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Artist Series to bring holiday cheer to BJU

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2021

Kirsten Oss

STAFF WRITER

Carols and Classics, a Christmas-themed Concert, Opera & and Drama Series event, will feature both well-known Christmas songs and a new arrangement composed for the concert, which will be held on Thursday and Friday.

Dr. Bruce Cox, head of the department of instrumental studies, will direct the Symphonic Wind Band, Concert

Choir and University Singers together in concert.

At the beginning of the planning process, Cox developed an objective for the event. “Glorify God and bring joy to His people by celebrating His incarnation specifically and the season broadly,” it reads.

“I want to bring glory to God and delight his people through the celebration of His incarnation,

both specifically theologically and the season generally,” Cox said. “People really need the hope and joy of celebrating Christ’s incarnation.”

Many of the pieces will be familiar to guests of all ages and tie into the Christmas season, thus the title

Carols and Classics.

The idea and outline of the program was born in the spring of 2020, but due to COVID-19, the production



was moved to this academic year.

In the meantime, Cox selected pieces for two University choirs to perform together and stand-alone pieces for the wind band.

Dr. Pattye Casarow, the head of the department of music education, conducts the University Singers, which will perform songs with

But this Artist Series has a unique musical feature.

“But I think one touch that I wanted to have was the creation of a new piece just for this program, and that is an arrangement of the ‘Wexford Carol,’ which is probably my favorite Christmas carol,” Cox said. “Dr. Seth Custer has crafted a new arrangement of that carol for the wind band, and I think the students will really enjoy that new setting.”

Custer, the department head of the department of music theory and technology, worked on remixing the elements in the “Wexford Carol” until he crafted an original composition.

“I usually start by sitting down with the material that I want to use and improvise with it to see what things I could do beyond the obvious,” Custer said. “Then I try to develop a familiarity with everything I want to do and a bank of ideas, so to speak. As I start fleshing out the piece, certain ideas tend to emerge more prominently.”

“It’s a beautiful, haunting melody—gorgeous,” Casarow said. “It originally was a traditional Irish carol.”

Listeners can hear the carol’s Irish roots in the structure of the music itself.

“This sort of [arrangement] is often heard in folk music, but less common to a typical classical or romantic style,” Custer said.

“It has a kind of antique, quaint sound to it,

which pairs nicely with this Irish carol.”

Cox said the first half of the program will feature sacred music, while the second half will consist of secular songs. “So in the first half, [we’re] using poetry and scripture to kind of weave our way through the story of ... Christ’s incarnation,” Cox said. “And just to give it a beautiful flow, instead of waiting on the wind band to just change pieces, it’ll just progress so logically, so obviously.”

Dr. Lonnie Polson, a faculty member in the Division of Communication, and Kate Jones, a theatre graduate student, will share the narration portions for the event.

Cox believes the program will offer students an opportunity to enjoy hearing their fellow students perform and partake in the arts. Cox said, “I’m glad that the University values beauty and high culture, and we want to contribute this program to the BJU student experience.”



the Concert Choir for the Artist Series event.

“The collaboration of the wind band and the choir—that’s not done very often,” Casarow said. “We sing with orchestra more than we do with wind band. So that’ll be nice and different and out of the ordinary.”



Photos: Lindsay Shaleen



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OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

BJU hopes to pack 1,000 shoeboxes of small gifts for children in need in partnership with Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan’s Purse.

In addition to giving the gifts, Operation Christmas Child also offers a 12-week follow-up course with the recipients to teach them the Gospel. According to Samaritan’s Purse, more than 12.5 million children have made a profession of faith as a result of this program.

In order to meet the 1,000 shoebox goal, the University needs to raise \$10,000, which an anonymous donor will match. Those interested in donating can go to give.bju.edu/shoebox.

The deadline for the fundraiser is Wednesday. BJU students will pack the shoeboxes on Friday at the lighting ceremony (see p. 4).



