

AUMNIBUS

Chronicling the Campus Community and Beyond Since 1971

November 2014

Warhawk Issue - 17

Counting Stars with Galileo

Jacob Saylor

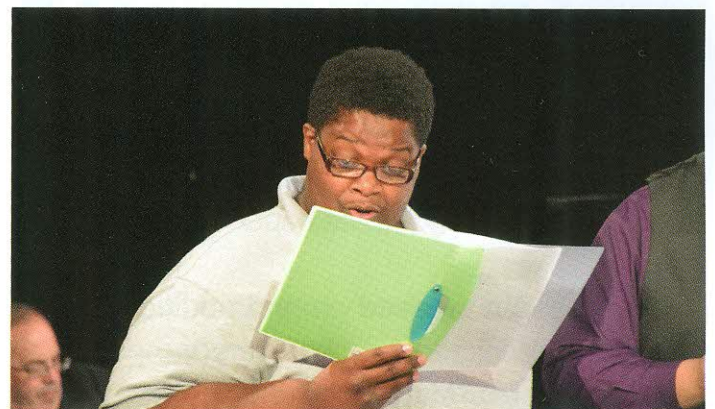
It's early October and I arrive at AUM Theatre, where I am greeted by Val Winkelman, a Professor in the Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts. Brandishing my camera, she immediately ascertains that I am there to cover auditions for the department's upcoming play, "Galileo." She offers me help, though does it with a sense of charm and wit – just what I had expected from a theater devotee. I ask her for introductions, and she requests that one of her students take me to the Green Room. Having no idea what or where this particular room was, I simply play along and follow this student into the unknown.

Upon the conclusion of our 20-second journey, I realized this room was not green at all. There are a handful of students practicing lines, and the mystical feel of art is heavy in the air. I introduce myself quietly to each person in the room, making sure to soften my normally booming voice. I then snap a couple of photos with my invasive camera and sit. Whether it is the silent conviction of these actors and actresses or my own timidity, I feel that I am somehow interrupting this solemn process of preparation.

Though, like these thespians, I have a job to do.

I approach one student, La'Brandon Tyre, and ask him for some of his precious warm-up time. Tyre, who is majoring in both Communication and Secondary Education, immediately dismantles any apprehensions I previously held about starting up a conversation. A senior at AUM, I ask Tyre what role he is auditioning for. The Communication major is quick to inform me that the audition process is not as generic as I think: "Well, I'm actually auditioning for all – we don't really do specific roles, you just come and audition, and whatever role they see you best fitting in they give it to you."

I noticed before talking to Tyre that he was not reading lines of any sort, though his companions were pacing around the room, scripts in hand. I



Tyre reads lines from the script of "Galileo."
Courtesy of Jacob Saylor

want to know how this young actor is so at ease with the situation, and why he isn't mimicking his classmates' regimen. "Well, I read the play already, so I've already kind of formulated my opinion on a lot of the characters," Tyre explains. "Traditionally, when I prepare for an audition, I try to listen to a lot of music because I have to get in the right mood – I have to get in the right head space."

I shake Tyre's hand and leaves the Green Room, navigating the short but still unfamiliar corridor leading back to the AUM Theater stage. Mike Winkelman, the play's director, has arrived in the meantime. He's setting up behind his makeshift desk near the audience seating. A host of other major figures in the Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts also sits around him, cementing his powerful position. While I'm unable to interview Winkelman before the audition process begins, I infer that he is a passionate man. He appears to be someone who will praise your triumphs but deliver brutal honesty on your failings. I am never able to confirm the latter of these two personality traits, but he is indeed friendly and applauds his more forthcoming students at various points throughout the audition process.

During the auditions, students are asked to stand in a near-straight line across the AUM Theater stage. The actors and actresses are then assigned roles on the spot, which appears to strike some off guard. There is a very clear divide between those who have experience with this audition archetype and those who don't, though everyone performs admirably if you ask me. Tyre is never assigned the role of "Little Monk," which was one character he informed me he wished to portray.

