Dordt announces new long-term construction projects

Amber Vis
Staff Writer

Watch out Dordt College. Construction is going to wreak havoc on campus yet again.

There are currently two different construction projects taking place on campus. The first is the expansion and renovation of the Science Building, and the second is the switching of the alumni house to the new president’s house, which will also result in the expansion of the current alumni house.

The expansion of the Science Building has been a priority for nine years. The master plan was written up in 2004, and the committee has been actively planning the expansion for 24 months. Arian Nederhoff, Vice President for Business Affairs, is part of this team who has been making these plans. The other members of the team include Ethan Brue, Jim Bos, Stan Oordt, and Tony Jelsma.

Although Nederhoff couldn’t give a specific number for how much this expansion and construction will cost, he estimated that the entire project will cost around $20.22 million.

Dordt students don’t have to worry about this money coming from their tuition, however, because the money for the project is all coming from donors.

At the end of December, donors had already given over $7 million dollars. The Advancement Office has volunteered to raise the rest of the money ($3 million) to start the first phase of the project.

The Science Building project is divided into 3 different phases. The first phase costs around $11 million, and it includes connecting the Classroom Building with the Science Building. This will include taking down the greenhouse on the south side of the Science Building and building an engineering lab building in its place.

The 2nd phase and 3rd phase are a conjoined effort, coming to around $11 million as well. These phases will work on renovating the existing science building. This will include remodeling the existing chemistry and biology labs, as well as agriculture and physics laboratories.

The 3rd phase will also include, if cost allows, a skywalk to connect the Science Building to the Campus Center to create a fully integrated academic complex. A field project laboratory plus a new astronomy observatory location will be created as well.

The start date for Phase 2 and 3 depends on how fast the Advancement Office can raise the $11 million. The committee is still working on reconfiguring designs and decisions for the last two phases. Nederhoff is hoping that Phase 1 receives the green light from the board, so that they can start the project.

“This is an exciting project, and it just feels time to start it now,” Nederhoff said. He also pointed out that although campus will be somewhat inconvenient for students and faculty next year, he is confident that they will soon see the advantages of the project.

The other construction project taking place on Dordt’s campus is the switch between the alumni house and the president’s house. Alisa Den Hartog, Alumni and Parent Relations Coordinator, said that the purpose of the swap is to improve both of the houses.

“Our alumni house is becoming popular, so it gave us the opportunity to expand it and to provide more bedrooms and bathrooms; the need was increasing, and we had an opportunity to meet that need,” Den Hartog said. The new alumni house will feature five bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. There will be a kitchen, living and dining room space that will be considered shared space with all the guests staying in the house. The old alumni house featured 3 bedrooms, 1 on the main floor and 2 upstairs.

The main floor bedroom had its own bathroom, but the two upstairs bedrooms had a shared bathroom.

The construction on the alumni house began back in November, and the completion date will be March 15th. It will begin accommodating guests on April 1st.

Record-breaking year for Prairie Grass Film Challenge

Lauren Volkers
Staff Writer

“We smashed all of our previous records,” said Professor Mark Volkers, one of the organizers of the event. “We’ve never broken 30.” This year, the challenge had 36 teams sign up and 32 teams actually finish the competition. Not every team completes the competition, while some get disqualified along the way.

The challenge is in its seventh year. “It’s grown each year, which we’re really thankful for. We never know year-to-year what’s going to happen,” said Volkers.

A 480-hour challenge was introduced as a part of this year’s event. It allowed teams to spend 20 days on a film rather than two days. It began on Dec. 31 and ended on Jan. 19.

“We’ve never done the 480-hour challenge before. I was expecting one or two teams and we ended up with six,” said Volkers. Those films will be shown along with the 48-hour films on Friday, Feb. 15. The showings begin at 5:45 p.m. in different venues across campus. The awards ceremony starts at 8 p.m. in BJ Haan Auditorium. This year, there will be an award for Best of Show in the high school division, the college division, and the post-college division. There will also be an award added for Best of Show in the 480-hour challenge. There is a full schedule of events at dordt.edu/filmchallenge.