2021 is BJU’s 95th anniversary and 75th year in Greenville.

Design: Arianna Rayder

COLUMN



Vicki Olachea

Over the summer, I received a diagnosis that changed my life. Or, more accurately, made better sense of it.

I was diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, more commonly known as ADHD.

This wasn't exactly a shock to me. My journey to a diagnosis had started a year before, during the summer the world spent in lockdown because of COVID-19. I had first suspected the condition when I found I was unable to pull myself away from my online classwork. Later, I came to know that mental state is called hyperfixation, but at the time I knew it only as not realizing I had spent several hours on a project until noticing I was dangerously hungry.

At that point, I had seen enough about ADHD in my time on the internet to understand that I should probably check into it. After learning my family has a history of ADHD, I began to look into diagnosis and medication options—both of which turned out to be more expensive and time-consuming than I anticipated.

But the time and money were worth it. I had finally realized life could get better for me. Although from an outside perspective I am reasonably functional without medication, I have to use a huge amount of energy to do certain tasks that others simply do easily.

At first, I was afraid changing my mental condition through medication would change my personality, and I would become unrecognizable. But several

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

Love is the central discipline of the Christian life. In Matthew 22:37-39, Christ said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Despite the innumerable sermons preached on these verses, we often find it difficult to apply these truths to our daily lives. Love should dictate every action we take toward those around us.

That includes the people we disagree with inside the church.

On essential matters, Christians have clear biblical standards to judge others by (although even that judging is to be done in love). These statements are foundational truths we cannot compromise on, such as the path to salvation or God's standard of morality. We must carefully study God's Word in order to know these clear truths and live by them.

However, with the gray issues where Scripture doesn't provide clear commands, sincere believers can evaluate the same issues and come to dramatically different conclusions without violating their consciences. God's Word offers us numerous helpful principles, but in many cases, we're left to figure out how best to apply those principles in light of the Holy Spirit's conviction.

But we can't turn our personal convictions into dogma. When we work out our stances on gray areas with biblical principles in mind, we're doing the right thing. But if we try to enforce those standards on others and claim they are the only legitimate interpretation, we wrong our broth-

ers and sisters in Christ by failing to love them more than our interpretation (1 Cor. 8:1).

Paul says, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks” (Rom. 14:5-6).

We as sincere Christians will disagree with each other when we form convictions on how to apply biblical principles. And that's good.

God created matters of conscience for a reason, and it wasn't so Christians could squabble and split churches. Living with those who disagree with us on gray areas is a chance to show them love.

One key way we demonstrate love is through respecting those who disagree with us on matters of conscience and showing them deference. “Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way” (Rom. 14:13).

God is honored by our working out practical ways to apply truth by consulting biblical principles on difficult subjects (Col. 3:23-24). The church should value the harmony found among God's people despite disagreements over the gray areas, a unity that baffles the world. Only an all-powerful God could allow Christians who disagree on so many issues to come together in love for the shared goals of glorifying Him and carrying out the Great Commission.

And that unity itself is an effective way to witness to the lost. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

When we don't show love to Christians who disagree with us on matters of conscience, we are nothing, as Paul said. Nothing but a stumbling block to both our fellow believers and the lost. ☹

friends on medication for other mental conditions assured me that they had similar fears initially, but they were glad they'd started medication. Knowing that I could improve my life and have some control over issues that had been controlling me, I took the plunge.

I returned to school excited about the opportu-

nity to do the same things I had enjoyed before but with a better control of my time and attention. In fact, I was so excited I told several people in my life at school about my diagnosis, expecting them to celebrate with me as my friends who had seen my journey had. What I wasn't expecting was one question, repeated in several differ-

ent circumstances: how does that affect your life?

