There and back again: Concert Choir tours southwestern states

Janelle Canninga – Arts Editor


One choir director leading his first Dordt tour. Instructive as they are, these numbers don’t begin to cover the journey of the Dordt College Concert Choir’s spring tour. Dr. Alecceciour, according to the music department’s new Instagram account. Or @dceccour, as the hashtag ended up evolving due to a bunch of college students who either couldn’t remember or didn’t feel like remembering just how many s’s belonged after the d.

Choir director Ryan Smit is an old hand at touring. He was part of the concert choir as a student at Dordt from 1996-1999 and has led many high school choir tours in his past 16 years of teaching. But each tour is different.

“I was pleasantly surprised by the grace and strength demonstrated by the students in the choir, especially when so much was asked of them,” said Smit. “I was also amazed at how eager our choir members were to engage and a strong performance from the great acoustical space to sing in, an audience that appreciated the music and the message of the gospel through song and sharing a bit about the beauty of the gospel.”

Choir tour experience since I was a student in high school. Smit and the students took him up on the offer.

“One choir director leading his first Dordt tour. The lives behind battery life in Congo’s cobalt mines

Jonna Stephens -- Staff Writer

You sort through your email. A girl sorts through a pile of rocks searching for cobalt stones. You plug in your phone. A boy goes to sleep, hoping to recharge enough to work for 12 more hours in the mine tomorrow.

Smartphones, laptops, tablets and almost all other rechargeable devices contain cobalt in their batteries. A smart phone contains about 5 to 10 grams of cobalt and an electric car battery contains up to 15,000 grams of the element. This brittle, silvery metal, which is found in abundance in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has made news recently due to human rights abuses in the mining industry. Both cobalt mines and the tech companies which use their extracted materials are under scrutiny as children make up much of the workforce.

Sarah Saisa Selenga, a sophomore at Dordt, is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She, along with over 10 million other residents, calls the capital city, Kinshasa, home. The cobalt mines are in the eastern and southern regions of the DRC, about 2,000 kilometers away from where Selenga lives. In Kinshasa, children go to school, study and play with friends after class.

It is a stark contrast from the lives of those working in the mines.

An Amnesty International report released in 2016 revealed that cobalt mined by children was being used in products from companies like Apple, Microsoft, Tesla and Samsung. Many of the companies released statements following this exposure, some saying they are committed to responsible sourcing of materials and that they had surveyed their supply chains.

“We must place pressure on companies and governments to act ethically in the sourcing of minerals and, where lapses occur, name and shame those that are not acting responsibly,” Alex Bankenhead, head of the Governance of Africa’s Resources Programme, wrote in an email.

There are at least 40,000 children working in the four main cobalt mines in the DRC. While the number of children working in the mines has decreased since 2014, forced child labor continues to be a problem.

The negative effects of cobalt mining are extensive. Children work in the mines instead of attending school. Videos filmed by CBS News show children trudging around the mines in shorts and colorful sandals, lacking the face masks, work clothing and gloves they should be wearing to protect themselves from the elements. Chronic exposure to dust and fumes can cause lung disease and asthma. Multiple cases of rare birth defects have been found in the babies of parents working in cobalt mines. The environments surrounding mines contain alarming radioactivity levels. Mining waste pollutes the communities’ drinking water.

Children trudge through trenches, navigating a path through mud and rocks. Some dig into the earth with shovels. Others dig with their bare hands. The youngest workers learn to pick pieces of cobalt out of the piles of rock and dirt, washing and sorting them in streams and lakes. In a few years, when they are stronger, they might haul sacks of cobalt on their shoulders over to the motorcycles which transport them to the market.

CIB News recently sent a team to the southern region of the DRC and shot footage of these scenes in the cobalt mines. They went on to investigate child labor in cobalt mines and what role the world’s biggest tech companies play in this industry.

Many cobalt miners in the DRC are artisanal miners. This means they are not officially employed, but rather work independently, mining by hand with their own basic tools. The workers lack labor standards or set salaries. But it cannot be ignored that artisanal mining is an important part of the economy in many developing countries. It provides employment and an income, although minimal, for the rural poor. Over half of the cobalt in the market today comes from the DRC, according to Darton Commodities Ltd., a research company in London. Twenty percent of this cobalt is mined by children.
In Sioux County, two political party advocate groups exist: the Sioux County Conservatives and the Sioux County Democrats. Both hold events to advocate their policies to community members and students.

