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Elevation Church screens a satellite service at HPU

Sierra Leone refugee now a community volunteer and HPU student

By Chelsie Gastright
Organizations Editor

“We were okay until we started hearing on the radio that the rebels were advancing into the capital. I remember my mom came and got me and the neighbor’s kids from school and we went into hiding mode.”

Throughout his life, James Kamara, a High Point University senior, has endured many struggles. His home country of Sierra Leone, located in West Africa, fell victim to war in 1991, when Kamara was only one year old, after the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began attacking villages on the southern border near Liberia.

Dr. Larry Simpson, HPU professor of African history, explained what caused the war and the tragic consequences that came with it.

“Like much of Africa, Sierra Leone suffered from wide spread corruption, the manipulation of ethnic politics by unscrupulous politicians and the lack of civil liberties. This contributed to more than a decade of civil war and caused tens of thousands of deaths; about a third of the population became refugees.”

By 1995, the RUF had control over much of Sierra Leone and was close to controlling the capital of the country, Freetown. Just three years later, Kamara’s life began to change when he started hearing gunshots in Freetown. It was then that 8-year-old Kamara and his family went into hiding to begin the longest journey of his life.

On that afternoon when his mother picked him up from school, when the war was taking a turn for the worse, Kamara and many other friends from school hid in the basement of a neighbor’s home. Several hours went by as they sat quietly together, waiting for transportation to arrive.

Finally, a large eighteen-wheeler pulled up. The group hurried from the basement and piled into the truck, hiding under whatever was in the back. The emotions were high as the truck began to drive off to a local port.

“I remember we hid under quilts that were in the back. Kind of like what your grandmother would make by sewing together different pieces of fabric,” said Kamara. “I also remember my younger sister was crying. My mom did her best to quiet her down and keep her calm during the ride.”

The eighteen-wheeler was taking the group to catch a

ferry at a local port. When Kamara was younger, he remembered times where going to the port to catch a ferry was to celebrate a joyous occasion.

“Usually when we took a ferry it was to go to the beach. We would go during Easter and Christmas with the whole family to celebrate.”

This time, Kamara knew it was different. They were not going to the port to catch a ferry to the beach, but rather to escape the travesties of war.

Kamara and the rest of the group arrived at the port and quickly boarded a ferry. Half way through the trip, the ferry broke down after unknown complications. The group waited anxiously for a rescue boat to come to their aid, but when it finally did, the rescue boat was already carrying other passengers.

“When the rescue boat got there, people were already on it,” said Kamara. “But my sister was one of the first ones on the boat and then I came on. My mom was last and I remember telling her it was going to be fine, but she was so nervous about crossing over from the ferry to the rescue boat. I just kept saying, mom it’s going to be fine.”

The rest of the trip was spent on the rescue boat. The group finally arrived at their destination in Port Loko, a small

village about 17 miles from the capital city of Freetown in Sierra Leone.

While in Port Loko, Kamara and his family met with his Uncle Milton and one of his older sisters. However, the journey was not over yet. Kamara and his family still had to make it to Guinea, which borders the northern side of Sierra Leone; they needed to make it there in order to escape the RUF.

Waiting for them in Guinea was Kamara’s father; he had previously been living in America with Kamara’s stepmom and came back to Sierra Leone when the war started to worsen. Once in Guinea, Kamara and his two sisters were told they were going to America to live in Maryland with their father. Since Kamara’s father had lived in America for some time,

this allowed Kamara and his family to have a secure way out of Sierra Leone.

At this time, Kamara found out that the correct paperwork had not been secured for his mother’s travel to America. The paperwork would take one year to complete, and until they could work out the issues, Kamara’s mother would have to stay behind. While the thought of his mother having to stay behind in Sierra Leone was not ideal, Kamara knew that if all went well, his mother could soon join them. In America, the family knew that life would be different and almost perfect.

“The way people talk about America from a foreign perspective is that the streets are painted with gold and there is candy falling from the sky. It was like something out of Willy Wonka,” said Kamara with a small chuckle. “I mean I was a 7- or 8-year-old kid, so I just couldn’t wait to get there.”

“And when I got here I was like, ‘This kind of looks like Freetown.’ I asked my dad if we were here yet because I was looking for streets of gold and candy falling from the sky. He told me we were here and I remember thinking, ‘Wow, this is America?’”

Once in America, 8-year-old Kamara and his sisters settled in with their father and stepmother in Maryland. Things seemed to be going smoothly, until Kamara heard the devastating news that his mother had passed away before the paper work could go through.

Things continued to decline for Kamara when he started his first year in an American public school. Since he could not speak English, he had to learn to speak English in the English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes.

“It was tough. I remember seeing students walk by the window of the classroom and they would laugh at us,” said Kamara.

However, Kamara’s father heavily stressed education; he had big

goals to get his children into the Clinton Christian School. “In order to get into the Christian academy, the faculty at the Christian school would give us twenty to thirty words for us to learn to spell, but **See Kamara, page 3**



Senior James Kamara on the HPU campus; he will graduate in December 2012. Photo by Jeremy Hopkins



Sierra Leone is located along the ‘ear’ of Africa; Kamara and his family escaped to Guinea in order to come to the United States. Photo by geology.com

Student body elects Tyler Steelman as SGA president for 2012-13 academic year

By Steven Haller
Editor in Chief

The students elected sophomore Tyler Steelman to be HPU’s SGA president for the 2012-13 academic year.

Steelman said, “The first priority of my administration will be to create a more streamlined [SGA senate] meeting with tighter fiscal responsibility and more individual senate responsibility.”

Steelman has been a class representative for the class of 2014 with SGA for two years. In addition to SGA president next year, Steelman will be serving in other leadership roles, such as the Assistant Resident Director of Finch, Millis, and Wilson and a University Ambassador. As SGA president, his primary goals involve running more efficient meetings.

“I feel like it is important to start with the small things, like the mess that we sometimes have with bills being incomplete and the long process we go through to check in,” said Steelman. “I feel like once we take care of the small things, people will not feel like SGA is such a hassle.”

Steelman said that once the small things are taken care of then SGA can start to take on bigger things, such as planning events to be sponsored and executed by the SGA. He said he wants the SGA to be more active with coordinating more campus events.

The candidates were only allowed to campaign in the five days leading up to the election, which culminated with the SGA presidential debate on March 18. Steelman points out that his campaign for this election was not like campaigns run for offices in the U.S. government.

“Unlike a campaign for an office in the real world, we don’t have a list of people who are likely voters. So, out of 5,000, you have to find the 500 or so that will actually show up and care and vote. The biggest challenge was, ‘If I am going to target someone, who is it that I target?’”



