Embracing the strange

BY SARAH ODOM

The screen at the front of the chapel shows lyrics to worship songs that are all too easily ignored. People in neighboring pews give slow glances in her direction. Girls snicker and point from the balcony on the left-hand side of the chapel. Some guy next to the snickering girls nods his head at a buddy standing on the balcony on the right-hand side of the chapel as a way to motion him to look down at her. People take turns gaping and then glancing at one another while bursts of muffled laughter escape their pursed lips.

They laugh because she stands shamelessly with arms raised high — fingers splayed apart awkwardly as they hyperextend at the knuckles. They laugh because she’s wearing one of those hats she always wears atop unbrushed hair (today it’s the one made of those exotic flavors of steampunk.

“Why not?” Spangler said. “Orange peels are packed with vitamin C.” Spangler began eating orange peels when she was sick of the peels from sack lunches making her room smell bad and decided eating them was the simplest solution. The oddest thing that Spangler has been known to eat, and said that she never wanted to grow up. Of course, Spangler became aware of her body as she grew a little older, but she has still kept some of her childlike whimsy.

Katie Petts said that she would compare Spangler to someone like Jack Sparrow. “She’s the odd character that everyone loves,” Petts said.

But, frankly, not everyone loves Spangler. Some make statements such as, “She’s off in her own little world singing songs. I can’t connect with her,” or “I just want to tell her that she is not making the world better by being so obnoxious,” or “I don’t get her at all, nor do I want to.”

It’s not as if her strangeness goes away when one gets to know her. Actually, the more one knows her, the stranger she seems.

A good place to begin the search for evidence of this deeper strangeness, is in her room. Spangler’s room hosts many oddities.

Piles of clothing, dishes and books are spewed sporadically on the floor. An assortment of hats she wears daily are stacked unorderly atop her vanity, and a collection of action figures she plans to display are in an open box near her window. In the corner, there is a didgeridoo that she plays from time to time. (She might also bring out her mouth harp.) The refrigerator houses a variety of ethnic foods such as mochi, a Japanese rice cake filled with beans, and kimbab, a Korean sushi.

Spangler is adventurous in the ways of food. She loves ethnic food, especially Japanese and Ethiopian. Ethnic food is not where her bizarre food choices end. If she has an orange, she will probably eat the peel, too.

“I could compare her to Lady Gaga,” Jeanie Fairchild, an acquaintance of Spangler’s, said. “If I felt really strongly about the treatment of animals, I could totally see her wearing a meat suit.” she then paused to think for a second and said, “Only I see Hana as more creative than Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga would probably get her ideas from Hana.”

In a sense, Fairchild might be right: Hana is very creative and always has been.

“All little kids like to play pretend, of course,” Teri Stettinisch, Spangler’s mother, said. “But Hana was a devotee to character development, pretending to be Puck when we were reading about Midsummer Night’s Dream, for example, and climbing up the ladder of her lofted bed with a toy plastic spring-loaded knife stuck into her underwear waistband and announcing that she was Tarzan.”

Her mother warned her that clothes were a necessity, but Spangler protested and said that she never wanted to grow up. Of course, Spangler became aware of her body as she grew a little older, but she has still kept some of her childlike whimsy.

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“I am not stupid,” she said.

See “Student” on Page 4

INSIDE this issue:

• Page 2: Jo Alberda art exhibit
• Page 3: Review of The Counselor
• Page 4: Basketball previews
• Page 5: Read about adoptive parents at NW
• Page 6: Cleanliness is next to godliness
• Page 7: Former NW students run for Orange City mayor
Tales from Heaven and Earth on display at Korver

BY JACOB CHRISTIANSEN

According to Sioux Center Artist Jo Alberda, art is a vital and integral part of the Kingdom of Christ. “It’s a way we express our faith,” she said. “We make images that express the things we believe.”

