



Fall 2000

The Forum: Fall 2000

Sharon Ennis
University of North Dakota

Dan Lucy
University of North Dakota

Amy Gieske
University of North Dakota

Pauline Berg
University of North Dakota

Nicky Sailer
University of North Dakota

See next page for additional authors

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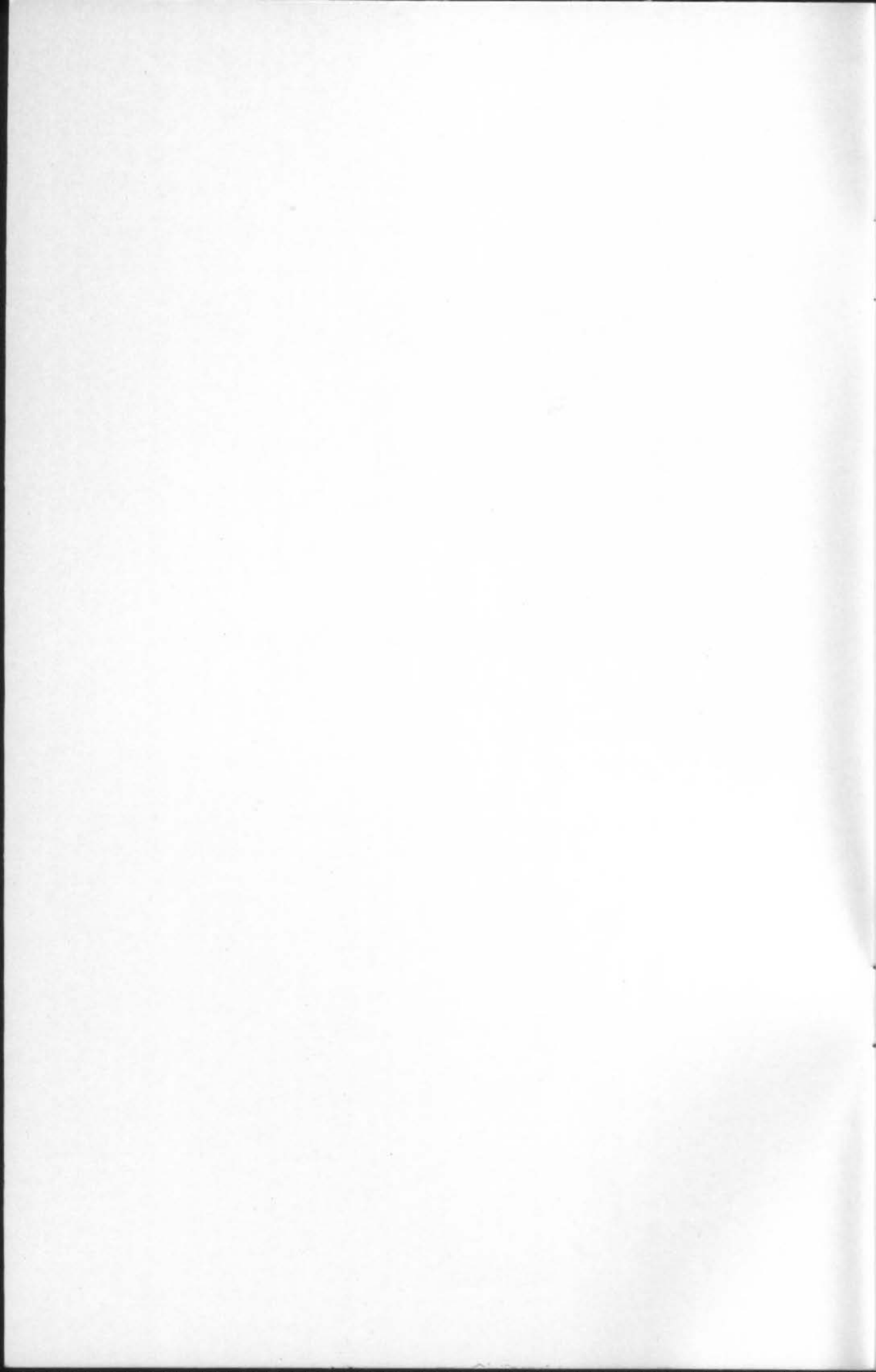
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Contents

Sharon Ennis Painting	Cover
Dan Lucy Poetry, <i>Natural Causes</i>	3
Amy Gieske Chalk portrait	4
Pauline Berg Essay, <i>Communicating a Culture</i>	5
Nicky Sailer Fiction, <i>The True Fisherman</i>	10
Jason Signalness Photograph, <i>Lucy Follows</i>	12
Tami Jo Partlow Essay, <i>Men or Mascots?</i>	13
Chris Stoner Poetry, <i>Approaching</i>	19
Dan Lucy Fiction, <i>Close, Though</i>	20
Michael Licht Sculpture	26
Lauren Hoffman Fiction, <i>Things That Go Bump in the Night</i>	27
Graphic Protest class Graphic design	29
Kirsten Robinson Essay, <i>And the Winner Is . . .</i>	30
Nicky Sailer Poem, <i>Death Forgotten</i>	34
Jeanne O'Neil Watercolor	35

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BOSP Chairperson: Megan Thibert
Phone: 777-9812

Dan Lucy

Natural Causes

This house once had a life all its own.
One hundred years it stood before invasion
five years ago—when we moved in
on it, parasites with suitcases.
The planned reconstruction was a conquest,
an adventure.

Skinning it from the inside, we crow-barred,
hammered, pulled-down. The walls fell mute
and unprotesting. We wore surgeon's masks—
who knows what one hundred years
of dust carries on its back? Long sleeves
protected us

from insulation's itch. The floral print couches
were sheathed in shrouds of black plastic.
If not dead yet, they would soon suffocate.
The nervous system,
each capillary, vein, artery stretched
to meet our needs.

Five years, and still the heart does not beat!
Through screaming fights and unchanged cat boxes,
despite our good intentions, we murdered this house.
So much burnt toast,
spilled milk ate away at its foundation.
One hundred years

and it crumbles under tears! It has become a crime
scene, an autopsy anyone can see from the newly-laid
front walk into the foyer now well-lit
by a chandelier. Isn't it grand!
To see the people inside dying of natural causes
where they stand.



Amy Gieske

Pauline Berg

Communicating a Culture

The first image I have of China is of flawless marble floors stretching empty to distant gray walls. Only a snaking line of people connects me to the serious, hatted guards, a human chain to prevent me from drowning in the plain of stone, plane of stone, the only ceiling a latticework of blue steel pipes to artfully divert attention away from the blackness of empty above.

And I need to use the bathroom. You shouldn't break away from the group, my instinct says, shouldn't cause that head, hat brim low to the eyes, to look directly at me. What if exploring isn't allowed? None of the line seems to be exploring or even spreading. The line is too dense in its single file and I take a deep breath and take my first steps on the moon, on this Chinese marble desert—for terrain is too earthy a word. The bathroom takes my breath away. Tall, black doors; beautiful fixtures, mirrors; stark and perfect; a contradiction to its function—unless that is scaring American tourists. It is literally the most impressive bathroom I have ever seen, and suddenly I can't remember any of the rules about procedures for toilet paper in China. In this breathtaking bathroom could there be third world sewers? Sometimes I'm supposed to put toilet paper in the basket, but why and when I do not know after fifteen hours of flight. Why did I think I would just know what to do instead of memorizing those instructions?

