Movin' on up... and in – to serve you better.

The following departments are in the process of relocating to the renovated Cunningham Hall:
Look for their offices in Cunningham Hall beginning January 2, 2013.
Committed by the numbers

In interview with al.com/Huntsville Times reporter Matt Wake, Oakwood alumni group Committed describe what life has been like since winning the second season of NBC's "The Sing-Off." Read the article here. More at committedsings.com.

LETC brings cheer to cities across the South

During the Thanksgiving break, LETC sent students to St. Louis, MO, Douglasville, GA, Birmingham, AL, and Kinston, NC, who reported outstanding results. The groups raised over $3,500 in sales, delivered 1,200 tracts and signed 80 individuals for Voice of Prophecy Bible lessons.
The accommodations were the best in LETC history! Not only did members take students into their homes, but the Kinston church placed them in hotels! The students were required to teach Sabbath School classes, conduct personal ministries, take members out Sabbath afternoon for tract attack, sell books to members after AY, visit a non-Adventist church, and witness during the week.

Then, for three weeks during the Christmas break, 28 student missionaries are spreading hope and cheer to a dying world, reminding people that "Jesus is the reason for the Season!" In Birmingham, Elder Jason McCracken taught the Sabbath School lesson, and trained the new leaders for both events!

**Mayan prophecy 'not the last word. . .'

Check out what OU’s New Testament professor Dr. Finbar Benjamin has to say about 12-21-12: read the [al.com article here](http://www.al.com).
OU’s Ambassadors basketball teams (men and women) participated in the La Sierra Christmas Basketball Tournament, December 15-17, 2012, along with teams from La Sierra University, Pacific Union College, and Andrews University.

Oakwood students, alumni and friends -- wearing their "blue and gold" -- showed up at the La Sierra Gymnasium in great numbers to support the Ambassadors for the games on Saturday night.

Both the Men's and Women's Ambassadors played three games each in the tournament. The men won one out of their three games; the women won two out of three of their contests. "The women have 'turned the corner' to understanding what it takes to win games -- especially close ones," said Women's Coach Alton Conwell.
Three of the athletic directors and coaches who helped make the tournament happen: (l-r) James Roddy (Oakwood); Javier Krumm (La Sierra); David Jardine (Andrews)  
(Thanks to OU Board Member Cynthia Powell-Hicks for the photos.)
Just a few weeks ago when President Pollard said to OU employees: "(...) It's sobering to realize that we have no guarantee that the people who accompanied us through 2012 will be with us through 2013," neither he nor any of us had any idea what was to happen in Newtown, Connecticut, on Friday, December 14, 2012. In the ensuing week, we've been just as shocked as the rest of the country as the reports have streamed through the airwaves.

OU
'Connecticut native' staff member reflects: "this is not the end"

by Linda Anderson
Residential Life Coordinator, Carter Hall

Last Friday's newscast reported that 20 children had been killed at an elementary school in Connecticut --shot down by a gunman. I didn't hear the name of the town in which the horrible massacre had occurred, so my mind immediately went to the grade school-age babies in my family. Staring at the television screen, I panicked and began calling relatives.

When I learned that it wasn't my town, and they weren't our babies, my relief was fleeting because I soon realized that although I didn't know the children, they were still our babies...all of our babies. Innocent lives taken so brutally...that is a tragedy and loss for us all.

Having grown up in Connecticut, I sorrowed also at the loss of innocence for my quaint little state, and our sleepy little towns. And the teachers and staff killed while attempting to save the little ones only punctuated the viciousness of the assault.
How can any of us make sense of this heinous crime? I dare say we can't. We may never know what drove a man to commit such an unspeakable act. But we do know that in the world we will have tribulation. We know that evil exists and will continue until the return of our Savior.

With Christmas only days away, last week's horror is a reminder that the world is still indeed need of a Savior...now more than ever. And as we pause to mourn along with 28 families in Connecticut, let's also pause to celebrate the fact that Christ came to give us LIFE and that more abundantly. His act of love didn't make any sense either.

So, weeping may endure for a night for us all, but joy comes in the morning and this is not the end. Jesus will one day soon return for us...and for our babies.

"Across the upcoming holiday, let us enjoy the time we have with God and with each of the people who mean so much to us. (...) thank you for all that you do to advance the mission of Oakwood University," said Dr. Pollard -- as he offered the opening prayer of the Employees Christmas Party, on December 18.
Along with the rest of the University, Team PR offices will be closed December 24, 2012 through January 1, 2013.

Happy Holidays!

This is the last issue of OU? Oh, Yes! in 2012.
OU? Oh, Yes! production will begin January 9, 2013.

May you have a blessed and safe Christmas and New Year's season!
Committed by the numbers: 'The Sing-Off' season two winners' backstage moments, mentors and more

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- Committed vocalist Robbie Pressley is looking at a text message containing set list possibilities for the Huntsville a cappella sextet's upcoming Christmas show.

"We have 'O Come All Ye Faithful,' 'Hark the Herald,' 'Jingle Bells,' 'Angels We Have Heard' just to name a few," Pressley, 24, says. He's calling from a hotel room in Kentucky.

Asked what he loves about a cappella performances, Pressley says, "You can't hide behind the music, you can't hide behind the tracks. It's just you."

Committed also features Maurice Staple, Tommy Gervais, Theron "Therry" Thomas, D.J. Baptiste and Geston Pierre. Besides obvious all-vocal touchstones such as Boyz II Men, Pressley says Stevie Wonder, Earth, Wind & Fire and Manhattan Transfer are key influences.