“It’s free, it’s fun, it’s family friendly, and it’s open to the public,” said Volkers. “It’s a celebration of the visual arts. It’s an opportunity for pros and first-timers to get involved. Whether you made a film or not, it’s a lot of fun to get out, roam around campus, and see what people created in 48 hours.”

Following the awards ceremony, there will be an after-party in 55th Avenue. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy food, drinks, and good music.
Kristina Heflin
Staff Writer

Dordt students brought home ten first place prizes and qualified eighteen individuals for the national competition during the Iowa Post-Secondary Agriculture Student (PAS) Leadership Conference, held on Feb. 4th and 5th. Dordt was also represented in the organization’s leadership this year, as junior Vern Oostra was elected as president of the Iowa association.

“We dominated,” said Vern Oostra, an Ag Business major from Hull, Iowa, became the first Dordt student to be elected to an officer position on the Iowa PAS leadership team.

“The day was filled with events all day, “Oostra said. “I hope they see the value of going to network, not only in the industry but with other students.”

By Holly Enerson

Dordt theology major with minors in beef specialty, dairy specialty, and crop specialty. Dordt also had multiple teams compete in the dairy and beef specialties.

“All of our teams and Dordt in general…we’re a pretty close-knit group. But even within our own teams, there’s friendly competition,” said Enerson.

The second day, consisting of individual events, also saw Dordt represented with four first place awards and two second place individuals. These events included Precision Ag, Ag Sales, and Employment Interviews.

Professor Gary De Vries feels that these events make Dordt’s participation in PAS worthwhile. “It gives students a chance to assess what they’ve learned and ask themselves, ‘Do I have a good base to be in this industry?’” They can figure out if what they’ve learned in college is going to be useful. Any time you have to put your knowledge to the test it forces you to stretch yourself, and every time you stretch yourself, you grow. I see us staying strong in PAS, especially if we have a state officer…that’s going to keep us linked in,” said De Vries.

Vern Oostra, an Ag Business major from Hull, Iowa, became the first Dordt student to be elected to an officer position on the Iowa PAS leadership team.

“I’ve always wanted the chance to be a leader for an organization like PAS,” Oostra said. “I ran for president because I believed that I had the skills to help PAS for the better and to benefit the fellow officers that I would be working with.”

Besides leadership opportunities, Oostra also pointed out PAS’ networking aspects. “One thing that I’ve noticed with PAS is that all the members are able to network and make themselves known to industry leaders,” he said. “PAS is also allows college students to network with each other too.”

De Vries agreed that the ability for Dordt’s students to network with important figures, such as Iowa governor Terry Branstad, who was this year’s keynote speaker, is one of the many valuable aspects of Dordt’s involvement in PAS. However, he also pointed out the advantage of the student relationships developed through the organization.

“I hope they see the value of going to network, not only in the industry but with other students.”

David Puruolte acts like any other Dordt student as he spends his days on campus. He spends late hours in the library, spends his extra time in the Rec Center playing soccer, and enjoys visiting friends in the library, spends his days on campus. As a freshman, Puruolte says his mind was “young” and “eager to learn about Christianity and its worldview.”

Since classes—and especially his major—are filled with information on Christianity and taught from that worldview, Puruolte said Dordt has allowed him to listen to other believers and learn from them, even when he doesn’t agree with everything they say. He also says he is “just beginning to learn,” and plans to attend four more years of schooling after Dordt to obtain his Master’s degree.

Puruolte did not mention much of a difficulty with fitting into Dordt’s community will be in the industry at the same time as them—they’ll end up doing business with them later,” Branstad said.

For now, though, the qualifying participants are gearing up for the National PAS conference to be held March 18-21, in Louisville, KY. Oostra is also acting as the chairman for the annual Dordt College Ag Day and already has plans for the 2013 event under way.
Technology in the classroom: Introducing the iPad

Staff Writer

Alex Updike

The Civil War has long been fought and won, but that does not mean it cannot be experienced once again. This May, Dordt history professor Paul Fessler is planning on leading a group to Wilson’s Creek, Mo. and Pea Ridge, Ark. in order to re-live the famous Civil War battles once fought there.

The group will experience what is known as a staff ride, which involves “participation in the unfolding of history, where each person is assigned to play a role of an original battle participant,” said Fessler.

