Occupy Mt. Tabor:
Protest, Public Process, and Productive Conversation
by Kate Farr

On Thursday, July 12, protesters gathered at SE 60th and Salmon for what is now known as Occupy Mount Tabor. The protests were the neighborhood’s response to city plans to disconnect the open-air reservoirs located at Mt. Tabor in order to comply with federal guidelines on water quality. The event was peaceful, however, three arrests were made. The three individuals were apprehended for either erecting signs in the park, pitching a tent, or interfering with a police officer, all of which are against park rules. According to KATU, protest organizer Jesse Spoonberg’s goal for the event was “to make sure everyone in Portland is talking about our water.”

In the weeks following Occupy Mt. Tabor, the community was still “talking about our water.” It’s an issue that hits the pockets of many Oregonians. In a recent article, Oregonian writer Ryan Frank reported that “Portland’s combined average monthly sewer and water bill has jumped 83% in the past decade, far outpacing inflation and household incomes, and is expected to rise an additional 49% within the next five years.” The article later explained that because Portland’s water serves 25% of the state’s population, rising costs could eventually affect ratepayers outside of the city as well.

The increase in rates could also have an effect on the cost of tuition for Warner Pacific College students. In an interview with Knight Times, Steve Stenberg, Vice President for Operations at WPC and college representative for the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association, explained: “This almost 10% per year increase is pretty high. The school pays about $100,000 a year for water, so that’s an increase of $5,000-$10,000 every year. We want the city to be a good steward of their water. Certainly it has to be safe and it has to be clean, but we’d like it to be reasonable in price too.”

The primary cause for the increase in utility rates is the $1.8 billion in construction costs for replacement reservoirs at Powell Butte and Kelly Butte, which will make up for the loss of water storage that the uncovered reservoirs have provided. However, it isn’t the major expenses that have Portland residents questioning the City Council’s decisions. In reality, it’s the small ones. The Oregonian named some of these “small projects.” The list includes: $50,000 a year to keep the “Portland Loos” (four restrooms located downtown) functional; $205,000 to rebuild a cabin in the Bull Run watershed; $625,000 for a house. When it comes to the city’s water issues, the Oregonian Editorial Board raises a relevant point: “As conservation and escalating water prices push consumption down, the prices of water go up. That’s because infrastructure costs, and in some measure city staff, are fixed no matter how little water is delivered. A cold truth is that conservation can pay only when capital investments are better contained.”

The projects implemented for the purpose of improving the Water Bureau’s image could be the very reason many Portland residents aren’t more willing to support the significantly larger, more necessary projects such as the replacement of the Mt. Tabor and Washington Park reservoirs.

$1 million on the renovation of Dodge Park. All of these, according to city commissioner Randy Leonard, are a means of “promoting Portland water.” The most recent project is a 2,119 square-foot house, complete with hardwood floors from the reclaimed wood of an old gym floor, as well as triple paneled windows and countertops made from recycled materials. The house, which comes complete with its very own guest cottage, cost a total of $625,000. According to Marie Teasdale, law student at Lewis & Clark and Southeast Portland resident who has researched this issue, the house is to be put up for sale. “It will only sell for about half the cost that it was to build,” she said. “No one really thinks the house was a good idea.”

The City Council has approved these projects despite the questions raised by both the Portland Utility Review Board and the public. According to Oregonian reporter Ryan Frank, “People accept that $100 million in pipes and pumps are necessary to deliver clean water and remove dirty water. They have a more difficult time understanding why they should pay $625,000 for a house.” When it comes to the city’s water issues, the Oregonian Editorial Board raises a relevant point: “As conservation and escalating water prices push consumption down, the prices of water go up. That’s because infrastructure costs, and in some measure city staff, are fixed no matter how little water is delivered. A cold truth is that conservation can pay only when capital investments are better contained.”

But there doesn’t seem to have been a lot of public process in how the decisions were made.” — Steve Stenberg

The federal guideline that the disconnecting of the Mt. Tabor and Washington Park reservoirs fulfills is the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) enhanced water treatment rule (also known as the LT2). The EPA makes the claim that the loss of chlorine and poor hydraulic circulation—common occurrences in large open-water reservoirs—are the major causes of poor water quality.
Fall Activities in Portland
by Rebecca Schrader

The Squashing of the Squash
(October 15th at 10:30 a.m.)

