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THE
Almanian

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Moot Court: New Year New Growth

By Katelyn Thomas
Layout Editor

Alma College's Moot Court is entering its third year under the leadership of Assistant Professor of Political Science Dr. Benjamin Taylor.

Bringing years of competitive and judging experience from his own undergraduate career. Dr. Taylor has built a thriving academic environment that continues to challenge and inspire students.

This season, Taylor works closely with 5 returning students and a wave of new members, bringing the total class size to 21 students.

Several of the veterans have been laying out the groundwork for this year's complex legal issues since May.

To prepare students, Taylor instructs the fall term Moot Court course and hosts intensive Wednesday night practices. These sessions focus heavily on building stronger arguments.

"That back and forth really leads you to establish greater and greater nuance and you're thinking about the issue. And then also to be able to argue it more precisely," said Taylor.

This preparation has already been put to the test. Several members participated in an early-season practice at the Rocky Mountain Invitational.

Their official season begins at Eastern Michigan University, followed quickly by the Pine Tree Regional, which Alma College will host for the second consecutive year.

Following the achievements of last year, students are looking forward to the further development of their own skills and the program.

"The fact that Dr. Taylor dedicates so much time means so much to all of the students who do Moot Court. Truly our program would not be what it is if it weren't for his influence," said **Natalie Krause ('28).**

Stand-out junior captain Natalie Krause shined brightly with her partner **Karol Pucek ('26)** last season. Placing 3rd as a speaker, while the team placed 6th out of 32 teams. Alma also placed 8th at the Pine Tree Regional.

"Winning that 3rd place speaker award came out of



Photo courtesy of Moot Court

left field to me. My partner last year was the most amazing speaker. I really valued our partnership," said Krause.

The program's upward trajectory is reflected not just in individual achievements, but on the programs future goals.

"I would like us this year, we have 21 students in the class, and so I want to at least get 9 and hopefully even 10 teams competing somewhere. I would like us to have more teams on the 2nd day," said Taylor.

Beyond tournament placements, Taylor emphasizes the long-term value of Moot Court and the valuable skills that students learn through participating.

"I think that having programs that intensify their thinking or short than their thinking, prepares them for the next steps in this process. It means that they can be competitive for those sorts of institutions, those sorts of admissions processes" said Taylor.

For students navigating the intense demands of college life, the program's supportive culture has allowed further student development and involvement.

"I absolutely would not still be in moot court if it hadn't been for his positive mentorship because like I said, it's very intimidating to like to do everything at first, but his passion for everything makes you want to be excited about it. And he has his own experience doing moot court," said Kraus.

As the season unfolds, the combination of faculty dedication, veteran leadership, and a rapidlyexpanding roster places Alma College's Moot Court program for its most successful year yet.

End of the Kiltie marching band season

By Grace Main
Copy & Layout Editor

As the Kiltie Marching Band season starts to wrap up, the band looks ahead to this year's Indoor Concert, which will be on Nov. 14.

"There is the halftime show that we will be bringing back, but there will also be other components for the Indoor Concert," said Professor Kerrissa Silverthorne, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands.

This year's Halftime show is "Voices of America" for the 250th year of the United States. The show includes three tunes, American Salute, American in Paris, and America the Beautiful. The halftime show this year was arranged by Alma student **Nolan Musonda ('29)** and **Dr. Justin Rito ('08)**, Assistant Professor of Music.

Also included in the concert is the Pregame Show, which includes Alma's Fight Song, Alma Matter, and the National Anthem. Stand tunes are going to also be played, and there is a component with the Alma College Pipe Band, directed by **Professors Ben Elliot ('19)** and **Aaron Krause ('17).** They will be accompanied by the Highland Dance team.

"I love all the traditions that we have at Alma College. The whole pregame sequence that we do with the multiple components to it just speaks to the heart of who we are, our identity as Alma Scots," said Silverthorne.

The Color Guard is also performing in a section of the concert, where they have designed and choreographed a feature to the music of Hamilton, on par with the American-themed halftime show.

There is going to be an additional component of the concert where the band plays a "Funk" themed selection, which includes a secret surprise as well.

"My favorite part of the show is going to be the surprise at the end, you'll have to show up and see," said **Frank Karl ('27)**.

The band has been working on their halftime show and pregame components since the Summer at Band Camp. However, with the amount of additional music there is included in the concert, along with the fact that band rehearsals are restricted to class time; Silverthorne focuses a lot of the rehearsal on memorization.

"We've gone from some students saying 'I just can't



Graphic courtesy of Christian Driessnack, Align Digital Films and Photo

memorize music, I don't have a way to do it, I've never been good at it,' to just being amazed at their own abilities because they just needed to have a method unlocked for them," said Silverthorne.

This has been Silverthorne's first year as Kiltie Marching Band (KMB) director, and her and the band have accomplished an impressive and ambitious soundtrack for the season.

"I think the biggest takeaway from this season is learning to change. I think it's important that we do not lose sight of the traditions and styles that have been developed over years in the KMB, but to be ready for new developments [too]," said Karl. " Professor Silverthorne has made the preparations for the concert a breeze. She is so attentive to us as a band, with a new director. Change is hard, but she made it easy with her love and care for us as if we were her own kids," said **Lauren McCarthy ('27).**

The Indoor Concert will also be the culmination of the graduating seniors' band careers. During the football game earlier in the day, the graduating students will be accompanied out to the field with their parents, and after the game will be their last performance.