The staff ride takes participants beyond what a simple tour would normally offer; it allows participants to actually experience and participate in the unfolding of history. Rather than being bored by pointless facts and long speeches, participants get a first-hand account at how even the slightest of factors, including weather and individual personalities, can have the largest of impacts.

The reenacted battles – both Wilson’s Creek and Pea Ridge – were vitally important to the Western Theater of the Civil War, as well as to the war as a whole. “These early battles offered tactical and strategic lessons that both sides would need for future battles,” said Fessler.

Of course, war is more than battles – it is the men fighting in them. And this staff ride understands that. Participants will have a chance, even beyond an understanding of the battles, to learn about the soldiers who fought in them and, consequently, how political, social, and even religious factors helped shape the battles’ outcomes.

The tour begins and ends in Springfield, Missouri and lasts from May 15 through May 18. If you would like to learn more, view the itinerary, or register, you can visit dordt.edu/events/civil_war_learning or contact Dianne De Wit. The trip promises to be a unique experience filled with history like never experienced before.

Student Symposium Update

Hello students and welcome to another exciting update from Student Symposium! (For the sake of those around you, please contain your exuberance, especially if you are in the library.) This week at Symposium we were blessed to have two new members added to our midst (Lisa Smith and Kyler Van Berkum), so please congratulate them and ask them about Symposium whenever you have a chance.

Also, if you have a request for a new club or require funds for your current club, please stop by and talk with us, or shoot us an email at Symposium@dordt.edu

Until next time,

Stephen Olson
Student Symposium Press Representative

Be a part of the Civil War

Students will experience the unfolding of history right before their eyes

Staff Writer

John Tiersma, a 2006 Dordt graduate, came back to his alma mater to speak about the benefits of teaching in a one-on-one classroom and how technology can be incorporated.

Tiersma currently teaches 7th grade science and Bible at Valley Christian in California and graduated from Dordt with an elementary education major and a middle school endorsement.

His evening lecture focused on why one-on-one education is beneficial. One-on-one teaching means putting a piece of educational technology, in Tiersma’s case iPads, into the hands of every student.

There are pros and cons to this teaching strategy, but Tiersma supports using iPads in a one-on-one classroom because it promotes richer learning, enhances creativity, promotes collaboration, provides access to information, and iPads also excite students.

In today’s society, technology is a large part of the school environment and teachers must adjust at their own pace. It’s crucial to ease into it, because it is overwhelming.

Tiersma emphasized that technology doesn’t equal success, but the goal, when using technology, should be to make learning better. It is a tool that should equip teachers and students. If it is used just for fun it shouldn’t be used in a classroom setting.

“I don’t want to do something because of the excitement factor,” said Tiersma.

Hands-on activities are still a big part of Tiersma’s classroom. There are days when he doesn’t let the students bring out the iPads at all. He encourages student interaction and creativity.

“Teachers need to be ready to learn from each other and the students,” said Tiersma.

He emphasized the need for technology to fit the school’s vision. Policies must be put in place and the school must be able to afford to make it work through appropriate training and support from principal and staff.
So we finally got married. Now what?

Dordt Students talk about life after marriage

Adam McDonald
Head Editor

On this particular Valentine’s Day, the focus will be on new marriages. Nothing is more intimate, more self-sacrificing, and more desirable than marriage. Marriage isn’t easy, especially new marriages.

“Making decisions together instead of by myself can be a challenge at times because I was so used to the former,” said senior Mark Opp when asked about what sacrifices he had to make after his marriage in August of last year. “Bethany, my wife, had to move from California, which meant a long distance from family and friends. We both had to give up a degree of independence and some singlehood goals.”

Although most sacrifices in a marriage may seem serious, there are a few decisions that are not. “I can’t watch TLC as much because my husband is addicted to Sports Center, along with every other sports channel and activity on cable,” said senior Melissa Venhuizen who married senior Joe Venhuizen in August last year.

One of the hardest adjustments for married couples living off campus is continuing to be involved on campus. “You lose a lot of contact with friends when you move off campus,” said senior Joe Venhuizen. “People seem to be scared of the married college kids. Just because I share my room with a girl now instead of five guys doesn’t make me any less fun to hang out with.”

Dordt has made efforts to engage married couples in more activities, despite their off-campus living arrangements.

