

Student takes on role of zombie

BY MICHELLE MARTIN
Staff Reporter

Sitting around Friday night, senior Drew Clark waits for a call from his fellow zombies on whether a mission will commence at midnight.

"It's a lot of fun," he said. "It's kind of addictive. It's a nice break from classes and just doing the regular Truman thing."

Clark said he first played Humans vs. Zombies when it came to Truman last year. He decided to sign up when a friend convinced him that it would be fun, he said.

Humans vs. Zombies began at a Maryland school, Goucher College, when its founders wanted to play a game similar to Assassins that wouldn't exclude the people who were "killed," Clark said.

"What they came up with was Humans vs. Zombies," he said. "You get tagged, and then your job is to keep tagging other people."

In the beginning of the game, most of the players are humans except for a few original zombies who tag humans throughout the game, he said. Clark said he was one of five original zombies during this game. The first day, the original zombies wear armbands so they look like humans, but after that they wear headbands instead, he said.

Clark said that after the first day, humans receive missions that force them to actively play around campus. The humans have the advantage of nerf guns and socks, which allow them to "stun" zombies, forcing them out of the game for 15 minutes, he said.

"The game ends when everyone is a zombie instead of a human," Clark said. "That's a different concept on tag as opposed to just kicking people out of the game. It's more and more conclusive until everyone's on the same team."

Clark said he enjoyed being one of five original zombies out of the 300 players during this semester's game. Together, the original and newly tagged zombies, were able to kill about 100 people on the first day alone, which dramatically reduced the length of the game to five or six days, from the eight-day-long first game last fall, he said.

"The first day there's not that many zombies around," Clark said. "By the second day,

you could start walking around, and you see someone you didn't know before, and you see the bandana and you wave. You both start walking together and ... within 10 minutes of walking outside you probably have a group of 20 people walking together looking for people."

As an original zombie, Clark said he woke up early to look for humans during passing periods. Even by the end of the day, groups of zombies began forming to look for humans, he said.

"One of the interesting things that will happen will be that as the day progresses you know you have other stuff to do but the game will kind of take precedence if you see someone playing it as well," he said.

For example, Clark said he recalls a random attack on his way to Missouri Hall one evening, in which multiple zombies near the same place were able to attack two human girls. The teamwork and camaraderie that Humans vs. Zombies promotes is one of Clark's favorite aspects of the game, he said.

"Every time I've played I've met people from all over campus, and a lot of people off campus too, that I had never met before," he said. "I mean, 6,000 people, you kind of get used to knowing the same group of people and recognizing everyone you see, but there's definitely a lot of people out there that I'd never met before playing this."

In fact, the most recent game included about 300 participants, which is a dramatic increase from the first game, Clark said.

"The first game was about 100, maybe a little over 100 active people," he said. "The second had about 140 and this one had 300. So it's definitely grown every time it's been played."

Humans vs. Zombies guarantees excitement, whether one is a human or a zombie, he said. Besides, he said, the game also promotes exercise and new friendships.

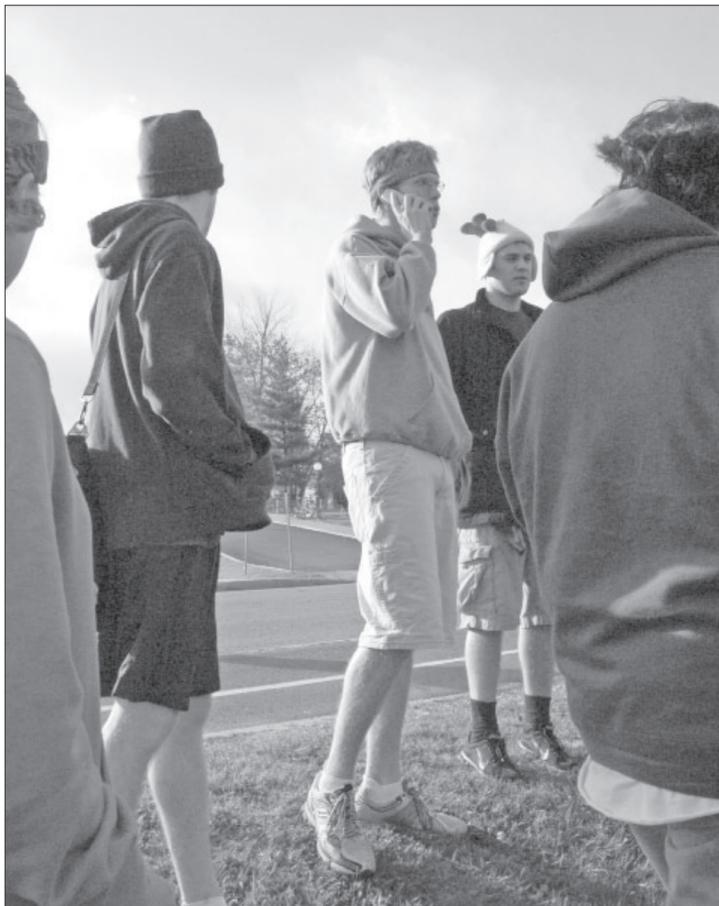
"Everyone remembers playing Assassins their freshman year, and it's the same thing only much, much bigger," Clark said. "If you want to meet people, you meet a lot of cool people playing this game, and if you just want to have a lot of really wild stories, you'll definitely end up with those."

