Ross takes office in landslide

BY KATE WALLIN
STAFF WRITER

The people have spoken. Winning the SGA presidential election with 50 percent of the votes, was junior Ross Fernstrum. While Fernstrum may be a new face to the SGA scene, he hopes to bring a fresh perspective to the process.

“I feel passionate about the student experience here at NW,” he said. “I felt as SGA president that there was an opportunity to better that experience that I couldn’t pass up.”

How Fernstrum got to NW is another story though. Both his mother and older brother went to NW, and Fernstrum grew up not wanting to follow in their footsteps.

“I was being recruited by a number of different schools, so I was going on a lot of different visits but everything felt empty,” he said. “When I visited NW, I felt the difference. People cared.”

Fernstrum hasn’t regretted his decision for a moment and has filled his time by being involved all over campus. There are so many parts I love. I’ve loved playing football here. I lived in West for two years; I loved that,” Fernstrum said. “Overall, I think it’s just the random activities and interactions with people that really stick out when reflecting on my experience thus far.”

And although he’s new to the presidential office, Fernstrum’s attempt to join SGA began last year. After submitting an application for the Academic Affairs representative position, Fernstrum recalled, with a smile, “They told me ‘no’ because I was too involved.”

Fernstrum disclosed that he doesn’t have any preconceived ideas about the presidency. Going into the next academic year, he described simply wanting to be real about the NW student experience and do what he can to unify the different pieces of that experience.

“I don’t have a set list of initiatives that I’m going to propose; I want to know what the students want.”

“I’m not expecting us all to hold hands and sing Kumbaya, but we can always still try something new.”

I’m looking forward to interacting with other SGA members as far to see what is important,” he said. “I do want to work at building support among students for other students. Even if it’s getting a bunch of guys who usually wouldn’t attend a play to all go see a show like Bagdad Tunes or to up attendance at our choir concerts. Instead of, say, 100 students, lets get 200 to go out and show our support.”

In the end, Fernstrum firmly believes that, “The college experience is what you want to make it.”

“IT’s always better, though, when you feel the support,” he said. “I’m not expecting us all to hold hands and sing Kumbaya, but we can always still try something new.”

Lamrof switches out the tuxes for the tires

BY TYLER LEHMANN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With students’ lives, schedules and summer plans already a mix of craziness, Northwestern adds its own spin on the end of the year with the annual spring dance.

“Dancing wildly in a ridiculous costume could be the best remedy for the stress of looming finals,” says the Student Activities Council, which will host NW’s annual “anti-formal” Lamrof dance, Friday, May 6.

“We like to have a dance in the spring. It’s kind of a stress reliever,” said SAC member Holly Stewart. “A lot of people, especially guys, don’t like to go to formal dances, and we want to include more students.”

Taking its name from a backward spelling of “formal,” Lamrof will have a street dance theme this year, inspired by an impromptu street dance that occurred during orientation week.

“Don’t dress up, dress the part,” Stewart said. “The baggier the better, and you’ve got to have the bling.”

For students whose closets contain only properly fitting clothes and modest jewelry, Stewart recommends hitting the thrift stores to find costume pieces.

“Just make sure you can dance in your costume,” said junior Sarah Bartz.

“Wearing white is a lot of fun because it glows under the black lights,” Bartz, who has attended Lamrof before, said students who are unable to find costumes can still attend Lamrof without feeling out of place.

“If you want to just wear jeans and a t-shirt, it’s totally fine,” she said.

Bartz, however, plans on wearing her “gangsta pants.”

“I like wearing a costume instead of a dress because I can have dance-offs,” she said.

With a wide variety of music expected, students may find themselves dancing to some surprising tunes.

Lamrof has always had fun songs. Everything from Disney sing-alongs to songs people normally dance to,” Stewart said.

Lamrof will be held Friday, May 6, from 9:30 to midnight in the parking lot outside the Bultman Center. Admission is free.
Pregnant but not in private

BY KAYLA VETTER

Have you ever watched a reality show on television and thought, “How could people actually want to participate in this?”

Well, making a public spectacle of yourself is what reality television is about. However, I find “16 and Pregnant”, “Teen Mom”, and “Teen Mom 2” overly disturbing.

“16 and Pregnant” started the teenage pregnancy craze on MTV two years ago. It started six teenagers and showed their journeys of pregnancy, labor and life after labor. It was a whirlwind watching the six girls and their families go through this very personal time in their lives.

A year went by and MTV decided that they should make a sequel. “Teen Mom” started airing on television across America. This show went into the everyday lives of four of the six girls-turned-mothers as they took care of their children.

Do you think it is a good idea to put your private life on television so the whole world can see it? Especially when you fight with your family members and have a camera shoved in your face? I think not. I would find it extremely embarrassing if my neighbors could be watching my life on their televisions. The teenagers involved in these productions already have a challenge being a mother. Why do they want the extra attention? The publicity seems to make these girls’ lives worse.

The four girls from “Teen Mom” are average teenagers who happened to get pregnant while in school.

One girl made the hardest decision of all: adoption. She and her boyfriend thought it was the best choice, realizing they were unfit to be parents because of their own home life. Their families were not so happy; the girl’s mom was especially hard on her about giving up the baby. Continued appearance on the show prevented the mother from getting her private life back. As you keep watching the show and go in depth with each mom, you can see the challenges that each one faces and the opportunities they have given up or are trying to balance in their life. Some had to drop out of school, some are stay-at-home moms that have to do everything, and some are still careless teens who don’t want to be parents.

MTV is glamorizing teenage pregnancy by showing that if you land a television contract, you can have fame and fortune as well. MTV is exploiting and distorting the lives of these teen moms, glamorizing tough situations, and promoting teens around the country to follow the same destructive path. While the shows keep airing and continue to ruin the lives of these women, Americans will continue being entertained by watching it. MTV makes it look like there is nothing to having a baby, but living it makes it a whole different story.