My first test in China, so I flush and stride back with more certainty than when I left the group, to declare myself sane and disease free and pass unquestioned.

The biggest bouquet of flowers I have ever seen makes the lobby look regal in some way. Too good for us, I think. Too good for the hotel itself, perhaps, as I see the inset clock, its handlessness disguised with a piece of yellow legal pad paper. They have legal pads in China. I know nothing about what they have in China, except for too many forms with vague questions and too little space for the answers. I'm not sure whether I hope they ever read these or instead file useless information away in some gray cabinet or, more laughably, pay someone to enter us into the visitor factoid database. "The Chinese government is wasting my time," I think of shouting, but quell it as we struggle to answer questions about our ID numbers and Chinese names. Oh, and what's my occupation, and into which category does

that fit? Most importantly, what is my purpose for entering the country?

I'm reaching for my embarrassing canvas bag that says young and poor all over it, and Pauline Berg—Grand Forks, ND—USA in black marker on red librarian's tape that my husband swears will not make everything sticky when I pull it off. My mind flashes back to a guy that I knew? met? kissed once? twice? who explained to me he was keeping all his clothes in garbage bags over the summer, because then it was easier to move into a new apartment in the fall without packing. It must have been to explain the wrinkles.

And I am moving, following a woman who had picked up my bag before I could grab it, one of the two staff people who were there to help us. The other was a real live bellhop with a hat and all, another hat to watch, and I realize guiltily that he is leading my husband just ahead of us. We have stolen too many staff members for our two bags, and I want to point that out, to stop them from making this mistake, but as I hurry ahead I simply remark to the woman "You have a very lovely hotel," and she brightens and looks pleased that I have said it, looks proud, and I am only a tired student with an ugly bag she doesn't need to carry, and I don't understand China at all.

June 18th, 2000

I'm feeling tough because I believe jet lag has been overdramatized by the masses. I will learn four weeks later that I'm completely wrong. I stand and introduce myself to the students seated at their desks. I sound quite good, like I have an organized message, and I'm a bit disappointed when the most interesting thing about me is being married. Later when we break into groups, I'm afraid that I've offended a girl whose father is in the PLA—People's Liberation Army—because I ask questions about whether that affords her family benefits and such. My group consists of great English speakers, even if they do try to describe her father's job at first as a policeman. Then again, maybe that's true in China. I don't think so now, but I will when several army guards in Beijing chase my husband and me, along with ten or so other people, out of Tianamen's Square because it is closing. They turn the monument spotlights off, but I guess I can't take a hint.

My group tells me they feel as though they are letting me down by not being able to answer well enough in English. I feel that I am letting them down by not being able to answer well enough in English. They don't want analysis of America or North Dakota or anything else, only stories and facts. Apparently I didn't bring any facts in my head, and stories come slowly with these more than strangers—always come slowly for me, I think.

I'm cold and I borrow a jacket and long to go out into the hallway with

the group to get out of the too many echoed voices. Why are the rooms so bare? The students reject my suggestion to leave the room. What would Dean Wong think? How could they be the first to separate from their classmates? I wrap up my inadequate analysis of my former life and what the Midwest means to answer their questions about what I do for fun, whether I live in the dorms, and who my favorite NBA player is.

We Americans go to the Shanghai Portman Ritz-Carlton in the afternoon, and I love its fabulous modern architecture. Fabulous meaning grandiose and unnecessary, but impressive in its unconcern for excess. I walk back to our more discrete hotel with Aaron and Bob, getting to know the streets. On one level, we want to become familiar with the names and orientations of the major streets, as well as their system of numbering. Okay, that's Bob's mission. I am more interested in introducing ourselves to the streets, so to speak, soaking in the sidewalk, quick old men and watchful old women alike. On this old main street there are no tethered animals as I will come to expect before dinner time on the sidewalks of smaller streets. Walking past the open front stores, only a metal door to pull down at night, I see small things to buy. I shy away from trying it, terrified of making a mistake ending in embarrassment, perhaps offending these salesclerks, hair curled perfectly like my grandmother's. Yet everything is so cheap in relation to the US that I know I can't hold out for long.

June 19th, 2000

The taxi takes us to the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology and as we get on campus we reach a fork in the drive. The driver asks which direction by pointing and we don't know, have no idea, so we point and stumble out of the taxi at the feet of a huge statue of Mao. I'm not worried about being lost, as though I believe we are so conspicuous that news of our presence must instantly spread to every corner of the campus, of the city, as if we have disturbed some sort of anthill and expect to be inundated by the curious. We quickly find the sidewalks nearly empty and we are not really even getting more than a glance from anyone. So we wander around, asking for Dean Wong with his card, and yet I am strangely unconcerned, feel completely safe here. Some essential quality of every campus, a university universal, and I feel like this is home, and homesick all at once. As Nancy stops to ask for help in English and everyone understands, I wait, caught up with the idea that we are back on some US campus in disrepair.

June 22nd, 2000

USST is a long way in a taxi and the traffic makes me gasp. The taxis play

a recorded message designed to make us feel safe and I do because it becomes familiar. That is good in a city where the traffic makes me gasp. We pull out across a lane of bicycles and the lights don't seem to mean anything to the bicyclers unless there is a traffic guard. Traffic cop? Traffic cop seems to be a ridiculous tag in this stream of Chinese faces, Chinese lives, far from the land of "CHiPS" and California tans. Very far. And I wonder, what can they think when they watch "CHiPS" or "Baywatch" in these connected cramped homes, these millions of individuals, their link to me Carmen Electra. And I know this is an impossible task we have set for ourselves, introducing ourselves to the Chinese students who already know about us through Hollywood better than we can see ourselves. They're righter than I am. Because when I look at myself I seem so different from other Americans, and I want to show them the subtleties of our lives and differences and issues. And yet, we confirm what they know to be true in every action, our American attitudes betraying us at every word.

We fill the table or the room or the street with our voices to show we are competent, to mask our insecurities. And we push ahead in the conversation with the students, because if where we are is not working, ahead is better—a new place. And we assume leadership of the group as they hand it over to us, only we don't have a script, will never know the funniest thing to say or the clue that solves the mystery like our television shows. And they will never know me as I stand in front of this group of students and try to be honest about American life in stories and facts, population statistics that I know aren't accurate. They will never know me, even while I betray myself at every word as I try to entertain them, because I am an actor. We Americans are all actors, and they play their role as audience beautifully and understand us better than we understand ourselves.

June 23rd, 2000

I'm going to try to be myself, whoever that is. I'm going to pretend, no wait, damn; I'm going to relate to these former students of Victoria's as though they were in a class with me at UND or some such thing, that we are just both students and not put into this uncomfortable position as representatives of our respective countries. Interestingly though, I can't seem to do that without imagining us both back to the US, my own turf. Is it because that is the only place where being a minority goes away for me, my actions do not potentially implicate "Americans" as a whole?