Alberda’s exhibit, Tales from Heaven and Earth, premiered this past Monday, Oct. 28, in the Te Paske Gallery of the Korver Visual Arts Center. Alberda uses hand-dyed fabrics, stitching and a variety of line and shape applications to present a beautiful collection.

Alberda’s exhibit, as the title suggests, is presented in two parts: “Heaven” and “Earth.” Each part is done in its own style and contains a variety of works.

The inspirations for “Heaven” and “Earth” were also different. “Earth” was prompted by images from Virginia City, a well-preserved ghost town in Montana. Photographs of old and decaying wood from the empty city inspired Alberda to create a set of pieces that are organic and based in simple patterns and color schemes.

Apollo 15 Astronaut James B. Irwin’s famous observation that from space, the Earth takes on the appearance of a little blue marble inspired Alberda to create “Heaven.” “I just thought that was a neat way of looking at it,” Alberda said. “I’ve been working with the circular form for a few years now and was inspired.”

This circular form is present in Alberda’s “Heaven,” each piece appears to be a planet viewed from space.

Contained within “Heaven” is a smaller set of pieces Alberda has titled “In the Beginning.” These works are derived from the creation account in Genesis 1. Each of the seven works takes on a different day of creation while still maintaining Alberda’s work on the circular form. These works were inspired by her visit to a monastery and the newly transcribed and illustrated Saint John’s Bible.

Alberda said beauty is an important part of her work. “A lot of modern art looks on beauty as superficial, but I don’t think that’s true. God has made a lot of beautiful things and filled the world with them. If you believe God created the world and you look around, you will see God there,” Alberda said.

Tales from Heaven and Earth will close on Nov. 15. A public reception for Alberda’s show will be held at 7 p.m. tonight, Nov. 1.

Arcade Fire still red hot

ALBUM REVIEW

BY IAN CARD

This week, Montreal-based indie-rock group Arcade Fire released its fourth studio album. The highly anticipated album, Reflektor, dropped late in the day on Monday after a music store in Ireland prematurely placed the record on sale (USA Today).

The group released a stream of the full album via a YouTube video with the sound played over footage from the 1959 film “Black Orpheus.” Two of the tracks reference Orpheus, a character from Greek mythology, and his girlfriend, Eurydice. The pair are also pictured on the album’s cover.

Since its debut in 2003, Arcade Fire has consistently set itself apart as an innovative group that is always pushing the boundaries of its creative abilities and genre. In 2010, to the surprise of many, Arcade Fire took home a Grammy for “Album of the Year.” It seems that they would stick closely to the formula that brought them a Grammy; however, Reflektor takes ambitious leaps and bounds outside of Arcade Fire’s usual rock recipe.

From the instant the title track drops, listeners are bombarded with deep reverb, heavy yet well-executed synth lines and bass lines dripping with funk. This new post-punk sabotage and disco dance cocktail draws influences from artists such as David Bowie, Michael Jackson and the Rolling Stones. The album comprehensively and creatively samples the best of all of these artists and combines it into something unique yet still signature Arcade Fire.

Highlighting one or two tracks doesn’t quite do justice to the beauty of the album as a whole. Each track provokes thought and emotion through unique instrumentation and powerful writing. The title track, “Reflektor,” features background vocals by David Bowie. For tracks such as “We Exist” and “Flashbulb Eyes,” Haitian percussion artists Willinson Duprate and Verrieux Zile came in to collaborate. The move brought new depths of rhythmic quality and some new percussive flavors to the project.

Still, some tracks are reminiscent of the sound Arcade Fire produced on its first few albums. Arguably the only true rock song on the album, “Normal Person,” opens up with a muted, pulsing, dirty guitar/bass line while a bluesy piano comes in over the top and steadily churns out common tones above the din.

Arcade Fire is to be applauded for its brilliant re-working of some classic elements and a daring new spin on its own signature sound.

