Creation Care Club to go to National Care Conference

Grace Venhuizen
Staff Writer

By attending upcoming conferences in Washington, DC and Des Moines, the Creation Care Club hopes to learn stewardly strategies that can be applied on Dordt’s campus.

Creation Care Club will participate in “Power Shift ’09,” a weekend conference in Washington later this month. Six club members will attend different lectures, workshops and panel discussions centered on caring for the environment, and will join with thousands of other students to lobby the government for their cause. The attending Dordt students will travel to the conference with members of “Restoring Eden,” a Christian environmental group from Minnesota.

“The Iowa Earth Summit will probably deal a lot more with local issues, while Power Shift will be broader,” said Creation Club chairman Matthew Kroll.

“It’s good to have that contrast, I think.”

The learning does stop after the conferences, Bakker warns. “We would like to have a panel discussion to answer any questions people on campus may have about it.” The club hopes its members will learn stewardship strategies Dordt students can apply on campus and in the broader community that will help make a difference.

“I hope that we will be able to open more eyes to the frightening reality that God’s creation is not something that can continue to be exploited the way that it is,” says Bakker.

“It is our duty as Christians to tend and take care of [the environment] in the entire manner. Hopefully going to these conferences will [equip] us with the proper ammunition to inspire others to join us in our mission to care for creation.”

Fundraising for the conferences and other club activities will come from a few different sources. Pending approval from Student Symposium for funding, the club is currently selling buttons in the Humble Bean. Some help may come from Restoring Eden, but the club has nothing definite yet.

New club funding guidelines focus of Symposium meeting

Sarah Groneck
Guest Writer

When Student Symposium met on February 3, the topic at hand was the newly created guidelines for the on-campus funding request forms.

“These criteria give people incentive to think about the ideas they have,” said chairperson Jessica Veenstra. “The idea is to get clubs to think harder about what they’re spending their funds on so it can better the community.”

The guidelines give students and Symposium representatives a better feel for what projects may or may not be approved.

The criteria indicate that, in order to for a project to be approved, proposals must show specificity, be well-advertised, be openly accessible, be a necessity and show a high student interest level. Guidelines may be found outside the Symposium room in the Campus Center.

Symposium representatives hope that these guidelines and the new funding forms will cut down on negligent spending.

“A club that focuses only on a field trip looks different than one that is trying to benefit the student body as a whole,” said Robert Taylor, visitors and some Symposium representatives were skeptical about the guidelines and the new funding forms in general.

“How many things actually benefit the entire student body?” — Matthew Kroll

“How many things actually benefit the entire student body?” asked sophomore Matthew Kroll.

Yet, most Symposium representatives remained steadfast in their support of the new guidelines and approved the forms.

“Student Symposium holds funds for the entire student body,” said representative Troy Ellens. “We don’t hold money for the specific people; it’s for the entire student body.”

Ellens also proposed that Symposium form a funding approval committee to, as Robert Minto said, “discard bad proposals and to better other proposals that could use some work.”

Representative Veenstra, Paul Hanaoka, and Sarah Groneck volunteered to be part of the subcommittee, and the Symposium representatives approved. The subcommittee will meet prior to Symposium meetings in order to decide which proposals will be kept or discarded.

Another matter of business was what to do with the recent $5,000 donation to Symposium.

Meeting guest Lucas Teweusen proposed that Symposium spend its $5,000 donation on a rock climbing wall. The wall would be large enough to fit 1-2 climbers and could be built in the DeWitt Gymnasium or in the All Seasons Center. Teweusen also proposed creating a work study position for a certified belayer as to decrease chances of liability.
New club forms cause concern

continued from page 1

Symposium representatives determined that the proposal should first go to Dordt’s Athletics Committee before becoming an option for the $5,000 donation.

In the end, representative Hami Yang suggested that Symposium leaders place a time limit on when proposals for the $5,000 may be submitted.

The representatives are cautious about spending the $5,000 in a stewardly manner.

“There is potential for more donations if we spend this wisely,” said chairperson Alvin Shim.

Symposium representatives set a proposal deadline for March 10. Students must submit their ideas by that time for Symposium to consider them.

For more information, please contact Symposium at symposium@dordt.edu.

