

THE GUSTAVIAN WEEKLY

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ISSUE 3

Gustie of the Week: Luke Israel



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"Welcome to the age of conspiracy"



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Women's Soccer suffers first loss



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Gustavus embarks on quest for economic balance

52nd annual Nobel Conference gathers economic minds on campus



Each year the Lund Center fills with people eager to attend the Nobel Conference.

Submitted

Mikayla Kvittem-Barr
Features Editor

This year marks Gustavus' 52nd Annual Nobel Conference. This year's conference is titled, *In Search of Economic Balance* and analyzes some of the challenges facing real world implementation of economic theories. Furthermore, the conference will focus on the factors polarizing economists and policy makers as well as the inequalities present in our economy. For the first time in 16 years, this year's conference will be entirely focused on the ever changing economy.

"This year's topic is interesting because it is not what might be expected of the Nobel Conference, but it is an aspect that impacts everyone," Junior Melissa Saholt said.

Each conference brings with a panel of incredibly talented intellects. This year, the speakers include Dan Ariely, Orley Ashenfelter, Paul Collier, Chris Farrell, John List, Deirdre Mc-

Closkey, and Joerg Rieger.

Dan Ariely currently serves as the James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics. He teaches at Duke University. He attended Tel Aviv University for his undergraduate education and has spent the following years researching behavioral economics and explaining in layman terms. His lecture will blend economic theory and 'irrationality'.

"Dan Ariely is underrated. He communicates complex theories through stories that anyone can relate to," Senior Sam Sanda said.

Orley Ashenfelter is a professor of economics at Princeton University as well as the Director of the Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University. He graduated from Claremont McKenna Men's College and turned his interests to labor economics, econometrics, and law and economics. A receiver of more than two dozen awards, he has made his name in the economic world. Ashenfelter will be discussing the inequali-

ties in human wealth.

A Professor of economics and public policy in the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford, Paul Collier attended the University of Oxford for his undergraduate education. Collier specializes in the political, economic and developmental challenges that impoverished countries face. Collier's lecture will address the political economy, economic growth, and poverty within Africa.

Chris Farrell is known for his voice on Minnesota Public Radio as an Economics Commentator. He is also the Senior Economics Contributor at Marketplace Money, a one-hour weekly personal finance show. After attending Stanford University, he began reporting and writing on economics. He aims to help people manage their money in the most efficient and practical way. This year, Farrell will be discussing the importance of economic inclusion.

John List works as the Distinguished Service Professor in

Economics and the Chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago. Despite his attendance at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, he has risen through the economic world fairly rapidly. List specializes in microeconomic issues, known for his fieldwork experimentation. He will combine these specialities in his lecture which encourages the use of field experiments in contribution to a better world.

"Rieger will argue that our misplaced faith in an unbalanced economy shapes us more deeply than we had ever realized, not only in our finances and work, but also our relationships, our thinking, and even our hopes, desires, and most sacred religious practice," Chaplain Brian Konkol said.

Deirdre McCloskey serves as Distinguished Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She attended Harvard University for her undergraduate degree. With a wide variety of experi-

ence, McCloskey has worked on anything from technical economics to the bourgeois era virtues. McCloskey's lecture will discuss how the economy's wealth accumulation.

Lastly, Joerg Rieger occupies the position of the Wendland-Cook Endowed Professor of Constructive Theology at Perkins School of Theology within Southern Methodist University. Rieger received his undergraduate degree from Theologisches Seminar der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche in Germany. Rieger will speak about theology's impact on economics, bringing a fresh and insightful look into religion's presence in the modern world.

Each year, the Nobel Conference brings only the finest intellects in the field and this year will be no different. Students can expect to leave with many insightful thoughts and challenging questions.

The Nobel Conference will also include a panel discussion with several Presidents, CEOs, and Directors at a variety of economic and religious organizations. This panel is aimed at discussing the search of economic balance at the local level.

Hosted by the Economics & Management department, each speaker is hosted by one of the department's esteemed professors. Each speaker also has a designated student group. These groups of six-ten students aim to better understand the speaker and learn from them.

"Knowing that Nobel is such a huge and impactful conference, I wanted to be a part of it!" Saholt said.