Rating: ★★★★★

Key Tracks: “Reflektor,” “We Exist,” “Flashbulb Eyes,” “Joan of Arc”
‘The Counselor’ needs help

MOVIE REVIEW

BY THERESA LARRABEE

“The Counselor” has a cast of stars: Michael Fassbender, Brad Pitt, Penélope Cruz and Cameron Diaz. Yet somehow, even they couldn’t save this movie.

When watching the trailer, audiences probably thought, “I’m not sure what it’s actually about, but it looks pretty good. I’m sure you just need to watch it to know.” Unfortunately, when they left the theater, those audiences were still a bit confused about what they had just watched. And not in a good way.

“The Counselor” has three different story lines with Fassbender’s character as the link between them. The Counselor, whose real name we never learn, has a great career as a lawyer and a loving fiancé (Cruz), but he is desperate for money.

The audience is left in the dark about why he needs money, but it drives him far enough that he decides to get involved with drug trafficking. From there, the movie goes in circles, showing the drug smugglers, Counselor’s investment in his associate’s (Javier Bardem, Skyfall) club, meetings with his middleman Westray (Pitt) and Malkina’s (Diaz) strange sex life. When the drugs get stolen, everyone goes on the run from the drug cartel.

The story doesn’t end with a bang. It simply drifts off leaving its audience with questions about what happens to Counselor, who Malkina was making plans with, and what happened to Rainer’s pet cheetahs. “The Counselor” leaves loose ends and doesn’t answer many of the questions its audience asks. The movie had everything going for it: Brad Pitt, cheetahs and drug trafficking. This leads audiences to ask, “What went wrong?”

Rating: ★★★

Five Star Guide

Classic: ★★★★★
Excellent: ★★★★★
Good: ★★★★
Fair: ★★★
Poor: ★★

Prepare 4 battle

GAME REVIEW

BY ANDREW FEISTNER

Fans of the original Battlefield: Bad Company anxiously awaited this week’s release of Battlefield 4. They are not to be disappointed.

Let’s start with what the developer, Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment, got right. The multiplayer is incredible. It’s kind of like a greatest hits album from that band that you love . . . with bonus tracks.

The usual Conquest, Rush, Squad Deathmatch and the shooter stereotypical Team Deathmatch are all present from previous installments, and they all play fantastically. There are new modes as well. There is Obliteration, Domination and Defuse to play, and they fit perfectly into the already incredible multiplayer suite already crafted.

Another great thing that has been added is a feature called Leveloution. When an event is triggered, it will change the way the map plays thanks to this new feature. For example, if a skyscraper is toppled, there will be a giant mass of rubble at the capture point.

The Test Range is another great new addition to the game. This mode allows you to hone your skills with vehicles and weapons without the fear of getting mullered by other players. This is helpful for players that struggle with piloting.

Although all of these new features are positive additions, the campaign is mediocre. Players are a squad leader trying to prevent a war between the ol’ USA, Russia and China. In theory the player is calling the shots, but it does not feel like it at times. Your character is silent which makes it all the more frustrating when your squadmates decide they are the ones in charge. There are also times when allies walk through walls or objects in the environment, or they were not textured.

Although Battlefield 4’s campaign is lackluster, the multiplayer makes it worth the money.

Rating: ★★★★

Submit your campus quote via our Twitter page, @NWC_Beacon or through Facebook.

“I wanna come back to pole-dancing.”
- Professor Scott Monsma while trying to re-route a discussion in Sociology of Gender. Submitted via Twitter by @TeRayRay_

“What does glute mean? I’m an international student so I don’t understand.”
- Shuen-en Ho on how to hit on biology-health guys. Submitted via Twitter by @BekyMac

“I’ll bet Jesus would have had a Mac.”
- Sophomore Isaac Veurink while debating about whether Macs or PCs are better. Submitted via Twitter by @matthonken

“The music department would love that . . . Of course God is in the music, where else would He be?”
- Professor James Mead on Christian elements in Lord of the Rings
Student is more than meets the ear

FROM PAGE 1

“There are two types of packing peanuts: the ones that are made out of Styrofoam, and the ones that are made out of corn. Obviously, you can’t eat the ones made out of Styrofoam, though people have tried to get me to eat them before. The ones made out of corn are pretty much like Corn Pops.”