Tyler Steelman speaks to the audience during the SGA Presidential Debate on March 18. Photo by Allie Dearie

Bradley Taylor, a junior and current SGA attorney general, ran against Steelman and said one needs to have motivation when they enter any election.

“I felt that for this election you really needed to show that you have a passion for that office and make sure you demonstrated that to the students who would be voting,” said Taylor.

Taylor said he will look to his professional and career goals this fall, but he still wants to be involved with SGA.

“I will definitely be involved with SGA in some capacity as a senator or at least as a guest sitting in the back. I do not plan on leaving SGA,” said Taylor. “But, I hope that the new president will appoint me to his executive council.”

As SGA president, it will be Steelman’s job to appoint the members of the executive council. He says that half of his executive council has been narrowed down to a short list of possibilities of students to fill those positions. Steelman cites secretary, technology chair, academic chair and publicity chair as positions he has individuals in mind for.

Steelman said that the vice president of judicial affairs and the attorney general positions might take more time to fill. Both of these positions involve work with Honor Court, so he wants to consult the student justices and the university’s judicial affairs administrators before he makes those decisions.

Steelman and his chosen executive council will be sworn in at the beginning of the final SGA senate meeting this semester on April 19, which will be the first official meeting run by his new administration.

Opinion

The perks of owning a puppy: a (wo)man's best friend

By Meghan Pignataro
Staff Writer

I have two dogs and they are my life. When I say they are my life, I mean that in every way possible. I obsess over them way more than I should, I have hundreds of photos of them stored in my phone, I'll play with them for hours and never get sick of them, and I talk about them constantly as if they are real people.

After loving dogs for all of my life, I never even considered getting another type of pet. I do not even remotely understand why anyone would ever choose anything different.

It's bad enough pet owners choose animals other than dogs, but what's even worse is when people choose animals that are boring, sneaky and creepy. Like cats.

No, I have never owned a cat before – nor do I ever want to.

After watching my aunt's cats for a few days, it confirmed my belief: dogs make much better pets than those ferocious felines.

When I walked into my aunt's house, I looked around trying to find where the cats were. For nearly 20 minutes I had no idea if they were even in the house. I went into the kitchen and prepared their foul-smelling food and within seconds they creepily appeared.

They hopped on the table, with such good manners, ate the food and then ran off being their selfish, independent selves.

They barely acknowledged I was there.

On the contrary, the moment I walk inside my house, my dogs come running full speed up to me, licking my face and wagging their tails. They are overly excited and follow me around for at least 20 minutes. Knowing my presence makes them so excited is heartwarming.

Based on their excitement, it's clear dogs form a close bond and connection with their owners. They

form a friendship that will last a lifetime.

Dogs will be there for you unconditionally; they will not judge you and they will be there to cheer you up.

They can sense when you are upset or feeling down and they will instantly try to comfort you. They listen to you, tilt their head and raise their ears as if they are actually communicating with you.

Cats, on the other hand, only care about the food they are waiting to eat. If anything, they will rub against your leg for a quick second showing an ounce of affection. How exciting.

In addition to forming a close connection, dogs are much easier to train and are able to follow commands.

My dogs know how to give you their paw, sit, jump and stop. They learned these basic commands within weeks after I brought them home. When I say a command, they know exactly what to do.

While dogs learn to follow commands, they also act as a great form of security. They have the ability to sense danger and know how and when to help people.

The moment my dogs see an unfamiliar person, they bark until my family becomes alert. Not a playful kind of bark. Instead, it's a loud, alarming bark that makes me question who is there. Cats, on the other hand, do nothing.

I happened to glance outside of my aunt's window and saw a tall man wandering around the backyard late at night. The cats were absolutely no help. If it were my dogs they would have alerted me the moment they saw the stranger and probably would have scared him away by their barks.

In addition to being a form of security, dogs can also guarantee to boost your activity rate. Studies have shown that having a dog can lead to a more active lifestyle.

According to a study of 1,000 adults conducted by Mars Petcare pet food company, 44 percent of dog owners age 65 and older exercise on a weekly basis be-

cause of their dog. In addition, 25 percent of adults with children and dogs visit parks and outdoor spaces regularly because of their dog.

My dogs force me to be active. I am constantly taking my dogs to the beach or taking them for a walk. When they get in playful moods I chase them throughout the house or run around the backyard until they, or I, get tired out.

Furthermore, dogs come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some weigh as much as 100 pounds, others as low as 10 pounds. Cats are generally the same size, just different colors. They generally have the same appearance, unlike dogs who have their own unique characteristics.

Whether big or small, dogs are also well suited for children. They know how to be gentle with kids rather than hissing at or scratching them.

When I was seven, and clearly unaware of how nasty cats could be, I thought they would be playful like dogs. Wrong.

Before I could even reach to pick up a cat, his paw fiercely snatched out and dug into my hand, leaving me with a tiger-like scratch.

Needless to say, I never wanted to pick up a cat again.

Although many households do have cats – which I don't know why – dogs undoubtedly make better pets. They are loveable creatures that give you their heart if you give them yours.

John Grogan, in the 2008 movie "Marley and Me," said it best about his Labrador Retriever:

"Marley taught me about living each day with unbridled exuberance and joy, about seizing the moment and following your heart. He taught me to appreciate the simple things – a walk in the woods, a fresh snowfall, a nap in a shaft of winter sunlight. And as he grew old and achy, he taught me about optimism in the face of adversity. Mostly, he taught me about friendship and selflessness and, above all else, unwavering loyalty."

Now that's a love that will last a lifetime.

HPU ASB aids Alabama devastation

By Graham Howard
Staff Writer

Spring break is the highlight of the spring semester for most college students. To 16 High Point University students and four advisers from Oak Ridge United Methodist Church, this year's Alternative Spring Break program offered a different kind of vacation.

Setting out on a weeklong adventure in Tuscaloosa, Ala., this group of volunteers, including myself, drove eight hours to Holt, Ala. where we were hosted by a local church for the week. We were there to renovate and rebuild areas in the two cities, which had been devastated by a tornado that struck the state on April 27, 2011. Little did we know the experience would become something far greater than what we were anticipating.

The group consisted of myself, Nathan Strode, Luke Grome, Zach Hall, Andrew Boniche, Lauren O'Neill, Michele Langenbach, Dina Monsen, Kim Whiting, Rachelle Schmitt, Carmen Jackson, Aunya Butler, Catherine Kelly, Katelyn Schultz, Marissa Brauer and Hillary Herr; ranging in age from freshman to senior.