Although MTV puts these shows on for their own reasons, the differences between Hollywood lifestyle and real world is dramatic.

About two years ago, one of my best friends was dating a guy that was too fast-paced for her. After a few months of missing classes during your junior year of high school, she was five months pregnant. When I heard the news, I was shocked, speechless and scared.

I saw my friend get bigger and bigger. She gave birth to a son. She didn’t come back to school for two weeks. When she did, she had to leave to go to doctor appointments like she did during her pregnancy, missing even more school.

Our senior year came along, and she started skipping the first two periods of school. Then she transferred to an alternative school and graduated with me in the spring. The experience took a huge toll on her. She missed the music trip that we had looked forward to since fifth grade. She missed high school in general. But she really missed her dream of going to college to become a doctor or a scientist. She made the decision to be a mother. My friend’s story is nothing like MTV’s “Teen Mom”. She does not have a television show and a website to get support from strangers.

My concern is that if teens watch this, they may want to get pregnant to get the attention these teens receive. The real world does not work that way. These girls happened to be in the right place at the right time, but now they are paying for it — emotionally and physically.

If MTV producers were wise, they would see the red flags in the shows that have already aired and forget about filming anymore. It makes matters worse for teenagers who experiment with irresponsible actions to try to get famous and receive money and other benefits.

What is our world coming to when a television show about teenagers becoming parents is considered entertainment?

As college students, should we watch teenage pregnancy shows? Sure it shows awareness of teenage pregnancy, but are we just as bad as the teen moms who are on the show?

When we watch these shows, we are the ones giving them ratings to make them popular, keep them on the air, and keep the cycle going. But if we stopped watching, these exploitive shows, perhaps they could come to an end.

Final reflections and memories from Muscat, Oman

BY KAMERON TOEWS

Sitting on the porch of the house I’ve called my home for the past four months, I look across the buildings of Muttrah and realize I only have 15 days left.

The sun sets hours ago, cooling the city. The mountains radiate the day’s heat back at me. The city is still while a breeze blows the white, red and green of the Omani flag as though it were waving me farewell. The streets remained quiet except for the shouts of a few children and the distant blaring of Akon as it drives past the gate to the house.

The Hajar Mountains surround us on three sides and the Gulf of Oman is on the fourth. The mountains’ rugged peaks are a stark contrast to the flat soil below. The small forts built on the mountaintops stand as symbols of history and perseverance. There is a sense of the five mosques around the house rise above the jagged horizon line of mountains. Fives times a day, they call Muscat to a community of worship and remembrance of God.

The gate for the house beside us, used daily as a soccer goal by neighborhood boys, now lays vacant, as though they simply stopped playing. I remember when I met those boys—their kind hearts, big smiles and welcoming handshakes. Three dumpsters on the edge of their parking lot, soccer pitch are searched by feral dogs looking for a last minute meal before going into the mountains to howl the night away.

I think of so many things that have happened within only a few blocks of where I am: a gym recently opened across the street by a man named Abdulla, with bixers like triangles; a building was repainted with a fresh coat of white after a fire destroyed a small rug shop not 100 meters away; a restaurant grilling meat every night; Nasser’s coffee shop selling sandwiches for 50 cents. I think back to the car accident on the dusty road in Oman’s interior and the hellish week that followed: the anger, confusion, doubt and love that resonated from that moment is a testament to the power of relationships. I remember the 9 km hike up Sun Mountain when I found where clouds were made, the three-day camel trek with nothing to do but relax, watching dolphins play in the fjords, the colors in the fish market, and moonlit fishing.

I realize that much of this city is no longer as exciting and new as it was when we first crossed the threshold of the Al Amana Center’s gate in our Toyota Prado and saw what would be home for the semester. The beauty of the massive rocky mountains of purples, greens, reds and blacks now often pass unnoticed while the stories of “This American Life” entertain us on our city drives.

I sit in the humid night air and appreciate all this country has done for me. All the stories it’s told, memories given, thoughts introduced, and friendships made.
The SGA elections have created a lot of discussion among the students at Northwestern College during the past weeks. The elections, however, were not the only SGA-related topics on many of the students’ minds.

Since the elections were first announced nearly two weeks ago, questions have arisen on the effectiveness of SGA. Is SGA doing a good job? Are they actually implementing new initiatives on campus? Is the organization just for show?

The answers to these questions may be debatable among students. As the current Campus Life Representative, I have had the opportunity to see many positive steps the organization has taken in implementing new campus initiatives and representing the student body.

In the past couple of years alone, SGA has organized several initiatives such as the Rent-a-Bike program, ConServe, clubs and organizations, going trayless, making the RSC cable programming as well as campus-related announcements.

As much as we would like each initiative to be as successful as the recent return of the television, the truth is it will not always turn out in our favor. For instance, take our addition of a seasonal ice skating rink on campus this past winter.

SGA took on the ice skating rink endeavor with hopes of building community, enhancing student activities on campus and initiating a new winter intramural sport such as broomball. However, due to unforeseeable challenges such as the weather, the ice skating rink was not as successful as SGA had hoped. We realize that as an organization we cannot look at these setbacks as defeat, but rather, as learning experiences.

Let’s be honest. SGA is not always going to get everything right. Occasionally we are going to miscalculate or underestimate the changing seasons, but that does not mean we don’t care about our jobs as representatives.

From each setback we experience, we gain beneficial information that will only improve any plans we have for the future.

Aside from the different initiatives SGA takes on each year, there are also various committees that SGA members represent. The different committees include the Honors, Admissions, Retentions, Campus Life, Academic Affairs and Professor of the Year committees. The subject matter of these meetings is not always publically presented to the student body because of the nature of the committees. However, the student body should be reassured that the SGA member representing a committee works hard to make certain that any decision regarding Northwestern College is made with the best interest of the students in mind.