"The members in this band are more than just Alma College music students; they are my family and a home I can always return to. After our Indoor Show, it will be hard to say goodbye to such a big part of my life, but I wouldn't change it for the world," said McCarthy.

More Than a Concert

By Madeline Gustincic
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Oct. 25 the Alma College Chamber Orchestra (ACCO) performed their first concert of the school year. This performance marked more than the beginning of a season for ACCO, it represented the opportunities within the Alma College Music Department.

Under the direction of Dr. Takeshi Abo, the orchestra performed Ludwig Beethoven's Coriolan Overture and Wolfgang Almadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major.

Music Education Major **Lauren McCarthy ('27)** started the concert on the conductor's podium, rather than in her seat with the flute section.

Conducting the orchestra was not McCarthy's own idea, but instead, was an opportunity presented to her by Dr. Abo.

"Working with Dr. Abo is a blessing. I told Dr. Abo about my dream to get my master's in conducting one day [and] he went out of his way to find a piece for me to conduct to gain experience," said McCarthy.

McCarthy's background experience had previously been in conducting wind ensembles, but as she explored something new, she was met by support every step of the way.

"Every week I would meet with Dr. Abo to practice conducting, analyzing, and building the fundamentals of the piece. I feel so blessed to have a professor like Dr. Abo on campus, one who truly cares for his students and who wants his students to do more than just succeed but to excel in everything," said McCarthy.

"My advice to students who want this kind of experience is to say yes to anything education related and to put yourself out there. If you want to try something, find the right professors, and build relationships. I only ended up in these positions by putting myself out there and trying new things!" said McCarthy.

For Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, Dr. James Schippers was a featured soloist, celebrated for recently earning his Doctorate in Musical Arts.

"Being "Dr." Schippers doesn't really feel much different. I most value the things I learned and experiences I gained working toward that degree," said Schippers.



Photo courtesy of Charlotte Rockwell

While completing his degree, Dr. Schippers continued his work at Alma College as a lecturer of music, piano professor, and an accompanist for the choir.

"[B]alancing school and my work at Alma was a challenge at times. The period leading up to the final work of the degree was difficult. During the days of the heaviest workloads, when I was deep in my research and practice, I found solutions aimed at long-term sustainability. Focusing on sustainability rather than hustle-culture style grind sessions worked better for me to finish my degree and continue my work at Alma at the highest level I could," said Schippers.

The structure of a concerto differs from that of a standard solo, as the performance is traded between a soloist, and the orchestra. This change in structure changes the demands of the soloist.

"With orchestra, I am always listening carefully to the other musicians, not just to stay together, but to blend the sound exactly the way I want it. The soloist has to be sensitive and constantly listen and adjust," said Schippers.

It is this combination of the work from the conductor, the soloist, and the orchestra that allow performances from the ACCO to feel as magical as they do.

"Even achievements that seem very individualistic can't happen without the support of a giant team of people.

Nobody can do this alone," said Schippers.

Alma Student Choreography Concert

By Audrey Hester
Copy Editor

On Nov. 6 and 7, Alma College will be having its student choreography concert in the Oscar E. Remick Heritage Center for the Performing Arts.

The concert will feature performances choreographed by Alma's dance students, showcasing the individual styles and artistic visions of each student. The Nov. 6 show will be at 6:30 p.m. and there are also two shows on Nov. 7, at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Dance, much like many forms of visual art, conveys emotion and narrative without using words—something as simple as a step can be symbolic of a greater meaning or place in a particular routine's storyline.

"Dance is a healthy way of expressing feeling through movement, it's nonviolent and historically has been used to solve conflict. It also allows you to say what words can't. Being able to create and tell stories without words is hard but that's what makes it so powerful," said **Samantha Cain ('29)**.

"Dance is important to me because of how healing it is. It comes with a story, and I think it has helped shape who I have become," said **Shannon Graham ('29).**

Alma College's dance program teaches multiple styles of dance. Previous student choreography concerts have featured contemporary, jazz and tap routines, among others. Concert attendees can expect a variety of performances with a variety of feelings. Since each routine is crafted by a student (or small group of students), they allow for every student to express their own creative freedom.

"I am most excited to see the creativity and individuality of each student choreographer come to life on stage. I think it is exciting that this concert showcases the unique perspectives, ideas and artistic voices of students within the dance program. I look forward to seeing how each choreographer uses movement, music and emotion to tell a story and share something meaningful with the audience," said **Kimberlin Mayhew ('27).**

Mayhew is a senior dance major and a director for the concert, alongside **Ellie Wietor ('27)** and **Lillian Riddle ('27).**

"I feel that the dance environment at Alma College is a welcoming and supportive community where dancers can grow both personally and artistically," said Mayhew.

The concert has been in preparation since the beginning of the fall semester and will be the culmination of months of work, in addition to the years of previous experience each student has.



Photo courtesy of Charlotte Rockwell

"I am most excited to perform and see the finished product of everyone's hard work," said Graham.