This Thursday, March 29, during the Sioux County Conservatives’ “Pizza and Policy” night, Republican Congressman Steve King will be in Sioux Center to speak. Prior to the event, community members, with the help of Sioux County Democrats, will be holding a “peaceful assembly” to discuss some of the things King has said. People are encouraged to go to listen to Rep. King after this assembly.

During the event, people from the community will read and respond to King’s past statements.

“One big problem is the disrespectful nature of his discourse, the way his language demeans people, especially immigrants how he implies that western civilization is superior to other civilizations,” says Kim Van Es, the Chair for Sioux County Democrats.

“I don’t want somebody representing my district who doesn’t know how to be a statesman,” Van Es said. “A statesman is someone who can speak respectfully of others even though they disagree.”

In the past, “Pizza and Policy” events have been met with protest, especially during Islamic scholar Dr. Steve Kirby’s speech.

However, Jacob Hall, a leader of the Sioux County Conservatives, says that they do not mind having protests on their event.

“Their (protesters’) doubled the size of our previous record attendance,” he said.

The Sioux County Conservatives started in 2016 during the Republican primary for the Iowa House. A few community members got together to promote Senator-Candidate Claydell Wheeler.

However, after the elections, priorities for the Sioux County Conservatives changed. Now they advocate for their conservative beliefs, for a small government and to promote local government.

“The purpose of government is to reward good and punish evil,” Hall said. “The federal government is huge; it’s doing things that is was never meant to do,” Hall said.

The Sioux County Conservatives’ primary goal is to educate, motivate and mobilize conservatives beyond Election Day. The Conservatives are also advocates for gun rights, anti-abortion and less government involvement in education. They recently spoke out against LGBTQ books being place in Orange City’s library. For many, their goal is to keep the books off the shelves.

“I have quite a few of them checked out right now and they would probably be re-checked in a day or two,” Hall said.

“One religion cannot impose their belief on how to live on a general population, unless a behavior is harmful to that population,” says Van Es.

“If you look at history, some of the societies where how gay people have lived will be elevated now that they are more out in the open, that they are able to marry, that they can feel comfortable getting the healthcare they need. I know of no harm in letting gay people marry. And whether or not I agree with that religiously, that should not affect the law in a pluralistic country.”

The Sioux County Democrats exists within the strongly conservative Sioux County. Van Es said he Chair of the organization during the 2012 caucus because they were without a leader at that time. Since then, she has been for the organization which has 14 board members on the Sioux County Democratic Central Committee.

Although the number of registered Democrats in Sioux County is small, Van Es says the number of people who are interested in the Sioux County Democrats is growing. Like the Sioux County Conservatives, the Sioux County Democrats will hold speakers and events to discuss political topics and events. During an event called “Plain Conversation” that invites people from different backgrounds to discuss political issues, Planned Parenthood speakers spoke on funding for women’s healthcare and the different ways women get and use their healthcare.

Though the debate was intense, Van Es says that during the meeting people from opposite sides had to listen to each other’s disagreement.

“The primary purpose of the meeting was to educate, and I think education happened that night,” Van Es said.

On March 24, the Sioux County Democrats met in the Sioux Center Library for their county convention to review, discuss and approve a draft for the Democrat platform for their party. The draft has been sent to the district level, then it will be sent to the state and then some part of it may become part of the National Democratic Party. The platform contains the position the party has on certain issues. In 2016, the platform included the party’s stance on immigration, trade and other political issues.

The event with Congressman Steve King will start at 7:00pm on Thursday in Sioux Center Library and the peaceful assembly will be meeting at 6:00pm. For more information, visit Sioux County Conservatives’ Facebook page or visit Sioux County Democrats’ Facebook page.

Serial bomber in Texas Shocked Austin before Committing Suicide

Austin has been deeply shaken in the past few weeks due to a series of bombings throughout the city. Between March 18th and March 21st, five bombs were detonated by a serial bomber, with most of the bombs strategically placed for victims to find. After five incidents, there was a final explosion, in which the suspect took his own life by detonating a bomb inside his own vehicle after being pursued by police.

