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The Parthenon, November 6, 2012

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THE PARTHENON

VOL. 116 NO. 46 | MARSHALL UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

Students mull faith, politics before elections

By **SAMUEL SPECIALE**
THE PARTHENON

As Americans flock to polls to cast their votes on Election Day, Marshall University students examine their personal faith and how each candidate's religious beliefs might affect their policies when they reach the White House.

Whether it is President Obama with his Christianity or Mitt Romney with his Mormonism, each of the presidential candidates has been straightforward

with their faiths when asked about it.

Eric Newfeld, a junior psychology major, said a candidate's faith is important but it does not affect the way he views their platforms.

"For me, I only let a candidate's faith play into whether I would vote for them or not only as much as they involve it in their platform," Newfeld said. "I think both presidential candidates do a good job of laying out what they believe and that

neither one of them has a religious belief that is going to be an issue for me."

Newfeld said his faith is an essential part of who he is and that it influences him on certain policies.

"Being a Reformed Jew, I believe in people having the right to choose their own paths," Newfeld said. "I think that makes me liberal on that aspect. But as a Jew, the nation of Israel is very important to me and that is something that is often a

conservative value. So, my faith pulls me in different directions and I have to reconcile what issues are important to me as a person and which candidate best supports my interests."

Shaheed Elhamdani, a junior chemistry and political science major, said he cannot separate his political and religious views and he does not expect a politician to do so either.

"I don't claim to separate my political views from my religious views," Elhamdani said. "I base

them off of what my religion gives me as morality and I support candidates who are more community oriented and more about taking care of our neighbors. I think you can draw every religion down to two tenants: love God and love others, and if a candidate cannot embody that, then I will not vote for them."

Elhamdani said people who are confronted with faith and politics tend to split into camps of conservatism and liberalism.

"I'm not going to speak for

all Muslim people, but I think splits are healthy," Elhamdani said. "It's only an issue because we define our differences along religious lines when they are not problems of religion. They are problems of secular, human behavior. I don't think that conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats want to do different things because, in the end, they all want to help people; they just go about it

See **FAITH** | Page 5

Commencement event set for today, tomorrow

By **SUZANN AL-QAWASMI**
THE PARTHENON

Graduating students are invited to attend Countdown to Commencement 2012 Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Don Morris Room of Memorial Student Center.

Roberta Ferguson, registrar, said students who completed their degrees in July and August, as well as tentative December graduates, are encouraged to attend the event. She said the event has been organized to help students complete their pre-commencement obligations.

"This event will allow students to take care of everything they need to do before the winter commencement ceremony takes place," Ferguson said. "Students can come here to get everything done and we'll be here to help them with it all."

There will be representatives present from different offices on campus to help students. The Registrar's Office will be there to verify students' graduation statuses, name formats for diplomas and addresses for mailing diplomas and to hand out honors cords and tassels. The Office of the Bursar will answer questions regarding students' accounts, holds and balances.

"Because it consolidates everything into a convenient location I think students should take full advantage of the Countdown," Ferguson said. "We know students' time is valuable and so this gives students the opportunity to handle all commencement responsibilities in one location at one time so they do not have to worry about anything else regarding commencement between now and the actual ceremony."

Ferguson said there will also be vendors on campus so students can purchase items to celebrate and remember this milestone. She said the bookstore will have caps and gowns available

See **COMMENCEMENT** | Page 5

Election Day: Time for voters to have their say

By **DAVID LIGHTMAN**
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS (MCT)

WASHINGTON — After billions of dollars, hours of debates and frantic last-minute pitches from the candidates, it's up to the voters Tuesday to decide whether to give President Barack Obama a second term or change course with Republican Mitt Romney.

Also at stake is control of Congress. Thirty-three Senate seats and all 435 House of Representatives seats are up this year, and while the House is expected to remain in Republican hands, Senate control hinges on a host of tight races.

Turnout will be one key to handicapping who's winning the White House and congressional battles, heading a long list of unknowns. Will the relentlessly negative campaign help or hurt? Did superstorm Sandy benefit the president? Did early voting give him a big advantage?

Once the polls close starting at 6 p.m. EST in Indiana and Kentucky, a number of early clues will signal whether Obama or Romney will get the 270 electoral votes needed to win. Polls on Monday continued to show the race a virtual tie nationally and in most of the 11 battleground states.

The first hints of how the night might go will come in four early poll-closing states: Virginia, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Indiana. Obama won all four in 2008.

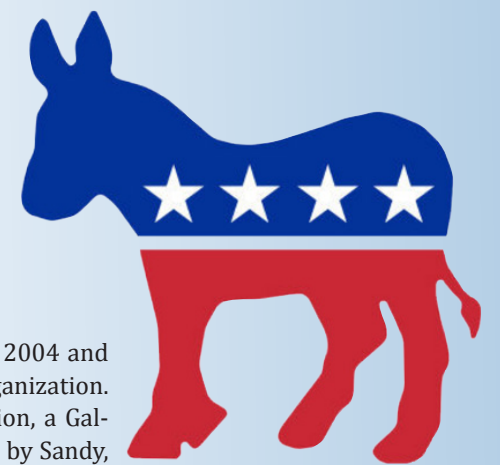
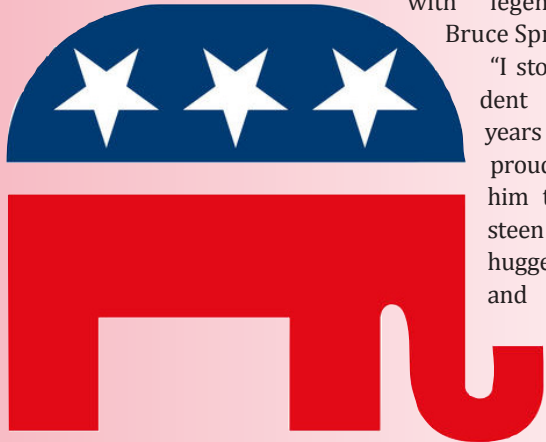
Romney needs all four if he's to become the sixth person in 100 years to defeat a sitting president. Should he falter in even one, or the results become too close to call, this race won't be over quickly.

Obama, on the other hand, can score an important win early by taking Florida. Losing its 29 electoral votes would be a huge blow to Romney, who has pushed hard for the state's votes and began his last full campaign day Monday in Orlando.

"Tomorrow we begin a better tomorrow," Romney told about 1,000 supporters, stressing his closing argument that Obama bungled the economy and is too fierce a partisan to work with Republicans.

The president was in Madison, Wis., where he appeared with legendary rocker Bruce Springsteen.

"I stood with President Obama four years ago, and I'm proud to stand with him today," Springsteen said. Obama hugged the singer and reminded the crowd, "We've got more change to make."



