Making connections in NYC

Lauren Bird - Staff Writer

Over spring break, a group of Dordt photography students took a trip to New York City. While they were there, they were presented with many opportunities to take pictures and to make connections with people in the photography world.

The group of nine photography students was accompanied by Matt Van Rys, a Dordt art professor. In New York, the students worked with René Clement and Cristina Mittermeier, both professional photographers.

During the day, the group visited museums, famous landmarks and places like Ground Zero, Chinatown, the Brooklyn Bridge, Coney Island and the Statue of Liberty, while taking thousands of pictures. At night, the students would edit their pictures from the day at their hotel.

In addition to taking pictures of all of the tourist attractions, the group also got to shoot photos for the nonprofit organization, Nazareth Housing, which works to treat and prevent homelessness. Each student received a different assignment that would aid the organization.

“I helped to take head shots of everyone on their staff, get shots of staff-client interactions and took specific stock photos for them, from images of someone typing to a key unlocking a door,” said sophomore Shelby Herrema.

Shannon Spargo, a Dordt senior who also went on the trip, realized how big of an impact these assignments would have on the organization.

“It was really great to be able to do something with our photography,” said Spargo. “On this trip, we were able to get out of our own worlds and to produce images with a purpose.”

Not only did the students help others on this trip, but they also got to make connections to help further their own education. They received critiques from René Clement and interacted with professionals in the photography world.

Herrema hopes that this experience will help her in the future.

“Even though I was already passionate about photography, this trip inspired me and encouraged me to continue in the field,” said Herrema. “It also helped me to see that there are tons of different directions I can go within the field itself, which is freeing.”

Spargo had a slightly different experience on the trip to New York.

“We felt like tourists in the city as we were constantly snapping pictures,” said Spargo. “It’s nice to just take pictures for fun. I enjoyed being able to grow and learn without being a professional photographer.”

Students learned more about photography and what it means to them.

“In my opinion, photography isn’t just a way to record a given moment,” said Herrema. “We can use photographs to capture attention, tell stories and even change the world for the better. And that is what I want to do.”

Former football coach returns to coaching

Sam Ekstrom - Staff Writer

When head football coach John Heavner left Dordt in 2011, he believed his coaching career was over.

“I didn’t anticipate coaching again,” said Heavner. “I still loved coaching, but I couldn’t imagine a realistic situation that would be a good fit for my family.”

Circumstances change, however.

After a one-year stint as a high school tight ends coach in Norman, Okla., Heavner, 37, agreed this spring to be the wide receivers coach at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, returning him to the college coaching circuit for the first time since 2011.

Dordt athletic director Glenn Bouma is pleased to see Heavner working in football again.

“It is great to see him back in coaching because that was one of his passions in life,” Bouma said.

Heavner was chosen in 2006 by then-athletic director Rick Vander Berg to be Dordt’s first-ever head coach. He was picked out of approximately 100 applicants to undertake a huge duty: building a program in one of the country’s most competitive conferences.

“I think it’s fair to say that nothing can prepare you to be a head coach, much less start a program,” said Heavner.

Under Heavner, the Defenders embarked on a slow build toward relevance in the Greater Plains Athletic Conference. Heavner guided the team to its first conference win on Oct. 11, 2008, a 17-14 victory over Concordia (Neb.).

Over four varsity seasons, Heavner’s team managed four wins — not atypical for a program in its infancy. According to Bouma, Heavner’s biggest accomplishment was shaping the proper culture.

“Anytime you start a new football program at the college level, you need a coach who is committed to the college and is able to embrace the mission and vision and then sell it,” said Bouma. “Coach Heavner was that type of person.”

Current junior Camren Pitre was a member of Heavner’s final recruiting class in 2011. Pitre talked about the strong connection Heavner had with his players.

“He had a relationship with all of us and showed us love on and off of the field,” said Pitre. “We all had love and respect for Coach Heavner.”

Heavner says he had the same respect for his players.

“We had some incredible people in our program, and I value the time I spent with them,” said Heavner.

Pitre also added that the head coach was excellent at elevating team morale in spite of any poor results.

“When times were hard, he always tried to keep our heads high and gave us hope to be successful week in and week out, no matter who we were facing,” Pitre said.

Heavner resigned from Dordt in 2011 to spend more time with his family. In December of the same year, he moved along with his wife and kids to Norman, Okla.
Debate team growing

Eric Rowe - Staff Writer

In its pilot year, the debate program at Dordt has been growing and gathering impetus. Over spring break, the Dordt debate team competed in their farthest away tournament yet; the National Christian College Forensics Invitational in Riverside, Calif., on March 8-10.

Dordt placed third in the novice parliamentary division and freshman Courtney De Wolde earned an individual 8th place speaker award.

With these wins, the debate team has brought home trophies from three of their five tournaments.

“There is a recognition across campus that this is providing real educational benefit to the students,” criminal justice professor and debate coach Donald Roth said. “It can be good for the students, the school and our image. It is something Dordt has potential to be good at.”

The national tournament is not something that Dordt had to build up a record to qualify for nor is it unusual for new teams to attend. Often college teams will compete locally during the school year and then compete in national tournaments towards the end of the year.

The National Christian College Forensics Association is just one league that offers the opportunity for colleges to compete. There are general rules and guidelines, but the structure and events that tournaments offer can differ from one association to another.

Dordt has only competed in parliamentary style debate, a style in which one team assumes the role of the “government,” suggesting a new policy that is related to a current event in the real world, while the other team represents the “opposition.” The “government’s” policy is based on a resolution that is new in each round.