Many of the involved students will also get the opportunity to meet to personally meet their group's speaker and discuss their research with them.

"It has been fun discussing Ariely's with Kathy Lund Dean and the reading group. It will be an honor to meet Dan during the Nobel Conference," Sanda said.

The 52 Nobel Conference will take place Wednesday, Sept. 27 and Thursday, Sept. 28 and will begin at 9:15 a.m. Students are encouraged to attend another wonderful conference!

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New Senate Representatives Elected

This year's Senate body aims to remain transparent and accurately represent respective constituencies

Priscilla Otero
Staff Writer

Gustavus Adolphus College Student Senate strives for transparency. Every academic year, any recognized organization on campus here at Gustavus Adolphus College who wants funding from the College must go through a process that includes drafting a budget proposal for the Senate. But the Student Sen-

ate has much more to offer. And they want you to know.

Besides approving and allocating budgets for student organizations, the Senate is an organization for students. In addition to two co-presidents, ten cabinet member positions, and hall and class representatives; Senate forms seven specialized committees. Each cohesive component of Senate assures that the voices of the student body are heard in the fairest way possible.

Senate wants to make sure student concerns are validated, with nothing being done without student input.

Herchran Singh'17, Co-President of Student Senate has been involved with the representation process for four years now. First as the International Student Representative, followed by a year searving as the Prairie View Hall Representative, then Diversity Committee Chair, and now as Co-President— Singh is

a passionate, organized leader.

"In Senate we get to be heavily engaged in the decisions that the College makes and [we] have a direct say in making sure that the students' voice and their concerns are heard," said Singh.

Senate meetings are held every Monday at 7:00 pm in the Board Room. The campus at large is invited to attend and participate while following Robert's Rules of Order. Meet-

ings are heavily engaged, with audio recordings of the meetings available to the community on the Gustavus site. Students are encouraged to participate in Senate in every possible capacity. And many do.

Sophomore Rafay Arshad ran for International Students Representative this year and won.

"The two major issues that I

'New Senate'
continues on Page 3

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'New Senate' continued

want to tackle for international students are living in the Southwest Hostel over the breaks [and] transportation to the Cities and Mankato. I love the diversity on campus, and hanging out with such diverse friends gives me different perspectives about different topics," Arshad said.

Newly appointed Class of 2018 Representative Olivia Ward has been actively involved with representing the Gustavus student body.

"I have worked with the Senate Finance Committee as the Student at Large for two years now and that experience has made me want to continue my work in student government. I enjoyed my time as Student at Large, but was interested in moving into a speaking and voting position in Senate so that I could allow my opinions to be viewed individually rather than only grouped in with the recommendations of the Finance Committee. Additionally, I would like to do a better job representing the wants and needs of my class, because as a member of the class of 2018, I haven't always felt fully represented by Senate representatives," Ward said.

In conjunction with focusing on transparency by motivating students to become involved,



Submitted

The Gustavus Adolphus Student Senate convenes weekly on Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Board Room to address issues brought to senators by their respective constituencies.

this year Senate will continue to support its programs implemented on campus.

The Gustavus Readership Program at Gustavus provides national and local newspapers free of charge to students. By working with *USA Today*, these newspapers are readily available in various areas around campus. The program hopes to motivate students to keep up with current events around the world and within our country's borders.

Another Student Senate implemented program, The Gus Bus, is a service that is highly

utilized by student on campus, and one that the Senate wants to keep providing to respectful students.

So what else is on the docket for the upcoming year? Well, diversity at Gustavus is an issue that Co-President Herchran seems to be very passionate about; as she puts it, "It's not always about equality but equity", and with a phenomenal track record of showing leadership Herchran, wants to expand the resources available to students from all backgrounds.

A new program, the "Implicit

Bias Intervention Program" organized as a workshop, is available to students with leadership positions at Gustavus. The program helps address issues of implicit bias in our Gustavus community. Student Senate would one day want to have the workshop available for every Gustavus student wishing to attend.

When running for Student Senate last year, Co-President Alexander Shaikoski'17 knew that the 2016-2017 academic year would be an exciting one for the Senate.