Turnout was expected to be down somewhat from 2004 and 2008, according to models developed by the Gallup Organization. Voters "have not been quite as engaged" in the election, a Gallup analysis said, and many voters could be distracted by Sandy,

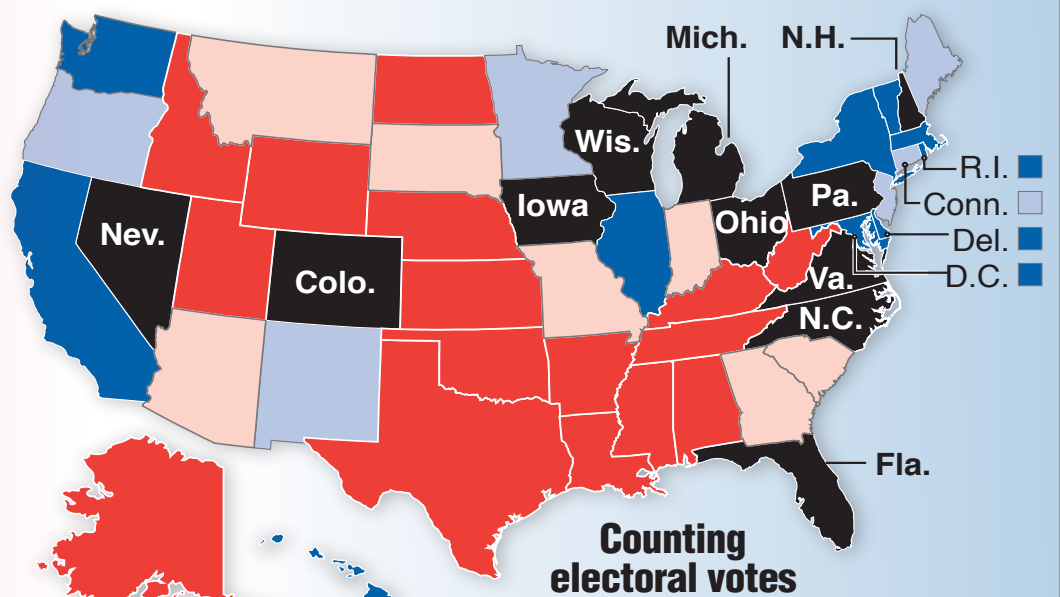
See **ELECTION** | Page 5

It's down to the wire

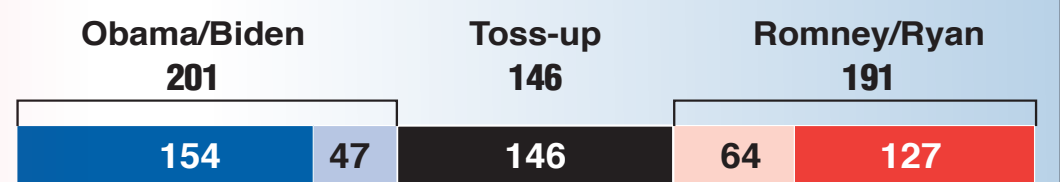
Eleven states are likely to decide who wins the presidency in this very close contest. A look at where the states stand:



Democrat **Toss-up** **Republican**
 ■ Solid ■ Likely/leaning ■ ■ Likely/leaning ■ Solid



NOTE: Alaska and Hawaii are not to scale
 There are a total of 538 electoral votes; the number of electors for each state is proportional to its population; 270 votes are needed to win the presidency



Source: Real Clear Politics, McClatchy Washington Bureau
 Graphic: Judy Treible © 2012 MCT

Election Results Party to take place in Harless Media Room

By **EVAN FOWLER**
THE PARTHENON

The Department of Housing and Residence Life, the Department of Political Science and the Political Science Graduate Student Association will have an election results party on Tuesday night to watch and discuss election results as they are revealed.

"It's a night of election results coming in," Shawn Schulenberg, assistant

professor for the Department of Political Science, said. "It's a big party for people on either side of the aisle to come and watch as the votes are counted."

Schulenberg said the night will be filled with activities and games focused around politics. He said there will be discussions guided by political science professors to educate students on voting, policies, practices and how the electoral college works.

"It's important to understand how this democratic process is and why it's important to vote," Schulenberg said. "The electoral college is weird. I'd bet 99 out of 100 people don't completely understand how it works."

Schulenberg said the event is based around civic engagement and taking away a better understanding of the electoral process. Schulenberg said students can come and go as they

please because the time frame is extensive. In addition to refreshments, trivia, games and prizes, the event will have several speakers from different departments.

The event will take place in the Harless media room Tuesday from 6:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. The event is open and free to all students.

Evan Fowler can be contacted at fowler68@marshall.edu.

NEWS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2012 | THE PARTHENON | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

A21 campaign to benefit fight against injustice

By **TYRELL CARLTON**
THE PARTHENON

The Abolishing Injustice in the 21st Century (A21) campaign will have a benefit concert Saturday in the Don Morris Room of the Memorial Student Center. The benefit will raise money

to prevent and fight against injustice around the world. Carol Good, business management sophomore and member of Campus Crusade for Christ, said A21 is an organization that helps to rescue and rehabilitate victims of human trafficking.

A21 states on their website that human trafficking is the second largest global organized crime today, generating approximately \$31.6 billion each year.

"A21 is one of the major organizations that helps combat human trafficking," Good said.

"I think it is a very good organization to help women and families who are stuck in human trafficking here and around the world," Charlotte Rakes, special education junior and CRU member, said. "It's not only international, but it's here in the

U.S. and people don't realize it."

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, of the 17,500 victims that are trafficked annually, 33 percent of them are American citizens.

The doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the free concert starts at

7p.m. The organization will also have prizes to win, such as One Direction tickets, Old Navy gift cards, Edible Arrangements and other prizes.

Tyrell Carlton can be reached at carlton5@marshall.edu.

Election Month material on display at Morrow Library

THE PARTHENON

The Marshall University Libraries' Government Documents Department is observing Voting and Elections Month this November by displaying several items from their collections.

The display is set up in their office within the James E. Morrow Library.

"Students seeking resources on the election process, voting, voting statistics and related topics to elections will find these materials on display very useful and handy," Majed Khader, director of Morrow Library, said. "In addition, information on who can vote, why we should vote, Election Day rights and information, absentee ballots and useful elections websites are also among the displayed items."

Sue Ellen Bell, Government Documents library associate, said the main purpose of the Federal Depository Library Program is making government documents available to the public so citizens can stay informed on the inner workings of their government.

The Government Documents Department is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Parthenon can be contacted at parthenon@marshall.edu.

COB to host personal finance workshop

By **SARAH HAGERTY**
THE PARTHENON

The College of Business Living Learning Community will host a Personal Finance meeting on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the First Year Resident Hall South.

Jacqueline Agesa, the Interim Associate Dean and professor in the economic finance department of the College of Business, will be speaking about how to manage personal finances while in college.

