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Kugler honors father through collection of comics

HISTORY PROFESSOR
MAKES BIG IMPACT

COLLIN VERSCHOOR
ENGLISH TEACHING

Art is an expression of how different people interpret the world around them. This is why there are several styles of art, each representing a different time, emotion and place. Even people who may not consider themselves artists use art as an expression of what is going on around them. From 1946 to 1950, there was a young gentleman in Lexington, NE, who used comic style drawing to process and interpret the tragedy of World War II. As a high-school student in small town Nebraska, Jimmy Kugler used drawing to create his own story of what happened during the war.

Jimmy Kugler just so happens to be the late father of Dr. Michael Kugler. Dr. Kugler is a professor of history at Northwestern and has been teaching here since 1994. Dr. Kugler received his BA in history from Judson Baptist College in Oregon, his MA in History at

Western Washington University and his PhD in history at the University of Chicago. Dr. Kugler is a professor beloved by his students here at NW. Often described as “a man of sarcasm” Dr. Kugler is well known for cracking jokes while giving lectures.

Senior economics major Michael Leon, who is currently taking Useful Past Two with Dr. Kugler had remarkable things to say about Kugler’s class. “Dr. Kugler has an uncanny ability to spark curiosity through his, sometimes bizarre, stories and connections he makes to my classes content. You will either laugh, or question what was said for the rest of the day.” Thankfully, Leon is the exact kind of student that Dr. Kugler says he enjoys working with.

“I enjoy working with students who have little or no background in history, convincing them that learning to think like a historian is central to being a thoughtful and informed citizen and Christian,” Dr. Kugler said. “My students have taught me to think carefully about explaining complex documents and historical arguments.”



Michael Kugler, history professor at NW, is holding up book “Into the Jungle” while standing in his office.

PHOTO BY AMELIA HOLT

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NW Resident Assistants carry out Christian calling

BUILDING DORM
COMMUNITIES AT NW

ROSE HOOGERS
HUMANITIES

Community is a word that gets used a lot around Northwestern’s campus. Many students can attest to the fact that NW stands out in terms of fellowship and cultivating a sense of belonging, but who is responsible for fostering this community? This would be the role of the many RAs in the dorms and apartments.

RAs at NW carry out the duties of encouraging their residents in their spiritual, social and intellectual areas of their lives. They are expected to lead by example and commit themselves to their wings, all while enforcing standards. An RA is one who wears several hats: friend, manager, counselor and mentor.

With all these responsibilities, the life of an RA can be a busy one. Elyssa Tang, RA of Fern Smith Hall’s third south, explained one of the tougher parts of the job. “A challenge I didn’t expect was the struggle of

finding the balance between being present on the wing and continuing relationships and involvements outside of the wing. I am definitely still learning and growing!”

Growth is something RAs witness a lot of, not only in others but also in their own lives.

A change many RAs have seen in themselves compared to when they were just an “R” is holding themselves to a higher standard. “Being an RA has made me more intentional about my actions,” stated Jakob VanDerWerff, RA of Colenbrander Hall’s third east. “I am supposed to represent NW student life, so I should be responsible and trustworthy. Moreover, it has led me to be more intentional in my relationships with the men around me.”

Through being intentional, RAs have the joy of seeing growth in their residents. “It has been so cool seeing how different people are growing,” said Tang. I like how my RA for the past two years put it - being an RA is a front row seat to seeing God at work!”



NW RAs took a retreat to Grand Marais, MN to recharge their minds and to build relationships with one another.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Perhaps an expected, but nevertheless favorite part of the job for most RAs is building relationships. Tang said relationships were what made her apply for

the role. “I appreciate how being an RA gives me the opportunity to walk alongside people intentionally,” she said. “Growing up, many people have walked alongside me, especially

in my faith, so I wanted to do the same.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Music industry stars shine at Grammys

NIGHT OF HISTORY AND PRESTIGE

LIAM NIBBELINK
ENGLISH TEACHING

Music's biggest night came back to the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California, for its 65th annual ceremony on Sunday, Feb. 5. The night was jam-packed with star-studded performances, from Harry Styles to Mary J Blige.

Many of our favorite music artists were celebrated with the night's biggest awards. One of the big winners of the night was Harry Styles, who took home the awards for both Best Pop Vocal Album and the coveted honor of Album of the Year for his chart-topping album "Harry's House", which features some of his biggest hits, including "As It Was" and "Music For a Sushi Restaurant."

Styles also wowed the audience with a visually stunning and energetic performance of his hit song "As It Was." Per usual, Styles donned a truly elaborate and flashy sequin fringe jumpsuit as he took to the stage. Harry Styles can always be counted on to push the boundaries of men's fashion with his over-the-top, high-end wardrobe choices.

Another big winner of the night was Beyonce, who not only took home two Grammy awards (Best R&B Song for her single "Cuff It" and Best Dance & Electronic Album for her album "Renaissance"), but these two wins allowed her to reach legendary levels of success as she broke the record for the most Grammy Awards wins of all time. She's known as Queen Bey for a reason!

There were some other famous faces who received high honors as well. R&B singer and TikTok superstar Lizzo won the award of Record of the Year for her viral hit "About Damn Time," a song that took the nation by storm through a viral dance trend that overtook TikTok in the summer of 2022. Another chart-topping song that won Best Pop Solo Performance was Adele's iconic ballad "Easy on Me."