"In the showings, you see the progress, but I am excited to see everyone's final products ... the smallest changes can make for the biggest differences in how a dance is perceived by the audience ... I am so proud of all my friends who are choreographing and are in dances this year. I feel like this will be one of the best shows that the Alma College Dance Company will put on," said Cain.

"I am looking forward to celebrating the talent, hard work, and passion within the Alma College dance community and seeing how everyone's different styles come together to create a memorable performance," said Mayhew.

Tickets for the concert can be purchased via Alma College Ticketing, and for Alma students, they're free! Be sure to purchase tickets ahead of time so you can select a seat and ensure you don't get held up at the box office.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
64°	71°	62°	53°	47°	47°	48°

Potential serial killer in the Capital

By Lexie Thayer
Editor-In-Chief
And Nayonikaa Singhaal
Layout Editor

The Lansing, Michigan, police are currently investigating whether five deaths of unhoused men within a 1.5-mile strip are connected.

The deaths span nearly a year, with the first homicide happening last October and the most recent occurring in September 2026. Many of the cases still have an unruled cause or are pending in court.

Police Chief Robert Backus of Lansing began the investigation between the cases, stating that all victims were white, unhoused men who were attacked overnight - typically between midnight and 6 a.m.

The first known case occurred October 14th, when Gino Chouinard, 54, was found unconscious with severe head and facial injuries. He passed 13 days later, according to USA Today.

The next case, Dennis Dunnebacke, 70, occurred on June 9th. He suffered facial injuries and passed on July 9th., according to USA Today.

Robert Smith, 57, was found bleeding from the head on July 13 and was pronounced dead at a hospital., according to USA Today.

Then, on August 20th, Daniel Lusk, 22, was found stabbed beneath the Michigan Avenue bridge, according to USA Today.

The most recent case is the death of Louis Woodruff, 57, who was found unconscious with severe facial trauma, according to USA Today.

So far, only one suspect has been arrested, specifically for the murder of Daniel Lusk. The same suspect, Edward Joseph Smith, was accused of assaulting a homeless man in October 2025 on the River Trail a day before the first victim, Gino Chouinard, was found dead there.

Police have not yet formally confirmed whether Smith is responsible for these deaths, but he has an ongoing open murder investigation on him as he remains in the custody of Lansing police.

Smith, in March of 2024, was also sentenced to five years of probation on account of stalking, harassing, and threatening to kill his father.

In response to the increase in violent crime, authorities have increased overnight patrols along the trail, deployed surveillance cameras, and set up a public tip line.

Four out of five victims were found with blunt force trauma to the head and face while they were lying down or asleep, which shows a potential pattern and has amplified fear about a local serial killer.



Graphic courtesy of Clover Lucha

Despite the similarities between the cases, investigators have not publicly confirmed that all five deaths are connected. The investigation remains ongoing as police work to determine whether the incidents share a common suspect or motive. Authorities are encouraging anyone with information about the deaths to contact investigators.

Moreover, with Alma College having a large demographic originating from the Lansing area, many students are grappling with the reality of this potential danger.

"I used to run the trail near the site of these incidents. There were always homeless people on the trail, and after I graduated, our cross-country team was not allowed to run on the trail anymore because it was considered unsafe," said **Madeline Hicks ('29)**

As this investigation continues, residents are left waiting for answers about the potential connection between these deaths.

Until investigators formally establish a connection between the deaths, the possibility of a serial killer remains, leaving the Michigan community searching for answers.

Midterms in Michigan

By Grayson Clifford
Staff Writer

With this paper released on Nov. 3rd, Election Day is upon us. Polls across the state of Michigan close at 8 p.m. (those who are in line past 8 p.m. will still be permitted to vote).

For those voting who live in Alma, Precinct One will be held at First Presbyterian Church. Precinct Two will be at Peace Lutheran Church. Precinct Three will be at Alma Public Library. To Alma College students who are registered to vote on campus rather than their hometown, Alma College's campus is located inside Precinct One. For those uncertain what precinct they're in, you can search online via your township's precinct to find a map of what precinct you reside in.

This year's midterm elections for the state of Michigan includes the governorship, one of Michigan's two senate seats and all U.S. house of representative districts. Additionally, voters in Michigan will vote for their representative in the state legislature, their state senator, state board educators and nonpartisan elections such as for the justices of the Michigan Supreme Court. Michigan voters will also vote on proposals both local and state-wide.

Many students here at Alma will get their first opportunity to vote. Some students are addressing the importance of going out and voting.

"College students should vote so we can represent the minds of young people in our government," said **Daniel Hickey ('28).**

Gubernatorial Race: Democratic candidate Jocelyn Benson and Republican candidate John James are both gunning to be the next governor of Michigan.

Jocelyn Benson is Michigan's current secretary of state since 2019 and served as dean of Wayne State University Law School from 2012 to 2016. As secretary of state, Benson oversaw a Michigan constitutional amendment which implemented Election Day voter registration and unrestricted absentee ballots. Benson is campaigning on issues including affordability, public education reform and reproductive rights.