"Agesa will be discussing topics such as budgeting, credit cards, loans and anything else that is new to freshmen in the finance world," Lacie Bittinger, academic advisor for the College of Business, said. "All of these things are very important to know as a freshman, considering they are becoming adults and are having to start taking control of their personal finances."

This event is being put on for the freshmen Business Living Learning Community but is open to all students who are interested in learning more about their personal finances.

Sarah Hagerty can be contacted at hagerty5@marshall.edu.



CLEM MURRAY/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER | MCT DIRECT

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie comforts Port Monmouth fire fighter Kathy Willem at the fire station where he visited residents and first responders Monday, a week after Hurricane Sandy devastated New Jersey.

Christie says New Jersey is seeking to reach 'new normal'

By **MATT KATZ**
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (MCT)

KEANSBURG, N.J. — And on the seventh day after the storm, President Barack Obama called New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie from Air Force One and put Bruce Springsteen on the phone.

Although the Democratic rocker has a notoriously frosty relationship with the Republican governor, Springsteen apparently appreciated the love Christie displayed last week for their battered home state.

Not only did they chat from Obama's campaign trail Monday, according to the governor, but Springsteen gave him a hug at the Sandy benefit telethon Friday night. He told Christie he was proud of him.

"And he told me it's official: We're friends," Christie said.

The governor called the experience a highlight of an otherwise devastating week. Christie surveyed more of Sandy's impact Monday, when he visited two Monmouth County towns badly hit by the storm surge.

He saw foundations gutted and siding ripped off homes; he passed destroyed belongings on the sides of streets, and one sign reading: "I assure you; we've got guns."

Christie spoke Monday of trying to reach a "new normal": gas for cars, kids in school,

roads free of trees, and clean water.

The state is getting there. About 765,000 households remained without power as of Monday afternoon, down from 2,700,000.

Only about 40 percent of school districts have reopened, and NJ Transit could operate only 13 of its normal 60 trains into New York City's Penn Station.

There are "serious power and signal and track problems along the Northeast Corridor," Christie said. As a result, he created an emergency bus service to take workers into the city.

An additional 350 buses from the U.S. Department of Transportation were expected to begin to arrive Monday to augment NJ Transit's fleet, according to the offices of Democratic Sens. Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez of New Jersey.

To handle security, Attorney General Jeffrey S. Chiesa swore in more than 280 temporary state troopers from the police forces of eight states.

Recovery at the Jersey Shore is mixed. Christie is allowing access to some barrier islands on a "grab-and-go" basis: Property owners can take what they need and get out. And while the New Jersey League of Municipalities canceled its conference of local government officials for next week in Atlantic City, as of Monday all 12 casinos had reopened.

Tuesday poses a big test as voters go to the polls — or try to.

Georgia's law banning texting while driving hardly enforced, analysis shows

By **ANDRIA SIMMONS**
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION (MCT)

ATLANTA — Motorists who are texting while driving may be risking life and limb. But they're at a pretty low risk for getting caught, recent law enforcement statistics show.

In the two years after a ban on texting while driving in Georgia took effect on July 1, 2010, state records reveal that fewer than 50 people a month have been convicted of the offense, for a total of 1,281 convictions as of Sept. 17. That's a small fraction of the 22,500 people convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the same time frame. The Department of Driver Services only tracks convictions, not the number of citations issued, DDS spokeswoman Susan Sports said.

Many law enforcement officers say the law is difficult to enforce.

State troopers have issued an average of only 11 citations a month since the law took effect.

Lt. Les Wilburn, assistant troop commander for the Georgia State Patrol, said troopers have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that someone was texting at the wheel, and not merely dialing a number or talking. Most drivers simply stash their phone when a cop is in sight, he said.

"We're having the same obstacles we've had since the law came into effect," Wilburn said. "They're looking for us now, because they know it's against the law, and they don't do it while we're in a car sitting right next to them."

Enforcement of the texting law has been minimal in most counties, state records show. A notable exception is in Gwinnett County, where 665 thumb-happy drivers were convicted — more than in all other

Georgia counties combined.

Gwinnett County Police spokesman Cpl. Edwin Ritter said officers diligently watch for distracted drivers during routine traffic patrols, but the department has not emphasized enforcing the texting while driving law.

"We enforce it just like we do any other law that's out there," Ritter said.

Studies show drivers who are texting are 23 times more likely to crash. A driver's eyes are off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds each time they send or receive a text, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Last year, there were 3,840 crashes attributed to cell-phone use/distracted driving in Georgia, according to the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Nine were fatal and 955 resulted in serious injuries.

Assistance available for MU students registering for classes

By **ASHLEY KILLINGSWORTH**
THE PARTHENON

Marshall University students registering for classes for the first time are being offered help from the Student Resource Center.

The MyMU registration program is being hosted by the Student Resource Center on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

According to the Student Resource Center, students will learn how to browse the schedule of courses online. Students will also learn how to register for classes

through the MyMU portal.

The sessions will last approximately 20 minutes.

Students will also be able to receive information on who their adviser is as well as how to set up an appointment with their adviser.

Resource specialists will be available at the sessions to assist students following the program.

Students who have additional questions can contact src@marshall.edu.

Ashley Killingsworth can be contacted at ashley.killingsworth@marshall.edu.



Spring 2013 Registration Schedule

Nov. 5

Seniors (90 hours completed as of Aug. 27)

Nov. 7

Juniors (58 hours completed as of Aug. 27)

Nov. 8-9, 12

Sophomores (26 hours completed as of Aug. 27)

Nov. 13-16

Freshmen

Students can register for classes by logging into MyMu and clicking on the MILO tab. From there, click on the Student tab and then click on Registration. The course reference numbers (CRN) are needed for a quick registration process.



We're Online!

@marshallparthenon.com

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| EAST DIVISION | C-USA | | Overall | |
|---------------|-------|---|---------|---|
| | W | L | W | L |
| UCF | 5 | 0 | 7 | 2 |
| EAST CAROLINA | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| MARSHALL | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| UAB | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| MEMPHIS | 1 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| SOUTHERN MISS | 0 | 5 | 0 | 9 |

SPORTS

| | C-USA | | Overall | |
|---------|-------|---|---------|---|
| | W | L | W | L |
| TULSA | 5 | 0 | 7 | 2 |
| SMU | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| HOUSTON | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| TULANE | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| RICE | 2 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| UTEP | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 |



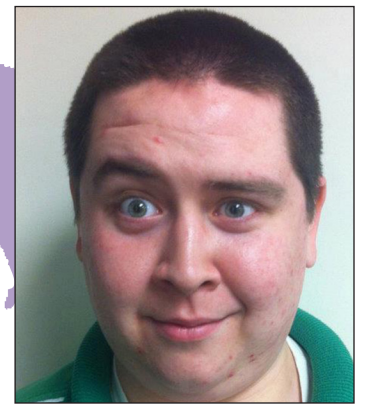
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2012 | THE PARTHENON | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

Heisman watch 2012, top five



JOHNSON

Sports Editor Jeremy Johnson and Assistant Sports Editor Adam Rogers list their top five Heisman Candidates.



