. “The school has decided to place its students into companies throughout the Southern California area to get real life experience and allow us to use our knowledge to help these companies,” Billings said.

As the Capstone program continues to evolve and grow, more students will be attracted to Concordia’s MBA program. “The Concordia University Irvine MBA program is a well thought out program with expertise and professional guidance,” said Michael Sweeney, ’12.

For more information on the Capstone program, or for general questions about the MBA program at Concordia, please either request information online via the website or contact the MBA admissions representative, Sherry Powers, by phone at 949-214-3032. There is a MBA soiree on April 10 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Grimm Hall North 3rd floor Conference Room.

Emil Cheng runs the world

KALEIGH WILDAUER
STAFF WRITER

Emil Cheng, Banner Data Analyst for Concordia, has participated in over 100 marathons. Cheng ran his first marathon in 2003, and has not looked back since. In fact, he has run at least one marathon every year since he ran his first marathon ten years ago.

Cheng participates in marathons not only to lead a healthy lifestyle, but also to travel to different places around the world. He has run marathons in numerous places including, Massachusetts, New York, South Carolina and even Germany.

Like many, Cheng trains extensively in preparation for his marathons. “I tend to start

eating a little more a couple of days before the race. That’s often called carb-loading,” Cheng said. Cheng’s long term goal is to qualify for the world-famous Boston Marathon.

For Cheng, the most rewarding part of participating in marathons is not only being able to cross the finish line, but having the opportunity to meet new people as well. Out of all the different types of marathons that Cheng has participated in, his favorite is the New York City Marathon. “It’s great to be able to run through all five boroughs,” Cheng said.

Cheng believes that the key to preparing for marathons is to build mileage slowly. “Practice your racing strategy by running a 10k and a half marathon before diving into a marathon. Part of the challenge of a marathon is showing up to the race healthy and uninjured,” Cheng said.

“For me the training for a marathon is hard, but it’s worth it because you will feel so accomplished after. Your body will be in the best shape and your cardio health will be good, too. It’s a really good way to push your limits,” said Monica Niskanen, junior.

Unlike other marathon runners, Cheng is not surrounded by many close competitors. “Most of my friends do not get into running races until they’re older and the doctor tells them that they need to exercise,” Cheng said.

Cheng has accomplished a lot over the years. “I’ve received a few age group awards, but my accomplishments are mostly for quantity over quality,” Cheng said. Last year’s Berlin marathon marked Cheng’s 100th marathon. The current total for Cheng’s completed marathons is 112. “I plan on running until I can no longer physically run,” Cheng said. Just this past weekend, he participated in a marathon in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This coming weekend, Cheng will be hopping on another plane and participating in the Tokyo marathon, leaving no time for rest.



Cheng at the LA City Marathon in spring of 2013.

Student-directed plays underway

CHRIS REAMES
STAFF WRITER

Monday's auditions for this year's student-directed one act plays were a success. These one acts are an annual project for selected senior theater majors. This March, we will see the fulfillment of their preparation in "The Lesson" by Eugene Ionesco (directed by Nicole Salimbeni, senior) and "Catastrophe" by Samuel Beckett (directed by Lauren Winnenberg, senior). "I am beyond ecstatic to begin the process of casting and starting the rehearsal process. This show is like a child I've been raising since last year and to be able to see it come to fruition is an inexplicable joy," Winnenberg said.

"The Lesson" is a dark comedy about a professor, his pupil and the tyranny of words. Playwright Ionesco uses language to manipulate and intimidate, to create and destroy. "Catastrophe" is a play about power and impotency. Both shows draw heavily from the absurdist style of theater.

"A few years ago, Professor Vezner directed a piece entitled "The Arsonists" which was closer to this style of theater. I think we are the first students to do works by these playwrights though, and that is really exciting," Salimbeni said.

Each student trying out for these plays had to be prepared with a short one to two minute contemporary dramatic monologue. Tony

Vezner, Associate Professor of Theater, supervised the auditions along with the two student directors. "Not a very big turnout; only about 20 people auditioned," Vezner said. Even though only a small group auditioned, those who did were excited to be a part of the process.