Spangler is also adventurous in her clothing style. She wears tattered jeans and t-shirts that have bold statements such as “Social Hazard- I will not conform,” but what really stands out is how she accessorizes. At one point in time, she wore a watch on each wrist—one to tell the time, and one because she liked the ticking noise. She wears a hat almost every day because she is comfortable in them. In the winter months, she wears a scarf in the style of a hajib as often as she wears a scarf in the style of a headband. She wears a hat almost every day because she is comfortable in them.

Her closest friends have grown to love her oddities, although they did not always love them initially.

“It may sound kind of bad,” Jenna Kitch master, Spangler’s current roommate said, “but I was kind of mad when I found out we were going to be roommates. I knew we didn’t have many common interests initially, but she ended up getting me into some things like Dr. Who that I probably wouldn’t have otherwise if I hadn’t known her. After a while, too, I realized how cool her strangeness is.”

Deborah Admire, a close friend of Spangler’s, admitted that she was turned off by Spangler to begin with.

“I was homeschooled, so I kind of had a radar for picking homeschoolers out,” Admire said.

There are two types of homeschoolers:

“The ones you are like ‘Wow!’ and the ones where you are like ‘Oh, boy.’ My first impression was definitely on the ‘Oh, boy’ sides of things.”

Admire was also thrown off by Spangler’s singing.

“She sang ‘There’s No Place Like London’ every time she came up the stairs. Morning, noon and night. I would lie in bed in the early morning and think I don’t know who you are, but that is not going to keep me from killing you.”

Admire said she soon realized that every weird thing that Spangler did, although it seemed she was making a point to be odd, had a purpose. The hats were things that were either made by her family or bought when she was with her family. She wore a ring that made her finger turn green and would never take it off because it was a gift from her younger sister, Marta. The orange scarf she wears often was a gift from her dad.

“When you are able to get past the stereotype that Hana is strange and just see her as Hana, you’ll be fine,” Admire said. “Now, if someone makes a crack about her singing in chapel, my reaction is more like ‘make fun of my friend… and I will kill you.’”

Although Spangler is often perceived as a loud person with a loud personality, Brittany Caffey, Spangler’s current president director, said Spangler seemed a bit reserved and nervous when she first arrived at NW.

“She didn’t say much, but I could tell that she had a very close relationship with her dad, who was helping her move in.”

Caffey said she could tell right away that Spangler and her family had a deep connection. Whenever there was free time she saw them spending quality time in the lounge—all on one couch—laughing and snuggling.

“They seemed to be a creative group of people that would make up stories together,” she said.

And that they are. The Spangler family refers to themselves as a pack of wolves. “We howl together,” Her father, Bob Spangle, said. “(We) go everywhere we can together. (We) sing together, mourn together. We watch the moon phases together and read together.”

Spangler’s mother, Teri Steetnisch, said, “We like being together learning, dreaming, making, enjoying whimsy, humor and creativity.”

And her family is cohesively odd. Spangler’s sister, Marta, is very similar in interests and mannerisms. Their mother decided to keep her maiden name after she wed her husband simply because she liked her own last name, and he was referred to as the deviant of deviants by his sociology teacher in high school.

The Spanglers are aware that they don’t fit in. However, they are just grateful that they fit so well with each other.

“The most wonderful thing about being in our family is that we all love and respect each other,” Spangler’s sister said. “There are no stupid questions. We are always ready to support each other in interests and activities.”

This philosophy of loving and supporting others has transferred over to Spangler’s social life. Caffey describes Spangler’s personality as one that is in tune with the rules of improv: there are no mistakes, you just go off what the other person gives you. Caffey said that Spangler has the ability to make anyone feel funny because nothing is off limits. Plus, she has a laugh that begs people to laugh along with it.

“She has a melodic thing that kind of shakes as it goes up and down.”

