The Talent Extravaganza Order of Acts
(Information is subject to change)

1. “In the Mood”— Dordt Jazz Band
2. “Red Hooded Sweatshirt”
3. “Stand on the Rock”
4. “Profound Thoughts”
5. “Between Life and Death”
6. “Ripple”
7. Progeny
8. The Poppies
9. “A Little Sump’n Sump’n”
10. “Fly Away”— Books and Comics
11. “Stomping Bag”
12. “Chili Pepper”
13. “More Than Words”
14. “Magazine”
15. “Where we went...wrong”
16. “Bandjo”
17. “Stinkin’ Garbage”

Come and find out who the members of these acts are on February 20.

Tickets go on sale Monday February 15.

Soup Supper is a smash

by Danielle Kamps
Features Editor

Four hundred and thirty two sandwiches. Four hundred and twenty five bowls of soup. Innumerable slices of pie. Last Saturday, February 6, the PLIA Soup Supper catered to the hunger needs of over 400 people who came to support PLIA while they got a great meal.

PLIA treasurer Kevin Verschuure organized the supper. For the last several months, Verschuure has been planning this huge fundraiser. He began in December when he contacted 21 local churches for donations of soup, sandwich meat and pies. In previous years, the biggest worry was the possibility of a lack of food. This year, however, was different. Verschuure said, “Overall, when it came to the day, we got a lot more than we expected. It was pretty phenomenal!” For example, by Saturday night, over 75 pies had been donated, deliciously more than necessary.

So many people helped to make the soup supper a success. Blue Bunny donated the milk and ice cream. The Commons generously helped by providing seating room, cooking tips and kitchen utensils. Advertising was aided by bulletin announcements, flyers, and radio spots on KDCR and KSOU. Verschuure says the highlight of the evening was “how everyone came through in the end. Everyone was willing to come and work together to make the soup supper possible.”

Volunteers served over 400 people at the PLIA soup supper. [Photo by Travis Bonnema]

Talent Extravaganza returns

by Tricia Van Ee
Staff Reporter

Dordt's 19th annual Talent Extravaganza is coming to the BJ Haan Auditorium on Saturday, February 20, at 7:00 p.m. This traditional activity put on by the Student Activities Committee promises 17 of Dordt's finest acts and a few surprises along the way.

The Talent Extravaganza, which is organized this year by senior Nate TeWinkel, will consist of music, skits, dance, comedy routines and other unique performances.

Students wishing to perform in the yearly event had to fill out an application and audition for a SAC sub-committee a few weeks prior to the event. Students wishing to emcee also went through the audition process. This year's Talent Extravaganza emcees are senior Tim Huizenga and junior Mark Vander Ley.
BJ Haan organ regains missing pipe

by Danielle Kamps
Features Editor

Dordt's favorite organ, the Casavant in the BJ Haan, has regained its former glory. Its huge missing D sharp pedal pipe, gone for several months, has been replaced.

The organ pipe saga began in 1978 and 1979 with the creation and installation of the organ. Each pipe was handmade in a factory in Quebec, Canada. Because the pedal pipes are so big, they were made in two sections and soldered together. The low D sharp pipe, made from high tin alloys, began to suffer metal fatigue. In the last 20 years, this pipe had been sagging under its own massive weight. When the organ tuner came recently, he noticed that this particular pipe was leaning. Fearing that the pipe might fall out of the organ all together, the music department and the maintenance crew quickly removed the pipe and shipped it back to the factory. The pipe had to be re-measured from the original plans, and the new pipe was made. The new pipe was installed this past week. As Dr. Joan Ringerwolde said, “One damaged pipe means a lot of work. I would like to thank maintenance for their work on this project.”

Today, when organs are built, they contain internal support systems which prevent all the weight to be placed on the bottom of the pipe. Maintenance plans to build a similar support system for the Dordt Casavant soon. If you would like to learn more about the Dordt organ, a new book tells the story of the organ’s designer. “Gerhard Bruzema,” edited by Thomas Donahue, is available in the Dordt Library.

The missing pipe in Dordt’s organ. [Photo by Joe Trosen]

Will this be on the test?

by Sean Gregg
Co-Editor-in-chief

The things that won’t be on the test were the main parts of three lectures given last Tuesday. About thirty students gathered to gain wisdom from three professors in the North Hall lobby.

Professors Mike Vanden Bosch, James Mahaffy and David Helmstetter were asked to give students their last lecture. They thought about what wisdom they might want to pass on to their students if they were about to retire. Mahaffy admitted that he wasn’t sure if the point was that the world was ending, or his students were dying, or if he was going to retire.

Helmstetter presented the first last lecture. He began by focusing on what he wished he had been doing. He wished he had talked less, listened more and cared more about his classes at times. The end of his lecture focused on what he wishes we would do as a community. The focus shifted from regret to hope. It was not simply a lament of lost opportunities, but a call to action for the future.

Helmstetter was followed by Mahaffy. He started by mentioning that he grew up in Africa, and told the “class” how he came to Dordt. Though he did mention scraping mites from his forehead for his class to see, he spoke of topics outside the range of biology.

Vanden Bosch wished that he had not been sarcastic a time or two. He also taught several lessons through poetry. He told of a time when he passed a man digging through a dumpster and did not offer the help he should have. He also read a poem that he wrote in response to a view of Calvinism that limits it to frowning people making sure that no one is having fun.

Calvinism that limits it to frowning people making sure that no one is having fun.

The point of the night was to get Dordt students to get to know their professors. The professors have quite a bit of knowledge in their areas of expertise, but their usefulness does not end there. Our professors are Christians who travel the same road we do, and their wisdom is waiting to be tapped.

Prof. Vanden Bosch teaches life lessons through poetry. [Photo by Joe Trosen]
New open hours for East and North

by Susan Vandermeer
Staff Reporter

The latest talk among residents of East and North Hall has been centered around the changes recently made in the open-hours policies previously imposed. Are they complaining? Not at all.

Last semester, the hours of visitation by the opposite sex was limited to 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. Although it was accepted in the past, freshmen complained that these hours were not fair with so many freshmen living in West Hall this year—they felt all freshmen should have the same open hours.

This prompted two East Hall residents, Emily Vander Hart and Holly Bonnema, with the help of Resident Assistant Brandie Ochsner, to create a proposal that was submitted to Student Forum. This proposal was looked over and a sub-committee of the Student Forum was created to modify the proposal to include rationale in order to bring it before Student Services and President Zylstra. It consisted of the visitation hours of West Hall. Rationale included the need for a consistent policy that would generate less confusion for visitors in the halls and prevention of accidental breakage of the policy. It was also stated that a consistent policy would facilitate the future integration of the Residence Life Staff among freshmen and sophomores.