Currently, SGA consists of 13 elected officials. This means that SGA makes up just over one percent of the student body. The 13 members of SGA cannot do much without the help of the students. If the student body of Northwestern College wants an effective SGA, they must be willing to give ideas, present concerns and vocalize subject matter. We want to hear from you!

Whether it is playing a game of sand volleyball with your friends, riding around campus on a yellow bike, watching ESPN in thecaf or lounging on the leather sofas and watching television in the RSC, the efforts of SGA are everywhere on campus.

Take satisfaction in knowing that SGA is hard at work, fully functioning and implementing new and exciting initiatives for you on campus.

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Fleet Foxes’ follow-up filled with life

By Jordan Langer

In the lead-up to their recording sessions for “Helplessness Blues,” Fleet Foxes’ Robin Pecknold suggested that the band would try to “distance” itself from the debut with a “less poppy, less upbeat” sound. He said that he wanted to do vocal takes in one go. “Even if there are [mess] ups, I want them to be on there. I want there to be guitar mistakes. I want there not to be flawless vocals.” This from a guy who’s so assiduously to his harmonic crafts that his girlfriend of five years had to break it off.

Well, the good news is that they’re working things out now that she’s heard the new record, which, after a long birthing stretch and a second studio session, scrapped some of those early concepts and instead maintained that vibrant naturalism of past work. For those that liked the Appalachian feel, the rural visuals of summer fruits and dawn upon the evergreens, and sounds of “The Cascades” — it’s all here in a lush way.

Which isn’t to say that nothing’s changed. The group’s still got a lived-in feel, and still swells vulnerably around a sense of hopeful mortality. But their debut had more of a baroque, chambered resonance where “Helplessness Blues” feels more open, freer, and moving. “Grown Ocean,” gives a good sense of the free-flowing pace, and its accompanying video — a montage of intimate glimpses into their hippie-like day-to-day— forms a kind of thesis to the record’s “lust for life” vivacity. Even tracks like “The Plains/Bitter Dancer” that begin dense or sonically overcast eventually break apart into a bright release of wattles.

Underlying this is a similar question as before: Why is life made only for an end? Only this time, it’s a more internalized question, and has Pecknold (who, by contrast to the almost always fellowshipped vocals of old material, takes lead more often) singing things like “I woke up a dying man” or “I was old news to you then.” These lines might seem forthright by their standards, but if they’ve veered more in that direction, it’s for the better in a lot of ways. As I hinted before, the aphorisms and serious details are still here, and actually in more savory form when put beside these plain confessions. On “Someone You’d Admire” and “Blue Spotted Tail,” Pecknold’s voice recording is more up-front than ever, and show just how much they do to get that worn, homely, even hymnic grain on other tracks.

“Helplessness Blues” does use some of the same terms as their debut. After both albums, I’m pretty certain that “morning” is Pecknold’s favorite word, or idea even. “Sunlight” is another. But where these are the leftover scatterings of their evocative world of things, they’re motifs, and it’s interesting where they differ from past uses. For instance, “thrust”: in last record’s “White Winter Hymnal,” a thing to bundle scarves around; here on “The Shrine/An Argument,” he sees the one he loves “in the ocean washing off my name from your throat.” In this way, all of their surroundings—the effect moves back and forth and back again. Similarly, “Helplessness Blues” is a record of transitions—almost all of the songs move into second or third parts. While the tracks aren’t much longer, they do have a veering form. I think that the extra space does well for them, especially with the addition of multi-instrumentalist Morgan Henderson. Henderson adds a Mediterranean-tinted violin on “Bedouin dress,” a free jazz phrase on “The Shrine/An Argument,” and flute interludes that puff into “Lorelei.” For the most part, these don’t feel like props on the soundscape, and instead give a sense that there’s a lot of places they can go yet.

And with this record, there’s an urgency to go to them if life allows. When I hear tracks like “Helplessness Blues” or “Grown Ocean”— and the record as a whole—I think I’d follow them most anywhere, and I’m reminded to, in all of life, see the forest and the trees.

Tina Fey becomes the boss in “Bossypants”

By Alena Schuessler

If you pick up a copy of Tina Fey’s new book “Bossypants,” you will see a very lovely photo of Tina with a pair of huge, ugly man-hands. Why these instead of Tina’s good-looking, womanly hands? As Tina would likely say, “It takes you a second before you catch the unpleasantly hairy limbs, and then it’s side-splitting.”

Best known as a writer for “Saturday Night Live” and as a producer and actress on “30 Rock,” Tina Fey has made “funny” her career. She has written an autobiography that is 100 percent funny and 200 percent brilliant.

Tina starts the book with several notes. She appeals to the women who want to navigate a male-dominated work world. She tells Sarah Palin lovers that if they want to find reasons to hate her, they should keep reading.

Throughout the book, Tina makes light of her wacky child experiences, including getting arbitrarily slashed in the face at age 6, navigating the awkward teenage years, and discovering her true friends while working at a theater. She paints an astute image of her father, Don Fey, who was a no-nonsense father growing up — and still is, according to his praise on the back cover. “I hope that’s not really the cover. That’s really going to hurt sales.”

In the chapter titled “My Honeymoon, or A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again Either,” Tina relays an experience of never having sinned and drowning with her new husband on their honeymoon aboard a cruise. While it’s not one of her fondest memories, she gives us permission to laugh with her: “We’re going to be one of those stories of a couple that died on their honeymoon,” Tina says. “We’ll be on the local news. They’ll identify Jeff by the monogram inside that suit jacket. I think about how horrible it will be if I have to get on the lifeboat and leave him behind.”

Tina’s life is full of unexpected and unexplainable glances into their hippie-like day-to-day — forms a kind of thesis to the record’s “lust for life” vivacity. Even tracks like “The Plains/Bitter Dancer” that begin dense or sonically overcast eventually break apart into a bright release of wattles.

