Looking for a summer job? Opportunities abound on campus

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Vanoy Harris: Life is bigger than football

If you’ve ever met someone from Texas, you know it. A state from the south where everything is bigger, the days are hotter, and football is more than just a game; it’s a way of life. For some it leads to fame and glory beyond their wildest dreams, while for others it’s a learning experience to help them get from one point in their life to the other.

“When I moved to Texas in 2010, I had the realization that it could help me pay for college,” said the junior middle infielder, Vanoy Harris. As he went through his college search, his options for bigger schools dwindled down for various reasons, other high school students signing before him, lack of the right program of study and other variables that factor into the decision making process of a student-athlete.

“I’ve never considered myself to be defined by football. It was just something I was good at and enjoyed. A big goal in life has always been to graduate college,” said Harris. “Dordt definitely wasn’t at the top of my list at the beginning. The name alone sounded unappealing. The offer of an engineering program interested me right away since many schools this size don’t offer engineering.”

Once he came into contact with former assistant coach Mike Garner at a meet and greet in Dallas, the coaches and faculty impressed him enough to make a visit. The rest, as Vanoy puts it, is history.

Since then he’s totaled 179 tackles, 15 for loss, played in 26 career games, has had two seasons that were cut a few games short due to injuries, and is poised to make a jump to number two all time in total tackles in Dordt football’s young history.

But playing football here has been more than just a athletic endeavor for Harris. As he said earlier, he isn’t defined by what he does on the field. He believes there are so many aspects of it that have impacted his life positively outside of football.

“The youth of the program didn’t impact my decision to play here. I’ve had to learn to trust the people around me; it takes a special group to go in week in and week out when no one except the workers get to know each other very well by the end of the summer. “Social life is there,” Harris said. “You are all in the same building, so it’s easier to do things as a large group, on the other hand, just worked eight hours, so you are usually tired.”

Senior Pete Hoelsema worked on campus as an engineering intern. “The job was a continuation of a spring semester individual study in which he designed a deck to facilitate opportunities for campus life.”

Pastor Aaron Baart named 2015 commencement speaker

This spring, Dordt will hold its 59th commencement ceremony, and Pastor Aaron Baart will be giving the commencement speech.

“Commencement is the academic name for the graduation ceremony from college,” explained Pastor Baart. “It connotes the ‘commencement’ of the next stage of life, for which college was preparation for.”

Though the commencement ceremony is primarily for the graduates, all aspects of the Dordt community are represented.

“Each year, the Co-curricular Committee selects a commencement speaker based on recommendations from seniors and faculty,” said Sonya Jongma Knauss, director of marketing and public relations. Jongma Knauss tabulates the names of the nominees and their justifications and presents them to the Co-curricular Committee.

The Co-curricular Committee reviews those names and sends two or three of these names to President Hoekstra. President Hoekstra selects one of these names as the commencement speaker for that year. As Pastor Baart explained, this protocol has existed at Dordt as far back as he knows, it is not a change from previous years.

The commencement speaker does not necessarily need to be a Dordt faculty member. “The nominee should be an engaging speaker who knows and appreciates the mission and vision of Dordt College,” said Jongma Knauss.

A commencement ceremony at Dordt includes “a time of worship, prayer, a reflection from the commencement speaker, and the reading of each graduate’s name as he or she walks across the stage to receive his or her diploma from the president,” said Pastor Baart.

“I’m extremely honored to be given this responsibility and privilege,” said Pastor Baart. “To be nominated by both students and faculty and then to be selected by a committee and then the president is a huge honor. I don’t take that lightly and hope that I can offer this year’s graduates and their families some inspiring parting words.”

“As for the speech content, I have no idea what I’ll be talking about,” added Pastor Baart. “I’m guessing it will have something to do with graduating.”