When brought to Student Services, they agreed with the proposal, except that visitation on Sunday through Thursday should be limited to 10:00 p.m. for all students with open hour policies. Members of the sub-committee felt this would be unfair to residents of West and Covenant Halls who were already enjoying the luxury of an 11:00 p.m. visitation curfew. The proposal was then brought to Zylstra, who agreed with Student Services, but limited the curfew to only students living in East and North Halls.

Freshmen students are now enjoying a trial period of extended open hours in effect from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday. This will be re-evaluated at the end of the year to consider its adequacy for future years. Various R.A.s have reported that the residents of their wings are generally happy with this change. With the exception of an increase in note levels, R.A.s have found these changes to be very good as well.

Students taste de real ting

by Allison De Jong
Staff Reporter

It was de real ting, mon! Last Friday Keith Eric and his band Waterhouse gave Dordt students and faculty a taste of the Caribbean with their afternoon workshop and evening performance at the tropical party.

The workshop included an introduction of the band members, a history of Jamaican music and a chance to learn some funky dance moves to be used later that evening at the party.

Only white-sand beaches and the sound of crashing surf were missing from the De Witt Gymnasium, which was decorated with palm trees, pineapples and flickering candles. A volleyball net and hula hoops were provided for extra entertainment and tropical punch and various fruits made up the refreshments.

The people who attended the party (not all were students) were not disappointed. Many wore colorful costumes, which were enhanced by the bright lights freely handed out. The music was original, the dancing fun and the tropical aura a refreshing change from the cold of mid-winter.

The limbo contest added enjoyment as well. Despite the participation of a few persons under four feet tall, Dordt students Rochelle Van Ry and Sarah Walsh tied for first place.

Keith Eric, a native of Jamaica, founded Waterhouse in 1984 after graduating from the American Conservatory of Music. His purpose in starting the band was to share Jamaican music and culture with the young people in the schools of Chicago. Eric also presents a variety of workshops which give the background of the different Caribbean musical styles such as Reggae, Ska, Dance Hall, Soca and Calypso. Now he and his band tour the Midwest, sharing their talents on college campuses, at festivals and in nightclubs.

International news

by Jen Hoogeveen
Staff Reporter

Amman, Jordan
Jordan's King Hussein died this past Sunday of cancer and was buried Monday on the grounds of the royal palace. One-sixth of the country's population, about one million people, attended their king's funeral as well as some important world leaders. President Clinton and 3 former presidents, George Bush, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford flew to Jordan for this event. Other leaders included Syrian President Hafez Assad, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Prime Israeli Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the ailing Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Hussein's coffin was carried on a cannon carriage escorted by his favorite Arabian stallion horse. This horse bore a pair of Hussein's boots placed backward in the stirrups as a symbol of a fallen leader. To show respect for the ruler, the horse will never be ridden again.

Hussein's eldest son, Abdullah bin Al Hussein was crowned king at the age of 37, just hours before his father passed away. He promised to his people that he would continue in his father's footsteps. His first ruling action as king was to appoint his 19-year old half-brother, Prince Hamzeh, as crown prince.

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
The testimonies for Captain Richard Ashby's trial of involuntary manslaughter began on Monday. One year ago, February 3, 1998, Ashby was flying a mission when his EA-6B Prowler radar jamming jet severed an Italian gondola ski lift dropping 20 people to their deaths. The gondola was positioned 308 feet above the ground, 600 feet lower than the one thousand foot minimum altitude for Ashby's plane. If he is convicted, he will face more than 200 years in prison on 20 manslaughter accounts. Prosecution says that Ashby was being reckless and that he knew he was under the required altitude, but his defense says that optical illusions, poor communication with the tower, and maps that didn't have the ski lift marked on it are factors in this tragic event.

Washington D.C.
The 13 House prosecutors feel that they won't convince Senate to remove President Clinton from office, but they went at it for all they were worth Monday, grinding Clinton into the ground.

Senators are preparing for a censuring motion that would condemn President Clinton for his affair and attempts of cover-up if the Senate doesn't get the two-thirds vote to convict and remove him from office. Deliberations began on Tuesday and continue today. The Senate will vote on the 2 articles of impeachment, the first one being for perjury and the second for obstruction of justice.
Power & Perversity
by Mitch Beaumont
Staff reporter

In the past couple years, network television has taken a new flavor. While some of the networks are trying to get their act together, there is one network in which I have noticed a decisive decline in not only the quality of programming, but also the commercials. The Fox network, it seems to me, has always had a reputation for being sick and twisted in what they air.

Two weekends ago Fox hosted the Super Bowl from Miami, Florida. The Super Bowl has always had a very large viewing audience, but this year was it astronomical. I've heard estimates of close to a billion people watching the game. I'm sure it was good for Fox to have a billion people watching their network, but I believe they took advantage of the exposure and subjected the viewers to some real trash. As I watched the game, I was absolutely appalled at what I was seeing.

There were two specific incidents that literally made me want to hurl. The first was a commercial for "King of the Hill," one of Fox's animated cartoons. The ad portrayed the male main character of the show standing in front of the camera holding a pan over their groin area and threatening to expose themselves. The next commercial sequence portrayed the back view of the same character as they removed the pan. No, the fronts were not shown, but they were practically naked in front of a billion people! The other instance was a Victoria's Secret commercial with women parading around in underwear. I chose to look away from this commercial, so I couldn't tell you exactly what it portrayed, besides it wouldn't be appropriate for a newspaper like this one. I can tell you that that same commercial was scheduled to appear on the Internet later that night.

With a billion people watching this trash flashing across the TV screen, there is no doubt that a very large number of children and pre-teens were watching the game. While I don't mean to say that these people can't determine what is wrong and what is right, their perception of right and wrong is not fully developed yet, so when they see a commercial like the two I described, the potential that they accept them as being okay is frighteningly high.

Not only are Fox's commercials lousy, but their animated sitcoms are just as bad. Fox has added three new shows in addition to the trashy, blasphemous "Simpson's" show which has been on for years. Now airing besides the "Simpsons" is "King of the Hill" and two brand new shows, "Family Guy" and "The B.F.D.." I haven't seen these shows but I have read a summation of each show on Fox's website, and I can't believe that people would put such trash on television for billions of people to watch.

I say all this to urge you, the reader, to take action against such blasphemous trash that is being aired on national television. I know that many students on this campus watch shows like "The Simpsons" and by no means is this supposed to be an attack on you, but rather I encourage you to take a look at what you watch and what you feed your brain with. So, brothers and sisters in Christ, if you enjoy watching these shows, step back and examine their content from a truly Christian perspective. And if you have never watched them and are led to do something about it, I urge you to take action and contact Fox through their website, or even write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and voice your feelings. It is one of our many duties as Christians to examine what we watch and regulate it so that it doesn't hinder our walk with our Savior.