John James is the current U.S. representative for Michigan's 10th congressional district, since 2023. Before politics, James served in the U.S. Army from 2004 to 2012, where he was an AH-64 Apache pilot during multiple tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom. James is campaigning on affordability, incentivizing Michiganders to stay in Michigan and having a government with more integrity.

Senatorial Race: Republican candidate Mike Rogers and Democratic candidate Abdul El-Sayed are battling to be Michigan's next U.S. senator, succeeding Gary Peters. Peters, an Alma College alum, is serving his second term in the U.S. senate. In January 2025, Peters announced that he would not seek reelection.



Graphic courtesy of Olivia Wolters

Mike Rogers served in Michigan's 8th district for the U.S. House of Representatives from 2001 to 2015. Rogers also served in the U.S. Army from 1985 to 1989, holding the rank of First Lieutenant. Rogers is campaigning with a housing plan that includes assisting with down payments and lowering interest rates, while campaigning a healthcare plan that expands access to Trump Rx and forcing hospitals to publicly post their prices to their patients so patients can compare with other hospitals.

Abdul El-Sayed is an American epidemiologist who received a Bachelor's of Science at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, while achieving his Medical Doctorate at Columbia University. El-Sayed won a close 2026 Democratic primary race, beating Haley Stevens by 16,000 votes. El-Sayed is campaigning for money out of politics, money in your pocket and Medicare for all.

Nationally: Currently, the Republican party holds a majority in the House of Representatives, controlling 219 of the 435 current seats. The Republican party also holds a majority in the U.S. Senate, as 53 of the 100 U.S. senators are Republican. However, with 35 senate seats and all U.S. house seats up for grabs, American voters will decide how Congress will be shaped

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Pumpkin Spice, and Everything Nice

By Nayonikaa Singhaal
Layout Editor

Every year, as soon as September arrives, people start talking about pumpkin spice. Some love it, while others insist it is overrated, overused and simply everywhere. Honestly, I think the critics are missing out. Pumpkin spice season is one of the best parts of fall, and I will happily defend it, one Starbucks drink at a time.

Coming from New Delhi, India, where the seasons look and feel quite different from what I have experienced in Michigan, I have grown to appreciate the little things that make fall special. At Alma College, fall means colorful leaves, cooler mornings, cozy sweaters and, of course, pumpkin spice. There is something about walking across campus with a seasonal drink in hand that makes an ordinary day feel a little more exciting.

Of course, not everyone shares my enthusiasm. Some people think pumpkin spice is too sweet, while others believe pumpkin belongs in a pie or on a doorstep rather than in a coffee cup. "Pumpkin is for carving, not drinking," said **Alex Detterman ('29)** a student at Alma College. While I respect the opinion, I have to disagree. Pumpkins can serve more than one purpose, and making a delicious drink is certainly one of them.

I understand that pumpkin spice is not for everyone. However, there is a reason it makes a comeback every year. People enjoy having something seasonal to look forward to. When the weather gets colder and assignments begin piling up, a familiar fall favorite can make an ordinary afternoon feel a little more special.

My personal favorite has to be an iced chai tea latte with pumpkin cold foam from Starbucks. If you have never tried this combination, you are seriously missing out. The chai has just the right amount of spice, while the pumpkin cold foam adds a delicious sweetness. Together, they create the perfect balance of flavors. It is creamy, refreshing and easily my favorite fall drink. I might even argue that it is better than the traditional pumpkin spice latte. I know that might be a controversial opinion, but I stand by it.

Being a college student, there is another reason I enjoy my Starbucks trips: Munch Money. At Alma, having Munch Money makes treating yourself to a seasonal drink that much easier. Between classes, meetings, student organization responsibilities and everything else that comes with college life, stopping by Starbucks for my favorite drink is a small pleasure I genuinely look forward to.



Photo courtesy of Petronella Wilson

Sometimes, a good drink is all you need to make a long day feel a little better. There is something comforting about having a favorite order, especially when it comes around for only part of the year. It is also a fun excuse to try something different instead of ordering the same coffee every morning.

I think pumpkin spice has become more than just a flavor. It is part of the experience of fall. It brings excitement to coffee menus, gives people something to anticipate and makes the transition into colder weather a little more enjoyable. There is no harm in being enthusiastic about something simply because it tastes good.

So, is pumpkin spice overrated? My answer is an enthusiastic no. If anything, I think it deserves more appreciation. And if you have spent years dismissing pumpkin spice without giving it a fair chance, I have one recommendation: head to Starbucks, use that Munch Money and order an iced chai tea latte with pumpkin cold foam. Give it a try before you judge it. You might just become a pumpkin spice person, too.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND THE VIEW OF THE ALMANIAN AND ALMA COLLEGE

Christmas in....November?

By Lillian Routowicz
Staff Writer

With the weather getting colder, Alma College students are gearing up for the holiday season. Now that Halloween is over, the annual roommate-dividing debate has begun: is it time to break out the Christmas playlists, or should we wait until after Thanksgiving?

Every year, the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving bring out two kinds of people: aspiring Buddy the Elves and bah-humbug Scrooges. While some students argue that Mariah Carey should remain frozen until after Thanksgiving, those who can still hear the bells on Santa's sleigh argue that it's never too early for Christmas music.

