The St. Bonaventure University community celebrated what would have been Thomas Merton's 100th birthday on Jan. 31 with a winter carnival. Activities such as ice-skating, horse-drawn wagon rides, face painting, Merton-themed games and trivia, performances from the comedy and slam poetry clubs and much more filled the 12-hour celebration.

Merton came to Bonaventure in 1940 to teach English. During his time here, he discovered the monastic lifestyle. The next year, he left the college to pursue becoming a Trappist monk. Merton's writing and speeches inspired many to this day.

The idea for the celebration started when Sr. Margaret Carney, University president, approached Michael P. Pitek III, executive director of event management. Pitek said he was asked by Sr. Margaret to plan this event with Father Francis DiSpigno, OFM, executive director of University Ministries.

Pitek turned to his event planning team of 20 interns and had them split up to come up with enough ideas of fun, Merton-themed activities to fill a 24-hour time frame. The celebration was later truncated to 12 hours.

The event team asked representatives from other clubs and organizations if they wanted to sponsor and run activities throughout the day to get more students involved and excited.

“We wanted the clubs and students to own it (the carnival) because this is for them,” Pitek said.

Throughout the day, student volunteers donated their time to make each activity run smoothly.

Denis Riordan, a freshman history major, volunteered his time to help the carnival. “I had a lot of fun at the carnival; there were different activities all day and I hope we have one next year,” Riordan said.
Does your student show leadership qualities? Do you see her as someone who could move a group to a common goal or mentor a younger student?

If so, encourage her to explore the idea of applying for a leadership position this spring. Applications will soon be open for resident assistants (RA), peer coaches and orientation leaders. Any of these positions could prove beneficial to your student's future careers and her personal development.

To explain: RAs are students who work on a residence hall floor or wing to guide students, create activities and help build friendships. Orientation leaders work with incoming freshmen during summer orientation, showing them what St. Bonaventure has to offer. Peer coaches are mentors for incoming freshmen – upper-classmen they can go to for help with issues including dealing with homesickness or how to find the best places to study.

Applying to be an orientation leader or a peer coach is simple. Chris Brown, the director of the First-Year Experience and Orientation, said he asks prospective orientation leaders to complete an application and do a writing piece. He and an orientation coordinator then interview the applicant to see where he or she would fit into the team. “It is all about balance,” Brown said.

The application process is similar for peer coach applicants. The student fills out an application and is asked to write a welcome letter to an fictitious incoming student. There will also be an interview portion with Brown and a Graduate Assistant or a peer coach leader.

Brown says that these positions strengthen many skills, including the student's problem solving and leadership skills. Both also offer students a chance to enhance skills that employers seek in a student's resume; consider how often an interviewer what leadership skills an applicant can bring to the table.

“Every student has a story to tell,” Brown added, “and to share it with incoming freshmen is a great part of the program.”

The application process for RAs includes an interview session with the University's three residence directors, Chelsea McBee, Hilary Kluttz, and Chelsea O'Connor-Rosiek. As part of that process, the applicant is asked to create her own program for students on a residence hall floor.

Arin Liszka, a senior political science major and RA, said, “Ever since I became an RA my leadership skills have strengthened. This position puts you into many different situations in which these skills are tested and because of that you grow each time.” Liszka has been an RA for two years. She said her decision to apply was a great one, and she's glad she's had the experience.
Your student has several ways to explore the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts this season. Some of the exhibitions, such as the European-American paintings and the Asian art collection, are ongoing throughout the spring semester. Others that are starting this spring may become favorites.

One of the newest exhibits is the Riparazioni: Meditations on the Fullness of Being (Women). Created by Anne T. Kmieck, this exhibit includes 11 dress and object ensembles of women throughout history. The women were chosen because their vitality and scholarship went far beyond that of the men of their time. The exhibit also includes a 12th dress on which visitors are invited to write the name of a woman who inspires them. The artist will give a gallery talk about her work on the exhibit on March 3 at 2:30 p.m. This exhibit will run until March 30.

“It’s kind of a different exhibit for us,” said Evelyn Penman, assistant director of the Quick Center. “It’s 11 baptismal gowns embroidered, each representing one woman in history who the artist feels had more to say than men in that age.”