Continued on page 3

Contributed Photo

Summer work study students gathered in Rock Valley last June to help with clean up and flood prevention as a special service project.
Bartz brothers snow sculptures make news

Lydia Marcus - Staff Writer

Driving down a quiet road in a suburb of the Twin Cities, one might expect to see plenty of snow. But, in New Brighton, the snow has taken on a form of its own. A Dordt college student makes the news (and Facebook, Twitter, and the Pioneer Press) with his enormous snow creations. For the past four years, Dordt freshman Trevor Bartz and his brothers Austin and Connor have built massive snow sculptures in their front yard. These impressive snow creations have caught the attention of both local and national press.

Trevor said: “This isn’t the first time the snow has come to life. The Bartzes have made a puffer fish (2011), a walrus (2012), a shark (2013) and a sea turtle (2014). Each year we make a snow sculpture of a sea creature, said Trevor. “We came up with this idea after doing a puffer fish our senior year modeled after one we caught in Florida. After that it became a yearly tradition.”

“The snow sea turtle is our favorite so far,” said Trevor, “as it is the biggest as well as the most kid-friendly. (The shark scared off some children last year).”

The Bartzes begin by gathering large amounts of snow from 11 yards in their neighborhoods and a local tennis court. They warm up the snow in their garage so the snow becomes easier to work with. “This simulates the sticky snow you would get on a warm winter day,” said Trevor. “We often go out and have to stop traffic on our street so that they can get on their way.”

“The visitors … inspire us to spend so much time creating a snow sculpture each year,” said Trevor. “It is great to see the smiles on everyone's faces as they stop and look at our sculpture.”

Trevor's favorite part of this snow-sculpting tradition is working with his brothers. “I feel that it brings us closer together and we have made many good memories throughout the years while making our sculptures.”

The Bartzes maintain the sculpture for about a month after its initial creation. “The sculpture finally melts near the end of April,” said Trevor.
Folks, it’s time: A campus sustainability update

Lillee Koerner - Staff Writer

The first article in a series on sustainability and “good living.”

Reduce, reuse, recycle. At this point in your life, you might be a bit tired of hearing that mantra. That’s the case, you’re in for a long semester. Starting this month, Dordt’s Sustainability Committee is launching a semester-long initiative to promote sustainability on campus as well as to provoke students to develop a more holistic picture of what it means to live well on the earth.

Whatever your feelings toward the growing environmental movement in our country today, we can all acknowledge that there are a myriad of problems that urgently need addressing. With topics like climate change, hypoxic zones, food waste and topical questions of environmental domination, we know the planet is in a precarious state that will only worsen if we don’t do something to curb the exorbitant ways we’re currently living. The word “sustainable” has become commonplace, but until we put specific and concrete actions behind it, sustainability remains an empty and abstracted ideal that never makes its way out of the classroom.

Last semester, Student Symposium established a Sustainability Committee to address this very gap between principles and practice. They observed that although Dordt administration feels strongly about sustainability, students are reluctant to take action. “As caretakers of God’s creation, our community should be leading the way in something as important as sustainability,” says Amanda Donnelli, Symposium’s Engineering Representative and chair of the Sustainability Committee. “The Earth that God gave us is not replaceable, and it goes against everything we are taught at Dordt if we mistreat creation by polluting and misusing resources.”

It can be easy to jump on the sustainability bandwagon with sporadic and convenient practices. However, we seldom realize the superficial and often hypocritical way in which we approach stewardship. How good is recycling if we don’t first find ways to reduce? Can we really celebrate local producers if we demand foods out of season? Environmental stewardship is not simply an idea to incorporate here and there when we feel like it. It is an imperative that requires us to search our own hearts and consciously decide how to live.

Prophetic author and poet Wendell Berry once said, “We have the world to live in on the condition that we will take good care of it. To and take good care of it, we have to know it. And to know it and to be willing to take care of it, we have to love it.” At the root of creation care is love. Come to know your corner of the earth intimately enough, and it will change the way you interact with it. For many of us, this will mean unplugging from our virtual realities, being present in the moment, and learning to live with less. I am convinced that this is the path to good living, not only for the sake of the environment, but for our social and spiritual fulfillment as individuals.