Many other famous faces were recognized, including Sam Smith's sensual single "Unholy" and Puerto Rican reggaeton sensation Bad Bunny for his album titled "Un Verano Sin Ti."

In addition to awards, there were many memorable musical performances throughout the night. The show opened with a thrilling dance party performance by Bad Bunny that got the crowd up and moving.

Another performance that had the crowd hyped up and excited was Lizzo's performance, in which she opened with a slower rendition of "About Damn Time" followed by the title song from her recent album "Special." Other individual performers included hip-hop superstar Kendrick Lamar, British pop sensation Sam Smith, queen of R&B Mary J Blige, country singer Luke Combs, and recently popular indie music star Steve Lacey.

On top of all these iconic performances, the highlight of the evening was a 10-minute tribute performance to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Hip-Hop as an American music genre. 2023 marks the fiftieth year since the creation of this historically culture-defining style of music, and the Grammy's pulled out all the stops with their rousing and flashy performance featuring many of hip-hop and rap music's biggest stars, as well as many up-and-coming artists. LL Cool J announced the tribute, which is fitting considering he is one of the biggest and most successful rappers in American music.

Another history-defining moment from this year's ceremony was when the Grammys unveiled a brand-new award known as the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HSYLES.CO.UK

This award, of which hip-hop legend Dr. Dre was the inaugural recipient, is an award that will be given each year going forward to an individual in the music industry who has achieved many great things and made many majorly impactful contributions to the industry over the course of their career.

In between all the energetic performances and the many gold trophies that were given out, host Trevor Noah filled time with a series of comedic jabs and witty jokes, some fun, and others questionable.

Overall, this was an energetic and fun night celebrating the art of music and the iconic musicians

and artists who have achieved the highest levels of success through their contributions and musical creations through this truly powerful art form.

Anticipated sequel grants audiences' wishes

MOVIE REVIEW

A QUEST TO LIVE FOREVER

BRAYDEN DIRKS
EXERCISE SCIENCE

After over twelve years since the original "Puss in Boots" hit the big screens, the long-awaited and highly acclaimed sequel has been accepted as a masterpiece. "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" follows the story of the final life of Puss in Boots, the beloved feline who is desperate for one last wish, one he hopes is granted well.

To begin the film, the favorite fearless hero cat is smashed by a bell and is told he is on the last of his nine lives. Puss, at first, is unfazed, and it is of no concern to him. However, Puss is soon confronted by an ominous whistling wolf. He is frightened off and determines he must step down as Puss in Boots and become a house cat to survive. Soon enough, Puss has a reason to return to his legendary status, as Goldilocks and the Three Bears reveal that they are searching for the Magical Wishing Star, which grants any wish to anyone who possesses the map and finds the star. Puss realizes the Wishing

Star is the way for him to evade death, so he joins the quest for the map.

Upon finding the map, Puss encounters Big Jack Horner, a villain after the star for magical greed, and Kitty Softpaws. Kitty is an old friend of Puss who has little trust left for him. Kitty and Puss—along with the addition of a homeless, strange dog referred to as Perrito—take off with the map. However, Big Jack, the bear family and the wolf are still always on their backs, waiting to overtake control of the Star.

The themes and internal values of "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" are very uncommon for a typical animated children's movie. It separates itself from other movies by providing an overarching, almost dark theme of not running from your death or your fears. Throughout the film, Puss is continually running from his fear of the wolf, and never confronts it. In the climax, he realizes that he should instead confront fear and live life to the fullest.

This latter theme is very well shown and is easy for kids and adults to understand. Perrito, the dog who tags along with Kitty and Puss, comes from a

terrible background, and has never had any friends. However, he consistently finds joy in all he does. Perrito reflects the theme of living life to the fullest, as he is always seeking the positive and has a joyful time despite their circumstances.

With Perrito and Puss reflecting the major themes, it is easy to say that the character development of this movie was exceptional. Each character had their own story arc that grew and improved by the resolution, signifying the screenwriters' abilities to emphasize each character trait. This is especially shown in Goldi and the Three Bears, as Goldi originally is seeking after the star to find a real, human family. However, as time goes on, she becomes closer to the three bears and realizes that her family is right in front of her. Additionally, Kitty Softpaws is a great embodiment of character development. She, at first, is lacking the ability to trust others, which hinders Kitty from believing anything that Puss or Perrito say. Kitty soon discerns that she could not trust anyone because she didn't believe in herself. This realization allowed

her to build relationships with others, an underlying theme director Joel Crawford was hinting at.

The directing of this movie is impeccable regarding the themes, along with the engaging visuals and ability to entertain. This animated movie has incredibly vibrant colors along with fascinating fight sequences that give a comicbook feel. The cinematography and animation create a sense of immersion into the plot and provide simple entertainment for all ages. Finally, the humor provided by Jack and Perrito serves kids and adults and creates a lively sense of emotion in the thick of action.

"Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" does a phenomenal job of combining important themes with a fast-paced, amusing plot. Its unique characters, mighty villain of death and wholesome humor for all ages combine for skilled execution in the telling of a fairy tale. Overall, it was able to provide one of the greatest animated movies ever, which is a wish well granted for all audiences.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MOVIE DATABASE

Production illuminates historical women

LADIES OF THE LOGBOOK

MARISSA LERRAS
THEATRE

Theatre professor Molly Wiebe Faber begins her directorial debut with a bang as she and the talented members of the Northwestern Theatre Department prepare to open their first Spring production – “Silent Sky.”