Letter to the Editor

I am writing in response to Sarah Walsh's article "Why I'm a Vegetarian," printed in the January 28 issue of the Dordtian. While I respect her right to choose what she will or will not eat, I believe some of her reasoning is flawed. Cutting meat consumption would not help people starving in other countries. Less consumption would only hurt the farmers who produce the meat and grain.

Walsh states that if we would just eat less meat there would be enough food to feed all the people in the world. Perhaps Walsh does not realize that there is already a huge oversupply of grain in this country and many other countries. The Quarterly Grain Stocks Report reported the 1997-1998 soybean carryover at approximately 200 million bushels and estimated that the 1998-1999 carryover to more than double to 465 million bushels. The term carryover is used to describe the extra grain that cannot be used during a particular year and is therefore stockpiled. The USDA puts the 1998-1999 corn carryover at 1.7 billion bushels and predicts a two billion bushel carryover in the year 2000.

One only has to look as far as the local grain elevator to see that there is an unbelievable amount of corn and soybeans. This fall, my father decided to buy more cattle in order to feed the corn because the price was so low.

Corn prices have fallen 65 percent since July 1996 and soybean prices have dropped 43 percent in the last 18 months. The wheat price is half of what it was two years ago. These low prices are a direct result of the oversupply of ggin in our country. We are awash with grain, yet Walsh assured us that we cannot use it to feed the hungry. Walsh promises that if we simply eat less meat the problem will go away.

As a prerequisite to constructive disagreements, its helpful to have teachable hearts and a willingness to be challenged--something that is very difficult for most of us. No one really enjoys having their foundational beliefs challenged.

One example of a non-helpful expression of disagreement on campus happened within the past week. A few freshmen produced an anti-Shmarer meeting poster. Aside to the free advertising for Shmarer, this joke didn't serve to build up the Dordt community, and it didn't leave room for Shmarers to learn from what these freshmen had to say. It came across in an attacking manner.

Regardless of how difficult it is to be civil at times, we are still called to treat each other with respect and love as well as to season our words with grace. As disagreements make themselves known, it is evident that we are a campus that is committed to growing together. May we continue to be driven by an intense desire to understand and build up one another.

Sincerely,
Mark Vander Poi


## Dordt's apathy bothersome

**by Rob Reitsma**

Staff Reporter

When I arrived on Dordt’s campus for the first time, last year, I saw a myriad of opportunities being offered to the student body. I was excited to try everything and to add my own ideas into the opportunity pool. But, after being here for a while and after trying out several of my ideas, I have become disillusioned by the general apathy of Dordt students towards artistic activities.

Several events in recent memory serve as witnesses to this apathy. For example, last year “Over the Rhine” came to campus and played a show in the BJ Haan for a grand total of maybe 200 people. I realize that not many people had heard of them before they showed up, but their impressive credentials had preceded them (they opened for Bob Dylan and are friends with the Cowboy Junkies, among others) and S.A.C. had promoted them rather well.

Also last year, several students (including myself) arranged a daylong music festival called Fire & Ice. After much preparation and hours of work, we pulled off a 12-hour benefit show for Doug Eckardt’s family. It was actually a really good show, looking at it as objectively as I can. The only problem was the lack of interest from students.

Another example is the Steve Bell show last month. Here’s a guy who just won a Juno Award—which is essentially the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy—and it seems as if half the campus never even knew he was here. It’s not that S.A.C. isn’t doing their job. They are getting good musicians and advertising well, but people don’t seem to be paying attention.

The final example I’ll bring up is the monthly S.A.C. sponsored coffeehouses on campus. Students come, and that’s a start, but they do not listen to any of the performers. Once again, I have a personal interest in this because I play there. But this isn’t meant to be a personal pity party. It’s just annoying for a performer to prepare something and then, having performed it, not even get applause for his/her efforts. I think people could support their fellow students a little more.

So, why am I bringing this all up? Well, I think that the apathy is by a majority of Dordt students is somewhat repressive. Some students and faculty members work hard simply so that students can be entertained, and very few (often not even close to half of the student body) are willing to reward those involved by simply showing up to an event. I can guarantee that just about anyone who likes music—and most of us do—would have enjoyed any of the previously listed events, and, in turn, would have rewarded themselves by attending some of these events.

It isn’t like I’m asking you to go to the coffeehouse so that he can start ripping teeth out of your mouth. I’m just asking you to enjoy yourself a little more and respect the efforts of fellow students by attending some of these events. I don’t think it’s too much to ask.

The day of the Diamond is that long-awaited occasion when the school paper becomes a primary focus of conversation at the supper table. Roommates love to chew on the issues, make a case for the tastiest article or moan about which ones prove to be indigestible. With frequency, a fellow student’s article or editorial may evoke feelings of gloom, anger, or even a burning desire for retribution.

Often I am caught up in that rage, in the pandemonium of passion that comes with talking things too seriously. But before I get too carried away, before I do anything rash, anything I might regret, I collect my thoughts and ask myself: What would Jesus do?

If he’s at all like me (and even if he’s not), surely he would write a response in the next issue of the Diamond and I tell myself:

So, verily I say unto you: that last issue of the Diamond really had me chomping at the bit.

I wasn’t offended by any article in particular. No specific editorial struck me as being outside of the norm for typical student opinions. I just finally came to a conclusion about what in the Diamond is consistently bothersome.

The phenomenon may be called the preacher’s complex, for lack of a better term. It is not so uncommon. In fact, by definition, this editorial might make a perfect example of just the sort of things I’m talking about. This “complex” is the very character trait which helps give Christians a bad name. Well, perhaps we should own up to it. I mean, really, who among us can pass up a perfect opportunity to tell another person how they should live? Not many. It is pretty satisfying, after all, to have in our capabilities the right words of advice, the proper instructions which will enable another person to become as happy and perfect as us. Surely it is a great feeling to have a powerful testimony on our lips to go with that bracelet on our wrists. I tell you the truth.

We might stop to ask ourselves, however, why we need a bracelet to coax someone to talk about our Christianity? Why do we witness to others if we are the models for perfection instead of uplifting the humble Christ who has cleansed us before God’s sight? Why must we command others in loud voices to boycott this and banish that? Why do we yell and scream for attention? Do our loving actions not stand out clearly enough to evoke the world’s questioning stares and gaping mouths?