No one is forcing you to separate your trash from your recycling, and no one is monitoring your water usage or waste habits. But folks, it’s time. Time we stop living lavishly at the expense of creation. Time we take responsibility by reevaluating our hearts and our habits. Time we stop merely talking about stewardship, but actually become a campus whose actions reflect our values. We will never “find our place in God’s world” if we don’t love and care for it first.

Core 160 trip offers an affordable arts experience

Amanda Oberman - Guest Writer

On Feb. 27 and 28, students taking Core 160 this semester are invited to travel to Minneapolis for the annual trip. The trip begins with a concert at the Minnesota Orchestra, where the students will get to hear Verdi’s Requiem sung by the Minnesota Chorale. John MacInnis, the professor who teaches the music sections of Core 160, explained the meaning and importance of this piece.

“This Requiem setting is quite large, loud and very popular. It has been continuously performed since it was written in the late 19th century,” said MacInnis. Much of its charm is the wide range of emotions it explores: the loneliness and alienation one feels when faced with death, the hope of eternal life, the darkness and power of the day of Resurrection, and finally the struggle to move on with one’s life after mourning a loss.”

After the concert, students will be able to explore downtown Minneapolis. The next morning, they will travel to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, and then the Minneapolis Institute of Art. MacInnis says that even though he has gone on this trip several times, he still finds something new to admire in the collection of pieces.

“If of course students should make a point to see the Van Gogh painting, ‘Olive Trees with Yellow Sky and Sun,’ but there’s also a collection of Asian art, art from Africa, photography, sculptures and ancient artifacts from several Eastern cultures,” said MacInnis.

After lunch, the students will visit the Guthrie Theatre to see Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. After the play, everyone will make their way back to Sioux Center.

This trip is not required for Core 160 students, but professors would highly recommend the experience. Matt Drissell, who teaches the art sections of Core 160, believes it has a lot to offer students.

“For just a little bit of money, the students get a world class taste of big city culture. It makes such a difference to experience the arts in person, at a performance or in a gallery. It is so much better than looking at it on a screen or listening through headphones. And each of the venues offer amazing performances that students will not forget. It’s a wonderful chance to get away from the business of the semester and enjoy the arts,” said Drissell.

If students wish to travel to Minneapolis, the deadline for signing up is February 5. The whole trip only costs $55, which MacInnis believes is a great deal.

“Students should know that they will never pay so little for a comparable experience ever again. I definitely suggest to students that they make this a priority in February,” said MacInnis.

If you are interested in going to Minneapolis on the Core 160 trip, please see Naomi DeWeerd in the Theatre Arts department.
New faculty member: Julie Geleynse

Haley Mulder - Staff Writer

The new friendly face you see in student services? That’s Julie Geleynse.

Geleynse is now serving as the new executive assistant for Vice President of Student Services.

“My favorite part of the job is being able to interact with students everyday,” she said. “I love to bring a smile to their faces … even if they’re only in my office to pick up chocolate.”

Geleynse is originally from Orange City and moving from Cedarburg Wisconsin for an administrative assistant position, she has returned to her alma mater. Geleynse is married to Sioux Center physical therapist Trent Geleynse, and they both enjoy being able to spend time with family members in the area. Geleynse graduated from Dordt in 2011 with a B.A. in exercise science. She has returned to her alma mater. Geleynse is now serving as the new executive assistant for Vice President of Student Services.

“Whatever it was, I really love the genuine concern each employee has for the students he or she serves.”

Geleynse is excited about the improvements and progress that Dordt has made since she attended, both in campus life and the campus itself.

“There are so many opportunities for students to get involved, and I love the leadership that I see in so many of the students that I encounter,” she said. “I also love that Dordt takes pride in its campus. They are always finding ways to update or improve, and I think the science building is just one example of that.”