Perhaps it's only a comfort thing, like those full body deep relaxation tapes. "Now imagine yourself in Grand Forks," a woman's voice croons. UND is my warm, sandy, island beach and the absurdity of having flown to the other side of the world to find this out hits hard. "I am not a traveler," I repeat again and again. This is my mantra.

As we walk into the room where Victoria's students wait patiently for

us I am bothered by this indecision, this reaching for a template as a crutch or necessity for my conversations—but never my thoughts—in China . . . in life I suppose. Yet sometimes I can break free of that and talk as I think, but not here. Not yet. I am anxious and feel artificial in these artificial interactions, and it depresses me, but I plunge ahead, speaking to keep from thinking in that ugly way we all have.

And I try, artificially, to be myself as I meet this student. I am an intellectual suddenly, querying him about how his parents feel about having been moved to a collective farm during the Cultural Revolution. Hearing him say that if the government asked him to he would leave Shanghai, just as his parents had before he was born, for a farm and another world, another life. And this is exactly what I came to China to hear and I push him to say more, to say it all quicker. To tell me all of what I read about Chinese culture and history; and I feel like he could say in ten minutes what may have taken me the whole trip to track down, the essence of China. And I'll have heard it from the horse's mouth, so to speak, validating all the reading I did. And I push for more because he knows, with his parents' struggle, and his childhood, and hard work to return here to Shanghai. He has learned, not from a book as I did, or a lecture, but through careful eyes and careful living, about China just as I have learned things about my world. And he catches what it is I want to know and we teeter on the edge like that for a timeless instant and look into each other's eyes—and he draws back, answering an easier question, diverting the subject. And I hear myself say perhaps these questions are too difficult and his eyes don't even show himself any longer, and we reach for something solid to stand on, and he says that he thinks my husband and I are a good match. I latch on to that, asking him what he means, but he shrugs, won't say, and I look at Aaron, wondering what anyone can see of him, farther beneath the surface where he truly is. Perhaps the student means that I am too much for the room when I get caught in an idea. I say too much, and Aaron too little. Or perhaps I have just met the most perceptive man in China, but he says nothing more, only shows me a pond, a building, with a group that has sprung up around us, and doesn't stand too close.

Nicky Sailer

The True Fisherman

The door bursts open with a crack of ice, and flakes of snow flutter to the cold and dirty floor. A beam of light streaks into the blackened house and spotlights the pot-bellied stove placed strategically kiddy-corner. A man grumbling something about the weather stretches a leg through the porthole and cautiously follows suit with the other as his body retreats from the fog of early morning. His burly, overworked hands grip the crystallized handle of the ax, and by the dim light shining through the opening, he begins to chop at the hole in the floor.

He works his muscles in a rhythmic motion while white ice bits fly into the smoky air accumulating from the miniature door of the blackened stove. The sudden *doosh* of sound and splash of water mean the task is complete. Ice is removed from the hole, and a connection is made between frozen land and frozen water. The fisherman lays his tool at rest and warms his hands at the stove where his great grandfather proudly placed it many years ago.

With the reach of a strong, young man, his hand the size of his grandpa's, he reaches into the burlap pouch where I'm stored, where I've always been. He attaches a clip to my back and plunges my antique body into the frigid water. The chill is exhilarating, as it has been day in and day out for the whole of four decades or more. With a glide and a twist, I find rest about four feet from the tickle of weeds layering the bottom. Time is what I need for my painted eyes to adjust to the murky depths surrounding my position. Jerk! A pull from above sends my body on an upward surge, into a slight glide, and yet another Jerk! My fins are purposely set to propel me counterclockwise, as they have been for the whole of four decades or more. Jerk! glide . . . Jerk! glide . . . The monotony of a job. Wait! Out of the corner . . . of my eye . . . I think . . . Yes! There it is. A shadow lurking, belonging to a creature of the depths.

The man sitting, waiting above, catches a glimpse of the motionless image with well trained eyes. He reaches with experienced hands guided by the hearts of his ancestors, not by his eyes alone. He reaches for the . . . slowly now . . . slowly . . . He's easing it in . . . almost there. Swoosh! The bubbles, the scales! The beast struggles . . . its tail thrashing, its body in an instant scare!

Where to go . . . only up. The slippery snake is pulled farther from

view, hidden by the murky water and soon by the darkness of the house where the fish's fate finds completion. For pride's sake I'd smile, if only I could. But I remain left behind. Forgotten. Glorious only in my own painted eyes. I remain an ornament for the wall, in a monotonous job, where I have been for the whole of four decades, or more.



Jason Signalness

Tami Jo Partlow

Men or Mascots?

Only thirty-eight years after the massacre of Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, a school in Wichita, Kansas, composed mainly of white children, adopted the Sioux name in order to "honor" their athletes. Incidents like these have prompted Native Americans to become outraged with the numerous schools and sports franchises across the country that have adopted Indian mascots to represent their teams. Native Americans feel that without truly understanding the heritage, religion, or history of their culture these teams have added to the stereotype of American Indians by representing themselves with Indian caricatures. However, players, owners, and alumni of these teams have quite a different stance on the issue. They believe that they are promoting and honoring the Native American heritage. They also do not understand why the logos cause such distress since so many people are proud of their team's Indian nickname.

In Grand Forks, North Dakota, home of the University of North Dakota "Fighting Sioux," debate has risen around the university's current Indian logo. The geometric silhouette of an Indian head the college now uses may be replaced by another logo. The news of instating a new logo has stirred up an outcry amongst the majority of Native Americans at the university. They were hoping that any changes would involve abolishing the nickname and logo completely. "They intend to keep it (the logo) if they're paying to come up with new logos," said Chase Iron Eyes, a student at UND. Charles Kupchella, the president of UND, however, hoped that the new logo would help bridge the conflict between the supporters and opponents of the logo. The new logo was created by Bennett Brien, a registered half-Chippewa Indian, in hopes that he could prepare a logo that is a better representation of Native American culture. "It's not stereotypical," says Brien.

There are two prevalent caricatures of Indians commonly seen at sporting events around the country that Native Americans feel are stereotypical. One is a warrior head, the other a cartoon of a grinning, red-faced boy with a feather sticking out the back of his head. Native Americans believe that these stereotypical mascots not only place their people in the past, but also separate them from their contemporary life. Native Americans feel resentful, knowing that people view their culture as something of the past and not

of the future. They believe the pictures suggest that the Native American culture exists only in museums and not in the people alive today. To them, keeping an Indian mascot that perpetuates stereotypes prevents them from moving towards the future. The pictures are also seen as depicting only times of war instead of "the beauty and serenity during times of peace." Wambdi Wastewin, a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, commented, "Our warriors were trying to protect us when they took up arms. To use the image of our warriors as a basis for popular sports is an affront to our history, our dignity and the character of who we are as people." Kupchella, however, felt that adopting a new logo that was made to be "non-stereotypical" would help alleviate these feelings. The new logo was designed in order to have symbolic meanings to the Native Americans in this area. According to Brien, the feathers, face paint, and the determined look on the logo's face are supposed to tie together the Sioux heritage with the accomplishments the university strives for, academics and athletics. Erik Enno, whose heritage is Sioux and Chippewa, said, "I like the logo and I like the way Ben put the symbolism behind it." Yet, these are not the feelings of many other Native Americans. Throughout the campus Native Americans have expressed that their "heartfelt belief" is that UND's logo is "dehumanizing."

