

From ASH and FLAME

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LOUD AND PROUD HOUSES

by Genii Grimsley

A NEW YEAR at *L'Universite des Arts Magiques* was ushered in by Headmistress Victoria Dann on Thursday night at Phoenix Rising's Overture Dinner.

Welcoming in the recently sorted students, the Headmistress gave a brief history lesson, to include house colors and mascots, of each of the four houses. Among the history lesson came the announcements of few tickets left for keynote speeches as well as the Rememberall Wall and Final Theories Wall being in the Room of Requirement.

Professor Dann then introduced the heads of houses. The head of Zodico house, Professor Christine Gengaro, declared her house the loudest and rowdiest house and proclaimed that we would have an "awesome time." She then sang the first verse of the Zodico house song, making her a bit of a tough act to follow.

Pontalbón's head of house, Professor Marjorie Manifold, was obviously up to the challenge and welcomed all students, though she warned her house that, "tricks shouldn't be played in front of the press," despite her house's trickster nature. She also mentioned that any displayable streeler would gain house points.

Bellereve house proved that Zodico house was definitely not the loudest by cheering loudly and chanting "Bellereve" as Professor Roxanne Conrad stepped up to the podium. During her welcoming speech, she urged all students to donate to the New Orleans libraries that were decimated by Hurricane Katrina. Her parting words to us were read from a book, "Chapter 1... Writing is Magic."

Finally, the Lumién head of house, Professor Michael Bolton, took the stage with a flourish of his pirate flag. He wondered why his house was stuck in a corner if Zodico house was supposed to be the loudest and the rowdiest. He challenged their claim by stating that his own house might have no charity, but was founded by a pirate.

With the feast over, several wizard rockers took the stage and were followed up by the PotterCast. In addition, thanks to the Listening Library, every student received the ultimate surprise of the unabridged *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* on cassettes.



photo by Kirstee Byrne



John Noe, Sue Upton and Melissa Anelli during Pottercast
photo by Jessica Blank

ANNOUNCEMENT

Spellcast will be holding auditions for their live radio play this afternoon from 1pm to 3pm in the Room of Requirement. Please head along if you're interested - all ages, genders, accents and abilities are welcomed!

MUSICAL MAGIC AT THE RHYTHM REVUE

by Genii Grimsley

THE FESTIVITIES BEGAN A LITTLE EARLY for those who attended the pre-conference Rhythm Revue. The Phoenix Rising volunteers, staff and early registrants truly rang in the conference with some memorable events.

Karaoke was sung by all with a backdrop of the *Prisoner of Azkaban* film projected on a wall. Amber Charleville started off the party by singing a lovely rendition of Garth Brooks' "Friends in Low Places."

With the party in full swing, both costumed and non-costumed attendees were singing such classics as "My Sharona" by The Knack and hits such as "Bootylicious" by Destiny's Child. There were several crowd favorites, such as Severus singing "I'm Too Sexy" by Right Said Fred, as well as Lord Voldemort's "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor.

Another crowd favorites featured Charleville and Rennie Guedel, who dedicated "Cold-hearted Snake" by Paula Abdul to the Dark Lord, much to his displeasure.

Of course, it was not just cosplayers who had all the fun. Anastasia sang beautifully to "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Starship. And karaoke is not complete without a rendition of "YMCA" by the Village People. All had a great time and it was definitely the prelude to a wonderful conference.

photos by Joselle Vanderhooft



Amber Charleville and Rennie Guedel (left to right) serenade Lord Voldemort



Kate Henndon and Lord Voldemort (left to right) share a moment. Aww!

UMBRIDGE ROCKS PHOENIX RISING

SHOCK AND DISMAY rocked Phoenix Rising early on Thursday when one Dolores Umbridge arrived amid a flurry of activity. Professor Umbridge, resplendent in pink tweed, registered for Phoenix Rising, saying she was looking forward to wizard rock. However, not long after, she disappeared mysteriously, and a Lumien pirate appeared in her place.

The Lumien student behind both appearances is Shae from Orlando. Easily one of the best dressed for Thursday, Shae, pictured below in her pirate regalia, has come to Phoenix Rising fully prepared with four Umbridge outfits, as well as an impressive array of Lumien accessories. As well as pennants, scarves and a highly sought-after basket of Ashwinder eggs, Shae has also been able to recover the scrolls of Lumien, a long-lost document detailing past adventures. Shae and her fellows Lumiens are collecting signatures of Phoenix Rising attendees on the scrolls, to pass down to future generations of L'Université students.

► story and photo by Kirstee Byrne

Lumien student Shae in full pirate regalia



PROGRAMMING preview

THREE DAYS OF PROGRAMMING – from academic presentations to informal roundtables or workshops – kick off this morning, and Phoenix Rising organizers say the schedule appeals to a wide variety of interests. Roughly 175 presenters from several countries will present on everything from writing violence in Harry Potter to the genetics of Muggles, wizards and Squibs.

Programming is organized into nine or 10 tracks each day to help attendees organize their plans, said Chair of Programming Suzanne Scott. "Tracks are themed blocks of programming, so if you're interested in character analysis in Harry Potter, you could sit in one room for five hours and get all sorts of presentations," Scott said.

The tracks can be as broad as parenting and teaching, and as specific as tricksters and literary theory. And there is a vast variety within each track, including the types of presentations – some may be formal academic papers, and others may invite attendees to participate in a roundtable discussion or a hands-on workshop.

And don't worry if you can't make it to every presentation that interests you; after the conference, Phoenix Rising will publish a compendium of the presentations. Presenters are encouraged to submit their papers for publication.

► story by Kayla Castille