Kugler, like many other people, said he appreciates Spangler’s laughter. He said Spangler’s laugh is something that attracts people to her, and although many people might try to hide something so distinctive, she just lets it happen. Shans is that she is almost everything—it be how she dresses, how she sings, how she sits in the front row completely alone during class how she brings action figures to class just because she likes them.

If she were to compare herself to anyone, Spangler would go with Clarisse McClellan, a character from the book Fahrenheit 451. Motivated by curiosity, Clarisse is a 17-year-old girl who has an excitement for living and enjoys the dandelions, rain and autumn leaves.

In a world where no one seems to care about what is going on around them, Clarisse’s innocence and unconventionality presents Montag, the protagonist, an outlet into understanding what makes life beautiful and worth loving.

“She wants to change people’s outlooks,” Spangler said. “I ideally, I would like to inspire many people to change their outlooks, too. But inspiring one person would be just fine.”

Spangler wants to show others that it’s okay to be different. “I know how gravity works. But that doesn’t keep me from jumping higher. I know that people may think I don’t care about what others think, but I do. “I care that they think I am strange—that’s how I want them to think of me.”
Features

The adoption option welcomed at NW

BY AMIE ADAMS

In the education category, Northwestern College was ranked fifth in the list of the Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces of 2013 by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. The college gives financial benefits to faculty and staff who participate in adoption, but the college’s commitment goes much deeper than that. Staff members have made the decision to get involved in adoption for a variety of reasons, some adopting before their employment at the college. Each adoption brings a unique story to the Northwestern community.

Integrating Identity

Between three years of working in the adoption and social work field and raising an adopted son who is now an adult himself, Kevin McMahan has seen the importance of integration for children of international adoptions. Through his sons Kory and Trevor, McMahan has also experienced integration. He is the father of both an adopted and a biological son, and he said that he has been given the extraordinary opportunity to parent in both ways.

When McMahan and his wife began looking at adoption, they didn’t see it as ministry but simply as a way to have a child. His knowledge of the field and process of adoptions led him to Korea because of the quality of foster care given to the children there prior to adoption. After completing the process, McMahan and his wife met their son Kory, now a sophomore at Northwestern, when he was five months old.

Prior to NW, when the McMahan’s were living in Seattle, Kory became involved with an organization called the Korean Identity Development Society. The organization runs a Korean culture camp for children and teenagers of all ages. This camp gives young children the opportunity to experience Korean culture and gives teenagers a place to bond and build relationships. The strong impact that KIDS has had on Kory’s life influences McMahan’s belief that children should know that adoption is part of their identity and should have the chance to integrate their native culture into their new one.

One Child, One Family at a Time

After two trips to Ethiopia in 2004 and 2007, Sherri Langton brought two children into her family. Her daughter Mari and her son Ahman are now nine and seven. When Langton began pursuing international adoption for her family, she specifically chose Ethiopia. She loves the hospitable culture of the people there and described it by saying, “They are the kind of people who would give you the shirt off their back if you needed one.”

Although Langton had concerns about bringing her children to a place without much diversity, she has experienced tremendous support from her church and the community. Because international adoption is also more common in this area than other places, Langton has been given not just financial support but also the support that comes from building relationships with families that have taken part in adoption.

Langton sees a strong connection between NW, the organization Katelyn’s Fun. This is an organization located in Sioux Center that maintains international and domestic adoption programs as well as provides funding and education about adoption, which is based in Sioux Center, and the amount of people in this area who are in some way involved with adoption. She said this “makes known the need” and provides more ways than adoption alone for people to get involved in the ministry.

“I’ve never believed that adoption is the one thing that’s going to fix the orphan problem,” Langton said.

She firmly believes in trying to keep children in their birth families but said that she believes her adopted children were meant to be in her family. She clearly sees God at work in her life and her personal experience with adoption.