American Indians also feel that the mascots are having adverse effects on their children. They question whether the demeaning of their culture through mascots can be linked to the suicide rate of Native American teens, a rate twenty times higher than the national average. They believe that their children who attend schools that boast an Indian mascot are constantly reminded of the stereotype bestowed upon their culture. Native Americans are also extremely upset when their children have to face ridicule just because of their race. On the campus of UND, Native Americans have become targets of racial comments and gestures. Chants made by opposing teams are often along the lines of "Sioux suck!" Native Americans claim while they are at sporting events they have to watch their culture being depicted inaccurately in ways they say demean their culture and religious practices. Native Americans get extremely upset when teachers and school officials claim they preach respect for cultural differences and yet tolerate stereotypical mascots and actions such as those mentioned above. By keeping mascots, Native Americans feel that their children are constantly being slapped in the face with the lack of respect for their culture.

Some school officials, however, don't feel that keeping an Indian mascot and preaching respect for cultural differences is hypocritical, as many Native Americans claim it to be. Leigh Jeanotte, director of UND's Native American Programs, touched on this issue when he stated in a letter to Kupchella that "UND long has proclaimed to have a commitment to diversity, as well as to fostering a campus environment that promotes multicult-

tural understanding. Unfortunately, the current campus environment is becoming increasingly hostile and frightening for American Indian students—whether they are involved in the recent issues [logo change] or not.” However, Don Partlow, a school board member in East Grand Forks, MN, holds a different view. He says, “Teaching children respect for other races and having an Indian mascot do not contradict each other.” Dale Stauss, also a school board member in East Grand Forks and a former Sioux hockey player said, “The Sioux name was not used in any derogatory manner by the fans or the athletes while I played [1963-64]. We were very respectful.”

School officials and owners of teams constantly bring up the question of respect and honor with Indian mascots. Many owners and school officials say that they are paying tribute to Indians. Rachel Thue, a UND graduate, says, “I would be proud to have my heritage honored by the use of a logo or nickname.” Native Americans claim, however, that using logos or nicknames is not how they pay tribute to one another. They believe honoring each other can be done in the following ways: at a Pow-wow, by listening without interrupting, or with an eagle feather. Al Gunderson, of Grand Forks, also disagrees with Thue on the subject of showing respect to Native Americans. In an editorial he wrote, “I believe the main issue regarding the Sioux logo/name is respect. When someone comes to you and says that they don’t like what you are calling them, you can either comply with their wishes out of respect for them or continue to call them what you want.” Native Americans have stated that keeping Indian mascots in order to demonstrate “honor” to their culture shows the lack of knowledge people have about the Native American culture.

People have said that using an Indian mascot will help keep the culture of a tribe alive. “The Sioux and other Native Americans are part of North Dakota’s history and heritage. If a state institution wants to remember that heritage, why not?” questioned Thue. Many Native Americans oppose comments such as those made by Thue. They claim that it is their responsibility to insure the continuance of their culture. They believe people of another heritage do not have the information to pass on the important stories, traditions, religions, values, and languages of their Indian ancestors.

Proponents claim that, even though the logos do not depict actual traditional values of Native Americans, they were not meant to cause harm when they were first instated. Native Americans claim that this may be true, but now they are saying that these nicknames and logos are harmful to their culture. They believe if the problem persists, then the harm people are inflicting becomes intentional. Lucy Ganje, an associate professor at UND, believes that the idea of adopting a new logo instead of abolishing the nickname as a whole is a step back in time and progress for the university. “Some ‘traditions’ belong to another time and should only be displayed in

museums," said Ganje. Kevin Fee, a newspaper columnist in Grand Forks, also wrote an article addressing Kupchella's proposal to change the logo. In the article he commented on the subject of "re-opening wounds" by introducing the idea of changing the current logo. Fee states, "It obviously hurts them." Wastewin also stated that the logo hurt her in a comment directed to Kupchella. She said, "President Kupchella, shame on you for mocking my people." However, UND's hockey coach, Dean Blais, has a different point of view. "I think it's [the new logo] more distinctive and I don't think it's derogatory in any sense. If people take it derogatory, I just don't think they're looking at it really open-minded," said Blais. Many agree with Blais; they believe that the new logo was intended to erase some of the negative feelings about the current logo.

Many people question how Indian nicknames can be harmful if people are not offended by other ethnic mascots. Norwegians from Minnesota, home of the Vikings football team, claim that they are not offended by the name. Native Americans, however, argue that there is an enormous difference between the Vikings and the Sioux. They point out that today, no one associates him or herself with being a Viking as one would a Sioux. Native Americans also point out that there are no Vikings left alive today to be offended by the name. Another comparison frequently brought up is the Notre Dame's Fighting Irish. People of Irish decent claim that they are not offended by the nickname, even though they had to endure many trying times as the Indian Nations once had to. Native Americans once again point out differences between the two situations. They claim that Sioux, for example, is not only a band of people but also a religion. They also point out the difference that people of Irish heritage founded Notre Dame. This is not the case with UND.

A somewhat related subject is the issue of why only mascots of Indian race are still prevalent today. The character of "Little Black Sambo" is no longer seen anywhere in schools or sporting franchises, yet Native Americans claim that he is just as much a stereotype of African-Americans as the Cleveland Indians mascot is of Native Americans. American Indians often question others on how they would respond to a team named the Honkies, Gooks, Kikes, or Niggers. Frank Johnson, an African-American student at UND, addressed this issue when he said, "I used to be the last person who wanted to change UND's nickname. Then my mother asked me what I'd do if the school's name was the Fighting Niggers. I told her that I'd burn this campus down. I know what my grandmother went through." Mike Rasmussen of Angle Inlet, MN, feels differently than Johnson. "I have Irish blood in me, and I know the great pain and suffering of the Irish . . . but I do not see the Union Jack or any other caricatures of this era as offensive and insensitive," said Rasmussen.

Native Americans also wonder why there are no mascots representing

other groups' religions. They claim an example of this double standard is how we choose to treat the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Today, they wonder why there are no stereotypical pictures of Jewish people plastered on gym floors or on the backs of jerseys. Native Americans believe that if someone did this, it would be deemed racist, slanderous, and just not acceptable. But today Indians claim that this is how many choose to "honor" the survivors of the many holocausts the American Indians endured. Rasmussen believes, however, that people are causing no harm to Indians by using their culture to represent a sports team. Rasmussen said, "I think we all need to remember that atrocities (past, present, or future) do occur."