"I'm excited for the year to start, and to work with Herchran in tackling issues that come up at Gustavus. I want to make sure our student body knows what is going on, who is representing, and what they are doing while representing them," said Shaikoski.

Upcoming events supported by Student Senate include "Breakfast with the Board". On September 30th, students have the opportunity to have breakfast with members of the Board of Trustees and discuss any topic of interest.



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Tuesday, September 27

- Swedish Meatballs
- Herb Roasted Chicken
- Russian Vegetable Strudel
- Mashed Potatoes
- Brussels Sprouts with Caramelized Onions
- Brown Rice
- Chicken Alfredo Pizza

soups

- Creamy Chicken + Wild Rice
- Tuscan Bean
- Tomato + Basil + Feta

deli hot bar menu

Wednesday, September 28

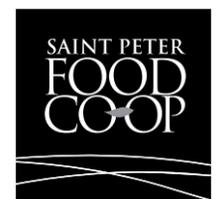
- Southern Fried Chicken
- Twice Baked Potatoes
- Mac + Cheese
- Chicken + Sausage Jambalaya
- Red Beans
- Grilled Vegetables
- Brown Rice
- BBQ Pulled Pork Pizza

soups

- Sausage + Kale + White Bean
- African Peanut
- Corn Chowder

Lunch at the Co-op.
nice thinking.

Join us during the Nobel Conference, we're just down the hill.



and Deli



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Did we mention our desserts and in-house baked goods?

Building Bridges prepares to uproot injustice

This year's conference centers around creative grassroots activism



The Building Bridges Conference attracts Gusties to Christ Chapel each year to explore various topics.

Submitted

Alexis Sienczak
Staff Writer

The annual Building Bridges Conference is a few months away, but the team just released this year's topic. The team has prepared for this moment months in advance.

The topic, Uprooting Injustice: Fostering the Growth of Grassroot Movements, has already spurred Gustavus students to participate in grassroots movements. The Building Bridges organization is much more than a team that puts together a fantastic conference. Building Bridges is a way of thinking about the power each individual possesses.

The Building Bridges Conference is a large event that happens annually on Gustavus's campus. Conference topics are usually built around current issues.

Past topics have included immigration, rape culture, and environmental justice. This year's Building Bridges conference topic is Uprooting Injustice: Fostering the Growth of Grassroots Movements.

The point of this conference is to bolster the individual into taking action against injustices.

The start of the topic, "Uprooting Injustice", points toward the meaning of grassroots movements. Rather than top-down authority,

grassroot movements start from the bottom-up.

Individuals at a local level congregate to fight for a common cause. It can seem daunting to challenge grounded institutions as a small group of individuals, but power comes in numbers. Thousands have marched in various places in the U.S. to challenge topics such as civil, gender, and body issues.

"This conference has been running for as long as most of Gustavus students have been alive. I think that's a testament to the important subject matter the conference highlights and the role it plays in educating our community."

—Jamie Hollis

This year's Building Bridges conference wants to bring that same mentality to all social issues. Building Bridges' Co-Chair, Liza Long, emailed the

entirety of the student population, earlier this week, to promote this year's conference. In the email, Long defined what activism can be.

"Activism is not just holding rallies of going on strike; it can be so much more—creating art, speaking publicly, writing papers, doing research.."

Long and the rest of the Building Bridges team want to bring this message home and more at this year's conference.

This year's conference, along with all of the others, require many hours of preparation and deciding what's included in the program. Luckily, the Building Bridges co-captains, Liza Long and Gabe Grosshuesch, spent their summer researching different issues they felt needed to be exposed on campus. The Co-Chair then spent time watching videos of possible keynote speakers. Their work has to offer a unique perspective of the issue at hand to be considered. Gustavus itself is a large supporter of Building Bridges.

When asked about the campus support, Long said, "All the offices, from the Dean of Students to Dining Services, has been willing to take the time to make sure we have the resources we need," Long said

That makes the event all the more special. Hundreds attend the conference live while others stream it from home.

