A "Knight" to Remember

Bethany Fopma
Staff Writer

Dordt knights and maidens are encouraged to break out their formal wear for the annual Christmas Banquet. This year's event, A Medieval Night, will be held Thursday, December 9, in the DeYager Student Center. Punch will be served at 6:00, with dinner, pictures and a dance to follow.

"Christmas banquet is always a big hit with exams right around the corner," says Student Activities Committee Member Marike Boerema. "The whole student body is encouraged to attend, especially those who need a fun study break."

SAC will transform the DeYager Student Center into a structure from a medieval era with the help of a king and queen, jesters, stocks and castle walls. Even the backdrop for the pictures will have a medieval look.

"We chose a medieval theme because we thought it would be fun to decorate, eat medieval food and have a jester," Boerema says. "Most importantly, it's a good theme for the attendees to take advantage of by dressing up like knights and maidens if they want to."

In addition to dinner and dance, entertainment for the evening will include a string quartet, a skit performed by the king, queen, jester and trumpeter and pictures compliments of SAC. The dinner, catered by Carrie Foods, will consist of roast beef, ham, baked potatoes, lettuce salad, corn, green beans and brownies and ice cream for dessert.

Boerema hopes this event will give students a chance to get together for a good time before everyone leaves for break. "We hope that students will enjoy dressing up, getting their pictures taken and eating together. Our goal is to have a fun time before everyone leaves for the Christmas holiday."

SAC is already busy planning activities for next semester. Some of these events include the Talent Extravaganza, Canon of Dordt, Spring Fling, and drive-in movies.

Andrea Dykshoorn
Assistant Sports Editor

When people consider Sioux Center, most think of a small, safe Dutch community. But that's not what residents of West Hall were saying this past weekend after a stranger wandered through the girls' wing on first floor.

The man in question was described to be about 25 years of age with a short, stocky build and dark, spiked hair. Introducing himself as "Travis," the man told the girls who were approached by a group of students that if they bought a magazine subscription they would be eligible to win a trip to Cancun. According to Ken Boersma, the person who was on campus had a boyfriend and whether the student had a girlfriend and whether the student would like to go to Cancun with him if he won the trip.

The girls who were approached related the incident to CA Julie Perkins, who proceeded to call security. Dordt's security then filed a report with the local police.

Boersma indicates that the event which occurred was not an isolated incident. "I also received a report this weekend of a stranger who knocked on a residence window in the early morning hours. This person was acting strangely and was not a student." The stranger eventually left after being approached by a group of students.

This past weekend's events have caused some concern throughout the Dordt community. Boersma has encouraged students and faculty to be aware of the incidents and take steps to ensure that the campus is as safe as possible. "Lock your doors when you are out of your room or office...[and] be alert to any strangers you see loitering on campus."

Campus Security can be reached any time between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. by dialing 6414 and then "22." Anyone who sees a suspicious stranger is encouraged to contact Security immediately.
Dordt forms committee to make recommendation on football program

Stephen Kloosterman
Editor

The Board of Directors of Dordt College recently instituted a committee to make a recommendation on a possible football program here at Dordt.

"No, this isn’t the Zircon. Wrong page.

Dordt’s decision to delve into the world of football follows hundreds of decisions made by high schools around the country—among them local high schools Unity Christian and West Christian—to develop high school football programs. This exploratory step also mirrors studies undertaken by Calvin College in 1995, 1987 and the 60s, which determined that a football team was not in their future, and at our neighbor college Briar Cliff, four years ago, where they did decide to start a football program.

The committee will make a recommendation in March 2005.

A unique change

"I think it’s an exciting thing for Dordt College," said Barry Brandt, Athletic Supervisor at Northwestern College. "I think a football program is a unique thing that elicits a change: it brings a new aura, if you will, to the beginning of the year, and it has the potential to impact the whole year."

Some question the change that would be brought about by a football program. Dordt History Prof. and Committee member Paul Fessler taught at a smaller liberal-arts college with a football program before coming to Dordt. "I think it that hurt it," says Fessler, of the college’s program.

"It was a school of about 850 students, and there were approximately 160 on the football team—and that was close to about half of the males on campus. Almost all of the males wanted to be on sports team of some kind. They dominated so much; they were opinion-setters. And on a small campus, it impacted the culture as a whole. Dordt has done a very good job balancing athletics and academics. While I am a strong proponent of Athletics and Sports, we need to consider the impact that sports can have upon our College’s mission," said Fessler.