ROGERS

1.) Kenjon Barner (Oregon, RB)

Five touchdowns and 321 yards against USC, enough said. Nineteen touchdowns, 1,295 yards on the season and 7.2 yards per carry. Opposing teams know Oregon is going to run the ball and still cannot slow down Barner. Oregon leads the nation in points per game and is second in rushing yards per game. Barner is running away with the Heisman.

2.) Collin Klein (Kansas State, QB)

His stats speak for themselves, 1,875 yards passing to go along with 12 touchdowns and two interceptions. Klein also has 698 yards rushing and 17 touchdowns. What's more impressive is wins against four ranked opponents and the teams number two BCS ranking.

3.) AJ McCarron (Alabama, QB)

McCarron leads Alabama to a comeback win in the closing seconds against LSU and has his team atop the BCS rankings. Forgot to mention his 1,849 yards passing, and 19 touchdowns to go with zero interceptions.

4.) Marqise Lee (USC, WR)

The sophomore receiver leads the nation in receptions at 88, second in yards with 1,286 and third in touchdowns with 12. In nine games Lee has had over 100 yards in six of them, including 345 yards and two touchdowns against Arizona. Let me say that again, 345 yards in one game, a Pac 12 record.

5.) Manti Te'o (Notre Dame, LB)

Has Notre Dame's defense playing tough and only giving up 11.7 points per game. Te'o has 85 tackles, two sacks and five interceptions on the season. The Irish are also perennial contenders for the BCS Championship.

1.) Collin Klein (Kansas State, QB)

Leaps and bounds better than the rest of the field, Klein has performed under the national scope better than anyone else and his team has won.

2.) Manti Te'o (Notre Dame, LB)

If Te'o keeps up his performance over the Irish's final three games of the season, he can make his way to New York with a legitimate shot to become the first solely defensive player to win college football's most prestigious award.

3.) Kenjon Barner (Oregon, RB)

After setting the Ducks single-game record for rushing yards in the win over USC, Barner still has two road-blocks ahead at home against Stanford and the season finale in the Civil War at Oregon State. Barner could be the best player in college football and still not win the Heisman because of Oregon's weak schedule.

4.) Braxton Miller (Ohio State, QB)

Yes the Buckeyes aren't eligible for the post-season, but Miller and Ohio State sure aren't playing like it. With close to 3,000 total yards and 27 touchdowns, Miller is making sure no one forgets about the Scarlet and Grey.

5.) Rakeem Cato (Marshall, QB)

Call it bias if you want, but if Cato attended a school outside Conference USA he would get more buzz. The sophomore quarterback is already in a majority of the Herd's top 10 for career records, chasing the likes of Chad Pennington and Byron Leftwich, and leads the country in passing yards (3,290) and completions (318), is fifth in touchdowns (27) and is ninth in completion percentage (69.1).

Lakers give coach a moment of respite from hot seat

By BEN BOLCH

LOS ANGELES TIMES (MCT)

LOS ANGELES — You can't lose them all.

Mike Brown made one wonder whether it was possible over the season's first three games, nobody doing less with more than the Los Angeles Lakers coach.

Four potential Hall of Famers who had never played together meet the Princeton offense.

A defense that was supposed to be the coach's hallmark yielded triple digits more often than Palm Springs in July.

Kobe Bryant, his foot sore and his career-minutes odometer about to turn over already forced into excessive playing time early in the season.

Brown remained as affable as ever throughout his team's 0-3 start, though he might have provided a glimpse into the strain he was feeling Sunday evening when he sighed deeply before walking down a hallway to meet with reporters.

He could exhale a few hours later.

The Lakers walloped the pitiful Detroit Pistons, 108-79, at Staples Center for their first victory, sparing further forays into the record books in search of historically bad starts.

The triumph also momentarily ceased the chatter about whether Brown would be history.

"I think it's more of a relief for Mike than it is for anybody else," Lakers guard Kobe Bryant said. "We're good."

Brown was reluctant to use the R-word, at least when it pertained to himself.

"Some people may look at it as a relief," Brown said, "but I

look it as a good win because we needed it, but not a whew, not one of those. I'm excited about the way we played the game and won the game."

Oh, he needed it all right.

Any question about this game's meaning to Brown was answered early in the fourth quarter when the coach sent Bryant and Dwight Howard back onto the court with the Lakers holding a 24-point lead.

"That was more just helping Mike out, man," Bryant said, "so he wouldn't have an ulcer over there or a heart attack over there."

Brown actually spent much of the game cheering.

He leaped off the bench and emphatically pumped his fist in the first quarter after Bryant made a three-pointer. He clapped in the third quarter when Bryant buried another long jumper and put his hands together again in the fourth when the struggling Antawn Jamison made a three-pointer.

This was more like what Brown said he expected his purported super team to look like, tallying 27 assists on 40 made field goals and committing only 15 turnovers.

"You look at the points some of these guys had and I'm sure they'll tell you they scored probably easier than any other time they've played the game because they got it within the system and so it gives us a little relief," Brown said. "And every win that we get gives us a little bit more relief on both ends of the floor."

It also presumably provided some respite for Brown in

cyberspace.

In the wake of the Lakers' horrid start, one message board ran a poll asking which coach fans wanted to replace Brown — Phil Jackson, Nate McMillan and Mike D'Antoni were among the options — with Jackson a runaway winner.

On another thread, fans were asked whether they preferred having as their head coach Brown or a raw, uncooked potato. The potato won in a landslide.

Jamison said Brown was not to blame for his team's shortcomings.

"It hasn't been his fault, the reason that we started 0-3, but that's the day and age that we live in," Jamison said. "If things are going great, it's the players, but when they're not, they put it all on the coach. Mike has been upfront with us from Day 1 telling us what he expects out of us on both ends of the floor. We just haven't done that."

They did Sunday, though much tougher tests await than the winless Pistons.

And the Lakers will have to take them for a while without point guard Steve Nash, who could be sidelined for up to a month by a broken leg.

But this was a start that the Lakers desperately needed in a season they expect to stretch into June.

"Come February, and you hope it happens before then, when guys really have a grasp of what we're doing," Brown said, "I think it's going to be really, really neat, and it could be something special on that end of the floor. So I'm excited."



LAWRENCE K. HO/LOS ANGELES TIMES | MCT

Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant drives to the basket on a reverse lay-up against Detroit Pistons' Jason Maxiell in the first half at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on Sunday.

MU's Cato named co-offensive C-USA player of the week

HERDZONE

Marshall quarterback Rakeem Cato was named Conference USA Co-Offensive Player of the Week on Monday. He shared the award with Shane Carden of East Carolina.