There's a simple answer to this question and a complicated one. The simple answer is that ADHD affects everyone who has it differently. In general, the condition causes you to struggle with focus, memory, sleep and even processing visual

See **COLUMN** p.3 >>

The Collegian Editorial

Nothing but a stumbling block

the Collegian

Bob Jones University
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www.collegianonline.com
Instagram: @thecollegianbj

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Editor in Chief

Vicki Olachea

Copy Editor

Johnathon Smith

Design Editor

Arianna Rayder

Photo Editor

Andrew Pledger

Web Editor

Melchisedek Dulcio

Social Media Videographer

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and auditory stimuli.

In my case, I focus too much on some things and too little on others, which leads to procrastination. I have trouble processing auditory stimuli, which is why I never watch movies without subtitles. I have bouts of insomnia and chronic night terrors. I overthink patterns of behavior and draw incorrect conclusions from them, which affects my relationships.

But those are all the symptoms I've lived with all my life, and now that I understand them better, I'm rapidly improving the methods I have to deal with them. And medication certainly does help.

The complicated answer is that ADHD affects how others perceive me, and not just those who know I have the condition. Long before my diagnosis was raising eyebrows, my condition was leveling insults at me.

Why can't I just write this email now, instead of having to wait until I get back to my dorm? Why can't I understand the sound clips for this French test at the same speed everyone else can? Why can't I remember the lunch plans I had with a friend, even though they're important to me? Why can't I listen in chapel without needing something to work on with my hands?

When I couldn't understand what made me different, ADHD was a source of a lot of insecurities for me. And if anyone else pointed out those difficulties, I took those comments as confirmation of my perceived shortcomings. When someone got frustrated with something I did differently because of the way my brain works, I wanted to fire back that I was frustrated, too—and I have to deal with the frustrating parts of myself far more often than anyone else does.

But as I learned more about myself and the mental space I live in, I realized my unique way of thinking gives me a valuable perspective. I can pull the big picture out of the patterns in tiny bits of information. I can determine the value or priority of rapid information easily. I can navigate a crisis situation with confidence and surety.

God makes people different, and He does so for many reasons. Because of the fall, often we find our differences frustrating, but He in His wisdom works through our differences. I know God's plan for me involves ADHD, and I can value that instead of letting it frustrate me. ©

Word from the Wise

A Biblical Perspective



David McKinney
Division of Natural Science

Wonder of Creation

When I consider how my vocation, classically defined as God's calling on one's life, is influenced by my daily walk with God, I see the two cannot really be separated.

In biology there are many wonders in the world around us, and when I am walking rightly with God, I often experience a sense of wonder at what He has made that causes me to turn and worship Christ, who has made it.

Professionally, this sense helps me through complex problems because wonder sustains focus, and focus reveals observations that I

would otherwise have missed or disregarded.

When I turn to the Scriptures, because of my training in biology, I often take note of the references to living things. However, the most valuable aspect of my perspective as I investigate the Bible is the sense of taking things as they are, of reading what God has said or done and simply holding it to be true.

In biology one looks at the created order without any doubt that it is there and that it has something to say. So, too, with Scripture.

TALKBACK

How have your devotions or a message you've heard impacted you recently?



Korbyn Griffith
Junior early childhood education major

"I've been reading a devotional called 'Gentle and Lowly,' and it's a really good devotional because it emphasizes the grace and the goodness of God, ... how our sins can really bring us apart and draw us away from God ... and we run away from Him because we think we aren't good enough for Him, but His deepest heart is for us to come back to Him."



Josh Till
Johnson residence hall supervisor

"In the discipleship seminar last night, there was a guy [named] Young Ghun, a student ... he gave his testimony. ... He had a pretty rough background, and he had some really probing questions that he asked. ... One of those questions was ... 'what do you always want more of?' ... and [another] question was, 'what do you use to run and hide?' Those were his questions regarding addiction, which was helpful for I think all the students, because we all have those things that we run to."

University family to celebrate Christmas, give back to children

Andrew Thompson

STAFF WRITER

Bob Jones University is preparing for a campus-wide celebration of Christmas with an emphasis on serving others and serving the student body through the final exams of the semester. The celebration will culminate on Dec. 3 with the annual Christmas lighting ceremony, Operation Christmas Child shoebox packing and the annual Christmas Radio Broadcast.