As the night pressed on and auditions come to a close, Winkelman asks everyone who was participating to stand up and gather in the middle of the stage. The director then informs the students that everyone who participated

in the audition process will be receiving a role in the play. A huge sigh of relief pervades the theater and Winkelman grins at the satisfaction on display. I asked Tyre how he feels the night went: "I think it went really, really well," Tyre said. "I'm pleased to be cast in the show, now I'm just waiting to see what specific role that I'm in."

As the student presence in the theater diminished, and Winkelman becomes more available, I saunters my way over to his desk in an attempt to gather a quote or two for my developing story. Winkelman addressed the students before the auditions started about how the play was pertinent to modern day struggles and the ways we deal with them. I now ask him to elaborate, which he has no problem with. "The play itself deals with an individual, but it discusses a universal theme in the sense that - the point behind it is you shouldn't allow others to make decisions for you," Winkelman explains. "You have to stand by your own beliefs, you have to stand up for what you feel is right, and what little things that Galileo had to go through was that he had a large chunk of society that was demanding that he recant not just his beliefs, but his experimentation and what he discovered about the universe. So it becomes a story about how you as an individual have a responsibility about the things that you discover in life and to live up to those discoveries."

Theater AUM consistently offers an amazing selection of plays, directed and composed by the teachers you love and occasionally by students as well. Next time you've got some free time on campus, go check out one of these fantastic productions featuring your peers.

"Galileo" is showing Nov. 6-8, 13-15 at 7:30 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.) and Nov. 16 at 2 p.m. (doors open at 1:30 p.m.) Please no late seating. AUM faculty, staff and students are free with their AUM ID. Senior citizens, any other students, military id tickets are \$5/general admission is \$10.

AUM Alumni—Where Are They Now?

Jessica Klinner

Life after college can be uncertain. While in college, students worry about how their degree will help them succeed in the real world. They ask questions like, “What kinds of jobs are available for someone with my degree?” and “How available are jobs in my desired field?” If you find yourself asking those questions or similar ones, we are here to put your mind at ease. The AUMnibus wants to highlight the alumni of AUM in hopes that our readers will gain insight into the post-grad world and how to succeed in a career in their field of study. One alumna followed her post-grad dreams all the way to New York City.

Dr. Claudia Wilsch Case graduated from AUM in 1998 with a double major in International Studies and Theatre. From Montgomery, Case moved to New Haven, Conn., where she received

her Master of Fine Arts and Doctor of Fine Arts in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama. She went on to receive tenure at the City University of New York, where she is still employed today. Case teaches theatre history and dramatic literature to undergraduate students at Lehman College in the Bronx and to Theatre Ph.D. students at the CUNY Graduate Center in Manhattan.

While still in graduate school, Case interned at La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, Calif., and had the opportunity to work on the musical “Jane Eyre” before it went to Broadway. “I helped the literary manager and dramaturg with providing dramaturgical research to the director and actors,” Case said. “It was terrifically exciting to collaborate with people who were working so hard to bring such an enormous undertaking to life.

Case fondly recalls her time at AUM. When asked about her favorite production, she could not pick just one. “I appreciated that the Theatre Program was able to bring in professional directors and actors to work with students and, most of all, I cherished the community of students who were involved in theatre when I was at AUM,” Case said.

As far as her professional career goes, Case credits the professors at AUM for helping her to prepare for her current line of work. “As a theatre scholar, the most valuable skills I learned at AUM are related to research and writing, and I often think of my favorite AUM English Department professors, Dr. Bob Evans, Professor Nancy Anderson, and Dr. Susie Paul, who helped me find my voice as a writer and who inspired my own teaching,” Case said.

Case, who currently resides in Brooklyn with her husband and two children, has gone on to be extremely successful in her field. As a theatre professor, she passes on her knowledge of theater every day, but when asked what advice



she has to offer students looking to pursue a career in their field of study, she said, "Look beyond your immediate comfort zone to broaden your horizons. I encourage all students to seek internships in the field they would like to work in so that students can begin building a professional network and ease the transition from college to a career in theatre or any other field. I also encourage students to be digitally literate and to use their social media profiles productively."

Case is just one of many success stories about AUM alumni who have gone on to do great things with their degree. Don't be afraid or discouraged to take a leap of faith after graduation. Move to a new city, or find a job that requires you to step outside of your comfort zone. It might just be the best decision you ever make.