The play follows the story of Henrietta Leavitt, played by Tabitha Thatcher, a real-life woman known to history for her remarkable discoveries in the field of astronomy. Beginning in the grand Harvard Observatory, she unfolds the mysteries of love, friendship and our galaxies. Joining Henrietta in the observatory is the strict and confident Annie Cannon (Sierra Tumbleson), also reflecting a real woman in the industry known for her contributions to astronomy. Filling the gap and cutting the tension is the headstrong and witty Williamina Flemming (Rose Hoogers), a true Scottish

woman known for her humble beginnings and her remarkable rising within the department. Other characters include the awkward love interest, Peter Shaw (Jack MacGregor), notable due to his flirting fails and the misadventures of his regular rounds throughout the observatory and Margaret Leavitt (Marissa Leraas), Henrietta’s sister and up and coming female composer in a man’s world of music. Together, this band of characters ask, argue and answer questions such as “What is the point of all of this,” “Just how big is the world outside of us,” “What is a legacy,” and many more.

Depicting our galaxy is a feat in itself. How does one create on a stage that is found in space? This was precisely the question that scenic designer and actor, Jack MacGregor, had to ask himself. Thankfully, most of his designs were intended to replicate the inside of the Harvard observatory. In fact, the furniture pieces found in these scenes were his favorite to create. He said, “My favorite set piece to build has been the desks.

I like how they have their main purpose of being a desk, but the platform I made them on has a fun geometric twist that’s also able to hold crates and makes easy transitions. It was fun creating a piece that is practical and looks unique.” While he faced many challenges filling the roles of scene designer, actor and student, being on the other side of the process and now getting to sit back and admire his work, MacGregor said, “It’s been satisfying having my work come together with other designs to make the ambience for the show. I’ve had a lot of long days putting in the work of building the set and fine-tuning the details, but at the end of the day, I feel proud of the work I, and so many others have made.”

Just as MacGregor alludes to, there is so much more beyond the director, Wiebe Faber, the actors and himself as scenic designer, that is needed to produce this play. Others filling production roles include Drew Schmidt on lighting and projection design, Frances DeArmond on sound design, Melissa Thompson as a projection apprentice, Madison

DenHerder on costume design, Emma Franken on hair and makeup design and so many other wonderfully talented hands stepping in to take over whatever work they can.

In addition to these production roles, there are also the hands that make the show run in real time! These hands include Hope Wallace and Liam Nibbelink on run-crew, Talea Errington as the assistant stage manager and Maddie Loats as the stage manager.

As the stage manager does for any production, Loats has a multitude of responsibilities ranging from leading rehearsal warm-ups to calling each cue as the show runs, which means she sees the show every time it runs. When asked what her favorite thing about the show is, Loats said, “I like that it has a nice balance of comedic, funny moments, but also beautiful and serious moments. My favorite thing is watching it start from nothing and become a beautiful something.”

“Silent Sky” opens Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. In the words of Maddie Loats, “Come see the show.”



PHOTO BY JACK MACGREGOR
Cast members portray Harvard astronomers.

Festival celebrates diversity of students’ cultures

NIGHT OF FOOD, FASHION AND FUN

THEA ANGELEE DAVIS
GRAPHIC DESIGN

In our world today, the diversity of cultures is evidently growing. In fact, within Northwestern College alone, there are at least 25 different cultures represented. Our unique qualities and differences are what make humans beautiful and distinct. With that in mind, it is crucial that we acknowledge and appreciate these differences through recognition and celebration.

On Feb. 4, our campus held its annual Beloved Festival of Culture at the four-court area of the Rowenhorst Student Center. The public event, which lasted from 5-8 p.m., featured meals, activities, a fashion show and performances that showcased various cultures from around the world. Kelsey Joseph, NW’s associate director of intercultural development, led the organization of the event with the assistance of I-Club members headed by Hikaru Hirata, Bridge Scholars and several other students.

During the Beloved Festival of Culture, a range of meals was made available to the public, including Yakisoba from Japan, Beef Bulgogi from Korea, Cachapas from Venezuela and Braised Chicken from Malaysia.

In addition to the delicious meals, the festival also presented a fashion show with individuals featuring their stunning traditional attire from China, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Polynesian Islands, Taiwan and Thailand. Additionally, audiences had the opportunity to watch a

recorded Soran Bushi performance by Japanese students from the Winter English Program. Following this, Melanie, a student from Dordt University, took the stage to perform a fantastic dance number.

The festival did not conclude at this point, as Hirata and Tyler Nhan organized a Slido pop quiz that focused on diverse cultures. Our esteemed associate professor of business and economics, Dr. Fan Fei, emerged as the winner of the quiz.

Afterward, the audience was treated to several other performances, including a beautiful Nigerian song by Princess Bola-Lawal from Nigeria and Megumi Tomita from Japan, as well as Japanese songs sung by Shion Lee and a band consisting of Lee, Tomita, Hirata, and Jef Meribole. The event culminated with a delightful collaborative dance number from our very own I-Club and Dordt’s Students Without Borders club members.

