Brauning will be first to graduate

Want to do an Honors given to shape her work

The Facebook staff at Varsity defeat JV Dordt athletes, basketball

Syposium sees transparency for SAC's future budgets

Ochsner defies death

State of the campus: President’s report

Symposium to “exercise joint oversight” over SAC events and projects. Student Services would give final permission for the events. Symposium’s involvement in SAC funding would be more along the lines of approving minutes; representatives will look at the expenditures and will either approve or object to the expenses.

“In the past, the student budget has been exclusively for SAC, but we [as Symposium representatives] will have to approve the budget,” said Minto.

Symposium members cannot veto the SAC budget, but they may review the full budget and call into question it to both SAC and Student Services staff, according to the Symposium minutes. Minto created this proposal to promote responsibility that he feels has, in recent years, been on the downward slope.

SAC’s Student Services staff leadership has had frequent turnover in the last two years, causing many to lose track of budget costs and even what supplies SAC has in storage.

Minto respects the hard work of present and past SAC leaders, but he feels that something must change. “Funding without accountability can be problematic,” said Minto. “They’ve been given a large amount of money, but due to extenuating circumstances, some of it has been misused.”

The proposal will not bring about a power shift, according to Schuttinga. “The motion is all about transparency,” said Schuttinga. “We aren’t looking for more power here.”

Some felt that the motion would allow the students to have more say in what the SAC portion of their activity fees went toward.

“Ultimately, SAC spending should come back to the student body because it really is our money,” said representative Andrew Sybesma.

Allowing Symposium representatives to see SAC’s expenditures will hold the organization accountable.

“Our financial picture is not as rosy as it once was,” said Schuttinga. “We have a lot of areas that need improvement.”

Minto calls for Student Services staff to help students better understand their financial priorities.

President Zylstra provides answers to some of Dordt students’ most pressing questions.

Why the redesign of the parking lot?

That’s a long-standing plan that goes back over 20 years to try to create a green – literally green – campus. [We wanted] to create a campus environment so that the campus isn’t a road. Students used to refer to that [old parking lot in front of the Rec Center] as the runway and so this was finally a chance to be able to soften the exterior – with both the redesign on the corner and the entrance of the gym lot... When you take the

continued on page 2

February 26, 2009
Zylstra discusses campus issues

East Campus apartments, sports, finances some of the few topics addressed

continued from page 1

new parking lot we put in here, the public spaces are equal or exceed what we had before.

What about the reduced student parking? That we knew is going to be tight… One place that’s always been on the master plan for more parking is where building A and B are. The current plan, if we go through now this year with the building of this new apartment residence complex, then there will be quite a bit more parking put in as part of that project on the east end of campus, which would replace probably the remainder of what’s in front of covenant, and lessen the need to use Siberia [the All Seasons Center parking lot].

What about commuter parking spaces? We knew that would be difficult during construc-
tion time. We did really believe in the planning that this [the BH Haan parking lot] would be the commuter lot. The number of spots is adequate. It may not be as close to what people want it to be, but it’s a heck of a lot better than what would be the case. We can’t have enough spots for people to park right in front of the building.

We’ve tried to soften the campus as much as possible, and that will mean some students, and also some public guests, will have to walk farther than they did in the past. [At the same time] more people are able to park closer. Those kinds of trade-offs are a little difficult.

Some campus visitors have complained that they have had to sleep on the floor when they visit the college as po-
tential students? How is Dordt different from other colleges? Should Dordt do something to remedy that? This is the first time I’ve heard of it, but that sounds like a good is-

sue that ought to be addressed. In fact I’ll follow-up on that just because I’m curious. [We might want to] or at least have some cots or something—hospitality.

It’s also true that our housing is tight right now… so we just don’t have the extra beds.

Why is it so difficult for people in general, specifically writers for the Diamond to get in-
formation? For example, to put it in perspec-
tive, we had a writer this week who was trying to write about a construc-
tion accident and it was very difficult for her to obtain information.

I suppose there might be some legal things about who should be re-
leasing personal infor-
mation. Most even hos-
pitals can’t release some information.

Number one, I think it’s important to ask the right questions. Again, if you ever have trouble finding the right people, just ask me and I can at least point you the right direction and go talk to them.

I don’t know the rules on it [regarding the con-
struction incident]. If it’s one of our own students, please get together orchestra-
selves and say “how do we get the appropriate information out to peo-
ple?”