School officials and athletic supporters believe it would be an "atrocitiy" in itself if the logo was ever abolished. For instance, college administrators worry that if the nickname is dropped, they would receive a much smaller amount of alumni support and funding. On the UND campus and in Grand Forks, many question whether the university would have received a one hundred million dollar donation from Ralph Engelstad, a UND graduate and former Sioux hockey player, if the Sioux nickname had been dropped. Engelstad was very vocal with his objections when the school decided to drop a past logo. Now that UND has a new president and an enormous amount of money to spend on a hockey arena, Engelstad once again asked to have the old logo reinstated. Since Kupchella said that adopting the old logo was "out of the question" many Native Americans weren't surprised to see a new logo, quite similar to the old one, unveiled. Jay Taken Alive said, "They're looking more at money, in my view." Gina Murray, a freshman at UND said, "It is questionable whether UND would have received the money had they gotten rid of the Sioux nickname all together." Native Americans therefore would like to ask the fans what they truly are supporting. They wonder if they care solely for the name and not the students, athletes, or academics. Murray also said, "The mascot doesn't bother me, but if they changed it, it wouldn't change the school, just the name." If the name was changed many believe people would eventually forget the dropped mascot. An example of this can be found in Grand Forks. Central High School held the nickname the Redskins, which was dropped in 1992, amid much protest. People believed that "things would never be the same" and that the athletes and school would all suffer. Today, however, students have accepted their new mascot, the teams are still winning, and the school's alumni are still supporting them. Tim Litzinger, a Central graduate, attended the school during the name change. "I was hurt and so were the coaches. But now my cousins [who attend Central] barely remember the nickname and have adopted the new name just fine," said Litzinger.

People in favor of keeping the logos occasionally bring up the argument that Native Americans have bigger issues to be concerned about than

abolishing nicknames. Stauss believes that health care and education should be more important than changing a mascot. Despite suggestions like these, Native Americans believe that changing an Indian logo will greatly benefit their people. They believe that people's educational environment and attitudes towards themselves would improve, if their self-esteem wasn't being lowered by the mascot.

Although there is still an abundant amount of schools and sporting franchises that tote an Indian mascot, much progress has been made. Since 1970, nearly one thousand primary and secondary schools across the country have traded in their Indian mascots for "non-racial" alternatives. Not only have high schools opted for a name change, but large universities have done so as well. For example, The University of Oklahoma, Stanford, and St. Bonaventure's have also changed their mascots to something less offensive. In lieu of the controversy of the mascot names, manufacturing companies have chosen to change the names of some of their questionably named products. For instance, Crayola has changed the former "Indian Red" crayon to "Chestnut" in order to disassociate the relationship between a Native American's skin color with the color of the crayon. The Native Americans fighting for the abolishment of Indian mascots are delighted by these changes. But they are still striving to put an end to the mascots still plastered on walls and floors at the two thousand schools still using controversial mascots.

Athletics supporters and team owners also are continuing the fight to ensure the future use of their mascot. It is questionable, though, whether their arguments will be strong enough to hold up in the test of these ever changing times. But, I believe that their lack of knowledge about the Native American culture is the only explanation for why they continue to fight for their mascot. If they were open minded I believe that they would realize their arguments are futile and self-centered. Hopefully the supporters will come to realize the saying "treat others the way you want to be treated" applies to every group, including Native Americans.

Chris Stoner

Approaching

Equality North Dakota Announces its Formation

The van dips and jumps
over the not always even roadway
as I stare out across the spongy,
almost springtime
Dakota fields
"Kiss Me"
plays softly
through the FM radio

*Kiss me
beneath the milky twilight
Lead me out on the moonlit floor
Lift your open hand,
strike up the band
and make the fireflies dance.
Silver moon sparkling . . .
And kiss me.*

Today we become political,
make ourselves known.
We who have been silent, silenced.
We will cry out with our existence.
We will justify
what should never need
to be justified.

But not yet . . .
For now, just this:
the road and the landscape,
a song about passion
and the moment of its clarity
the fields,
the chilled wet beauty of the season.
For now, just this.

Dan Lucy

Close, Though

“**N**ot one complaint or your time doubles. Sit quietly for ten minutes, and you can come back upstairs with the family. Until then think about what you’ve done,” Dylan’s mother called out as she climbed the short flight of carpeted stairs. At the top she turned and looked down to him. He didn’t meet her eyes. Instead he stared at her hand, and her pale thin fingers circling the railing. He imagined her expression at that moment; face tipped forward, mouth partially open, eyebrows arched as if to ask, Do I make myself clear? Without waiting for a response or saying anything further, she folded her arms across her chest, turned and walked away. Dylan turned to face the wall.

The “time-out spot”: a short stool in the front entryway; or, as his father called it, “The Chair.” This area of the house was chilled by an ever-present draft. His father had bunched a thick white towel against the base of the door to keep out the cold air. It didn’t help. Coldness seemed to permeate the walls themselves, worming in through invisible cracks. When either Dylan or Joshua, his younger brother, were sent to have a time-out, his father would issue it in a mock sentence—“I find you guilty of hitting your brother and hereby sentence you to ten minutes in the chair” or “I hereby decree that you spend ten minutes in the chair for talking back.” His mother would sigh “honestly . . .” while his father laughed loudly, opening his mouth wide, showing his teeth. Dylan never understood his father’s sense of humor. He rubbed his bare arms for warmth since he was wearing only pajama bottoms and a pair of socks.

His mother stood at the bulky white Kelvinator, cooking, while he, Joshua, and their father sat at the table, quietly awaiting breakfast. All were in a state of half-sleep, except his mother, who woke, by habit, hours earlier than the rest. In an attempt to break the silence of the kitchen, Dylan’s father told a joke—a joke about three men entering a bar, in which he replaced himself, Joshua, and Dylan for the three men. He had told it so many times that now the joke had evolved into a recitation of sorts, accompanied by well-rehearsed actions. He set himself into a laughing fit before the punch line, slapping his palm against the table, shaking the plates and

cups. As if on cue, Joshua joined in, going so far as to fall from his chair and roll about on the linoleum kicking the air in hysterics, and holding his side like he was keeping something in. Dylan didn't laugh.

Craning her neck toward the commotion his mother shook her head, still expertly turning the sausages in the pan. She sighed.

"Honestly. Can't you boys at least comb your hair before coming to the table? Hair sticking up so bad you look as if you've sprouted horns in your sleep." Her husband laughed at this, slapping the table again. The table rattled. He stopped laughing a moment only to pull his hair up on either side of his head in imitation of horns.

"You're no better," she said, addressing her husband, who was coughing after laughing so hard, and trying to gulp down some coffee to clear his throat; black coffee that overwhelmed the tiny kitchen with its strong odor. "Honestly. It's like the devil himself sat down for breakfast in my own kitchen." She shook her head again, pressing the spatula she wielded against a tanned circle of pancake. Dylan smiled at the clumps of yellow eggs on his plate.

He rarely laughed at his father's jokes, or even paid much attention to them. He focused his attentions on his mother at the stove. She always looked prepared for the day, even in the harsh light of the early morning sun just hoisting itself laboriously over the horizon, piercing the frosty kitchen windows. She wore no make-up, and her hair was done in a tight halo of a braid that wound around the top of her head, held secure by invisible pins. After clearing the breakfast mess, she would unwind it, comb it out, and let her hair hang loosely over her shoulders until evening. Before she went to bed, it would be combed and done up in the braid again.