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And with this record, there’s an urgency to go to them if life allows. When I hear tracks like “Helplessness Blues” or “Grown Ocean”— and the record as a whole—I think I’d follow them most anywhere, and I’m reminded to, in all of life, see the forest and the trees.

Check Out

Music: Tune-Yards’ “Who Kill”
If you’re up for something fresh and are up for something that leans a little more to the experimental side of things, “Who Kill” is full of unexpected and unexplainable genre mash-ups and a weirdly but compelling maternal sense.
In 2005, NBC aired a comedy about a group of eccentric office workers. At their center was an over-confident, unprofessional but hilarious boss. For six years, we Office fans have had the pleasure of seeing Michael Scott’s professional career at Dunder Mifflin and Saber. Now, as six seasons of The Office on DVD lay strewn about my floor and six of Michael’s Scott’s faces stare back at me, I am forced to come to terms with the fact that April 28 will bring about the end of Michael’s paper and printer career and the beginning of my mourning period. I know many people who think that The Office cannot continue without Steve Carell’s participation. It’s tempting to take that point of view. After all, Carell’s character has provided us with the countless laughs, cringes and awkward silences that I am not sure any other character can. Michael’s ability to create a devastatingly awkward moment has shocked me for six and half seasons. Topping my list are: his brilliant idea to initiate Yankee swap at the company Christmas party, disappointed at his potholder gift from Phyllis after he “got carried away with the Christmas Spirit” and bought Ryan an iPod; his completely unsympathetic (but totally unsurprising) reaction to Kevin’s possible skin cancer that just happened to fall on Michael’s birthday; his insistence to support Oscar’s coming out by kissing him in front of the entire office; and his numerous inappropriate comments to the women of the office (Like his comment to Karen: “Wow! You’re very exotic looking…”). Let’s not forget his role in Phyllis’s wedding, his short-lived relationship with Pam’s mom, and his emotional breakdown at the Nashua branch seminar. However, I suppose we should all be happy about the reason Michael has decided to leave: he is finally going to be with Holly, his perfect match. After all, Michael has gone through with relationships; how can we not be happy for him? Just look at his past girlfriends. There’s Jan, of course, who forced him to testify against the company, made him get a vasectomy (and then reverse it and then reverse it back again), and went to a sperm bank while they were still dating. Let’s not forget Carol, though, who broke up with him after he proposed to her at Kelly’s Diwali party and the bar manager who turned out to be married. Michael has gone through a lot of heartbreak to get to the woman he is with now. Jim Halpert once commented about Michael’s pursuit of Holly: “I gotta say Michael is killing it with Holly. And I think I know why. It’s because Holly is kind of a major dork.” Yes, indeed. And from Michael and Holly’s “Let’s Get Ethical” seminar to their “SlumDunder Mifflinaire” skit, we have all known that they were meant to be together. I suppose, then, I can grudgingly admit that I’m happy Michael gets the girl, even if it means leaving behind his co-workers and his devoted viewers. To use Michael’s phrase: I’m not superstitious, but I am a little stitious of change, especially the change that will occur due to his absence. So many cons and basically no pros fill my list of his departure. Who will give us the inappropriate sexual and racial remarks? Who will call the unnecessary but humorous conference room meetings? Who will fill the ironic role of the office boss acting like a little kid? Who will hate Toby? Who will shake back at me from the center of the cover of my season eight DVD of The Office? Who will be the boss? Whoever is taking Steve Carell’s place doesn’t have big shoes to fill but a sumo-wrestler-sized fistsuit to fill. I wish that person the best of luck, because he or she is taking on a pretty difficult task. By the time you read this, the last episode of The Office with Steve Carell as the star will have aired. Along with my fellow fans, I thank him and bid him farewell.
If you could revisit the last 8 minutes...

BY AARON BAUER
STAFF WRITER

Somewhere in the prefrontal lobe of the cortex of your brain is a plethora of short-term memory data, waiting to be recalled or replaced by fresh information. According to the new movie “Source Code,” a full eight minutes of memories is retained after death, and that information can be powerfully useful. Stretching from a straightforward action/suspense to a sci-fi brain bender, Jake Gyllenhaal’s latest film gives you a glimpse of the final eight minutes captured in the memory of a man on a train and an army captain’s attempt to save the rest of the passengers.

A train, on its way into downtown Chicago, is blown up by someone who is assumed to be a small-scale terrorist. Captain Colter Stevens (Gyllenhaal) is asked to enter a program, a matrix of sorts called the source code program. Vera Farigma plays Goodwin, the woman with whom Colter interacts when he is outside of the source code, trying to learn more of the how and why he is in that position. Farigma’s role is different in this film, as opposed to her stronger women in “Up In The Air” and “The Departed,” but she splendidly portrays her character as being torn between doing her job and helping the captain. The script of “Source Code” isn’t anything spectacular, but the dialogue works very well with the exception of a few lines from Dr. Rutledge (played by Jeffrey Wright). Also, the cinematics are strong; the repeated explosion, especially in slow-mo, feels authentic, and the confined sensation of both the train cars and the capsule that holds Colter make everything a little more intimate.

Apart from the aesthetics of the film, there is the idea that really out-there technologies could be a reality. Is it possible that we could delve into the final eight minutes of a life in order to gain some sort of knowledge that would lead to a better future for those who survive? Would this become an alternate reality, a parallel universe or some sort of “holographic simulation”?

The film does not entirely explain exactly what they have created, but it seems to be a parallel universe that could essentially be altered by taking different actions within those final eight minutes. Assume someone died in a car accident because they veered too far off the side of the road, but we’re able to give them back the last eight minutes of their life through something like the source code—that way they can be sure to alter their previous actions to avoid the accident. Does this go beyond the line of controlling our own lives? Is this too much like “playing God” to be legal, ethical or even possible?