The Beloved Festival of Culture was a delightful celebration of the diverse cultures and traditions that make our world unique and beautiful. The event was a great success, with a diverse range of performances, delicious food and a vibrant atmosphere that celebrated our community’s unique qualities and differences. The festival demonstrated the importance of recognizing and appreciating the value of cultural diversity, and it served as a reminder of the joy and fun that can be found in sharing and celebrating different cultures. Moving forward, it is vital that we continue to celebrate and honor our differences, both on our campus and beyond, and that we actively seek out opportunities to learn from and engage with diverse cultures.



PHOTO BY SONU GUPTA
The festival featured a fashion show displaying traditional cultural attire.



Extraterrestrial Culture Day landed on Feb. 14

AN OUT OF THIS WORLD HOLIDAY

GIDEON FYNAARDT
ECOLOGY

While most people take Feb. 14 to celebrate the righteous exploits of Saint Valentine by handing out cheap, red and pink, heart-shaped memorabilia to their peers and giving gifts of flowers and chocolate to romantic partners, the avid followers of all things out-of-this-world (and also citizens of the state of New Mexico) celebrated their own holiday of astronomical significance: Extraterrestrial Culture Day, which falls annually on the second Tuesday in February - coinciding this year with Valentine's Day.

Extraterrestrial Culture Day is an official holiday of the state of New Mexico, introduced by New Mexico State Representative Daniel Foley, and has been officially recognized since March of 2003. Theories of extraterrestrial activity and the state of New Mexico became inextricably linked in 1947 when a Corona, New Mexico rancher by the name W.W. "Mac" Brazel discovered

debris of unidentifiable origin scattered across a square mile of his land. In the few days prior, pilot Kenneth Arnold made national news with his claims of spotting nine unidentified flying objects (UFOs) shaped like saucers near Washington's Mount Rainier during a flight over the area. Several accounts followed Arnold's, matching similar descriptions.

Upon learning of these alleged "flying saucers", Brazel returned to the area where he'd gathered and dumped the debris and brought it to the sheriff's office in the nearby town of Roswell, a town that has since become famously linked to the incident, and the birthplace of State Representative Daniel Foley. The sheriff contacted the Roswell Army Airfield, who collected the debris, reported the finding to the Fort Worth Army Airfield and issued a press release stating that it was the remnants of a "flying disc" stirring the public and fueling curious reportage. The debris was then flown to the Fort Worth Army Airfield, who upon further investigation determined its identity to be a weather balloon kite.

To this, one might sigh at the apparent incompetence of

the Roswell Army Airfield and conclude that this incident was a laughable misunderstanding, a fire fanned by trending allegations of UFOs and built upon no real evidence, but others weren't convinced. In the decades since, theories have propagated of military and government conspiracies to hide the truth of what crash landed in a ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. The Cold War sparked new interest in theories of government cover-ups for new weapon technology testing, but the theory of extraterrestrial presence on Earth remains a very popular one - so popular that over 55 years later, the government of New Mexico made a celebration the cultures of species from beyond our planet into an officially recognized holiday. Even today, Roswell, New Mexico cannot escape its reputation as the "UFO" town, and clearly, they aren't trying to escape with new town branding featuring flying saucer and bug-eyed alien imagery and a slogan, "We believe."

Perhaps the incident at Roswell in 1947 was indeed a simple weather balloon kite and the claims of extraterrestrials are fictitious. Perhaps the state



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM
Extraterrestrial Culture Day is celebrated on the second Tuesday of February.

of New Mexico, by making Extraterrestrial Culture Day an official holiday, was not stating express belief in alien lifeforms, but just making a push to bolster tourism in one of their towns famous for an old military flub. But, on the off chance that any of the skepticism misguided,

and extraterrestrials have been regular visitors of our planet, it would be terribly rude of us not to celebrate their accomplishments and the contributions they've made to our own culture. So next time the second Tuesday in February rolls around, Valentine's Day

or not, take some time to think about extraterrestrials, wherever they may be. They might be closer than you think.

Preserving history through artistic comics

FROM PAGE 1

In 2017 Dr. Kugler committed himself to taking the hundreds of comics that his father had drawn and compiling them into a collection. This collection has now become a published book titled "Into the Jungle! A Boy's Comic Strip History of World War II." Dr. Kugler had no easy time putting this together, however. As a historian himself, Dr. Kugler had to realize the importance of different approaches and perspectives when deciding the narrative and argument of the collection.

This publication is no small feat. "The comic strip project has occupied a great deal of my time over the last ten years," Kugler said. "Creating a historical context for my dad's adolescent drawings, connecting that to American popular culture of the World War II years, represented a series of complex interpretive problems. I have more confidence now that I can accomplish that kind of project than I did a decade ago. But now that it is finished, I also see

holes or missed opportunities."

The comics themselves are complex and detailed pictures that show how Jimmy Kugler was able to use frogs and toads, to depict a war that pulled in the entire world. The interpretation from the elder Kugler shows just how much the war impacted not just those who served, but those who had to watch others serve.

Dr. Kugler hopes that these comics can be a learning tool that readers can use to recognize that propaganda used during war times has inspired the youth of the time to become creative and use the skills they had to show how the war looked through their eyes.



PHOTO SUBMITTED
An excerpt of Jimmy Kugler's "Into the Jungle."