As someone who can recite the entirety of Elf, I believe it is never too early to begin celebrating the holiday season—the best way to spread Christmas cheer is by singing loud for all to hear.

Christmas is the most joyful time of the year, and the window for celebration is just too short. Between decorating, baking cookies, Hallmark movie marathons, and spending time with loved ones, cutting the celebration short deprives the season of its magic. One Thanksgiving ends, it's just a few short weeks until Christmas, and then it's over.

"I start listening to Christmas music around Thanksgiving. Maybe even a few days before Thanksgiving happens. After New Year's, all the stores and radio stations drop the Christmas-themed music and decorations and it's so sad," said **Kaylee Vonderau ('27).**

"Listening to Christmas music after Halloween always gives me a boost to help me get through the rest of the semester. It gives me something fun to look forward to, especially knowing that Christmas break is getting closer," said **Addison Cooley ('29).**

For many students, November brings the heaviest course workloads. Between assignments, studying for exams, and extracurricular commitments, finding time to enjoy the little things can be difficult. Paired with academic and social burnout, the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving leave many people waiting to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

"I start listening to Christmas music as soon as Halloween ends! I love pop Christmas music, especially songs like Last Christmas by Wham!, but I also love instrumental songs like ones from the Charlie Brown Christmas soundtrack. Honestly, I enjoy pretty much any kind of Christmas music," said Cooley.



Graphic courtesy of Olivia Holt

"I love listening to Christmas pop music, and I LOVE Christmas music from old TCM movies and musicals. Examples are White Christmas, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas, etc. Whether I want to or not, I always hear songs from Mariah Carey and Paul McCartney during Christmas season on the radio or in stores that I shop at. I feel like I want the Christmas season to keep going past Christmas Day," said Vonderau.

On campus, the Alma College Choir has already begun preparing Christmas songs for the annual Festival of Carols in early December. They first began rehearsing the songs at the end of September, and Alma students and community members have been eagerly waiting to hear the performance. For many, the Festival of Carols is tradition, and it would not be the holiday season without the musical performance.

Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, the joy of the holiday season is undeniably contagious. From Christmas movie soundtracks to seasonal classics, getting a head start on Christmas spirit is the perfect way to power through the rest of the semester.

New Alma scholarship available for local graduates

By: Lily Sierakowski
Staff Writer

A new Alma scholarship is hitting the ground running for high school and homeschooled graduates from Gratiot, Isabella and Montcalm counties. This scholarship, the Tartan Edge, replaces the previous scholarship for locals, the ACE scholarship. This opportunity brings excitement to not only prospective students, but also to those who are already a part of Alma College's community.

"The Tartan Edge Scholarship is an exciting opportunity for both our local students and the future of Alma College," said **Lottie Carman ('25)**, Alma Admissions Counselor.

With these listed counties being amongst some of the poorest in Michigan, this new funding available to local students opens up opportunities for pursuing higher education that might not have been available previously. The ability to stay close to home is also a incentive for students who don't want to travel too far.

"I think it encourages local students to take a closer look at a high-quality college that is in their backyard, rather than traveling far for a good education," said Carmen.

Tartan Edge covers tuition, room and meals all in one as well as tuition for two Spring Terms under the single price of $18,500 for the 2027-2028 academic school year with an expected $1,500 increase yearly. However, Tartan Edge replaces all other Alma aid.

What rounds out Tartan Edge the most is the ability to use any federal funding to help aid students financially with the remaining tuition cost. This greatly reduces costs for students that receive the Tartan Edge scholarship with the possibility of being billed as little as $5,605 for the 2026-2027 academic school year.

"The Tartan Edge Scholarship made me want to go to Alma. It saved me a lot of money and I like that I am so close to home," said **Mikayla Rojas ('30).**

Another unique feature of the Tartan Edge Scholarship is the availability to students transferring out of other colleges. Scholarships such as this are not commonly available to transferring students, but the Tartan Edge brings local grads back home with a strong education ahead of them for a reasonable price.

Tartan Edge does come with requirements for yearly renewal including remaining enrolled a full-time student with 12-15 credits per semester, maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy and filing for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every year.

Promoting Tartan Edge through word-of-mouth to local high schools is one of the ways for this scholarship to grow as one of the initiatives that the college is doing to increase enrollment and make post-secondary education more accessible.

Overall, this new opportunity for local grads excites many and opens doors for many grads that may have previously felt that higher education had been out of reach for too long, and there has also been an upward trend of enrollment this past year with a full-time student increase of 28 people, with the help of the Tartan Edge.