If not, then something is getting lost amid the noise of our evangelical hubbub. That same something seems to be missing, also, in many of the editorials and articles I read on a regular basis from my fellow sinners—saved-by-Christ. I have a feeling I know what that something is. It’s just annoying for how much you need to have it. Because if I’m at all like you (and I’m sure that I am), I need it just as badly.

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## Arts speak of truth’s elusiveness

**by Jason Vande Brake**

Guest Writer

Words do not sum up who we are. Life does not fit into a simple equation. The arts, recognizing this fact, display the reality that life is not black and white, but rather acknowledge the grays in between. The arts question what we assume to be the answer and remind us that truth is an elusive thing. And just when we think we’ve got it figured out, the arts challenge us to think again.

It seems to me that something is amiss in the way we look at things in our culture. We seem to have this idea that there are certain persons chosen by God or fate to be the privileged, the ones given insight which the rest of the world doesn’t have. We are told that some have been elected to be artists and geniuses. This group can go on and change the world. Then the rest of us are politely asked to go and become middle class and boring.

What good is there in debating about truth or beauty when life is reduced to the comfortable predictability of a nine to five workday? We’re really not offered an alternative to this. It just seems to be our lot in life and, well, so be it. But like it or not, things aren’t that easy. The elusive nature of truth cannot be avoided.

Have you ever been in a situation that made you feel like it was you against the world? Like every decision was the wrong one? Have you felt grossly unqualified to choose a course of action? Sounds like Hamlet. Did you ever want to express something too wonderful or horrible or complex for words? That was Picasso’s dilemma. How do you know exactly how to live according to the Lord’s plan? There are no easy answers.

In school, we are told that we must be able to quantify our knowledge and state our opinions clearly and distinctly. If we don’t know an essay about it, it either doesn’t exist, or doesn’t matter. And because of this, our lives are often reduced to what we can talk about. Here’s the problem with that—words will only take us so far. God has created us so that there is more to us than words can describe. Have you ever looked at a word for so long that it loses all meaning to you? If you have not, feel free to experiment on the following school:

**All you can concentrate on is how it looks and maybe how it sounds. For some reason, the meaning behind the word no longer seems related to what you’re looking at on the paper or the sounds your mouth forms when you say it. Here’s why that happens. Words are only representations of the meaning we actually want to convey. The arts allow us to go beyond ordinary words. The arts acknowledge that even though two plus two has always equalled four, ending world hunger is hard to do. Can you solve the problem of world hunger in two words or less? See what I mean? Words...**

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## Who’s to say?

**by Grant Elgersma**

Opinion Editor

If you’re at all like me (and even if you’re not), you take some time out every other Thursday to mull, ponder or suffer over the next installment of the Dordt College Diamond.

The day of the Diamond is that long-awaited occasion when the school paper becomes a primary focus of conversation at the supper table. Roommates love to chew on the issues, make a case for the tastiest article or moan about which ones prove to be indigestible. With frequency, a fellow student’s article or editorial may evoke feelings of gloom, anger, even a burning desire for retribution.

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Reflections on Russia:
A Traveler’s Perspective

by Jill Vossen
Copy Editor

Note: The following is a collection of ruminations written while I was actually there—portions of letters and journal entries.

Of the many impressions that I have received since arriving in Russia, one of the most prominent is that Russian society can best be categorized as The Great Paradox. So many diametrically opposed things co-exist peacefully and often side-by-side in this country. Russia longs for Western pop culture and yet wants to remain isolated in her own cultural traditions. The pagan and Christian exist together and have become intertwined in a marriage called syncretism. A desire to accomplish many things on a grand scale contrasts with the bogged bureaucracy which prevents any efficiency in task completion. Everyone is in a hurry to get nowhere. Cars are driven very fast where. Materialism and consumerism contrast with the reality of wages, placing even the most basic of necessities sometimes out of reach. A post-Christian society exists with a trend which pulls people back to Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is alongside amoralism and atheism and becomes something of a marketable commodity in its icons and religious books sold in the church building itself. Russians can put more on a rocket and launch it into space than any other country in the world and yet they can’t make toilets that work properly or electrical systems that function consistently. The people have stoic expressions and somber dark clothing, but very warm hearts with hospitality that has no boundary.

I realized today that I have learned to really love Russia. This place is funny—it steals a part of you. I have learned so many things here I cannot begin to recount in a feeble letter. I feel I have even failed adequate representation in my journal. So many ideas, impressions and experiences bombard me every day, I can’t always remember everything later.

I realize also how very rich we are, as Americans, and yet we are so poor. We have allowed ourselves to become so isolated from each other and alienated that even basic relationships are difficult. Relationships are so important here—I now understand their value. God intended for us to live in a community, not in a cocoon. Living outside the shell is a scary thing—I’ll be the first to admit it. It requires vulnerability, sacrifice and a willingness to live outside the zone. Suffering is a quality to be admired here. It is a deep part of the culture and is expected rather than avoided. Conventional folk wisdom is carried and believed to the letter, regardless of contradiction with scientific fact. The common sense of the people is extremely sound—borne through long, cold winters and harsh conditions of the years. Many things contradict themselves and yet manage a peaceful co-existence somehow. Russia has one eye on the past and is blinking, in confusion, at the future with the other, wondering what direction to take. The Russia idea of Orthodoxy and tradition was bankrupted during the Soviet years and Russians are now struggling to find themselves in a post-communist, post-Christian society. Amid the confusion, uncertainty, turmoil and paradoxes, however, there are beautiful people with great stories, if only we would stop to listen.

"Russia, whither flyest thou?" Answer! She gives no answer. The ringing of the bells melts into music; the air, torn to shreds, whirs and rushes like the wind. Everything there is on earth is flying by and the other states and nations, with looks askance, make way for her and draw aside" (Nikolai Gogol, "Dead Souls").

Practical work part of Med Tech program

by Carole Hoekstra
Guest Writer

The medical technology program is one of the lesser known off-campus opportunities offered at Dordt. In fact, most people don’t know of the program at all, unless they know Cresta Zwart or myself.

Students at Dordt taking biology and chemistry classes are eligible to apply to several Midwestern hospitals for admittance into the medical technology program. During the student’s senior year, he or she spends twelve months working and studying at the hospital. After the completion of the internship, the student graduates both from Dordt and the hospital’s program. At that point, the student is a "clinical laboratory scientist."

This year, Cresta and I learned how to draw blood, do cross matches, CBCs, test for AIDS... all the way to doing a urinalysis. (Fans of ER should be familiar with these terms). We also attend lectures by doctors and technologists from the two participating hospitals in Sioux City, St. Luke’s and Marion. We still take tests and quizzes, but it is a completely different experience learning hands-on with real patients.