Some evenings she would let Dylan or Joshua comb it out for her. While she sat on the floor reading, one of them would sit behind her on the couch, cross-legged or kneeling, and pull the wooden brush through the brown waves of hair to where it hung at the middle of her back tapering to a soft point. Dylan enjoyed doing this for his mother, more so than Joshua it seemed. A fact that his father enjoyed pointing out. He would often walk through the room, stopping only to remark how Dylan, if he kept it up, would one day be a famous hairdresser.

"You know, like one of them queers in the movies—" he would stop and correct himself. "Or should I say 'one of them queerth in the movieth'?" before breaking into his customary laugh. No reaction from either his wife or Dylan would send him from the room, chuckling to himself, and calling for Joshua. When he was gone, Dylan's mother would reach back over her shoulder and pat his knee, letting him know it was okay not to stop brushing.

"You can't always help who you fall in love with," she once said to him, turning the open book upside down on her lap.

There was a lengthy silence before she spoke again, during which Dylan studied the book's cover. It was a Rose Petal Romance novel; she bought a new one every two weeks. The cover was a smudged painting of a man and a woman leaning against a mossy, thickly trunked tree. She was pale, half-naked and large breasted, with her thin hands splayed across the man's back. He was tanned a dark brown, incredibly muscular, and shirtless. His one hand cupped the back of the woman's head while the other circled her slender waist.

"Just like you can't necessarily help it when someone falls in love with you. Sometimes," she continued, "you may not even love the person at all. People can grow on you. Sometimes you love about a person what you can, and live with the rest."

Dylan listened to his mother's words, continuing to stare at the cover and brush her hair. She opened her mouth as if to say more, but stopped herself, returning instead to the pages of her book. They grow on you. Like moss, Dylan thought. He knew not to say it aloud.

This particular morning at breakfast, out of nowhere, his father called him on the fact that he never laughed at his jokes. He brought it up like a fault. Why did you fail that test yesterday? Why did you not make your bed this morning? Why don't you laugh at my jokes, ever? Dylan didn't look at his father, but at Joshua, who was at that time reseated, following the brief seizure of laughter that had thrown him to the floor.

His mother had taken her place opposite Joshua, and sat quietly sipping her tea. She occasionally broke off small pieces of buttered toast, and placed them delicately in her mouth, chewing slowly, before once again lifting the mug to her lips.

"I don't think they're funny," Dylan said to his plate, quietly but matter-of-factly, as he traced the yellow mounds of eggs with his fork. A look came over his father's face, or rather, expression drained away altogether, and his face went limp as a mask. It was a quiet minute before he spoke again. Quiet except for the sound of Joshua gulping down a big swallow of grape juice.

"Not funny?" he snorted nonchalantly. "Well, Josh thought it was pretty damned funny, huh, Josh?"

Josh grinned widely at his father, bits of egg between his teeth. His lips were dyed a deep purple from the juice, and there was a dark wet line just under his nose. His father gave a small nod of approval.

"At least someone has a damned sense of humor around this damned house," his father said. He clutched his fork and knife, slicing off one end of a sausage, shoving it in his mouth. He chewed quickly as he spoke. "He's not a little sissy," his father swallowed before continuing. "He's not a sissy playing with his mommy's hair all the—" Dylan's mother slammed her mug down on the table, sloshing tea over the brim, cutting her husband

off mid-sentence. The small room was quickly silent. His father muttered a curse and raised the steaming mug to his lips. His mother stood and crossed the kitchen to the sink, touching Dylan lightly on the shoulder as she passed. After wetting a cloth she returned and wiped the pale brown liquid from the tabletop. As she cleaned, Dylan spoke again; louder than before.

"I just didn't think it was funny," he said. "You tell that same stupid joke all the time. You asked why I don't laugh, and I told you. How else can I say it? It's not funny, it's not funny, it's—" His father's hand came down hard on the table, shaking it so much that Dylan's grape juice tipped over and spilled down the front of his shirt. The glass lay on its side, lolling back and forth, the mouth like a small cannon. The cold liquid absorbed quickly through his shirt, leaving a pale purple stain. Joshua gaped, silent.

In a rush his mother stood, picking up the cloth from the table. Dylan slid his chair back, and his mother came around behind him, pulling the shirt over his head as he raised his arms. The juice had already soaked entirely through the shirt and had reduced to a few small beads of purple perspiration on his chest and stomach. His mother tossed the wet shirt into the sink from across the kitchen, and ran the warm cloth over his torso.

"Honestly," she sighed, exasperated. "At the breakfast table?" She rinsed the cloth in the sink and twisted it dry, and then ran cold water over the shirt before holding it up to the window, checking for what might turn into a permanent stain. Assured that it was clean, she left to put the shirt in the dryer, eventually coming back to the still silent table. Dylan looked down his chest where the juice had spilled. There remained a splattering of faint pink freckles on his stomach. No definite shape to them, like a splattering of tiny birthmarks. He touched the small space of skin with his fingertips, noticing that it was warm from the washcloth. His father was the first to disrupt the silence, speaking directly to Dylan.

"I'm tired of it—tired of it! This constant disrespect from you. I'm your father," he said. "You have to understand that." His words were slow, monotone, deliberate. "I deserve respect because I am your father. For that outburst, you're taking a time-out."

Dylan was shaken with surprise; not at the fact of punishment, but at the form it had taken. There was no joke. He hadn't known his father to issue punishment without a joke.

He looked up to face his father, who was now raising his mug of coffee to his mouth. A barely visible steam curled around his nose and over his eyes. Dylan studied his father's face as if seeing it for the first time, taking in just how hard his features really looked when he wasn't laughing. Dylan recalled a photo his grandmother had once showed him; a photo that she declared to look just like him. It was of his father as a child; a black and

white school photo taken decades earlier, in which he stood at the end of a long row of boys lined up against a brick wall. They all appeared to be similar in build, though their faces were different and varying shades of pale gray. The shadows and light that stretched over their features were the only things that distinguished them from each other. The boys squinted out of the photo at him, some shielding their eyes from the overly bright sun with their hands against their foreheads like a mock-salute. His father, obviously one of the smaller boys, stood with his hands crossed over his chest. He stared directly out of the photo—eyes wide, smiling like he alone knew some great secret and was keeping tight-lipped about it. Dylan had tried making that same smile once, staring into the mirror and holding the photo up, but had been unable to.

“Your mother will decide how long this time. You don’t respect me, maybe you’ll listen to her.” His father’s voice forced him back to the present.

Dylan looked to his mother. She had a torn piece of toast between her fingers and was staring blankly at her husband. Just then the dryer emitted its sharp buzz, signaling that the load was done. It was a loud grating sound that startled her before it set her into motion. She left the kitchen quickly, running her fingers over her braid as she walked, checking for stray hairs. Dylan’s father stood too, sliding his chair away from the table loudly. He reached one hand into his robe to scratch his chest. Joshua’s face suddenly lit with recognition.