Fessler also noted that when he taught at Texas A&M, with Division I athletes in his class, the football team was a much smaller percentage of the student body and did not have as great a sway over what was done academically. "Athletics, and football in particular because of its greater numbers, have a much greater impact on smaller Schools like Dordt. How will it impact the culture of the college when perhaps 1 in 12 Dordt Students could be football players? How will it impact tuition? These are all questions that need to be considered by the committee," said Fessler.

According to Dordt HPER Prof. and Track and Field Coach Syne Altena, football would increase enrollment. When Briar Hill started their program, enrollment increased by 2.5 students for each player recruited.

"I think if you let Sport take you where it takes you, you’ll end up somewhere you don’t want to be," said Brandt. "It’s important that we not pursue sport for its own sake. Football is a very complex process, and the character it requires in the players is something we would like to see. It is potentially a great learning environment."

Altena said that while football "potentially could bring about good school spirit and visibility to the school, there are still many issues to be addressed. "I believe that it is true, that—at the NCAA division level a study was done—that the football team’s GPA was lower than the student body. Interestingly, at Dordt College, the graduation rate of athletes is quite a bit higher than that of other students. So I don’t think that this is true of our athletic program, that our GPA’s would be lower. But people are concerned that that will change," said Altena.

Reforming football

"Abraham Kuyper would have us at Dordt take every square inch of the creation for Christ; and the yards marked off on a football field are no exception. "It seems to be cultural that the more violent something is, the more people like it, and that isn’t the reason we want football—we want to be sure we do it in a reformed way," said Altena. "It’s going to depend all on the coaches and their attitudes—and our whole committee has said that more than any of these factors and weigh them, but it’s all going to come down to the coach, and the philosophy of the athletic department, whether or not you can play it Christianly and this is true of any of our sports.”

"In any activity we have, God is our creator, and He gives us gifts and has provided a multitude of ways to express those gifts. I believe you glorify God by approaching activity with humility and thankfulness and a desire to use your God-given ability to the best of your ability," said Brandt.

Syne Altena says there are many questions the committee must ask itself. But "one that is more likely to answer the question is of whether the sport is Christian or not, is, ‘injuries: are they higher than in other sports?”

"(Football) is very physical in nature, but is not founded in brutality. I think some people would have a problem grasping that fact, but I believe that is true," said Brandt.

Must be the money

According to Dordt Athletics Director Rick Vander Berg, Briar Cliff’s football program startup costs totaled $160,000 for equipment alone. Based on 7 GPAC schools surveyed, Vander Berg predicts an expenditure of $48,000 to $50,000 for new equipment, transportation, officials’ compensation, uniforms, and pre-season camps each year. Insurance may cost from $10,000 to $20,000 per year. Football would require 3 full-time staff: a head coach, and offensive and defensive coordinators (all of whom presumably would teach classes and engage in other college activities besides football). Six part-time coaches would have to be hired as well.

If a salary of $40,000 dollars is assumed for each of the full-time staff and a salary of $2,000 for each of the part-time faculty, a Dordt football program would cost an estimated $362,000 to $352,000 the first year and $202,000 to $192,000 every year thereafter. Football scholarships and potential medical costs are not included in this estimate. Scholarships within the GPAC conference, said Vander Berg, range from none at all at Nebraska Wesleyan College to over $250,000.

Jury out

"One thing I’m sure of, from knowing Dordt, is that this will be well-thought-out. It will not be a knee-jerk decision," said Brandt. "The committee has really wrestled with a lot of the questions about how it’s going to affect Dordt College, and how it would affect our reformed perspective, and that’s what we’ve spent the majority of our time so far talking about," said Vander Berg.

"I think we’re looking at it very deliberately. We’ve got to careful about why we’re doing this, what’s the primary reason for adopting football," said Fessler. "I think the way in which this is handled is important. I do think any decision Dordt makes about football has to be done in such a way as it does not compromise the mission of Dordt. I think that’s what our committee is trying to do."
DEATH IN THE LIBRARY!

SLEEPY-HEAD SEWELL CAUGHT ON CAMERA!

The Semi-National ZIRCON

BYOM: BRING YOUR OWN Marijuana!