Together the team headed to their first site, where massive amounts of debris, warped fallen trees and a neighboring sign that read "No trespassing, Deadly force in use" welcomed them.

For one trailer home, we fixed the siding, put up insulation and dug ditches for plumbing and electrical. However, our jobs also included landscaping/cleaning debris in yards, flooring, building steps and landings for entrances into the trailer homes, digging up a sewer tank to have a new concrete lid put on it and assembling new furniture. The work we were doing was an educational experience in itself, but there were many other lessons we learned that week.

The unfamiliar surroundings were a shock to many students. Herr said to me, "Nobody should be living in such uninhabitable conditions."

She was right – it was an eye-opening experience to see the destruction of a single tornado, and how severely the lives of those involved were affected.

This was the fifth alternative break trip I have signed up for since I've been at HPU, and this was one of the most meaningful trips. Not only because the people we helped were in such need, but because they were so thankful for what we were doing.

Out of all the people we were trying to help, there was one that really inspired us. A man named Jeremy,

who had a family including two small children (5 and 6 years old), found his home completely destroyed. He bought another trailer with the little money he had left, and we were doing all we could to get that into living order for him and his family.

Seeing how motivated Jeremy was to repair his home and actually seeing him on site working with our team really motivated us to get as much done as possible.

We also saw how hopeful and innovative other locals were. One man had developed his own system in which he used fallen trees as building-lumber for several projects. From this, we learned important lessons, such as teamwork, leadership and the importance of a helping hand.

The friendships made were amazing and the lessons learned invaluable. I would like to thank every member of the group for their hard work, as well as members of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church who traveled with us and every other person who was a part of this trip.

I commend the students for going on this trip because I know it benefitted them as much as it benefitted the families whose homes and lives had been ripped apart.



Howard hangs insulation on spring break. Photo by Graham Howard

Decision 2012: voters wanted

By Pat Budd
Staff Writer

What an exciting time of the year to be a North Carolinian!

As we end a long winter (if you even want to call it that), the spring temperatures have heated things up here in the Tar Heel State. But 80 degree days are not the only thing heating up North Carolina. Election season is upon us.

This season, North Carolina voters have a very important job on two critical election days. First, on May 8, voters get the opportunity not only to cast their ballots for Republican presidential candidates, but also the chance to voice their opinion on same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage is a hot issue in North Carolina, and I predict a record number turnout for both Republican and Democratic primaries.

Second, on Nov. 6, North Carolina voters have the opportunity to decide even more. With current Gov. Beverly Perdue announcing she will not seek reelection, voters will seek to elect a new governor. Most importantly, North Carolina, as a swing state, will play a large part in determining the outcome of the 2012 Presidential Election.

As you remember, President Barack Obama keyed on North Carolina in 2008 when he ran for the first time, won the state, and won the presidency. He has already indicated he is planning on spending millions again in North Carolina with frequent visits to the Triad, Triangle and several universities. Moreover, the Democratic National Convention is being held in Charlotte later this year.

So what does this all mean?

There has never been a more important time in North Carolina's history to be a registered voter. High Point University's Survey Research Center has found that most voters are split on all candidates running for office in 2012, more of a reason to get to the voting booth to change all of that.

In 2010, the U.S. Census found the 18-24 age bracket had the lowest number of registered voters at less than 50 percent (43.1 percent). Yet, many argue President Obama was propelled to the White House by winning the registered voters ages 18-24.

We all have annual duties that are not typically favorable: going to the dentist, getting a physical, filing taxes, taking final exams.

Add voting to that list if you find it to be something you don't want to do. It is essential and equally as important as the list of duties above. If you're not registered, go online to your home state's website and do some research to find out how to register – it is simple.

The typical response of college students' lack of voting is, "Well, one vote is not going to be a difference."

This ignorant response couldn't be further from the truth. Voting is important, and this year, even more important. Too much is at stake to sit idle on Election Day, especially in states such as North Carolina.

If you're unsure on how to vote, or not well versed on the issues at stake, go online to various candidates' websites and research their stances on certain issues. We are all humans and we naturally have opinions.

Voice yours via the ballot box.

News

From Kamara, page 1 he would make us learn fifty. Not only would we need to know how to spell them, but what they meant and how to use them in a sentence," said Kamara. "It paid off in the long run because I remember in high school people used to stress about the SAT's. People would prep for the test and go, 'Oh man I don't know these words!' And I would think to myself, 'Wow I've known that word for a long time!'"

Even though Kamara's first year in school was tough, he did have some positive influences in his life, such as soccer and football. He played soccer on the high school varsity team at a young age and really enjoyed it... until he found football.

"I remember thinking, 'wow, this is America?'"

**~James Kamara
Sierra Leone refugee
and HPU student**

"My dad used to tell me, 'Why do you play that American sport? You are going to get hurt, all they do is beat you up all day!'" said Kamara.

Playing football did create minor conflict between Kamara and his father, but it did not stop him from playing the sport he loved. Life was starting to get better for Kamara, and then he moved into his eighth grade year.

During his eighth grade year, the war in Sierra Leone was finally ending. According to Simpson, the war ended in 2002 after interventions on behalf of "the British, the United Nations, and West African States."

"The country has sought to bring justice to those responsible for the crimes committed during the civil war," said Simpson. "The political system remains fragile and must confront a host of problems such as restoring the economy."

While conflict in Sierra Leone was finally calming down, Kamara was having difficulties with his family. While Kamara was in eighth grade, his grandfather became ill. Out of concern, Kamara's father decided it would be best if he returned to Sierra Leone to care for Kamara's grandfather.

Soon after Kamara's father had arrived in Sierra Leone, his grandfather passed away. When Kamara's father returned to America, he noticed a change. Kamara had voiced his concerns, saying, "It wasn't that he fell into a deep, deep depression, he just seemed off."

Following his return that same year, Kamara's father fell ill. Regardless of the pleas from Kamara and his sisters, his father decided it would be best for him to return to Sierra Leone to receive treatment. Once returning to his home country, months went by without word from anyone about his father's condition.

Left in the care of his stepmother, Kamara wanted answers for what had happened to his father.

"I never really got the full story, but from what I have pieced together they just left my father to die," said Kamara. "I tried calling my uncle in Sierra Leone, but my stepmother didn't like that. All I wanted was answers but she kept telling me not to talk to him."

A year went by and Kamara was now in ninth grade. His stepmother lost her job and this meant the family had to relocate to another part of Maryland. Unfortunately, the neighborhood was in a bad part of town and not "fit to raise children in."

Finally, his stepmother got another job, but she had to commute several hours to a different area of Maryland, and this made things very difficult for the family.