Like Long said, it takes a tremendous effort to pull something off as big as the conference. Fortunately, the Building Bridges team is full of diverse students and faculty that are dedicated to educating the public. Along with the co-captains there are six executive board members and three advisers. One of the advisers, Jamie Hollis, is new to the Building Bridges team. Last year, she started out at Gustavus as the head of the Diversity Center. The Diversity Center and Hollis supports Building Bridges through financial means.

"This conference has been running for as long as most of Gustavus's students have been alive. I think that's a testament to the important subject matter the conference highlights and the role it plays in educating our community," Hollis said.

The conference is much more than just a presentation. The conference is an event that brings people together for a united cause.

The Building Bridges team is already gearing up for next year's team. Earlier this week Co-Captain applications were available to students. Even though the planning has just begun for Long and Grosshuesch they are already looking forward to the long term future of Building Bridges.

Long wants the organization to give students "the confidence and capability to be an activist, no matter what injustice they are passionate about."

For her, Building Bridges was one of the biggest highlights of her Gustavus career. She and the rest of Building Bridges want other students to feel the same way. The future of Building Bridges lies in the hands of students at Gustavus. It's up to us to challenge the status quo and educate others about the injustices that exist in our world. Just like this year's conference, all it takes is one person to change the world.

The annual Building Bridges conference may be held at Gustavus but its impact can be felt around the world. This year's topic is about fighting injustice through grassroots movements. Already some Gusties have been involved with grassroots movements. Andrew Deziel and Nick Pemberton spent their summer working for a grassroots presidential campaign. Co-captains Long and Grosshuesch have been planning this event for some time. Behind them, stands the team of the Gustavus' Building Bridges. Together, they make an event that defies all expectations of what a group of individuals can accomplish.

GUSTIE of the WEEK

Luke Israel

Kayla Cardenas
Staff Writer

It is the beginning of a new semester with brand new opportunities. Greek life, clubs, and organizations on campus have been capturing the interest of Gusties since day one. Being overinvolved happens to the best of students, to the point of being stretched thin. Finding a stable medium of being adventurous, involved, and keeping those grades steady is something Luke Israel, Senior International Management and Philosophy double major from Duluth, MN has been able to achieve.

Luke is one of the Co-Presidents of the Epsilon Pi Alpha Fraternity, involved in Inter-Greek Senate (IGS), Habitat for Humanity, TEDxGustavus, and the Nordic Ski team.

"It is really easy to say yes and get involved in more and more things," Luke said. "I have had that problem in the past where I took on too much and I could not give 100% in anything I was doing, which I did not enjoy."

David Newell, an Administrator at Gustavus, thinks fondly of Luke's determination. Luke and Newell's relationship strings from their work together

with Habitat for Humanity and TEDxGustavus

"Luke possesses the ability to adapt to new environments and bring his best effort wherever he is," Newell said. "I believe Luke is committed to excellence. He demonstrates this by always working hard, following through, and committing to a job well done."

As recruitment for Greek life thrives in the current weeks, Luke looks forward to fun times ahead with the Eppies while adapting to some changes.

"Luke possesses the ability to adapt to new environments and bring his best effort wherever he is."

—David Newell

"It is fun. It is a really exciting time of year right now. We had our first meeting and it is really nice to be back and see everyone," Luke said. "It is tough sometimes, a lot of new things this year. We have a new director this year for Greek Life, her name is Julianne Watterson and I work a lot with her. But we are in this transition period where

there is always something new, and always transitioning. There is no formula or book saying 'This is how you run a fraternity', you just get a lot of new things and unique opportunities where you just have to figure out how to best serve the fraternity. Yes, I am a Co-President but the fraternity belongs to everybody, not just to me."

The other half serving with Luke as the Epsilon Pi Alpha Fraternity Co-President is Senior Benjamin Michalick. It was the mix of soccer and pink hair that kick started this roommate, friend bromance between Luke and Michalick.

"Luke is mindful, caring, and sassy," Michalick said. "Luke came for a visit to my school, and I think I struck him with my pink hair, so he remembered that several years later when we were in high school together."

Through the years, the two friends have made memories through their outdoor adventures with their fellow Eppie Brothers.