Halo 2 class offered! Classifieds Inside!
From the outset, students noted a change in the normally jovial professor. "When noticed a change in the notion of Alexander II, Europe became apparent. The incident in question occurred on 30 November 2004, the day that classes resumed after Thanksgiving break. That morning, Sewell walked in wearing a brimmed cap, I knew something was wrong," states one eyewitness. I thought only students knew that trick—wearing a hat in class to hide drooping eyelids." According to reports from eye-witnesses, this is not the case.

The second sign that Sewell was not his ordinary self came when the professor sat down and commenced a lecture on the history of history—a little odd, considering the class was scheduled to discuss the foreign policy of tsar Alexander II. However, for the first time on record, Sewell failed to reach the 'question and answer’ period. Instead, he nodded off mid-sentence, leaving the class stunned.

Reactions to the incident varied greatly. One student, obviously well-grounded in the penny-pinching Dutch tradition, was outraged. "I paid good money for that class, and I want a refund!" The student proceeded to prepare a three-point mini-sermon outlining his concerns, and carried through on his threat to take his concerns, and carried through on his threat to take the issue to President Zylstra [Editor’s Note: as of press deadline, no consensus has been reached on the prospect of a refund].

Additional complaints were also launched against Dr. Sewell for his lethargic behavior. One red-eyed student complained after class that the professor's loud snoring had interrupted his nap. Nevertheless, the general response from the class was somewhat light-hearted. "It's not often that we get to see a cap-clad Sewell lecture himself to sleep," remarked an amused student.
When questioned about the video, Schaap was unable to pause from his sobbing to answer any questions posed to him.

**YOU’VE GOT A FRIEND IN US**

--continued from pg. 2

Personal grooming. In this component, freshmen are taught how to dress, how to smell nice, how to do laundry, and how to keep their room clean.

How to impress girls. This component gives freshmen valuable skills with the ladies. Since three of the senior men in Covenant are engaged, they are able to share their experience and expertise. Pick-up lines are engaged, they are able to share their experience and how to keep their room clean.

How to impress girls. This component gives freshmen valuable skills with the ladies. Since three of the senior men in Covenant are engaged, they are able to share their experience and expertise. Pick-up lines are engaged, they are able to share their experience and how to keep their room clean.

Study skills. Freshmen learn how to study, how to take notes, and how to take tests. The senior mentors create practice tests for freshmen to take, and the senior room has been restructured to allow for quiet study and testing areas for the freshmen guys in Covenant.

How to have fun. Ideas for how to have a good time in Sioux Center are included in this component. Ideas include donut runs, Student Services approved buffalo runs, a friendly game of Rock, defying your parents and all authority figures and yelling as loud as you can down the halls.

"This program has been so successful that we are writing a new manual, and we will be marketing it to other colleges," said Ken Boersma, Vice President of Student Services.

"I’ve really grown over the past semester because of this program," said Nate Jensen. "The skills that I gained as a result of helping the freshman has made me a better person."

"You won’t want to miss this unique opportunity. Sure, the communal showers and living with freshmen may seem like a set-back, but they’re really not. If I had to choose a place to live next year, Covenant would be it!" said Josh Bowar.

**MEDICINAL MARIJUANA CLUB REACHES ACADEMIC “HIGH”**

Cannabis J. Weedly Staff Pigeon Feeder

After a landmark decision by the Student activities council, Dordt students will now have a new choice for weekend entertainment. What is it? It’s the Bring your own Marijuana club!

Following the success of the Bring Your own Beer party a few weeks back, the SAC decided to take it one step farther with the creation of the BYOM club. The club seeks to promote free thinking through the use of cannabis in an attempt to free the mind from the usual constraints of logical thinking.

"Said Dr. Tazelar, faculty advisor for the club "We feel this will really create a new line of thinking in the student body, and provide some much needed stress relief as well."

Talk to (hey, you guys have any bright ideas for a contact person? Maybe we should throw Steve K in as a retiring present) for more details. (Writers note: The BYOM club is not responsible for any arrests resulting from obtaining or the use of, marijuana.)

**Classifieds**

**SERVING AND LEARNING IN HUNGARY OR UKRAINE**

A Cross-Cultural Course in Budapest and Western Ukraine-
Learn about culture and contemporary life in Eastern Europe.
- Learn some basic Hungarian, as well as history and folk culture.
- Explore the intersection of the Reformed and Orthodox religious traditions and meet missionaries in the area.
- Live in the dorms at the Hungarian Reformed Schools and interact with the local students.

