



Baptist Collegiate Ministries Offers Opportunities for Connection through Faith

Breanna Tillie
News Editor

A great deal of young adults who have taken advantage of the opportunity to participate in the college experience often relate to having an itching desire for success. This goes far beyond academics and future career aspirations. College students desire success in their social lives as they yearn for a place of belonging and connection. They desire success in their personal growth, and finally finding the passion that sets off the spark that they never knew lived inside of them.

The Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) is one organization on campus dedicated to serving students in fulfilling the need for community with a solid foundation of Christian faith and spiritual engagement.

“The purpose of BCM is to show the love of God on campus and share the name of Jesus to the students on campus,” said Emily Grisset, president of BCM at the University of West Georgia. “We want to make His name known.”

The next upcoming major event that the BCM will be participating in is the Confluence conference for college students throughout Georgia at Eagle’s Landing First Baptist Church from Sept. 20 to Sept. 22.

“Confluence is when BCM’s from all over Georgia meet at a weekend conference,” said Grisset. “There are breakout sessions and a guest speaker that comes to discuss a topic. It’s a great way to not only get to know your BCM better, but get to know the other BCM’s better too.”

BCM also partners with a ministry called The Great Exchange, offering BCM students an opportunity to have

meaningful conversations about faith with other students on campus. Although the idea of doing so may seem intimidating, Grisset said that it does get easier.

“Until you do it, you’re going to feel nervous. But the more you do it, you’ll become more with it,” said Grisset. “When I first started going, I was so shy. But now I can go up and talk to pretty much anyone and I actually get excited to go to The Great Exchange now.”

You definitely get shut down a few times, but most people are actually willing to have conversations. There were definitely more people willing to have conversations than I thought,” continued Grisset.

BCM students will also have the opportunity to go on missions trips, which make it possible for students to provide community aid and spiritual service for places near and far.

“Our fall break mission trip will be helping out at a church plant in Dalton, Ga. We did that last year and it was really cool to see God working in that church,” said Grisset. “We’re still planning the Spring missions trip.”

However, the top priority of BCM is to encourage students to become plugged into a local church.

“BCM is a college ministry, but the church will continue after college. It’s important to recognize that BCM is not a church and we should find local churches to serve,” said Grisset. “We see in scripture that we are supposed to be involved in the church. There are so many ways to do this. Being on the worship team, helping out in the children’s ministry, sitting at the front

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desk. There are plenty of ways to get involved in a local church.”



Photo by Cindy Martinez

UWG Debate Team Hosts Presidential Debate Watch Party To Encourage Student Involvement

Abbie Klein
Feature Editor

On June 27, former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden debated on live television for the whole country to watch. Due to Biden's withdrawal from the election, presidential candidates Trump and Kamala Harris met for the first time for this year's second Presidential Debate on Sept. 10.

With the second debate happening in the fall, the UWG debate team was able to host a watch party for the event welcome to all students regardless of political stance. The event was encouraged to be an opportunity to critique and ask questions about debate techniques used by both individuals and learn more about UWG Debate.

Students who attended the event were given goodie bags with snacks and bingo cards before the debate started. The bingo spaces had different topics and words in them that were predicted to be brought up during the event. Students won bingo by either party mentioning one of the phrases on their spaces. This encouraged attendees to pay attention to everything that was being said and study the debate on a deeper level with the incentive of winning one of the several prizes the team had available.

Members of the team were also providing live fact checking during the debate for students who had questions or concerns about evidence mentioned. Respectful commentary and questions

were encouraged throughout the debate to further increase understanding of the event while it was happening.

"There's a substantial body of research showing participation in debate increases students' academic achievement," said Michael Hester, director of UWG Debate. "And the skills learned in debate - media literacy, critical thinking, audience analysis and persuasion - do more than help students perform better in the classroom. These are the skills citizens need to positively contribute to democratic governance."

Throughout the year, UWG Debate hosts multiple events to engage the public with debate. This very successful debate team encourages all students to get involved with the program and take advantage of its benefits.

"Any currently enrolled student can be a member of UWG Debate," said Hester. "Those that choose to participate on our intercollegiate competition squad, led by Coach Geoff Lundeen, will have opportunities to meet with and debate against top students from the best universities across the country, earn scholarships, win championships and gain the skills and build the kind of resume that has a track record of securing admissions to the top graduate schools."

