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A very merry X-Mas



NEWSWIRE PHOTO BY KELLY SHAW

Jolly old St. Nick visited Gallagher Monday night as part of "A Xavier Christmas." Students, faculty and members of the community visited campus for the new tradition.

KELLY SHAW

Campus News Editor

Xavier students were able to begin preparing for the holidays on Monday with "A Xavier Christmas." Sponsored by SGA, the event was an evening of Christmas events for Xavier students, faculty and 100 local elementary school students who participate in the Xavier Buddies program.

SGA took the idea of "Christmas on Campus" from the University of Dayton, which has had a similar celebration for over 40 years. For the past 15 years, Xavier has put on a smaller scale event called Christmas on the Mall, which always included the lighting of the Sally Watson Memorial Tree on the greenspace. This year, the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership (OSIL) was trying to make Christmas on the Mall a bigger event, while one of the SGA committees was planning to bring kids to campus.

"We met each other at a very opportune time, and the collaboration was perfect," said SGA senator and chair of the project, sophomore Krista Kutz. "It was a success because it happened."

"There has been talk of a Xavier Christmas on Campus for years, and we've finally turned that idea into something special for XU students, faculty, staff and children of the neighboring communities to enjoy."

The evening began with a live nativity enacted by the Xavier Play-

ers and the arrival of the children. The live nativity was complete with a constructed stable, the Biblical cast and sheep eating hay. A lighting of luminaries accompanied by the serving of hot chocolate then took place to entertain everyone before the opening ceremonies on the greenspace.

To start the festivities there was a Gospel Choir performance, followed by words from SGA President, senior Steve Bentley and XU President, Fr. Michael Graham, S.J. The ceremonies ended with the



NEWSWIRE PHOTO BY KELLY SHAW

The newly illuminated XU tree.

lighting of the Sally Watson Memorial Christmas tree and a surprise visit from Santa.

The residence halls took part in the evening by providing a pizza dinner with cookie decorating for the children and their buddies. To end the evening, there were pictures with Santa in the GSC as well as arts and crafts sponsored by various student clubs and organizations, such as STANDXU, South Asian

Society, Navigators, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the men's soccer and cross country teams, Finance Club, Advertising Club, Mortar Board National Honor Society, International Students Society and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

"I saw the childlike spirit of Christmas in 20-something-year-olds' eyes as they played Christmas musical chairs, decorated cookies and sang 'Joy to the World' around the Christmas tree. I witnessed children cry when they got back on the bus because they didn't want to say goodbye to their Xavier Buddies. Several teachers from the local elementary schools (Norwood View, Burton, Hoffman and Parham) attended the event with the children and thanked me endlessly for making the event happen. It seemed that everyone was so happy to be a part of the first event of its kind at Xavier," said Kutz.

In addition to the activities on the residential mall, students collected canned goods and non-perishable food items for the Freestore Foodbank.

"Xavier University, as a Jesuit school, has a thing for service. So it's about time we combined that Jesuit mission of service with the spirit of Christmas," said Kutz.

"Celebrating 'A Xavier Christmas' brought so much happiness to everyone involved—both the children and the Xavier students. I think it reminded us all of what the holiday season is all about: being connected and spreading joy."

Detroit begs for Mercy

JOHN LAFOLLETTE

Sports Editor

Junior forward Josh Duncan scored a career high 25 points and senior forward Justin Doellman added 10 more as Xavier easily dispatched the University of Detroit Mercy Titans, 88-55 on Tuesday night at Cintas Center.

The win brought Xavier's record to 7-1 to start this season, their best since starting the 1996-97 season 10-0. UDM fell to 2-6 with the loss.

The win also secured (for the time being) Xavier's spot in the AP top-25. The Musketeers are ranked 24, their first appearance in the polls since finishing the regular season ranked 12 in 2003.

Duncan's record performance was spurred by a sizzling 82 percent shooting percentage, including 4-of-5 from 3-point range. "I'm just trying to let the game come to me," said Duncan. "I'm trying to shoot with confidence."

Tuesday's win over Detroit was the last in a season-high homestand of four games, all of which Xavier won.

In the past week, Xavier has defeated the Miami (OH) RedHawks by a score of 68-53 and the Western Carolina Catamounts 95-61 in what would be the first of back-to-back 30-point wins. Xavier has not beaten a home opponent by fewer than 15 points since last year's Crosstown Shootout, when Xavier held off Cincinnati to win by two.

The Musketeers shot over 50 percent for the fourth straight game, making 32-of-54 from the field for a season-high 59.3 shooting percentage.

Still, head coach Sean Miller isn't entirely satisfied with the team's offensive performance. "I

want to give our guys credit for working hard and for having done a lot of things right, but we're a work in progress," said Miller. "We've got a long way to go and a lot of work to do."

The homestand was highlighted by Doellman's 1000th point scored, in typical Doellman fashion, with a soft bank shot midway through the first half against Western Carolina.

"I didn't even know that I had a chance to achieve that," said Doellman. "It's such a great honor; I'm just happy to be a part of the tradition."

Junior guard Drew Lavender has recorded back-to-back season

highs in assists, dishing out six against Western Carolina and seven against Detroit.

Xavier Nation also saw seven dunks by flashy freshman forward Derrick Brown in this homestand, including three crowd-pleasing alley-oops in Tuesday's win over Detroit. Junior guard Stanley Burrell, who threw one of the alley-oops to Brown, said, "Derrick's an

unbelievable athlete. Those are the kind of things he does for us. He's an X-factor type guy, he does a little bit of everything."

Burrell has hit a cold streak since leading the team with 15 points against Miami, going 4-of-14 in the last two games. Still, Miller is sure he'll bounce back.

"I don't know if he has the most confidence he's ever had, but he's playing hard, he's playing unselfish, he's passing the ball," Miller said. "His shots will drop. Stan's a hard shooter to rattle."

The Musketeers will hit the road to take on the Creighton Bluejays at 8 p.m. on Saturday at the QWEST Center in Omaha, Neb.

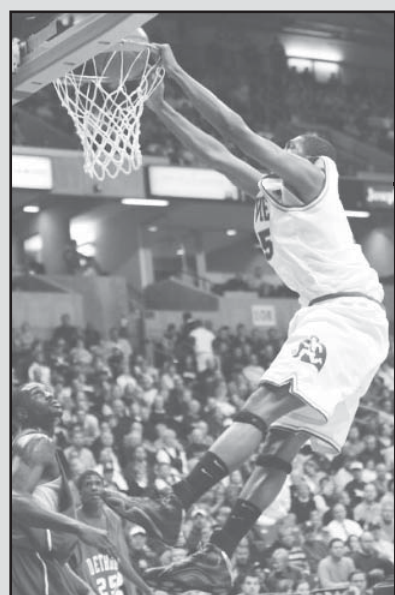


PHOTO COURTESY GOXAVIER.COM

With three more highlight reel dunks, redshirt freshman Derrick Brown continued his amazing season Tuesday night in an 88-55 win over Detroit.

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Advertising (513) 745-3561
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Inside the 'Wire...

- The very best police notes from the past four years: **Op-Ed, page 4**
- The Spectator tries to make sense out of the BCS: **Sports, page 6**
- Choose your own Newswire adventure: **Calendar City, page 8**