

News

New year, new challenges: A talk with Dr. Bonner

by Blake DuDonis
Pilot Editor in Chief

Here we are boys and girls: 2010. It what seemed like a few weeks, 2009 has come and gone and we sit at the top of a new calendar year. So now what? Although every year has its own unique characteristics, it seems we start them all the same way with resolutions and predictions of all sorts. This year isn't much different in those regards but it is different in what we will face, or more specifically, what Gardner-Webb will face.

I recently sat down with Dr. Bonner, president of Gardner-Webb University, to discuss the new year and what the school faced, and although excited for what the University has he store, he knows it will not come easy.

"The challenges that we face are largely related to the economy... which is not news to anybody," said Bonner. "So the challenges are getting tougher and tougher, but at the same time, our ambitions are still there and I'm convinced that the most dangerous thing a university can do is to batten down the hatches and say 'Lets just hang in there'... When times are

tough, that's the time to go aggressive."

Hearing these words from the president of Gardner-Webb, I was very encouraged to hear that the people in high power positions are continuing to find ways to make this school better, even though it won't be easy on them. Dr. Bonner went on to talk about how he wants the school to improve overall, both in the classroom and out.

Along with building a new science building, Dr. Bonner also is looking to "stress preparing students for service to the larger community". He also wants to expand the study abroad program and is in discussions with a university in Wales to have an exchange program put in place. Gardner-Webb will host several students from Wales this fall as a part of the discussions.

Knowing the importance of academics, Dr. Bonner also acknowledged that extracurricular growth is important for students and he wants to play a part in that as well. One of the big parts of the extracurricular is a new student center.

For the past several years, students at Gardner-Webb have heard rumors of a new student

center but have seen no visual proof to confirm the rumors. I myself wrote a column two semesters ago calling for action on building the center or someone coming out and saying it would not happen. Those of your who agreed with me, hear me now: it is coming.

Sitting with Dr. Bonner and conversing with him, I could tell that he truly cared about the students as a whole and really does want what is best for us. In fact, Dr. Bonner is in Houston now, meeting with a very high powered owner of a large sports franchise to discuss a donation to Gardner-Webb, one that would be used for buildings like the student center.

While Dr. Bonner is looking for physical growth in the school, he also wants to shift the focus of growing the school in size to now making what we have better.

"We have been attempting to grow the 22 years that I have been here," said Bonner. "But its just simple arithmetic: that can't get going and still remain a medium sized to small sized institution that clearly is so important to ours... it's the relationships that are key and its hard to have that if you have 800 people in all the classes."

More groundbreaking at Gardner-Webb

by Jordan Love
Pilot Staff Writer

Around this time last year, ground was being broken for the building now known as Suite G. The fall semester of 2009 was Suite G's first time with residents, and the feedback has been very positive.

The suites are half the price of the apartments, yet still substantially more expensive than dorm life. Floors one and three were originally reserved for Honors students in Suite G, but whether or not Honors will keep those

floors next semester is still unknown.

Due to the great success of the suite, another dorm building is already well on its way. Ground was broken before Christmas break behind Suite G, and construction workers are toiling daily to ensure the new suite gets done on time for students to move in next semester.

The new suite is supposed to be designed exactly like Suite G, which currently means four bedrooms with 2 desks, 2 dressers, 2 beds, and 2 closets in each. The new suite will also have two bathrooms, a kitchen sink, refrigerator, microwave, and living area like Suite G.

Although many different departments have wanted to make the new living space a specific learning environment (i.e. for Nursing students, Honors students, or Foreign Language majors), nothing has been set in stone yet.

Presently, the idea is to equip the new suite with a full sized classroom, public restrooms, and a laundry area downstairs in an attempt to provide a close-knit learning environment for those living in the rooms. However, with the building process is still in the beginning stages, nothing has been officially decided as of now.