Christian Formation conversations over dinner

ALPHA COMES TO NW

HOPE WALLACE
PUBLIC RELATIONS

From chapel services to Ngages, and NED Talks, there are multiple ways in which students can reach the required 28 Christian formation credits per semester. The most recent addition to these types of services and gatherings which provide Christian formation credits is a group called Alpha.

Alpha is gathering of people who value studying the foundations of the Christian Faith in an open and unimposing environment. Led by Kristin Brouwer, leader of discipleship in Campus Ministry, and Mark DeYounge, dean of Christian formation, this series began on Saturday, Feb. 2. The group will continue to meet once a week over the next six weeks to discuss topics such as the purpose we as humans were made, how we can live out our purpose and how we can help others discover their purpose in the advancement of the kingdom.

The main purpose of this

group is to engage in conversation with peers and faculty members who have various viewpoints and understandings of what makes someone a Christian. The beautiful thing about this group of people is that participants are encouraged to engage in whatever way suites them best, rather it be by bringing their own thoughts into the conversation, or by simply listening attentively.

Alpha is unique in the sense that it is a much more intimate setting compared to something such as chapel or a NED Talk. Only those who apply and are accepted into the program. The reasoning behind this is that when

Brouwer and DeYounge first had the vision for this group, they wanted to make sure it was a place where people felt safe to share their thoughts. Although sign-ups for Alpha are already closed for the 2023 spring semester, anyone who is interested in this program is highly encouraged to considering applying for it in the spring semester of 2024. As mentioned earlier, by participating in Alpha, students receive Christian formation credits. The only exception that



PHOTO BY TAYLOR MESMAN
Alpha offers the place to discuss spiritual topics.

comes with this is that students are required to attend at least six of the eight meetings in order to

receive any Christian formation credits. This rule is in place so that the students who were selected to

become members of this group honor the leader's decision and so that they can get the most out of

an incredible experience to grow in the knowledge of their faith.

RAs appreciate relationships

FROM PAGE 1

Through the many hours spent working and getting to know one another, RAs on campus have also built close relationships with each other.

"One thing most people don't realize is that all the RAs across campus get really close with one another," said Ian Else, RA of North Suites' second-floor. "I love working with the rest of my staff and all the RAs and RDs on campus. It is super fun being all together."

RAs find that they grow close relationships to their

residents, other RAs and resident directors, but those aren't the only relationships being strengthened. For some, becoming an RA has led them to grow their relationship with God.

Lincoln Siebert, RA of Hoppers Hall first-floor, reflected on how his walk with God changed since becoming an RA. "As normal resident my faith journey had stalled out a bit, and as an RA I could not fathom doing it without having a good relationship with God and digging into the word and

prayer on a consistent basis," Siebert said.

Challenging, yet rewarding may best sum up the role of an RA. The load of responsibilities may be a lot to take on, but most RAs would agree that the opportunity to give back to their dorm, connect with others and microwave popcorn without having to leave the room all make the job worthwhile.



PHOTO BY SONU GUPTA
Colenbrander RA Aaron Eckmann is proof RAs can have a life.



Show your college ID for a discount on the buffet!

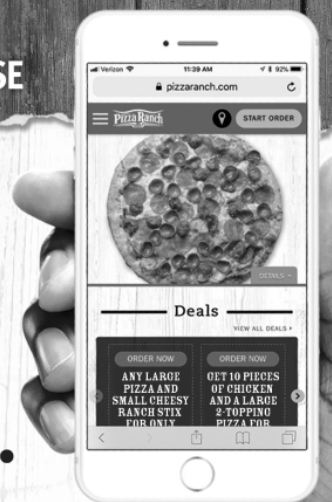
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HOT TAKES

Who is your favorite caf worker?

“Stacy! He is always smiling and excited to serve hungry students”

“Connie. She always has the sweetest smile and lil twinkle in her eye”

“Lauri is nice”

“Just not Kevin, I don’t need to explain”

“Renee is underrated - she always knows my name and smiles”

“Chef Stacy, his food is good, but more importantly he always says hello to me and asks how I’m doing”

McDonald’s or Culver’s?

“Culver’s! The fries are warm and not cold”

“McChickens FTW”

“Culver’s, because I back the blue”

“Culver’s! Better quality food”

“McD is for post 10 pm or on a long car ride. No in between”

The quotes expressed in these polls represent student opinion and is no way intended to indicate particular perspectives or beliefs of the beacon staff.

Be sure to follow the Beacon on Instagram to submit your own HOT TAKES!

You should leave the country during college



Ellie Natelborg
Public Relations

Greetings from Italy! I’m studying abroad in Florence this semester, quickly coming to learn it’s one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I’m going to say right off the bat that if you are considering studying abroad during your time at Northwestern, please don’t hesitate. Do it! It’s an opportunity that will likely not come again and something so unique to this time of life. I truly believe that every college student should travel to another country at least once during their career.

Maybe it doesn’t mean studying abroad for a whole semester. Maybe it’s going on a mission trip or SSP for one week, or a summer study abroad for a couple of weeks. Tailor it to whatever makes the most sense concerning your academic load/schedule and extracurricular activities. There are plenty of valid factors that can prevent people from traveling

outside the US. It’s simply not possible for everyone. However, if your only reason for not traveling abroad is fear or shallow excuses, I think you are letting the wrong things hold you back. There are always a million reasons not to travel, so if an opportunity presents itself, you should absolutely take advantage of it.