Cato hit on 34 of 44 passes for 341 yards, four touchdowns and no interceptions in Saturday's 38-28 win over Memphis. With Marshall clinging to a 31-28 lead midway through the fourth quarter, the signal-caller hit wideout Davonte Allen on a 28-yard TD down the sideline on fourth-and-6 to put the game out of reach. Cato is currently the nation's leader in completions (318) and passing yards (3,290) and is fourth in total offense

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OPINION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2012 | THE PARTHENON | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

THE PARTHENON

ABOUT US

The Parthenon, Marshall University's student newspaper, is published by students Mondays through Fridays during the regular semesters, and weekly Thursdays during the summer. The editorial staff is responsible for news and editorial content.

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THE FIRST AMENDMENT | The Constitution of the United States of America

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble; and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

ONLINE POLLS

Which presidential candidate will receive your vote?

- Obama
- Romney

The following are the results from the most recent poll question: Who do you think would win a debate between Ann Romney and Michelle Obama?

- Obama 56% - 29 votes
- Romney 44% - 23 votes

Visit marshallparthenon.com to share your opinion.

Editorial

End to election nonsense, satisfaction of fulfilling civic duty warrants celebration

After months of exposure to news coverage chronicling every turn along the campaign trail, countless opinions aired via social networking sites and debates that have drawn lines between families and friends, today is the day that we say goodbye to the 2012 election. And what better way to say farewell to a long, hard fought battle among politicians and the American public than a long line in the polling place?

Early voting is great. For those of us who had the foresight to visit the polls and give our own goodbye to all of the nonsense surrounding the election, we can promise the rest of you that you will feel a sense of relief after you cast your vote. However, there can be no promises made that those who chose to cast their vote prior to Nov. 6 experienced more ease in the polling place.

But, no one ever said that it would be easy. Voting is a right

presented to us as Americans and in the words of John D. Rockefeller Jr. "every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty."

Leading up to today, millions of Americans have held strong to their convictions, making it to the polls despite time-consuming lines, legal disputes and even in the face of tragedy caused by Superstorm Sandy. So, if you have not had the opportunity already, make your way to the polls today and cast your vote. It may be a hassle, but the reward of performing your civic duty is enough of a return on your efforts.

By no means does today fix everything, but today does call for celebration. It is a day we finally make forward-moving progress as a nation and within our state and our communities. We are banning together to make our voices heard and to elect representatives to carry out the ideals of our people.

Column

Why I am voting for Obama

By **MASON COLE**

THE DARTMOUTH, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE VIA UWIRE

When you go to the polls, you will face a stark choice between a president who entered office with two wars raging and an economy on the brink, but nonetheless brought us to a point of stability, and a formerly moderate governor who wants to bring back failed economic policies and backward social policies. We are all about to enter the "real world," and what happens on Tuesday will matter.

What's important in this election? Former President Bill Clinton is famous for saying, "It's the economy, stupid." Well, President Barack Obama took a stumbling economy and immediately worked to stop further job loss. He introduced a stimulus bill, which not only helped to bring our economy back to life but also gave tax relief to millions of Americans and began the process of modernizing our crumbling infrastructure. When Mitt Romney said that we should let Detroit go bankrupt, Obama decided to make an investment in the auto industry that is paying off. When circumstances called for bailing out the banks, Obama not only made sure that the money was paid back but also that struggling homeowners would be helped. Have a student loan? By taking out banks as the middlemen, Obama has already cut the cost of student loans. We all benefit from Obamacare, which allows students to stay on our parent's insurance until we turn 26 while creating exchanges that leverage the power of competition.

Romney and Rep. Paul Ryan are nowhere near the financial experts that they claim to be. Although they present themselves as concerned about the deficit and middle America, they propose a tax cut for the wealthy that can only be balanced by increasing taxes on the middle class. They have abandoned the idea of completely replacing Medicare with a voucher system, but the system they propose would still cannibalize Medicare and would bankrupt the system sooner. Why should we trust these people with our economy when they can't even get their numbers to add up? Want more details on their plan? Wait until after the election.

And this election is about more than just the economy. Reproductive freedom, LGBT equality, our environment and immigration reform are all at stake.

What's tragic is that Romney used to be somewhat moderate. He used to support a woman's right to choose. Before he mocked global warming at the Republican National Convention, he advocated for research in renewable energy. And before he started pandering to the gun lobby, he supported sensible gun control that made the streets of Massachusetts safer. While my vote in this election would likely be the same, the old Romney would have been a formidable challenger for Obama. He would have shown that moderate Republicans still exist. But this isn't the man running for president.

There is only one candidate in this race who supports an "equal pay for equal work" bill. There is only one candidate in this race who stands on the side of marriage equality and has worked to protect the right of LGBT Americans to serve in the military and receive federal benefits. There is only one candidate in this race who embraces a woman's right to choose. There is only one candidate in this race who has fully embraced the DREAM Act.

I was not always such an enthusiastic Obama supporter. I supported him after he won the Democratic primary, but his goals still seemed lofty to me, and I was unsure if he would bring about real change or whether "real change" could even be defined. But looking back, I know that America made the right choice. Are we better off than we were four years ago? If you look at job growth: yes. If you believe that women, gays and children who are "illegal" through no fault of their own deserve the same shot at the American dream: yes. And if you agree with Vice President Joe Biden that we are better off when "bin Laden is dead and General Motors is alive:" yes.

We still have work to do. No one thinks that our health care problem is completely solved. Our economy is not fully back on track and we need to find a way to fix it without further increasing our deficit. Immigration reform needs to happen. But there is only one candidate who has shown a willingness to face these issues head on and doesn't change his positions for political expediency. Obama has already taken the first steps to solve the tough problems from which many of his predecessors have run. I'm voting for Obama so he can finish the job.

Mason Cole is the president of the Dartmouth College Democrats.

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by phil flickinger (www.blundergrads.com)



Column

Why I am voting for Romney

By **MELANIE WILCOX**

THE DARTMOUTH, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE VIA UWIRE

Four years ago, Barack Obama promised the American people hope and change. Today, President Obama has a track record to evaluate, and by objective measures, it is not good. The president acknowledges this, and his message is now, "I need more time. If we stay the course, things will get better." Clearly, he cannot run on the slim accomplishments of his first term.

The facts are damning, even considering the economic mess the president inherited in 2009. Today, over 23 million Americans are unemployed or underemployed. The unemployment rate is now 7.9 percent, higher than when he took office. After calling former President George W. Bush "irresponsible" and "unpatriotic" for piling up \$4.9 trillion in debt in eight years, Obama has added over \$5.3 trillion in just four. If reelected, the national debt will skyrocket to a whopping \$20 trillion by 2016, with yet another likely downgrade to the U.S. credit rating.