It is a great experience to get off campus and have an almost real job. Being at the hospital every day at seven a.m., no naps, real patients and autopsies... these are the things that make it a real job. The almost part is that we still pay tuition.
expand students’ education
Stories from the Middle East

by Livija Shannon
Guest Writer

For one week I was part of the Sadakas’ household. Seventeen-year-old Charlotte was my friend and interpreter. Mama Nabila fed me more fatty foods than I care to remember and her husband, Baba Shaker, worried each day that I was not careful enough when walking through their neighborhood. I was a stranger to them in language, manners and customs. The family wore pajamas all the time. The only reason to risk one’s clothes was for trips out of the house! Only once during my stay did I see Mama Nabila without her nightgown and slippers.

Sheddy, the Sadakas’ oldest son, is living in New Jersey and knows that I am well and have not quite forgotten all of my Arabic. Because his family knows me and because he is a man, Sheddy has the responsibility of checking on me periodically. If I ever have a problem, Sheddy would expect me to call on him.

“Salaam alekum,” I said as I greeted Hussein. “Alekkum salaam,” he replied as we kissed each other once on each cheek. “Izzayak?” I inquired, asking how he was. “Kwayiss, ill-hamdilallah,” he answered. (Well, praise to God), “Illhamdilallah,” I responded, praise to God. In my broken Arabic and his broken English we were able to establish that he would buy tea and I wanted only one spoonful of sugar. He would send his friend Yassir. Yassir, Hussein informed me, wanted to marry an American girl and avoid the required military service. I did not ask Hussein how he was avoiding his three years of duty; we both knew that if he did not run from the police who came to force him to comply, his family would starve.

Yassir returned with the tea and his brother Magdi. Magdi is studying to be a tour guide and speaks four languages fluently, though his Dutch and Italian need some work. Hussein and Magdi confer for a moment in Arabic which I cannot understand, though I gather that I am the issue in question. The result is that Magdi proclaims my friends unlike the other students. “When you say ‘no’ to beer, to kissing, to any fun, you mean it,” he tells me. “You are nice people and we like you, but you are not like the French, the German, the Australian.”

Chicago Met: an unforgettable experience

by Anna Young
Staff Reporter

The very first day they scramble through downtown Chicago and land at the Executive Plaza Hotel where they have rooms on the 48th floor looking down over the Chicago River and the infamous Wacker Drive. They are then thrown into riding the subway and going to interviews and figuring out where to live and who to live with. After the first week, they’ve all got internships, some at huge organizations like WorldBank, YMCA, ABC and AMOCO, others at small, rinky-dink businesses and social service agencies. For three months, four days of the week are full of interning - getting coffee, learning the names of supervisors and coworkers, giving presentations, getting more coffee, learning more about their chosen fields, others simply learning to photocopy. The nights are spent crammed into one-bedroom apartments talking about the city, the concrete, the homeless, the beggars, the projects, hope, the future, God and back home. Fridays are spent in classes with professors like George Beukema whose nature it is to teach and Clinton Stockwell who has more than 800 books in his office, half of them on the subject of “Chicago.” Weekends bring walks along the beach up towards Navy Pier, plays and symphonies, small, ethnic restaurants, used book stores and thrift shops, museums, and long readings at Barnes and Nobles over strong cups of Starbucks’ coffee.

And all of it, all of the dark passageways to the subway, all of the passionate talk of making a difference, all of the disparity of not making a difference, all of the thought and emotion that go into having reality reach you and then draw back again to see your reaction, all of it culminates in one distinct, unforgettable memory that forever rests in and changes the point of your perspective.
Men split last four: sit in fifth place in SDIC

by Craig Broek
Sports Reporter

The Dordt Defenders men's basketball team won two out of four in the past two weeks, putting them in fifth place in the current SDIC standings with six games to play, five of them conference games.

Sioux Falls University 81, Dordt 73

Dordt went on the road on January 27 to take on the Cougars of USF. Both teams played close throughout, with Sioux Falls holding the slight half-time advantage at 35-32. Dordt played well in the second half but couldn't seem to get over the hump, dropping to 3-4 in the conference, losing 81-71. Neal Bremneman led Dordt with 17, followed by Adam Van Meeteren with 15. Van Meeteren pulled down seven rebounds and Bremneman took six of his own.

Dordt 69, Buena Vista 59

Dordt hosted BV in a make-up game on February 2 at the De Witt Gymnasium. Dordt jumped out to the early lead and took a seven point halftime lead at 31-24. The scoring opened up a bit in the second half, but Dordt took over and went on for the non-conference victory by the score of 69-59. Bremneman again led Dordt with 17, followed by Ertc Maas and Adam Van Meeteren with 11 and Mike Ribbens who also pulled down 11 rebounds. Brian Wassenaar followed with 14 points. Dordt held BV to cold shooting from the outside, connecting on only 5-26 from behind the three point line for 19.2 percent. Dordt also held the advantage at the free throw line as the Beavers only reached the charity stripe four times, making good on two opportunities.

Dordt 70, South Dakota Tech 69

The Defenders picked up a huge road win the first night of their Black Hills weekend by defeating the Hardrockers on their home floor. After trailing by four at the half, Dordt kept the game close throughout, finally trailing by a point with 8.5 seconds left. With the length of the floor to go, Dordt in-bounded to sophomore Mike Ribbens who dribbled the length of the floor, penetrated and hit the winning shot with 1.5 seconds left for the win. Coach Greg Van Soelen was proud of his team's effort. "Every time we would fall behind five or seven points, we would make a little run. We never got out of striking distance – that's important on the road. We wanted to have a chance at the end." The victory evened Dordt's record in conference play and 20-3 overall.

Roos and Serena Van Beek were the scoring leaders, netting 18 and 17 respectively. With the win, Dordt improved to 10-6 for the season.

Dordt 66, Sioux Falls 62

Coming hot off their record-breaking output against Martin Luther, Dordt went to Stewart Center to challenge the University of Sioux Falls on their home floor. At half time, the women were down by 10 points. However, 20 points from Lori Roos and Carla Geleynse's 19 enabled Dordt to pull ahead and defeat the nationally-ranked Cougars in a close battle. Lisa Roos pulled in 10 rebounds this game, and in doing so, became the leading rebounder in Lady Defenders' history. At 816 and counting, she broke the record of 809 rebounds held by Anita Tinklenberg who played from 1992-1996.

Dordt 65, South Dakota Tech 78

This was another nail-biter game to go. Wesleyan visits the De Witt Gymnasium tonight for a big conference match-up. BHSU sits atop the conference standings with an 8-1 record in conference play and 20-3 overall.