A round is about an hour. During the first 15 minutes, both teams prepare their arguments. Then they give alternating speeches to support their position and rebut their opponent’s.

“It’s usually a logical format,” senior debate team member James Rylaarsdam said. The challenge is putting that format into words.

While debaters come with an entire team, they only compete with one partner.

“Because you have no idea what you are going to debate on before the round, it’s almost better not to have someone from your own field,” Rylaarsdam said.

Rylaarsdam went on to explain that having a broad range of interests is helpful because partners can fill in gaps in each other’s knowledge of certain subject matter.

Once, Rylaarsdam and his partner Michael Jansen were debating whether daylight savings time should be uninstituted. Jansen is from Arizona where they don’t follow daylight savings, so Rylaarsdam was able to inform him.

“Often I will take the economic side of things,” said Rylaarsdam. “And he will be able to take the political side.”

Usually a team is not allowed to use the Internet or take outside notes into their preparation time. The California tournament, however, did allow use of the Internet and also allowed the coach to help in this beginning stage.

Tournaments usually offer other events as well. When planning for the year, Roth originally looked into team policy debate. Policy is based on current events, but policy debaters prepare a case that they argue all year. This event is more research intensive than other forms of debate.

However, Roth decided on parliamentary debate because it offered the experiences of public speaking, thinking on your feet and preparing logical arguments with a time commitment that is much more manageable for the program at Dordt.

“We thought that it was a better fit for what we wanted to do,” said Roth. “Policy logos can get quite daunting.”

Another debate style is forensics, which includes individual events such as impromptu, an improvised speech with limited prep time, and interpretive, which is acting out a story.

“I would love to see this expand to something that would interest people in communication or theater arts,” Rylaarsdam said. “It’s not only debate at these competitions.”

Rylaarsdam’s favorite event to watch was “After Dinner Speaking,” which is similar to stand-up comedy. The object is to make an oddball point in a comedic light.

“It’s ridiculous,” Rylaarsdam said. “But you still have to cite your sources.”

In order to prepare for debates with other colleges, the Dordt debaters meet Thursday nights for a practice round competing with each other and Fridays at 11 a.m. to discuss current events.

The debate program is open to all students regardless of major. Not everyone is required to commit to fly to California during spring break or compete in local tournaments. Anyone interested in current events is invited to spectate and take part in the Thursday and Friday discussions.

“The more diverse viewpoints that we bring together, the better it is,” Roth said.

PLA serves neighbors, builds relationships

Rachel Mulder - Staff Writer

Once again, the PLA teams returned from spring break with a variety of experiences, stories, new friends and memories that will never be forgotten.

The distances ranged in length from six to twenty hours, but the van rides never cease to be full of laughter, sleep and team bonding experiences.

One team that has a special event called PLA is that each team has a sister site and is encouraged to write notes to their sister site and, if they choose, provide them with small games or toys to use throughout their trip.

Senior Amanda Oliver went to Neon, Ky., and served with Homes, an organization that strives to help people with low income housing. Her team did some light construction and demolition, clean-up work and also took out a few trees.

Oliver enjoyed her experience and said she would definitely go again, but she will be graduating in May.

Senior Andrew De Haan led a team to Roseland, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. They worked with Roseland Christian Ministries. His team spent a lot of their time with a local youth group and built a great relationship with the youth pastor, Harold. Their team continues to pray for the work Harold is doing with the youth in the Roseland community.

De Haan’s team got along very well and enjoyed playing card games and Apples to Apples together in the evenings.

“Relationships made on PLA have a special something to them that bonds goers in a different way than is normal. It’s a good sort of different,” said De Haan.

Freshman Kevin Steiger journeyed to Colorado City, Ariz., and was able to worship God by singing hymns at the house of a polygamist Mormon family.

“I would definitely go [on PLA] again because of the experiences serving God and meeting and growing closer to people on my team,” said Steiger.

Cameron, N.J., is where sophomore Eric Geels was able to go on PLA this year, his team worked with Urban Promise. They did clean-up work at the organization and worked at an after-school program at a local school.

This was Geels’ third time working with Urban Promise in Camden. His first experience with Urban Promise was on PLA last year. Then, he felt called to spend his summer there. He will also be spending this coming summer there.

After a blessed week in New Orleans, senior Nate Ten Broeke’s team made a stop at the arch in St. Louis, where their van got broken into. A few backpacks with computers and wallets in them were stolen.

Despite these losses, Ten Broeke says there is still so much to be thankful for and he hopes that for his teammates, those events don’t overshadow all the amazing experiences they had during the week.

“My personal prayer is that God will use even that event for good in His rich mercy, and especially that He would use the Bible in many of the backpacks to bless those responsible and lead them to Him. That would be far more wonderful and of far greater value than all that was taken combined,” said Ten Broeke.

God can use any situation to bring people to Him. Each trip taken with PLA never fails to be an amazing experience, even if there are some unexpected events along the way.

Student Symposium Update

I am currently serving for a second year on Dordt College Student Symposium. Symposium has given me an opportunity to get involved and has been very beneficial. Being a part of a student government has been extremely interesting and very worthwhile.