For those with a taste for nostalgia, there are many other galleries to visit, especially Current Work by David Haack, O.F.M. Running until March 1, this exhibit features some of the current work by Father David, a retired Bonaventure art professor. Father David will give a gallery talk about his recent work at 6 p.m. on Feb. 13. A reception will follow and will precede the 7:30 p.m. performance of Sonic Escape in the Rigas Family Theater. The exhibit is located in the Paul and Toni Branch Gallery.

Your student might consider exploring the Peter Max Prints, located in the Front Gallery. That exhibit also runs until March 1. Max’s prints represent a popular symbol of the counter-culture and psychedelic movements of the later 1960s and early 1970s.

Later in the spring semester is the exhibit Gold Mining in the Rain Forest, a set of photographs by anthropologist Steve Cagan and drawings by Mary Kelsey. The photographs represent the damage done to the Amazonian rainforest by gold mining. The exhibition will be running from April 10 until June 15 and will be located in the Beltz Gallery, second floor.

Performances at the Quick will include Sonic Escape. Sonic Escape is a trio of Juilliard graduates who use every part of the performer — fingers, mind, voice and story — to reshape the live music experience. The musicians will perform on March 6 at 7:30 p.m.

The visit of Symphoria (formerly Symphony Syracuse) has become an annual highlight of the Friends of Good Music season which is hosted by the Quick. Guest conductor Heather Buchman, the director of orchestra and chamber music programs at Hamilton College, leads Sibelius’ Symphony No. 7 and the popular Serenade of Strings by Tchaikovsky. The performance is scheduled for March 6.

The Donald Sinta Quartet (DSQ) will perform at the Quick Center on April 10. Having distinguished themselves on the competition circuit winning numerous prizes, the quartet made its Carnegie Hall debut in November 2014.

Penman said the gallery talks appear to be the most enjoyable for many Quick Center visitors.

“Surprisingly, the gallery talks tend to become very rewarding for the people who come because you get to speak to the artist one-on-one, if they want to, they find out things about the art, and they get to understand the artist better. I think the gallery talks are really the fun part of the schedule.”
Financial Aid

Many families need assistance to pay for a college education. Luckily, there are many sources which can be a part of your total family financial plan. Please follow these steps to ensure your student receives the best award for which he or she is eligible.

**File the FAFSA**

To get started, you will need both the parents’ and the student's PIN. If you forgot your PIN, you can get it again at www.pin.ed.gov. File the FAFSA electronically at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Make sure to include St. Bonaventure's school code: 002817. If applying for aid for Fall 2015, use 2015-16 as the academic year for the FAFSA and submit 2014 income information on the FAFSA. The priority deadline for St. Bonaventure University returning students to file the FAFSA is April 1st. There is an option when filing the FAFSA online to electronically retrieve your IRS tax data. This will streamline the process and decrease the chances of being selected for verification. After you successfully file the FAFSA, watch for a Student Aid Report (SAR). Review the SAR and make corrections if necessary. If you are selected for verification, the SBU Office of Financial Aid will notify you regarding specific documentation you must submit (usually income verification, tax transcripts, verification of family size). Reply to this verification request as quickly as possible. The student's financial aid is considered tentative pending the completion of verification. After you successfully file the FAFSA, watch for a Student Aid Report (SAR). Review the SAR and make corrections if necessary. If you are selected for verification, the SBU Office of Financial Aid will notify you regarding specific documentation you must submit (usually income verification, tax transcripts, verification of family size). Reply to this verification request as quickly as possible. The student's financial aid is considered tentative pending the completion of verification.

**Investigate other sources of financial aid**

Private scholarships can be a source of additional funding for some families. However, many families find they need to borrow to supplement the student's financial aid package. If you decide to borrow, we recommend you exhaust all federal loan options (Federal Direct, Perkins and PLUS loans) before seeking private or alternative loans in the student’s name. Federal loans have the best terms and rates available. The SBU Business Office also offers plans that enable you to pay your balance in monthly installments. You will receive specific information about payment plans in a separate mailing from the Business Office. Questions can be directed to the Business Office at (716) 375-2100.

**Financial aid from SBU**

Your student should watch for a financial aid package by late March. Academic awards are renewed at the same amount each year provided the student maintains the minimum cumulative GPA required for the award. Need-based aid will stay relatively the same as in prior years provided the family financial situation is relatively the same and federal funding sources remain constant. In all cases, the student must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress toward his/her degree to renew financial aid. Returning students receive notification of the financial aid award via their SBU email accounts. They should review the financial aid award on our secure site at my.sbu.edu.