After upcoming gigs, including some in London, Committed - who won season two of NBC's "The Sing-Off," singing competition - hopes to record their next album in time for a fall 2013 release.

The Committed Christmas show is set for Dec. 23 at The Rock Family Worship Center (2300 Memorial Pkwy., 256-533-9292), with 4 and 6 p.m. show times. Admission is free. "We're always really, really excited to perform in Huntsville," Pressley says, "because that's where a lot of our base is, and where a lot of people who voted for us (on 'The Sing-Off') are from."
In 2010, Committed were Oakwood University students when they appeared on "The Sing-Off." "I think one of the best moments for us came when we were talking to Shawn Stockton (Boyz II Men singer and 'The Sing-Off' judge) behind the stage. He was talking about the longevity of their career, and that we had something special and it's important we stay together and don't let the industry break us up, no matter how many times they tell you you'll be more marketable if you do this or that."

6

"Out mentors, Take 6 kind of paved the way for us," Pressley says of the Grammy-winning '80s combo, which also formed on the Oakwood campus. "The jazz chords and very tight harmonies. One of the former Take 6 members (Cedric Dent) actually recommended us to a producer of 'The Sing Off.' They contacted us, we submitted a video and next thing you know we're on the show."

5

Five of Committed's six singers have backgrounds as instrumentalists, and Pressley, who grew up playing piano and violin, feels this gives the group an edge musically as an all-vocals act. "Modulations, the crescendos and all the dynamics are definitely easier when you've played an instrument."

4

The group's new "Christmas with Committed" release contains four tracks, including holiday chestnuts "Joy to the World," "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." But the highlight is a soulful rendition of a lesser known song called "Mary Did You Know." "That was suggested to us by a current Oakwood University music composition student, Stephen Murphy," Pressley says. "When we first heard it we were like, 'Yeah, this needs to go on the CD.'"

More: committedsings.com

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After big shopping days, Christmas events in full swing in Birmingham
Committed will play a Christmas show Dec. 23 at Huntsville's The Rock Family Worship Center. (Contributed photo)

Committed by the numbers: 'The Sing-Off' season two winners' backstage moments, mentors and more

By Matt Wake | mwake@al.com on December 18, 2012 at 1:33 PM, updated December 18, 2012 at 1:34 PM

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12/26/2012 12:22 PM
Mayan Prophecy not the last word on 12-21-12

By Kay Campbell | kcampbell@al.com

on December 18, 2012 at 4:07 PM, updated December 19, 2012 at 8:36 AM

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – The world is changing on Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, but don’t expect to notice anything right away, says Keisha Tafari, an astrologer who lives in Huntsville.

“The planets indicate that this is a very intense time,” Tafari said.

“Institutions, global economy, governments, structures – all this is expected to break down in the next 24 years – but it’s not all doom and gloom. This will give us the opportunity to build institutions and economies that benefit all.”

The information she’s learned about the Mayan calendar, which marks the end of an epoch on Friday, underscores what she sees in the current alignments and oppositions of Uranus, Pluto, Saturn and Jupiter.

The arrangement creates an opportunity for everyone to look at actions and values and, as a team, to come together for the sake of all humanity.

This is the same message that Mayan Timekeeper Hunbatz Men will give Friday from Chechen Itza, one of the largest Mayan temple ruins in Yucatan. Hunbatz Men spoke in Florence earlier this month, and brought a message of love and renewal to those who gathered to hear him speak atop an Indian Mound in Florence.

At the moment of the Winter Solstice alignment of the Sun and Earth, Hunbatz Men will lead a meditation to “open the space for all of humanity to embrace the unconditionally loving light of the Divine Feminine,” as Huntsville-based psychic LaMont Hamilton wrote on his WorldPsychic.org blog. “This rise in consciousness will help us to remember who we really are and guide us out of the darkness into the Light regardless of what you were told by the media and press.”

Hamilton has looked into Incan and Mayan prophecies about these changes.
"Most prophecies are optimistic, even though the media has only focused on the sensational," Hamilton said Tuesday. "They refer to the metaphorical end of time as we know it, the death of a way of old thinking and a way of being, the end of the old ways of relating to nature and to the physical earth."

In Christian terms, "the former things are passed away."

But putting a time on the End of the World is something Seventh-day Adventists learned not to do back in 1844, when some of the people who would later form the Christian denomination, experienced the Great Disappointment. Believers in New England gathered in their white ascension robes to await Christ’s coming. Some had sold everything they had.

Jesus is coming, says Professor Finbar Benjamin, who teaches New Testament studies at Oakwood University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, quoting Matthew 24:36, but no one knows the hour – in fact trying to figure out the day and the hour is not really the point.

"Again and again in Matthew, Jesus says, ‘Don’t be deceived,’ `Don’t go running after false prophets,’” Benjamin said from his office on Tuesday. "In fact, Christmas, a celebration of the First Advent of Jesus, is a foretaste of what God wants for human society: To bring hope, love, and meaning out of discord."

The speculation about the Mayan end-of-days has been only about the destruction, Benjamin said, but Christians have an eschatology (study of end days) that looks beyond that, to when God renews the Earth.

"For sure," Benjamin said, "Christians believe there will be an end to sin, an end to evil. But the key is that there is a loving God, a God of good news who assures us that whatever seems to be fearful ahead, we can look to Christ and find hope and find a trusty friend. As the Psalm says, 'The Lord is my shepherd.'"

For The Huntsville Times reporter Lee Roop’s survey of the literature on the topic, including NASA’s video, follow this link.

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