I have been blessed to be able to travel to six different countries in my life, and I always tell people that traveling outside of the States has, by far, produced some of my most life-changing lessons and experiences. There is a certain kind of discomfort that comes with visiting a new country, one that I have never been able to fully explain. When everything around you is so unfamiliar, and you are surrounded by a completely different culture, it really challenges you. Strangely, that discomfort produces adrenaline, which empowers you to do things you didn’t know you could. Being alone in a new place is very intimidating, but it naturally forces you to explore and try new things you otherwise wouldn’t have. Most importantly, it leads you into a deeper relationship with the Lord since church and fellow Christians are harder to find.

Experiencing different cultures, climates and people groups is essential in aiding us toward growth and maturity. It

is important for us to be around people and places different from us. When we leave behind the things we are used to and comfortable with, our eyes are opened to a world so much bigger than the bubble we live in. Before leaving for Italy, I talked with many people about studying abroad and what it’s like to be outside of America. Almost every college graduate I spoke with said that not studying abroad was one of their biggest regrets about college.

College is such a formative time in life. I know that I have grown more throughout my college years than I have at any other time. Because of the college atmosphere and our formative stage of life, we are discerning where God is calling us, learning about the person He made us to be. That’s why I believe it is important to step outside of our own culture and comfort zones to see what the rest of the world has to offer. Yes, we live in a great country, but we can’t let that take away from what is outside of it.

Whether it’s a four day or four-month trip, I strongly believe that college is the best time to explore somewhere outside of America. Do something that scares you. Book the flight. Join the mission trip. Don’t be so quick to assume that travel isn’t for you. Leaving what you’re used to will leave you amazed at the things God will teach you.

The perks of being a single Raider!



Mark Cooley
Social Studies Teaching

As a senior here at Northwestern, I have realized that we have a toxic dating culture on campus. Have you ever noticed how people ask about your relationship status before asking about your character or faith? Have you noticed how students on campus make their relationship status a defining aspect of their life and college careers? Have you noticed someone become depressed because they judge their personal character by their relationship status?

Maybe these instances only apply to my personal experiences on campus, but I find it quite annoying to see this toxic relationship culture on display at NW. I am not writing this article to bash people in relationships or to command people to singleness. I want to display, the benefits of singleness in college. I hope someone can learn from my personal experiences in singleness! Moreover, I want to pass on what I have learned to those who feel the need to be in a relationship but cannot find the right person, leading to a state of depression.

I want to emphasize that God has got

your back. God has already defined and planned your life according to His purpose. He may already have someone picked out for you. That person may be a million miles away, which is totally fine. I encourage you to utilize this college stage of life. Work on forming a stronger relationship with Christ, and get to know who you are as a person. I know this is hard to hear, but your future is on God’s time, not your own. You are not less of a person because you are single. Your relationship status does not define who you are, so stop making your worth depend on it. Have Christ be what validates you. This is something I wish I could tell my younger self, because it would have saved me a lot of time and energy.

Despite what it seems, there are a plethora of benefits to being single at NW. First, think of your singleness as a freedom to do what you want (in a God-appropriate manner) without the pressure of a relationship. Sign up for SAC events, join clubs on campus, get a job or internship, go to sports games, serve on mission trips, study abroad or hang out with the homies on weekends without worrying. You are on your own time, not mixing with another person’s schedule. I know I am single-splaining right now, but without my singleness, I would not have been able to do all of these “absofruitly peachy” things.

Secondly, singleness is cheap. As one of my friends stated last week, “having a girlfriend is expensive.” I know this to be true for both sides. As a college student, life is expensive! Now add another person

to your life that you buy gifts, meals and more for. Instead of spending cash on another person, use this extra money to buy new clothes (RIP me), an extra scoop of ice cream at Blue Bunny, a burrito at La Juas or pay for college (which would be the smarter, but less desirable option).

Third, singleness allows you to more easily achieve your personal goals. Being single, I have used my extra time to focus on my fitness and academic goals, becoming a healthy and smart individual who hopes to achieve the status of a “Greek Philosopher King” (Plato). I have not only surpassed what I thought I could achieve physically in four years, but I have taken additional college classes. These courses have helped me think critically and challenge what I believed when I first came to college. I can do the same for my students at my student-teaching placement. I achieved all of these goals at my convenience without the added pressure of another person in my life.

Finally, because of my singleness, I can teach and live wherever after college (this is the greatest benefit in my opinion). I don’t have to worry about this affecting another person. This opens up a whole new realm of opportunity that dating life cannot give.

Again, I am not trying to bash people in relationships. I am also not commanding people to be single. I merely want to offer some benefits of singleness and encourage those who judge themselves too harshly because of their singleness. Thank you for coming to my TED Talk.

Editor’s Note

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NW Raider Esports gaining players and plans

RECRUITS KEEP ADDING UP

CHEYENNE SCHMIDT MARKETING

The Red Raider Rocket League team did exceptionally well last season, winning their conference championship. They also ended their season 16 – 7 last Spring. The young team consists of four Freshman, two Juniors and one Senior.

As for the Red Raider Overwatch Team, coach Cole Prescott stated, “the Overwatch team’s matches will be broadcast live in the Hub.”