Along with a love for the college, Geleynse appreciates the friendliness of the people and the values they uphold as a community. Moving from a bigger city to northwest Iowa can be a major change, but she loves so much about the community here at Dordt, and the little pleasures it has to offer.

“AFTER living in a city, it is so different to hear Christian music playing over the sound systems in the stores, and to have people at the grocery store bring you’re groceries to your car for you!” she said. “I’m also really happy to be able to go the Chili Bash at Casey’s Bakery every Thursday again!”

The new friendly face you see in student services? That’s Julie Geleynse.

Summer work (cont.)

Continued from page 1

Students who stay on campus during the summer must be living outside of a 15 mile radius and be registered for the upcoming fall semester.

“It was a cool way to get ready for the fall with cooking and cleaning my apartment,” said Hooisma. The different crews on campus had the same scheduled breaks in the morning and at lunch.

“It’s almost like lunch in the common,” Evans said. “You get to be all together.”

Summer job and internship applications can be found on the DC Central finances tab. The application submission deadline is March 18.
I ask God for guidance and to help me realize that I can’t win alone. I need Him, I don’t need knowledge, money, status, degrees or people. We need Him. The world needs a redeemer.

I’ve been wearing makeup since I was ten years old. My mom used to sell it for a company called Arbonne, and she always had loads of it, though she rarely wore it herself. I was convinced my face needed a lot of help, so I began piling on everything, my eyeshadow every day before school. I was embarrassed of my sandy-colored lashes and how they were blonde at the tips. In middle school I added on thick foundation, horrified at what puberty had done to my skin. I discovered lipgloss in eight grade and eyebrow pencils in ninth, so high school was basically spent walking around looking like a slightly expressionless plasticity.

My freshman year of college I learned how to apply it more professionally, so I spent about three years looking better than I had in my entire life. I didn’t realize, however, that painting my face each morning had not only become a routine acquired over ten years, but had also become a dangerous dependency. I realized this when I awoke late for a final one day, and instead of shouting on my boots and running out the door, had to first rush into the bathroom and apply my mascara, foundation, and lipstick as quickly as possible. I could not stand the thought of entering that classroom and having everyone look up at me and see my naked face. It was unbearable. I wanted to cry—I was so frustrated with myself, but I also felt powerless. Was I really this weak?

It was the same year I first began embracing equality and women empowerment, so I was thoroughly embarrassed at my dependency on makeup—something I learned was encouraged by massive companies in order to squeeze billions annually from girls and women by promoting the lie that they are ugly and incomplete without it. I didn’t like the thought of any of my fire little sisters wearing it, and this made me wonder why I was convinced that they were beautiful without it while I wouldn’t even consider for one second that I might be not only fine without it but actually more beautiful? I’ve always hated double-standards, so even though I was petrified. It was unbearable.

I once considered offensive, but due to the frequency I heard such nonsense, I learned to not get bothered. I have been asked if we have cars, microwaves, electricity, and houses in Nicaragua, and have even been asked by me and other Nicaraguan friends that it is a misfortune to return home after studying in the United States for so long. I wonder what kind of life that Nicaragua is different: opportunities aren’t the same, laws differ and life is a bit harder. Nevertheless, I feel small and insignificant in the midst of all these major power struggles. I wonder if everything will be alright every time I enter an airplane. I also wonder how much the media and this 1% of the world is constantly manipulating me. But at the same time, I don’t want to be part of this 1%. I am voluntarily submitting myself to serve them and to become one of them. Driven by the needs in my family, I tell myself that I need to produce, to make an income, build my resume, and make money. I need to fight for myself, nobody will. My uncle tells me, “before you help others, you have to help yourself first” but suddenly I wonder when “helping myself” will be enough. As I start this year, I pray for faith. I pray for certainty. I ask God for guidance and to help me realize that I can’t win alone. I need Him, I don’t need knowledge, money, status, degrees or people. We need Him. The world needs a redeemer.
Christian Zylstra - Staff Writer

Dordt track teams start on the right foot

It's 2015, and with the new year comes a new indoor track season. The spring semester is off to a quick start, and the Dordt College indoor track and field team is up and running. Currently, the Dordt track team has competed in two meets, the first of which was hosted on Dordt's campus. Not only was there a strong crowd showing for the hosts, there was also a strong performance by the host team as well.