"My experience was very welcoming. Most of my audition time was spent just talking to the directors about past shows. Even though I won't be a part of the show as an actor, I'll be first in line at the box office," said Kayla Lardner, freshman.

Though the cast has only just been decided, there has already been a significant amount of work done by these two directors. "We have been working on these pieces since second semester last year, when we first began looking for pieces to direct," Winnenberg said. "I found my piece in about February or March, and we began research last year when we applied for the project."

Not only will these plays be exciting but they could be the first of many plays directed by Winnenberg and Salimbeni. Each will hopefully continue directing further in their careers. The shows' performance dates are March 27-30.

This is going to be a great event for Concordia students and anyone else who wants to see some great drama. Look for more information on the "Arts" page through mycui.edu.

Preview Day a siren call for new students

SHEA FRATES
STAFF WRITER

On Sat., March 8, the 5th annual Fine Arts Preview Day will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The day begins with devotion at the Good Shepherd Chapel followed by a series of concerts, art viewings, info sessions and scholarship auditions. Prospective students will be touring the campus as well as interacting with current students in order to get a feel for the Concordia campus.

Some notable presentations throughout the day will include performances by the Concordia Wind Orchestra and Sinfonietta, Concordia Choir and Concert Handbells, a scene put on by the theater department and multiple student solo performances. Each concert or performance will be held on the hour with activities and info sessions shortly following.

"The concept is that we want to keep people moving," said Jeff Held, Director of Instrumental Activities. "You're not sitting down for more than 20 minutes at a time."

Fine Arts Preview Day has been a huge success since it started five years ago. "The first year we did Preview Day, we more than doubled the

number of music scholarships," Held said. "It's made a big difference." Last year, approximately 135 people attended the event and the music department held about 70 auditions.

Michael Busch, Director of Choral Activities, will be actively participating in Preview Day as he will be in the room while potential students audition for vocal scholarships. "Last year I was in the audition room for seven to eight hours," Busch said. "We look for students who are talented vocally, have a desire to serve and who will be a great fit to Concordia."

Jendi Samai, sophomore at Mt. San Antonio College and prospective Concordia student, attended last year and it made a big impression on her. "The students from Concordia were not only talented but respectful as well," Samai said. "I'm definitely applying to Concordia for this fall semester."

"Most of the students who attend Preview Day end up attending Concordia," Held said. "It seems to be working really well." Many current students have attended the Fine Arts Preview Days in the past and remember it fondly.

For more information, please contact Jeff Held at jeff.held@cui.edu or visit the Concordia Fine Arts website.

South Coast Repertory brings Broadway to OC

KAYLA LARDNER
STAFF WRITER

South Coast Repertory (SCR) is an esteemed local theater company which offers students high-class artistic entertainment that won't break the bank. The company began in 1964 with a band of theater students attempting to bring theater out of Broadway and into the public's attention. They left college to find themselves in the middle of a theater revolution and, 50 years later, they are still going strong with award-winning performances and even some world premieres.

SCR allows students interested to experience the arts for low costs through their Mystage ticket program and other special offers. Students between the ages of 15 and 25 can sign up for \$10 tickets to any performance of any show and to receive information on insider events and behind-the-scenes updates. Nicholas Pilapil, Mystage manager, started out as a Mystage subscriber, and now is helping the theater to bring in more of the younger generation. He says that they often feel excluded by the high prices and the elderly crowd who frequent SCR. With the help of Mystage, students can see a full-fledged theater production "for the price of a movie," Pilapil said.

Their most recent musical is *Light in the Piazza*, which will close Sun., Feb. 23. The show features an incredible cast en route from Broadway and a beautiful love story set in 1950s Florence. The plot focuses on a mother and mentally handicapped daughter visiting Italy from America, the Italian boy that the heroine quickly falls for and the mother's struggle in letting go of her daughter so she can follow her dreams and find true love.