Students learn from development conference

Jurgen Boerema
Staff Writer

Six Dordt College students attended the fourth annual Conference on Faith and International Development at Calvin College this past weekend.

The trip was sponsored by Dordt’s Justice Matters Club. Students from colleges across the country attended the conference and learned about the possibilities of partnerships in international development.

Four main speakers headlined the conference. They were Katherine Marshall, Dr. Moses Moraga Amador, Abhik Rik and Dr. Daniel Rickett.

The conference was lightened by Katherine Marshall. She shared the concerns of families in rural Uganda.

Marshall's presentation centered on the importance of political stability and property rights.

Representatives from aid organizations such as CRWRC and Food for the Hungry led break-out discussions on issues raised in the main speakers’ presentations.

The conference was also given the opportunity to attend the performance of the Dordt College Band.

People accomplish more when they are united by a common goal.

Vander Plaats speaks on the future of the GOP

Lance Kooiman
Staff Writer

The future of the Republican Party was the main theme of former Iowa governor candidate Bob Vander Plaats’ speech in Dordt College’s C160 on February 9.

After introducing himself and his rise into politics, Vander Plaats touched on several post election issues as well as reasons why the GOP was unsuccessful in the 2008 elections.

“Usual politics is not getting the job done,” said Vander Plaats. “That is why Republicans are losing.”

Vander Plaats then gave several strategies Republicans must use to become successful.

“We have eroded the trust of the American people. If the people can’t trust us, we may never win again.”

Vander Plaats then explained the changes Republicans must make in order to win the trust of the American people.

“If Republicans will ever win again, we must stop being party ‘No’ and become the party of solutions.”

Vander Plaats compared this issue to life: “It isn’t enough to simply be against abortion. What are we doing to give women the opportunity to choose life for their child?”

Vander Plaats’ final instruction for Republican success was for candidates to deliver on their promises.

“We need to deliver on how we campaign,” said Vander Plaats. “Too often, candidates forget about their promises when they reach Washington. Working harder on fulfilling a party’s promises will win the support of the people.”

Vander Plaats closed his speech by commenting on his appearance to the public.

“Most people see me as Republican as they come. I’m pro-life, pro-gun, and pro-marriage. Others see my work in the public education and health care industry and see slight qualities of a Democrat. I see myself as a typical Iowan, someone who says, ‘Let’s serve and let’s lead.’”
Legendary fish passes on to fishbowl in the sky

Elliot De Wit
Guest Writer

Bowser, two and a half, of Sioux Center, died on February 3, at his temporary residence in Sioux Falls. He has passed on to the big fishbowl in the sky.

Bowser was originally a resident of Southview 104. There, he enjoyed many afternoons swimming in circles around his fishbowl and taking naps with Jeff Deaver. Bowser even won his roommates, Deaver, Bryan Burgers, Elliot De Wit, Josh Fey and Travis Hoekstra a pizza party, outlasting all the other fish in Southview.

After the SV104 men graduated and moved on, Bowser moved in with De Wit at his Alton home. There, he spent several months enjoying living the life of a fish. De Wit gave Bowser to Kayla Bremms, Amber Dianne, Katie Roder (Jansen), Katie Rozenboom, and Elizabeth Van Egdom of B8. There, Bowser enjoyed a new setting with a bright green and pink wall directly behind his fishbowl. Bowser spent Christmas breaks and summers with Van Egdom where he enjoyed life in Sioux Falls. One memorable time in his life was when he was on the verge of death because of some tainted water, but he managed to pull through. Bowser was a fighter.

This fall, Bowser became a resident of Southview again, and has been known as the biggest goldfish on Dordt College’s campus. He was given a new tank with a cleaning filter and much more room. His octopus figurine with the “no fishing” sign has followed him everywhere he’s gone.

While Van Egdom has been student teaching in Florida, Bowser has been at the Van Egdom home in Sioux Falls, being cared for by the Van Egdom family. Bowser passed away while the Van Egdom parents were visiting Florida. A neighbor of Breanna Van Egdom took care of him while they were away. The cause of death is uncertain.