The Learning Center Fights Failure

Nikki Headley

Are you struggling with your classes? Do you need extra help with your homework? If so, the Learning Center is the place for you to go. The Learning Center helps students get through each semester.

There are many benefits to going to the Learning Center. According to Director Susan Barganier the Learning Center can benefit you in just one visit. "Their data has shown that students who come for more than one visit are more likely to succeed than those who don't come at all," Barganier said. Not to mention the tutoring is free to all AUM students. Students can pick the right tutor and the specific time to meet.

Are you still questioning why you should go? The Learning Center's mission statement is "to provide excellence in education." Students "make better grades if they show up with an open mind," Barganier said. So, if you go into



Susan Barganier is in her office, where she makes sure that students have the best tutoring possible.

Courtesy of Nikki Headley

the Learning Center with a willingness to learn, you will succeed.

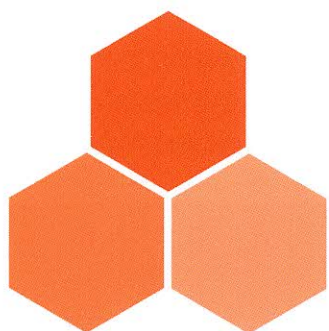
If a student has a need, the Learning Center staff members will do everything they can to meet it. The Learning Center tutors students in math, history, sociology and many other subjects.

The Learning Center is open from 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is appointment-based only, and you can make one by calling 334-244-3470. The Learning Center is located on the second floor of the Ida Bell Young Library Tower. Do you want to improve your chances at succeeding? Give the Learning Center staff, a call!

The Changing Landscape of STEM

Matthew Thornbury

What do you do if you want to major in a subject where you aren't sure you're welcome? STEM --- science, technology, engineering, and



connected

AUM COMMON READING PROGRAM



BIG FISH

A NOVEL OF MYTHIC PROPORTIONS
BY DANIEL WALLACE



Dr. Ward and an immunobiology student inject a frog in her lab.

Photo courtesy Matthew Thornbury

mathematics --- has traditionally been a man's world, but the tide appears to be changing, especially at AUM.

STEM is fraught with gender inequality. Even after graduation, many women lose interest working in environments that can seem like boys' clubs. Research from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found that female trainees were disproportionately targeted for sexual harassment, and Popular Science reports that female scientists earn less, are more likely to drop out of their careers early on, and are less likely to speak at conferences than men.

"Many times women don't get encouraged to go to grad school, or aren't told that they're doing very well," says Dr. Sue Thomson, an associate professor in the Department of Biology at AUM. "I think it varies from university to university and it's changing a lot. For example, my dad and I are veterinarians. When he was in vet school there was one female in his class, period. When I went to vet school, a fourth of my class were female."

Thomson says that the situation is rapidly improving, and she expects the culture surrounding STEM to shift over time. She says it takes a certain personality to persevere in a sexist environment, and she thinks that many equally capable students leave STEM majors because they don't get enough encouragement. Luckily for female students, there are many faculty members and peers available for support.

Department Head Dr. Chelsea Ward says that until recently, the dean and associate deans of the School of Sciences were women, and that women often outnumber men in the classroom. She attributes this phenomenon in part to AUM's nursing school, but even her senior-level courses are taken mostly by women. Neither Ward nor Thomson can recall any sexist incidents at AUM.

If you are hesitant to study a certain subject for any reason, or are experiencing trouble in one of your classes, reach out to a faculty member.

"A lot of what they're feeling we've already been through," Thomson says.

Warhawk Squawk

Jacob Saylor

Question: What sort of extracurricular activities do you engage in and how do they help you get through the semester?