“At the Squashing of the Squash, our elephant herd will receive several big pumpkins to pulverize,” said zoo event coordinator Krista Swan. “It's great fun for them, and fun to watch as well — so bring your camera.”

One healthy way to spend the day is by participating in a walk through the park called Give n’ Gobble. The event takes place in Sherwood, starting at 9:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day. It includes a 5K walk/run as well as a 10K run.

Meals on Wheels People (Thanksgiving week)

Getting involved with Meals on Wheels People is a great way to reach out to the elderly within the community on such a food-oriented holiday. Volunteers help prepare and serve meals to seniors in 35 different meal centers throughout Multnomah, Washington and Clark counties, and also make house-call deliveries to the homebound elderly within these areas. If you can't volunteer on Thanksgiving day, consider helping prepare for the massive Thanksgiving deliveries a few days before.

Proper Thanksgiving (November 28th)

For a fun and unique Thanksgiving experience, volunteer at Proper Thanksgiving, which includes a feast, storytelling, and music. The Thanksgiving meal is held at the Celebration Tabernacle and is intended to provide an enjoyable holiday for those in need. Volunteers are needed to hand out fltres, help prepare food, set tables and clean up after the meal. www.createorgen.org

Thanksgiving Dinner

• Wildwood Restaurant Thanksgiving menu served 2-7:30 p.m. (around $25 per entree). www.wildwoodrestaurant.com
• Paley’s Place Thanksgiving menu served 2:30-8:30 p.m. (around $29) www.paleysplace.net
• Irving Street Kitchen Thanksgiving dinner to go ($50 for 2-3 people) www.irvingstreetkitchen.com

Thanksgiving activities.

Photo courtesy Oregon Zoo. “The Squashing of the Squash” begins Halloween activities.

Photo courtesy Oregon Zoo. “The Squashing of the Squash” begins Halloween activities.

The EPA states that the purpose of the LT2 is to “reduce illness linked with Cryptosporidium and other disease causing microorganisms in drinking water.” The LT2 requires that water systems be covered, treated at reservoir outlets, or replaced in order to prevent viruses such as Cryptosporidium from entering drinking water systems. The reservoirs atop Mt. Tabor are required to be disconnected from drinking water systems by Dec. 31, 2015 and the uncovered reservoirs in Washington Park are planned to be disconnected no later than Dec. 31, 2020.

The current attempt to comply with LT2 is not the first time the quality of water in open reservoirs has been a concern. In 1912, the city engineer for Seattle recommended the Lincoln reservoir be covered because of “rapid urban growth and the potential for an epidemic disease outbreak.” Since then, the American Public Health Association and the U.S. Public Health Service have made similar claims regarding uncovered reservoirs. Despite such claims, the occurrence of water degradation in open-water reservoirs, though well documented, is rarely traced to human illness.

Many reservoirs have remained uncovered until now because of the capital cost of covering them. Another reason for the delay is the difficulty in clearly accounting for the public health benefits that would result from the covers. The reservoirs also hold significant aesthetic value. In the past, homeowners have adamantly opposed covering reservoirs. Some neighborhoods have gone so far as to have the reservoirs declared historic monuments. Steve Stenberg commented about the Mt. Tabor neighborhood: “The neighbors here really view the park as a very precious thing, and they protect it. Many of them volunteer with maintenance of the park. It’s a part of their life.”

The reservoirs on Mt. Tabor range anywhere from 100 to 117 years old and have been rated as poor by engineers. The reality is that 100-year-old structures are regularly in need of expensive maintenance. The Portland Water Bureau (PWB) website states that Reservoir One has “significant infrastructure issues.” The concrete floor is distressed, impounding walls are poor shape, and the piping is well past the end of its life span. The existing liners in reservoirs Three and Five will also be in need of replacing. Although the liners prevent leakage from the ground, they do nothing to solve the LT2’s open-air issue. The liners also make it more difficult for routine maintenance, as workers are unable to see the state of the structure beneath the lining, such as cracks and chunks missing from the concrete, the lining panels, or the corrosion of steel pipes and valves. There is also the issue that the reservoir pipes are not seismically sound; if there were to be a decent sized earthquake, the reservoirs would be unlikely to survive, rendering them useless at a time when most needed.

It is possible for the reservoirs to become seismically sound, but it would cost $125 million, and the reservoirs would still not meet the EPA’s requirement that they be covered. According to the PWB website, “If the reservoirs are to remain operational for any length of time, they need extensive infrastructure repair, renewal and modernization.”