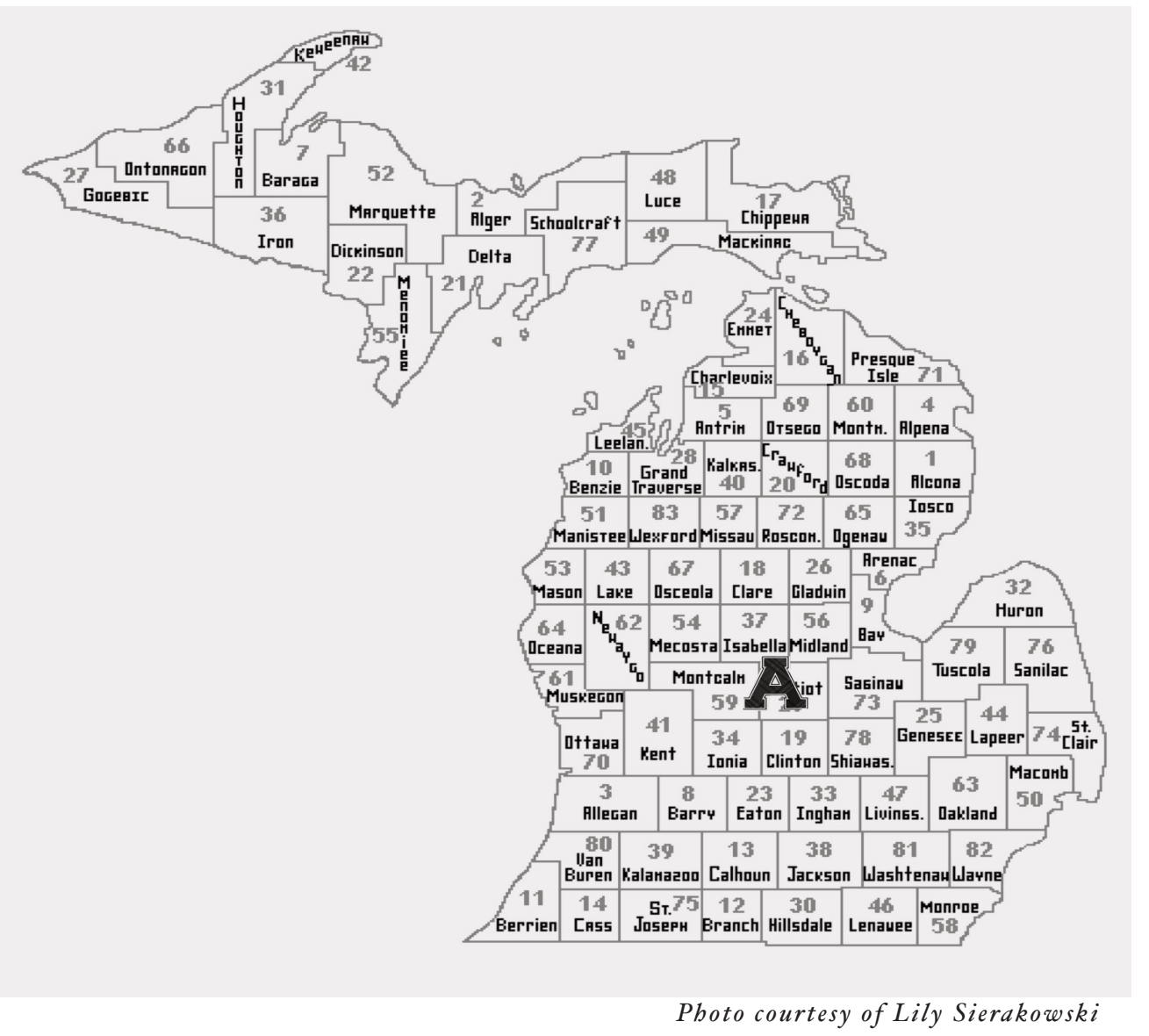


Photo courtesy of Lily Sierakowski

The Sounds of Scotland: Student Feature

By: Madeline Gustincic
Staff Writer

Leading one of the most honored traditions at Alma is **Dalise Jurtu ('30)** and Bagpipe Professor **Ben Elliot ('19),** as they accompany the football team to Bahlke Field each home game.

Jurtu began her bagpiping journey as she transitioned into a new high school.

"I was outside of the school district so I could only attend the school through a lottery chance or by playing an instrument. Instead of choosing a common instrument, I chose the one I had never heard of before, bagpipes. I'm not 100% certain as to why I did that, but I think it's safe to say I enjoyed doing something that other people found embarrassing. When you participate in something that everyone else thinks is "lame" or "uncool," you develop a different type of enjoyment, you stop caring about what people think about you because that enjoyment isn't meant for them. The bagpipes were special and just what I needed," said Jurtu.

The bagpipe is an important tradition at Alma College that Jurtu is grateful to carry on. Jurtu enjoys devoting herself to the act of playing.

"My favorite part of playing the bagpipes is feeling my body devote all its power to one single act. Bagpipes are all about breathing and the ability to do it constantly with the support of your body. My core is constantly engaged as I play while my arms remain in a constant tense 45-degree angle and my back must be extended and as straight as possible so my lungs can grow about 5 times more than what the average person has when they are breathing. The change that my body has made over the 4 years I have played truly amazes me every time I play; I just love the feeling so much," said Jurtu.

After the bagpipe sound has faded, the Kiltie Marching Band (KMB) takes the field at halftime, performing their "Voices of America" Marching Show, featuring the work of another student, Music Composition Major **Nolan Musonda ('29**).

The second piece in the show is Musonda's arrangement of George Gershwin's "An American in Paris (1928)." The piece was originally written for orchestra and is around 19-minutes long, which gave Musonda the difficult task of trying to figure out the proper balance when re-writing this work for marching band.