"The last two summers Luke, some brothers and I have gone on a canoeing trip down a river together," Michalick said. "We decided to take a small detour on a side stream instead of traversing down a big bend. We turned a corner to realize a



Caroline Probst

Luke shows his dedication as a worker in all his extracurricular activities.

tree had fallen over said stream, and couldn't back paddle, so we wound up going through the tree. I fought the branches (still have a small scar) but when I turned around in the canoe, Luke was gone. I was about to jump into the river to swim up after him when he poked his head out of the bottom because he just laid down under the seat. Somehow we still beat the others who'd taken the correct way though."

Another story Michalick enjoys sharing is the time when

he convinced Luke to join him with putting their fraternity's Greek letters on their chests so they could tan around it.

"His skin burned a lot faster. He had an incredibly red chest with our letters sticking out in pale white. He's never let me live it down that he did my idea better than I did," Michalick said.

When Michalick and Luke are not out making exciting memories together they are conversing in thought provoking conversation, bowling on Mondays, hanging out with fellow brothers or listening to some laid back music.

As Luke is no longer new to his Gustavus educational career, thoughts of what comes next come to mind. "Graduation seems some long ways away but it's not," Luke said. "I don't know what I am doing after school so that is not the greatest feeling. It is the beginning of the school year now but I know it is going to go by in a blink of an eye. I am excited but nervous for what the future holds."

Luke has some last-year advice to those especially contemplating Greek life.

"Even if you don't think at first you want to go Greek, just go to the recruitment events and meet the different chapters and meet the members. Spend time looking into Greek because it is a big decision to join. Check out everyone and if you have questions, ask your questions, don't be afraid to ask. Don't be afraid to explore things that you were not interested in at first."



Luke looks forward to what the year has to offer for him and the Eppies.

Caroline Probst

The Third *Star Trek* goes *Beyond* expectations



Brady Lass
Variety Editor

With Gene Roddenberry's acclaimed science fiction series *Star Trek* celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, what better time to release another film installment for these celebrated characters?

Ever since the franchise reboot in 2009 directed by J.J. Abrams, the latest *Star Trek* movies have been a hit with both critics and audiences, but has divided the Trekkie fanbase with what they view as questionable creativity choices, such as the creation of a new timeline to justify the reboot, and how Abrams essentially remade *Wrath of Khan* with *Star Trek: Into Darkness*.

People weren't too sure of what to think when it was announced that *Fast and Furious* director Justin Lin was helmed to direct the third installment of the reboot series due to Abrams focusing his efforts on the new



The latest installment in the *Star Trek* rebooted universe is guaranteed to impress fans and critics. Creative Commons

Star Wars trilogy, and their optimism was lowered due to the unfortunate deaths of actors Leonard Nimoy and Anton Yelchin.

However, despite the heightened skepticism, the third *Star Trek Beyond* succeeded in a number of areas, making it one of the few 2016 summer blockbusters worth checking out.

In the middle of their five year exploratory mission, the crew of the USS *Enterprise* is sent on a rescue mission to Altamid, a planet within an uncharted nebula.

Because it can't be a *Star Trek* movie without the ship crashing, the *Enterprise* is ambushed when it comes in proximity to the Altamid, and the crew

is separated on the unknown planet. They discover the force behind the attack is a mutated alien named Krall, who has plans to destroy the Federation with an ancient bioweapon.

They receive some much needed assistance in reuniting and leaving the planet from an alien scavenger named Jaylah. During their time there, Kirk and Spock question whether they should keep their places on the *Enterprise*.

Out of the three entries in the *Star Trek* reboot movies, *Beyond* is guaranteed to satisfy old and new fans. Unlike the last two movies, it remembers that *Star Trek* is an ensemble piece, giving nearly every member of the crew a moment to shine rather

than focusing only on Kirk and Spock.

Splitting up the *Enterprise* into different pairings was a great way to highlight more of the supporting cast and demonstrate the chemistry the actors had with each other, with Zachary Quinto's Spock and Karl Urban's Dr. McCoy being my particular favorite. The new character, Jaylah, was also a fun addition to the ride in terms of design and character, coming across as a Rey-like figure without being too good at everything.

The writing duties for this installment were handled by Doug Jung and Scotty himself, Simon Pegg, giving the series a much needed comedic boost

after the overly edgy tones of *Into Darkness* (even if the world "dark" was in the name).