Sometimes, as a stu-
dent, you’re not quite sure who to ask so you can always refer to me or Curtis Taylor and we’ll point you in the right direction.

What is your per-
spective on the new for-
mat for clubs? Do you think it’s a good idea or should it be changed or modified?

I think putting that level of accountability in is probably a good peer review. It will be good to see how well it works… But I think it’s pretty typical that student gov-
ernments decide alloca-
tions of student funding and rather than being au-
tomatic… this is a way to really talk about the way you’re really going to contribute to the life of

the campus. Now if student sym-

posium becomes a group that, I don’t know why it wouldn’t, but that showed favor or became too po-
titical we would have to reconsider that.

But I think it sounds like it ought to work and I hope it does. We’re just going to have to work through it and see if it’s a reasonable way to do it.

How do you respond to students who have problems with the ath-

tletic department—how money is spent, justifi-
cations for how much.

money is spent in those areas? If I think putting that into a dialogue, we could make sure we stay within our budget. Same thing would be true for who-
ever buys the vacuums [vacuums were given as an example as a per-
ceded need for replace-
ment].

What is the medall-
ion we wear around your neck—com-
monly referred to as “the bling”? What is it for, is it just a status symbol?

It is a symbol, because I wouldn’t wear it much of any place else. It’s a symbol of the office. It’s very common for presi-
dents to wear some sort of a medallion that they wear as a symbol of their office. I was presented that when I became president. I presented it by my predecessor who had ac-

tually designed it and had commissioned it. And so the name of every presi-
dent is to be inscribed on it and so my name and the years of service should be inscribed on it and then it will just get passed on from president to president.

There is a special place for it and I’m not tell-

ing you where it is. It’s mean, that is just a prank waiting to happen, and so, no, I’m not telling.

Students may e-mail President Zylstra at cze-

lstra@dordt.edu with fur-

ther questions/concerns.

Nederhoff declined to comment on any other details about the acci-
dent, other than saying he believed the worker was released from Sioux Cen-
ter Hospital on Tuesday. The maintenance office and Bethany Schuttinga also declined to com-
ment. Walstra Plumbing was not able to be reached for comment.

Furnace injures construction worker

Hannah Gallo
Staff Writer

During construction on the morning of Feb. 16, a worker on campus, employed by Walstra Plumbing, was burned by a furnace “used to heat the construction area,” according to Arlan Nederhoff from the Busi-
ness Office.

Symposium handles SAC’s budget

continued from page 1

representatives were not

posed to the proposal; howe-

r, they were more worried about whether or not funding for new ideas would be turned down by Symposium.

“We understand why this is being proposed,” said Shena Couperus, a SAC representative.

“But we’re more concerned with little events that might get overlooked.”

Another concern related to SAC’s weekly food costs. SAC members have pizza and snacks at every meeting, an expense that most clubs are not afforded. Couperus said giving food to members was a way to thank the members for their hard work, and she does not want it to fall by the wayside.

“We supply pizza and snacks to show our thankfulness for the students coming to our meetings,” she said. “These people are giving

of themselves to help others have fun with the activities they’re planning.”

In the end, the motion was passed. SAC representatives were pleased with the outcome, as were most Symposium representatives.

“The idea of transparency this way is totally fine with us,” said Faber. “We’re not opposed to that at all.”

Couperus agreed. “We don’t really see this being a big change for us,” she said.

“Mostly, we see this as a good thing,”

An “emergency” finance symposium meeting has been called for next Wednesday at 10:00 PM to discuss proper procedure as well. For more information about Student Symposium, please contact your respective Symposium leaders or email Student Symposium at symposium@dordt.edu.

-
Caution: anorexia, depression differ from addictions

Lisa Veurink
Guest Writer

I am writing in response to the opinion article by Alyssa Hoogendoorn entitled “Catch us, if you can” with caution: people only cover their messes with more.” I was very offended by the fact that the writer lumped all people with “depression and anorexia and different kinds of addictions” into the same group and then proceeded to state that such people throw “their lives away because few were willing to admit they had messed up and needed help.”

Anorexia and depression are very different from addictions. According to Dr. Melissa Condrad Stoppler, anorexia is first and foremost a psychological disorder. Depression, according to the 7th edition of Mosby’s Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions, is an abnormal emotional state that can be caused by difficult situations or genetic predisposition that result in a chemical imbalance in the brain which can severely hamper the ability to lead a normal life.