The bombings are of national significance, but the incidents also have local repercussions for the Dordt College community. Approximately 25 students on campus hail from Texas. One of the Dordt College students was in the explosion. The Dordt College students were in a VIA trip during several of the bombings.

Despite the ongoing attacks and investigation into the group set out, the PDLE group did not allow their willingness to serve the community to change.

Rowser said that when the attacks were ongoing, he spent his time “just hoping they wouldn’t be the next house to get a package on their doorstep.”

In addition, one of the nine Putting Love Into Action groups had been assigned to go to Austin before bombings began. Thus, a group of Dordt students were in their PLIA trip during several of the bombings.

The engineer community takes note of previous failures, and is careful to avoid the same mistakes. Vander Werff has already included the collapse as a potential topic of study in ENG 212.

But damage has already been done. Vander Werff called it a “double tragedy,” referring to both the fatalities, and the fact that the collapse has harmed the reputation of the ABC University Transportation Center.

The benefits of ABC are high according to Vander Werff, but bad publicity of the collapse will be a major setback.

In Florida, three people died when a bridge collapsed into the highway, killing six people, on March 15. The bridge utilized accelerated bridge construction (ABC) techniques and technology to minimize traffic delays and improve construction speed.

A full investigation is in progress, and Justin Vander Werff, a Dordt engineering professor, believes that it will uncover the root cause of the collapse.

Vander Werff noticed that the failure occurred near the end of the bridge, not the middle, indicating that the bridge failed in shear, as opposed to bending. After the bridge was in place, the supports were removed and crews began working on post-tensioning, a standard process in which steel cables running through the concrete bridge sections are tensioned after the bridge is in place. Because it failed during this step, it’s possible that a mistake was made in the post-tensioning process that led to the catastrophic failure.

FIU is home to the ABC University Transportation Center, a leading research organization in the field of ABC. Vander Werff has met Aerod Arzizimimian, the civil engineering chair at FIU, and identifies him as one of the leading figures in the field of ABC. FIU also collaborated with FGG, a well reputed bridge design firm, to design the bridge. They, in turn, contracted Munilla Construction Management (MCM) to construct the bridge.

Vander Werff explained that no single person or company oversees all aspects of the bridge construction. Usually the design firm is responsible for the final bridge construction, and the construction company is responsible for the intermediate steps during construction. Regardless, certified engineers must approve of each step of the process.

ABC is a method of bridge construction that involves prefabrication of bridge sections offsite, and rapid installation of the bridge. Sections of the bridge are assembled near the bridge location, and then moved into place. This method has several benefits. Firstly, the bridge sections are usually produced in a dedicated offshore facility that can ensure that each section is built to specifications. Second, because of the rapid installation, ABC reduces the time roads must be closed. Thirdly, the overall construction time and cost is reduced because less on-site work is required.

A recent success of ABC in Iowa is the Keg Creek bridge that was recently installed near Council Bluffs. According to the Iowa DOT, the bridge was installed in two weeks, a much shorter time than the several months that would have been required for conventional bridge construction.

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The Sioux County Conservatives and Democrats clash over King
Putting Love Into Action—or PLIA, as it’s better known—is an opportunity for students to spend their spring break serving in various locations across the United States. Dordt organizes eight to ten trips, with around eight students in each group, and they travelled to sites in Mississippi, Arizona, Texas and more.

“It was completely different from what I expected. I thought we would only talk to people, but I listened to people’s testimonies in this broken community. We worked, but the city also wanted us to talk about racism, that still exists.”

Kooiman and his group of eight traveled to Mendenhall, Miss. His group worked on repainting houses, refurbishing furniture and cleaning up around the town. In the evenings, they exchanged testimonies and listened to the people of Mendenhall.

Mendenhall is a community where racism is still a problem. A railroad track splits the mixed community, and each group is aware of the situation and are taking steps to change the way the town is used to be.

“The last night, one person’s testimony really summed up the whole trip,” Kooiman said. She said, “When Jesus died on the cross, He was completely different from what I expected. I thought we would only talk to people, but I listened to people’s testimonies in this broken community. We worked, but the city also wanted us to talk about racism, that still exists.”

Another place students served was in Georgia. The first part of the trip took place in the inner city of Atlanta. The group of eight students spent the day hanging out with kids at school and in the park.

“We really learned the class and do homework,” junior Ben Tiemersma said. “We went to a park and in the park.