The unemployment rate among youths (aged 18 to 29) is worse than the

national average, at 12 percent. This does not include those who have given up looking for work. More than 5 million women are unemployed, and more women are in poverty — 25.7 million — than at any other time in our history. I find this frightening. To mask the facts, the president has diverted attention by creating a fictional case for a "War on Women" by the Republican Party, citing access to birth control as a top campaign issue. This is a ruse to mask the real problem: abysmal economic conditions for women and men of all ages. Who's waging the real war on women? How do these seemingly abstract numbers impact college students? It's simple. High debt slows economic growth that, in turn, negatively impacts the job market. Can't find a job after graduation? Stuck with educational loans? Without a job, or without a well-paying job, it will be painful to meet these obligations. Every Dartmouth student is subject to the economic effects of our government's actions and policies. Four years is enough. The president tried, yet a record 47 million Americans are on food stamps and nearly 50 million are in poverty. "Trust me, things are getting better" is not a strategy.

Hope, however sincere, is not sufficient for our success.

Instead, we have an opportunity to elect a man who has the proven experience to get our country back on the right course.

Mitt Romney knows we can't borrow and spend our way out of this mess. Unlike the incumbent, Romney has a clear plan to rein in government spending, expand trade, increase access to energy, rationalize our tax system and reform outdated entitlement programs so that our generation will not be punished for the fiscal blunders of previous generations. In short, Romney has a verifiable track record of success in precisely the things that matter the most right now.

How likely is it that real change will occur in Washington? According to Dartmouth's own Andrew Samwick, director of the Rockefeller Center for Public Policy, Romney is a "results-oriented" person who can work effectively with Republicans and Democrats to get 60 votes for legislation in the Senate.

This results-driven approach enabled him to build Bain Capital, one of the nation's best private equity firms, from the ground up. Romney's penchant for results was evident at

the 2002 Winter Olympics, which he saved from massive debt and possible relocation and transformed into one of the most successful and profitable Olympics in recent history. It was evident when, as governor of Massachusetts, he negotiated with decisive Democratic legislative majorities in both houses to pass legislation that moved the state forward. It will also be evident as president of the United States.

Against Romney's record of accomplishment, President Obama can only offer four years of failed economic policies, legislative gridlock, continued government spending and acute economic pain that show no sign of subsiding.

America needs a leader who intuitively understands the private sector and will implement common sense policies that will create private sector growth, not growth in government. This will lead to job creation. Mitt Romney has the experience and vision to make this happen. So when you go to the polls and vote, think about what you want the next four years to be like. When I cast my ballot, the choice is clear: Mitt Romney.

Melanie Wilcox is the vice president of the Dartmouth College Republicans.

Bomb-sniffing dogs are troops' best friends

By HAL BERNTON
THE SEATTLE TIMES (MCT)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan — Dinomt, a 90-pound German shepherd trained to detect the scent of explosives, could grow edgy in a firefight.

Whenever the shooting started, Petty Officer 2nd Class Leroy Williams would strive to keep his 90-pound canine partner calm by maintaining his own cool.

"There is something that all the dog handlers say. 'Your emotions go down the leash,'" Williams said. "Your dogs feel everything you are feeling. And when you are nervous and afraid, your dogs know it."

In Afghanistan, dog handlers and their military working dogs help find IEDs, improvised explosive devices, that have repeatedly killed and maimed U.S. troops.

On foot patrols, soldiers wielding metal detectors and other devices locate most of the IEDs.

But the dogs' ability to find these bombs makes them a valuable addition to foot patrols. The dogs and their handlers often are assigned to difficult missions that stretch several days or more, and require navigating through trails and fields planted with lots of bombs.

Williams arrived in Afghanistan last spring along with three other Navy colleagues and their canine partners. Since then, two of those dog handlers have died from combat wounds.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Brazas, from Naval Base Kitsap Security Detachment in Bremerton, Wash., was shot in late May, while assisting a soldier wounded in a firefight.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Brodsky, from a San Diego base, stepped on an IED in early July, and died of his injuries two weeks later.

Williams served as a dog handler on previous tours of duty in Kuwait and Iraq, but says nothing compares to Afghanistan.

"This is the hardest by far. I lost two really, really good friends," said Williams in a September interview from the base in Panjwai District. "We



HAL BERNTON/SEATTLE TIMES | MCT
Petty Officer 2nd Class Leroy Williams works closely with Dinomt, a 90-pound German shepherd. In September 2012, on a patrol, Dinomt stepped on a bomb and was killed.

encounter so much, and we are out there a lot."

At the base in Masum Ghar, Williams lived with half a dozen other Navy, Air Force and Army handlers in a plywood bunkhouse just a short distance from the kennels. The handlers feed their dogs, exercise them, check for bumps and bruises, and offer rub downs. Every once in a while, Dinomt would sleep on Williams' bed.

"We take them out and play with them," said Staff Sgt. Gabriel Travers, an Air Force handler. "But we have to walk a fine line to where the dog is going to respect you and do what you tell him, and the dog is going to work for you."

In Afghanistan, the handlers patrol with German shepherds, Dutch shepherds and a slender smaller breed, the Belgian Malinois, that Williams says can be very hyper. "All they want to do is work."

The dogs are trained to display what the handlers call a "passive response" when they find bombs. They do not bark or paw at the ground. When they pinpoint a site, they sit, stop and stare in the direction of the bomb.

Williams says that long before Dinomt would "go final" with that routine, he would display subtler signs that a bomb was near. If his tail was swaying back and forth, it might

go still, or his nose would work the ground more intently.

During a summer patrol, when Dinomt appeared to be getting close to an IED, Williams quickly called the dog over to his side to try to ensure the dog didn't trigger the bomb.

"I just loved him up, and we got out of there," Williams recalled.

The bomb was then detonated by a demolition team.

Williams and Dinomt rotated through four bases, ending up in late summer at Masum Ghar in the Panjwai District.

During 1,700 hours of foot patrols in August, dog teams working out of that base found four IEDs.

But Afghanistan also has helped define the limitations of these working dogs.

During the intense summer heat, temperatures may soar above 120 degrees. The handlers do not let their dogs drink water from irrigation canals. So to keep Dinomt hydrated, Williams must pack several cases of bottled water on his back in addition to all his combat gear.

Some dogs, even if well hydrated, eventually lose focus in the heat and are unable to hunt for bombs without a break.

The larger German shepherds, with their thick coats of fur, appear to be at a bigger disadvantage in the heat than the smaller Belgian Malinois, according to dog handlers.

And Dinomt had another quirk. He couldn't swim. So on occasion, Williams would have to hoist the dog on his back to ford an irrigation canal.

In recent years, some veterinarians also have begun to speak about military dogs, like their human counterparts, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. That diagnosis came as no surprise to the handlers.

"They are finally, finally saying that dogs are having it — PTSD," Williams said. "It's been around for a while."

One stressed-out dog in Afghanistan would lose control of his bowels, and shake and cry when exposed to shooting or loud noises. That dog had to be sent home.