Bowser was preceded in death by his tank mate, Luigi, a snail. He leaves behind Toad, another snail. He also leaves his previous owners and an abundance of friends. Bowser will be remembered for being a big, loveable goldfish.

His trick of swimming to the top of the tank and “giving kisses” will never be forgotten. He was loved by many, and will go down in history as the best fish ever to grace Dordt College’s campus.

— Jennifer Dukes-Lee

Bowser made a name for himself by outlasting other goldfish to win a pizza party for his roommates, and swimming to the top of his bowl to “give kisses.”

Photo courtesy of Elliot De Wit.

Adrian Hielema
Staff Writer

Joining the staff this semester at Dordt College is adjunct professor Jennifer Dukes-Lee, a journalism teacher and freelance writer.

Currently residing on her husband Scott’s family farm, Dukes-Lee makes the trip from just north of Inwood to Dordt College every Tuesday and Thursday in order to teach COMM-242: Print Journalism.

“I’ve been glad to do this,” said Dukes-Lee. Professionally, Dukes-Lee has worked at the Omaha World-Herald and the Des Moines Register.

Jennifer Dukes-Lee came to Dordt this spring to teach journalism. Previously Dukes-Lee worked at the Omaha World-Herald and the Des Moines Register. Photo by Naomi De Boer.

“I think there’s a good story in every person...stories of perseverance from common people like me.”

— Jennifer Dukes-Lee

While working as chief political correspondent for the Register, Dukes-Lee was assigned many important stories, including Presidential elections and the execution of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. Her favorite the big name or fancy title, it’s the stories of perseverance from common people like me.”

When she isn’t teaching or writing, Dukes-Lee is busy taking care of her daughters, Lydia and Anne. Although only seven years old, Lydia already expressed interest in attending Dordt.

“She really likes the big set of stairs in the Student Center,” Dukes-Lee said. As for future plans, Dukes-Lee isn’t getting ahead of herself. “I’m looking forward to the adventure, and I hope my time here is beneficial to the students.”
Opinion.

What's wrong with club funding?

Symposium's new guidelines are unrealistic and too regimented

Kristina De Graaf
Staff Writer

The task of allocating last semester’s club funding fell to Student Symposium. In their attempt to spend the money more responsibly, Symposium segmented the clubs into public versus private interest groups, with private interest groups receiving no funding. Many club members felt this to be an unsuccessful and inequitable method of allocating funds.

Symposium has chucked that method, now creating a new system by which specific proposals may be submitted. Wanting to eliminate irresponsible club spending, they’ve approved a new set of guidelines by which funding proposals will be evaluated.

I appreciate and applaud Symposium’s efforts to strive for stewardship in the monies awarded to different clubs and activities. However, I don’t believe that the current guidelines will be able to fairly allocate new funds.

In past years, Dordt applied a fixed amount of money to each approved club for the purpose of operating needs and other basic activities. Now, however, any proposal that benefits a particular major, department or club body is outside the boundaries and will most likely not be funded.

Whatever happened to club funding? Why does Symposium assume the right to take monies originally allocated to clubs and make them off-limits to those very users? The original intent in changing club funding allocation was to ensure stewardship in our spending—avoid club funding for t-shirts and pizza parties. And that’s an admirable goal. We should promote stewardship in our spending. But why penalize the clubs that are and were fiscally responsible?

Symposium’s current guidelines call for the funds to go towards events or projects that impact the entire student body. They may not know what the Student Activities Committee funds are for—activities for the entire campus? Money has been allocated already towards events for the entire student body. Club funding was meant to give students an opportunity to experience more specific and diverse events. Each may not benefit the whole student body, but with such a variety of clubs, the overall effect is to add value to the student body as a whole. The money appropriated for club funding should, I believe, be used to fund clubs.

It’s true that the business club doesn’t directly do much for history majors. It’s true that the ag club does little for the journalists. But clubs do have a significant and central purpose on Dordt’s campus. Clubs are able to offer students opportunities they wouldn’t otherwise have. And academic clubs especially help to add to book knowledge and classroom learning by providing real understanding of the diversity of clubs on campus. The extensive range of clubs is a drawing factor for prospective students. Having everything from a flying club to a dance team to pre-professional clubs allows for a diverse student body to engage in a variety of different interests, activities and experiences.