Addiction, on the other hand, is dependence on a foreign substance you choose to put in your body. I do not believe it is accurate or fair to lump anorexia and depression into the same category as addiction. To generalize in such an extreme manner is dangerous and offensive.

The broad terms referred to in this article are sensitive issues which ought to be dealt with individually — and tactfully. If the author truly was seeking help, as she inferred, I would expect her to have a more appropriate understanding of this reality. I also believe it is important to clarify that all people who struggle with depression do not necessarily “mess up their lives” and then refuse to seek help as the article seemed to suggest. In fact, the majority of people who have depression often do seek treatment through medication and therapy.

This is not to gloss over, however, the sad reality that there are still people burdened by this disease who do not seek out help; many continue to fade away alone and helpless. An even sadder reality shows itself within the Christian community, which has too often labeled this illness a sin or (worse yet) a test from God.

Likewise, anorexics should not be dismissed as people who have messed up their lives. Instead, they should be viewed as those struggling with a serious physical and psychological illness. Such diseases were not “asked for” and should not be regarded in such a trivial manner.

Furthermore, I believe it is inaccurate to state that those suffering from depression and anorexia fail to “post caution signs,” choosing instead to “carry their pride and slouch through their muddles, making their way through life and into other people’s lives.”

This is a demeaning generalization that completely minimizes the severity of these diseases. Those who do not post caution signs on their foreheads often do so because they will be met with inappropriate responses such as those stated by this article.

I also believe it is fair to say that the majority of those who do send out warning signs are often overlooked, misread or carelessly dismissed. The human soul cries out to allow companionship, so if such a cry is disguised, and we must learn how to properly read and respond to such tears.

Emphasizing the manner in which they “slosh through their puddles,” perhaps we ought to be kicking ourselves for not actively seeking out ways to help them.

The terms discussed by the author in this article are extremely delicate. To lump them together and then proceed to make generalizations about individuals suffering from them is disrespectful and inaccurate.

Although the metaphor used by the author in this article involving spilt milk and a mop is unique, it ought not to be applied inaccuracy to issues which are far more complex than this generalization. I fear that the only thing left to make is the misconception contained in this article — for this truly is not a simple case of “crying over spilt milk.”

Lack of community involvement no more than empty excuses

Hannah Gallo
Staff Writer

I wanted to thank everyone for their responses to my opinion article in the last Diamond issue, and give a little response in turn. It’s nice to know that there are more people on campus who share my view point.

I finally found out who is in charge of the Community Outreach Program — Julie Van Boom and Daniel Mahaffy. I believe C.O.P. is now open to applications for leadership roles.

As to the broader questions of “what are your ideas, Hannah?” Sunday school teachers and helpers: I’m sure your pastor would love to tell you who needs a little encouragement; Dordt professors will automatically deduct points from an essay if it doesn’t mention Abraham Kuyper in some way.

When Dordt was first founded, as legend has it, the two nominees for the official motto were “Solii deo Gloria” and “If ya ain’t Dutch, ya ain’t much.”

The very first story told was that the name of Dort, held in 1618 to its name from the Synod of Dort, is connected to Dordt. It is “mink farm. Some say it is a break-dancing Abraham Kuyper in some way.

Dordt College gets its name from the Synod of Dort, held in 1618 to discuss a controversy among Arminianism. In a recent survey, nobody knew what Arminianism means.

22. Contrary to popular belief, the first intercollegiate sports team at Dordt was competitive cow-tipping.

21. They lost in the division finals due to the team captain suffering a freak hoofing accident.

20. In a recent study, 60% of on-campus male students admit to having a Hannah Montana poster in their room. 100% of the female students surveyed thought they were cool enough to keep it.

19. A majority of Dordt students agree that a break-dancing Abraham Kuyper would be the coolest mascot ever.

18. Dordt College is located halfway between the Ice Cream Capitol of the World and a gummy bear factory, thus making Dordt a very sweet place (horrible, horrible pun intended).

17. “I was playing Dutch Bingo” is not a legitimate excuse for missing classes.

16. The very first complaint put in the Dordt Diamond was about the lack of things to do around Sioux Center. Some things never change.

15. Some students have expressed the desire to make Dordt’s official song “She Thinks My Tractor’s Sexy.”

14. You for sure belong at Dordt if you know all the words to that song.

13. Walking can prevent heart disease and type two diabetes, not to mention reducing pollution and dependency on gas. Dordt students drive from Covenant to the Commons.