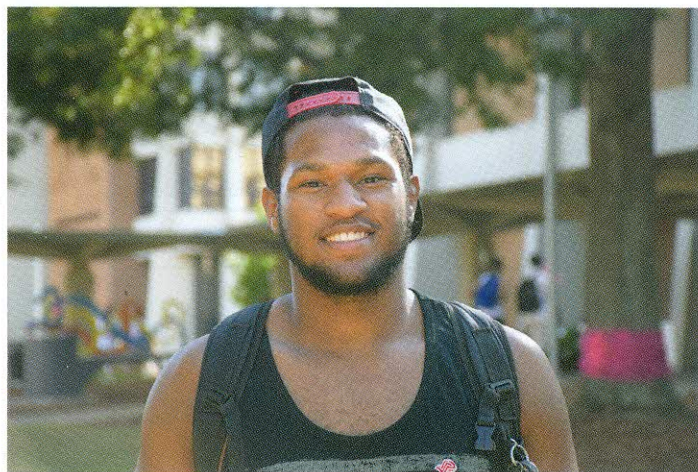


Adam Ahrednt

Junior

Mathematics

"Exercise helps get rid of a lot of the built up frustration and then hunting gives me a way to relieve all the tension throughout the week."



Demarcus Sharpe

Sophomore

Psychology

"Martial arts, yoga and meditation. I like to use all three, they kind of help me concentrate and relieve stress when like the pressure's on for test time."



Austin Maxie

Junior

Marketing

"Playing Magic: The Gathering, sometimes dancing and running. Dancing and running help me physically express myself and Magic: The Gathering helps me mentally."



Brittani Opferback

Accounting

"I like to watch TV and my favorite show is Vampire Diaries. Some of the characters are actually college students in that show and I can kind of relate to it and it helps me keep my mind off of the stress of school."



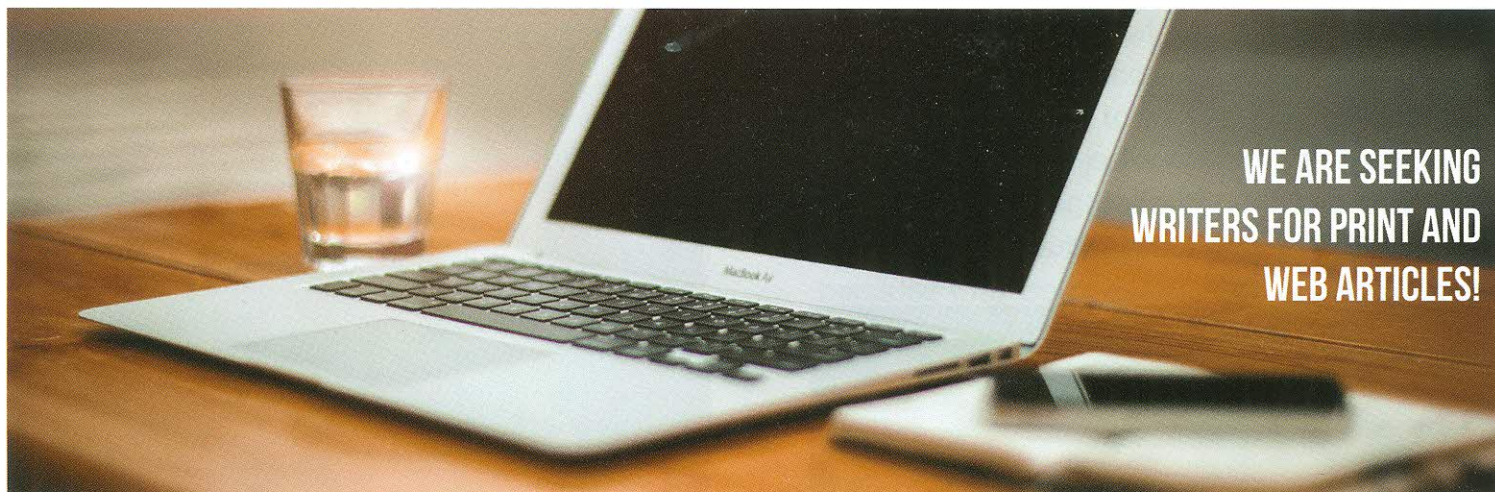
Kaderra Vails

Graphic Design

Sophomore

"Besides trying to be active – I mean, I try to take a walk every once in a while – I watch a lot of TV, that always helps after a big stress load. I'll binge watch like a whole season in a night even though I feel kind of bad. I watch too much TV."

Courtesy of Jacob Saylor



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Nov. 17 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Nov. 20 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

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