The team consists of two Freshmen, three Juniors, and one Senior, so they have a lot of experience coming into the season. The Red Raiders Overwatch team is currently 1 – 0 with the season opening game being against Bradley University on Feb. 9, resulting in a win for

the Red Raiders. The Overwatch team has a match almost every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. For a more detailed schedule with opponent information, visit the athletic website.

The NW Red Raider Esports team is growing in more than one way. There is another Varsity team joining the Esports team, Super Smash Brothers Ultimate. They are gaining four new recruits in the coming year, including two for Overwatch, and one for Rocket League and the new Super Smash Brothers Ultimate team.

Kadin Collins from Osage, Iowa, signed a letter of intent for the Red Raider Overwatch Team. He has played Overwatch for two years at Osage High School and was a state runner up in Overwatch. He plans to major in Mathematics at NW.

Jonah Van Dyke, of Homer Glenn, Illinois, signed a letter of intent to join the Super Smash Brother’s Ultimate Team. He hopes

to study Creative Writing at NW.

Dash Headley from Gothenburg, Nebraska, announced his intent to join the Rocket League team. He is a two-year Rocket League player at Eustis-Farnum Public School, which had a record of 12 – 1 in their recent season. He plans to major in Computer Science at NW.

Xander Ingallinera also announced his intention to join the Red Raider Overwatch team. He was a Overwatch National Champion at Cary Grove High School, where he was also the team captain for three years of competition. He also plans to study Computer Science while at NW.

Keep an eye on the Red Raider Esports team as it continues to expand and do great things. For all things Esports, be sure to check out the Red Raider Athletic website.



COURTESY OF NW MARCOMM
Clayton Brouwer focuses on the competition.

Softball leaders pulling team to the front

TEAMMATES MAKING MEMORIES

GRACE BACHELDER PSYCHOLOGY

The Northwestern softball team is starting their season off strong by coming home with four wins at the NAIA Leadoff Classic. The NW softball team is a younger group of athletes which makes it more incredible that they came back undefeated against top teams in the Midwest.

Traveling to Illinois was a great team bonding trip with many unforgettable memories made and fun.

Ashtyn Billings said her favorite memory from the weekend was that the “game against Roosevelt University went into nine innings and we ended up finishing the game around 10:30 pm. I was so encouraged by the resilience and supportiveness that was demonstrated

by the team till the very last out. I’m thankful to be a part of a team where each girl is playing for the girl next to them.”

As the team traveled to Sioux Center, Iowa for the Dordt Dome Tournament they continued to dominate the competition. After completing eight games, the softball team have 11 runs scored against Grand View, and 13 hits against Mount Mercy.

One of the many reasons the team can outperform their opponents is because they come onto the field performing up to their standards when it came to attitude, effort, hustle, toughness and defense.

They are looking strong coming into their 2023 season with returning and newcomers stepping up to the challenge. Some key players to look out for are Jennifer Boeve and Kameryn Etherington who have already been named athlete of the week. However,

the team has more than stats going for them.

The softball team is a second family for players. The support they give to each other is remarkable. “Something I love about being a part of the softball team is getting to learn from my teammates,” Billings said. “In their actions and the way they play, I’m constantly being built up and challenged to play at a very high standard with the purpose of serving the team well,” said Billings.

As the softball team continues to have big games, team dinners, bus rides, time in the Juffer and witness classic Coach Miller moments, they will continue to make memories. After coming in second last year in the GPAC tournament, this team is coming into the season ready to see what they can do with a well-mixed group of experienced players and newcomers.



COURTESY OF NW MARCOMM
Jennifer Boeve smiles in the Raider dugout.

Men’s tennis swinging onto cold February courts

RAIDER MEN COMPETING

KRISTA GLEASON PUBLIC RELATIONS

Northwestern men’s tennis team swung into the season on Feb. 4 with a pair of sweeps in a tournament hosted by Cornell College.

During this tournament, the team beat out two other NCAA teams: Cornell and Wisconsin Lutheran. At the end of the day, the Raiders had a 9-0 win over both competing schools.

NW junior, Jack Roisum, said, “that was a good confidence boost for our guys.”

Last year, when the

NW men’s tennis team travelled to Mount Vernon at the start of the spring season, they defeated Cornell in all six singles matches. For two years in a row, the team kicked off the season with decisive wins at the first tournament.

Up next, the team will be heading to Yankton, SD on February 16, to play against Mount Marty, initiating the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) play for the season.

Roisum said, “The team is getting better and better each day, and we’re looking a lot stronger this year.”

The team kicked off the new season

strong – this vast improvement should not be a shock to tennis meet attendants. NW junior, Noah Roisum said, “We really benefit from some strong competition in practice which makes the transition to matches a lot smoother and prepares us better.”

“I think this has the potential to be our best season yet. The team is definitely back in its groove from the fall,” Roisum said. “We’ll be looking to continue to improve as the season goes on and really hit our stride down the stretch in March and April.”

April is also when the team will have the

ability to host matches at home, given that the weather will be warm enough to use the new outdoor facilities. NW doesn’t currently have the capacity to host indoor competitions.

“Once the weather gets nice outside, we’ll host a few meets in April here on our new courts on campus,” Roisum said.