UWG debate has won multiple titles and is placed in the top 15 of all college



Photo courtesy of ABC News debate programs, making it onto the list with ivy league schools like Dartmouth and Harvard.

"West Georgia Debate has been a nationally-renowned intercollegiate debate program for more than fifty years," said Hester. "In the twenty-nine years that I have been director, UWG Debate has won three national championships, finished as national runner-up twice and reached the Final Four on two other occasions."

Students that missed this event or want to get more involved with debate are encouraged to attend a second watch party being held on Oct. 1 for the Vice President debate. Various other student organizations will also be holding events on voter education within the next few weeks.

To learn more about UWG Debate and be informed about future events follow their instagram @uwg_debaters or stop by their office in Callaway 160.

Arts and Entertainment

British Indie Songwriter Marika Hackman Makes a Tour Stop in Atlanta

Emma Swales
Editor-In-Chief



English alternative vocalist Marika Hackman is embarking on her North American tour and is set to perform at The Earl in Atlanta on Sept. 14 in support of her newest studio album, Big Sigh.

Hackman is currently on the third stop of the tour and will soon arrive at The Earl, a popular bar and music venue located at 488 Flat Shoals Ave SE. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. and the show will begin at 8:30 p.m.

The British indie singer is known for her emotional lyrics paired with the seamless harmony of her acoustic guitar. Hackman experiments with multiple genres to

expand her unique sound and support her intense and impactful songwriting.

"I've changed so much through different records," said Hackman. "There's always a slightly grungy scene in my music, a lot of acoustic elements, but I also play with electronic sounds. It's really hard to define my sound. I would say it's genreless and has no bounds."

She released her first studio album, That Iron Taste, in 2013, and her musical career soon began to take shape. After finding success with her first few records, Hackman continued to follow

her passion for songwriting and is now on her fourth album, Big Sigh, which debuted on Jan. 12 earlier this year.

"The recording process for this new record took its time," said Hackman. "It felt like a real crawling out of the mud as the world was starting up again. I was getting to grips with this record and hauling it behind me. It flourished into this sad, sad kind of intense record that I love. It was definitely the hardest record I ever made."

After working tirelessly to produce Big Sigh, Hackman explained that she is excited to be back on the road to perform the music that she worked so hard to create. Her current tour setlist consists of popular new songs from the album such as "No Caffeine" and "Blood."

"I like touring because I feel like I get into a routine with it which is comforting for a routine-less job," said Hackman. "I am surrounded by people I love and it feels like being back at school. You don't have any responsibility, you are just on tour. All you have to do is just play a show, which is fun."

After many years of experimenting with instruments and tackling the art of songwriting, Hackman has put a few American tours under her belt. This isn't the first time the English singer has stepped foot on Georgia soil to perform at The Earl.

"I came to Atlanta in 2019 to the same venue," said Hackman. "It was our first show of the tour five years ago and I am looking forward to coming back because I really enjoyed that one. I spoke to lots of people in the crowd afterward and they were all so lovely."

After her performance at The Earl later this week, Hackman will return to the road and head towards Texas to continue her busy tour across North America.

For more information about upcoming tour dates and ticket inquiries, please visit <https://shop.marikahackman.com/tickets>.

The UWG Vault Gallery is Now Showcasing its First Art Exhibition

Courtney Bixby
Contributing Writer

The Vault Gallery art exhibit in Newnan, Ga. has recently opened its first exhibition of the fall semester and is showcasing local art and unique displays.

The gallery is used for local and national artists, students and even UWG alumni. It was created by Dr. Chad Davidson, Executive Director of Global Engagement and Cultural Programming, who partnered with the city of Newnan and the Newnan Arts and Residence Program to use the space.

The gallery is located in the Wadsworth Auditorium in Newnan and it is open Tuesday to Friday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. with free entry. The Vault Gallery opened in early September and has three exhibitions for the fall semester. The name of the gallery comes from the vault still located in the auditorium due to it being a bank in the past and now even features portraits in the teller windows.