Another dog became spooked by loud noises and would try to run away from the base when mortars were fired.

When Brazas, from Naval Base Kitsap, was struck by enemy fire, his dog, Sicario, struggled fiercely to stay by the mortally wounded handler as he was put into a helicopter for medical evacuation. Finally, the dog was pulled away.

After Brazas' death, Williams spent four days caring for Sicario. Williams recalls that the dog, normally so hyper and alert, was listless and just wanted to lie around.

Upon returning to Washington, Sicario appeared to continue to mourn.

"He was pretty torn up. He had his tail between his legs. He didn't bark. Clearly, something was wrong. He knew what had happened," said Allie Brazas, the widow of Sean Brazas.

At Naval Base Kitsap, Sicario is now assigned to a new handler.

It has been a difficult adjustment, but he is undergoing daily training and is expected to be able to "get back to performing at the high level he is known for," said Chief Petty Officer Allan McGathey, the kennel master for the 10 military working dogs at the base.

Back at Masum Ghar, the base kennel is dedicated to the memory of Brazas. A photo of the Navy handler — and Sicario — is posted on the plywood door that serves as its entry.

In late September, the Masum Ghar kennel suffered yet another loss.

On an overnight patrol, Dinomt, after traversing some 10 kilometers, stepped on an IED and was killed by the blast. Williams was a few feet away and suffered bruises and a traumatic brain injury that ended his tour in Afghanistan. A soldier also was injured.

Recovering from his wounds, Williams grieves for Dinomt.

"He somehow took most of the blast, saving my life," Williams said. "I am eternally grateful. ... There has not been a night go by yet that I don't miss him and even cry for him. He will forever be in my heart, loved and missed."

Commencement Continued from Page 1

purchase at the Countdown. Jostens will have class rings available and Framing Success will have diploma frames available for purchase. Classic Photography will be taking portraits of students in their caps and gowns.

"We usually have a very large turnout," Ferguson said. "I'm always amazed at how many students will stop by in the morning and then come back later in the day or the next day to make purchases."

Students should bring their Marshall ID. Refreshments will be served and students are welcome to bring their friends and family.

The 2012 Winter Commencement ceremony will be Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. in Cam Henderson Center. Students who are unable to attend Countdown to Commencement but plan to attend the winter ceremony must RSVP in the Office of the Registrar or through the registrar's website beginning Friday.

Suzann Al-Qawasmi can be contacted at alqawasmi2@marshall.edu.

Faith Continued from Page 1

Elhamdani said he believes there can be harmony between faith and politics despite the separation of church and state.

"I think you can apply faith to everything," Elhamdani said. "I think religion provides a way for us to identify who we are, and it gives us a way to state what our morality and stances on issues are. I would argue that everyone has faith, whether it is faith in God or faith in humans, and I believe that, in the end, everything is rooted in faith."

JamesHorsley,aseniorreligious

Cato Continued from Page 3

(3,292) and fifth in touchdown passes (27).

Cato's fourth quarter touchdown pass to Demetrius Evans

Election Continued from Page 1

whose impact is still being felt in parts of the Northeast.

As the night unfolds, here's how to watch the returns:

THE STATES

Most states are solidly for Obama or Romney, so 11 are likely to decide the race. All have polling places scheduled to close by 10 p.m. EST. All went for Obama last time, and he has to hold on to most of them to win again.

Hour by hour:

7 p.m. EST: Virginia. Obama's 2008 victory was the first there by a Democratic presidential candidate since 1964. Romney needs its 13 electoral votes.

7:30 p.m. EST: Ohio, North Carolina. Romney needs Ohio

was the 40th of his career, putting him at seventh all-time at Marshall. His 500 career completions rank sixth all-time at Marshall and his 27 touchdown passes this season is the ninth-best in a single season.

and its 18 electoral votes; no Republican has won the White House without the state. North Carolina is another state Obama won in 2008, the first time a Democrat had taken it in decades, but Romney is counting on winning its 15 electoral votes. If not, he's probably in trouble.

8 p.m. EST: New Hampshire, Florida, Pennsylvania. If Obama wins Florida, Romney's chances would get shakier. But if Romney wins Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes, which Obama has regarded for months as his, the president should start worrying. The four electoral votes of New Hampshire — Democratic in the last two elections — matter if the race stays close.

9 p.m. EST: Wisconsin,

Marshall (4-5 overall, 3-2 C-USA) will be back in action Saturday at 4:30 p.m. ET/3:30 p.m. CT against UAB (2-7, 1-4) in a game that will be televised by CSS and carried locally by WVAH-TV.

Colorado, Michigan. A Romney win in Michigan — a state Obama won last time by 16 percentage points — would be another sign that the president is faltering. Wisconsin and Colorado are tossups.

10 p.m. EST: Iowa, Nevada. Nevada has been trending Democratic. A strong Latino turnout would be a signal that Obama is doing well. Iowa is another tossup.

Long lines. Polls might stay open past closing time, delaying the vote count. But if lines are too long and people get discouraged, they might go home.

Hurricane Sandy. Will voters be more sympathetic to Obama in hard-hit states such as Pennsylvania or New Hampshire? Or blame the feds for being too slow to respond?

every American be able to express their faith."

Horsley said there is a marriage between faith and politics but that Americans need to be cautious so one faith does not become more influential than the other.

"I feel optimistic about it though," Horsley said. "It seems to me that young people of faith are coming to the realization that they can be firm in what they believe and yet they can still work together and coexist with people of other faiths. It's part of being an American."

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'The Arabian Nights' transports Huntington to Baghdad

By SHANE ARRINGTON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Marshall University's Francis-Booth Experimental Theatre will transcend time and space this week as the Marshall Theatre Alliance puts on their performance of Mary Zimmerman's award-winning adaptation of "The Arabian Nights."

The production begins Wednesday and goes through Saturday. It picks back up Thursday, Nov. 15 and goes through Saturday, Nov. 17. All shows begin at 8 p.m.

Nicole Perrone, Marshall theater professor, said a play such as "The Arabian Nights" provides an invaluable learning opportunity for the young students.

"In an educational theater setting, we're always looking for shows that will provide the right kinds of challenges for our students," Perrone said. "This show relies on the strength of the ensemble - most of the 17-member company remains onstage throughout the performance. Each actor sings, dances, plays a musical instrument and performs many roles."

Perrone also mentioned the importance of costume and stage design for helping the audience believe they have left Huntington behind and, in this instance, traveled to Baghdad.

Nicole Peckens designed costumes for "The Arabian Nights" as part of her senior capstone project. Peckens started in the theater industry at 13-years-old and came to Marshall with professional experience, but she said this production provided new challenges.

"I've been designing for about 12 years," Peckens said. "I was an apprentice for four years, earning my stage hand

certification. I also spent two years as an intern working as a designer and stitcher, designing four shows a season and helping to build 15 shows per season. I am particularly proud of this design, not simply because it is my senior capstone, but because it provided me an opportunity to learn a great deal about a fascinating culture, and pushed me to new heights. I always believed costumes bring the last bit of life into a character."