Black Hills State U. 74, Dordt 45

Dordt ran into a buzz saw in the first half as they wrapped up their Black Hills swing. BHSU, rated fourth in the latest NAIA Division II polls, pounded Dordt early and didn't let them back into the game, racing out to a 48-16 halftime lead. Dordt actually outscored BHSU in the second half, but it was of no consequence as this one was decided early. Van Meeteren led Dordt scorers with 9, followed by Wiebe Vander Hoeck with 7. Maas pulled down 8 rebounds to lead Dordt. The loss put Dordt at 4-5 in the conference with five SDIC games left to play. The Defenders trail Huron by one game and Dakota Wesleyan by two. Wesleyan visits the De Witt Gymnasium tonight for a big conference match-up. BHSU sits atop the conference standings with an 8-1 record in conference play and 20-3 overall.

Women set team and individual records: improve record to 12 and seven

by Leanne Prins
Sports Reporter

Dordt 100, Martin Luther 55

The Lady Defenders put on a show for the home crowd, almost doubling the score of their opponents. By reaching 100 points, the women broke the previous school record for scoring in one game. 99, which was set in November of 1996. Also, 56 first-half points tied a record that had been matched two other times in school history. Lisa Roos and Serena Van Beek were the scoring leaders, netting 18 and 17 respectively. With the win, Dordt improved to 10-6 for the season.

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Dordt 65

The win brought Dordt to a 12-7 record overall and 4-5 in the SDIC, good enough for a tie for fifth place. The top four teams in the conference qualify for postseason play, making the team's remaining games quite important.

Freshman Eric Maas works for a tough bucket in the paint. [Photo by Travis Bonnema]
Strong showing for indoor track

by Jocelyn Van Beek
Sports Reporter

On January 30, Dordt's indoor track team went to Sioux City for the CSD Championship meet. They did quite well there and set three school records.

The men's 4x400 relay team consisting of Troy Ten Napel, Jon Dekkers, Steve Holwerda and Ron Kingma set a record in this race with a time of 3:27.10. Ron Kingma also set a record in the 400 M, turning in a time of 51.49 seconds. The third record broken was by Jill Starkenburg, who pole vaulted her way to a height of 9'6". Marta Davelaar also did very well with a throw of 36'8" in shotput.

As for overall team effort, the men and women did very well at this meet, considering the size and extent of the competition.

On Saturday, February 6, Dordt's team traveled to the University of South Dakota at Vermillion. Two more records were broken at this meet, with many of the individuals and relay teams coming very close to breaking even more.

Eeka Ton set one mark in the triple jump with a jump of 36'10". The 4x100 Relay team gathered the very close to breaking even with a time of 44.69 seconds. This relay consisted of Dan Allena, Eric Carlson, Steve Holwerda and Troy Ten Napel.

Maria Davelaar did very well in the shotput with a throw of 36'4". Troy Cok fell short of the best triple jump by one inch with a jump of 42'2".

The 4x800 relay teams also did well at this meet. The women who ran this relay were Lisa Cannegteber, Tabitha Vander Plaat and Cathy Palmer. The men's team consisted of Jeff Summerhays, Jon Dekkers, Jim Dekkers, and Ron Kingma. The men fell .16 seconds short of getting the new record in this event.

Guy Ratcliff pauses to check out the Iowa State defense before passing the puck during Saturday night's loss. [Photo by Joe Trosen]

Blades break losing streak: tie SDSU four to four

by Franklin Guillaume
Sports Reporter

Good news for all you Blades fans, the streak is finally over. Blades fans were rewarded with a 4-4 tie back on January 29 against a hard hitting SDSU squad. The tie broke a 16 game losing streak that goes back to the first game of the season.

SDSU 4, Dordt 4

The Blades ended the losing streak in fine fashion as they stormed back from a third period 3-1 deficit to take a 4-3 lead late in the game on goals by VanNiejenhuis, Bentum, and Zuidhof. After Saarloos gave Dordt a 1-0 lead early in the second when his first of the year, SDSU scored two straight before the period was over to take a 2-1 lead into the dressing room. The Blades didn't really deserve to trail by only one goal as goaltender Tim Hoogland faced 34 shots in the first two periods alone. Going into the final frame, one goal down is a familiar story line for the Blades this season and some fans were expecting the same disappointing finish to the story. When SDSU scored three minutes into the third, it looked like another loss. There was only six minutes left when Van Niejenhuis started the comeback and with under half minutes to go the Blades found themselves with a 4-3 lead. The crowd was buzzing, having yet to be this close to victory at home this season. Desperation hockey ensued as SDSU poured on the pressure. The Blades failed to clear the puck, allowing an SDSU player to make a nice pass to a teammate right in front of the net, who deflected the tying goal in with under two minutes to go. The Blades hardly saw the other side of the rink after that as SDSU threatened to steal the game back in overtime. With diehard goaltending from Hoogland and a little help from the crossbar, the Blades hung on for their first tie of the season. It was a great game that Blades fans deserved to enjoy.

SDSU 8, Dordt 2

SDSU came out strong in this one and the Blades didn't bother to reply. Before ten minutes had past, SDSU took a 4-0 lead and never looked back. Zuidhof added his second goal of the weekend while Beldering provided the other half of the offense for the Blades.

Iowa State 11, Dordt 1

The Blades failed to muster up any offense in this game as they failed to click on any of their five powerplay opportunities. After surviving the first with a two goal deficit, the uninspired Blades got hammered by Iowa State's junior varsity squad. Saarloos notched the only goal for the Blades in an interesting segment of 3 on 3 hockey. A parade to the penalty box by both teams gave the players a little bit of extra skating room and Saarloos took advantage. The Blades were plagued with colds, as Vander Plaat and Mark Bentum were forced to sit out while many others players were suffering on the bench.

Iowa State 9, Dordt 4

After an anemic first period, the Blades played two strong periods of hockey in the second and third. The forward line of Van Niejenhuis, Saarloos, and Vande Kraats had a strong night, with at least one of them contributing on all four of the Blades' goals. Van Niejenhuis, Vande Kraats, and Zuidhof scored one each and Van Berkel scored his first of the year on a rebound as SDSU squad, Saarloos took advantage. The Blades were able to overcome the clutchy Iowa State defense. Iowa State's five first period goals, however, were too much for the Blades to surmount.