"My stepmom got a job at a Wendy's several hours away. It would be like living in High Point and getting a job in Charlotte. That's what it was like," said Kamara. "She would be gone for days at a time."

Kamara also remembered how after

school on Friday's, he and his sister would commute to his stepmother's job. They would help her work double shifts, even if this meant sleeping in undesirable places and even pulling all-nighters. Even though the situation was undesirable, Kamara and his family were at least doing it together and that is what mattered most.

A couple years passed this way and Kamara's family struggled. Finally, after much searching, Kamara's stepmother managed to secure a home in Burlington, N.C. so the family could finally live together without the commute.

But soon after the family had relocated to North Carolina, Kamara's stepmother was offered a nursing job in Pennsylvania. To avoid her children from moving with her, she would stay two weeks in Pennsylvania, and then come back to North Carolina when she could.

Left in charge of his younger sister, Kamara became the man of the house in their Burlington home. This meant that he had to cook, clean and take care of anything else that may come up for his little sister and himself. However, Kamara shared light heartedly the words of advice his father gave him.

Things went on like this for a while, where Kamara and his younger sister lived alone in the house that his stepmother had secured for them. Then, when Kamara was 17, his sister told him she was pregnant.

His sister was only 14 years old, and this made things difficult for Kamara, but he managed to find a way to work through it and help in any way he could. Things were fine between them until the neighbors started to notice his sister was showing, and they were the only two people living in that house.

This is when the state came and told Kamara that since he was not of age he could not take care of his sister properly. Kamara's sister was then made a ward of the state, and Kamara did not know what to do.

A kind neighbor, whose name has been omitted, heard what was going on and suggested that Kamara could live with her. Grateful for her offer, Kamara moved in with her and for a while, the waters were smooth. He was playing football for his high school and he had many great friends.

"I don't know if it was because she got more stressed, or had more things going on in her personal life but (the neighbor) started to change," said Kamara.

Eventually he was given an ultimatum: get a job or move out. This would mean that he would no longer be able to be a part of the football team, and as much as it hurt Kamara to leave his teammates, he quit the team and got a job.

"The way I was brought up is that you never question your elders. Unless it is going to kill me, I just say 'yes ma'am' and do it," said Kamara.

Months went by where Kamara would wake up and attend school, and then catch a ride to work. He would spend roughly eight hours working and then get home around midnight.

"I never wanted to make her mad, so there were some nights I wouldn't eat because in order to get to the kitchen, I had to cross right in front of her room. I figured it would be safer to not even risk it."

Then, the neighbor told Kamara the one thing he did not want to hear. She told him that she was moving to Georgia and that he could either come with her or stay in Burlington.

Kamara began talking with his social worker and counselors at the school to find out what the best course of action was for him. During that time, his social worker mentioned I Am Now, a non-profit organization that provides housing for men ages 18-25 who have outgrown the foster care system, and he began looking into it. The school social worker, Ms. KC, made a

phone call to Travis Burrell, who is the Executive Director of I Am Now.

"I don't really remember the exact date, but in November of 2007 I moved into the I Am Now house. They were still putting up the exit signs the day I moved in," he said laughing.

From there, Kamara finished his schooling and graduated from High Point Central High School in May of 2008. Kamara had big goals of playing college football and great SAT scores. He was accepted into Livingstone College in Salisbury, N.C. and decided to major in architectural engineering.

He spent one year at Livingstone and finished his first semester with a 3.8 GPA. This is when his mentor at Livingstone suggested he apply for a scholarship to HPU.

"I told her, you know they don't have a football team right? I really had plans of transferring to Virginia Tech or some school like that, but she thought I should just give it a shot and see what happened," said Kamara.

While Kamara did not receive the scholarship, he did receive plenty of other funding through numerous HPU grants and other means of financial aid.

Today, Kamara is a double major in human relations and political science. He is also actively participating in many community service opportunities and has an internship with West End Ministries.

Helping the community and those who truly need it just comes naturally to Kamara. Kamara mentioned that ever since he could remember he has had this urge inside to help the oppressed in any way he can.

Throughout his time at HPU and through his community work, Kamara met Chris Gillespie, an HPU graduate and executive director at West End Ministries. West End Ministries is a not-for-profit organization that specializes in multiple community outreach programs.

These programs include a women's shelter known as Leslie's House, a thrift store, a partnership with the Boys and Girls club, a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, life skill classes and more.

Kamara works specifically with the program department to help plan special events for the church and community. One of the things Kamara has started is a movie night once a month for those in the High Point community. Gillespie also added that Kamara is working on what he calls a "community day" which would allow students to come to West End and help refurbish a room to build a gym area.

"James is a wonderful example of what God can do in your life," said Gillespie. "Also through hard work and dedication, James has become a role model. I am just so proud of him."

Kamara has been through a lot in his life, and so much of it has shaped him to who he is today. Throughout his years, Kamara has come out humbled by the experience and has not let his experiences negatively impact his larger life goals.

"People have done so much for me, so the least I can do is pay it forward, or help someone else," said Kamara. "I'm just thankful that people see something in me, to invest your time and money to see what you see in me."

"For a while, I questioned myself but my mentor, Dr. Don Scarborough, (vice president of Community Relations at HPU), just kept telling me that I had so much potential. It's just crazy how your mind is powerful enough to keep you away from realizing your full potential."

Dr. Nido Qubein once said, "Your present circumstances do not determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start." Throughout all that Kamara has been through, he has remained humble and appreciative for everything people have done and continue to do for him.

"Everything has just worked itself out, and I just thank God every day that I wake up. I don't know how I got here, but I am going to go along for the ride."

March Extraordinary Leader: Kendall Hager

The Office of Student Life presents the Extraordinary Leader award to outstanding students each month. According to Gail Tuttle, vice president of Student Life, the entire HPU community – students, faculty and staff – make nominations, and the nominees are asked to complete an online survey about their academic, social and charitable involvement on campus and in the community. A committee of HPU administrators selects the students that best embody true leadership. Results are printed in the Campus Chronicle each month.

One thing is certain about sophomore Kendall Hager – she has a talent for helping others in amazing ways.

Hager has been heavily involved in the Special Olympics organization where she works with children who have mental and physical disabilities to give them



Kendall Hager works with physically and mentally disabled students through the Special Olympics. Photo by Chad Christian

a safe and fun environment to play sports and excel in athletics. When she arrived at HPU, she founded the university's SO College Chapter. SO College is a national network of college students that engage in the missions of Special Olympics on campus.