But more striking than the storyline are the visuals and the music. The costumes seemed to step straight off the streets of 1953 Florence and dazzled with the sparkle that only musical theater can create. The stage design was minimal, but allowed the characters and their stories to speak to the hearts of the audience. The music was enchanting and the intensely operatic tone made it feel as if this were not a Broadway mu-

sical, but—at crucial, emotional moments—an Italian opera.

Madison Mitchell, part of the supporting cast, said, "The music is so stunning. It's probably one of the best musical theater compositions of my time." As for the plot, Mitchell said, "The main thing in this show is the love... I'm a Christian myself, and I believe that love is the highest calling that we have as human beings. If someone can sit in the audience and learn what love truly means, then my job is worth it in that moment."

As an assignment for her Experiences in Theater class, Professor Lori Siekmann, Director of Theater Activities, had her class watch and critique the play. Camila Covarrubias, freshman, said, "I thought the show was very well done. All the different elements, from the lighting, to the staging, to the incredible talents of the performers, really helped to illustrate a story that was carefully crafted together." Though she enjoyed the show, Covarrubias also had some critiques. "[The plot] could have developed further. There were a few questions left unanswered," Covarrubias said.

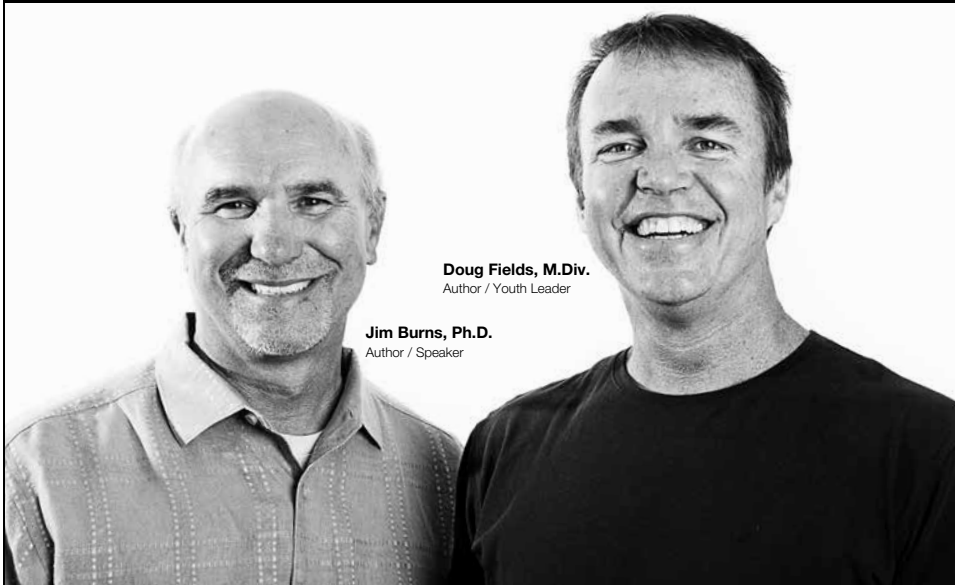
Philip Bartelt, freshman, said, "I loved the parts of the show... all the parts were very well done, but I'm not sure I liked the show itself. Everything was performed splendidly, but the show itself I'm not sure I absolutely fell in love with." Bartelt also agreed with Covarrubias's comments. "The plot that the playwright chose to portray onstage didn't appeal to me. That's what a musical is all about; it's supposed to give you a good story," Bartelt said.

However, Nicole Salimbeni, senior, had a different opinion of the plot. "It had me engaged from the moment it began to the moment it ended," Salimbeni said. "The ending left me hanging, but in a good way."

To join Mystage, simply email your full name, address, phone number, birthday and year, email, and the name of the school you attend to mystage@scr.org. For more information on South Coast Repertory, go to <http://www.scr.org/>. To get tickets for *Light in the Piazza* and any other upcoming shows, go to <http://www.scr.org/tickets>.

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Monthly Art Walk at anti-mall

BRIAN TRAINOR
STAFF WRITER

For the past two years, Costa Mesa has been home to a local art exhibit known as the SOBECA Art Walk, held every last Tuesday of the month. Next Tues., Feb. 25, will be no different. The name, SOBECA, South on Bristol Entertainment Culture Arts, will lead you right to their location in The LAB, located just south of the 405 freeway off of Bristol St.