12. The more years spent at Dordt, the more likely one is to develop Claustrophobia: fear of being surrounded by corn.

11. Dordt has more Van’s than Volkswagen did in the 60’s.

10. The book The History of Dordt College is unofficially subtitled “Old Dutch men argue about money and stuff.”

9. Dordt College is the only place in Iowa where the majority of hate crimes are committed against Canadians.

8. If you’re not sick of Calzone by the time you leave Dordt, something is wrong with you.

7. A Northwestern student once put manure in the ventilation system of North Hall as a prank.


5. Some said it smelled better.

4. Though they never admit it, many Dordt professors will automatically deduct points from an essay if it doesn’t mention Abraham Kuyper in some way.

3. When Dordt’s cornerstone was put in place, it contained copies of financial records, Dordt’s founding constitution, 11 newspapers, and, according to myth, a list of “You know you’re a Dutchman when...”

2. If a package is addressed “Middle of Nowhere” instead of “498 4th Ave NE” it will still end up at Dordt College.

1. If a fellow student asks you if you know any jokes, the correct response is “Yeah, Northwesten.”
features.

Brauning serves as a media model

Brauning talks about his experience being the first student to graduate from Dordt’s digital media program. Photo by Alvin Shim.

Getting off campus is a two-step process

Brauning serves as a media model

“Dordt can’t get you into all interested students will have to go. Despite the fact that the program is limited to 30 of the year prior to the graduate on schedule.”

The first step is getting Dordt’s approval for the preferred semester. Pre-application forms can be found in Hentges’ office in the Campus Center. This application needs to be completed by Sept. 30 of the year prior to the year the student hopes to be off campus. (For example, if a student wants to study abroad in their junior year, the student needs to apply for pre-approval by September of their sophomore year.)

After all the pre-application forms have been turned in, Hentges checks that the applicants are in “good standing — academically, behaviorally, and financially.” She meets with Jim Bos, the Registrar, and John Kok, the Director of Off-Campus Programs, to “pre-approve” students to apply for the off-campus program of their choice.

The group considers the applicants’ reasons for going and how the semester off-campus will fit into the student’s plan for graduation. Said Hentges, “We want to make sure students will graduate on schedule.”

The number of applicants pre-approved for each semester is also considered.

Besides the participants in the SPIN and SPICE, Dordt is limited to having 42 students participate in off-campus semester programs each year. Hentges explains that the pre-approval process allows for equal consideration of all interested students instead of working on a first-come-first-serve basis.

The second step of the two-step process is applying for the actual program of the student’s choice. The ultimate decision for admitting a student is up to coordinators of the individual programs — “Dordt can’t get you into a program, but we do have support or ‘certify’ your application,” says Hentges. Each program is different in its application process and students need to apply accordingly.

To give students more information about off-campus study programs, an Off-Campus Programs Fair will be held on March 26 in the Eckardt Lounge. Students can also check out http://www.dordt.edu/academics/programs/off-campus/.

“Dordt was talking about going abroad in the fall of 2007. Dordt students have a variety of off-campus programs to choose from but must plan accordingly and follow the necessary acceptance procedures to go.”

Brauning tells about his experience being the first student to graduate from Dordt’s digital media program. Photo by Alvin Shim.

Senior Bree Brouwer studied in Oxford in the fall of 2007. Dordt students have a variety of off-campus programs to choose from but must plan accordingly and follow the necessary acceptance procedures to go. Photo courtesy of Bree Brouwer.

Jureg Boerema Staff Writer

Several hundred students will graduate from Dordt College at the end of this academic semester. One of them will stand out for unique reasons. Jesse Brauning will be the first Dordt student to graduate from the two-year-old Digital Media program.

Brauning described his initial interest in Digital Media as coming from a project he did as a freshman English major. “We had to explain some subject of literary criticism, and the actual video was rather short,” Brauning said. “But after the project, I decided I wanted to make films”

Around Corinne Hentges’ office, “SPIN” more than a verb and “SPICE” more than an ingredient. Hentges, Dordt’s Coordinator of Off-Campus Programs, works to organize the Study Program in Nicaragua (SPIN) offered in the fall and the Study Program in Contemporary Europe (SPICE) offered in the spring. Besides these two programs offered by Dordt, students can spend a semester participating in about 22 other Dordt-approved programs located in the United States and around the world.

Off-campus study programs offer academic and personal benefits to participating students. Academically, students can meet requirements for graduation and gain knowledge and new insights from their experiences.