Blades Fans Deserve Applause

With the season winding down and only two home games remaining, it's appropriate now to congratulate all of those Blades' fans who keep coming out. There's no hiding it, it has been a tough year for this team and I'm sure it's been a big disappointment to a lot of the players. It's hard to say how much of it is a lack of ability and how much of it is a lack of hard work, but no doubt these guys believe they could have done better. So to all of you fans who travel the 45 minutes to get to Luverne and pay your two or three American dollars per game, thanks for coming out. I think it says something about the game of hockey that these fans are willing to pay the price to see these guys go out and play, when, despite a handful of good efforts by the guys, the fans usually end up seeing a loss. The two remaining home games are February 19 and 20, against a beatable Carleton College team. If you haven't gone to a game yet this year, or even if you've made sure that you haven't missed one yet, these are two you will want to see. The Blades want to win in front of the home crowd and they will be giving it all they got, hoping to finish strong.

Visit the new Blades home page through KDCR's sports information page at http://www.dordt.edu/ clubs/hockey/
Students put finishing touches on their characters in preparation for opening night. [Photo by Joe Trosen]

Dordt to put on Joyful Noise

by Andrea Voogt
Staff Reporter

At the end of this month, the Dordt College Theatre Department will be putting on a play entitled "Joyful Noise." It's about the writing of a timeless piece of music, known virtually all over the world. This music is, of course, the "Messiah." According to professor Simon du Toit, the play is about the writing of the "Messiah," including Handel's struggles with being an artist in the culture of his time. du Toit states that the play is "almost absolutely historically accurate" because the writer (Tim Slover) did a great deal of intensive research into Handel's life and the conditions under which the "Messiah" was written and tried to present history as accurately as possible.

The cast is made up of Dordt students, with Jason Vande Brake starring as George Frederick Handel and Rochelle Van Ry co-starring as Susamma Maria Cibber, the actress who sings in the London premiere of the "Messiah." Other members of the cast include Letaon Boschult, Ben Rysheld, Brian Wisselink, Kim De Groot, Jeff Ploegstra, Janet Krant, Sean Coovington, Eric Van Wyk, Emily Deuschman and Amy Vroom. Ploegstra, a senior who plays the role of Charles Jennens (who wrote the libretto for the "Messiah"), says that on the surface, the play is about the writing of the "Messiah," but there is a deeper theme of redemption through the development and creation of the music. According to Ploegstra, at the end of the play it is the music that is emphasized above all else. It is the meaning of the music that overshadows all of the human struggles and circumstances under which it was created, such that the music becomes a medium of praise to the "Messiah."

du Toit says that his goal through the presentation of "Joyful Noise" is to bring praise to God through the staging of an entertaining and highly spiritual piece of theatre. He acknowledges that the themes and style of "Joyful Noise" are a strong contrast to the fall production of "Macbeth," but it is more dramatic and entertaining. Both du Toit and Ploegstra predict that the audience will be very pleased with "Joyful Noise." "Joyful Noise" will be performed in the Te Paske Theatre on February 26 and 27 and on March 5 and 6, at 7:30 p.m.

THE GALLERY

by Kirstin Vander Giessen
Arts & Entertainment Editor

I used to be wary of anyone who looked at something in a frame on a wall, in a museum, or on a stage and, because it didn't make immediate sense, claimed that it was not art. Now I'm not so sure.

We in the age of Post-modernism are faced with the all or nothing dilemma. Either everything is valid or nothing is at all, because it's impossible to pick and choose what is true art and what isn't. So I don't want to fall into the category that says nothing is art, but what do I do when an artist feels the need to pack a neutral room with the absurd and call it an art exhibit?

My friend told me a story last week about a high school trip to an art museum in Vancouver, British Columbia. One exhibit featured enshrined in glass cases and resting on white pillows, used tampons from all over the world. Huh? And on the opposite side of the spectrum from that artist, we have a history professor whom I witnessed accost Jackson Pollack for being an idiot in thinking that throwing his paint onto a canvas was "almost absolutely historically accurate" because the writer (Tim Slover) did a great deal of intensive research into Handel's life and the conditions under which the "Messiah" was written and tried to present history as accurately as possible.

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Goin’ down to South Park

by Grant Eigersma
Opinion Editor

The days of Denver Creamer and the Little Rascals are gone for good. In their stead are four potty-mouthed school children. The show, "South Park," is part of the newest development in television programming.

Since "The Simpsons" and "Beavis and Butthead" became major hits cartoons have been aimed at adults. The rise in popularity of "The Simpsons" and "Beavis and Butthead" among older viewers proves that cartoons are not just for kids. Satirical cartoon families have really caught on with a mainstream audience, making the American Ideal for family life a laughing matter.

The co-creators of the series intentionally present the cartoon images in one-dimensional form, giving a juvenile effect to a very juvenile show about well, juveniles. Perhaps the closest it is to style would be Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" cartoons, but the work of Mr. Schulz does not use the simple drawing style and limited motion animation to quite the same effect. The stories grow out of a spirit of play and are brought about in childlike ways as would occur in a world unrestricted by adult instruction and domination.

With "South Park," Trey Parker and Matt Stone help to express what it is like to live as a child in today's society. The two have no idealistic notions as to the way life should be for children. Fathers are not always supportive. Mothers are not always selfless. Children do often use language inappropriately and when they do, it is often funny. Parker and Stone just want to make people laugh. As a result, we are shown the silliness of the ideals we hold onto and the shallowness of the culture in which we live.

Parker and Stone offer a refreshing voice to the discourse about childhood in our society. These young men, with their one-dimensional cartoonish creations still play in the sandbox of childhood experience. The shows are presented in a childish manner, not putting on adult airs or laying down moral lessons. They are just having dangerous fun with their environment, as children often do.

These trash-mouthing kids capture in a very real sense the true state of children in today's society. As James Collins indicates, the traffic sign where the four kids hang out makes plain "two subjects at the heart of South Park—childhood and danger."

The storyline of "South Park" are straight from the imaginations of little kids, even while using the tools of an adult world. Children often see and expose things that adults want to ignore. For a long time, television tuned its nose up at bathroom humor and looked right past the giddy reality that childhood is not all "gosh," "golly" and "gee willikers." It took four vulgar kids from a small town in Colorado to make us realize what had been missing from our memories all these years.

"Wow. Someone understands me?"
Patch Adams is simply Powerful

by Justin Westerhof
Staff Reporter

In one of the initial scenes in "Patch Adams", Hunter Adams (Robin Williams) checks into a mental institution for depression and is posed with this question: "How many fingers do you see?" "Four," says Adams. "Four? No. Four!"

The man who asks him is a genius entrepreneur, who everyone else mistakes for a nut. However, the question he asks is central to the theme of the movie.