For further information about financial aid at St. Bonaventure, please see our web-site at www.sbu.edu.

**Application tips:**

1. File the FAFSA as early as possible. Estimate information if necessary and watch for the Student Aid Report.
2. NYS residents, complete the TAP application electronically as early as possible at www.hesc.org.
3. Keep copies of all application materials.
4. Follow up to make sure everything is received.
5. Pay attention to application and billing deadlines.
6. Respond as soon as possible to requests for additional information.
7. Seek out additional “free” sources of aid through private, state and federal organizations.
8. If you need to borrow, exhaust federal loan sources first.
College campuses can be even worse than kindergarten classrooms when it comes to germs. Hundreds of stressed, overtired students are packed into communal dining halls and classrooms, so every individual's health is the community's concern.

According to a recent article in The Buffalo News, New York State reported widespread influenza cases this year. The Erie County health commissioner said the majority of patients are between the ages of 18 and 49.

Because college students are in the targeted age range, universities must prepare for an increase in ill students. Dr. Roger Keener, director of the Center for Student Wellness at St. Bonaventure University, said that although influenza cases have not been a huge problem at Bonaventure, there has been a spike in sick students.

“We’re at a peak [of sick students] right now,” Keener said. “We had a spike this week of about 15 percent of students coming in with sore throats, cold, flu symptoms and those types of things. And lots of those students can be dealt with fairly quickly.”

Keener added the spike in student illness is typical at this time of the year.

“It’s a by-product of everybody being inside a lot and not going out,” Keener said. “Lots of people get sick and pass it along, that kind of stuff. The rise in cases of ill students will probably go on about another two weeks.

“When they come in for help, we talk to them about getting rest, washing their hands, coughing properly and those types of things,” Keener said. “So any time a student comes in, there’s also a wellness component to it. It’s not just getting him or her medication and saying goodbye; we teach them about self-care.”

There is no cost for any services provided by the Wellness Center, Kenner said. However, if a student were to require hospital care, the Wellness Center does not cover additional costs.

A nurse practitioner is available to students on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Nurses, who are able to hand out over-the-counter medicines, are on staff Tuesdays and Thursdays. If a student is seriously ill, nurses can recommend the student go to an emergency room or urgent-care facility.

Keener said the best thing a student can do to stay healthy is keep rested and wash his or her hands frequently.

“What people have to realize, too, is that colds are caused by germs and not the cold [weather],” Keener said. “Germs are bred more in confined areas. That’s why lots of times people don’t get colds in warm weather, because there’s lots of fresh air.”

Keener said Wellness Center staff displays posters around campus that promote good health practices.

“We have always done posters…” Keener said. “Our nurse practitioner is starting to design and wanting to do more outreach with the residence halls, where she goes in and talks about illness prevention, wellness programs and those types of things.”

The outreach program will take place in the middle of March. Resident assistants (RAs) also provide support services to students. Aaliyah Samuels, a sophomore psychology major and RA to freshman students, said RAs add student wellness to their list of duties.

"RAs help kids be healthy by having floor meetings on wellness,” Samuels said. “We let them know their options on campus to stay in good shape. I keep my door open and say hi to my residents. They feel comfortable to come to me about anything.”

Samuels said she makes sure her residents know where to go if they feel ill.

“If a student were to come to me, I would direct him or her to the wellness center,” Samuels said. “I made them aware of it on our first program. I did a trivia night [later in the semester] to see if they remembered important information from orientation. Students tend to have questions about the Wellness Center”

Freshmen Gabrielle Nicolinli, a psychology major, and James Klos, an accounting major, said healthy habits make a difference for them.

“I made sure to get the flu shot before I came back to school after break,” Nicolinli said. “I go to the gym a lot, which alleviates stress and keeps me healthy. I also have really supportive friends who look out for me.”

Klos added little things can go a long way toward keeping healthy.

“I make sure to get more sleep during the week,” Klos said. “I also keep/hand sanitizer on my desk. Just stuff like that to make sure I stay well and focused.”

Keener said if parents have questions, they should not hesitate to call the Wellness Center. Officials can give information to parents if students have signed a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) form.

The Wellness Center accommodates walk-ins and scheduled appointments. Hours and other information about the Wellness Center can be found on Bonaventure’s website under the student health tab.
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Remember to cheer on the Bonnies for the remainder of their season!