During my time on Symposium, I have had the opportunity to get involved in other areas at Dordt, which have led me through a lot of personal and professional development. Student Symposium, as many student governments do, occupies a unique area of campus life. We support student organizations, hear students’ requests and try to develop a more cohesive community at Dordt. We have the means to make changes to create a better Dordt College. As we approach the end of the year, Symposium is looking ahead and searching for people willing to be involved in leadership. Student Symposium elections are approaching quickly, and we need members for next year. Think about becoming a part of Student Symposium because you can make a difference on campus! Like Dordt College Student Symposium on Facebook to hear more about the election process and for the opportunity to win free Dordt College apparel!

Wishing the best,
Reuben Van Gaalen
Career center equips students for life after college

Sarah Moss became Career Center Coordinator in 2013. Photo by Andrew Deelstra

Students thank donors at GRACE Days picnic

Lauren Bird - Staff Writer

On Friday, March 21, Dordt students, faculty and staff gathered in the rec center from 11-1 p.m. in honor of GRACE Days (Gifts Received from Alumni and donors for Christian Education). For two hours, they were encouraged to fill out postcards expressing thanks to Dordt donors, sign a banner, eat a free meal and try out inflatable games.

But the organizers of GRACE Days want students to realize that it's more than just an opportunity to get free food. Barb Mellema, Dordt's Director of Annual Giving, sees it as an awareness program.

"GRACE Days is not just targeted at the students, but at the community," said Mellema. "It's a way to recognize the graciousness of others and see the donors behind the dollars. They put their money where their hearts are, and they really have a heart for Dordt."

March 21 marks the period in the year where donations cover the rest of the school year's tuition for every student. Robert Taylor, Dean for Campus Life, believes that it's very important for students to recognize this.

"When students graduate, they get a phone call asking for a donation to Dordt and many times they don't have context for this call. They still have debt and think they can't donate to the school," said Taylor. "GRACE Days gives context to this. Donors paid for the ends of each of their years here. They can pay it forward and do for current students what was done for them."

A big part of GRACE Days, according to Taylor, is the students' thanks to donors.

"The thank you is huge," said Taylor. "It's much more powerful for donors to hear thanks from students and to hear how their money is being used."

Mellema agrees that hearing from students is good for donors.

"Our donors believe in what we're doing and they really have a heart for Dordt."

"They're helping to fund our education and to help make Dordt the awesome community it is. Thanking our donors is the least we can do for them."

Carina Pols, a Dordt sophomore, believes in spreading awareness of the graciousness of donors.

"Students need to be aware that they're not just here because of their own or their parents' money," said Pols. "Imagine how much higher tuition would be without our donors!"

"It's really cool to see the community come together to thank donors," said Pols. "Not only do we get to fellowship with others, but we get to express our gratitude."

Along with Brandon Huisman, the Director of Alumni and External Relations, Moss tries to foster relationships with employers around the area and beyond Sioux County to provide students with more networking opportunities.

"We think it is really important for students, even while they are still at college, to take advantage of gaining working skills or learning how to interview well because this is a good time to practice in life; there is not time after that," said Moss.

The Career Development Center endeavors to help students obtain skills that they can use during their first and second jobs. They also strive to help students become informed when it comes to graduate school decisions.

"We try to expose students to as many employers as we can as they are searching for a job after college," said Moss. 

Because they are located in the Advancement Office, many students tend to forget that Dordt offers career development services.

"Yes, there is a problem with students realizing where (this place) is, and that is one of the many reasons we keep having different events," said Moss.

Any student who needs to have their résumé checked, practice for an interview or obtain professional advice can e-mail Sarah Moss (Sarah.Moss@dordt.edu) and set up an appointment.

Students thank donors at GRACE Days picnic

News

Dordt Writes features

Jennifer Dukes Lee

Hannah De Vries - Staff Writer

Had enough of not being good enough for the world? This is the question that Jennifer Dukes Lee asks in her newly published book Love Idol: Letting Go of Your Need for Approval – and Seeing Yourself through God's book. A former journalism adjunct professor at Dordt, Dukes Lee is coming to campus to introduce her new book on Friday, April 4, at 11 a.m. in the Library Study Café.

Love Idol is focused on recognizing the constant need for approval that we experience throughout our lifetime, said Dukes Lee. "My own life journey has been looking to seek approval from other people," she said.

Using personal stories, Dukes Lee brings this journey to light, while encouraging her readers to look to God rather than others for approval.

"You grow up to be a college person and you're looking for the approval of two doors down or a professor ... and then you grow up and look for approval from a boss or a parent, and then you want approval for your children," said Dukes Lee. "Until you rest in the approval of God, you're always going to be seeking for approval from someone else."

While Love Idol is geared toward Christian women, she said that the issue of seeking for approval is pervasive throughout our culture and love, young and old. "This is especially evident through social networking," said Dukes Lee, "where a 'like' button can make a huge difference."

"There are so many things we try and measure up to in our lives; we are constantly trying to seek affirmation from something while we're performing," said Dukes Lee. "We forget that God's love is unconditional, and already ours."

While this truth is evident in the Bible, constantly living by it is more difficult, said Dukes Lee. "We need to give thanks for our donors' contributions," said Dadisman. "They're helping to fund our education and to help make Dordt the awesome community it is. Thanking our donors is the least we can do for them."

"Yes, there is a problem with students realizing where (this place) is, and that is one of the many reasons we keep having different events," said Moss.

Any student who needs to have their résumé checked, practice for an interview or obtain professional advice can e-mail Sarah Moss (Sarah.Moss@dordt.edu) and set up an appointment.
Student teaching feature: Alexa Groen

Rachel Mulder - Staff Writer

Where are you currently teaching? What grade are you teaching and how do you like it so far?