"Going from orchestra to band is always a challenge. The balance of the instruments is completely different. There is no string section, no 'neutral' color. Each instrument has its own distinct color. It's like painting without using white or black. It's hard to get contrast, but the colors can be beautiful if mixed correctly" said Musonda.

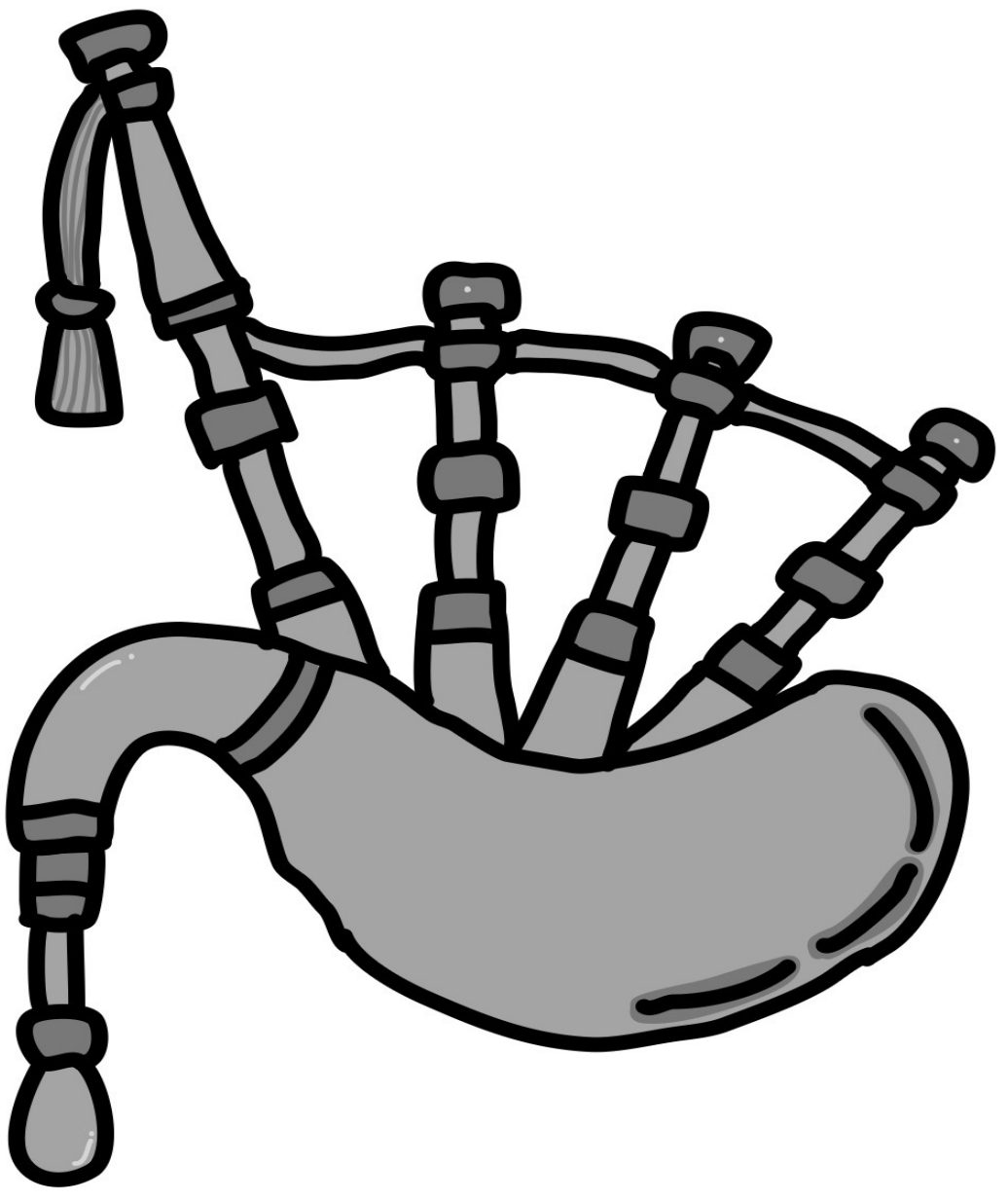


Photo courtesy of Abigail Shaub

"Arranging is a different challenge from composing. Rather than writing the notes yourself, you have to choose them from the original piece. This is sometimes easier, as you don't have to start from scratch, but it's often harder, because you have to follow what's already been written," said Musonda.

Musonda is grateful for the work the KMB has put into learning his piece and for the support he has received along the way from **Dr. Justin Rito ('07)**, Assistant Professor of Music; Professor Kerissa Silverthorne, KMB Director; and **Aaron Krause ('17)**, Drumline Instructor.

"It was really great to hear the band perform. Everyone did such a great job. It sounded exactly as I had imagined. The scariest part of having a piece performed is the gap between my original intentions and how it sounds on real instruments. But with this band, there was no gap; it was perfect," said Musonda.



Comic courtesy of Damien Gagnon



Dear Gossip Squirrel,
The amount of professors using generative AI for their classes but then accusing students of using it (even if they didn't) is insane. Students could have their academic careers ended over AI accusations but professors can use it whenever they want. Feels hypocritical and frustrating.

-Seething Student.