World Vision and Ethiopia Reads are two other organizations that Langton recommends as good places to get involved with supporting the countries that children of international adoption come from. Both of these organizations put an emphasis on breaking the cycle that leads to the need for adoption. Specifically, Ethiopia Reads builds schools with fully stocked libraries in rural places so more children have access to education and literacy. Education empowers people to lift themselves up and provides them with opportunities that they wouldn’t have otherwise.

Langton knows that the issue of adoption and the vast amount of orphans in the world is overwhelming, but that hasn’t stopped her from getting involved in being part of the solution.

“We can’t fix it all by ourselves, but we can make it better, one kid, one family at a time, everybody doing their part,” Langton said.

She said that being overwhelmed doesn’t “excuse us from our responsibility.”

“God doesn’t say, ‘Well, this is too big so just forget about it,’” Langton said.

Beauty from Ashes

Six years ago, Laura Heitritter and her family welcomed two new members, Shega and Megan. After Heitritter and her husband prayed to see God’s hand guiding them, the girls were adopted from Ethiopia at the ages of five and one.

Heitritter understands that “every adoption is born of loss,” and she recognizes the pain that occurred for her daughters in Ethiopia before she got to experience the joy of the adoption of two beautiful girls to her family.

Heitritter has been able to use trips that NW groups have taken to send packages back and forth between Megan and Shega’s birth family. Beyond the adoption of her two daughters, Heitritter is also involved with Katelyn’s Fund, the Sioux Center organization previously mentioned.

Professor Laura Heitritter has been blessed by the adoption of her two Ethiopian daughters. Heitritter said that God promises to put the lonely in families, and counts her experience with adoption as an incredible blessing. However, she is still realistic about the challenges.

As a result of the loss of their birth family, her daughters have experienced a complete change in surroundings and culture, learned a new language, and are now surrounded by people of a different race. Although all these things seem like incredible challenges on the surface, the Heitritter family love has triumphed over them all.

“Adoption is beauty from ashes, and we need faith that God will create that beauty,” Heitritter said.
Small town life is lovely

BY MOLLIE FERGUSON

You know you live in a small town if everyone at your school has a cousin in that same school, no one mows their lawn on Sunday and the closest mall is 50 minutes away. I may be biased since I grew up in small town, but I don't think small town living is such a bad thing. There is support, safety and trust and time to grow.

Life throws all kinds of curveballs at us; dealing with the problems of life alone is despairing and bleak. In the small community of roughly 6,000 people, Orange City has much to offer in support of its citizens. No one wants to do life alone; God created humans to be relational beings. In the hard times, Christian or not, there are 14 churches and bleak. In the small town, but I don't think small town living is such a bad thing. There is support, safety and trust and time to grow.

In the hustle and bustle of a big city, the important things in life can get lost in the shuffle. What would students be doing on Sunday if everything were open? I find Sundays to be not only a time to do homework, but a day to relax and enjoy the calmness and serenity on campus when students aren’t rushing to activities and classes. I appreciate that most businesses in the community close in respect for the Sabbath.

In just a week, students can get pretty burned out with few things to do off campus it gives students a chance to evaluate. If we were busy all the time there would be no time for reflection.

It is important to consider how we are growing as people. Am I making time for the important things in life like friends and family? When the business of the week picks up, am I still a pleasant person or does the stress of school damper my attitude and perspective?

I can’t speak for all students because not all came from a small town, but I loved growing up in a small town and I appreciate everything that Orange City has to offer even though it is a smaller town. The characteristics of a small town are important to me: support, safety and trust and time to grow.

Cleanliness is next to godliness

BY PATRICIA DAKA

Northwestern campus is a home away from home for all of us. Why do I say this? It’s because we spend more of our time here than we do at our respective homes.

Working maintenance for the past couple of months has taught me a lot. It has opened my eyes to the much unappreciated work that impacts the campus very dearly. I can’t speak for the whole of the maintenance department, but my observations have left me speechless and flabbergasted for the most part.