I am currently student teaching at Elim Christian School in Palos Heights, Ill. My home is about 45 minutes away, and I commute each morning and pray for each of my students and staff on the way.

Elim is a Christian school founded to teach individuals with disabilities. I am in a middle school classroom with seven students who are academically at a first to third grade level. I work with the seven students, we have five staff members who help in our room each day: my cooperating teacher, three one-to-one paraprofessionals, and a teacher’s aide.

I absolutely love teaching at Elim! I look forward to going there each morning because each day is so unique. Even if a day is planned out perfectly, you never know when a behavior will occur or when the students will say “all done” and the lesson will need to stop.

I look forward to teaching a lesson on Marine Life in the upcoming weeks. I am planning to bring in my fish, a conch shell, and a turtle shell to help my class learn about ocean animals. I am planning a field trip to the John G. Shedd Aquarium in downtown Chicago; I figured the best way to make ocean animals come alive would be to go visit them in person! I hope the students will be engaged and come to appreciate God’s creativity, precision, and variety that He used when creating aquatic animals.

What is the school community like? The school community at Elim is amazing.

The people are caring, loving, encouraging, patient and gracious as they live a life of service every day. The students are also wonderful. It is a joy to get to know them, work with them and be humbled by their ambition and love for life.

You have an endorsement in special education. Is that what you are interested in pursuing after graduation?

After graduation, I am not 100 percent sure what God has in store for me. I would be open to teaching in a special education classroom, a resource room, or in a school where all of the students had disabilities.

So far is your current placement anything like you thought it would be?

Going into Elim, I did not know what to expect. I knew Elim was a school for individuals with special needs, but I didn’t know the age of my students, their developmental level or the level of communication I would be able to have with them. Getting into my classroom and observing helped me to prepare for teaching there.

Where was your first placement and what grade did you teach there?

I was at Crown Point Christian School in St. John, Ind. I taught first grade and had 27 first graders in my class. Transitioning from 27 to 7 students has been a big difference!

Have your student teaching experiences reaffirmed your decision to be an education major?

I have learned a lot through my student teaching experiences. Getting into the field is an invaluable experience. My education, work, and volunteer experiences have all been very positive experiences that have helped me to confirm my pursuit of a degree in elementary education.

What has been the best or most memorable experience of student teaching?

Each day we have devotions in our class, which consists of the students choosing Christian song to play. We have a child with Autism in our class, and although he does not frequently communicate verbally, he does enjoy music and likes to hold hands with a teacher as our devotional song comes to a close. One of my first days at Elim, one of the paraprofessionals in our class danced with him (a 6’4”, 240 lb middle schooler) and sang “My Savior Loves, My Savior Lives.” He mouthed the words and beamed with joy the whole time he danced along. I was almost in tears because although this boy may never be a star student with high academic success, he knows the most important thing in life—that our Savior lives and our Savior loves him!

Social work month

Lauren Kleyer - Staff Writer

March is Social work month, and the junior social work majors at Dordt College are taking full advantage of the title, planning several events to raise awareness and funds for social issues.

This year, there are three events planned to raise awareness for sex trafficking, abuse and foster care and adoption, according to Jess DeWeerd, a junior social work major who has been helping plan and carry out the activities.

Before Spring Break, a pancake supper raised funds and awareness for a local organization that helps with sex trafficking.

Other events include a movie night on March 26 that is open to the community. The event will feature the movie Camp, a film about Royal Family Kids Camp, a camp for kids who are in foster care.

There will also be a 5K on April 5 to raise awareness for foster care and adoption.

While all social work majors are involved in these events, it is the juniors who have planned the events and will carry them out.

Social work is a growing program at Dordt College. Students are beginning to realize the impact social work can have on society.

“I decided to do social work because I spent my summer at an inner-city day camp, working with first through fourth graders, and [I] realized that I wanted to help these kids emotionally,” said sophomore Eric Geels. Sophomore Chelsea Maxwell recognized early on that she wanted to be involved in something like social work.

“My call first began when I was ten years old and my uncle was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS),” Maxwell said. “Walking alongside [my family] was humbling and it fostered a passion for vulnerable, hurting people.”

There are many stories like these about why students are choosing this major, and all of the students have a true passion for what they are doing.

Having the opportunity to get involved in social work month helps these students to show others the fire that they have for what they are doing, and it also helps them to spread the word about why social work is so important and so necessary.

“We’re a social work major at Dordt gives [you] a great opportunity to expand yourself, improve Dordt’s environment... and experience... different areas that many other majors do not experience,” said Haeley Dirksen, a senior social work major.

In addition to the three events the juniors have planned, social work majors will also be helping out at a Christian concert that is being held on April 5. This concert will help to support the Royal Family Kids Camp. The concert will be featuring Selah, Mark Schultz, and JF Heller.

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Contributed Photo

Alexa Groen is student teaching at Elim— a Christian school that focuses on teaching individuals with disabilities.

Contributed Photo

Junior social work majors planned several events to raise awareness and funds for social issues.

Photo by Ashley Vander Molen

News
Jeremy Vreeken - Columnist

Nearly every Friday, anywhere from a handful to an Eckhardt-Lounge-full of students gather to discuss the campus atmosphere. They are out on campus, every effort and accommodation is made for these people. Extra food is made, fancy name tags are worn, tours are given, campus is cleaned meticulously, the highlights of the college are shown, and everyone is supposed to smile bright, be friendlier; everyone on campus turns into a living, breathing, recruiting brochure.