In an attempt to satisfy regulations made by the LT2, a $90 million construction of a 25 million gallon underground concrete reservoir began in October of last year by Kelly Butte in SE Portland. The reservoir will replace the already existing 10 million gallon above-ground steel tank that was built in 1969. The construction is expected to be complete by the end of 2014.

One of the reasons many Portland residents aren’t supporting projects such as the disconnecting and replacement of the Mt. Tabor reservoirs could be the “small” projects which, individually, have been implemented to improve the Water Bureau’s infrastructure. Public resentment may also have something to do with the city’s inability to better involve the public. According to Steve Stenberg, one of the frustrations of the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association is the lack of ability to engage with the city in dialogue. “People feel pretty strongly about wanting to keep the reservoirs running. And of course, we have the federal directive to make sure that our water is safe, and that makes sense. But there doesn’t seem to have been a lot of public process in how the decisions were made,” Stenberg said.

Occupy Mt. Tabor had the effect the protesters intended. It made sure that “every one in Portland is talking about our water.” Unfortunately, there’s not a lot of productive conversation going on between the city council and the public. If there were, there’s a possibility that capital investment would be better contained and an even greater possibility that Portland residents might spend less time protesting decisions made by the city and more time supporting them.
by Monique Lay

Changes All Around: Campus-wide improvements focus on students

Winston Churchill once said, “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” Warner Pacific College is adopting this philosophy wholeheartedly with the numerous campus-wide improvements. Senior Brenda Khang noticed many changes when she arrived back on campus this semester. The new appearance of her work-study job in the admissions office and the new experience of chapel where she takes the stage to sing thrilled her most. “There have been so many changes,” she said, “it’s all really exciting.”

President Andrea Cook explained that the college intends to avoid “whiplash” from reacting to fads and that the ongoing improvements are deliberate and judicious moves: “The reality is that the professors are pleasantly surprised by the new offices on the second floor of Egtvedt Hall, which now houses the marketing department, a large and central meeting room, and a comfy waiting area. The new semester also brought with it patched and restriped parking lots, more visitor-parking, and parking for rental cars like Zipcar. “We have also added a new bike enclosure by the library that will be secured yet and easy to access with student ID cards,” Jenks said. There are even upgrades for dorms such as the new furniture in the lounges of Warnman Hall and Smith Hall. All of these changes improve the college community morale and prepare the expanding campus for continued growth.

Information Technology

The campus IT department also took part in getting the three new classrooms ready for this semester and, similar to the bookstore, they are contributing to the Academic Vision by engaging student preparedness. Director of Information Technology Linda Rudawitz revealed that the IT department—housed in the yellow building on the west side of campus—is constantly taking preemptive measures to serve the Warner Pacific community.

The information technology team oversees and supports such things as computer functions, system security, Wi-Fi, and all on-campus computers—including Centre 205, Cascade, and Washington County campuses. Rudawitz and her team are only allotted an upgrade to 80 computers each year. With 400+ computers on all campuses, some computers may get software upgrades while others may get a new monitor. Despite the limit, the IT department has implemented some great improvements for this school year. Computer labs have been updated with 24-inch monitors—great for multitasking or looking over the shoulder of a classmate!

PaperCut, a print management program, can now be found on the bottom left of every student’s MyWP page under Printer Accounting. PaperCut allows students to print documents to almost any printer on campus from the comfort of home, a perk for resident and commuter students alike. “We start students off with $2 of credit, and students can seem financially daunting. “We want to continue to increase low-price textbook options for students—more rental books and used books, as well as more digital options.”

Student Financial Services sets the amount that students are able to charge to their accounts each term. Currently, that amount is $700. So there is no need to put off homework because of a limited budget. And don’t postpone that trip to the bookstore—the option of charging books to student accounts is only available during the first six days of the term. Late arrivals to the bookstore will also find fewer used books left, and their only option might be a pricey purchase of freshly wrapped science and math textbooks.

Fonseca and her team at the bookstore understand that buying books each semester can seem financially daunting. “We want to continue to increase low-price textbook options for students—more rental books and used books, as well as more digital options.”