Working in the dorms has been an interesting experience to say the least. The thing that bothers me the most is the level of disrespect that occurs in the bathrooms. The stains, the hairs like flies on the wall, the toilet paper thrown around like a TP-ing party had just occurred and the boxes of personal trash mixed with recyclable items. Is this the same way that we treat the bathrooms in our respective homes? I don’t think so.

Why is it that we can’t treat the bathrooms on campus as we would in our own homes? Ask yourself this: Would my parents stand and let me get away with this? I would hope not! Are we that oblivious to signs that are stuck at every wall telling us to “Please pick up your hair” or “Please help your campus bathroom fairy.”

Many people look down on the various people who work the maintenance jobs, but they are the people who help keep the campus clean. We are all well aware that poor hygiene is a health hazard, and the costs of healthcare are expensive. Where is our school pride if we can’t even keep the bathrooms clean? You see various people dressed nicely and looking clean, but what we are blind to is the mess that they have left in the bathroom expecting someone else to clean it up after them.

Doesn’t the Bible say cleanliness is next to godliness? It doesn’t only mean cleanliness of the body but cleanliness of everything. Despite many people looking at maintenance as a “dirty job,” we should all be appreciative and respectful to all who help maintain and keep the campus looking spectacular. I mean, wouldn’t you want to walk in a nice clean smelling bathroom? Do your part and help keep the bathrooms clean; after all, it’s a place we all visit frequently.

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New faces will lead Raider basketball

BY JORDAN DYKSTRA
FEATURES EDITOR

Last season, the men’s basketball team ended a successful season with its third-consecutive trip to the NAIA Division II National Championship and claimed the regular-season GPAC title with a 17-3 conference record.

The Raiders ended their season with a 24-7 record and a first-round exit to California Maritime at the national tournament last March. However, NW lost three starters to graduation and a 2-8 record in the GPAC and seventh in the national rankings.

Sophomore Bryce Moss also returns after playing in all 31 games last season. Moss averaged four points a contest on 55 percent shooting from the floor and also grabbed 3.1 rebounds per game.

Junior Gerasimos Mantalvanos will also be in the mix after transferring to NW from Athens, Greece.

WORST CASE: No. 6 seed
BEST CASE: No. 4 seed

Sophomore Ryan Johnson passes against Concordia earlier in the season. Johnson scored the lone goal on Wednesday night.
Former NW students run for Orange City mayor

Campaigning for student votes, Mick Snieder sits at the voter registration booth outside the Cafe and De Haan holds a rally in the Bullman Center Lobby.

BY ALYSSA CURRIER

This fall, there are no congressional candidates debating in Christ Chapel or Romney rallies in the gym. It is an off-year for national elections, but politics continue with the upcoming election for Orange City mayor.

Current mayor Les Douma is stepping down, and two candidates, De Haan and Mick Snieder, are vying for the open office.

Mick Snieder

Snieder graduated from Northwestern in 2006 and currently works at Northwestern Bank. His political career began his sophomore year of college when he was elected to city council. In 2009, he ran for mayor against Douma. Now he’s back for a second shot at the office, this time with 10 years of city council experience under his belt.

A major focus of Snieder’s campaign is the need for more housing. According to Snieder, this issue directly affects a number of students.

“Probably the biggest problem we have right now is very slow residential growth,” Snieder said. “We graduate 250 to 300 students here at NW every year, and the large majority of them leave town. I don’t expect that we would keep all of them, but I think part of the reason is it’s pretty hard to find housing.”

As a college student on city council, Snieder was able to increase the number of months during which students were permitted to park on the street. However, last year, the city made overnight street parking around NW illegal — a decision that was highly unpopular among students.

“That’s one area where the city and the college can partner,” Snieder said. “We have to find a happy medium. What we had a problem with before is people parked on both sides of the street, so essentially there was only one lane of traffic through. We have to find a way where people can still park on the street, but we have to be fair to our neighbors and residents in the area.”