Peckens credited the cast of "The Arabian Nights" for helping breathe life into her design work. She said their acting inspires her work and creates a mesmerizing performance.

Perrone said music is also an important part in bringing the play to life for the audience. They used the lyrics provided by the playwright, but it was a Marshall student that provided the sounds.

"Emily Pritchard composed all original melodies, accompaniment and underscoring," Perrone said. "There is also a tremendous amount of dance and movement which the students and I crafted together. This show is performed in the 'round,' meaning the audience will be seated on all sides of the playing space. This gives the show an intimate feel and enables the audience to be very close to the action. For the students, however, it has been a unique challenge. Being aware of your entire space, not just the space in front of you, becomes extremely important."

This is the first production Pritchard has composed music for and she said it has been a nerve wrecking, but fun experience.

"This is my favorite show I've done," Pritchard said. "When I

got the script, I went through the whole thing and marked any place music was noted in the script. My father is a music teacher back home and he let me borrow some of his authentic instruments and even helped compose some songs. Professor Perrone and I would meet once a week to talk about the music we were learning that week and I would play her what I had came up with."

Pritchard said the audience may only see the show for a couple of hours, but it takes hours just to create one song.

"It usually took me around two hours to compose one song that I liked," Pritchard said. "I dealt with musician's block a lot throughout this process."

"But I have had so much fun doing this show. I am a theater performance major, so I am used to being onstage acting, but this show I am playing the music so it is very different for me. My favorite thing is musicals, and even though this isn't a musical, it has a musical feel to it. I love it because all of the music is live and I am in control of it. I am so thankful and blessed to be a part of this show."

Perrone said she looks forward to seeing the combination of costumes, music and acting on opening night. She also said parents should be aware the production may not be appropriate for young children as Zimmerman made a point of choosing the funniest, saddest, yet most erotic of the "Thousand and One Nights" stories. She said it is a tribute to the art of story telling and the audience will be surprised by how many places the story can take them.

Shane Arrington can be contacted at arrington16@marshall.edu.

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November offers deals beyond 'Black Friday'

By NEDRA RHONE
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION (MCT)

For many bargain hunters, November brings the most sacred of shopping holidays, Black Friday. While there are many deals to be dealt on that day, there are also items not traditionally connected to Black Friday that can be had at substantial savings.

Cookware: "One of the first

good items to buy in November that isn't necessarily tied to Black Friday is cookware," says Lindsay Sakraida, features director for Dealnews.com, a consumer website. Cookware, cutlery sets, dining sets and small appliances are all expected to hit the lowest prices of the year in November.

Hardware: Expect substantial savings on tools at stores

such as Home Depot, Sakraida says. The discounts may not be as deep as they were several years ago, but you will still find some good markdowns.

Free turkeys: "A lot of grocery stores will offer a free turkey if you reach a minimum purchase," says Sakraida. She spotted one store that gave turkeys to anyone spending at least \$400 in one month, which isn't much if you do

your regular grocery shopping at that store, she says.

Televisions: Shoppers will see the best prices on televisions, a frequent Black Friday doorbuster, from third-tier manufacturers such as Westinghouse, Sakraida says. Upscale brands likely will have better discounts in the first quarter of the new year.

Laptops/tablets: Laptops

will also be available for bargain prices, Sakraida says, but these will be basic dual core systems that could fall as low as \$179 this month. Higher end models will carry the best discounts in coming months.

The iPad2, which could drop to a low of \$299, may have the best promotions of any tablets on Black Friday, Sakraida says.

Toys: "The deals on toys are

pretty good," Sakraida says. Even the newest toys may be marked down to 50 percent off around Black Friday. Video games released earlier in the year are up to 75 percent off on Black Friday, she says. But overall, with toys, it may pay to wait. "If you are not in a rush and you wait until December, you can get a bit of a better deal," Sakraida says.

Bond gets back to the basics in 'Skyfall'

By ROGER MOORE
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE (MCT)

"Skyfall" is far and away the best and the most British of the Daniel Craig-James Bond movies. Director Sam Mendes ("Road to Perdition") gets Bond back to the basics—bullets, babes, big time bad guys and bawdy humor. And the result is an entertaining romp, an old (spy) school Bond film that reins in the more violent and Germanic Bond of Marc Forster's "Quantum of Solace."

In the film's opening gambit, Bond bites the bullet. He's accidentally shot while wrestling with a generic villain on the roof of a train speeding through Turkey.

Since he's chased this guy by car and motorbike through the crowded bazaars and narrow streets of Istanbul (and settings from "Taken 2"), spy chief

M (Judi Dench) is willing to risk the marksmanship of a fellow agent, played with a sexy pizzazz by Naomie Harris, best known as the sexy witch of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies.

What Bond was trying to nab was a computer hard drive with a "list" on it. Some supervillain with Wikileaks tendencies wants to expose spies. Bond getting "killed" means that he's failed. And that M has failed, too. The fallout for 007 is an obituary. For M, it's a political raking over the coals, where she's called an "old fashioned" relic of a bygone era, "the golden age of espionage."

We, of course, know better. When MI6 is hacked and bombed, Bond comes back from his babe-and-beers and drinking games (very Indiana Jones) to save the day. Except he's gotten old. He's lost a step. And he couldn't hit the broad

side of a barn with a Walther PPK. No matter, M won't have anybody else.

The biggest problem with the first two Craig Bonds, both films were huge hits, was the villains. This time, Oscar winner Javier Bardem shows up as a murderous hacker with a Julian Assange blond mop top. And he brings the pain and the homoerotic undertones (OK, overtones).

The writing, three screenwriters pitched in, is jokier, crisper. The "Bond Girl" is played by the ultra-exotic Berenice Marlohe.

And there's a new quarter-master, "Q," played by waif-thin Ben Whishaw in a radical re-interpretation of a witty role that has been beloved by fans of the series for nearly 50 years.

"Were you expecting an exploding pen? We don't really go in for that anymore."

Yes, this marks 50 years of

James Bond films, and Mendes & Co. use the film as an excuse to joke about age and trot out old props and older actors (Dench and Albert Finney). Mendes gets that the familiar ingredients are what have made this series, and that "reinventing" Bond was never necessary. He just needed a new suit.

The finale is straight out of John Wayne's "Rio Bravo," and the violent set pieces ranging from Shanghai and Macao to Parliament and the bunkers of London are blandly predictable.

But that's kind of the point here. This is action comfort food, from the brand of gun and martini recipe to the quips and coital interludes. It's all good, clean, British fun. "Skyfall," the title's a tease to a third-act surprise ensures continuity in that comfort food: that as long as there's a Britain, there will be a "Bond, James Bond" to look after her interests.