Facilities

While the bookstore is doing their part to ensure that students have the tools needed to accomplish academic goals, Dean Jenks, Director of Facilities, is working tirelessly with his team to prepare for continued expansion. From 2005 to 2012, Warner Pacific’s total enrollment increased from 576 total students to 1,679 traditional and Adult Degree Program (ADP) students. This type of steady growth trend is exactly the kind of stable success that Warner Pacific intends to maintain. A detailed story of the plan for expansion can be found in a 2012 Portland Tribune article: http://portlandtribune.com/pt9/news/23097-warner-pacific-gives-city-a-lesson-in-neighborly-skills.

Jenks and the facilities department have been instrumental in many recent campus improvements that work towards expansion goals. One such improvement that is hard to miss is the addition of three new classrooms in Egtvedt Hall, expanded during summer 2013. Story photos by Tim Jackson.

The new classroom buffers Josh Peterson from the noise of the dining hall.

In a Knight Times interview with President Cook, she reflected on the question that the faculty have asked themselves many times: “How do we make sure students are getting books? They really do need them to be successful in college.” The absence of pertinent information from books during class or homework time becomes a barrier to the learning process. One of the six pillars of Warner Pacific’s Academic Vision is student preparedness. The first strategy for addressing this is by “engaging in analysis and evaluation of the prevailing social patterns that erode student preparedness.” The Academic Vision can be read at http://www.warnerpacific.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Academic_Vision.pdf.

Many students know the bookstore well; this familiarity comes from intentional strategies, such as buying books early to take advantage of the supply of used books and using the book rental option as a cheaper alternative to buying outright. This semester, there is one more option. Mimi Fonseca, bookstore manager, explained that “our new in-house rental program allowed students to charge rentals to their accounts for the first time this year.”

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Information Technology

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The new classroom buffers Josh Peterson from the noise of the dining hall.

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Sometimes the irony in improving things means doing them so well that people don’t even notice the change. MyWP has been added to the growing MyWP page, this link allows students to quickly reset their forgotten password online.

WP Campus Wall is also a link found on MyWP. Campus Wall is similar to the classifieds world of Craigslist—only students can post or search, and it is within the campus community they already know so well. Student resident concerns about Wi-Fi have been addressed with upgrades and permissions for gaming devices to be used on a separate network to avoid bogging down the bandwidth for the main network. These conveniences network reduce stress and provide security while keeping the community socially and environmentally conscious.

Gym/Athletics

The Director of Athletics, Jamie Joss, oversees the day-to-day operations of the department with advocacy, policy and procedure implementation. Joss is committed to improvements that focus on the sustained positive well-being of the students. Before Joss was hired in 2012, the weight room was a place that did not have significant ownership, leading the confusion of who was responsible for its oversight. He has now taken responsibility for the weight room, leading to the changes of equipment and hours.

$10,000 has been spent on new equipment. In the last year, three bikes, two tread mills, six medicine balls, plyo boxes, jump ropes, super bands, and a TRX system have been added. This is an investment that the college would like to protect. In the past, there have been dumbbells, weights, and other workout equipment stolen due to lack of supervision of the weight room.

New hours for the fitness center were chosen from survey research. Every student, faculty, and staff member was sent an email survey which asked for preferred time slots. Seventy percent of the survey respondents chose weekday evenings of 5-11 p.m., while several other time slots were among the most requested—weekday mornings from 6-9, and Saturday and Sunday from 11-1 and 3-7. These newly implemented fitness room hours will also generate more work study jobs for students. The block of hours are now similar to the fitness room hours offered at other private colleges in the Portland area. Senior soccer player Scott Schnitzer believes that everyone’s schedule may not fit the hours, but he also thinks having supervision is a good idea. “Monitoring the weight room will keep people from messing around with the equipment, and the hours will keep people safe,” he said.

Joss said that the structured fitness room hours were implemented to address health and safety concerns first and foremost. Joss explained, “I want to do everything I can for students, and the reality is when we make changes in policy and when we do things that are different from what used to be, it’s not done on a whim—it’s done in order for us to be healthy, safe, and consistent.”

Quincy fences jump iron on the bench press during Fitness Center hours.

If we could see into our futures, no doubt we’d balk at the first gate and panic our selves to death, or at least into frozen inactivity. For example, who could have predicted that we would leave Zambia, you and I, by different routes and at different times, and end up in the United States? Who could have known the ways you would be nurtured, broken, abandoned and saved? And who could have predicted that I would become so baffled by life, swamped by all the things against which there is no way to insure oneself: love, and love’s loss, God and God’s mystery, the world’s warming crust and rising seas, a violent history, an unknowable culture.