The LAB is a self-described “anti-mall” that is home to some of Orange County’s best shopping, art, and culture. According to their website, “[I]t recognizes a need for a homey, indoor-outdoor hang out with shops and restaurants geared for the young at heart, and not offered in every mall on every corner. The ‘LAB’ stands for ‘Little American Business’ and that’s what it is, and what they continue to support.” This makes it the perfect venue to host the SOBECA Art Walk.

Welcoming all types of art, the Art Walk is open to all ages and is free of charge. “The main goal of the Art Walk is to bring the art community of Orange County together to meet other artists, experience different mediums of art, and to network with other artists while listening to awesome live music,” said Ayla Henderson, Staff Artist.

A new band will be playing every month, laying down a different ambiance at each event. Stacy Kim, avid photographer and Laguna Beach resident, has been to the Art Walk before. “It is really a treat to see some of the local art, enjoy good food, and listen to live music,” Kim said.

With the awareness of the event becoming more prevalent in the area, more and more artists are showcasing their work. Anyone and all forms of art are welcome. Most artists contact info@thelab.com to enter their art, and as of late SOBECA has been utilizing the muscle of social media and by e-blasting via Facebook to extend out to more artists.

Showcasing work is quite easy. Once an artist proposes a work online, the crew will send back an entry form to be filled out to confirm a spot. That’s it. Not only do artists submit their own work, but Ayla Henderson also pursues new talent on a daily basis, considering anything unique that will add to the experience.

No two months are ever uniform. Whether an experienced artist, or just starting out, one will get an opportunity. Spots fill up quickly, but with 12 showings a year there is sure to be a time to showcase one’s work. “There are artists that have already made a name for themselves that still come and participate in our art walks every month,” Henderson said.

Local art is an expression of the community around us. Costa Mesa has been an art hub of Orange County for years. As the popularity of

the SOBECA Art Walk grows, it becomes a better and better place for local artists to come together, appreciate each other’s art and network with one another. “It gives a creative spark within the city. It is important for the city to have an outlet like this for artists so the creative inspiration stays strong,” Henderson said.

Linda Sadeghi from The LAB described the hours for this event. “For the colder seasons, it’s 6-9 p.m. During the summer weather we have it from 6-10 p.m. because it stays warmer for the

participants and the people that come to see the work,” Sadeghi said.

The LAB also makes itself available to artists who want to showcase their art in a mini gallery setting and is available to hold shows there as well. Aside from the art side of things, The LAB also offers some world-class eateries. For more information check out thelab.com.

For more information about showcasing your own art, attending, or general questions please email info@thelab.com.



ALICIA HARGER

Choir ministers through music in Vatican City

KALE SANTACRUZ
STAFF WRITER

This summer, the Concordia Choir will be traveling overseas to perform in cathedrals throughout Italy on a 12-day trip sponsored by Kingsway International Concerts. Kingsway International is a company that organizes tours in various countries, along with concerts in famous historical venues.

As the choir explores Italy, they will visit numerous cities such as Rome, Venice and Florence. Accompanied by their overnight stays in grand cities and tours of historic landmarks, the choir has also received the opportunity to perform in a few of these places. “We will be performing in several cathedrals throughout Italy. Specifically, we were approved by the Vatican to sing at St. Peter’s Basilica, which is a great honor,” said Gretchen Sheetz, senior. “I’m also hoping that we as a choir will understand how to communicate our ministry through our music.” Although this trip is filled with beautiful scenery, sharing the beauty of Jesus Christ through music indeed lies at the heart of this experience.

The civilization and culture in Italy holds centuries of history of Western music, an en-

counter that most can only dream of. As for the choir, aside from their life-changing musical escapades, this trip will be a learning experience that will bring them closer, not only to foreign culture, but to each other. “When it comes to everything else, I am most looking forward to traveling with my choir family. Good times are sure to follow with such a great group of people,” said Katherine Dubke, senior. “This will be a learning experience. I can’t wait to be surrounded by the Italian culture. I hope to return to America with a fresh perspective and a desire to learn more.”