Snieder has spent time campaigning to students. He was on campus during the voter registration drive last month and held a forum at the Learning Commons on Tuesday, Oct. 29. Community members were also invited to attend the event to learn about Snieder and voice their opinions.

“One of my curiosities is what voice, if any, the Latino population has in city government,” said Orange City resident Kristin Hall who attended the forum. “I understand that Dutch heritage is deeply valued, and it should be, but there is a richer fabric here, and I’m wondering if those voices are also welcome in city government.”

Hall went on to say that the fact that the Latino population was not even mentioned at the forum gives an indirect answer to her question. Issues that were discussed include the possibility of a new recreational trail to encircle Orange City and whether a bowling alley could move into the soon-to-be-empty Bomgaars building downtown.

For more information about Snieder, visit his campaign Facebook group, “Mick for Mayor.”

Deb De Haan

De Haan attended NW during the ’74-’75 academic year and is currently a nurse in the Orange City Area Health System.

Many people throughout the community remember De Haan’s father, Robert Dunlop, who was mayor for 37 years. De Haan was the first woman on the MOC-Floyd Valley school board, on which she served for 20 years and was president for 16 of those years. If she wins the election, De Haan will be the first woman to serve as Orange City mayor.

There have been some question as to why De Haan decided to join the race at the last minute.

“People had encouraged me six to eight weeks before,” De Haan said. “Then I ended up having shoulder surgery, so it just really kind of went out of my mind. The week before, I had more and more people contacting me saying, ‘We know you’d be a good leader.’”

Five days before the filing date, a member of the development board together with Mayor Dauma spoke with De Haan. That discussion played a major role in her decision to enter the race.

Like Snieder, De Haan cited lack of housing as the biggest problem facing Orange City. As for the issue of street parking for students, De Haan expressed concern.

“Parking is an issue here,” De Haan said. “I would love to see representatives from the student government and city council sit down and discuss some of this. I often wonder about parking around here. We either have to somehow supply some more parking or try to find some alternative.”

De Haan said it is important for students to vote in the mayoral election.

“When Orange City is growing and doing well, the college is doing well,” De Haan said. “Right now you guys are students here, but someday you could live here or work here. It matters who’s in the leadership positions.”

Senior Isaiah Twitty, who has been assisting De Haan with her campaign’s public relations, helped her put together a rally on campus. The rally took place on Thursday, Oct. 31, in the Bullman Center lobby.

For more information about De Haan, visit her campaign Facebook page, “Deb 4 Mayor.”

Debate controversy

In early October, De Haan declined an invitation from Snieder to have a debate. The Oct. 24 issue of the Sioux County Capital Democrat then published a letter to the editor from Snieder in which he subtly criticized his opponent for bringing the political “games” seen at the national level into local politics.

Professor Jeff VanDerWerff of the political science department offered his take on Snieder’s letter.

“I have to surmise that what (Snieder’s) thinking is that, at the national level, Steve King has, through much of his career, been unwilling to debate any of his opponents,” VanDerWerff said. “I would imagine there’s just been a calculus done on Deb’s part that a debate might hurt her more than it would help her, and she can get her message out in other ways.”

De Haan has substantially more financial backing. As of noon on Thursday, Oct. 31, her campaign had raised $3,785 in contributions compared to Snieder’s $450. Many of De Haan’s supporters are prominent members of the community. Even Mayor Dauma is supporting her.

De Haan had her own explanation as to why she turned down the debate.

“I think if a third party had contacted me, I would have done it, but I never got a call from the college or anyone who was going to sponsor it,” De Haan said. “I felt I wanted to have more input from the beginning. It’s a small town; people know me. I just decided to go a different avenue for my campaign.”

Voting information

All students who are U.S. citizens, even those from different cities and states, are eligible to vote in the mayoral election as long as they are registered in Orange City. Students who are not registered in Orange City can do so at the poll with a valid driver’s license or student ID and a proof of residency letter signed by an NW administrator.

The election for Orange City mayor will run from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Students living on campus may vote at City Hall.