The team helped Larry, the man who started the camp, in preparation for the summer. The Grand Cabin in the camp is a place to kids for when it is too hot or chilly for outdoor activities. The PLIA team trimmed, painted, cleaned, and this photo of the local church provided the roof of the Grand Cabin. Part of the team even helped to build a ropes course.

PLIA also sent students to Colorado City, AZ, a community with a large Mormon population. “Colorado City is a great place to serve,” sophomore Kylie Shea said. “We have already had dinner of citizens of the United States; nor shall any person state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within the jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

“The sweet smell of hog and cow manure smells like home to me.”

Residents say that it’s the small, quiet and happy for what they have. It could be the overlooked states who seem to be content feed.

“Eating need is to this point is the right of life that God has given to the unborn baby,” Pullman said. “We have to use our rights to protect a variety of amenities and services to continue to make this a great place.”

Sioux Center has one of the lowest unemployment rates and 15th-highest median household income in the country. Having a college within the small town is an added bonus to the Sioux Center community.

On top of Sioux Center’s award, the state of Iowa ranked as the best state to live in America in a US News and World Report study. Iowa was also placed eighth in the Top-10 list for the “Happiest State in the USA.”

The statistics behind the success of the state comes from a list of criteria, including the percentage of depressed adults, amount of adequate sleep, suicide rate, long-term unemployment numbers, average work hours, volunteerism, safety ratings, income growth and divorce rates.

Iowa came in third for Long-Term Unemployment, sixth place for Adequate Sleep Rate and Income Growth, and eighth place for Separation and Divorce Rate.

The Hawkeye State has a population of 3.14 million and 35.7 million acres to farm and develop. Iowa is the number one producer of edible corn and second to Nebraska for corn feed.

Some states say that it’s the small, quiet and people who seek to be seen and happy for what they have. It could be the overlooked states who seem to be content feed.

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Dance bonanza in full swing

Evangeline Colarusso – Staff Writer

Low lights, loud jazz music and the scent of fresh popcorn accompanied dozens of cheerful voices in the Campus Center Saturday evening. Skirts swirled around the floor as couples flowed through the moves they had been learning in the swing dance club. Grand dips and turns were executed, along with the basic swing steps tying it all together.

Members of the club started decorating at 5:30 p.m. to set the black and white theme in place. Clear fairy lights hung from the railings and ceiling along with spiraling black decorations while black and white balloons scattered the floor. Dancers arrived and moved onto the floor for a short session at 7:30 p.m. The dance officially started at 8:00.

From Frank Sinatra to Bruno Mars, swing dance can be adapted to many styles of songs. Dancers Rocked Around the Clock and several ambitious souls ventured out for a dynamic, yet draining polka, teeing around the floor like a whirlwind.

Even people who just passed by got the chance to learn a few moves. Dancers were more than willing to stop anywhere to show the floor for a few minutes and teach newcomers the basic steps and a few tricks.

Halfway through the dance, couples competed in a competition for a (somewhat) crisp five-dollar bill. Panic! at the Disco’s “Death of a Bachelor” reverberated in the background as the couples attempted to dance and defeat their opponents in a lively game.

The dance involved a balloon stomping contest. The guys had to move their feet carefully to avoid getting their balloon popped, as each balloon was tied to an ankle. Every round added another balloon and the competition got hotter. The girls received balloons in the third round. When one of a pair’s balloons had been popped, they were out.

Lugs swung all around, in an attempt to keep balloons away from stomping feet, whether they were bare or encumbered by heels.

“I feel that it’s a special kind of fun that we here at Dordt are keeping the more traditional aspects of dancing alive,” said freshman Danikka Jackson, who has been part of the swing dance club since the fall. “I get to take what I’ve been learning at the regular Tuesday swing lessons and practice them in a more formal setting. It’s almost like going to a ball.”

And what a ball it was. Coming off the dance floor, the clock looked like it never had before. A few rounds were ventured back out, the energy was flowing again. When the dance ended, the floor was covered in balloons. A few minutes later, the music turned back on and it was a lively game.

If you’re interested, you can “swing” with the aerobics room at 8:30 p.m. each Tuesday to learn dance moves and make new memories. A partner is not needed and all are welcome. You can also contact the group on their Facebook page: Dordt College Swing Dance.