All this is done to make our little campus look as appealing as possible to anyone who might be trying to decide where to invest all of their money for the next four years. During a campus visit, college shoppers are shown and told about all the best things and the great experiences that can be theirs if the price is right. They are told about this or that state-of-the-art facility, the various opportunities that could be available to them, and the all-powerful Christian worldview they’re supposed to leave this place with.

I understand that on one hand, our school is a business. One major way the college increases its customer base is through these visits it days and by making its products, the campus and a Dordt education, seem as attractive as possible. But walking around with the tour groups or sitting in on department-specific visits sounds like a tour of Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory. Only the positive sides of things are described, and they are talked about in an uber-excited salesman voice.

Why can’t we be a little more honest about what we show and tell our campus guests? I know, there are a lot of good things about our campus, but you’ll never hear a tour guide talk about the stink in the air that persists all year, or the nightmare involved with parking, or the fact that there’s hardly anything to do in this town, or that there’s no air conditioning in the guys’ dorms. These things, along with any other flaws or potential deal breakers, are conveniently forgotten or swept under the rug while there are guests on campus.

Shouldn’t potential students and their parents know exactly what they’re getting into? Would it be useful to know the numbers of people who transfer out during and after the first semester—some even due to the Christian pressures on campus?

I don’t have the answers, I just don’t love the amount of shushing that happens on our campus every week. It feels hollow and almost deceptive sometimes. Like I said, I attend here, and I do enjoy it most days, but I just want people to know what they’re getting into. Every decision has pros and cons, it’s a little unfair to show just the pros.

Prior to spring break, I suggested that Dordt start a bar on campus. I believe the reason behind this suggestion is sound. Alcohol can be good, yet more often than not, it is abused. This is exactly the area where a Reformed college such as Dordt should step in and do some reforming. However, I realize that implementing this suggestion could cause some problems. This week I would like to suggest some practical ways to successfully implement alcohol on a Christian campus.

Limited Hours. An extremely important characteristic of the bar is its business hours. Having a bar open every night is simply not possible. One or two nights a week would be more than enough to adequately inform students about the benefits and pitfalls of alcohol consumption, build community and have a good time. This would also limit the amount of people requiring licenses, as well as the amount of mature adults needed to populate the venue.

Mature Attendance. The success of the bar hinges on this characteristic. The consistent presence of older, mature role models is what would separate this place from any other drinking establishment. These would be people who have been around alcohol for a while. They have seen the benefits and community building of a drink or two, but they have also seen the drawbacks of a few too many. They would be willing to spend some time with the younger generation, learn about them and develop relationships that can carry on outside night at the bar.

People have asked me why the bar needs to be at Dordt. Why can’t people walk down the street to the Lighthouse? I think it is a great environment for intergenerational wisdom to be passed on. It is a place where people can actually get homework done and eat food, and talking with one another at a civilized pace. I almost wish the Lighthouse was run by some third party who would be at the venue.

An extremely important thing to consider is the R.C. venue.

To put this erroneous price into perspective, let me show you what else you can buy at the grill with that same amount of money. You can buy 2 burgers, 2 cheeseburgers, or really 2 of anything for only 50 cents more than the mozzarella sticker price. In fact, you can buy 2 burgers, 2 cheeseburgers, or really 2 of almost anything for still less than the price of the mozzarella sticks. It is honestly outrageous.

It would be one thing if these expensive mozzarella sticks were served by the ton, or at least in a quantity that fits the inflated price. But no... they come in 50’s. Yes, that’s right. Your 3.75 only buys you 4 mozzarella sticks, and these sticks are only like 1.5 inches long. Let’s compare this to fries. Fries come in like 50, and the standard fry is much longer than the standard mozzarella stick.

Long story short, anybody who buys the mozzarella sticks is getting extremely ripped off. So as the title of this column says, here is my advice: don’t buy the mozzarella sticks. If you absolutely can’t resists the mozzarella sticks, and these sticks are only like 1.5 inches long. Let’s compare this to fries. Fries come in like 50, and the standard fry is much longer than the standard mozzarella stick.

We’re back... It’s weird...

Darin Hoekstra - Columnist

Darin: Okay Kyle, let’s just hit the ground running this week. GO! Kyle, why don’t you go first and be the one to hold this thing down on the table unceremoniously.

Kyle: So... here we go. Today, there are a lot of different ways to find music. Essentially, there’s endless amounts of it available to all of us through the internet. However, most of us are content with just taking in whatever we hear over the radio. Now, before you think I’m going to start attacking all of you who love pop music because it is somehow inferior to whatever else there is, hang on, that’s not the endgame here. I’m not going to tell you what music to like. What I do think is important is to understand what you like and why you like it. If your only source of music is the radio, then you need to understand that your palate of music is being funneled down quite a bit by people who want your money. And if you actually like the music, it’s cool! But knowledge is power. I’m scared this is sounding preachy. Darin, rescue me.

Darin: Here! I come to save the daaaaaay! See, there’s so much music out there, but I think it’s really important to be confident in what you like. In other words, like it because you like it. But, in regards to what Kyle is talking about, they’re both right. They’re both right! You know why I like the music you listen to, and in addition, it like individually: it’s important to be an individual. Enjoying something that’s popular isn’t inherently a bad thing, but I want people to like it because they themselves enjoy it, not because a mass of others like it or because you’ve been pressured into liking it. Now this isn’t always easy, and as a person who’s been pressured to like certain music, I speak from experience. And in case no one has ever told you, it’s okay not to like something that others like. There are movies that are ‘critically acclaimed’ that I don’t like, and there’s music that a lot of people like that I simply don’t enjoy. And I’m okay with that! But I do encourage people to explore their options and consume intelligently. Kyle, save me before I talk more about myself.