“Source Code” provides a decent script acted out by a great set of names and faces; altogether it is a film worth watching. But the concept is the most striking aspect, offering a lot of questions about where we are going with technology and whether or not we should even go there. Give the film a chance and see if it bends your brain, into its own reality.

Although not as novel, Portal sequel remains mind-bending

Portaled from p.3

developers planned as a solution. This is far less satisfying, but even though I just spent a paragraph or two describing it, it didn’t really bother me when I was doing the puzzles the first time. Don’t get me wrong, there are still a few beautifully open sections of puzzling. But for the most part, there’s one solution.

The cooperative play, while not as important or impressive as the single-player, is equally well-written and hilarious, and presents more mind-screwing puzzles, as both players have a portal gun. That means four portals, which means even more interesting scenarios for the players to overcome. That also means that physics has gone home crying. The newer elements of the game, combined with the cooperative play and four-portal shenanigans mean that there are a whole lot of ways that the game redefines how you think about solving specific problems.

I guess the original Portal's puzzles were just on an entirely different level, and not because they were necessarily more complex or wonkier, but because the player didn’t know anything about portals. For newcomers, the ideas and mechanics of the portals and the Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device’s workings are, I’m sure, just as mind-bending as the first game’s puzzles. Puzzles that make you puzzle and puzz until your puzzler is sore. (Fantastic. I’m reduced to stealing content from Dr. Seuss.)

So, the good part: the characters. GLaDOS is really well-realized in this game. The entire Aperture Science facility is massive and sprawling, and she is the heart of it. She’s trying to use it to.... whatever. Testing whether the presence of smooth jazz will offset the terror of a deadly test chamber. Whether participants in the tests can solve problems when launched into space. They can’t, she says, but she’s going to test it anyways. For science. She’s also going to call you stupid and horrible and fat. Especially fat. It’s hilarious. Seriously. This is some of the best insulting to come out of video games. “Look at you. Soaring through the air majestically. Like an eagle. Piloting a blimp.”

GLaDOS is a great antagonist—one of the best in gaming history. She’s equally scathing and guiding, wanting to test as much as possible, while still hating you for being stubborn and persistent and being human. Humans are totally inferior. A couple of her lines are a tiny bit forced, but for the most part, she’s a perfect passive-aggressive, psychopathic artificial intelligence, who you destroy in the first game. She says she’s willing to put it all behind, for science, but she constantly reminds you of everything you did wrong.

And that’s all I can tell you, really, because I really don’t want to talk about anything that might spoil the game for you. Seriously you’ll have to take my word on this one. I keep re-weighing the value of revealing important exposition from the game in order to give a better picture of what I’m talking about vs. letting the potentially-less-encouraged reader discover these things for themselves. The sneakrets keep winning out. It’s more important that the player discover and ponder the game for themselves than that they get a complete picture of it from some fool talking about how it has problems but you should play it anyways.

Yes. But let me be clear in conclusion: Portal 2 is worth your time. It’s lost some of its subtlety and gained a far greater respect for itself, and some of the puzzles are lacking in creative solution. But, oh my goodness, play it anyways. And if you haven’t played the original Portal, shame on you. Go apologize to someone. And then go play it.
How to: determine what you believe and why

1. Define your fundamental beliefs.
   - List your primary religious beliefs, such as “I believe in a supernatural god, or I believe the holy book of my religion is inspired by God.”
   - Write down each belief as clearly as you can. If you’re unsure of a belief that is an important part of your religion, include it on the list.

2. Step outside your worldview.
   - This is an extremely difficult thing to do, but it’s important to ask yourself if you value self-honesty and pursuit of truth more than you fear letting go of current beliefs. Without this dedication to being honest with yourself, you’re wasting your time.

3. Determine the source.
   - Take each of your beliefs and ask yourself when you first started to believe it, who told you, why they would know it to be true or if it’s just speculation on their part, and why you accepted it as a belief.

4. Study your religion.
   - Identify the beliefs that are part of the tenets of your religion, then research when your religion started to believe these ideas, what the alternatives were, and why might they have adopted the belief.

5. Re-evaluate.
   - Ask yourself to what degree you hold these beliefs to be true. If one wasn’t true, would it affect other beliefs you hold? If so, note the implications.

“It doesn’t matter what I believe just because I was raised that way. But, because of my upbringing, I’ve come to understand that nothing else makes sense,” Brugioni said.

In contrast, sophomore Brett Amiotte doesn’t consider himself traditional when it comes to faith. “I would call anyone who adheres to Jesus’ teachings and principles in a life-giving way a Christian,” he said.

According to Amiotte, he has had many doubts throughout his life as well. “The problem of evil has really challenged me,” he said, “How can an all loving, all powerful God, permit evil?” Amiotte also struggled with the fact that belief in a literal resurrection of Christ is not unanimous among New Testament scholars. “I don’t think I’ve overcome my doubts,” said Amiotte. “I think doubts are things that everyone has to wrestle with, and they don’t go away because there are no simple fixes or answers. The real challenge is learning to have comfort in doubt.”

In an attempt to briefly summarize why he believes what he believes, Mead said, “I think I’ve seen myself change a lot.” She grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, a place of affluence, and to that Barber said “there wasn’t much ownership of where I’m from.” But life in small-town Orange City has helped Barber “mellow out a little even if I didn’t feel like it and kept worshipping. If you go it alone, and leave it behind, you really are in a desert place.”

When it comes to why he believes what he believes, Mead said, “It’s a combination of the reasonableness of the Christian faith and a deep, innate feeling I have that God has his hands on me.”

See ‘Fern’ on page 9
How justifiable is the royal wedding fever for Americans?