Dr. David Parker, director of the Christmas lighting ceremony concert, emphasized the unified joy the student body will experience at the lighting ceremony. “The lights and the singing have always been a time for the entire BJU family to sing together and usher in the gorgeous front campus Christmas lights,” he said. “You won’t want to miss it!”

This year, the lighting

ceremony will be focused on honoring several BJU alumni who are overseas serving in the United States military and cannot be home for Christmas this year. The freshmen University Singers will also be singing, along with the sophomores that were in University Singers last year but could not sing at the ceremony because of COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to the U-Singers, the Bob Jones Academy High School Choir will sing in front of Rodeheaver at 5:30 p.m. and the High School Choir from Southside Christian School will sing at 6 p.m. before the lighting ceremony.

Following the Christmas lighting ceremony, the student body will have the opportunity to pack boxes meant to spread the Gospel to children worldwide at Christmas time through the program Operation Christmas Child.

BJU students and faculty

have been fundraising all semester for the means to fill and send as many boxes as possible, taking donations from faculty and students for funds and toys.

Karis Martin, a sophomore health science major and the BJU Community Service Council director for the Student Leadership Council, thinks this Operation Christmas Child ministry opportunity will be particularly special for the student body.

“What’s really exciting is that we get to raise the money and pack the boxes individually, and each of these boxes will impact individual lives,” she said. “This process goes beyond donating money or time. It is an opportunity to make a difference in an individual’s life through each box you invest in, and that’s very special.”

“I am really excited to see the University celebrate Christmas together as a family, being a soph-



Sophomore health sciences major Karis Martin addressed the student body in chapel about Operation Christmas Child.

Photo: Robert Stuber

omore and never having seen all the festivities due to COVID,” Martin said.

BJU has a longstanding tradition of hosting a Christmas Radio Broadcast to give the campus a taste of home before officially going home. Although no longer actually on the radio, the tradition has extended into the modern-day, now produced live in The Den before an audience.

David Lurtsey, a BJU faculty member in the journalism and mass communication department and the organizer of the annual radio show, believes the broadcast is a way to encourage students near the end of the semester.

“I think it’s a neat way to get all of us on campus excited about the Christmas season,” he said. “Traditions are sentimental, and giving students holiday traditions really encourages them through finals and gets them excited about going home.”

Throughout the day there will be several other Christmas events including cookies and hot chocolate for students on the way to class, an ugly sweater competition, Christmas-themed

food in the dining common, a Christmas-themed chapel and a campus-wide elf-on-the-shelf game.

Pam Cushman, the BJU events management director, considers the day to be one of service. “Traditions are unifying,” she said. “BJU might not be your home, but for four years it is your second home. We are motivated by serving the students. We want to give them a taste of home and a way to relax and enjoy themselves.”

“There’s not a lot we can do about the students’ hustle and bustle and their busy schedules and the pressures they carry and the decisions they’re making as God is molding them in these four years,” she said. “But this is something we can do.”

“A lot of the community will be here on Dec. 3, and we get to have fun with them and share with them what we are really celebrating and the hope that comes with Christmas,” she said. “We then spend the day serving together. Finally, it culminates [in] the music and the joy of Christmas.” ©



This year’s lighting ceremony will be bigger in scope than last year’s ceremony, which was downsized because of the accelerated semester schedule due to COVID-19.

Photo: Robert Stuber

World’s longest-running play to be performed on campus

Erin del Toro
STAFF WRITER

Featuring a cast of interesting characters and a snowy mountain inn setting, BJU’s production of Agatha Christie’s classic play *The Mousetrap* will be performed from Nov. 30 through Dec. 3.

Anne Nolan, a faculty member in the department of theatre at BJU and the director of this production of *Mousetrap*, said the play is a classic whodunnit that has been running since 1952. “I don’t think you can get any more quintessential Agatha Christie than *The Mousetrap*,” said Nolan. “It is ... the world’s longest running play.”