Kyle: Man, we really should just shut up soon. There is way too much serious booozerriiniit talk up here. Are we done with the hugging and learning? Where’s the jokes, man?

Darin: I have a joke.

Kyle: OH! OOH! Tell it, please!

Darin: Why did the watch go to the doctor? Kyle: Whyyyyy?

Darin: Because his TICKER wasn’t working! You know, like, how some people call a heart a ticker.

Kyle: Yeah! THEY DO! THEY DO! HAHAA-

Darin: HOHOHOHOOOO!

Kyle and Darin walk out of the room arms in arm, laughing ardently.

Caleb: I don’t get it.
Dordt track leaves mark at nationals

Both 4x800 teams were named All-American and shattered school records in the process. Contributed Photo

Christian Zytstra - Staff Writer

While the Dordt Defenders did not win any events, they set a number of school records and had several athletes receive All-American honors at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field competition in Geneva, Ohio on March 6-8.

“Overall, we performed really well,” said Dordt College track and field coach Craig Heynen. “Almost every performance was a school record. Everyone performed as well as or better than I could have hoped for.”

On day one of the action, the Defenders started off with a bang. New school records were set in four different events: Lauren Opp set a record in the women’s 5000-meter race with a time of 17:29.31, which broke the previous record by 24 seconds. Jordyn Visscher, Sam Wensink, De Vries set a record in the women’s distance medley with a time of 12:08.09, and Sam Ekstrom - Staff Writer 800 relay with a time of 7:38.23. Each event qualified for the finals.

Day two of the action was not quite as spectacular, but the Defenders still had several quality outings. The women’s 4 x 800 relay team finished second in the nation and broke its own school record with a new time of 8:59. The men’s 4 x 800 relay team followed up the women’s performance with a seventh-place finish and a time of 7:44.23. The two relay teams received All-American honors for their performances. Katie Bonnema also had the fastest preliminary time in the women’s 600-meter race with a time of 1:32.

The final day of action saw Dordt’s women’s distance medley relay team finish sixth with a time of 12:09.76; All-American honors were given to the team for its performance. Katie Bonnema tried to defend her title in the women’s 600-meter final, but a time of 1:31.53 last year. Bonnema received All-American honors as well.

Dordt enjoyed the success of the indoor season, even though it did not result in any first-place finishes on the national level.

“Competition was as high as it has ever been, and the quality of teams were as high as they’ve ever been,” Heynen said.

Even against tough competition, the record-setting performances by the team were of no surprise to Heynen.

“Going into the season, we knew we had talent throughout. We had a lot of potential, and we felt we had the chance for our relays and some individuals to make the finals,” Heynen said.

Dordt now hopes to build off the success from the indoor season and apply it to the upcoming outdoor season.

“To really excited for outdoor,” Heynen said. “The indoor performances were a reflection of our team. It was one of the best indoor seasons ever for us, and we want to carry that over into the outdoor season. We have some momentum in the throw (discus, shot put, javelin and hammer throw) with a new coach (Joe Snyder), and we have some really talented basketball girls who will be joining the team for the outdoor season.”

If the indoor season is any indication of what the outdoor season may hold, Dordt officials better hope the record books were written with pencil.

Nate Forseth is Dordt’s starting pitcher and clean-up hitter. Photo by Andrew Deelstra

Schouten reports that Forseth expects to be back for the March 28 conference opener. Schouten says the team is excited to have Forseth back.

“His versatility is a great asset for us,” said Schouten. “He has been a great addition. He fits in well with the team and will help us on the field.”

As for Forseth, he says his current ailment pales in comparison to what he dealt with in high school.

“Pulling my hamstring sucked, but, at the end of the day, it’s not that big a deal,” said Forseth. “You can still work hard and still come back from it.”

“My high school experience put a lot of things in perspective,” Forseth continued. “You realize that the world doesn’t revolve around baseball. It doesn’t revolve around academics. It revolves around relationships with people, with friends, with family.”

Junior Nate Forseth has a prominent name around Dordt’s campus. After all, his father, Eric Forseth, was hired as the new provost last May.

What’s not to be overlooked is that the younger Forseth has a remarkable story of his own.

Nate Forseth is the newest first baseman, clean-up hitter and starting pitcher on the Defenders’ baseball team. The 20-year-old transferred to Dordt from Division II Nazarene University (Idaho) when his father accepted the job as Dordt’s provost.

But Forseth’s journey to play college baseball is what sets him apart.

In high school, Forseth dealt with a condition that threatened his entire playing career: pectus excavatum.

“I would get out of breath when I wouldn’t even be doing anything,” said Forseth. “I couldn’t breathe while just sitting around, and if I would play athletics, it got even worse.”

Forseth’s sternum and backbone were growing too closely together, restricting the growth and function of his heart and lungs. As a high school sophomore, Forseth underwent major surgery to get a curved bar inserted into his chest so that would correct the condition.

It took one month for Forseth to start walking again following the operation and three months to resume playing baseball. While sidelined, Forseth had to sit back and watch his Nampa Christian High School baseball team win a state championship.