In February, she bravely represented her home state of Colorado at the Special Olympics Hill Day in Washington, D.C. where she conducted ten presentations to members of Congress. Her presentations urged them to continue to support Project Unify – Special Olympics' national school-based inclusion program.

And most recently on campus, she held the Ban the "R" Word event – a campaign to eliminate the derogatory use of the "R" word (retarded) in casual language.

"I hope I have impacted the HPU community through my advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities," she says. "I believe strongly in the ideals of inclusion and respect for every person. It's an especially important task on a college campus, because as the next generation of leaders, it is our responsibility to positively shape public consciousness."

Her academics are as stellar as her volunteer work. She has been on the Dean's List every semester she's attended HPU, and as a special education major, she knows how she'll use the experience that she's gaining now in her future.

"I plan to use my HPU education and experiences to start my teaching career, ideally working with very young children who have special needs," she says. "I am fascinated by the enormous impact early educational and therapeutic interventions can have on a child, and I know it will be very rewarding to be a part of that kind of positive work. Special Olympics will always hold a major place in my life, and I will continue to coach and participate in their advocacy efforts."

A&E

The everyday fashionista: spring

By Jordan Breetz
Staff Writer

Spring has arrived. The trees are finally in bloom and everyone is dressing like it is summer. Even though I love the weather and that everyone is coming out of hibernation, there are a couple things to keep in mind when dressing for spring 2012. Brights, whites and bold prints are key, but there are guidelines to follow in order to pull off these trends.

Color! – Pops of color are my favorite thing about spring. With them, they carry a sort of promise for great weather and that the frigid winter months are coming to an end. This season, wear any bright color you choose. You can even wear multiple together, but if you incorporate “nude” color it will really complete the look. Check out J Crew, Kate Spade and Anthropologie; they are all pushing the nude-colored bright look.

Whites – Whites hold an awkward position during spring. When are they appropriate? I say not until Memorial Day, but certainly be sure to wait until after Easter. Either way, white shorts should not be the first thing you run to as soon as the weather starts to warm up.

Dresses – Oh the sundress... the item some guys wait for. Why they want to see our pale (or orange if you go the spray tan route) legs is beyond me. Either way, dresses will always hold a special place in the heart of spring. Try a “maxi” dress this year. I know it feels a little like a high school prom flashback but you will look fabulous and that’s a promise.



Bold prints and sundresses will be popular this spring.
Photo by www.smile-awake.blogspot.com

Bold Prints – From Dolce & Gabbana to Jason

Wu, bold prints are here to stay this spring. Try a large floral or a bold polka dot; some designers are even mixing the two. If you are feeling the urge to experiment with mix-match prints, then now is your chance. You really can’t go wrong.

Spring is finally here! Take note of these simple steps, and you will look fabulous. Remember, the secret to spring is to dress fun and have fun!

The style guy: A guide for men

By Tyler Yarema
Staff Writer

Comments on Business Attire

- When it comes to business dress, stick to your blues and grays. Black should be saved for funerals and for children to wear at their first communion.
- It is perfectly acceptable to have fun – in moderation. Play with bold patterns in your socks and pocket square.
- A building starts with the foundation: Invest in a pair of quality shoes. Good care can make them last a decade.
- Wingtips. ‘Nuff said.
- On Casual Business: try a gingham shirt with a knit tie. Perfect match.
- Don’t be afraid to layer. If it’s cold, add a sweater over your shirt and tie.
- No undershirts.
- Never match your tie/bow tie and pocket square. Be creative. Find one color in common and let your mind do the rest.
- Less is more. Don’t try to make the bow tie and square perfect. Throw it on, and get



Photo by www.newclothing.com



Photo by www.newclothing.com

out the door.

- Want a small detail to go a long way? Monogram.
- On fit: everyone has a different body, so find your perfect fit. The keys are pants break, sleeve length, jacket waist and shoulders.
- Lose the belt. Start buying slacks that match your waist.
- Thus, find a tailor you trust. No suit is ready to wear off the rack.

FRESH FOOD

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Organizations

College Life offers uplifting atmosphere for college students

By Chelsie Gastright
Organizations Editor

“We’re not about telling people what to think, we’re about getting people to think for themselves. We do not want to answer questions; we want to walk people through the questions. We aren’t just about winning an argument; we are about entering life with people.”

Four years ago, Chris Barrett was the area director of Young Life, an organization to help spread the message of the gospel in a fun and contemporary way. Around this same time, Barrett and several students wanted to form a club on High Point University’s campus that was similar to Young Life and was outreach oriented.

Six people started a Bible study, and soon those numbers grew to over 80 when the original six participants decided to implement weekly meetings. Finally, at the end of spring semester in 2008, the group went to the Student Government Association (SGA) to become qualified as an official HPU organization.

In the fall of 2008, SGA added College Life, the college chapter of Young Life, to the list of official organizations. Since that time, College Life has strived to help college students learn the word of the gospel in a fun and contemporary way.

Barrett volunteers with the HPU chapter of College Life, and he is extremely proud of what the group has accomplished. In 2009, only a year after the organization was founded, College Life won Student Organization of the Year. Not only was this a great honor for Barrett and those involved, it also meant that the organization

was doing something right.

“It’s a non judgmental place and we accept everyone, not for who they try to be, but who they really are. Deep down I think everyone wants to just be accepted for who they are,” said Megan May, vice president of College Life.

May also discussed how she was a part of Young Life as a high school student. Once she arrived at college, she knew that she wanted to become more involved with

others. May focuses primarily on helping freshmen who are having a hard time making the transition to college easier.

“I really wanted to reach out to girls who were freshmen who were having a rough time adjusting. I guess it’s just a way to reach out to people and let them know that you don’t have to fit in.”

Matthew Munroe, president of College Life and student at HPU, also talked highly of the strong sense of community that

College Life has to offer students. To help model the idea of community, Munroe opens his on-campus home up to the upperclassmen Bible study that is held each Sunday night from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

“I tried out College Life and it just felt like that’s where I needed to be. I was just so thankful because that’s where I found my community,” said Munroe.

College Life also hosts two other meet-

ings on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Mondays, they offer an off-campus Bible study for freshmen from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. During the hour that the Bible study meets, students are taught how to become leaders in ministry through leadership training. However, after the first few weeks of the Bible study, weekly attendance is strongly encouraged so that students can get the most out of each session.

On Wednesdays, the organization hosts College Life Club from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Greek Village. These meetings happen every other week and are open to all who want to participate. During these meetings, the group plays games, performs skits, sings songs and shares the Biblical teachings found in the gospel.