“You look like Neapolitan with your hand like that, Dad.” His father smiled, close-mouthed. “You mean Napoleon, Josh.” He tousled his son’s hair before he walked out of the kitchen. “Close, though,” he said.

Joshua smiled triumphantly at Dylan. “You probably don’t even know who Neapolitan is,” he bragged. Dylan rolled his eyes.

“Na-po-le-on,” he said slowly. “Not Neapolitan; that’s ice cream. Napoleon was some really short war guy.”

“I know all about him,” Joshua said. “Dad read me a book about war guys one time.”

You don’t even know his name, Dylan thought.

He could hear his father and mother talking in loud whispers in the laundry room. That’s how he knew they were arguing; arguments always happened in another room. She was protesting the fact that she had to punish Dylan because she wasn’t even involved in the dispute at the table. He was assuring her that if Dylan was going to learn respect, he needed to receive discipline equally from both parents. He doesn’t even listen to me, his father argued. He likes you more, and he will listen to you. Please. He’s out of control with this attitude, and I can’t handle him by myself. Please.

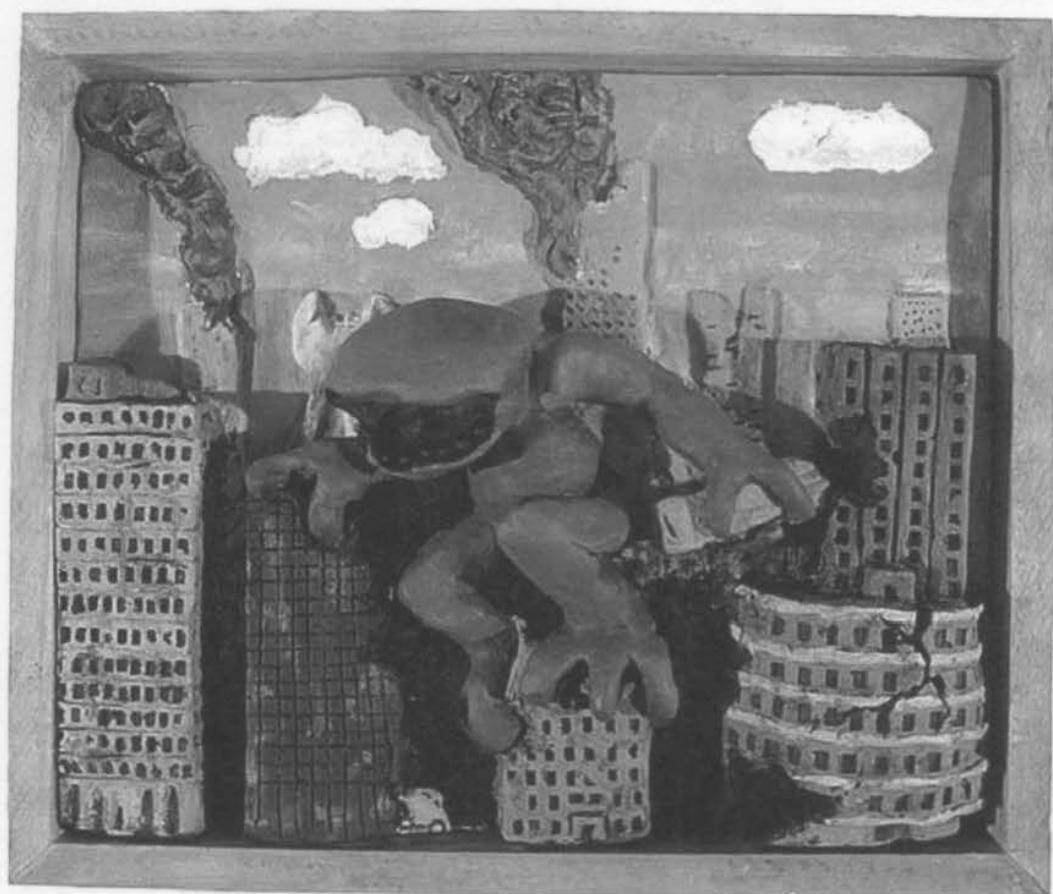
Silence followed. Dylan looked up when his mother reappeared in the

doorway of the kitchen, holding the white T-shirt by the shoulders, shaking it into its familiar shape. She had removed the braid from her hair while in the laundry room. The brown waves now hung over her shoulders, spreading at the ends like wiry, dark fingers. She didn't look at Dylan as she spoke, but busied herself with the shirt, flattening wrinkles, and smoothing bumps and creases the heat of the dryer hadn't alleviated. Folding the arms of the shirt together, she said, "Ten minutes. For talking back to your father, it's ten minutes."

Dylan stood slowly from the table. He was not altogether surprised by his mother's words, or angered by them. He felt another emotion entirely foreign to him, and which he didn't know the name for. Like something that had always been in his possession, neither earned nor given, was being taken away against his will. A nameless thing. Even without a name it hurt.

Dylan focused on the wall. A row of hooks with coats, hats and scarves, hanging limp and shapeless from their metal question mark shapes. Above the hooks was a wooden plaque that commanded, in intricate white and gold lettering, God Bless This House; his father's idea. In a frame his father had made, carved out of extremely hard wood and painted off-white, hanging next to the coats, was a family photo in which they stood blank as mannequins. Dylan vividly remembered the day it was taken. The early morning hours had been spent rushing about, putting on their nicest clothes, while his mother said repeatedly how she wanted this picture to be special. She had stood them side by side in the living room, going down the line from son, to son, to father, buttoning shirts, straightening ties, flattening stubborn hairs. All the while she spoke with quiet excitement about how the picture would be something they could look back at in the future and remember how the family has been back then. Now, upon looking at it, all he could bring to mind about "back then" was that morning in the living room.

"Three minutes left," his mother's voice entered his thoughts. She was calling from the top of the stairs. "Catch," she said, tossing down the T-shirt. He turned to look just in time to see it leave her grip, still folded. As it passed through the space between them it flipped and spun and eventually opened up. And the small, simple piece of white fabric, still warm from the dryer, draped itself gently across his knees.



Michael Licht

Lauren Hoffman

Things That Go Bump in the Night

When I was four, my father gave me the opportunity to move into my own room. Until then I had shared a room with my older sister or my little brother. Needless to say, I jumped at the chance to be on my own. I was going from the bedroom right next to my parents' room to the one underneath them in the basement. This room housed the furnace and the water pump. My room was split away from these mechanics by a wall, but a doorway connected the two rooms. In the furnace room was a green carpet that would haunt me throughout my childhood years.

My sister Shannon had the room next door to my mine and that first night she told me a story as I was brushing my teeth. This story dealt with the alligators that would come in the middle of the night and try to eat appendages or whole children, especially little girls. She never truly explained how the alligators got there, but blind faith led me to believe that it had something to do with that green carpet. That first night was hell; I figured I was a goner.