Personally, students grow in independence and self-confidence by finding new ways to explore their unfamiliar environments. “Students grow spiritually in relying on God and spending time with devotions when their usual support system is hundreds of miles away,” said Hentges.

Sometimes off-campus programs will connect directly to a specific major, but most programs are not geared toward an exact field of study. “Just because a student can’t find a program to fit their major doesn’t mean the student should not go,” said Hentges.

“[Off-campus programs] help students learn more about the world we live in and our place in it, our responsibilities and opportunities as citizens.”

If students are interested in going off-campus for a semester, Hentges explains that there is a two-step process that needs to be followed when applying.

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The group considers
Licht leads campus fundraiser for building wells

Kristina De Graaf
Staff Writer

Christmas shopping for aunts and uncles who didn’t need just another gift card morphed into the start of a new vision for senior Gabe Licht this year. Licht is heading an initiative to raise money to build wells in impoverished areas overseas.

After stumbling across various “gifts” through World Vision, Licht realized relatively impressive projects required surprisingly small donations. He thought about how Dordt students could participate.

“Even some of the larger projects would be only four dollars per person at Dordt,” he said. “That’s so do-able even for students in college.” Licht chose to raise money for CRWRC specifically due to its cost efficiency. The money goes to an impoverished country to employ local citizens, purchase local products and produce a lasting benefit.

Campus ministries and the CDAs and RAs at Dordt have joined the campaign as well. “We want to take ownership,” Licht said. “Just from giving what’s a miniscule amount to us can make a difference.” Students can drop donations by their RAs or CDAs. There is also a donation box by Pastor Gorter’s office in Student Services.

The Bible calls us to care for the orphans and widows. “What’s that look like? For Dordt, it could be raising one or two or five thousand dollars so that another community can have clean water and the gift of salvation presented to them,” said Licht.

CRWRC raises funds for various international relief efforts. Money raised through Licht’s fundraiser will be used to build wells in Niger. Photo courtesy of CRWRC.

If you’re interested in helping...

- Cash or checks may be left with Pastor Gorter, CDAs, RAs or Licht
- Checks are tax-deductible
- More information can be found: http://crwrc.org/
Alumni return for JV basketball game

Seniors, Van Soelen, Vander Berg also honored at Varsity games

By the Numbers

Dordt sport scores & stats

Compiled by Ashlee Stallinga

82: Days since the hockey team has lost a game.
64.8: Average points per game scored by the women’s basketball team in the regular season.
24: Percentage of points that, on average, are scored by basketball player Amber Soosma.
2: Days until the lacrosse team starts its season against St. Louis University in Springfield, Mo.
21: Points by which the men’s basketball team has out-scored their opponents in total games this season.
25: National rank of the team that the softball team defeated.
4.16: Seconds by which the men’s 4x800 relay beat the qualifying standard.
4:16: Seconds by which the men’s 4x800 relay beat the qualifying standard.
92: Free throws that Logan Kingma has made this year.
10:42.47: Time that Michelle Steiger ran in the 3000m at the GPAC Championship track meet.
13: Teams that the Blades were ranked ahead of to earn a spot in the NAIA National Championship meet.

The Diamond is published by students of Dordt College to present and discuss events on campus and beyond.

Opinions expressed are not necessarily the view of the Diamond or of Dordt College, but represent the views of individual writers.

Any letters, comments or opinions are welcome. Contributions must be received before 5:00 p.m. the Monday before publication to be printed in that issue.

The Diamond reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of any contribution.

Send contributions to: diamond@dordt.edu

February 26, 2009

Ashlee Stallinga
Staff Writer

Eric Maas donned his black Dordt College basketball jersey once again. When he tapped the scorers’ table, ready to get into the game, his three-and-a-half year old daughter, Katelyn, cheered him on. Decked out in a Dordt t-shirt, she yelled “Go dad dy!” from the bleachers while munching on popcorn and drinking from a paper sippy cup.

Maas was one of nine alumni and former Defender basketball players who returned to the DeWitt Gymnasium on Saturday, Feb. 21 to play against the JV team. He and his wife, Darcy, are 2002 graduates; they came to the game from Sioux Falls, where they now reside with Katelyn and their son Evan, 1. As an ‘02 graduate, Maas was one of the oldest alumni on the floor, with most players having graduated within the past 5 years.