During the year, College Life also hosts a kick-off celebration in August to help recruit new members. Barrett mentioned that typically the organization invites a band and tries some “off the wall and fun things” to make the celebration memorable. They also host two retreats, one in the fall and one in the spring, to help deepen the sense of community that College Life strives for.

Whether you have always known the Bible or you have no idea where to start, College Life welcomes all who have a desire to grow through community and scripture.

For more information, you can contact Megan May at mam09@highpoint.edu and Matthew Munroe at munrom10@highpoint.edu, or search their Facebook group HPU College Life for more details.



Members of College Life dress up as hipsters for their previous meeting. Photo by Allie Dearie

ministry. Even though she is biology major, it has not stopped her devotion of helping

Elevation Church extension provides new worshipping experience

By Katie Harmon
Staff Writer

North Carolina is just one part of the Bible Belt. This is where, each Sunday, the faithful of all denominations rise early and don their Sunday best with zeal. Businesses are closed on Sundays and church bells are heard over everything else. With so many churches, a person can have difficulty finding the perfect church.

Recently, however, one church has caused quite a stir among the students of High Point University. Late last year, Evan McGuirt founded the HPU extension site of Elevation Church, a Charlotte-based church led by Pastor Steven Furtick.

“Early in my freshman year, God put the desire in my heart to share His word in a relevant and meaningful way,” McGuirt explains. “Not until this year did I understand He wanted me to do that through an extension site.” The church’s mission is to “see people far from God raised to life in Christ.”

Elevation has been acknowledged as one of the fastest growing churches in America by Outreach Magazine. When the first Elevation site opened its doors in 2006 it had only 121 members. Since then, the church has seen over 19,000 professions of faith and over 4,800 baptisms.

The HPU extension of Elevation has grown into a well-respected and recognized organization.

In order to make Elevation possible on campus, McGuirt had to send in an application to the church administration and go through two interviews in order to gain permission to lead the extension site. She also had to put together a “core team,” which would help her get the site started and lead the worship service every Sunday.

“We started the site in the York common

room with 20 students attending on the first Sunday,” McGuirt says, “We quickly realized that we needed a larger space to meet.”

Sunday attendance has grown to an average of 60, with 90 people attending on Family Weekend this past February. The group now meets in the Cinema every Sunday at 11 a.m. with a full worship band that plays contemporary Christian music.

There must be something special about Elevation Church that warrants such growth and commitment from students.

According to McGuirt, it is “the friendliness of the people and how relevant and impactful Pastor Furtick’s sermons are.”

The pastor’s sermons are pre-recorded at the Charlotte mother church and projected onto the Cinema movie screen.

“The pastor is very engaging,” says Sara Beth McBride, a HPU junior and regular Elevation attendee. “He is able to relate biblical truths in a practical way. He can be funny. He just communicates at my level.”

The church has also gotten a positive review from campus administration. McGuirt is happy to report that “the administrators who have visited the site have been supportive and thought the student-led worship experience was cool.”

The HPU extension is interested in volunteer work as well. During a week in February, which Elevation refers to as “LOVE week,” the core team, along with many student volunteers, teamed up with Habitat for Humanity and donated 35 hours of service.

“We love the city of High Point,” McGuirt explains, “[We] look forward to donating more hours of service in the future.”

The future looks bright for High Point University’s Elevation site. McGuirt believes that there is only good in store.

McGuirt said, “From humble and sacrificial beginnings, God has placed his hand on Elevation Church, and we truly believe the best is yet to come.”

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Organizations

Service fraternity spends spring break giving back



Students who attended an Alpha Phi Omega service trip to New Orleans sit in front of a home they helped rebuild. Photo submitted by Dylan Robinson



Alpha Phi Omega members break ground to help renovate a home in New Orleans. Photo submitted by Dylan Robinson

Volunteer Center provides variety for community service projects

By Chelsie Gastright
Organizations Editor

Each year, the students at High Point University average 30,000 hours of volunteer and community service work. With several outreach-oriented organizations on campus, it can become difficult to decide which organization offers the right service opportunities for you. The Volunteer Center at HPU offers students a wide variety of community service options all throughout the year.

Maggie Sturdivant, coordinator and president of the Volunteer Center, explained that unlike other organizations on campus, this organization does not require regular attendance to service events, and that most of the students that volunteer through the organization only volunteer for a single event.

"We just try to reach out to our stu-

dents and provide opportunities for them to help the community," said Sturdivant.

Sturdivant also talked briefly about some of the larger events they hold each year that help provide service opportunities for both students and on-campus organizations. In the spring and fall, the Volunteer Center holds a carnival for the local elementary school students around the High Point area. The students get an authentic carnival that includes giant inflatables, booths run by HPU organizations and a large lunch in the Slane Student Center. The Volunteer Center is hoping to see anywhere from 100 to 150 students at this semester's carnival.

The Volunteer Center also hosts several blood drives, with their largest drive in the fall. Sturdivant explained that the fall drive averages 250 units of blood, while the smaller drives average 60 units.

Finally, Sturdivant talked about how each semester the Volunteer Center offers "alternative break trips" where students can spend their spring breaks giving back. (See photos from a recent alternative break trip above.)

For the last three years, HPU has sent students to Guatemala during their fall break to help build close-fire stoves, provide water purifiers and distribute medicine to local families in other under-developed parts of the world.

"I decided that I wanted to get involved when I heard about the fall alternative break trip to Guatemala," said Dylan Robinson, a junior and political science major. "I am a native of Guatemala and had never been back, so I thought it was a good way to visit the country I am from."

Robinson has been to Guatemala twice and has also been to Mississippi

in the spring. The Volunteer Center has been to several other locations during spring semester, including Alabama this past spring. Students who attended the Alabama trip helped rebuild homes that had been destroyed because of recent tornados.

"I have learned a lot about myself and it gives you a new outlook. I have gained so many experiences I wouldn't get in a classroom," said Robinson.

The Volunteer Center hopes to show students that volunteering does not mean you need to be at a weekly meeting or regularly attend events; you just need the drive to want to help others.

For information on how to help and how to get involved, search for the Volunteer Center on Facebook (Volunteer Center-High Point University), on Twitter (@VolunteerHPU), or email the Volunteer Center at volunteer@highpoint.edu.