Service OPTIONS:
- Work with Gypsys (Roma people)
- Teach English and Agriculture - high school and adult
- Mentor high school students
- Assist area missionaries

TENTATIVE DATES: May 12-28, 2005
Duke Nukem
Riot Correspondent

... and it was that element that would prove to be the fatal flaw in my plot. I strutted through the library doors, my head held high, trying to appear calm. I bid my beating heart to be still, and yet the perspiration flowed. But behold! Alas, my intuitive bird's-eye was run or die. Prosperity! I should have run, but I couldn't hear their screams. For fierce mobs now existed and I was certain to be thrown into a large wire cage and forced to survive by dukeing it out. Helmets, weapons, and other objects were encouraged for this event, which will be held on April 19th.

SAC Plans New and Exciting Events for the Coming Semester

Being as progressive as possible, the Student Activities Committee (SAC) has planned several new events for next semester.

**Facility t-shirt contest.**
Faculty and staff will be encouraged to sign up to get soaked in wet t-shirt contest. Being as progressive as possible, the Student Activities Committee (SAC) has planned several new events for next semester. In this event will be held on the old soccer field on Saturday, April 25 at 7:30 PM. The following faculty have already shown interest: James Mahaffy, Jim Scharp and Lorna Van Gilst.

**Dog sledding.**
Because of a heightened interest in mushing dogs this semester (particularly from the Canadian contingent here at Dordt), SAC will provide a course to be completed during the month of February.

**Mass marriage.**
Because of the high number of engagements this year, SAC will be offering engaged couples the option of participating in the first ever mass marriage ceremony, held in the BJ Haan on Valentine's Day, February 14th. President Carl Zylstra will be officiating, music will be provided, and a reception will be held for the couples and their friends and family in the Campus Center with Carlee Foods catering. To sign up, find someone to ask them to marry you, and email sac@dordt.edu.

**Fiancée swap.**
Based on the popular television show Wife Swap, this event will provide engaged couples with the opportunity to swap fiancé es for a day, a week, or forever (all options given to couples).

Halo 2 course begins Fall

Since its addition to Dordt College's academic repertoire last Tuesday, Halo 2 Studies has surpassed Business Administration as the most popular major offered here. Focused on the popular new video game distributed by Microsoft and Bungie, Halo 2 Studies teaches students such important values as gratuitous violence, disgusting profanity and sickening lethargy as they rank up the credit hours within the comfort of their own room. The administration had joked about the possibility of such a major, but did not begin serious discussions until after the entire population of North Hall failed to show up to class the day after the game came out. After much administration tried to solve the problem through suspensions and academic alerts but failing that, they were forced to involve a new friend, Boersma, vice president of student services, commented, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Most students choose to major in Halo 2 studies with an emphasis in "running riot", but some major with an emphasis in "creative Halo names." Still others choose an emphasis on the "mystery of the new energy sword."

President Carl Zylstra expressed his enthusiasm at this new addition to Dordt's academic ics: "I think that it is good that students are reclaiming this particular slice of creation." One anonymous freshman echoed Zylstra's sentiments. "I'll reclaim YOUR square inch, you stupid team-killing (expletive)," while a sophomore said, "Hey, you're blocking the (expletive) TV, get the (expletive) out of my way (expletive) (expletive)." Aw, (expletive), I just died... Did I mention (expletive)?"

Replacing Gen100, Intro to Halo 2 Studies (HAL 101) is required for all freshmen. This class covers the history of Halo 2, starting with the first Halo game. The class spends three weeks studying the differences between the easiest three difficulty levels for the single player campaign mode, and takes an in-depth look at the technology behind the much-loved system link option. All students in HAL 101 must also take a Halo 2 lab, which they can work on in their own room or the room of a friend, worth 3 credit hours per week (although most HAL 101 students accumulate over 50). Interestingly, the most popular lab hours tend to be from 4:00 in the afternoon to 4:00 in the morning, followed by extended periods of sleeping.

The Halo 2 Studies major promises to prepare students for such careers as drifters, philanderers, hobos, bums, drunks, Master Chief, mass murderers, fast food workers, and veterinarians (EVIL veterinarians).