Forseth’s inactivity also caused his weight to drop. Forseth – currently 6-foot-7 and 205 pounds – weighed in at 150 pounds after surgery.

“That was by far the most painful thing I’ve ever been through,” said Forseth.

Then the hard work began. Forseth played his final two years of high school baseball with a bar firmly planted inside his torso. He worked hard with his coaches to reinvent himself as a pitcher.

“A lot of people worked with me to get back to some semblance of a normal throwing motion,” Forseth said. “[It took] a lot of hard work, a lot of support from friends and family and coaches.”

Forseth’s biggest asset is his height. The former high school basketball player towers over batters as he stands on the mound and has a much higher release point than the average pitcher.

“Couple that with some sneaky finesse and you can understand why Forseth had a 1.50 ERA during his sophomore season at Northwest Nazarene. “I try to rely a lot on deception,” said Forseth. “A lot of off-speed pitches, keeping guys off balance, throwing strikes, getting ahead in counts; really simple things that are important.”

Now a Dordt Defender, Forseth has the opportunity to be in the every-day line-up as a position player when he is not toeing the mound. It’s a role that he enjoys.

“I like being able to interact with the guys more at first base,” said Forseth. “Being a position player, I’m in the lineup more often; more at first base, “ said Forseth. “Being a position player, I’m in the lineup more often; more of an impact player.”

During a March 10 game in Tucson, Ariz., Forseth suffered a pulled hamstring that forced him to miss time. Head coach Jeff Heynen said. “The indoor performances were of no surprise to Heynen.

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Senior artist Brett Jasper hopes to confuse viewers

Haley Mulder - Staff Writer

Meet Brett Jasper.
“Jasper is motivated to create art because inspiration comes to him through the process. “I need to just start working before it actually hits,” Jasper said. “I don’t usually like painting and feel anything from it until I’m at least half or two-thirds of the way through, something strikes me and I just expand on what I’m seeing until something else strikes me.”

It takes time, and a whole lot of paint. “As far as the actual content, my ideas are never really concrete,” he said. “I just expand on whatever strikes me about the piece as I’m working.”

Jasper says that he hopes his work confuses people. “It does contain some social commentary, but other viewers’ opinions are just as valid as mine,” he said.

Jasper’s art show remains free from a strict theme, although it speaks to him in certain ways. “It all gets mashed around in my brain and sometimes I’ll see little bits and pieces of old family photos,” he said. “A mixture of his experiences, other artists’ work, his environment and natural personality; somehow, everything seems to work together.”

“Simply put, I make art that looks good to me, but I’m a slightly different ‘me’ every day,” Jasper said.

Jasper’s new solo senior art show “AMBCOA” can be seen in the campus center art gallery from March 18-24. “I didn’t start with a theme and, for me, the meaning of a piece or even a show, doesn’t start to appear until it’s well underway or even finished,” he said of the work in his show. “This is the only way I know to make good work. It’s more about feeling the meaning than being able to describe it or even connect it in any way to anything recognizable.”

Jasper believes that many artists are led away from making good, genuinely felt works by the false idea that art has to say something. “Painting is a language on its own and the whole point is that it can never fully be described with words,” he said.

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Jasper says that if you want to get anything out of art, you have to be aware of it when you’re responding, and then have to question the ideals you are falling back on. He claims that this is where personal growth and knowledge of self happens.

“People who don’t mind being uncomfortable or confused can consider every option objectively and can choose whatever they want to believe and know that whatever they choose will stem out of the core of who they are and not out of fear or the need to feel secure,” he said. “So in a real and practical way, art gives us confidence and a sense of direction by teaching us to lean into uncertainty. But it only works if we allow ourselves to be confused.”

Eric Rowe - Staff Writer

The B. J. Haan auditorium grew quiet as the final notes of “Praise to the Lord” rang silent. Ending concerts with this piece is a tradition for Dordt’s concert choir and a fitting end for their 2014 tour homecoming concert.

The choir’s spring tour included 11 performances at churches in Illinois, Michigan, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ontario.

From March 6-16, the 52 members of the choir traveled and stayed at homes of hosts in the area in which they performed. Touring enables Dordt to share the blessing of music with people beyond the campus.

The tour concert was divided into nine sections with songs arranged by themes. One section included songs about the assurance of God’s presence, such as “I know my Redeemer lives” and “Take my Hand, Precious Lord.”

One of the goals of the concert choir is to perform choral literature in a variety of styles and genres. They performed three love songs from around the world. “Dulhania” is an Irish folk song in Gaelic, “Catania” is Sicilian and “Balleilakka” is from the Tamil film, Sivaji, from India.

Dordt freshman, Rachel Blom, enjoyed “Balleilakka” the best. “It was catchy, the solos were amazing and it was funny,” Blom said.

Another group of songs was about the weather. The choir sang a British BBC weather report, which garnered giggles from the crowd, before exploring a more somber mood with “Stormy Weather” and ending with the hope of Dolly Parton’s “Light of a Clear Blue Morning.”

Near the end of the concerts on tour, Dr. Benjamin Kornelis, conductor of the concert choir, would invite any alumni in the audience to stand and join in singing the Dordt College Alma Mater. This homecoming concert was no different. The entire audience stood and sang.

While they were not performing, members of the choir had the opportunity to get to know each other very well. “There are only a few groups of people I can stand 12 days in a bus with,” junior concert choir member Sam De Groot said. “And I would be willing to do it again with these 52 people.”

