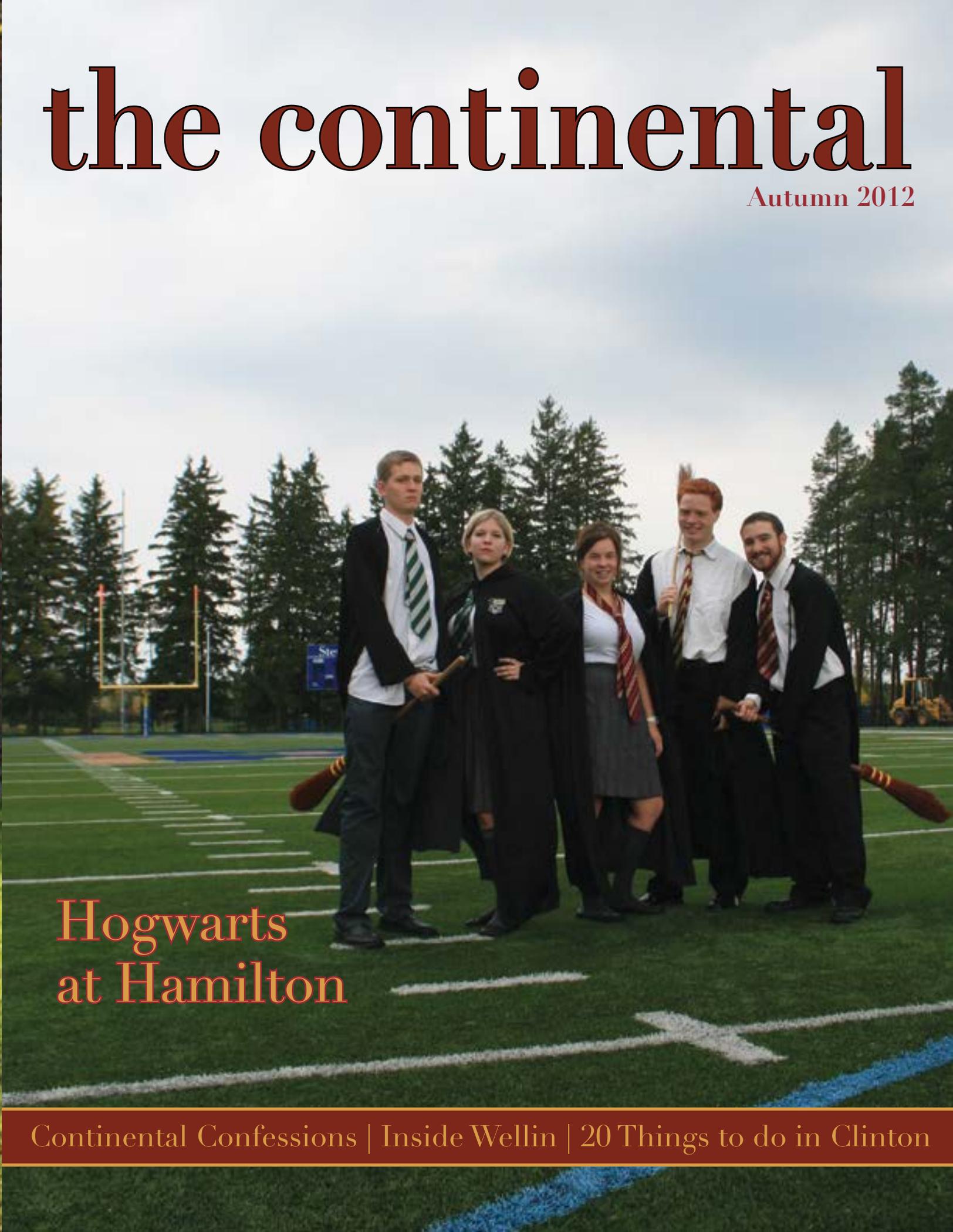


the continental

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A group of five people, three men and two women, are dressed in black graduation gowns over their formal attire. They are standing on a green football field with white yard lines. Each person is holding a broom, suggesting a Harry Potter theme. The background features a line of tall evergreen trees under a cloudy sky. A yellow goalpost is visible on the left side of the field.