Nolan said Christie probably assumed the play

would run for about eight months and then end, but the play ran continuously in the West End in London until it had to close down because of the pandemic in 2020.

Christie put a clause in production paperwork that no movie version can be made of the movie until six months after the play has stopped running in the West End—something that had not happened until recently. Despite the probably temporary closure of the play for the pandemic, a movie version has not been planned by any filmmakers.

“To put it in perspective, Winston Churchill was still the prime minister when [the play] opened,” Nolan said. “It’s a classic murder

mystery with a surprise ending. There’s a little tradition in the theatre of *The Mousetrap* when they come and they say, ‘We ask you to keep this secret. Don’t reveal who the killer is so that people can enjoy [the ending].’”

The play features a traditional cast of suspicious and quirky characters, as well as a surprise twist ending like many Christie stories. “It takes place in an old English country estate and it’s at an inn,” Nolan said. “And they get snowed in.”

Nolan said the basics of the plot are that a murder happens in London, and then a policeman shows up at the inn to tell the people inhabiting it that he thinks one of them will be mur-

dered. “[The characters] are a little quirky,” she said. “Christie isn’t without humor and so everybody there is a little off and ... some of them are slightly creepy as well.”

Nolan said the second-to-last performance of the play at 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3, will feature booths where pie and hot chocolate will be available for purchase before and after the show. The pie is a nod to the last line of the play, which is something the audience can anticipate with interest.

AnnaGrace Leszkowicz, a freshman communication major playing the character of Leslie Casewell, said she has enjoyed getting to know her character. “I always like

character work,” Leszkowicz said. “So that’s really getting into the mind of the character and really learning a lot about her.”

Tim Hulbert, the assistant stage manager and understudy for all male roles in the production, said there have been some challenges in preparation for the play. “It was difficult with blocking [the positioning of actors on stage],” Hulbert said. “You have to write down every single little thing [the characters] do.”

He also said there were enjoyable parts when preparing for *The Mousetrap*. “The cast we have, they’re really great,” Hulbert said. “They just love to be here and it’s really natural.” ☺



Photos: Melia Covington



Photos: Nathaniel Hendry

BJU hit by national labor shortage

Ethan House

STAFF WRITER

As widespread labor shortages sweep the country, Bob Jones University has struggled to fill many positions and has made adjustments to accommodate reduced staffing.

Although some locations on campus, like Bellis Copy Center and University Cleaners, have remained mostly untouched by the labor shortage, others have felt the full impact of the crisis. In particular, the University's facilities maintenance and Aramark's dining services have struggled to fill open positions in the past year.

According to Brent Wustman, the director of campus dining services, 53 of Aramark's 240 positions across campus are cur-

rently open. "[The city of] Greenville was already really short-staffed before this problem, but I would say we're probably averaging about double the openings that we usually had before the pandemic," Wustman said.

Because of staffing shortages, hours in some dining locations have had to be adjusted as staff is spread thin to compensate. In recent weeks, some of the food stations in the dining common have also been closed for the same reason, including the stir fry station.

Much of the problem, according to Roy Hulehan, director of campus retail, was a lack of applications. "It used to be, if I posted an ad for a position, I could fill [the position] within a week or two," Hulehan said. "[If I] posted now, I'd be lucky

to get any application in a week or two, let alone the best one for the job."

Wustman said turnover rates have risen dramatically over the summer. "Some people are just leaving," Wustman said. "[It's] more and more common these days to work one shift, then disappear or work one week, then disappear. ... We'll hire two or three people, and things will be looking better, and then a week later, we'll lose two or three people that have just stopped showing up."

In addition to difficulty filling positions, Tom Berg, the director of facilities, said retirements due to an aging staff are a growing concern, especially in his department.