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Drew Clark
Senior

All eyes on Drew Clark

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Krista Goodman/Index
Senior Drew Clark (center) gathers fellow zombies on campus Sunday for one of the last missions in this semester's game of "Humans vs. Zombies."

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Spanish holiday promotes remembrance

BY CHRIS BONING
Staff Reporter

They call it El Día de los Muertos.

The Day of the Dead, as it is known in English, is a traditional Mexican holiday celebrated Nov. 1 and 2 in remembrance of families' beloved deceased, with the first day set aside for honoring children who have died and the second day for adults.

Carol Marshall, associate professor of Spanish, said the Day of the Dead has its roots among the indigenous cultures of Mexico. One of these cultures, the Aztecs, practiced a lot of violence, so they developed a great sense of the fleetingness of life, she added.

"One of [the Aztec] kings was also a poet, and he wrote these poems about the brevity of life and nothing remains forever and all that we have, he said, is flowers and song and art," Marshall said.

She said the Day of the Dead also ties in with the Catholic Church's — the predominant religion in Mexico — observation of All Saints' Day on Nov. 1.

"It's just a different attitude toward death," Marshall said. "It's not that people aren't sad when a loved one dies or something like that, but rather that this day [in] particular is an opportunity to remember by means of rituals and ceremonies or whatever to reintegrate and reconnect those who have died [back] into the family."

She said she thinks this time of year is so sacred because the changing of the seasons reminds us of death.

"Nature dies, the crops disappear, the flowers die — you can imagine how frightening that would be if you didn't know spring was coming again, if you didn't realize it's all a big cycle," Marshall said. "We feel that [in] ourselves, we feel like a part of that cycle, and we hope to participate in the going around."

The Day of the Dead also is evident of the Mexican affinity for reminding arrogant people to be humble, she added.

"It's a part of the culture, I think, whenever somebody gets to be too self-important or pompous or whatever, there's a tendency to ... burst that bubble and make fun of that person and bring them back down because after all, we're just human," Marshall said.

She said she thinks the Day of the Dead is important because it reflects the character of the Mexican national identity.

"It's really emblematic of kind of the Mexican sensibility [of] the way that they've managed to integrate the indigenous and the imposed and make something beautiful out of it," Marshall said.

Junior Tahamara Ibarra, who was born in Mexico, said her family does not celebrate the holiday in the U.S. as much as when they visit Mexico.

"It's the environment," she said. "[In the U.S.]

my parents usually have to work during the Day of the Dead, so we do a small remembrance celebration such as putting a small altar of dead relatives and flowers and sweets."

Ibarra said that in Mexico, whole villages take part in the Day of the Dead celebration, which usually includes a small fair, religious services, ethnic dances and visits to family graves. She

added that overall, the atmosphere surrounding the Day of the Dead is a happy one.

"Your family gets together, you remember your dead relatives," Ibarra said. "[Making] food is always a happy time because everybody is cooking and the food is always delicious. There's flowers everywhere, especially marigolds, and lots of sweets in the shapes of skulls and skeletons. Death is mocked, in a way."

She said other traditions for the holiday are dressing up like Death, which in Mexico resembles a woman clothed in white, or Grim Reaper-type figures. Dishes usually are left out for dead relatives, Ibarra added.

Ibarra said she is saddened by the way Halloween has begun to permeate towns on the border between Mexico and the U.S.

"[Halloween] is kind of overshadowing what the Day of the Dead is," Ibarra said. "The Day of

the Dead isn't only a religious thing, but it's also an indigenous celebration. The indigenous celebrated their dead relatives, and when the Catholic Church brought [its ideas] they looked at the celebration as demonic and so as a way to make it look not demonic, they called it [All Saints' Day]. Indigenous traditions are still held, of course, but it kind of has been mixed with Catholic traditions."

She also said that to her, the Day of the Dead is about remembering those who went before us and that doing so is important.

"My younger brothers were born in the U.S., so they have no idea, but with this, we're like, 'Yeah, this is your grandpa and he did this for the family,'" Ibarra said. "It's a time of remembrance and telling stories and jokes. It's a way for them to remember and also for us because we tend to forget in our daily lives."

Senior Elizabeth Bonanno, president of Sigma Delta Pi, the Spanish honor fraternity, said the organization will host an event tonight at 6:30 in Magruder 1000 for anyone who would like to learn more about the Day of the Dead.

She said there will be an altar set up, in addition to traditional Mexican dishes, poetry and presentations on the meaning of the Day of the Dead. The event is something the organization hosts every year because it is a holiday few know about, and although the Day of the Dead is different from Halloween, it has a similar feel, Bonanno added.

"I hope [students] take away a better understanding of what Day of the Dead is and a little bit of Mexican culture, and also they can come get free food," she said.

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Tahamara Ibarra
Junior

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