Dordt had married less than a decade ago in an apartment on 4th street, equipped with its own RA, but according to Robert Taylor, it didn’t work out very well. “There has to be a lot of buy-in (from students) since it’s such a small community,” said Taylor. “We found out that most couples just wanted to be on their own. They said, ‘We are off campus, we are trying to build relationships in the greater community through church and other mediums. We have friends on campus, but we’ll see them when we see them.’”

But despite the chaos of the wedding day, school, and finding a place to live together, it hasn’t deterred many couples from making the leap to marriage. According to the Registrar’s office, the average number of students getting married is between 40 and 45 each year.

With so many people saying, “I do”, there has to be something they all find appealing, if not hypnotizing, about the idea of being married to each other.

“There are some definite challenges that come along with being married, especially while in school, we wouldn’t change it for anything,” said Opp. “God has really blessed us through this process and has used it to grow us in Him. We know that this will continue with whatever happens in our lives as a married couple.”

Valentine’s Day in pictures

Nate Scripps - Single

Darin Lammers - Dating

Zach Jensema and Sarah Kaemingk - Engaged

Jake and Lydia Buss - Married

Senior Joe Venhuizen and his wife, Melissa

Senior Mark Opp with his wife, Bethany

Photos by Emily McFarland
Humility - Just Think About It

Alex Upkne Columnist

we give it credit for. And guess what? It worked . . . kind of. The kids didn't become little Jesuses the rest of the week, but during almost every meal time, at least one kid would offer a bigger piece of dessert or the last piece of something to one of his bunkmates. It was magical.

So how does this apply to us? Because I'm not giving up my dessert for anybody. Luckily, I think this verse speaks on a higher level (although I also believe that what my camp did was a great example). Especially in a college atmosphere, where the social aspect of life is so important and highly regarded, I believe this verse has wonderful implications. Let's just take one hypothetical example. Say you walk into the Commons, the Grill, or 55th and there's a group with a friend. And say that you happen to notice an individual sitting by his or her self looking particularly lonely. If the above verse is to be taken into account and applied to our lives, what does that look like? Does it mean sitting next to him or her? Involving him or her to sit next to you? Or does it just mean not making fun of them with your friends? I'm not going to give you an answer, but I think it's worth thinking about even more than that paper you have coming up.

I've worded this so rhetorically on purpose. I'm not going to preach at you and give you answers – that's what my dad does. I'm just trying to bring to light some things that I believe need to be thought about. So someday, when your 15-minute nap turns into a three-hour one, and your mind wakes up at least semi-refreshed, think about what you would do to put others ahead of yourself, in a social atmosphere or in any other way. And realize that your actions speak volumes, and positively or negatively. That guy or girl you didn't invite simply because they aren't part of your “group”, that friend you ignored in the hall because you thought they were “cooler” people, and everyone else are people that we are to put above us. How does that change how we think and act? I think that’s some food for thought of which we can all fight for the biggest piece.

What Love Is

Rachel Mulder Columnist

Well, today is Valentine’s Day. I’m not a serious boyfriend or girlfriend for that matter, so I’m not spending Valentine’s in a fancy, dimly lit restaurant like many others will be. I won’t have a dozen roses sent to me by the love of my life.

I have enjoyed spending nights on Pinterest and making Wal-Mart runs with roommates who are working the clock to find and make the perfect gift for their loved ones…you know who you are? I haven’t started my Valentine’s yet (am I too old for that?), but I have been googling Valentine’s poems for my preschool lessons and came across this good one:

"God’s Valentine Gift"  
God’s Valentine gift to love is to give.

Was not a bunch of flowers,

It wasn’t a candy, or a book

To while away the hours.

His gift was to become a man.

So He could freely give

His sacrificial love for us,

So we could be forgiven.

He gave us sweet salvation,

And bestowed upon us true--

To love our friends and enemies

And our sibling, too.

So as we give our Valentine,

Let’s thank our Lord and King;

The reason we have love to give

Is that He gave everything.