The JV-Alumni game is a tradition that happens annually, but no one seems to know exactly for how long. “It’s been a long time,” said Athletic Director Rick Vander Berg. “Over 20 years. I’d say over 25 years.” Nevertheless, it is a tradition.

“It’s a tradition for the alumni to win, too, I think,” said manager and temporary JV coach, Sam Wetselaar. And this year was no exception. Even though they were looking a little tired at the end of the first half, the alumni defeated the JV team 106-84 in their last game of the season. “[We’re] a little out of shape, but it’s okay,” said Maas. The game was certainly “okay” for a team out of shape, but it’s okay,” said manager and temporary JV coach, Sam Wetselaar.

The atmosphere in the gym was one of friendly competition, with smiles from the players and laughter from the crowd throughout the game. There was some good-natured teasing and even a couple fancy moves, such as a backward pass between the legs by Shawn DeStigter, which wasn’t converted into a field goal, but certainly entertained those watching.

During halftime of the game, Provost Eric Hoekstra read a note of thanks from President Carl Zylstra and his wife, Gloria, who were unable to attend the game. Besides being athletic director, Vander Berg has served as a men’s basketball coach, track coach, and teacher. Vander Berg was presented with a large frame, featuring four pictures and the words “Serving Leader, 1977-2009,” and Lori also received a bouquet.

Senior Kelsie DeNooy was honored for her four years in Dordt basketball, and before the men’s game, four seniors were honored: Lance Dielemann (manager), Mark Taatjes, Eric Modema and Mark Rowenhust.

There was also a tribute given to both Varsity coach Greg Van Soelen and Athletic Director Rick Vander Berg, who plan to retire from Dordt at the end of the year.

Vander Berg spoke about Van Soelen before the men’s game started, presenting him with a plaque for being a “leader, mentor, and role model” during his time at Dordt. Van Soelen’s family was with him, and Vander Berg provided his wife, Kathy, with a bouquet of flowers.

During halftime of the game, Provost Eric Hoekstra came onto the court with Vander Berg and his wife, Lori, to recognize him for his 32 years serving at Dordt.

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Send contributions to: diamond@dordt.edu
Douma drawn back to northwest Iowa, Dordt

Ashlee Stallinga  
Staff Writer

He’s back.

Ross Douma, a native of Sanborn, Iowa, and a Western Christian High School and Northwestern College alum, is coming back to the area where he grew up to coach men’s basketball at Dordt and teach in the HPER department.

Douma is coming from Waukee, Iowa, where he is the head coach of the men’s basketball team and a history and physical education teacher at Waukee High School.

When he heard about the position open at Dordt, he went for it.

“I’m very familiar with Dordt; I know the potential to do great things is there,” Douma said. “There’s community support, and because of Van Soelen, the program is respected. It’s just a great job.”

Another benefit of his position at Dordt is being near family, in the area where he grew up.

“Both my family and my wife’s are in northwest Iowa,” Douma said. “Our kids can develop strong relationships with them.”

For all these reasons, Douma is “looking forward to the opportunity” to work at Dordt. And people at Dordt are looking forward to having him here.

“What was most impressive about him was his organization, his vision for the future for Dordt basketball, and his excitement for being a college coach,” said Rick Vander Berg, Athletic Director.

Douma has never coached at the college level before, but anticipates that it will work out well. “Any time you move, there’s some transition,” he said. “But I have confidence in the people at Dordt to make the transition smooth.”

The committee that chose Douma for the position from nearly 70 applicants clearly has confidence in him as well. The committee included Vander Berg, and Provost Eric Hoekstra, along with representatives from the athletic, human relations, advancement, and academic departments, and one other very important group: the basketball team.

The team was involved in the final interviews of the candidates, and got a say in the decision. “They were taken very seriously,” Vander Berg said, “and they gave good input.”

“We had lunch with [Douma], and we asked him about basketball, but also about personal relationships and teams bonding,” said Logan Kingma, who will be playing for Douma in his final college season next year. “We agreed with what he said, he seems dedicated and passionate, and we felt that if he were to coach us, he would put all his effort into it and not let us down.”

Because of Douma’s connections, “he’ll be an excellent recruiter,” Vander Berg said. Not only does he know the schools in northwest Iowa, but also has connections throughout the Midwest, from working in club basketball in the summer and being involved in inner-city work in Chicago.