The tennis team is warming up during the winter to take on opponents during the spring season.



COURTESY OF NW MARCOMM
Jack Roisum prepares for the upcoming season.

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Transformational time at men's retreat

MEN SPEND A WEEKEND AWAY

JORDAN DESMET
PUBLIC RELATIONS

The course load of a full-time college student can be grueling. Because of the daily assignments, lengthy papers and heavily-weighted exams, it can be difficult for Northwestern students to find time to get away from the stress of the semester. However, NW staff provided students with opportunities to clear their minds during both the men's and women's retreats this semester. From Feb. 3-5, a group of men partook in a retreat at Lakeside Lutheran Camp in Okoboji, Iowa.

To put the event together, all the male resident directors partnered with Mark DeYounge, dean of Christian formation, and Marlon Haverdink, dean of residence life, to reserve the venue, plan the activities, order food and get the word out.

Once everyone arrived at Lakeside Lutheran, the men participated in a variety of activities. "We had a few large group sessions with some messages and some small group time to discuss," Michael Simmelink, the



PHOTO SUBMITTED
The frozen East Okoboji Lake served as a peaceful backdrop for the men's retreat held at Lakeside Lutheran Camp.

resident director of Hospers Hall, said. "We also did a Q&A panel where Mark DeYounge, Brian Follett, Jason Katsma and myself took questions from the guys."

The Q&A session had a positive influence on several of the students present, including junior Kyle Christy. "The wisdom shared by the resident directors and Mark surrounding habits, relationships and their own life experience was extremely valuable," Christy said. "Hearing older men talk about what matters to them and how they have learned and grown

in their own walk with Jesus is life-giving."

The retreat had four main goals: fellowship, growth, challenge and snacks. Yes, snacks. Simmelink stated that everyone involved in the planning process wanted the men to create an authentic connection with guys from different dorms and grow in their confidence, faith and self-assurance. "This gave us opportunities to do things that are uncomfortable, to stretch ourselves as men and engage with difficult conversations," Simmelink said. In addition, when the

men were not engaging in tough conversations, they were eating what Simmelink described as "a lot of bad food."

All jokes aside, the intention of the retreat was for everyone involved to walk away with a meaningful and impactful experience. "We wanted the retreat to be a transformational experience for the guys. Even if they were only 1% different, we value that," Simmelink said. "It was never meant to be a Jesus high where guys cool off after the weekend and go back to their normal routine. Something

had to be different."

After it was all said and done, the retreat seemed to make progress toward the goal of spurring real transformation and not just a temporary high. "I grew in my appreciation and realization for how many guys have such good hearts and are chasing after Christ on this campus," Christy said. "The retreat added to the fire in my heart to live life in a way that faithfully witnesses God and to be even more present in everyday activities and relationships."

A battle of bands brings together rival colleges

NW AND DORDT HOST NCDC COMPETITION

ASHLEY MONJARAS
SPORT MNGMT-MEDIA/MRKTNG

Northwestern Student Activities Council has paired with Dordt to bring back a beloved tradition that brings together students from the rival Sioux County colleges. Like American Idol, NCDC, an abbreviation for Northwestern College and formerly, Dordt College, is a musical competition where the best talent from both Dordt and NW go head-to-head.

This competition brings a new layer to the long-time rivalry between the two schools, going beyond athletics and academics. Up for grabs is a \$650 cash prize for the winner of the competition, \$250 for second place and \$100 for third place. The competition is broken up into three rounds: the preliminary round, semifinal and final competition.

The preliminary round was held separately by Dordt and NW and served as an audition. Each school held auditions in which bands or soloists had to perform a song of their choice with their own accompaniment.

NW's took place at Christ Chapel on Feb. 3. Four NW bands and one soloist moved from the prelims to the semifinals. This included Just Jazz Combo, Women in Stem & the Other Guys, The Coly Boy Band, Two Days Old and Megumi Tomita. The Dordt groups that surfaced were BN'B, Chopsticks and Soup, Covergirls, Mashed Potatoes, Paraless and South Hall.

These groups all advanced to the semifinal round, which was hosted by Dordt on Feb. 11. The bands faced off to showcase their talents, and fans from both colleges attended to watch the battle. Raider Nation did not disappoint in the semifinal round, showing up and out to support their own.

Bands appealed to the crowd with popular songs that the audience could sing along to. The night's performances featured the songs "Since You've Been Gone," "Party in the U.S.A." and "Stacy's Mom," among others. There was even a special performance by Dr. Laird Edman, a NW psychology professor, and Dr. Jongerius, a NW math professor. Following the semifinals, student voting took place to select the top three groups from each school to



PHOTO BY TAYLOR MESMAN
The band called Two Days Old from NW opened the semifinal round with a performance of "Party in the U.S.A."

advance to the finals.

From NW, the groups moving on to the final round are The Coly Boy Band, Just Jazz Combo and Women in Stem & The Other Guys. The finalists from Dordt are Chopsticks and Soup, Covergirls and Paraless.

In the final round, the top three

finalists from both schools will perform two songs. Each judge will get to vote for their act of choice, which will add 25 votes to that band's vote tally. This, along with a live audience vote, will determine the top three winners. Fans can come to Christ Chapel on Feb. 17 at 9 p.m. to watch the

finals unfold and place their vote for who will be the winner of NCDC 2023.