The Defenders placed in the top six in 17 different events, including first place finishes by Jacob Moats in the men's high jump and Xavier Caffee in the men's 200 meters. Kayla Byl and Lauren Opp each finished second in the women's one mile and 300 meters, respectively.

“We had some very good performances from our freshmen, particularly Nicole Slater and Xavier Caffee,” said Dordt track coach Craig Heynen. “We also had some very good performances in the 800 (meters) for both men and women.”

The Defenders helped each other out on the scoreboard, and they found other unique ways to help out the team and the event too. “It really is nice to start off our season at home,” Heynen said. “They get to perform in front of friends and family and in a comfortable environment. The team really worked together to help each other and to help me at this year's meet, and that was a real blessing for me. Athletes get really used to just showing up for their athletic events and performing, and I think they can take for granted all the work that happens behind the scenes. This group helped set up, and they cleaned up after the event was over. That doesn't happen too often in sports.”

Not everyone has the chance to compete in athletic events on campus either, which plenty of athletes on this team understand. In turn, they learn to appreciate the opportunity they have. “It is nice for people to see what we do rather than just read about it in the newspaper or online,” said senior Lauren Opp. “We want to shine a positive light on Dordt as a whole when we compete, and competing at home helps us try harder to do that. It is also nice to not have to travel, because track meets are quite long.”

Performance-wise, truly it has been a splendid start to the season. But finishing position and times aren’t what define success for this Defender team, particularly early in the season. “I will see this as a successful season if we work together as a team, show love and support to each other and help each other become better athletes and people,” Heynen said. “I have already seen these characteristics on the team, so I am very excited about how the season is going to go.”

Of course, in collegiate athletics, success on the playing surface matters as well, and the Defenders know exactly what needs to be done to help reach their goals. “I think this season will be successful if the team peaks at the right time,” said senior Lillie Koerner. “Accomplishing this means going to practice every day understanding that the workload will prepare us for achieving our end-of-season goals. We may not be running our fastest times now, but coach Heynen knows that we will be at conference and nationals if we stayed if we worked hard!”

It's with that determination and focus that Dordt plans to use as it moves head-on into the thick of the indoor track season. Three more meets remain on the schedule for Dordt College before the GPAC Championships in Seward, Neb. Next up is the Buena Vista Open on January 31st in Storm Lake, Iowa.

Aaron Ladzinski - Staff Writer

Women’s Basketball playing a strong season

The Dordt Defender women's basketball team came out of the gates flying. The team started out red hot, opening the season with a 5-2 record, but since then, things haven’t gone so smoothly. Since entering conference play, the women's team has gone 1-12 through January 25th.

The teams leading scorer is Abby Chapman. She leads the team with an average of 13.6 points per game, good for 7th in the conference, with a shooting percentage of .333 from the field, and .341 from deep.

Other top scorers include freshmen Cassidy Vredevoogd, with 9.3 points per game, sophomore Kim Krooze with 8.5, junior Mycah Hulst with 8.4, and sophomore Paige Engbers with 8.4.

Along with Chapman's total of 299 points, she has lead the team in assists with 42, right behind junior Mycah Hulst with 8.4, and sophomore Jade Byl and Lauren Opp each finished second in the women's one mile and 300 meters, respectively.

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Along with Chapman's total of 299 points, she has lead the team in assists with 42, right around 2 per game. Mycah Hulst leads with 10 rebounds per game.

Defensively, junior Robyn Blount leads the team at 1.36 steals per game while Hulst leads the team in blocks at 3.4 per game.