Before he worked at Waukee, Douma spent time as assistant principal at Chicago Christian High School, and before that, he worked at Hartley Melvin Sanborn. He has achieved honors in basketball as a coach in all three high schools, as well as a player at both Western and Northwestern.

Yes — Northwestern. Douma was a Raider in college, and graduated from Dordt’s biggest rival. But that’s behind him now.

“I enjoyed my time at Northwestern,” Douma said, “but that was 15 years ago. I cherish the idea of coming to Dordt and continuing a strong program.”

Douma and his family plan to move to the area as soon as they can after the end of his school year in Waukee. He starts at Dordt on June 15.

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Dordt Sport Report: Sarah Visser

Ashlee Stallinga  
Staff Writer

I’ve had some experience.

How has the season started off?

Really good. We’ve been practicing a lot, which is fun. [The two games we’ve played] started really late—the first one started at 10 p.m. and went until after midnight; the second one started around 12:15 a.m., and was done at 2.

We’ve meshed really well so far. I’m excited to see what the year will bring.

In your last game, you defeated a ranked team.

What is the significance of that?

Well, we really didn’t talk about it going into the game, but it really gives us confidence.

What’s your favorite part about Dordt softball?

Friends and relationships.

Do you have any team traditions?

We do a cheer before the games to get us pumped up.

How long have you been playing softball?

I started tee ball when I was really little… and probably played softball since elementary school.

Who is your inspiration?

My dad. Is that corny? He’s pretty cool — he’d always shoot hoops with me, or catch for me… just always there.

How do you plan on incorporating sports in your future?

I want to be a coach. Basketball, softball or both. I’d start out anywhere, but it would be cool to get to the college level one day.

Are you the faithful follower of any TV show?

One Tree Hill.

If you could see any band in concert, which one would you choose?

I’ve seen Rascal Flatts, and it was really good. I’d see them again.

What is your favorite professional sports team and player?

The Suns, and Steve Nash. Or the Diamondbacks. It’s pretty close.

Do you have any predictions for the Diamondbacks this year?

Well, they need to make the playoffs. Predictions…. Brandon Webb will win 20 games, and Mark Reynolds will NOT lead the league in strikeouts.

What is your candy bar of choice?

Probably Hershey’s dark chocolate.
Redness had risen to her eyes. She took a crumpled napkin to catch the tears from falling and said it had been awhile since she brought back those memories.

Gina Ochsner, a 39-year-old author, is fascinated with the afterlife and with the things people leave behind when they’re gone. About 10 years ago, she almost left behind her newborn son.

Reflecting on that time, she admits, “I thought of how foolish and ridiculous I had been to do the things that put me in such a situation.” She was on a faithless journey, and it looked like her journey was about to end.

“There was a time when I was not walking with the Lord at all,” Gina recalls. “I really wasn’t for about 10 years.” Too many times she had said, “No, I’ll do it my way.” She found herself pregnant at 25. Single and pregnant. Her defiance met its match in a hospital room.

She gave birth to a healthy baby boy, but an undetected infection made her lose so much blood that she was facing death.

“I became very, very ill and was going to die because they could not find a transfusion, a good match,” she said hesitant-ly. “Finally, they found a match and flew it in, but they couldn’t find a vein that wouldn’t collapse... That’s when I thought—I could be in trouble. How could that be? What a silly way to go...” That was a turning point for Gina as she started to appreciate what it means to be alive:

“My life had been spared, and I know it had been spared for a reason... I realized life is so precious and fragile and can’t be wasted.”

But her faith didn’t come back instantly. She had to rethrive the choices she made and why she made them. Her walk away from God began after she went back to college, and her walk back began about 10 years later after she finished graduate school.

“It was a long journey back,” she said.

After facing death, she had to face herself. She heard God say- ing, “This is who you are. What are you going to do with your life?”

Gina didn’t have an answer right away, but she says these events made her craftsman-ship and writing technique come together.

In 2002, her first book was published—The Necessary Fall to Grace, a collection of short stories that explores the boundaries between life and death. In 2005, People I Wanted to Be was published. Both books are filled with magic realism and natural phenomenon, exploring a world beyond this world. Gina’s fascination has led her to do some exploring of her own, and she continues to indulge in her sense of curiosity.

She has two more books in progress.

But even after they’re done, she’ll keep ask-ing—what happens next?

**Ochsner defies death, writes about life**

Bylenga Hoogendoorn
Staff Writer

February 26, 2009

New improv group tries different style

**Enchanted April**
by Matthew Barber
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