"My average employee has been here over 18 years," Berg said. "I've got

... a lot of people that are nearing retirement age." Berg said six of the 62 full-time positions in facilities are open right now.

Wustman and Berg both pointed to a decrease in students working on campus, both in number of employees and number of available hours, as being an increasing issue over the past several years. "We've never had student shortages for working in The Den [before], but this is the year we've struggled to get students to work in The Den in the six plus years I've been here," Wustman said.

The number of student workers in custodial is down about 100 compared to previous years, according to Berg. "We're not cleaning the campus quite to the level that we'd like, but we've been able to keep

the main areas clean and ready for the public."

Aramark has begun offering greater incentives, including \$300 toward student workers' school bills, in an effort to fill the openings. The company also provides workers with meal vouchers that can be used in The Den. Wustman said that even with these extra incentives, Aramark has had difficulty enticing students to work for them.

Wustman stressed that students should be patient and understanding with the current staff. "We're just asking that people understand that we don't want to close stations and we don't want to change our hours, but it's out of necessity to maintain our staff so we don't overburden them to the point where we lose more staff." ©

Greenville community comes together to celebrate Christmas

Nathaniel Hendry
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, Dec. 3, at 5:30 p.m. Greenville Mayor Knox White will count down with attendees to turn on the city's official Christmas tree and surrounding decorations. The tree, located at the intersection of Court Street and Main Street in front of M. Judson Booksellers, stretches 30-feet into the air and is covered in 25,550 LED lights. Attendees can also enjoy food vendors, live special music and an early visit from Santa Claus.

Night of Lights



Window Wonderland

Downtown Greenville businesses will compete in the central business district window decorating contest, in which they decorate their shops with colorful displays and festive lights. Visitors can tour the Christmas wonderland and vote on their favorite shop window display. The lights will be on from 5 p.m. - 10 p.m., and there is no cost to participate.

United Community Bank Ice on Main

Greenville's annual Ice on Main allows visitors to enjoy outdoor ice skating between Nov. 12-Jan. 17, 2022. Visitors can enjoy Greenville's only outdoor, seasonal ice rink from 2 to 9 p.m. on Monday-Thursday, from 2 to 10 p.m. on Friday and from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday. The rink is located on Village Green downtown Greenville near City Hall. Tickets cost \$10/hour for adults and can be purchased onsite or at iceon-main.com.

TD Saturday Market

On the Saturdays of Dec. 4 and Dec. 11, shoppers can browse festive artisan handmade crafts, holiday baskets, seasonal locally grown fresh produce, gourmet foods and fresh-cut flowers, specialty items (honey, fresh pressed juices, pasta/salsa) and more from over 75 local vendors. The market, located at 206 S. Main St., is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and entry is free to the public.



Poinsetta Postcards

In a new tradition started last year, local nonprofits and school groups create giant holiday postcards to decorate Main Street downtown each December. The displays, presented by Fifth Third Bank, compete against each other for a winner chosen by community votes. The City of Greenville encourages visitors to enjoy sharing photos of the postcards on social media and tagging [@gvilleevents](https://twitter.com/gvilleevents) in the post.

On Saturday, Dec. 4 at 6 p.m., scores of floats and displays will parade downtown during the annual Poinsettia Christmas Parade. Thousands of attendees can enjoy marching bands, choruses, dance groups and community organizations to kick off Christmas in Greenville. Held annually for over 75 years, but canceled last year due to COVID-19, this year's parade will take place on Main Street between Augusta and North Streets.

Poinsetta Parade

Photos: Nathaniel Hendry

Bruins cross country grows athletes

Vicki Olachea
EDITOR IN CHIEF

AN ENDURANCE SPORT

“Cross country is an endurance sport.” According to Ken Roach, the head coach of both the men’s and women’s cross country teams, cross country is the sport of athletics, partially because of its link to track and field.