Forensics nationals team attends national competition

Emma Stoltzfus – Staff Writer

Forensics: studying dead bodies from crime scenes or giving speeches and debating competitively.

Since Dordt brought an odd number of debate competitors, Dorsett created a hybrid debate team with both another odd-man-out from a different school.

On one day, the team was able to take a quick hum of the horror brought by In-N-Out in between round—courtesy of Azusa Pacific.

After a full day of speeches on Friday, the team split off for an evening out and about Los Angeles. Several members of the team visited the Hollywood Walk of Fame and checked out the haunted house at Universal Studios. Competitors were approached by representatives from the Church of Scientology to “watch a film.”

On the drive back, they gushed in the hills of Hollywood trying to see the famous sign and return to the rental house.

The NCCFL made a big push for school spirit within the tournament and had an ongoing competition comprised of human bingo, heads up, and other teamwork-oriented games.

At one point, a student put on a panda onesie and danced around with the animated character “Pete” to the song Kang Fu Fighting.

Dordt tied for fourth or fifth in the spirit competition, which awarded a small painted figurine to the most spirited team. During the competition, there were a few slips-ups in debate and in the IE speeches a couple team members forgot their lines or accidently remained seated while giving their speeches.

The results were counted and determined three hours of standing, sitting, and clapping as the winners each round were handed plaques and cups.

Zoe reached the semi-finals for impromptu speaking, Van Eps received second place in the round of novice prose and an overall debate speaker point’s award for the team as a whole.

Towards the end, the graduating seniors who went into the competition for the last year were asked to stand and be recognized. This included Dordt’s own Ben Kuiper and Michel Gomes.

The next morning a few hours of sleep further shortened by daylight savings time, the Dordt Forensics team members each flew their separate ways for the remainder of winter break.

Feature

2018 commencement ceremony speaker announced

Evangeline Colarusso – Staff Writer

Dr. Ethan Brue, or as many students know him, Prof. Brue, will be the 2018 graduation speaker. As someone who has worked at Dordt for over 30 years, Brue has firsthand knowledge of Dordt’s grads and community. He plans to speak about shepherding throughout the Bible and our lives as Christians.

“The scriptural concept of shepherding is not defined by task,” Brue said, “but by relationship to the sheep. It’s an identity, not a job.”

As the students are sent out to their new found places in the world, they go with this same identity, to be a shepherd. Brue will address what it looks like in every moment of life - not just in work but in small bits of time as well.

“The speaker should be someone who knows Dordt, its mission and the students individually,” said campus chaplain Aaron Baart.

Speakers who are chosen tend to be local Pastors, or someone who provides guidance and advice, and examine agriculture as a whole.”

As Ag Department archives. Dordt Farm Manager Mike Schouten took attendants through old photographs of past classes, professors, and of course, past Ag Days—an event which remains an annual campus tradition to this day.

Following the slideshow presentation, Professor Gary DeVries took some time to talk about the construction of the new Ag Stewardship center that will be located just north of the current center, on Dordt farm property.

The event also served as a celebration honoring the work of Dr. Bajema, who is retiring at the conclusion of this school year. Friends and family took advantage of the “open mic” period as an opportunity to share stories of the past years, enjoying the food and drink andRESEARCH DISCOVERY

The eight Dordt students who attended a national tournament comprised of trips to the on-campus Starbucks and playing Jackbox. The first day started off with Ben Kuiper drinking milk with his breakfast out of a large wineglass. Once the wayward suitcase was returned, the entire team was able to dress professionally.

The team arrived in California minus one checked bag, which happened to contain most of the team’s belongings.

The team also ate twins in a collaborative shirt and slacks.

Then commenced three days packed with voting, listening to and preparing for rounds of speeches and debates. Hours had been spent prepping for when there were composed of trips to the on-campus Starbucks and playing Jackbox.

The awards ceremony and dinner included the winners of each round were handed plaques and cups.

The next morning after a few hours of sleep further shortened by daylight savings time, the Dordt Forensics team members each flew their separate ways for the remainder of winter break.

Agriculture Department celebrates forty-year anniversary

Zack Steenwijk – Staff Writer

On the evening of March 2, current and former students and faculty of the Dordt Agriculture program came together to celebrate the department’s 40th anniversary.