Dordt’s concert choir shares their joy of music with audiences everywhere they go, whether they are singing traditional choral pieces, Dolly Parton songs or pieces sung in Latin, German, Gaelic or Sicilian.

The concert choir holds recognition whether traveling or at home and draws an appreciative audience. “I came to support the choir,” Blom said. “I knew they would be amazing, and they were.”
Dish Network review for the first timer

Megan Kaiser - Staff Writer

Spring break. AM I RIGHT!!? Now that I have that out of the way, I have to admit to you, I did not go watch any newly released films over break. I HAD NO INTEREST IN SEEING NEED FOR SPEED. I really wanted the Need for Speed experience, I would have strapped a NOS tank to the bottom of my 2003 red Ford Taurus. Or my Razor scooter. Whatever. Either way, those options would have been more worth my time. Plus, I didn’t want to be a third wheel with my brother and his girlfriend.

To share some insight into my world, my family just invested in a Dish network system this past year. If that isn’t surprising, maybe the fact that we owned a Windows 95 till 2013 will get a bigger point across. Of course my family would get Dish AFTER I graduated from high school, and then proceed to turn my room into a workout area. OK, so my personal perimeter did not get turned into a room to pump immense amounts of iron, but over break I had to adjust to the fact that we now had more than 20 channels. Rather than reviewing a film, I wanted to throw down some facts that I came across while growing accustomed to this new way of “life” in the Kaiser household. So here goes a review of the Dish network system by a first-timer.

1. 200 plus channels, and some days it still felt like nothing was worth watching.

Oh good! Story of my whole life. You would think that with the extra variety I would be able to find something to spark my interest. Not the case. I would find myself clicking guide every five minutes. For you, maybe the wider range of channels is good, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that you are going to find something more worth your time compared to regular TV.

2. I am 10 years too late when it comes to the Dish network.

Over break, yeah, I may have meandered to the Disney channel every now and then. Sure, I was impressed: Something about a dog that has a blog and a show about twin sisters where one is famous and the other isn’t? Pretty sure that’s just a rip off of Hannah Montana. Sorry that I’m a kind of gal. The current shows on the Disney channel seem like punishment in my opinion. Also over break, I saw a commercial Disney channel seem like punishment in my opinion. Also over break, I saw a commercial on Montana. I wasn’t impressed. Something about a dog that has a blog and a show about twin sisters where one is famous and the other isn’t? Pretty sure that’s just a rip off of Hannah Montana. Sorry that I’m a kind of gal. The current shows on the Disney channel seem like punishment in my opinion. Also over break, I saw a commercial.

3. Guy Fieri looks like a sea anemone.

I’ve never watched the Food Network till this year. Growing up, my only exposure to cooking shows were Americas Test Kitchen and Julia Child on PBS. As a whole, the Food Network is quite fascinating! Apparently it’s possible to create a 105-pound burger. If it is possible to eat the whole thing and not implode, well, you’re asking the wrong person. The only beer I have is with Guy Fieri. That dude is still sporting a 1999 hair-do along with gross Hawaiian shirts that went out of style when they hit the market. I’m all about nonconformity and being yourself but his OUT. NSYNC auditions are over.

4. DVR’s aren’t worth your time.

Yes DVRs, in your opinion, are probably heaven sent. You don’t have to go out, buy a VHS, and then proceed to figure out how to record a TV show the old fashioned way. Aren’t you blessed. Personally, I didn’t jive with our DVR. I would record stuff and NEVER get around to watching it. I recorded movies and watched how many of them? None of them. Loss of interest? Forgetting that I recorded it? There are plenty of factors.

Now, I don’t want to sound ungrateful. Dish is neat. I was excited when I found out that I recorded it? There are plenty of factors.

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According to Hoekstra, the band’s name was the result of a last minute decision.

“I brought up the name ‘Willis’ and Matt, David and Michael loved it,” said Hoekstra. “I told them it was a joke, but they thought it was a good name, so it just stuck, I guess.”

Leading the band on vocals, Hoekstra sang through songs originally performed by several popular groups ranging from Muse to The Killers to Blink 182. Michael Van Dixhoorn played lead guitar, David, Michael’s younger brother, played drums, and Matt Vande Kieft rounded out the group on bass guitar.

The group was well-received by an enthusiastic crowd of friends and fellow students. Despite the lengthy set, the venue stayed full throughout the entire show. Hoekstra expressed gratitude to the audience for sticking with them through their first live performance. Several students thought the show went well.

“It was fun to see friends perform,” said freshman Ross Van Gaalen, who has known the members of Willis most of his life. “I enjoyed watching the show and jamming out.”

Hoekstra commented that the future of Willis is unknown, but looks hopeful.

“There might be more shows in the future,” said Hoekstra, “but who knows, it’s a surprise.”

Where future set lists are concerned, Hoekstra mentioned that he hoped to cover some more well-known songs, as well as diversify the types of bands whose songs they play. A majority of the songs Willis performed were originally performed by the English rock group Muse, a band that members of Willis identified as one of their biggest musical influences.

Hoekstra mentioned that he would be open to expanding the group by adding other members to the band.

“We wouldn’t mind maybe a keyboardist or maybe another guitarist,” said Hoekstra. The band felt positive about their performance and was excited that so many people decided to attend the show.

“I think it went pretty good,” said Hoekstra. “It was our first time playing together, so obviously it was not perfect, but yeah, it all went pretty well.”

Willis is well-received.