Students join various clubs not because the club affects everyone on campus but because they’re looking for more honed interests. Perhaps we should put together an academic club. Anyone with a major or who will declare a major eventually can join. That way, maybe we could definitely get funding.

Some of the problems that Symposium seems to have with the old way clubs were funded was that the money given to a club affects only the club’s members. Yet, the very nature of a club is to bring people of like minds together for a specific interest.

There is no more diversity in the new funding qualifications. Instead of spreading monies among a diverse set of clubs, they have defined diversity to be something in which the whole campus is interested. Is diversity so common? Will you ever find such a project? As the new guidelines stand, no club will ever receive funding, because a club focuses on a definite group of people. So instead of demanding projects that will not benefit a certain major, department, club or group of people, let’s get to the root of the issue—fiscal responsibility.

Evaluating by using a project by project basis will help. Ask for receipts. Look for responsible leaders and methods. Require budgets and accountability.

But don’t just write a club off as illegitimate simply because it is exactly as its name suggests—a club.

Once again, this is an excellent goal. But isn’t this what the Student Activities Committee funds are for—activities for the entire campus? Money has been allocated already towards events for the entire student body. Club funding was meant to give students an opportunity to experience more specific and diverse events. Each may not benefit the whole student body, but with such a variety of clubs, the overall effect is to add value to the student body as a whole. The money appropriated for club funding should, I believe, be used to fund clubs.

We should promote stewardship in our spending. But why penalize the clubs that are and were fiscally responsible?

Alyssa Hoogendoorn
Staff Writer

What do I want? What do I want? The question replayed in my mind as I paced from one food aisle to the next. I was having a dilemma between granola bars and rice cakes when I saw it—a broken gallon jug swimming in a puddle of milk. I smiled and shook my head at what I saw next—naps, buckets and rags were about three feet away from the mess. How convenient. But still, no one had cleaned it up. A caution sign stood between me and the puddle.

After seeing that, I started thinking about people—all the broken people. I’ve seen friends suffer from depression, anorexia and different kinds of addictions. Sadly, all I could do was watch, from what I thought was a safe distance, as they threw their lives away because few were willing to admit they had messed up and needed help. Instead of posting caution signs, they carried their pride and sloshed through their puddles, making their way through life and into other people’s lives. Their lives, like the broken jug, could not contain the mess.

They may not know it, but I saw the signs. And no matter how badly I wanted to help them, I couldn’t just grab a nearby mop and say, “Now clean up your life.” It’s not that easy. They had to take responsibility for their actions first. In the same way, taking one of the nearby mops in the store wouldn’t be convenient but irresponsible and wrong. But I think the truth is—I’m already one of those broken people.

Caution: Help Me.
Dordt’s outreach extends little past campus borders

Hannah Gallo
Staff Writer

Myself – pronoun. Used as an intensive of me or I. Community – noun, a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality.

When I came to Dordt last fall, I didn’t realize I was coming to an “all” Dutch school. I also didn’t realize that a college campus could be so involved in campus – and only campus – activities.

Don’t get me wrong, I understand that we, as college students, don’t have an extreme amount of free time or resources to give to the community. I am the first person to say I’d rather watch TV and eat ice cream then do something for someone else.

But when I’m sitting in church on Sunday morning and see the need for workers the seventh Sunday in a row while half the auditorium is filled with students, I wonder. When I hear moms in stores discuss how hard it is to find a babysitter, and they live within a mile of 1,300 students— I wonder then, too.

I realize the important of Dordt sending students to Belize or Nicaragua, or on PLIA trips. What I don’t understand is how there is a Christian community living in a dozen (ish) buildings, and across the street is a town. Why do the two communities not interact?

There seems to be a great amount of importance of ministering to those who do not live in the same ‘community’ as ourselves. We will travel through time zones and cultures in order to share the Gospel, but we can’t cross the street to share the Love of that Gospel.

I’ve been told so many times, “There are opportunities here, Hannah; there are things for students to do, Hannah; there is this club, Hannah; there’s this group, Hannah…”

Don’t cross the street, I heard that the Diamond isn’t supposed to publish articles that have to do with Sioux Center, and there isn’t much community connection on campus unless it’s a job offer post, or a Sioux Center Shopper.