One of the positives on the season is the youth of the team. With no seniors on the roster, potentially the full squad will be back next season. Coach Craig Stiemsma has stated on the other hand, will not be returning as he has accepted the positions of the men's head soccer coach.

When asked about how she felt about the coaching change that will happen at the end of the season, Chapman said, “Well, we are sad to see Coach Stiemsma go, but we know he will be a big asset to mens soccer and we are excited about the future of our program next year!”

Coach Stiemsma was asked about his departure and how he feels about leaving the girls this year. Stiemsma said, “It has been a challenging year. We went from being a very young team (no seniors and one starter back) to an even younger team - due to a number of injuries.”

“It has been a test in perseverance - and the team is filled with ladies that are great people with great attitudes and they work hard. They are fun to be around and make it a hard. They are fun to be around and make it a

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PGFC’s ninth year brings changes

Megan Kaiser - Staff Writer

In its ninth year, the Prairie Grass Film Festival (PGFC) underwent what everyone would call a “new year, new me” transformation. Traditionally when the 48 hours start, every team that enters is given a genre, a character name and role, a line of dialogue and a prop. This time, however, genre and dialogue were thrown out of the criteria for all films. The teams were given a character, a prop and a question such as “where did it come from” or “why did she say no” to work with.

“I thought this year’s parameters were very difficult in that they weren’t really parameters. It is always easier to create within constraints—you know exactly what you want to work with and can then be creative with those few resources,” said Nathan Walter, a junior Digital Media major. “I loved the idea of answering a question with the film, however. That is essentially what stories do—they present a question or problem with the world and then show how to fix it.”

Nathan Walter’s group, which included Sam De Groot and Benjamin De Groot, created a stopmotion film, which is where an object is moved in small increments between individually photographed frames to achieve an animated look.

“Three years ago, we had the question ‘where did it come from’ and we had the character ‘Chopper,” Walter said. “This year, we had the question ‘Why did she say no’ and we had the character ‘Deliver.’ The idea of changing the parameters was to get too complicated and bite off more than you can chew. I think we’ve all learned a lot through the challenge each year so that we had something more to bring back to the next year,” Brasser said. Brasser’s team also included Abby Louwerse, Kaylie Ogle, and Dan Woudenberg.

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Lupe Fiasco’s production is one of its strongest features, with the latter half of the album dominated by beats from DJ Dahi. Dahi provides a wide range of instrumentals, from club bangers on “Chopper” to old-school jazz dominated by beats from DJ Dahi. Dahi provides a wide range of instrumentals, from club bangers on “Chopper” to old-school jazz.

Lupe incorporates four interludes named after the four seasons that turn the album into a conceptual walk through the various phases of ghetto life. Starting the album with “Summer,” Lupe showcases his rapping abilities in fun-loving songs ranging from an eight minute continuous rap to a duet with Guy Sebastian, the Australian singer whom Lupe has bested his previous albums with his most mature work to date. With records like “Mural,” “Prisoner 1 & 2,” “Deliver,” and “Adoration of the Magi,” Tetsuo & Youth shines as the best album, so far, of 2015.

Tetsuo & Youth brings the rebirth of Lupe Fiasco

Jonathan Janssen - Staff Writer

Wasalu Mohammed Jaco, more commonly known as hip-hop artist Lupe Fiasco, has had a rocky career. Lupe Fiasco’s Food & Liquor, his first album released in 2006, was met with fresh enthusiasm in the hip-hop community with critics and fans alike praising the album’s production – spearheaded by the likes of superstar Jay-Z and Kanye West - and Fiasco’s masterful, socially-conscious lyrics. The next year, he was back in full force with Lupe Fiasco’s The Cool. Fiasco was commended once again for his unique ability to deliver lines that operated on multiple levels and his subtle critique of ghetto glorification.