This inspirational film answers this question, but also shows the effect one person who cares about others can do. The old man tells Adams, "Look past the problem and focus on the solution." (When the old man puts his fingers up in front of Adams face, and one focuses on the solution (the person) the fingers blur. This man's question gave Adams the inspiration to go onto being a doctor. Adams then goes to medical school with his new nickname "Patch", and sneaks into the hospital to cheer people up, fulfilling their last wishes, and improve the quality of their lives with some classic Robin Williams' humor. His motto becomes, "If you treat the disease, you have a 50/50 chance. If you treat the person, you will always win."

Although some of the plot was cliche, I don't believe the intention of this movie was to be an artistic masterpiece. It brilliantly outlined what a life in the service of others means, and what it does for the people one serves, and what it can mean for the servant.

In one scene, an older woman refuses to eat. The rest of the resident doctors have tried everything and have no idea what to do. With their tails between their legs, they turn to Patch. Patch was interested in the person and not just the disease. He knew that this lady had always wanted to swim in a pool full of noodles ever since she was a little girl. So, they set up a pool full of noodles in the hospital lawn. Patch and the older woman go swimming and she began eating. Scenes like this fill the audience with a fresh hope and a distinct calling when the movie is over. "Patch Adams" is a "must-see" for those who find their calling in working with people, or for those who enjoy great comedy woven around an obvious theme. "Patch Adams" is simply powerful.

by Ryan Vande Kraats
Staff Reporter

Writers, in general, have the power to create history. Within their novels and stories, a good author can capture a moment in time and preserve it. These novels and stories can serve as valuable tools for readers--a good story can provide insight into the past. For example, one can learn a lot about the decendence and lary moralities of the twenties by reading "The Great Gatsby" by Fitzgerald or "The Sun Also Rises by Hemmingway." Or, by reading Jack Kerouac, one can learn a bit about the underground poetry and jazz scene in the fifties. But who will come to define our generation? What great works will tell future generations about our decade, the nineties?

One of the most prominent writers to establish himself as the voice of the nineties is Douglas Coupland, a thirty-seven-year-old Vancouver resident. Since 1990 he has published six novels, the most famous perhaps being Generation X (he was the first one to apply that phrase to that generation). The book that I am going to talk about is one of his more recent novels, "Life After God."

This book is really more of a collection of short fictional pieces, but it can be read as a longer work as well. There is a constant theme that runs through out all of the pieces: they all deal with living and growing up in a society that has moved on from traditional morality and entered a time of relativity and postmodernism. There is a certain cynicism and darkness that pervades most of these stories. In one of the stories, the narrator tells the tales of the people who live in his apartment building: drug addicts, prostitutes and abusive boyfriends. Another section deals with Coupland's own childhood fears of nuclear war and the destruction of humanity.

Personally, I really enjoy Coupland's books. Though they are often a bit bleak and quirky, he creates characters that are real and believable. His observations on our modern society are pretty much right on. We really are living in a world that has moved on from the church as a prevalent social institution. So I do think that perhaps Coupland could be our writer; the writer that will come to define our generation. That could be disappointing to some of you, but I think he does come pretty close to capturing society at large.

I thought that I would leave you all with some interesting insights from "Life After God."

"It wasn't animals who invented machines, it was humans. What is it about our essential humanity that we are expressing with our inventions? What is it that makes us us?"

I thought of how odd it is for billions of people to be alive, yet not one of them is really quite sure of what makes people people. The only activities that I could think of that humans do that have no animal equivalent were smoking, bodybuilding, and writing. That's not much, considering how special we think we are.
Justice in economics

by Emily Hutten
Staff Reporter

Challenge economic structures with justice. This was the call we heard from Brian Fikkert, this year's distinguished alumni, who recently came to Dordt and talked with us about our shared call to spend ourselves on behalf of the poor.

Women in Third World countries are working with, what Brian Fikkert would call, an alternative to a life of injustice and poverty. They have joined micro-credit programs which give each of them the opportunity to have enough credit to take out a loan in order to start a small enterprise. Micro-credit programs demand commitment and members are held accountable to one another. If one member does not make her payments, the other members do not receive their loans.

Success, measured in good rates of loan repayments, income production and improved health, has been high within these programs, according to Fikkert. Yet, on the other side of this development model, there are others who ask if this measure of success is accurate and just.

Jude Fernando, professor of economics at Dordt, has spent much time learning from the women and men in the villages of Bangladesh. He has seen the outworking of micro-credit programs at the grassroots level and researches the apparent success of these programs and non-governmental organizations in these villages.

Fernando suggests that the success of micro-credit programs is dependent on the institutions that are seen to contribute to the oppression of women. The family, local government, money lenders and non-governmental organizations are all forces which complicate the benefits of these programs. Instead of being empowered, women are placed under enormous pressure to maintain existing modes of social relations, on which depend not only high rates of loan repayment, but also the survival of their families," says Fernando.

This is a complex issue. Women are being active members in community development, but their everyday lives are not made easier. These women work within social structures that continue to place them in subordination to men, who have more bargaining power in economic, governmental and familial spheres.

Fernando writes, "Inequalities are socially constructed through the mediation of religious, cultural and biological norms held in the society."

In theory, micro-credit programs sound good. Yet, as they operate in the villages of Bangladesh, Fernando found they produced and supported the very institutions that were bringing oppression. The micro-credit programs supported by non-governmental organizations became the "New East India Company" and the "foreign money lenders" benefitting the local traders and lenders more than the women themselves.

Empowerment of women in these situations and renewal of entire communities cannot take place by merely recognizing the oppressive forces within the society. The first step of empowerment, Fernando explains, is transformation of power relationships. A change is first needed, not in economic income, but in values, attitudes, indeed, their entire worldview," says Fernando.

Liberation in the workplace

by Suzi Goudzwaard
Staff Reporter

Current statistics show that working women receive 76 cents for every dollar that working men earn. This rate has increased from past years (in 1979, women earned 63 cents for every dollar that men earned) but still, women are being paid 25 percent less than men. Many attribute this wage difference to gender discrimination, but it is women's experiences, education, hours spent at work, industry and occupation that influence the "wage discrimination" to a greater degree.

The oppression of women in such sectors as nursing, teaching and education, who enter a certain occupation and are able to spend as much time working as men, make 98 cents to every dollar that men make. Therefore, it is not that employers are discriminatory, because they pay what they get.

Typically, women have less experience because they leave the work force at times due to family or household duties. Women have typically gotten less education, again because of family commitments. Whereas men work full-time, on an average, put 45 hours of work in, women put in an average of 40 hours. Also, women often enter what are seen as "women's occupations" which typically pay less.

Finally, when the responsibility of women as "mother" is seen as a lesser role or weakness, but as a strength and an asset to society, they are not only women, but the whole society, will be liberated.

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