It is hardly a time to show up now. You’re already schooled, grown, in love, and half a dozen steps into a new life. But if we make limits on how we can be in the present based on how we have behaved in the past we would all be locked in prisons of our own making. So let me come to you as wordsmith to wordsmith, as blood of my blood and tell you, in your twentieth year, what I wish I had known a quarter of a century ago. It’s a late letter, so take from it what you will and discard whatever does not make sense to your own soul.

I love you. Your Aunt Bobo.

To My Nephew in His 20th Year

by Alexandra Fuller

1. It’s as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote. “There is only a single, urgent task: to attach oneself somehow to nature, to that which is strong, striving and bright with unresolved readiness, and then to move forward in one’s efforts without any calculation of guile, even when engaged in the most trivial and mundane activities.” You’re the son of so much earth; English born, an African mother, an American childhood. There’s a lot of nature to which you might attach, and a lot of earth for you to protect.

2. Learn to distinguish between failure and the accumulation of wisdom. Failure is when you take your disappointments personally. Wisdom is when you take your losses as part of the universal condition.

3. Remember your privilege and do something every day to prove the existence of justice. Stand up for the deliberately unheard, the willfully ignored and the intentionally silenced.

4. Emotions can only overtake us when we’re unaware of them. Notice joy and suffering, ecstasy and distress. Take all of it with equanimity, and offer no feeling—however good or bad—it’s no weight than any other. Feel deeply, courageously and honestly and then allow the feeling to move out of you.

5. Meet regularly with people with whom you do not agree and with whom you have little in common. Take delight in the freshness and unknowable texture of the interaction. If you can’t understand someone else it’s not his or her fault. Rather, it’s likely the quality of your listening that is impaired.

6. Say what it is you have to say clearly. Then take responsibility for it.

7. Never confuse your comfort with your security. Nothing is yours except the essential things: such as the air, the sea, mountains, oil, trees, birds. Don’t allow possessions or the desire for possessions to get in the way of your soul’s growth. Imagine yourself with nothing to lose. Then lose that thought and strike ahead without fear.

8. Take risks with the firm knowledge that you are a delicate miracle of what you would express as God, and what I would express as the universal mystery. There can be no other manifestation of you than the person that has arisen here, now. Fulfill that contract with God/the universal mystery by learning why it is you are here, now.

9. There is a time limit on how long you can blame your parents, your schools, your churches, community and culture for the ways in which they have hurt you or messed you up. That time limit is now.

10. As a matter of hospitality to yourself and others, read widely and well. Don’t expect to understand everything you read the first time.
Meet the Knights
Student leaders represent WPC year-round
by Mollie Berry

Originally, the Warner Pacific College Knights were a group of students who wanted to help facilitate new student orientation during Welcome Week. There wasn’t too much structure to it, if you were a student and you wanted to help out, you were a Knight. When Logan Walton, Associate Director of Admissions, became the leader of the Knights about four or five years ago, he had a vision for the team. “I wanted a more intentional group of leaders to introduce new students to the college. Here’s my idea,” said Walton, recounting his first pitch, “why don’t we put together a team of ten students to be full year Knights and then choose ten more students to be Orientation Leaders (OTL) at Welcome Week?”

The full-year Knights have many duties throughout the year. “I help out at events, I give tours to prospective students, I host Knight Life, and I make sure that people’s experience at Warner Pacific is inviting, enjoyable, and captivating,” said Sidney Davie, a current Knight. Other responsibilities for the Knights include helping with campus club activities, welcoming new and prospective students, assisting with Act Six events, and representing WPC—the best that they can. Walton said that the formal role of being a Knight “is to help facilitate new students and prospective students to Warner Pacific College; however there is a secondary role that the Knights hold, and that is to be leaders of their peers, to exemplify the college as a student leader, and to be a change agent in the community.” Being a Knight is not just a one-time volunteer gig at Welcome Week; it is a year-long commitment to be an example to student body and to represent the college.

When asked why they wanted to be a Knight, each of the current Knights had a similar answers that demonstrate a passion for the students here on campus and a passion for being a leader and example to others. Ariel Cook said “I wanted to get more involved on campus, have an impact on the students here, and I wanted to be a genuine example of Warner Pacific College to current and prospective students.” Nicole Worthington said she wanted to be a Knight because “I was involved in leadership in high school and thought I could be helpful to the Warner Pacific community.”