Dordt is a Christian campus, dedicated to teaching its students the power of God in all of their life, knowing that God is Lord of all.

Why then, should we as a campus, as a college community, not reach out to the community around us in this town?

Should there not be a storm of community service acts that the students partake of, and not just the few college clubs?

Why are there no middle school and high school students in the ASK Center? Why is it when there are kids playing in the Rec Center we college students chose a different time to go?

Shouldn’t our strong Christian community be infatuating the city and town around us?

Why aren’t the stewardship clubs full?

Why do you never hear anything about those groups? Why is it that this Christian campus is so talented atkerneling to ourselves?

The plus-minus grading system: plus or minus?

Josh Dykstra
Staff Writer

The plus-minus grading system was implemented in 2007 to better judge the progress and aptitude of Dordt College students.

This grading system alters a student’s GPA by .33 per step. These steps can be as narrow as 5 questions on a test, or as wide as an assignment.

Most students at the announcement of this change had an opinion on way or another. Some students were very adamant on both sides. Mud was being flung in every direction.

Now that this policy has been in place for over a year, many students have nothing but apathy for this relatively new policy change. Students that were concerned about getting good grades now have to work that much harder to continue receiving high marks. 4.0 students now have to receive in the range of 95% to continue their perfect mark.

This puts additional stress on students determined to advance themselves or retain scholarships. Instead of allowing the comfort of knowing that grade position cannot change much (in most cases) based on the final exam, the narrower margin of error forces students to recognize the importance of every little mistake. This added stress could potentially lead to mental and emotional breakdowns because of the realization that a single question could mean the difference between keeping or losing a scholarship.

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Check us out on the web!
blogs.dordt.edu/diamond

Come to Improvisation Sensation!
The new long-form improv group
February 16
9:30 p.m.
C 160

February 12, 2009
Defender baseball plays weekend in Metrodome

Ashlee Stalling
Staff Writer

While Nick Blackburn prepares to head to Florida to report for spring training in a mere two days, Dordt College pitcher Patrick Sinnema got a chance to stand where the Minnesota Twins pitcher might otherwise be: on the mound at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

The Defender baseball team spent last weekend in the Twin Cities, playing a four-game weekend in the Twin’s home stadium.

Dordt lost all four games, but that didn’t seem to dampen Sinnema’s spirits, as he chatted with his parents along the edge of the field and tossed bubble gum over his shoulder as he watched his friends who went to watch the games.

“My initial thoughts, as I ran onto the field, were of all the old Twins players that have stepped foot on that field,” Sinnema said. “It’s been a lifelong dream of mine to play there.”

His parents, Ron and Lynne Sinnema, made the 1000-mile, 15-hour trip from Churchill, Mont. to see Patrick play.

Sinnema pitched the first game of the weekend against Viterbo, a college in La Crosse, Wis., and he played right field in game four, against rival Northwestern.

“It was pretty exciting,” Lynne Sinnema said. “He’s wanted to do that for a long time.”

“He’s been a lifelong Twins fan,” Ron Sinnema added.

But Sinnema didn’t let the excitement of being in the big league stadium affect his game performance. “They usually get you down,” said Schouten. “They had some openers in March, but we were there to play,” Sinnema said. “I think we really could have won all four, but we lost. We were defensively strong; overall, I’m happy. It was only February 6 and 7. There’s time to work on it.”

Indeed, the first week in February is an early start to baseball season. According to Coach Jeff Schouten, this was the earliest that Dordt has ever started its baseball season.

“It was not that difficult to get a spot reserved at the Metrodome,” Schouten said. “We had a team fielding percentage of .965, and Patrick Sinnema a .3.18. But while the fielding was strong, the team was lacking offensively.”

Despite the early start and less-than-usual preparation, Schouten said that he was satisfied with the team’s performance.

“We played really good defense,” he said. “We had a team fielding percentage of .365, and only four errors on the weekend.”

Schouten highlighted the team’s pitching: “Pitching was a plus,” he said. “Bryan Diemer did a good job against Northwestern, and Patrick Sinnema too, in the first game. The kind of thing he’s come to expect from them.”