BY KATI HENG
OPINION EDITOR

If you are too tired to read this article, I hope it's because you were one of the millions of Americans who have stayed up until late hours in the morning watching the royal wedding.

I stayed up to watch the wedding of two people I have never and will never meet. So did many of my friends and wing-mates. But for some reason, the fact that we were watching the wedding of the future king and queen of Great Britain made the whole situation perfectly rational.

Americans have few logical reasons to be so interested in the wedding. Besides taking over our magazines and TV programs, the wedding will have little impact on our American lives. So why are so many Americans obsessed with it?

Dan Young, a Northwestern College political science professor currently on sabbatical, finds our interest in the royal wedding to be rather understandable. Young sees the wedding as the media's latest "big story," or as a "celebrity of the month."

He continued, "There's something fascinating in this hold-over tradition from ancient times still playing a role in British life."

Without the history or a governing system to provide us with our own royalty, Americans have to go elsewhere to find the pageantry and ceremony associated with a wedding of a future monarch. After all, "nobody does ceremony like the British," said Young.

Young doesn't believe the media's coverage of the wedding is gossip or simple fluff stories. "Because it is the royal family, that gives it a bit more weight," Young said. "The media interest is more justified."

Despite his interest in the royal wedding, Young said he would not be staying up to watch the ceremony as it occurred. "I'll be fast asleep," Young said.

On the other side of the spectrum, NW freshman Gillian Anderson has planned to watch the wedding for some time. "It's a big deal," said Anderson. "Royal weddings don't happen that often."

Anderson has been watching network news coverage of details of the wedding ceremony as well as reading headlines on Yahoo that tempt with insider information about the event.

Anderson agrees with Young that the media's coverage is justified in this case. "They're the royal family - their lives are already put out in public," Anderson said. "It's not really gossip."

Araya Assfaw, a sophomore originally from Ethiopia, had different opinions about the American media's obsession with the wedding. "It's just crazy," he said. "Why are they concerned about other countries' weddings?"

Assfaw admitted that he had read a little information about the wedding, mainly from BBC.com. He even admitted that he had found stories about why the Prince of Bahrain would not be attending the ceremony and the revealing of the seating chart to be interesting. However, Assfaw does not think he is obsessed with the wedding news. "I just stay updated on current issues," said Assfaw.

Assfaw said he would not be watching the wedding that took place Friday morning - 4 a.m. Central Time. "I'm not interested in watching, I prefer watching other important things."

Then there are other students, such as sophomore Rebecca Reints, who were more ambivalent about the wedding. Reints said this past Tuesday that "if I'm studying that early, I'll probably just stay up and watch the wedding," but did not plan on setting any alarms.

The American media’s coverage of the wedding is more justified. "It’s weird – it’s not even a part of America," she said. "The only things outside the country we usually talk about are soccer and war."

So, for those not so interested in soccer or war news, wedding news may be a perfect outlet to European news. It's easy to find stories about the fashion involved in Kate's wedding dresses (yes, I meant dresses), or the kind of cake they couple will be cutting (a fruitcake is traditional), or even about who is or isn't coming to the ceremony (for example, one guard was uninvited after it was found that he had posted negative comments about Kate on Facebook).

Maybe it's too easy to find stories about the wedding. But for those of you who decided to sleep through the ceremony – don't fear! The media will give you all the news about the wedding that you can take.

One queen in, one queen out

As Middleton joins royal family, West queen Currier leaves NW

BY HOLLY STEWART
STAFF WRITER

West Hall has had many changes throughout the years. Built in 1981, West has been a women’s dorm and a men’s dorm. It has also had an exterior wing (Westenga).

This year, West will say goodbye to their RD of four years, Seth Currier.

Seth was hired four years ago after graduating from Spring Arbor University in Michigan with degrees in philosophy and religion. Because of his love for residence life, he applied for positions all over the country, but felt God’s calling to accept the position of RD at Northwestern.

Two years into his position, Seth married his girlfriend of four years, Erin. Erin, who had graduated a year after Seth, worked for a year before moving to Orange City.

Knowing that they wanted to go abroad, Seth and Erin began a search for the right opportunity. Through many twists and turns, they were led to this opportunity—one that they are excited about and at peace with. "We are going to this specific place, partly because of the community," Seth said.

After fulfilling their one-year requirement, the Curriers are excited to begin a new chapter of their lives. In May, Seth will finish his master’s degree in spiritual formation and leadership. They will then move to China in August to teach English.

"I'm not interested in watching. I prefer watching other news. "I just stay updated on current issues," said Assfaw.

Assfaw does not think he is obsessed with the wedding news. "I stay up to watch the wedding of two people I have never and will never meet. So did many of my friends and wing-mates. But for some reason, the fact that we were watching the wedding of the future king and queen of Great Britain made the whole situation perfectly rational."

Erin said. She has always been geared toward using her skills and abilities with and for nonprofits. "I love the relationship aspect of it."

"The guys in the dorm are amazing. But I'm excited for our future and for the future of West Hall."
Mueller is ‘all smiles’ after advancing in model contest

BY ANNA HENKE
STAFF WRITER

Northwestern junior Natalia Mueller recently entered maurices’ Main Street Model Search, a nationwide search for “12 real girls in all sizes to model maurices clothing.” Natalia is one of over 500 applicants to enter the contest.

There is a "huge variety" of contestants in the Main Street Model Search. With a minimum age of 18, women of all ages across the U.S. have entered the contest, including college students, young married women and mothers in their 40s. Women from sizes 1-24 have submitted themselves for consideration to be the next maurices model.

Mueller loves shopping online and saw the Main Street Model Search advertised on the maurices website. "I got really excited about it," she said. For Mueller, the fact that applicants couldn’t have any modeling experience or published photographs "made it more real." In order to achieve a "more professional look," Mueller asked fellow NW students Brittany Leikvoll and Betsy De Glover to take photos and film her entrance video.