While this trip will contain many joyful and memorable moments, 12 days in a foreign country isn’t nearly long enough for some. “I am extending my tour and will travel with my girlfriend to several countries. The music I will get to hear and the performance spaces I will get to perform in will be incredible,” said Michael Miller, senior. “It will definitely be a life-changing experience.”

Surely, traveling with friends and visiting ancient historical places is enough fun to satisfy anyone for one trip. However, through their singing, the choir hopes to portray their passion for ministry and celebrate their invariable faith with a civilization that lives an ocean away.

Double-feature movie night

ALEX TUKEY
STAFF WRITER

On Wednesday, two wildly different types of films were aired to the Concordia residents on campus. The two films, *Gifted Hands* and *Junior*, have extremely different tones ranging from a true life story to an upbeat fictional comedy. This is to be expected as two separate Concordia groups, Every Life Matters and LEAD, each hosted movie nights on the same night, effectively turning the campus into a mini multiplex.

Gifted Hands tells the true story of Ben Carson (Cuba Gooding Jr.), a world-renowned African American neurosurgeon in the 1960s and 70s. It details both the challenges he faced as he attempted to successfully separate two conjoined twins and the difficult past experiences that shaped his life. LEAD Diversity Awareness Coordinator Sarah Taylor, sophomore, said, “The goal of LEAD is to celebrate the different cultures and heritages on campus and to help educate the students about diversity awareness. I thought [*Gifted Hands*] would be a good story to present for Black History Month in celebration of the black community.”

Junior focuses on a man named Alex Hesse (Arnold Schwarzenegger) who attempts to develop a hormone designed to reduce the chance of a woman having a miscarriage. When human testing is ruled out, Hesse takes matters into his own hands and injects himself with the newly developed drug. Hesse quickly becomes pregnant and the comedic banter only escalates from there. This movie is being hosted by Every Life Matters, Concordia’s pro-life club. President Katie Young, senior, said, “We want to get the campus involved by watching a fun, silly movie with a subtle but important pro-life message about putting the life of a vulnerable person above difficult personal circumstances.”

Concordia students really enjoyed the opportunity to watch these films in a fun, social environment. If you missed it, don’t fear: neither group plans to stop hosting periodic movie nights anytime soon.

For more information on Diversity Awareness, contact Sarah Taylor at sarah.taylor@eagles.cui.edu.

To keep up with Every Life Matters and their events, contact Katie Young at katie.young@eagles.cui.edu.

Pedal your way to fun with Pedego

PETER DOESBURG
STAFF WRITER

Pedego Irvine had their grand opening on Feb. 15 with much fanfare and well wishes from their future customers. Pedego is an electric motor assisted bicycle that makes getting around easy, has a nominal impact on the environment and, best of all, is fun to ride.

Bob Bibee, Owner of Pedego Irvine, said “There are a lot of people who have lived in Irvine for years and don’t know about the [bike] trails.” He showed me a map that they have on the wall in the new store. “There are even ones below Concordia and UCI that are hidden away from the main streets; you can even get to the beach from the store,” Bibee said. The idea that you could navigate Irvine and the surrounding areas without too many street crossings made for a great idea: Why not go on a bikeride to a park and have a picnic? Why not, indeed.

Going to the movies nowadays isn’t cheap. Tickets are \$14, add in popcorn and soda and dinner, and you have spent \$75 to sit in a cramped theater with no face to face quality time. Sounds fun... not. Try Pedego instead.

The Pedego bikes are available for rent; the company also offer tours from their location at the Woodbridge Center to the Back Bay of Newport Beach. “We have just gotten a response from Garmin, a GPS mapping provider, that will allow us to put GPS units on the bikes so you can choose your own routes,”

Bibee said. Perfect.

Pedego bikes can also be a way to get into cycling for fitness. Scott Keith, Associate Dean of Residential Education and Housing, said, “Cycling was my original escape when I was younger, and has continued to be that escape into my adulthood. It is a great way to get around, especially in a place like Irvine that has so many bike paths and trails.”