GWU students, community respond to crisis in Haiti

by Diana Palka
Pilot Editor

Immediately following the earthquake that rocked a small nation over 1200 miles away, eyes were opened to the devastation and havoc that unhesitatingly sprung itself upon the people of Haiti. Images of bloodied survivors being recovered from rubble and mothers carrying their dead children flooded the media, alerting the world to the severity of the aftermath.

Among those provoked by the gruesome reality was Gardner-Webb junior, Gaby Hooker. Hooker's efforts, along with the legwork of various others in the GWU community, resulted in the planning of the Hope For Haiti Benefit Concert to be held on February 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the Millennium Playhouse.

"I was in my Western Civ. class and the teacher was just talking and I was just thinking about just like what had happened with the earthquake," said Hooker.

Distracted by the thought of the nation's

desperation, Hooker was overwhelmed with compassion and found it nearly impossible to concentrate on the at-the-time seemingly insignificant course material.

"I was wondering if anyone else was thinking about this right now, and I was like, kind of hoping that someone was," she said.

Hooker soon realized that she wasn't alone in her compassion when she approached fellow junior, Nikki Rice of Campus Ministries. Together, they marched to the CMU office to get the ball rolling.

"In like two days, we got everything finalized pretty much," Hooker said.

Hooker and company see the event as "a way for us to give back since we have so much."

"People in college- we have money. A lot of us say 'Oh, I'm a poor college student,' but generally compared to the people in Haiti, we are very rich," she said.

The benefit concert will cost \$5 at the doors, opening at 6:30 p.m., however, larger donations will be accepted. All proceeds go

to New Missions, an organization committed to medical care in Haiti.

"It's going to people that are already there. An organization that concentrates its mission being trips to [Haiti]," Hooker said. "It's good that it's already like an established relationship with people."

Musicians from the Gardner-Webb community, Broad River Community Church and the Community Discipleship Home will be performing at the concert. The line-up consists of Erin Dalton and Rosalee Johnson, Mortimer Rex, Ashley Seagle, The Unworthy Beloved, Rory Tyler, The Appalachian Heroes and Jeremy Current.

"We've had to turn people away from performing because we've had so many... which is an insanely good problem to have," Hooker said. "In two days, we've had so many people say they'd be willing to do something."

The turn-out is expected to be sizeable as the Facebook event page has 88 confirmed attendees (as of Sunday evening) and is expected to continue to grow.

How Gardner-Webb can help

Haiti Relief through the Red Cross

The person to contact if you are interested in donating financially through the Red Cross is Dr. Tom Jones. He will be donating the funds collected on behalf of the Honors Association. His email is tjones@gardner-webb.edu

SGA (Student Government Association)

SGA is working on creating a Haiti relief fund. SGA has agreed to match student or group contributions to their relief fund up to \$1,500. The contact person for this group is Tyler McCall. His email is tmccall@gardner-webb.edu

The Athletic Training Student Club

The athletic training student club is doing a donation drive for medical supplies to send to Haiti. They will cover all the costs of shipping. The drive will go from January 11-January 31. Donations can be dropped off at the LYCC, The Football center, or the Café. Maggie Lindsey is the contact person. Her email is mlindsey1@gardner-webb.edu

CMU (Campus Ministries United)

CMU is collecting donations for Samaritan's Purse. Anyone who wishes to give may go to the campus ministries office in Suttle Hall room 107. Ask for Teresa Davis.

The Haiti Benefit Concert

This will be a night of music in the Millennium Playhouse. Local and regional musicians will be featured and play live music. There will be a \$5 entrance fee, and people are encouraged to give more if they feel like doing so. The concert will be on Thursday February 11, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. The doors will open at 6:30 P.M. The contact person for this event is Gabriel Hooker.

Her email is ghooker@gardner-webb.edu

Samaritan's Feet

On January 30, 2010. The Big South Conference will be sponsoring the Samaritan's Feet charity. Coaches will be going shoeless to bring attention to this charity. Anyone who wishes to give is encouraged to bring a pair of gently worn shoes to the various athletic events that will be collected and distributed amongst the Haitians.

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