By Joanna Fuchs

My love life right now consists of seeing the little things God has provided. You know, the one I love is seeing God’s amazing handwork through a beautiful pink sunset. Love is knowing you are being prayed for every day. Love is receiving prayer requests and getting my own knees to pray. Love is remembering a wonderful grandfather. Love is spending time with friends. Love is sleeping in. Love is being skyed with my sister. Love is spending time with preschoolers. Love is knowing that I am right where I supposed to be because God has orchestrated my life down to the second. That’s that love.

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will take great delight in you; he will quiet you by his love; he will rejoice over you with loud singing."  
-Zephaniah 3:17
Sports

Baseball and Softball gear up for a promising season

Athletes and Coaches are pumped for the new season and are ready for the challenges

Justin Pastoor
Sports Editor

After months of practice hitting in the cages and throwing across the field, both the baseball and softball teams are on the brink of beginning their season.

The baseball team is lead by head coach Jeff Schouten and the softball team is led by Jeff Zomer.

Schouten’s squad consists of 41 members; 28 on varsity, 13 on JV. The team hopes to build off of the experience they gained last year with six out of their eight field positions returning.

Travis Dekkars, all time hit leader at Dordt, is the only player who graduated, and Engleman and Mitch Feller.

Schouten along with Brian Schouten’s squad consists of 41 members; 28 on varsity, 13 on JV. The team hopes to build off of the experience they gained last year with six out of their eight field positions returning.

While Schouten doesn’t designate specific players as his captains, he gives praise to his seniors for taking the reins during the preseason and displaying early leadership while his underclassmen have been responding well to the new challenges of college level ball.

Gameplay was scheduled to begin this weekend with two double headers against Manhattan Christian in Kansas, but due to weather, it will be pushed back to the following weekend.

On the other side of the spectrum, the softball team began practices last week. Coach Zomer sports a smaller squad of 13 with the help of assistant coach Ken Rosebery.

“Due to the underhand motion of pitching, the shoulder can take that stress every game,” said Zomer. “Only 13 players on our roster pose some potential problems, but when you only need one or two pitchers, the need for girls just isn’t as high.”

The strength of the team is going to come in the amount of offensive power they can bring night in and night out. Coach Zomer expects his team to be able to consistently put up a lot of runs.

The team will be traveling to Sioux City this week for a number of indoor scrimmages before the start of the season at the beginning of March in a tournament down in Kansas. Both teams will be making a road trip to Arizona for a series of games over spring break. GPAC play will begin late in March.

Woltersdorff honored academically

Justin Pastoor
Sports Editor

For the second year in a row, the men’s basketball team has had an individual selected for an award as recognition for their accomplishments not on the court, but in the books as well. Senior Trevor Woltersdorff, a Sioux Center native, has been selected to the Capital One Academic All-District team in the college division.

“This speaks levels about Dordt College as an outstanding institution,” said men’s basketball coach Ross Douma. “With Trevor’s selection, it verifies the quality of education we get here at Dordt and the great student Trevor is. It also shows that it’s equally important to be good in the classroom as well as on the basketball court.”

Qualifications for this reward take into account academic achievement as well as athletic success. Woltersdorff is a four-year starting forward for Coach Douma’s squad and currently ranks 2nd all time in scoring and 4th all time in rebounding. He has been an All-GPAC selection three times, as well as an All-American selection twice along with being an NAIA Scholar-Athlete for both basketball and track.

Trevor is a psychology major and currently holds an accumulative GPA of 3.82 at Dordt. The men’s basketball team holds an accumulative GPA of 3.35, one of the top team GPAs in the nation.

Last year Shawn Keizer was awarded the A.O. Duer Award. This award is given to a male junior of outstanding academics selected from all sports throughout the year. It is estimated that Keizer was selected out of 6,500 candidates.

The men’s team holds a current record of 22-6 (14-5) and is fighting for the top spot in the conference, and the number one seed in the GPAC tournament. The Defenders play Doane on Saturday the 16th before entering tournament play.

Ask an Athlete

Name: Jordan Vogel
Age: 22
Major: Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice

Sports Involved: Basketball

Why did you come to Dordt?

Coming to Dordt was a really easy decision for me. Both my parents went there and so did my older brother. My dad actually played basketball here back in the day and my mom teachers here now. It was a no brainer.

How did you first become involved in sports?

I first became involved in sports from watching my older brother since I can remember. I didn’t start playing basketball until like 5th grade at RVCS though. Represent!