For her submission profile, Mueller submitted a written biography with a unique angle. Mueller was adopted from Romania at the age of two, so she proposed herself as the "next Romanian maurices Main Street Model." She highlights her passion for giving back to the community and personal goal of having a business "sort of like TOMS shoes," where a percentage of the proceeds go to charity. Mueller currently has a small business of homemade headbands and is looking into producing T-shirts, but "only has one pair of hands."

She hopes to pursue and expand this goal later in life. "Part of the prize of the Main Street Model Search is $7,500 to give a nonprofit organization a charitable makeover." If selected, Mueller would like to use this money to an adoption agency or an organization that works in Romania.

The Main Street Model campaign is not just about real models; it’s also about small-town America. In a press release announcing the contest, maurices Vice President of marketing Brad Hartmann said, "Fashion, small towns and community involvement are the heart and soul of maurices." The photo shoots for the 12 winning girls will take place in the models’ hometowns for maurices’ fall, holiday and spring campaigns.

Mueller, who listed Orange City as her hometown, explains, "They want to broadcast small towns that are unique."

The top 50 contestants were determined by online voting and announced on maurices’ website on April 28. Friends of Mueller’s had texted and called her early that morning to congratulate her. "I really am happy I found out that way and didn’t have to wait to look on the website to see if I made it," Mueller said. Upon receiving word that she’d continue on in the contest, Mueller said she was shocked and honored. "I feel so blessed to have so many people support me through this."

A judging panel, led by fashion designer Christopher Straub from Project Runway, will determine the top 20 from these 50 contestants. "The judges already picked their top 20 models and the sponsors are supposed to contact the models on [April 28] or sometime soon after," Mueller said.

The top 20 will then go to Minneapolis for a final casting call in front of the judging panel. The 12 winning models will be announced on May 9.

Because being a Main Street Model is not just about outside appearance, judges will select models based on "their representation of the maurices’ image." Therefore, Mueller explained that "any of the top 20 could be alternates." There are extensive rules that contestants must adhere to, and physical and psychological tests that top contestants have to pass. Essentially, maurices wants their Main Street models to be positive role models. Judges will consider the models’ image as important as appearance.

Mueller said that this experience has "taught me that if I want something I really have to go for it." Before knowing she advanced to the top 50 contestants, Mueller was just glad to have had the courage to put herself out there and do something unique. "I’m really happy for all the other contestants; they all sound amazing and have so many things to offer," Mueller said. "I know that the judges will have a hard time picking, but I know that whoever wins will bring so much to the table."
Softball riding hot streak

BY MICHAEL SIMMELINK
SPORTS EDITOR

On Monday NW earned an 8-0 win over Dordt in a five-inning game. Rain caused the contest to be shortened.

Senior pitcher Drew Nonnenmacher threw a gem, shutting out the Defenders as he went all five innings. He gave up only three hits while striking out five and walking one. The Raider bats were alive and gave plenty of run support behind Nonnenmacher. Sophomore Corey Van Gorp went 2-2 and scored twice while hitting a home run. Junior Steve England also belted a homer as he went 2-3 and drove in three runs. Freshman Davis Bloemendaal also contributed with a 2-3 performance at the dish.

On Saturday the Raiders came home with two wins over Dakota Wesleyan by the scores of 3-2 and 5-2.

In the front end of the doubleheader, sophomore Taylor Morris picked up his fourth win of the season, giving up two earned runs while striking out four in five innings of work. Junior Eddie Pantzlaff relieved him at the plate. Morris helped his own cause by leading NW with two hits in three appearances. Juniors Mike Shields brought home two runs and and England knocked in an RBI to lead the scoring charge by the Raiders.

In the second game, freshman Ryan Brasser was on the mound. He picked up the win after going six innings and surrendering only two runs. He didn't give out any free passes and struck out three. Pantzlaff was called on again and picked up the save to end the game. Junior Matt Negaard completed his job in the leadoff spot, going 2-3 and drawing a walk. The top of the order complimented each other well, with the first five spots in the lineup each scoring a run. In all, eight Raiders picked up a nine hits in the contest.

The Raiders will be in action next Saturday as they host Dordt for senior day.

Top 20 picks full of questions, similar to 2011 season


Women shoot best round of season

BY NATASHA FERNANDO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Senior Maggie Rozenboom marked her fifth win of the season and led the Lady Raiders to a victory at the Dordt Invite on Monday in Sioux Center. The meet was the The Ridge Golf Course.

The Raiders shot a season-best of 335, which is the second lowest round in the history of the program. The Raiders won the team title by seven strokes over second place Midland Lutheran (342). Morningside finished third with a 347, followed by Briar Cliff. The Northwestern junior varsity shot a 402 and finished the invite in seventh.

Rozenboom carded a seven-over 78, winning her fifth title this season. Freshman Taylor Kline placed third with an 83 behind an 87, putting all four varsity Raiders in the top 10.

Sophomore Leigh Van Horve led the junior varsity with a score of 91 and 15th place finish, followed by sophomore Kayla Johnson with a 95.

Over Easter break, the Raiders traveled to Yankton, SD to the Fox Run Golf Course for the Mount Marty Invite where they finished third out of eight teams. The Raiders shot a 351, seven strokes behind the leaders, Dakota Wesleyan and two strokes behind second place.

Baseball riding hot streak

BY NATASHA FERNANDO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Lady Raider softball team split their doubleheader Wednesday night against Briar Cliff. The decisions put Northwestern at 13-19 (9-9) overall on the year.

Game one was a pitcher’s duel as the Raiders fell 2-1, having two potentially-tying runners thrown out at the plate throughout the contest.

Freshman Katie Vande Voort took the loss after giving up two earned and seven hits while striking out five in six innings of work. Sophomore Heidi Esdohr went 1-3 and knocked in the only run for NW, which was scored by Vande Voort. Freshman Alex Price also went 2-3 at the dish.