The only grim element was that Leonard Nimoy's death was written into the film, but rather than feel like another sad reminder, it actually plays an important role with Spock's character without feeling too forced, giving Quinto another chance to show that he's a worthy successor to the Vulcan mantle.

Aside from that, it has entertaining and creative action with the technology and vehicles present in this universe, and there's no more suffering from J.J.'s infamous lens flares.

The primary reason why *Star Trek Beyond* succeeded where the other didn't was that it acted as its own product. The first *Star Trek* had to be an origin story for characters a number of people knew and tried to justify why they rebooted the universe, while the second was a remake.

It essentially feels like an extended episode of the original series, with even some morals thrown in for good measure.

Star Trek Beyond is one of those very few instances where the third is better than the first two. It has fun character dynamics, acting, action, and serves as a good reminder of why this series has endured for 50 years and will continue to live long and prosper. For those who unfortunately can't do the same, it's a worthy swan song.

The Nobel Concert: A Finer Side of Science

Josh Monson
Staff Writer

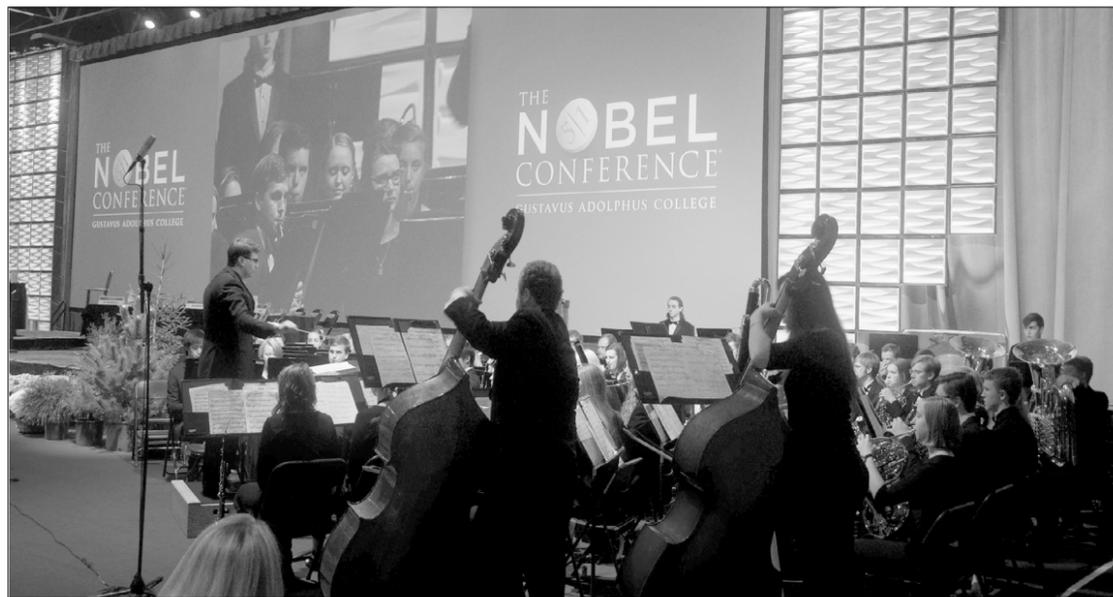
Students are settled into their dorms, the leaves show signs of contemplating color changes, and professors have (hopefully) stopped revising their syllabi. It is time to welcome the 52nd Nobel Conference to our quaint campus.

This year's conference arrives earlier than any in recent memory, taking place Tuesday, September 27, and Wednesday, September 28. With this powerhouse of academic and scientific thought comes the Nobel Conference Concert, bringing a broader and more artistic experience to attendees on the first night, starting at 7:00 pm.

"A lot of talking and thinking at the conference," Professor Yumiko Oshima-Ryan, concert piano player and current chair of the music department said. "How about listening?"

Yumiko first became involved in the Nobel Concert four years ago, and is glad to see it taking place for the first time not in Christ Chapel, but Bjorling Recital Hall in the Fine Arts building, which is a dream come true for her.