It was an evening of reminiscence, a time of looking back on the legacy of Dordt agriculture, as well as ahead to the future endeavors of the program.

The Dordt College Agriculture department first began in 1977, when then Dordt College President RV BJ Haan asked Dr. Duane Bajema to start the Agriculture program.

Initially, when offered the position, Bajema turned down the offer, but would later change his mind.

“I approached me and asked me to reconsider,” Dr. Bajema said. “It’s not a sermon,” Baart said. “You want it to be a bit clever or funny, but also some significant faith and fusion from Dordt.”

The next morning after a few hours of sleep further shortened by daylight savings time, the Dordt Forensics team members each flew their separate ways for the remainder of winter break.
Faith and science, not faith versus science

Thank you, Amelia, for your previous Diamond article calling for more access to understanding biological evolution and engaging this topic from a Christian perspective. A recent study from the Barna Group and Impact360 highlights just how timely this is [1].

The trend shows that individuals in the younger generation understand that evolution is more likely to report a conflict between science and the Bible (43% vs 31%) and Boomers and Gen X. Increasingly, they are...
Track athletes compete in NAIA championships

Caleb Pollorena -- Staff Writer

It's not often athletes get a shot at championship, but Dordt track athletes got this opportunity at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field National Championships in Pittsburg, Kan. The three-day event brought some of the NAIA's best track and field teams together to see who'd go home with the National Championship title.

Dordt had athletes competing in both individual events and relays. In the women's 4x800-meter relay, Dordt women finished ninth and missed the finals by less than one second. In the men's 4x800-meter and 4x400-meter relays, Dordt's men missed eighth place and a spot in the finals by only three seconds.

In the women's distance medley relay, Dordt finished ninth (originally placed in eighth), after an appeal that reinstated another team.

"It would have been nice to qualify for finals in several of our relays, but I thought our relays all ran their best times of the season and ran solid races," said 4x400-meter relay participant junior Caleb Drake. "Overall, I was proud of how I, and other teammates, competed at Nationals."

After the relays, the Dordt team looked to support their teammates in several individual events, two of whom competed in the 5,000-meters: senior Audrey Brooks and graduate student Caleb Drake.

On Saturday, Drake ran the 5,000-meters and finished in third with a time of 14:49.39. He claimed NAIA All-American honors.

Leaving it all on the court: Andrew O'Donnell

Andrew O'Donnell was the only senior playing on the men's basketball team this past season and he played every game with no regrets. O'Donnell said he had no reason to dwell on the past and he showed that every chance he got on the court.

Before landing a spot on the Dordt men's basketball team, O'Donnell played for Sioux Center High School where he earned All- Conference and All-State honors. O'Donnell averaged over 10 points per game his senior year. O'Donnell was a multisport athlete in high school, leading his high school's football team to the state semifinals his senior year as well.

Having a successful high school career, O'Donnell knew he'd continue to Dordt where he continued playing for the Defenders. Wearing the #1 jersey, he hit the ground running, playing in all 31 games his freshman year, averaging six points per game and three rebounds per game.

Photo By: Sawyer Strelnick

Brooks competed in the 5,000-meter race for the Defenders. Brooks finished with the second-fastest time in preliminaries, with a time of 17:16.00 -- which was less than half a second behind the leader.

Brooks advanced to the final rounds where she claimed NAIA National Champion Runners-up honors with a time of 17:38.26. Brooks also earned NAIA All-American honors with her performance.

In the women's mile, senior Erica DeShelfart earned NAIA All-American honors with a sixth-place finish and a time of 5:01.45.

In the other events, senior Jocelyn Winds finished sixth in the Pentathlon and in the throw, senior David Deavor finished ninth and junior Ike Van Kempen finished 20th.

Senior Dani Wubben finished 14th in the women's 60-meter hurdles and senior Keith Idehm finished 20th in the men's 60-meter hurdles.

During the indoor season in Arizona, the track and field team is preparing for the outdoor season.

"It's always exciting to start the outdoor season and build on our indoor training," Wind said. "As athletes, the transition from the indoor season to outdoor is exciting, but it can also be difficult. We often have to deal with weather that is less than ideal throughout the season."

Even with the difficult transition from indoor to outdoor ahead of them, the track and field team is preparing for the opportunity to build on their great performance at Nationals in indoor.