In the back end of the double-header, the Raiders won 6-2, having a five-run fifth inning. Juniors Shelby Johnson and Kami Kuhlmann were 2-4 and knocked in two RBI to lead NW in hitting, Senior Rachel Harris and Esdohr walked, followed by the game winning walk-off single by Kuhlmann.

In game two, the Raiders managed only four singles from the batter’s box. Harris, Esdohr, Kuhlmann and Price each had one hit. Freshman Keely Bracelin lost for the second time in her past eight starts, giving up 10 hits and four runs in seven innings. She struck out six and walked one.

Bracelin was named pitcher of the week announced by the GPAC office earlier this week. She went 2-1 with a 1.83 earned run average in three starts. She is 7-6 on the season with a 2.43 ERA.

Northwestern hosts Hastings on Friday night and Midland Lutheran on Saturday, in what will be senior day for the Raiders.
Young guns lead Raiders at Doane

BY NATASHA FERNANDO

Freshmen Brianna Hobbs and Dawn Gildersleeve, along with sophomore Matt Huseman, won their respective events and led the Northwestern track and field team at the Doane Invite last weekend.

Hobbs won the 800-meter with a time of 2:20.19. She was also a part of the 4x400 and 4x800 relay teams, which both finished first. She joined senior Stacey Dietrich, sophomore Kim De Jong and junior Theresa Scholten to win the 4x400 with a time of 4:05.19. Scholten and Hobbs later participated with Gildersleeve and senior Charity Miles to win the 4x800 in a school-record time of 9:18.05. The team met the NAIA automatic standard and currently holds the No. 1 seed in the NAIA.

Gildersleeve also won the 1500-meter and qualified for the national meet with a time of 4:39.96. She is currently seeded second in the GPAC and 15th in the NAIA. Miles and Scholten finished third and fourth, respectively, in the event.

Senior Sara Hess and Miles finished first and second, respectively, in a very tight 5000-meter race with times of 18:27.5 and 18:27.7. Junior Liz Stevens finished second in the heptathlon with 4,142 points, setting a school record in the process. She is currently the No. 15 seed in the NAIA. Junior Dani Fry placed fourth in discus, while junior Jackie Brooks and sophomore Jana Olson placed third and fourth respectively in the pole vault.

On the men’s side, Huseman won the high jump with a personal best of 6-11, qualifying again for the national meet. Junior Mark Minear cleared 6-05 to finish in fourth place, missing his personal best by a half inch. Both jumpers were very pleased with their performances after taking limited full jumps in the previous week’s practice.

Freshman Zach Wittenberg finished with a time of 4:09.3 in the 1500-meter, earning a second place finish. Freshman Jeriah Dunk placed third in the 200-meter with a time of 22.01 seconds. Sophomore Brandon Hammack placed fourth in the 100-meter while Dunk finished fifth.

Dietrich also had second and third place finishes in the 400-meter and 100-meter hurdles. Freshmen Kyle Heidebrink and Taylor Bodin also finished in fifth place in the 110-meter hurdles and 400-meter hurdles, respectively. At the long jump pit, sophomore Mark Johnson had a third-place finish and sophomore Corinne Muyskens took fourth place in the steeplechase.

The Raiders will travel to Sioux Falls this Friday for the USF Invite, the last meet before the GPAC Outdoor Championships, which will be held on Saturday, May 7, in Orange City.

Kevin Durant’s coming out playoff series

BY TOM WESTERHOLM

On some nights, players are described as having scored a ‘quiet’ 20 points. This usually means they hit some shots and contributed sufficiently to the game, but that didn’t change the course of the contest; they weren’t gamebreakers.

This is the complete antithesis of what occurred in Oklahoma City. Kevin Durant’s 41 points in Game 5 were jet-engine-screaming, 11-year-old-girls-at-a-Justin-Bieber-concert loud. With his team down nine, and the fourth quarter winding past the halfway point, Durant saw the situation was calling for a hero, and he took over.

One thing he made abundantly clear: Durant was NOT about to let this series stretch to a Game 6.

What was so special about the performance wasn’t the 41 points, or even the fourth quarter explosion itself. It was seeing Durant demonstrating himself as a wise, mature-beyond-his-years player before our very eyes. He was aware of the stakes: if Denver won tonight, the Nuggets would have an opportunity to play at home in Game 6, and they would be dangerous molotov of confidence and desperation.

Oklahoma City’s confidence was visibly wavering. They had collapsed in the final seconds of Game 3. All the statistics and questions about teams who had never won a playoff series were swirling around their heads, and it was starting to get to the young team.

So Durant made like Woody Harrelson, and had to nut up or shut up.

He chose to nut up, demonstrating a sense of all the over-used cliches that are so deservedly bestowed upon Kobe Bryant. One has to wonder how much good leading the USA national team to a World Basketball Championship over the summer did for Durant’s maturation, because, as he took an entire franchise upon his slender 22-year-old shoulders, it felt as natural as breathing.

Durant started elevating for jumpshot after unguardable jumpshot, pumping his fist after every basket, and gifting the young team.

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West Battle 2011: The legacy continues

“Laflo and I spent most of the battle fighting each other. After that I didn’t think I’d stay alive much longer, but once I saw there were only a few guys alive I went for them with all I had left and came out the victor,” said Jacob Vander Ploeg (left), winner of the individual event.

Legion History: The birth of a tradition

The annual West Hall Cardboard-Duct Tape Battle began in April of 2008 after West RD Seth Currier and dorm residents wanted to instigate a Medieval Week under West Hall’s name.

Currier suggested a battle-like event modeled after his own college experience—a cardboard and duct tape fight. The guys ran with the idea and have kept the tradition alive ever since, founding a favorite event of participants and campus viewers alike.