Being a leader naturally comes with responsibility and hard work. Many Knights said that the job of being a leader bleeds over into their personal lives. Being a Knight puts the responsibility of leadership not only in their given roles but in their life as a student as well. Boston Jackson puts it like this, “being a Knight helps motivate you to have a positive attitude as a student and when representing Warner Pacific.” Jordan Olson said that “even as a student, you have to represent Warner Pacific in a good way.” Cody Meyers, a second year Knight, stated it succinctly: “I am a student leader, therefore I am a Knight.”

Nicole Worthington, Cody Meyer, and Jordan Olson are all second year Knights. Most students are only Knights for one year; however, on occasion some may be asked to continue on through the next year. Walton pushes for this because he sees being a Knight to just be a stepping stone: “I want them to be challenged, to progress further in leadership. I want to push them out of their comfort zone.”

There is an official hiring process for Knights at the end of each school year. The applications are reviewed by Logan Walton and Cara Mace, as well as the visitation intern and the event interns; no interviewing process takes place. “Knights are chosen based on the answers they give on their application, their recommendations, and what is known of the students by reputation,” said Walton. The goal is to create a diverse and balanced team of Knights that are a reflection of the entire student body.

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Continued from page 8:

The athletics department is working on many more improvements such as the Enriching Academic Results Network (EARN) and the student athlete handbook, all of which have been implemented this semester. Joss hopes that in his role he can bridge the gaps between athletes and the general student body, Christians and non-Christians, and the school and the local community. This focus will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of the Warner Pacific community. This positive impact is sure to extend beyond the college. Joss is also working on branding and sponsorship deals. Recently, the athletics department secured an all-school deal with Nike and has rebranded the score board. Joss believes it is imperative that the school “builds community relationships and align with strong brands.”

Rest assured that while students flip through textbooks in the wee hours of the morning and faculty lug around copious amounts of papers to grade, the staff is in the background diligently taking care of the details that make a huge difference. Their hard work has positive effects for the entire Warner Pacific community. Don’t forget to thank them.

Christ Avery also contributed to this story.
I was visiting my friend in Texas. I got sick and was stuck inside. They asked me if I wanted to watch Doctor Who. She told me that she saw the first episode of the Eleventh Doctor, portrayed by Matt Smith (pictured far left). Her first thoughts when the Doctor appeared on screen: “This looks like a weird show, and he’s funny-looking. But I like the bowtie.” Some Whovians pick favorites from among the eleven different depictions of the character, but some, like Mollie, have more. When I asked if she had any advice for people who are interested in the show, she replied, “Watch more than one episode and more than one Doctor! Have an open mind.”

After its first appearance in 1963, Doctor Who stayed on the air until 1989, a time that spanned seven Doctors’ adventures and twenty-six seasons. Doctor Who: The Movie, unaffiliated with the BBC, came out in 1996. It introduced the Eighth Doctor but was not successful in reviving the franchise. The show was rebooted in 2005 and is now moving into its eighth season. November 23rd, 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the show, which will be celebrated by a special episode on BBC America that promises to answer many of the loose ends left by Steven Moffat, the show’s current head writer. The long-expected 50th anniversary will, we hope, prove to be the most impressive episode of the whole series.

DOCTOR WHO?

WPC students anticipate milestone special for one of BBC’s longest running TV shows

by Deborah Landers

My first encounter with Doctor Who was channel-surfing on a Sunday afternoon. I only saw a small snippet of a scene from an episode in the first series called “The Empty Child,” but it has greatly influenced much of my writing since. It was years later when I finally discovered that what I had seen belonged to Doctor Who. My first conscious brush with the show came through my older sister when she forced me to watch “The Christmas Invasion,” the first episode in which David Tennant (pictured above right) began his three series foray as the Tenth Doctor. Falling for the mad-cap adventures, and the deep, emotional connections I didn’t expect to make with the characters. As Shakespeare wrote in Twelfth Night, “Even so quickly may one catch the plague?”

The show centers around the adventures of a character called “the Doctor,” the last of an ancient alien race known as the Time Lords, and his time-travelling companions. His weekly romp through time and space begins and ends with an unusual spaceship: the TARDIS (which stands for Time And Relative Dimension In Space). It was originally intended to blend in with its environment and his time-travelling companions. His weekly romp through the mad-cap adventures, and the deep, emotional connections I didn’t expect to make with the characters. As Shakespeare wrote in Twelfth Night, “Even so quickly may one catch the plague?”