Changes in Athletics Department

Clarissa Kruezenbrink -- Sports Editor

The 2018-2019 academic year will bring significant changes to the athletic department, including new faces and talents stepping into the athletic department. Perhaps most notable of these changes is the retirement of Athletic Director Theresa Glenn Bourgeois and the appointment of Ross Duama to take Bourgeois’s place. Other positions that will see changes are men’s and women’s basketball, men’s golf and women’s tennis. Gillian Douma will be taking over as the head coach of both teams and Stiemsma will be the new head coach of the women’s basketball team.

Duama’s promotion to Athletic Director meant the men’s basketball head coach position opened up. Former Nebraska-McCormick Vaunt has been hired to fill the role. Van Huften is a Northwestern graduate who coached at Buena Vista University from 1996-2017. Under Van Huften’s direction, the Broncs are 414-188 and had six consecutive 20-win seasons from 2000-2005.

"I can’t wait to spend time with my new players and get to know them on a personal level. I want to try to make a difference in their lives,” Van Huften said, in a statement to Dordt College sports information. “We will chase championships and enjoy giving our best to the sport of basketball.”

Along with the men’s team, the women’s basketball team also welcomed a new head coach. Bill Monsen, previous athletic director and boys’ basketball head coach at Western Dakota Palace in Mitchell, S.D. Both teams are GPAC competition and get to know each other outside of the sport.
Tots get toys, students get experience

Allison Worden -- Staff Writer

Toys are not necessities, or something people need, says sophomore Aunna Weinert. Each year, around the holiday season, millions of kids across the United States send in their wish lists. This holiday season, Toys for Tots, a United States Marine Corps Reserve program which provides children with Christmas gifts if their families cannot afford to buy them, is a worthwhile organization to support. The group brings joy to kids during the Christmas season when finances can be tight for families. Country-wide organizations like this also are helping Dordt students gain experience and necessary skills in their fields. Drop-boxes for Toys for Tots are located in Toys-R-U and other toy stores around the country. Because the organization cannot determine the value of toys, they need a third party to go to all their locations outside of their county. Weinert said, “It’s a worthwhile organization to work for.”

In addition, there is a brief backstory given on the drop-boxes for Toys for Tots. A United States Marine, having grown up in Mexico, was a little surprised at the high value of toys people were donating,” Weinert said. Most toys were brand new, because, for this reason, they were in high demand and immediately a toy by putting it in the collection bin. ‘I think it means more than people would give money – toys the kids can hold in their hands,” Weinert said.

Monetary donations are harder to follow once they have been donated, whereas with toys you know the recipient will be a grateful child. Weinert took the opportunity to work for the project that is part of Prinsen’s class. Her job does not include distribution, but involves counting and checking the value of toys received. Since Weinert traveled to be with her family in Washington state over Thanksgiving break, it worked well for her to go to locations near her coast at that time. She visited 5-6 locations in Portland, Ore., and the surrounding area. All of the data goes back to Prinsen and the auditors. He collects it and arranges it into a spreadsheet, making sure everything is in order. Then he works with Lesko, who changes the information into statistics.

Weinert said she hopes to work for Toys for Tots again next year. “Dordt does a good job of being in people who present good experience opportunities,” Weinert said.

Weinert said she sees a lot of internship offers in her business classes, and this experience working for Toys for Tots has given her the experience she was looking for.

Cultural Fair celebrates diversity with food and dancing

Emma Stoltefas and Ashley Huisenga -- Staff Writers

On Saturday, March 3, the Grille area was abuzz with color, fabrics and the smell of foreign cuisine. Attendees flocked to this year’s International Cultural Fair, an annual event held to celebrate the international diversity on campus.

Freshman Dankaka Jackson attended the fair in traditional Mexican dress and presented a table on her home country of Mexico. Raised in Oaxaca, Jackson is a minority kid, and she heard about Dordt when a representative spoke to her mom, who volunteered at the Christian school there.

“Most of the international students are native to their countries, but there are quite a few of us who were missionary kids,” Jackson said. “So, we were representing a country that we are not ethnically from.”

Still, Jackson considers Mexico her home and appreciates the SWB club for allowing her to celebrate the diversity within cultures.