Have you ever, or do you have any nicknames on the court?

Most everybody calls me “Voges” on the court; it’s been like that since high school. Most recently, CarelessRainbow has gained a following. By the way follow me on twitter @CarelessRainbow. Gotta take advantage of free press.

Who’s your favorite professor here at Dordt?

It’s a toss-up for favorite professor; there are a lot that I really enjoy. But if I have to name one it would be Andy Schuttinga.

If you could swap places with anyone on campus, who would it be, and why?

It would definitely be Coach Douma. Then we could see just how much he enjoys participating Kentucky Layups with 10 guys.

What do you view as the best movie of all time?

My favorite movie is definitely “Just Friends.” Its hysterical.

Just how good are you at Halo?

Haha that’s a good question. I’m alright, I guess you could say I get my fair share of practice in. I’m always up for a challenge!

If you weren’t at Dordt right now, where do you think you would be?

If I wasn’t at Dordt I’d probably be going to school in a big city like New York or Chicago.

Any special plans for the big holiday of love?

Haha no plans, Valentine’s Day is the worst! You women should be ashamed.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation I hope to find a place to play basketball, hopefully overseas. That would be living the dream. If that doesn’t work out, I’ll be off to grad school for me.
“The Miracle Worker,” a play based on the life of Helen Keller

New English professor on campus

Lauren Bird
Staff Writer

Dordt theater students will take the stage to perform “The Miracle Worker,” the story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan on Wednesday, Feb. 27 through Saturday, March 2. Miracle Worker tells the story of Annie Sullivan, a young teacher sent to the home of Helen Keller, a blind and deaf child. Senior Shannon Spargo stars as Annie alongside senior Brittany Arkema as Helen. “(Annie) is fighting for Helen—fighting for her sight and the light to break into her soul,” said Spargo. The play shows the struggles and conflicting personalities of Annie and Helen as they work together to educate Helen. The 15-member cast has been working hard since January. “Producing a play is full of hundreds of moving parts and I am so thankful for all of the hard work from the actors, designers, costumers, set builders, and everyone else involved,” said Director Josiah Wallace. “I am particularly pleased with Brittany and Shannon’s efforts. Not only do they bear the brunt of the work when it comes to very physically and emotionally challenging acting, they spend a lot of time working on the set on which they will soon perform.”

The actors have worked hard and have come across some challenges. “(Annie) is much stronger willed than I am,” said Spargo. “It’s been hard for me to just throw aside common courtesy and niceness for the greater purpose of reaching Helen.”

Wallace has been pushing the actors to do their best. “I make the actors work hard every night, and they have bruises and sleep deprivation to prove it,” said Wallace. He encourages the actors to spend time exploring possibilities in rehearsal and then encourage them to keep things or try new things throughout the process. It is quite a change. “One thing that struck me was the layout of the school,” Matthews said. “The English pod in particular was really attractive. Here the faculty offices are community oriented, great for faculty interaction. It’s encouraging.”

Matthews greatly enjoys the change in students and classes at Dordt. “I could expect 7-8 to drop out of a class in the first two weeks. And here, almost every student I’ve had is very committed to do well, which is wild to me,” Matthews said. “The greatest moment in teaching is seeing my students make a connection that I didn’t see.”

Chemistry Major Madie Kooima is a senior currently taking Business and Tech Writing with Matthews. The class itself is at 8-9 a.m., but Kooima says she enjoys the class and professor so much she doesn’t even realize how early the class is. “Besides making things interesting to us as students, he gives us assignments that are really practical,” Kooima said.

“Do you know how sometimes professors give work that seems like you’ll never need to know?” Kooima said. “I never get this feeling in Professor Matthews’ class.”

Hannah DeVries
Co-Editor

In one corner of the English pod is an office not unlike many other English professors’ offices. A bookshelf takes up an entire wall, a desk and filing cabinet another, posters are scattered across the walls and neat piles of papers are lined up on the floor.

But the contents of this bookshelf and the images of these posters are what makes this office and its inhabitant unique: movies from “True Grit” to “The Twilight Zone” rest in a stack next to books ranging in title from “Moby Dick” to “The Odyssey.” On the wall is a poster containing a quote from Walt Whitman, and pictures from his children line a cork board above his desk.