"Live classical chamber music always brings a special quality to any gathering," Barb Leibundguth, flute instructor and performer for the event said. "Our concert will provide an entertaining evening event



The Gustavus musicians are hard at work preparing for this year's Nobel Conference Concert. Submitted

that showcases Gustavus arts faculty."

The focus of this year's conference is the search for economic balance, for which Leibundguth believes the six part Francis Poulenc song was wisely chosen.

"The piece exemplifies one aspect of economy--every note is perfect and nothing is wasted," Leibundguth said.

Also speaking to the benefits of holding a concert in the midst of the scientific symposium is professor, performer and Gustavus Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Justin Knoepfel.

"I love bridging the gap between the left and right brains.

These concerts do just that and it has been a pleasure to be invited these number of times," Knoepfel said.

This will be Knoepfel's third Nobel Concert, in which he will play a solo piece by César Franck, the Violin Sonata in A Major, which Knoepfel has personally transcribed for viola.

Preparations for this concert began as early as the day after last year's concert, but that doesn't mean that rehearsal has been a cakewalk for the various Gustavus faculty musicians involved. For example, finding the time when six busy music instructors could practice

Poulenc's Sextet proved to be challenging, and it's no simple piece to begin with.

"The jazzy rhythms are sometimes tricky to coordinate with six players," Leibundguth said, who is revisiting the number after last performing it almost 40 years ago. "It's challenging to bring out all the different moods of the piece, from very soft and floating, to very loud and super-fast."

Sarah Erickson Lume, woodwind instructor at the college and Oboe player for the concert, also attests to the difficulty of the work.

"The Poulenc is challenging

and requires many, many, many hours of individual preparation before we even come together as a group, but playing together is an excellent way to connect professionally and ultimately strengthens our department," Lume said.

Nevertheless, everyone seems excited to be working with one another, especially when they come from such varied schools. The parts in the Poulenc are comprised of piano, oboe, flute, clarinet, bassoon and French horn.

While the headlining Nobel Conference requires ordering tickets in advance to ensure access, this concert is entirely free of charge. With only a limited number of seats being in the Jussi Bjorling Recital Hall, however, it is advised that attendees show up early to the seven pm performance to secure seating.

All in all, this year's Nobel Conference Concert is on track to impress and enthrall its audience. The talented instrumental staff at Gustavus have poured many hours, both alone and when joining forces, into producing something truly special to complement the Nobel's display of scientific prowess. For Knoepfel, this concert is a key aspect of the two day event.

"It is an essential moment in time for reflection and admiration of what is deemed valuable." He encourages everyone to attend," Knoepfel said.

Tales from Abroad

Ben Keran
Staff Writer

Growing up, I won't say I was bull-headed, but I think I could have easily been described as stubborn. I tended (and still do) to think that my opinion, whether it was well documented or not, was always clearly the right one.

I entered Gustavus as a first-year in the fall of 2013. I remember my dad telling me that I "had" to study abroad. As an incoming freshman, still anxious about living on my own in Minnesota for the next four years of my life, I thought that was maybe the stupidest thing I'd ever heard.

Eight months ago, I was told that my tray table needed to be folded up because my plane was landing in Osaka, Japan. I was planning to stay in a country I'd only heard and studied about, preparing to live with an anonymous, non-English speaking family, and doing it for the next four months of my life.

That's not something I ever expected.

When you step off of a plane in a foreign country, you expect a lot. You expect everyone to look different and for the food to taste funny, but nothing can prepare you for seeing a vending machine selling hot cans of coffee, tea, and creamed corn, much less with Tommy Lee Jones' face plastered across it.

For most of my life, people had referred to Japan as this technologically advanced place where robots run the country and everything is wired to be this amazing powerhouse of video game companies and electronics. There is nothing further from the truth. You'll find those places in Tokyo, sure, but it's not nearly as impressive as heated toilet seats or the convenience of a train that's always on time.

"My experience in Japan was happiness personified by the person who was with me every step of the way."

Something about Japan that people underestimate is the train system. Japanese trains can take you anywhere and everywhere, and they're always on time. When I was in Japan, the trains were how I got to school, how I got home, and how I got around Japan. For example, every morning, I awoke close to 7:00 am, took a shower, ate breakfast next to my half-awake three-year old host-sister, and began my approximately one-hour commute to school. A brisk ten minute walk to the train station, five to ten minutes of waiting for the train while drinking a Tommy Lee Jones-endorsed



Japan offered Ben a number of life-lessons through its influential citizens.