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PANDORA
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 APRIL FOOLS vs VMI 1PM</p> <p>CULTURAL ENRICHMENT SERIES 23-24 Spring Choral Concert 7:30PM - Hayworth Fine Arts Center</p>	<p>2 <i>The Post</i> WATCH THE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP T-SHIRT TRADE IN DAY!</p>	<p>3 FACULTY Film Series HPU Orientation Crew APPLICATIONS NOW ONLINE!</p>	<p>4 vs North Carolina A&T 6PM CAT EASTER EGG HUNT</p>	<p>5 admissions open house</p>	<p>6 vs Radford 6PM Good Friday (No Classes) Easter Break</p>	<p>7 Double Header vs Radford 1PM Women's Lacrosse vs Presbyterian 1PM Easter Break</p>
<p>8 Happy Easter Easter Break</p>	<p>9 Easter Monday (No Classes) Easter Break</p>	<p>10 HPU RADIO SPRING SHOWCASE at The Extraordinaire Cinema 10 DAYS UNTIL <i>Greeks goTalent</i></p>	<p>11 WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE Charcoal Pony Student Improv 8PM</p>	<p>12 SGA Meeting Phillips Lecture Hall 7PM PRIME Culture & Cuisine Series Sign up at the Campus Concierge IRC Panther Pop Quiz 10:10PM Slane Café</p>	<p>13 vs Presbyterian College 6PM CATFLIX EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA 10PM Admissions Early Registration</p>	<p>14 CAT PAINTBALL AT HPU ESTATE 12-4PM vs Presbyterian College 6PM HPU Theatre Presents Shakespeare's Twelfth Night 7:30PM • Hayworth Fine Arts Center</p>
<p>15 vs Presbyterian College 1PM HPU Theatre Presents Shakespeare's Twelfth Night 2PM • Hayworth Fine Arts Center</p>	<p>16 MONDAY MOVIE EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA 8PM & 11PM SGA Spring 2012 Budgets Due by 5PM to Student Life</p>	<p>17 FACULTY Film Series TWELFTH NIGHT HPU Theatre Presents - Shakespeare's Twelfth Night 7:30PM • Hayworth Fine Arts Center</p>	<p>18 Going Global Day Slane Center 11AM - 2PM HPU Honors Day Millis Center 7PM</p>	<p>19 Celebrate Earth Day 11AM Arbor Day Celebration Hayworth Park Amphitheatre 4PM SGA Meeting Phillips Lecture Hall 7PM FACULTY Film Series</p>	<p>20 Women's Lacrosse vs Liberty 6PM</p>	<p>21 Spring Concert The Fray</p>
NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK						
<p>22 Earth Day Women's Lacrosse vs Longwood 1PM HPU Theatre Presents Shakespeare's Twelfth Night 2PM • Hayworth Fine Arts Center SGA Meeting Budget Defenses, Organizations A-I 7PM</p>	<p>23 <i>IDS Event Today</i> HPU Spring Choral Concert 7:30PM Hayworth Fine Arts Center MONDAY MOVIE EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA 8PM & 11PM SGA Meeting Budget Defenses, Organizations M-Z 7PM</p>	<p>24 <i>IDS Event Today</i> HPU Spring Choral Concert 7:30PM Hayworth Fine Arts Center</p>	<p>25 Reading Day (no classes) Exam Break 9pm - The Café <i>Wuppy Home</i></p>	<p>26 <i>Fast Coast Wings & Grill</i> America's Best Wings Exam Break 9pm - The Café EXAMS</p>	<p>27 Panera Bread Exam Break 9pm - The Café EXAMS</p>	<p>28 CAT MASSAGE NIGHT Women's Lacrosse vs Davidson 1PM EXAMS</p>
<p>29 6 Days until Commencement Celebrating People in Action National Volunteer Week April 19 - 21, 2012</p>	<p>30 BEN & JERRY'S Exam Break 9pm - The Café EXAMS</p>	<p>THE EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA facebook twitter LIKE THE "EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA" ON FACEBOOK - FOLLOW @HPUCINEMA ON TWITTER</p>		<p>MONDAY MOVIE PRESENTED BY CAT EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT 8PM & 11PM IN THE EXTRAORDINAIRE CINEMA</p>	<p>FACULTY LITERARY FILM SERIES Located in The Extraordinaire Cinema</p>	<p><i>Greeks goTalent</i> April 19th Millis Gym</p>

Sports

VertKlasse sees record times and close finishes

By Nolan Stout
Staff Writer

One of the biggest meets with the best teams - that is how Coach Mike Esposito described the VertKlasse Meeting at HPU's Vert Stadium, which featured over 25 colleges and upwards of 1,000 athletes on March 24.

The meet derives the name "VertKlasse" from two sources: a famous Swiss race called the Velt-Klasse, meaning "world class," and Vert comes from Dick Vert, for whom the stadium is named.

The Panthers had a total of 19 top-ten finishers in the meet. The men had eight individual top-five finishers while the women placed four in the top five.

Looking at the women's side for the Panthers, the sprinters are led by senior Manika Gamble.

"She's probably one of the better hurdlers on the East Coast," said Coach Esposito.

Gamble placed third in both the 400-meter hurdles (58.85) and the 200-meter dash (24.67) at VertKlasse. She is a school record holder in the 100- and 400-meter hurdles as well as a national qualifier in those two events.

Coach Esposito feels the team should be strong in the steeplechase this season with senior Kelsey Fraser and sophomore Audrey Mallory.

Both placed in the 3,000-meter stee-

plechase at VertKlasse. Fraser, defending champion of the event, took first (11:23.34), while Malloy finished fifth (12:07.66).

Sophomore Kaitlin Whittington finished third for the Panthers in the triple jump with a distance of 11.18 meters.



Junior Jacob Smith defeats Duke's Domenick DeMatteo by less than a second to place first in the 1,500-meter run. Photo by HPU Sports Information

On the men's side, Coach Esposito said, "This is probably the best overall track team we've had since I've been here."

In the sprinting events, the men are led by sophomore Evan Emery, who placed first in the 200-meter dash with an HPU-record time of 20.87. The record was previously held by Kent Sides, who ran the 200-meter dash with a time of 21.45 in 1983. Emery defeated Jamaal Torrance, a runner for Team USA who won a gold

medal in the 4x400-meter relay at the 2008 IAAF World Championships.

Another winner at VertKlasse was junior Jacob Smith, who placed first in the 1,500-meter run with a time of 3:48.14. Smith defeated junior Domenick DeMatteo from Duke, who had been named to the NCAA All-East team last year. Smith is also a national qualifier in the steeplechase.

Freshman Christian Spaulding threw 61.25 meters in Javelin, taking second.

Esposito said Spaulding is, "one of the best throwers in the country."

The men had five other top five finishers at VertKlasse. Freshman Justin Doehr placed fourth in the 400-meter run. Senior Alex Fisher placed fifth in the 110-meter hurdles. In the 5,000-meter run, sophomore Patrick Crawford, freshman Jeff LaCoste and senior Mike Ali finished

second, third and fifth, respectively.