Dear Seething Student,
That is very frustrating and I'm sorry that this has happened in your classes. My advice is to talk to the provost if there is a certain class that this is constantly happening in. The provost will be able to help you out there. Otherwise, just remember that you can control only what you can control. Don't let what a professor is doing by "cutting corners" affect your own learning. A strategy I use if a professor accuses me of using AI is the AI tracker tool on Grammerly Authorship. It will track your keyboard and writing process, which then compiles a report that can show the exact writing process and if you used AI or not. The report is something you can send to your professor if they accuse you of using AI, and that way it won't affect your grades. I hope this helps!

-XOXO, Gossip Squirrel

Horoscopes:

Nayonikaa Singhaal
LAYOUT EDITOR

November 2nd, 2026

Aries: This week is a good time to slow down and spend some time reflecting on your decisions. Pay attention to the small details because something you have been trying to understand may finally start making sense.

Taurus: Your hard work and teamwork are beginning to pay off. Trust the people around you and take a moment to appreciate what you have accomplished together.

Gemini: Do not let unexpected delays make you feel like you are falling behind. You have made more progress than you realize, so trust yourself and give things time to come together.

Cancer: You may be taking on too many responsibilities this week, so remember to set boundaries and make time for yourself. Looking after your own well-being will help you show up better for others.

Leo: Staying true to yourself is bringing positive things into your life. Appreciate the people who support you and keep trusting the direction you are heading.

Virgo: Changes around you may feel overwhelming, but try not to fight them. Be open to new developments and trust that some changes are necessary to help you move forward.

Libra: Things may take longer than expected this week, especially when working with others. Be patient and focus on finding the right people to work with rather than settling for what is convenient.

Scorpio: Pay attention to whether people's actions match their promises this week. You may need to speak up and hold others accountable, especially when teamwork and shared responsibilities are involved.

Sagittarius: Your leadership skills may stand out this week, and others could start looking to you for guidance. Be confident in your abilities and recognize the role you can play in bringing people together.

Capricorn: This is a week to celebrate your accomplishments and appreciate how far you and your team have come. Give yourself permission to slow down and enjoy the results of your hard work.

Aquarius: Take some time to recognize everything you have achieved, including the small things that helped you get there. Your progress is worth celebrating, especially when you consider the people who supported you along the way.

Pisces: You may feel frustrated if a group project or shared responsibility is moving slower than expected. Be patient, focus on doing your part and allow things to unfold in their own time.

SPORTS

Alma-Hope football rivalry, over 100 years

By: Jazmine Matthews
Staff Writer

The football rivalry between Alma College and Hope College has continued for more than 100 years, bringing two Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) programs together through conference competition, historic games and changing team records.

The two schools first competed against each other Oct. 9, 1919, when Alma defeated Hope 39-0. Since then, the teams have met 100 times, with Hope holding a 62-34-4 advantage in the all-time series.

Although the rivalry began more than a century ago, the competition between Alma's Scots and Hope's Flying Dutchmen continues to play a role in both football programs.

The history of the matchup is closely connected to the MIAA, the oldest collegiate athletic conference in the United States. The conference began in 1888, with Alma joining in 1902 and Hope following in 1926.

Both schools compete at the NCAA Division III level, where conference games can influence championship standings and postseason opportunities. Their shared conference membership has helped maintain the matchup across generations of players, coaches and students.

For students at Alma, the rivalry is something they may become familiar with during their time on campus. **Ayla Tover ('28)**, said she has known about the rivalry between Alma and Hope since arriving at Alma College as a freshman.

Alma recorded six consecutive victories over Hope from 1966 through 1971. Hope later controlled the matchup with 16 straight wins from 1972 through 1987. These stretches of success have helped shape the history between the programs, as each new season creates another opportunity for the teams to compete.

Recent games have also shown how quickly the outcome of the matchup can change. In September 2025, Alma traveled to Holland, Michigan, to face then-No. 15 Hope. The Scots defeated the Flying Dutchmen 29-26 in overtime, earning a victory over a nationally ranked conference opponent.

The win gave Alma another memorable result in a series that has included both close finishes and one-sided games. However, the team's most recent meeting produced a different outcome.

On Saturday, Oct. 24, ninth-ranked Hope traveled to Alma College and defeated the Scots 38-3. Hope entered the matchup undefeated and continued its successful season, improving to 7-0 overall and 4-0 in conference play. The Flying Dutchmen controlled much of the game offensively and defensively, gaining 498 total yards while holding Alma to 205 yards. Despite the loss, Alma's **Jett King ('27)**, linebacker, recorded a career-high 18 tackles, the seventh-most in a single game in program history. King also blocked an extra-point attempt, giving the Scots an individual highlight during a difficult afternoon.



Photo courtesy of Ava Peraino

The result added another Hope victory to the all-time series and showed the competitive challenges Alma faced against one of the conference's strongest teams this season.

The Alma-Hope matchup represents a larger part of the MIAA's football history. Unlike rivalries connected to a championship trophy or a single historic incident, the relationship between Alma and Hope has developed through repeated conference meetings and the competition that comes with playing for league standings. Hope has a long standing rivalry with Albion College and a newer rivalry with Calvin University. Still, its history against Alma remains one of the conference's longest running football series.