Halo 2 Studies have also been a great asset to college recruitment. Said recruiter Michael TenHaken, "Many current high school seniors are strongly considering Dordt for their unparalleled Halo 2 Studies program." Ten Haken attributed this to the fact that Dordt is currently the only college to offer a major in Halo 2. However, similar programs are being instituted at other colleges. Said Ten Haken, "Calvin just set up a "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" fault overseas study program, and Northwestern is looking into adding NCAA Football 2005... . The video game, that is."
Step into a Larger World

Ann Andree
Staff Writer

Dordt bubble. Fish bowl. Dutch. CRC Circle. These are buzz words around campus used to describe the community in which we live. Unfortunately, often our close community is to the exclusion of others. A Diamond article in the September 13, 2001 issue written by Chris Wilson, a student who left Dordt, reads:

"How long... before I realize that this place, even though it means well, was not designed for a person of color or of a different culture? How can this college expect to bring in people of another culture when the place is not made for such a purpose? This college is filled with so many people that are not of my culture and that is intimidating for me. Another problem here at Dordt College is that there seems to be no problems, even though I see them clearly. So many of us walk around with our minds and our hearts not to be touched."

If this response was an isolated incident, Dordt could dismiss Wilson’s reply; however, he is not alone.

Residence Life probed the student body in 2003 in order to get a feel as to how the general population feels about diversity and community on campus. The results of Residence Life Staff’s probe of campus were summarized as follows.

Most of the student body says that Dordt is a civil place, but they also recognize that civility by its nature is surface level politeness. The Dordt community is split on the issue of whether people are honored and diversity pursued. The majority thinks nothing is wrong, but minorities, exchange students, and those who question that status quo disagree.

The majority has a choice to ignore the lack of diversity, remaining neutral. They have their circle in which they feel comfortable. The minority students, on the other hand, must come face-to-face with culture clashes. Those in the majority group at Dordt have a responsibility instead of remaining apathetic so that diversity will be pursued.

As we gain knowledge about the division between the majority and campus, we also are given responsibility. Caucasians often feel like reconciliation is not their issue, even if it is a good idea, and so remain neutral, never moving forward. However, reconciliation is the responsibility of Caucasian students just as much—or more—than of the minority students. When the minority students cry out, the majority needs to hear and take action.

Think of the family of God as a family photograph. Everyone has a sliver of the photo to make the picture. In order to see the entire photograph, we need the other parts of the photo. We piece the photo together by listening to people’s stories. Sit down with people. Listen. Share.

I saw a glimpse of God’s Kingdom while at a multicultural conference in Seattle, Washington. All the people—red, yellow, black and white—were worshiping together, worshipping the one, true God. We were swaying in unison and singing in harmony. Physically, the congregated worshippers represented the body of Christ. And we were unified in our diversity. Is Dordt a close or closed community?

Looking back...

Steve Kloosterman
Editor

12-04-04

Dordt? I will remember it clearly. I will remember flying around like a chicken with its head chopped off, blinking my crusty eyelids like a drunk just out of rehab, biting my cracked lip and causing a keyboard to chatter. Sprawled before the TV in a deep funk, wondering how I can face the morning. Sprinting to get to the classroom building at 8:00 a.m. for class; sprinting there again at 5:00 p.m. to turn in my papers at the last minute, pushing and stumbling and fumbling my way through a four-year marathon called college.

The Diamond has been a significant chunk of my college experience, a notable part of my education, and a notable part of my life that now draws to a close. Next semester, the Lord willing, I’ll be running around at some sort of publication in Chicago as an intern, and The Diamond will be in the more-than-capable hands of Andrea Dykshoorn, who has already shown remarkable responsibility and vision while working with The Diamond last year and this semester.

Four years ago I came to Dordt and was amazed by the challenges with which it presented me. I wrote in my journal that I didn’t know how on earth I’d get through college without God by my side each step of the way. But I knew Him whose grace was enough for me, and I trusted that His strength would be made perfect in my weakness. And although there have been many moments in the past years and even the past week in which God has seemed very far away indeed, somehow, I’ve been brought through it all.

Good memories fill my head and start to run over: second place finish in the Southview pie-eating contest last Thursday, the masked and spurgeon-wielding bandits in our apartment this morning. But regrets are there too, because when you’re a person like me, in a position such as I have had, you tend to make mistakes fairly often. Most of my friends know the frenzied, lopsided style in which I tend to live and work, and some of my friends know my other personal faults: my depression, my laziness, my paranoia and pride. But no one knows better how screwed up Steve Kloosterman is than I do.

I’m both humbled and encouraged that God chose me in all my weirdness, and used me in spite of all my weirdness. Whatever good I’ve done with regards to this college and this newspaper, wherever I am, whatever good I do in the future...

“Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” –2 Corinthians 12:9

by Chris Maust

I mean, Jeez.

I don’t even like Whitman.
Defenders battle on hard court

Basketball season is in full-swing, and the Dordt basketball teams are doing battle on the hard court often. Both the men's and women's teams have played a few non-conference games, and the GPAC conference schedule is also underway.

The Dordt men's basketball team jumped off to a quick start this season. They took their first three non-conference games of the season.

During the season, the Dordt men's basketball team will face the preseason favorite and 6th ranked team in NAJA II, Sioux Falls.

“The Defenders continued the torrid conference start by beating Mount Marty in the home-opener. Dordt found themselves down with only seconds left to pull ahead when Luke Ruter hit a jumper in the lane to give Dordt the 70-69 victory.”

The men's team repeated their last second heroics with a 82-81 road victory over Morningside College. Down one with twenty seconds left, Dordt had one final chance to win the game. BJ Haan tipped in a miss with 3.9 seconds left and capped a thrilling game.

Successful season ends

Rachel Guthmiller
Sports Editor

The 2004 Dordt College volleyball season officially came to an end during pool play at the NAIA National Tournament Dec. 1-3. The Defenders found themselves matched up against the home team, the Point Lome (San Diego, CA) Sea Lions in first round play on Dec. 1. The Defenders dropped game one 30-21, but Dordt turned up the heat in games two and three winning both 30-27 and 30-22. The Sea Lions found themselves facing defeat and turned the match around winning the fourth and fifth games 30-25 and 15-13. Tara De Boer had 18 kills and Traci Kostin tallied 25 digs.

In the second round the Defenders took on Texas Wesleyan and dropped a close 30-28 decision in game one. The Defenders then rallied to win the second game 30-23. Texas came back with a 30-25 third game win. Facing a do or die situation the Defenders rallied back to win the fourth game 30-27. The fifth game proved close with nine ties, but Texas Wesleyan pulled out the 15-12 win.

The 15-12 win, Rachel Pontier pounded 20 kills and Jill Haan contributed 30 digs.

Round three matched Dordt with Georgetown (Kentucky). The Defenders again came out slow and lost the first game 30-22. But the Defenders turned their game around by taking game two 30-21. The Defenders continued to rally to come from behind and pull out the victory 30-23 to take the match. De Boer hammered in 22 kills, Kostin tallied 13 digs.

In the final round Dordt faced Cornerstone (Michigan). Dordt came out blazing and won the first game by a 30-15 decision. The Defenders carried their momentum into game two by coming back from a 26-23 deficit to win the game 30-28. Cornerstone came back in game three and won 30-25, a 3-0 decision. The Defenders put game four away easily with a 30-19 victory. De Boer lead the way with 20 kills and Emily Van Voorst dished out 63 assists.

The Defenders ended their season with 37 wins and four losses, and their conference record was 16-0. Senior Rachel Pontier was named a 2004 NAIA Scholar Athlete in volleyball.

“White Oleander” ...the poison of a mother’s love

Lynette Andree
Entertainment Editor

"White Oleander," starring Alison Lohman and Michelle Pfeiffer, is a story about the dangerous love of a mother. Ingrid (Pfeiffer), an artist, murdered her boyfriend after he abandoned her. Her 15-year-old daughter, Astrid (Lohman), witnessed her mother arrest. Through a number of foster homes Astrid learns more about herself in three years than she had before in her entire life.

Each foster home has a different set of rules that Astrid needs to conform to. Astrid needs to learn how to survive in an unstable and often cruel world. She shuts herself off from the world, refusing to open up to anyone for fear of losing them. Every time she would let someone scratch the surface of who she was, she would lose them to foster homes, abandonment, and even death.

As the years progress Astrid sees more of who her mother is. Her mother is a constant in her life, her influence—good and bad—is unavering. “Oleander can be poisonous... so can a mother’s love.” Through manipulation and lies, Ingrid tries to force her own beliefs on her daughter; she tries to mold her daughter into a carbon copy of herself. Ingrid tried to live vicariously through her daughter, but failed to when her daughter turned against her. The woman who Astrid formerly looked up to and practically worshipped turned out to be someone she would end up hating. This powerful story of a mothers love is nothing short of intense.

“White Oleander” is British director Peter Kosminsky's debut into the American film industry.