Diemer posted a 2.25 ERA, and Sinnema a 3.18. But while the fielding was strong, the team was lacking offensively.

“Hitting was the downside,” Schouten said. “We only batted .221.”

A slow start with the bats is normal, Schouten said. “We’ll do better—without a doubt.”

An offensive highlight for the weekend was Travis Feekes’ solo home run over the left-center field fence in the second game against Northwestern.

Overall, the team enjoyed the Metrodome experience, despite the losses.

“Playing up there is always a great experience,” Schouten said, “and one we hope the guys will always remember.”

— Coach Jeff Schouten

Did you have to make any significant adjustments on the team this year? As a team, yes. We lost three key starters. We have a lot of new faces, so we have to work people in, and work on the chemistry and coming together. A lot of guys have stepped up.

Do you have any pre-game traditions? Just… Finding a quiet spot to stretch and focus on the game.

What do you plan to do after college, and how will you incorporate sports? I’d like to play professionally overseas… but you’ve got to be good enough. After that… I’d like to be a Rec director, work with kids and sports.

Was your favorite childhood TV show? The Wonder Years. It’s kinda old… my older brother watched it, and I watched it with him.

When’s the last time you watched it? Actually, this Christmas break. I got all the episodes for my brother for Christmas, and we watched it together over break.

Name one thing you’re afraid of. The dark. When it’s pitch black…. I think I just watched too many scary movies as a kid. I was too young to watch that stuff. It’s a good thing I have a roommate in college. If my roommate’s gone, I have to have a light on or something.

What’s your favorite color and why? Oh, man. That’s a good question. I like blue, but I don’t know why.


What is your must-have pizza topping? Sweet Swine: Canadian bacon and pineapple. Gotta have it.
Early qualifications bode well for track team

Bridget Smith
Staff Writer

This weekend’s Dordt Invite could mean at least eight more students will be added to the roster of athletes competing at the 2009 NAIA National Championships in Johnson City, Tenn.

Laurel Ochsner, a senior at Dordt, was the first member of the indoor track team to qualify for nationals. Ochsner ran the 60 meter hurdles in 9.11 seconds to finish in third place and qualify. Ochsner also provisionally qualified in the long jump with a distance of 17’9”.

“At this point, to be qualified for Nationals is a pretty good accomplishment,” Coach Craig Heynen said.

Most indoor track athletes do not aim for their best until conferences, he explained.

“I thought I might qualify earlier than this so I was starting to get a little stressed out,” Ochsner said.

Last week’s competition was the toughest Dordt will run against all year – for both indoor and outdoor track, Heynen said. Nonetheless, a number of Dordt runners rose to the challenge and had their best performances of the year so far.

“This weekend, he said, both the men and women’s 4x800 relay teams hope to qualify for Nationals.

Though the team lost a number of upperclassmen last year, this year is actually going smoother and the team is further ahead overall than last year, Heynen explained.

Over half of the team is comprised of underclassmen who have had “big shoes to fill,” he said.

“We have a really good group of freshman runners this year – a lot of good sprinters. Dordt isn’t usually dominant in sprinting,” Ochsner explained.

“My number one goal or hope is just to get as many people as possible to reach their full potential,” Heynen said. “For each person on the team and some it’s just to shave five seconds off their time. My goal is to see steady improvement from the team as a whole – to reach full potential.”

Qualifying for Nationals was always something Ochsner hoped to do, she said. Last year, she had come close to qualifying and her dream became a little more real. Ochsner hopes to move up to an automatic qualifier in the long jump at this weekend’s track meet.

“I do like the Dordt Invite. It’s fun to perform in front of our fans instead of other schools. It’s a really good opportunity for the Dordt runners to get some recognition for what they do,” Ochsner said.

The Dordt Invite track meet begins at 9:45 a.m. on Saturday, February 14, in the Rec Center and will end shortly after 3:00 p.m. The Rec Center will be a little bit like a circus, Heynen said, except there will be even more than three rings going at once.
Slumdog Millionaire short on cash

Alvin Shim
Staff Writer

A few hours before I went to see the highly anticipated, gloriously reviewed film Slumdog Millionaire, I sat with the Philippines documentary team in the campus center. Someone joked that we should compile our footage—dozens of tapes shot over nine straight days—into a travelogue. It was a joke and we laughed because that would diminish the stories we heard into a series of colorful images—a video postcard. This, actually, wouldn’t be so terribly uninteresting.