— “THE FAMILY OF BLOOD”

For Left: Matt Smith and David Tennant will play the Tenth and Eleventh incarnations of the Doctor in the upcoming 50th Anniversary Special. (Photographer: Adrian Rogers, © BBC) Left: Scottish actor Peter Capaldi is set to appear in the iconic role as the Twelfth Doctor in this year’s Christmas special. (Photographer: Rankin © BBC)
This fall, the Warner Pacific drama program is producing the Pulitzer-winner play *Doubt: A Parable* by John Patrick Shanley. While the production is just a few weeks into rehearsal, the content of the play has already begun to spark discussion throughout the community as faculty and students examine how doubt affects their life, the lives of their friends, the community of the Church, and humanity as a whole. Leading this discussion is Professor Robin Gordon, with the primary question of *Doubt*: “What is it that informs our judgment, how do we know what we know?”

Shanley wanted to create a play which would make people think. He saw modern society as being too sure in its opinions. Debates, be they political, theological, or academic, no longer seek to inform, and they give little room to compromise, just look at Congress, or the conversation between atheists and believers, or the comments in a YouTube discussion. Certainty can give no quarter to different perspectives, and it cannot admit that it is wrong. Certainty was something that Shanley wanted to confront, and to him the opposite of certainty could only be one thing: doubt.

Shanley was born in the Bronx of New York City in 1950. He was raised as a Catholic, and attended a Catholic school for most of his life. During his extensive career, he has written and directed plays, operas, and screenplays. Shanley’s first huge success came with his release of the play *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, but his most renowned achievement is his Pulitzer prize-winning play *Doubt*.

Gordon chose to produce the play because, “every day, this play is timely.” In *Doubt*, one of the key tensions pits Sister Aloysius, a principal at St. Nicholas Catholic School and a hard-line follower of the principles behind the first Ecumenical Council (order and control), against Father Flynn, a believer in the message of the second Ecumenical Council (meeting people where they are). “This is perfect timing for our play,” said Gordon. “Pope Francis has been in the news numerous times lately, and every time he speaks, he encourages us to rethink what we do in the name of God and grow together in our understanding of what it means to be Christian.”

In the play Sister Aloysius is certain that Father Flynn is more than a caring teacher to his adolescent students; she believes that he is taking advantage of one of the students sexually. Shanley carefully chose this topic of sexual abuse not because it has been all over the news, but because it is something about which people feel strongly. He knew he could get a strong response from people if he wrote about child molestation by a priest. He could take a topic about which everyone would feel the same, and during a 90-minute period, remove anyone’s ability to tell who is right. Nobody would disagree about what was right in the play, but everyone would argue about what was right.

This was exactly what Shanley wanted from *Doubt*. “What has always been important to me is that sense of doubt belongs to the audience. I’m not going to tell them what’s right or wrong; I simply wanted them to think and feel something, rather than tell them what to think and feel,” he said. Prof. Gordon has some advice for this fall’s audience: “Pay attention; the doubt each of the characters experience on the stage helps us understand ourselves. It is a mirror and a window for us to attend to someone else’s story.”

Echoing Gordon, Dr. John Johnson examined the themes of *Doubt* through a Christian Ministries lens. “*Doubt* serves as a mirror in which we can examine ourselves,” he said. What really captured Johnson’s attention was how quick Sister Aloysius was to judge Father Flynn. “The play calls us to be beyond certainty; perhaps the most Christian thing to do is suspend judgment on others’ thoughts, intentions, or purposes,” Johnson said.

Doubt: A Parable runs November 7-10 and 14-17 in the McGuire Theatre. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are $5 and can be purchased in the Bookstore. Student discounts are available.

In his preface to *Doubt*, Shanley writes that “deep under the chatter we have come to a place where we know that we don’t know anything.” Every question that human reason answers brings to light a dozen more questions. Shanley recreates that uncertainty in the play: “There is an uneasy time when belief has begun to slip, but hypocrisy has yet to take hold. The beginning of change is the moment of doubt. It is that crucial moment when I renew my humanity or become a lie.”

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This fall’s drama production asks big questions
by Zechariah Dirdak and Kaleb Hood