Student Wichita Brooks, who really is Students Without Borders. It doesn’t matter where you were born, and if I consider Mexico a country it’s cool even though I don’t look Mexican,” Jackson said. “There’s so much diversity and cultures can be so different. I think about a minority of my family and that whole side of my family that there are a lot of differences. Being a part of Students Without Borders—and especially going to the cultural fair—makes you realize that.”

Most of the tables—and there were many of them, representing six continents and 15-20 countries overall—celebrated the diversity of cultures with food, from tea at the Senegal table to vegemite on the Australian table.

For example, Jackson laughed about a little girl who was super excited about eating the carrots and “kept snacking on them like they were candy,” in contrast to “all these big guys” being squeamish.

“It was funny watching everybody’s reactions… most were pleasantly surprised,” Jackson said.

“The Fair’s fashion show, always a highlight of the evening, was followed by a talent show, featuring songs and even a few dances from various countries. Senior Yanick Hubinana (Rwanda) and sophomore Jazmin Mendietta Guato (Mexico) served as emcees for the night, periodically throwing trivia questions to their audience with the promise of prizes galore.

Acts included grad students Brian and Stephanie Oh, representing Korea, who sang a soulful rendition of “Airing,” a popular and mysterious Korean folk song considered the country’s unofficial national anthem.

Freshman Delano Adamson, representing Jamaica, sang Bob Marley’s “Feel Alright” to a small crowd of audience members who responded to Adamson’s call to “feel the music” by dancing and swaying across the Grille floor.

Finally, freshman Israel Yakubu, representing Nigeria, stole the show with a street dance performed to Olamide’s “Science Student.” Or rather, his entourage stole the show, when they unexpectedly joined Yakubu onstage.

“I will still be forever scared [by this Fair] from [senior] Matthew Ojo shaking his butt in my face as he strutted down the runway,” said junior Annette Camu."
Walmart policy change affects Trap Shooting Club
Brad Weber – Staff Writer

In the midst of a national debate on gun control, Walmart has made a corporate decision to prohibit ammunition and firearm sales to those under 21. The Dordt College Trap Shooting Club has been dormant for the winter but will be starting its spring season on Apr. 14 with a student and alumni event. This will be the first club event since Walmart has changed its policy, and the new policy may affect club members under 21.

Trap Shooting Club faculty advisor Tom Prinsen believes the restriction will be more of a nuisance than anything else. He acknowledged that many club members are underclassmen, and therefore, under 21.

In the past, most students purchased shotgun shells at Walmart, but now a sizable portion will be unable to do so. Prinsen said there are plenty of other options for students to buy shells. The Rock Valley Gun Club, where the Trap Shooting Club meets, sells boxes of 25 for $6.50, and Bomgaars sells boxes of 100 shells for $30. This is more expensive than the $22 that Walmart charges for a box of 100 shells, but both the Rock Valley Gun Club and Bomgaars sell to anyone over the age of 18.

Prinsen also noted the possibility of club members over the age of 21 selling shells to underclassmen. In addition, students can order ammunition online and have it shipped directly to Dordt College. According to Dean of Students Robert Taylor, the Dordt mail room accepts all packages in compliance with federal law, and students would simply have to store their ammunition in Student Services with their firearms.

Sophomore Joe Schares is one of the affected underclassmen. He has been trap shooting for years and is certified as a trap shooting coach by the Iowa DNR, but he will not be 21 until this August. He does not believe the Walmart policy will hinder his ability to obtain ammunition. He will just have to find a different place to buy shells or bring back a few hundred the next time he goes home.

Unfortunately, Student Services has limited space for firearm and ammunition storage, and Schares worries they will not have enough room for all the ammunition that students may want to store. Although an inconvenience for him, Schares thinks it will be worse for Walmart.

“Walmart is losing money, losing business,” Schares said.

This situation may be only temporary. Walmart is facing a lawsuit in Oregon from a 20-year-old who is claiming they discriminated against him because of his age. Tyler Watson argues that Walmart policy is in violation of ORS 659A.403, which, in part, reads: “All persons... are entitled to the full and equal accommodations... of any place of public accommodation, without any distinction, discrimination or restriction on account of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status or age if the individual is of age, as described in this section, or older.” If this lawsuit is successful, Walmart will be forced to amend its policies in states with age discrimination restrictions, and would likely change its nationwide policy to protect from further legal action.