Then Lupe changed. His next release in 2011, Lasers, saw harsh criticism for its preachy messages and over-produced production – spearheaded by the likes of superstar Jay-Z and Kanye West - and Fiasco’s masterful, socially-conscious lyrics. The next year, he was back in full force with Lupe Fiasco’s The Cool. Fiasco was commended once again for his unique ability to deliver lines that operated on multiple levels and his subtle critique of ghetto glorification.

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Enter Lupe’s new album Tetsuo & Youth. With Fiasco announcing it beforehand as an album for his longtime fans, hype over its release reached an all-time high – and with good reason. Tetsuo shattered all conceptions of Fiasco as an overzealous political preacher, and saw him return in full force with an array of subtlety and lyricism the likes of which made his fans fall in love with him in the first place.

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# Ideas for Staying Warm this Winter: The Top 10

Even though Christmas and New Years is over, there’s still plenty to do!

1. **Watch movies.** Keeps you warm and close to your friends.
2. **Hot Drinks.** Apple cider. Hot chocolate. Warm fingers.
3. **Ice skating.** It really doesn’t matter how good you are.
4. **Build a Snowman.** Duh.
5. **Bake cookies.** YUM! Choco-chip’s always good...
6. **Hibernate.**
7. **Wait for it to snow.** Any time now.....
8. **Watch the Superbowl.** Even if it’s just for the commercials.
9. **Sledding.** There has to be a hill around here somewhere
10. **Skip class.** To do any of the above. Or don’t. It’s your call.

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**Winter: The Top 10 Ideas for Staying Warm this Winter**

*Feature Photo*

*By Jerusha Pimentel*

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**Eastwood delivers gritty realism in American Sniper**

Jonathan Janssen - Guest Writer

Here’s a question: How does one properly create media depicting war? One way it has been portrayed is through a shoot-em-up—endless hordes of bad guys versus a group of outnumbered heroes who somehow scrape their way out of tricky situations with a “hoohah!” and an RPG.

Other war media focuses on criticizing war, casting the atrocities, sorrows, and perceived pointlessness of its pursuits into light. These are only two types of films, but they encapsulate opposite ends of the spectrum (and are usually marketed thusly).

Clint Eastwood’s newest film American Sniper could feasibly be judged merely for its technical qualities, yet with the wide variance of opinion on it and the way in which it weaves its story, to rate it on technicality alone would be doing it a disservice.

Sniper tells the “based-on-a-true” story of United States Navy SEAL Chris Kyle (Bradley Cooper), who earned the nickname “Legend” after confirming 160 kills as a sniper. Considered the most lethal sniper in U.S. history, Kyle’s story comes from two sides: his unwavering manner towards his job in the Iraq war and the deterioration of his home life with his wife Taya (Sienna Miller) and his son and daughter.

Eastwood treads carefully with the film. Every time the film starts going down the road to preachiness, a major event or realization will shake up the viewer’s perspective. While touching on subjects found on both sides of the earlier-realized spectrum, the film never over-rotates, never-closer, the patriotism are running out of ammunition while taking pot-shots at whomever they can see. The entire scene feels exactly like one that would be found in a Call of Duty mission, right down to enemies coming in and out of cover among vague metal boxes on opposing rooftops.

And yet, this scene is not fun. There is no respawn or power button which would whisk the entire event away into frivolity. There is merely impending death, last-resort violence, and a call home from Kyle to his wife in which he tearfully declares, “I’m ready to come home now, baby.” This is not fun; this hurts. At this point, any desire for Kyle and his pals to shoot their way out or reinforcements to blast the battle zone to smithereens in a glorious explosive victory is gone. The viewer, with Kyle, just wants him to be home.

Eastwood’s hesitance to turn this movie into one big metaphor or message leaves it as a gritty, straightforward film that touches on broad ideas including war, PTSD, and honor. While honest direction by Eastwood and brutally realistic cinematography from Tom Stern, American Sniper is a quintessential war film that can be appreciated by any open-minded viewer.

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**The Back Page**

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**Winter: The Top 10 Ideas for Staying Warm this Winter**

*Feature Photo*

*By Jerusha Pimentel*