Hogwarts at Hamilton

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Magic Among the Muggles: Harry Potter's Home at Hamilton

By Maggie Maloney '15

Have you ever wondered where you can find fellow Harry Potter enthusiasts at Hamilton? Do you have frequent urges to speak in a British accent or wish that magic was real so you could teleport yourself to class instead of walking up the hill from Bundy? Are you still disappointed that on your eleventh birthday you did not, as you so hoped, receive an acceptance letter to Hogwarts? If you answered yes to any of these hypotheticals, then Hogwarts at Hamilton, the premier organization for magic loving Hamiltonians, is right up your alley.

Hogwarts at Hamilton may seem like an under-the-radar organization because it is active only from the beginning of the school year until its performances at the end of October. It is a non-profit performance group run by students that raises money for the Kirkland Town Library. During the last weekend of October (however the performance came early this season), the celebration that is occasionally referred to as Halloweekend, the Hogwarts at Hamilton cast members transform a building on our very campus (this year, Benedict Hall) into Hogwarts. Complete with themed classrooms, magical professors and activities for young visitors, Hogwarts at Hamilton truly transports guests into the world of Harry Potter.

With roughly 75 students involved this year and four classrooms on the tour, with classes such as Potions, Care for Magical Creatures, Quidditch and Defense Against the Dark Arts, the spirit of Harry Potter is alive and well at Hamilton. Performances run all weekend, with a child-friendly show during the day for the Clinton community and a raunchier late-night version for many Hamilton students to enjoy.

Not only is Hogwarts at Hamilton a way to embrace the nostalgia of the world of Harry Potter, but it is also a charity. While entry is free, any donations earned from the Hogwarts at Hamilton performances go towards the Kirkland Town Library's children's section and various library-sponsored programs. It's very appropriate for an event that honors our generation's greatest literary character.

"I think Hogwarts at Hamilton is a great fundraiser for the local community while also letting the kids of Clinton experience the magic of Hogwarts," said Leah Berryhill '13.

But what is it like to be a cast member at Hogwarts at Hamilton during a performance? How does one feel stepping into the shoes of these famously adored characters? While honing a respectable British accent

is a necessity, members are cast as characters similar to themselves, and everyone who auditions gets a part (even Dobby, the beloved house elf, makes an appearance). To get into character, the cast channels qualities of their favorite Harry Potter individuals and puts their own personal spin on the act. After so many weeks of practice, complete with numerous skit rehearsals, it is almost natural for performers to be in character. It also helps that the cast members are Harry Potter fanatics. The skits are often interactive as well, whether teaching children a spell or the rules of Quidditch.

For the cast members themselves, Hogwarts at Hamilton is a rewarding way to celebrate the characters they grew up admiring while including their own perspective of their character. Leah Berryhill '13 for example, has participated in Hogwarts at Hamilton since her freshmen year. Her favorite Harry Potter character is Professor McGonagall, the strict yet respected professor who constantly supports Harry. However, this year, Leah will perform as the kooky Professor Trelawney. In her act, Berryhill channels her silly side to make her character come alive. Berryhill said, "I have always been cast as the more

outlandish Hogwarts characters, but I guess that matches my personality on a regular day. Though I feel ridiculous yelling about magic and seeing the future in crystal balls, it's hilarious."

Alana Christopher '14 favors Dolores Umbridge, a one-time professor at Hogwarts who she conveniently had the chance to play her freshmen year. Christopher loves the way Hogwarts at Hamilton brings together members of the community. "Every year, I've seen kids from Clinton, professors, my friends from home and on campus, and even a fraternity come and have a great time" she said. This year, Alana will be playing Ginny Weasley in a cast that includes Cooper Creagan '13 as Ron Weasley and Josh Bridge '14 starring 'the boy who lived' himself.

As we grow further away from new Harry Potter books and movies, it is vital for fans to keep the world of Harry Potter alive and to enjoy themselves while doing so. Hogwarts at Hamilton does exactly that for Hamilton and the Clinton community and with over 600 visitors last year, it is clear that there is still a love for all things magical, mythical and mystical among us muggles.