I have to admit this because I am, in many ways, a total gawking tourist when I travel, snapping photos of every street scene in Manila for days and days. I also have to admit this because I really enjoyed the first twenty minutes of Slumdog Millionaire. The film opens with our lovable, geeky hero Jamal being torture-interrogated by the Indian police. There’s no way in Holland, they reason, that this slumdog can be answering so many questions on India’s Who Wants to be a Millionaire? correctly. So they insult, electrocute and question him and, through a series of dual flashbacks, he explains how he knew the correct answer. For example, the film takes us to a question of which American hero is on the hundred-dollar bill and then to a flashback of Jamal and his ambiguously evil older brother Salim finding a large sum of American cash. Get it so far?

So the film does this, showing us the questions he answered, the time he spends in the police department and the early childhood of Jamal and Salim, the last of which is easily the most captivating and interesting part of the film. I groaned audibly every time we went back to the game show because, of course, we know he answers the questions correctly so why feed the audience pseudo-suspense? And, anyway, look at what happens to Jamal and Salim. While bathing, their family and the rest of the slum neighborhood are caught in the middle of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Their mother dies, giving them time to run away safely. (I didn’t spoil this; the mother has no significance whatsoever to the film.) Newly orphaned, the kids join something of an Oliver Twist troupe with their new lady friend, the beautiful Latika. Horrible, enraging crimes are committed and we all clenched our teeth, remembering the kids we met in the Manila slums.

It is around this point in the film that director Danny Boyle decides to turn up the cliché love story fairy tale. Here’s one dialogue between hero Salim and damsels-in-distress Latika on one of the first times he finds her.

Salim: Come away with me.
Latika: What will we live on?
Salim: Love.
I think I heard Pipper, Danielle, Hani and Dale’s collective awww at this, but it might be mistaken—it’s difficult to hear when you’re attempting to control projectile vomit. The rest of the film is an exercise in a man and a woman finding love through the power of destiny. It’s as if the Coen brothers wanted to produce a love story, but instead of chance running the universe and pushing the characters to the very edge of their existence, an elementary schoolgirl is running this universe and she’s pushing the actors to entertain the most predictable ending I’ve ever seen.

It’s not that this film is about the ending, but the journey that the characters take to get there—well, it manages to make no sense and, in order to keep the audience from dwelling on that, on why Salim jumps back and forth so quickly from selfish jerk to self-sacrificing Christ-figure, to sweeping panoramic shots of India set to plenty of loud, thumping dance music.

A lot of potential for riveting stories, gorgeous cinematography, interesting setting (if you’re North American), competent, genuine slum actors, and the chance to tell a story dwinded down, unfortunately, to equal parts travelogue, music video and cliché love romance. Is this reviewer just a cynic? Last lines:

Latika: I thought we would be together only in death.
Jamal: This is our destiny.
Latika: Kiss me.
Bottom Line: If your girlfriend wants to go see it, take her to go see it and then watch City of God, which is marvelous. Otherwise, just see City of God (2002)—in style, duo-directors and pace, it’s like Slumdog Millionaire except, you know, it’s not a total and complete bastardization of filmmaking.

Coming soon to TePaske Theatre:
Enchanted April
by Matthew Barber

February 26-28:
7:30 p.m.
March 5 and 7:
7:30 p.m.
March 7: 2:00 p.m.
FREE admission for Dordt students

“You’ll fall in love all over again when you see this funny, heart-warming Broadway hit that was nominated for a Tony Award for best play. In this romantic journey, two lonely women rent an Italian villa for a month. They share their rent with a crusty Englishwoman and troubled aristocrat. What could be better than sun, relaxation, and wisteria? When the men in their lives make an unexpected visit, their Italian vacation turns into something even more wonderful. Forget about winter during this delightful evening at the theatre.”

Prairie Grass Film Challenge Screening: February 13

Admission is free!

For a full list of films, times, and locations, visit dordt.edu and look under “events.”