Cross country is a long-distance running sport, while track and field focuses on several different endurance events. Roach said cross country tends to be the more robust because the track is off road. Many athletes run cross country in the fall and track and field in the spring because the seasons keep them in shape. “Endurance is a 365-day commitment,” Roach said. “You’ve got to maintain it.”

This season, Roach’s cross country rosters include 11 men and 19 women. Although the number of runners on a team is only limited to Roach’s discretion, each time a team competes, the school pays an entry fee ranging from about \$150 to \$300.

These fees go to the host team and fund expensive equipment, such as the timing systems and cameras used to determine the winners of the races, according to Roach. Beyond the entry fee, Roach said he considers travel arrangements and other necessities when choosing how many athletes to allow on a team.

Runners often race with several other teams, ranging from four or five in one meet to 16 or 17. At the end of the race, the first five runners will score for their team, but up to seven of the first runners can score if they beat the other teams’ first five runners, Roach said.

For the rest of the runners, the race is timed on an individual basis, but many of the athletes enjoy

the personal aspect of the competition. “It’s a sport that you can really do a lifetime,” Roach said. “You don’t have to walk away from it.”

In fact, the meets are open to unattached runners for a fee of \$150. Roach said many people take the opportunity to compete, including professional athletes training for their own competitions. Many of them are just people who enjoy running. “It’s not uncommon to have 40- or 50-year-olds sign up for a race,” Roach said.

Both cross country and track and field provide opportunities to grow in more than just athletic prowess, according to Roach. Because the sports are performance-based, hiding low dedication behind inherent talent is practically impossible.

“You really have to put your best effort forward,” Roach said. “You can really tell if an athlete’s being complacent, and that can correlate to what your walk is with God as well.”

THE SOCIAL SPORT

According to Roach, cross country tends to be the most social sport. “When you get in cardiovascular fitness shape, it’s very easy to be able to carry a conversation on when you do a run,” Roach said. Runners often talk to each other during their long runs.

Margaret Snyder, a junior early childhood education major, has been running on the BJU cross country team since her freshman year and started because she loved the team atmosphere. “You either start your day talking to people, or, if you’re running in the afternoon, you can talk about your day and hear what’s going on with the other girls and offer encouragement to each other.”

Unlike most other sports at BJU, the men’s and

women’s cross country teams train together for much of their warmup and strength-building exercises. Although they do run separately, the teams also travel together, and Snyder said she enjoys the opportunity to connect with the male runners as well.

Kaitlyn Unruh, the sports information director, runs the social media for the Bruins cross country teams. “For cross country, it’s a little unique,” Unruh said. Cross country has fewer meets than other sports do games.

But Unruh said the social element extends to social media. Cross country enjoys engagement rates similar to the other Bruins teams. “We actually see really good engagement rates with all of it,” Unruh said. “It’s not necessarily like one is significantly higher than the other.”

According to Unruh, often friends or family of the runners will tag them in the

Bruins’ social media posts. Unruh promotes the Bruins on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using the handle @BJUBruins.

Unruh also posts recaps of each meet on the Bruins website at bjubruins.com. The recaps include a photo of the runners from the meet, highlighted runners’ finishing times, quotes from the coach about the meet and a look at how that will affect the team’s overall performance.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

“Cross country is really fun to watch,” Roach said. Unlike on a field or a court, spectators can spread around the track to cheer the runners on.

Unruh said, “Having the fans there and different supporters being able to cheer them on is a huge momentum booster for them.”

Snyder encouraged any students thinking about

trying cross country to go for it. “It’s a really good opportunity to ... get to know people and see what your body’s capable of doing,” Snyder said. “We’d love to meet you—you can even come out and run with us sometime.”

Roach is looking to expand the number of athletes competing in track and field by up to 20 students. He said he plans to recruit incoming freshmen for both cross country and track and field, so current students interested in the upcoming spring season of track and field should not hesitate to sign up.

“It’s a good time to do it because we’re going to field as large a track and field program as we can this spring,” Roach said.

Students interested in track and field should email Roach at keroach@bju.edu. ©

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