Submitted

coffee, 35 minutes standing and holding onto the grip above my head on said train, and another 15 minute zombie walk up a hill to my college. One Japanese student I met, made a five-hour commute from the other side of Japan, on a daily basis.

I went to school at Kansai Gaidai University, which is a school specifically meant for Japanese students to study abroad and for students from around the world who want to study in Japan. I usually had classes three times a day, and the classes ranged from courses on Japanese business, sexuality in Japan, or even Japanese film. The Japanese school system is different than in the United States. Their spring semester starts in April, so the campus was empty for most of my stay. However, upon the return of the Japanese students, the "ichi-

nensei" or first-years, spend most of their time practicing their English with the English-speaking foreigners. If you're not ready for it, it can be tiresome, but not only is it both helpful for learning Japanese, you're teaching them English and it can be a very rewarding experience.

After my first week of school, I met someone that changed my life forever and we travelled everywhere together. We spent a week trip going to the Japanese Alps and exploring the cities around them. On a pretty regular basis, we would go to Kyoto and visit temples, we would go to a day-long festival in Nara, or sometimes we'd spend a weekend in a new town and just explore. We watched the cherry blossoms lose their petals while we drank convenience store wine underneath them. It's hard to put finding someone like that

into words or to explain what it's meant for me as a person. Basically, my experience in Japan was happiness personified by the person who was with me every step of the way.

I think Japan can be described as a life-changing experience for me, but it seems as though the important things I learned were never particular to Japan: treat the people around you with respect, eating is something everybody has in common, etc. I didn't learn about Japan so much as I learned that people everywhere are truly people, no matter how they look, how they talk, or where they live.

When you step off of a plane in a foreign country, you expect a lot. It's almost impossible to expect you'll change your life forever.



Japan had plenty of gorgeous sites for Ben to photograph and add to his scrapbook and Facebook page.

Submitted

Nobel Conference 52

In Search of Economic Balance



Diedre McCloskey

Distinguished Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago

McCloskey's work has varied from technical economics and statistical theory to transgender advocacy. McCloskey has authored 16 books and nearly 400 articles in her many fields!

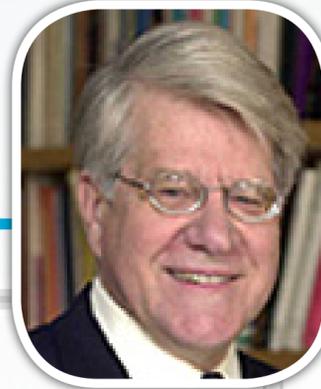
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John List

Distinguished Service Professor in Economics and the Chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago

List's work primarily focuses on microeconomic issues. He is also known for utilizing field experience to offer new insights in economic research.



Orley Ashenfelter

Professor of Economics at Princeton University and also the Director of the Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University

Ashenfelter's work centers around labor economics, econometrics, and law and economics. He is currently the President of the American Association of Wine Economists and an editor of the Journal of Wine Economics!



Paul Collier

Professor of Economics and Public Policy in the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford

Collier specializes in the political, economic, and developmental issues of poor countries. Collier was knighted in the 2014 New Year Honours!



Chris Farrell

Senior Economics Contributor at Marketplace Money, Economics commentator for Minnesota Public Radio

Farrell's work includes reporting and writing on economics while helping people make the most of their money. Farrell started his career as a merchant seaman!



Joerg Rieger

Wendland-Cook Endowed Professor of Constructive Theology at Perkins School of Theology within Southern Methodist University

Rieger's work recognizes the need for more radical visions of Christianity while examining the relationship between theology and public life and its effect on political and economic power. Rieger's work has been translated into Portuguese, Spanish, German, Korean, Chinese, and Italian.

[@joerg_rieger](#)



Dan Ariely

James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University

Ariely has spent years researching behavioral economics and explaining it in easy to understand, plain language. Ariely's TEDtalks have been viewed over 7.8 million times.

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