Adam Hesley, Assistant Professor of Theology, said, “Some forms of exercise are better suited to certain stages of life than others, but you can cycle at almost any stage of life, health permitting. I like it because you can get out there and take in some nice views.”

Bibee offered me the opportunity to take one of the bikes for a test ride. Since I am older (and larger), it was a good way to test the bikes out. There was plenty of power, I moved along quickly and felt very comfortable riding. The bike wasn’t awkward to handle and the power assist made the ride back up the hill effortless. It is something I would recommend everyone to try. I had the wind in my face, felt the freedom that only riding a bike can give, and would certainly consider getting one for myself down the road.

Take a break from electronic distractions; get out on a Pedego bike and do something fun.

Pedego Bikes are located at 4624 Barranca, next to Barnes and Noble and on the web at www.pedegoirvine.com



Bob Bibee and his son Shawn pose in their recently-opened electric bike shop on Barranca Ave.

Men’s Bball prepares for end of season

JAKE HUNTER HAM
STAFF WRITER

The Men’s Basketball Team are fighting to keep their #2 GSAC ranking, with an overall record of 19-8 and a 6-5 current record in the GSAC.

Assistant Coach Brett Lauer is pleased with what he has seen from the team thus far. Lauer is in his third coaching season for the Eagles and he knows how important conference games are. “Every league game is a big game, and every league game is a grind,” Lauer said. The Eagles hosted the #9 Vanguard Lions this past Tuesday, suffering a tough overtime loss. The Lions are the the number one team in the GSAC. The Eagles suffered a tough loss to the Lions already this season back on Jan., 28. The Eagles guard, Montreal Harris, junior, knew the Lions would be a tough opponent. “We knew we were going to have to come out with a lot of energy, and get after it,” Harris said.

The coaching staff knows how important the final three games of the season will be. But they are keeping their squad focused on the present tasks of each day. “We take it one game at a time and talk a lot about competing,” Lauer said.

Head Coach Ken Ammann has been doing his homework to prepare his team by watching video of the upcoming opponents. “It is going to be a grind, just like all other league games are--there is no let up,” Ammann said. Ammann has been a part of the GSAC for 15 years and he cannot remember a time when the competition was this even across the board. However, Ammann stressed not getting caught up with the schedule and just focusing on the task at hand.

Josh Smith, junior guard, agrees with what the coaching staff is preaching. “Coaches said it was going to be a grind, so we have

been grinding them out,” Smith said about the team’s league games. Smith talked about his fellow teammates and the solid defense they have been playing. “We stay tough and we stay focused throughout every time out,” Smith said. The Eagles appear to be well pre-

pared for the final stretch run. The players give much credit to the coaching staff. The Men’s next home game is tomorrow night as they host the Eagles of Biola in a crucial GSAC game. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m. in the CU arena.



Track and Field indoor update

AUSTIN DERRYBERRY
STAFF WRITER

Concordia’s Track and Field team is in the process of concluding a successful indoor season. This past weekend, Feb. 15, the Eagles managed to qualify five athletes and set four school records at the CUI Last Chance Meet held here at Concordia. As the name indicates, this was the last chance for any Eagle athlete to qualify for NAIA indoor track and field nationals. The Eagles had seven members total qualify for NAIA indoor national competition this season. Joshua Gomez, Robert Blackwell, Arielly Conde, Tyler Nichols, Moises Ramos, Elena Ornelas and Ashley Bell will all represent Concordia at the NAIA national championship March 6 in Geneva, Ohio.

Brad Battenberg, senior, described the indoor season “as a great way to build up for the outdoor season and a true test of conditioning.” He has been a member of the Concordia Track and Field team for all four years of his tenure here in Irvine. Despite the coaching staff changes and uncertainty of the program over the years, Concordia has overcome “the bumps in the road and coaching changes have certainly brought cohesion among the athletes,” Battenberg said. This tenacious group of athletes look promising to put together a strong outdoor season. With senior leadership from athletes like Battenberg and fellow senior Olugbenga Eshugbohunge, the substantial roster of juniors and seniors looks to cement their GSAC dominance and make a run at NAIA qualification.