The gallery has been open for three years and usually features four exhibitions. Every fall the Blackwell Prize in Painter winner will have a solo exhibition. The annual prize hosted by UWG and made possible by the Blackwell Trust of Newnan, recognizes exceptional art and includes \$10,000. In



Photo courtesy of Charly Palmer

the spring the goal is to showcase anyone with a university connection. The gallery also holds student shows where UWG's Art Student Union will choose a jurist every year to choose between student artworks that are submitted.

"It allows students professional gallery experience and exhibition time," said Dr. Davidson

The first exhibition of the semester explores the creation and evolution of Georgia Courthouses with over 17,000 images presented. The exhibi-

tion is currently on display and will remain until Sept. 27, and will hold a reception and gallery talk on Friday, Sept. 20. The goal of the exhibition is to capture the architectural and artistic effect in the Georgia courthouses.

"That's just the beautification of Newnan," said Dr. Davidson.

The second exhibition features work from an Atlanta-based artist, Charly Palmer, who is also this year's Blackwell Prize winner

Blackwell Prize winner and will be on display from Oct. 1-25. Palmer's work is described as visual stories that "bear witness to African ancestry and contemporary experiences."

Palmer was recently appointed by the United States Postal Service to design the 47th stamp in the Black Heritage Stamp Series. He has also worked with John Legend, TIME Magazine, the NBA, and just co-authored The New Brownies Book: A Love Letter To Black Families, which won the 2024 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work – Non-Fiction.

The last exhibition this semester features work from David Boyd Jr., a nationally recognized artist that highlights rural and urban landscapes. Boyd Jr uses plein air paintings to highlight the messages in his art. This exhibition will run from Nov. 1 to Dec. 6.

The Vault Gallery is currently taking applications. Anyone interested in being a gallery assistant may reach out to Dr. Davidson at davidson@westga.edu.

"Art just makes for more tolerant and beautiful places to live," said Dr. Davidson. "It is called a museum because you go there to get in touch with muses."

Blake Lively Shines in Powerful & Moving Drama It Ends with Us

Cindy Martinez
Copy Editor

It Ends with Us was based on the beloved best sellers book by Colleen Hoover. It was an emotional and empowering film. It highlighted the complexities of love, pain and difficult choices. The film was directed by Justin Baldoni, who also played a leading role alongside actress Blake Lively. The movie takes a deep dive into the challenges of relationship and personal growth.

The story is centered around the main character Lily Bloom (Blake Lively), a young woman who follows her dreams to move to Boston to open her very own flower shop. She soon meets Ryle Kincaid (Justin Baldoni), a successful neurosurgeon, and their relationship quickly heats up. While Ryle is charming at first glance, his true colors begin to show as the relationship evolves. As Lily struggles with her feelings for Ryle, her first love, Atlas Corrigan (Brandin Sklenar), comes back into her life, bringing back locked away memories and unresolved emotions.

Lively delivers a phenomenal performance as Lily capturing

the character's strengths in the perfect light. She makes you feel the weight of Lily's internal struggles and the emotional toll her choices have on her. Baldoni is equally as strong in his character of Ryle, he portrays both the loving partner and the darker side of his character. Their chemistry on camera is undeniable, making the ups and downs of their relationship feel believable and raw.

One of the film's strengths is how it approaches the topic of domestic abuse. It doesn't oversimplify the situation, but instead shows the often painful decisions that someone like Lily has to make. The film shows how love and abuse can coexist making it clear on how leaving a toxic relationship is not always easy.

Overall the visual of the movie was well executed. The details of the movie, the close up shots and capturing the characters' emotions made all the motion of the movies all too real. The soundtrack in the movie also complimented the film's tone without being

overpowering, thus allowing the performance to take the spotlight.

On the other hand some fans of the novel were a little disappointed by the cutting of scenes in the book not being in the movie. The film reminds us of the theme and the

heartfeltness of the story. The key themes of love, forgiveness, reunite and personal growth align with the emotional growth displayed in the book.

It Ends with Us was a moving film and handled a difficult subject matter with care and respect. Lively's performance in particular makes the film a hit. For fans of the novel or anyone who appreciates a heartfelt and emotional movie, It Ends with Us is definitely worth a try.



Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures

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WEST GEORGIAN
EST. 1934

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