At the meet, Bill Webb was honored for his contribution to track and field at HPU. Webb ran track at HPU before moving on to coach at Florida and Tennessee, winning national titles in the sport at those schools. Webb is currently retired and in the national track and field hall of fame.

The Panthers track & field team has five more meets before the Big South Championship in Myrtle Beach on April 19-21.

Sports, cars and more: a commentary for men

By Jeremy Hopkins
Staff Writer

As story ideas are brought up for the Campus Chronicle, at weekly staff meetings, I notice a severe lack of article ideas targeted at men. There's nothing wrong with articles on the perfect spring bathing suit, signs you're dating the wrong guy or romantic comedies. However, my manhood feels slighted. I decided to take the issue into my own burly hands. This is for you, guys.

What's manlier than some football? Peyton Manning is now a Bronco. Not only is "man" the prefix on the back of his jersey, but his mascot is now an untrained, reckless horse and he gets to test his lungs every Sunday in the mile-high city's thin air. Have you ever tried throwing a football 50 yards while 300-pound men juiced up on steroids are trying to kill you, all while you can't breathe? Well, neither have I, but I bet it's hard, and definitely manly.

In all seriousness, one of football's best players is no longer with the team that essentially belonged to him. If men could cry, this would surely do the trick. Manning joins arguably one of the least manly coaches in the NFL, John Fox. Although he's had considerable success, Fox won't be able to work with someone as undeniably manly as Manning. Manning likes to do things his way. He changes the play at the line of scrimmage four or five times just because he can, and throws footballs at children on television (thank you, Saturday Night Live).

Fox likes to have his players run the ball; his team led the league in rushing last season. Manning takes a day and a half to run the 40-yard dash (he could be the fastest player in the league of course, but only if he felt like it). Am I the only one who thinks that this relationship won't work? If you take two strong personalities with two different football ideologies and put them in the same film room, blood will flow, and it won't be Manning's. Look for Bronco fans to be chanting "Te-bow, Te-bow" halfway through his mediocre 2012-13 season, only to realize they traded him away.

Raise your hand if you're watching Major League Baseball's spring training. Okay, I guess I am the only one, but it's a great way to pass the time as you gnaw through a couple dozen wooly

mammoth hearts. The Tigers sure are looking solid this Spring Training. This team is the best thing to come out of Detroit since the Ford Pinto. Oh, wait...

In other MLB news, the Texas Rangers are terrible. They won back-to-back American League championships the past two years, but are worst in their league during 2012 Spring Training. This team is perhaps the worst thing to come out of Texas since, (enter president here). It'll be a great season, and I mean it. A million baseballs will be thrown at enormous speeds and many times more wings will be eaten using peppers hot enough to burn a man's skin. I've never been more excited for a Major League Baseball season, even though a couple drunken, but manly, Bostonian businessmen and I are still mourning Jason Varitek's retirement.

However, knowing how these things work, the Rangers will likely come back to shock the baseball world, get to the World Series, and then return to mediocrity as quickly as Starbucks can make a venti, manly, black coffee with a couple shots of espresso and absolutely no cream.

Cars. Fast, loud cars. Ford has released a new 2013 Mustang that might become the new best thing out of Detroit. Yes, even better than the 2012 Detroit Tigers. The amped-up version of the new pony pulls a 5.0L V-8 engine with 420 horses in its herd. It takes a manly car to pull that many horses down the highway. It will also get up to 31 miles per gallon on the highway, but being men, we don't really care about that.

Believe it or not, there's something called men's fashion too. Thus, I'm going to give you some unwarranted advice. Looking good is actually okay to do. And I don't mean wearing a pastel polo, khaki pants and Sperry's. Throw on a button-down, a tie, some nice pants, and real shoes, and you'll have your dream job within a week. Guaranteed. Just kidding, but you'll be a man. A popular, professional-looking man. Then, buy yourself a 2013 Mustang, and then head to Florida to watch some Spring Training.

So guys, as you're devouring your two-pound steak, be proud of your manhood. As bikinis, Cosmo, and "Love Actually" seem to be the most important elements of society, hold strong to what you are: a man.

Hosting the Big South tourney is beneficial for HPU basketball

By Nick Sturdivant
Staff Writer

For the past couple of years the women's basketball Big South Conference Tournament has called High Point University home. The tournament gives spectators more than just a basketball showcase, but a platform for the city of High Point and the more than 200-acre campus to showcase their beauty.

According to Craig Keilitz, Athletic Director at HPU, the school does its best not only to draw in student attendance to the games but also to reach out to people in the community.

"For our season ticket holders and our alumni we send emails and text messages. Also in the newspapers we advertise [the tournament] throughout the year and we use a little word of mouth and radio ads as well," said Keilitz.

Not only is attendance critical to the overall well being of the tournament, but also other factors determine whether the tournament comes back.

HPU has been pretty successful at hosting the Big South tournament, whether it being for women's basketball or any other sport on campus. In 2010, High Point also played host to the Men's Soccer Big South Tournament and will play host for the 2012 Men's Baseball Tournament as well.

So what's made HPU so successful? Well it's not easy, but High Point has found a way to meet the credentials necessary year after year.

First, they must have plenty of hotels. In High Point alone, there are 18 hotels, many of them in close proximity to the school.

Luckily it has a central location within the Big South Conference and in North Carolina. Downtown High Point is only minutes away and with its central location, visitors don't have to drive far to bigger cities like Greensboro, Charlotte or Winston-Salem.

It also doesn't hurt to have some eye candy to look at while at the tournament. High Point has done this with many renovations of the campus. This is one of the reasons that people and tournament sponsors are attracted to HPU.

From the outside looking in, you would think that HPU would have some struggles hosting the women's basketball tournament since a majority of the students are gone for spring break, the time that the Big South Tournament for women's basketball falls. The ACC basketball tournament for women and men also makes appearances the same week in the Piedmont Triad.

However, the Big South Tournament is still able to hold its ground here in High Point and isn't fazed by this competition and adversity.

"It's really different customers, most of the time those who are interested in the ACC teams are not likely to come to see the Big South teams and vice versa," said Keilitz.

Even though the women's basketball Big South tournament will not be back in High Point next year, don't be surprised if it doesn't jump at the opportunity to come back again later.

Leon Jiménez, who has been an on-and-off High Point resident for more 30 years, has no problem with the tournament coming back.

Jiménez said, "It gives people in the community something to do and look forward to. Why go out of your way to other cities when you can see good basketball here in High Point?"