This is the office of Dordt College’s newest English professor, Joshua Matthews. In the past he has taught Science-Fiction Literature, and is currently teaching CORE 120, CORE 180, and Business and Tech Writing. Though he’s not entirely sure what next semester will hold, he will be teaching American Lit. I.

Before Dordt, Professor Matthews was a doctoral student at the University of Iowa. He worked for the Walt Whitman Quarterly Review and worked in the Walt Whitman archive as a part of his doctoral work. After school and while writing his dissertation, Matthews worked maintaining gas and oil wells and teaching at the University of Northern Colorado. After finishing his dissertation and applying for several different teaching jobs across the country, Matthews received an offer to teach at Dordt College. “It was a little bit of a culture shock,” Matthews said with a laugh.

“I grew up in a small town, but this is different—small, remote, friendly, and welcoming.” Coincidentally, Matthews first experiences with Dordt College came when he lived in Iowa City, when the brother of a past Dordt professor, David Zwart, was his neighbor across the hall.

Going from living in a large, urban setting to a small, rural location was not the only shock Matthews felt upon moving to Sioux Center. “Everyone knows who you are here, and you will see them at church and Walmart and the mall, which has its ups and downs,” Matthews said with a chuckle.

The school and classroom setting itself was

International Introduction: David Puruolte

David Puruolte

Puruolte is a Dordt student in the public relations and writing major. He is originally from Sioux Center, Iowa.

“Don’t really have the time to listen for the answer” or don’t seem “comfortable enough to listen for the real answer.” This concern is one that has been voiced by other international students interviewed in the past.

Overall, however, Puruolte has deeply enjoyed the growth God has provided him with while at Dordt for the past four years. He misses the mountains and clear rivers back home but has plans to continue schooling in America for the next several years, following God’s plan wherever that may take him.
Redbox Review: Silver Linings Playbook

Hannah DeVries
Co-Editor

Rating: 7/10

Memorable Line: Tiffany: You let me lie to you for a week? Pat: I was just trying to be romantic!

Crude. Outrageous. Odd. Dysfunctional. I’ll admit, this is what I thought of Silver Linings Playbook when I stopped watching it the first time. It just didn’t feel like a real movie, it started so abrupt, like the audience just got thrown into the plot without any warning whatsoever. The camera even seemed to follow the actors like a normal person would, hovering over their shoulders, peeking into their lives the same kind of unashamed abandon that the characters themselves were living in.

But that’s what made this movie good. Silver Linings Playbook is about a man, Pat Solantano (played by Bradley Cooper) who is sprung out by his mom from a mental health institute after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder. He was sent to the institute in the first place after beating up the love of his wife, Nikki, and promptly diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

He spends all his time in and out of the institute trying to turn himself into the man that his wife wanted him to be when they were married, but dysfunctional relationships with his parents and friends makes this difficult. He finds himself forced to help another woman, Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence), so he can slip a letter to his wife around the restraining order Nikki has placed on him. Tiffany has a past of her own that makes her seem just as crazy and off-the-wall as Pat, and somehow this drives the two together in the end.

Don’t expect a chick flick out of this one. Silver Linings Playbook deals with such a realistic story that trying to compare it to a chick flick would make it seem even more convoluted than it already is. So take it for what it is: keeping the little things in life, like songs, from turning into monsters. It’s about always trying to find the silver lining in everything (hence the title). The swearing and sexual innuendos might put you off, but the crudeness in the film is on purpose. It may not always feel like it, but life is raw.

This movie teaches that no one is perfect. In fact, this theme is summed up perfectly when Tiffany says, “There will always be a part of me that is dirty and sloppy, but I like that, just like all the other parts of myself. I can forgive. Can you say the same for yourself? Can you forgive? Are you capable of that?”

That’s what is best about this movie. Sure the characters swear a lot, but there is more to people than their brokenness. It isn’t our faults that define us, and we can’t be so close minded to let it define the people we meet every day. These people were able to overcome them, or at least to make peace with them, to find the silver lining in the midst of all the crap going on in their lives. The question remains, could these estranged, mentally unstable characters be that kind of example for us, whose lives are relatively peaceful? Yes.