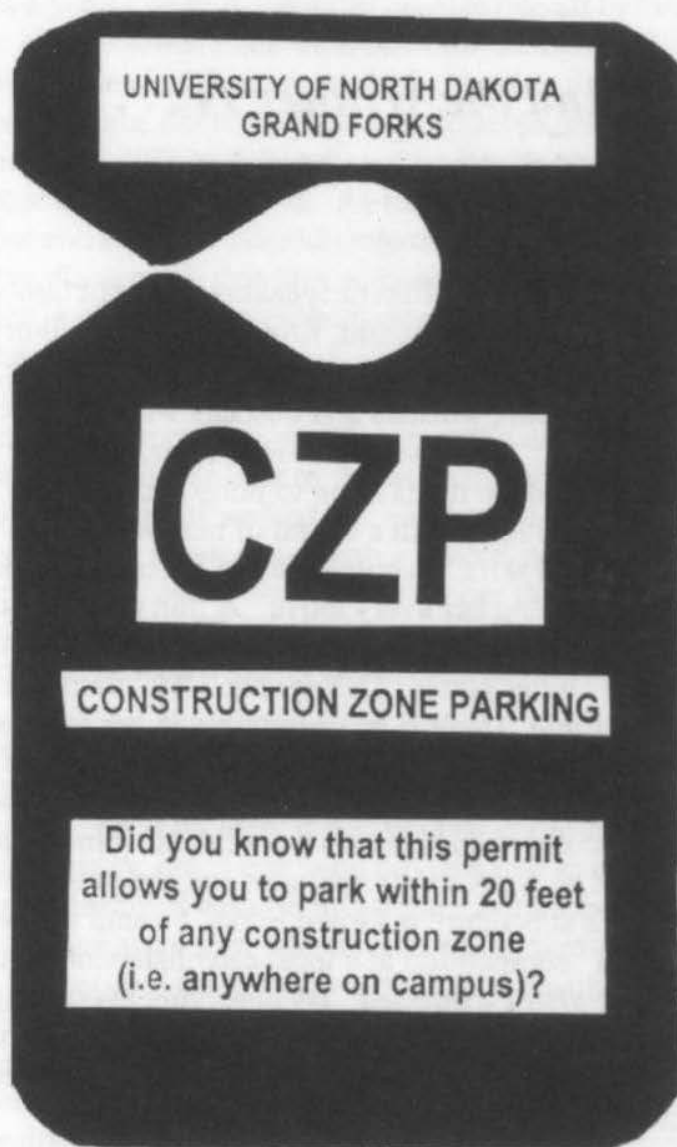
Well, naturally I did what any child would do, I cried and told my mom. She didn't believe me because I never told her who had mentioned the mysterious alligators to me. So, late at night while I thought I was safe, I would climb the stairs with pillow and quilt and sleep at the top. Every morning when I woke I was back in my bed; I never figured out how until I was sixteen and living with my mom. Every night, she or my dad would notice me sleeping there and carry me back to bed. This went on for a couple of months and finally my parents threatened to punish me. As a result, I slept at the foot of the stairs instead. I eventually got in trouble for that too. I needed a way to defeat the alligators at their own game. This was war and I didn't intend on losing!

I fought my battle late at night when no one else was up, about eight o'clock. I carefully positioned my toys in strategic locations that would defend the home front, otherwise known as my bed. I set up rules on how they could fight and where they could report back in case of emergencies. It took weeks to prepare them, but in the end, they were ready. Besides the rules I set up for them, I also made some for myself: after the light was turned off it would stay off, no getting out of the bed. Toys, blankets, or appendages were not permitted to hang over the edge, stuff like that. I lost

some good men in the battle: two teddy bears and a dinosaur, I believe. I figured I shouldn't let any more die to fight a cause that I alone should be waging.

One dark and stormy night when the lights were out in the sixth year of my life, I got out of bed with my pillow and quilt and headed to the other room. I turned the corner and saw flames at the bottom of the furnace, but no alligators. I walked right up in front of the furnace and sat down. Taking my quilt, I covered the carpet figuring if I laid there all night, trapping their way into my world, they couldn't get in. I'd fell asleep watching the flames flicker 'til the dark night set in, about nine o'clock.

I had won my battle with the green monsters of the night, but the fear still remained. They could be watching from any corner of my room, near the stairs, or worse. Today still, at all costs, I try to avoid walking on green carpet. Maybe the alligators have disappeared for a while. Maybe they'll come back when I least expect it. Or maybe, they truly never existed in the first place. But either way, I'll be ready for them.



Collaboratively designed by Honors 392
Graphic Protest class
Lucy Ganje, Professor

Kirsten Robinson

And the Winner Is . . .

Loud music blares from ten different speakers as bright lights flash back and forth. The room is thick and humid, filled with the smell of beer and sweat. Even if she could drown out the heavy beat of the music, she still could not ignore the piercing whistles and obscene words that come from every corner of the room. As she steps onto the floor, the noise explodes into a frightening roar and the lights seem to jump and spin in a frenzied manner. She nervously fidgets with a strand of her long blonde hair and straightens her thigh-high skirt. Everywhere she looks, she finds eyes staring back at her and watching her every move. A thin rail separates her from a crowd of intoxicated men with few inhibitions and a group of women who shoot her bitter glares. Despite her 5'10" frame and long legs, she seems small and timid. There is an uncertainty in her eyes as she stands in the middle of the mayhem and, for a moment, you almost see her as a young child who is lost and scared. Then her song begins and with the blink of an eye, the young child becomes a confident woman who strides around the crowd and beckons for its applause and cheers.

In my search for a subculture in Grand Forks, I found myself in the midst of a "boxer girl" competition at a local establishment I'll call Bar B, and I was amazed by what I witnessed. By observing everything from the clothing (or lack of) that these girls wear to the way they prepare themselves for the contest, I experienced a very unique beauty pageant through the eyes of the contestants.

The "Bar B Boxer Girl Competition" is an annual contest open to all females and is divided into three categories. The girls must wear an evening gown, a pair of boxer shorts from Bar B (with whatever top they choose), and a pair of boxer shorts from Coors Light, another sponsor of the event. Throughout the night, the girls step onto the dance floor and have the length of one song to show off each outfit. A panel of seven judges, all male, scores the girls on their appearance, charisma, and ability to interact with the crowd. Between events, the girls must remain downstairs to prevent any interaction with the judges and to protect the girls from overeager audience members. At the end of the night, scores are tallied and the Boxer Girl for that year is named. Her prize includes gift certificates, free drinks,

and a professional photo shoot. The picture from the shoot will hang on the wall of the bar and will be featured in the bar's calendar.

How does a young woman mentally prepare herself before she performs in front of the crowd? The waitresses for the Boxer Girl participants claim that most of the girls depend on alcohol to give them the courage to walk out onto the dance floor. Because time tends to drag in the unfurnished basement, the girls eagerly rely on the free drinks that the bar provides for anyone in the competition. As this night wore on, drink orders became heavier and heavier. Already intoxicated participants downed shot after shot of tequila, fearing that they were too sober for the next event. More than once, a swaying contestant needed help walking up the stairs and finding the dance floor.

The first event of the evening was the evening gown competition. The young women were supposed to parade across the dance floor in elegant dresses and fancy hairdos, similar to the women who compete for Miss America. When the first girl walked out, she looked the part of a pageant queen. She wore a long black gown with a simple string of pearls and she walked with controlled, dainty steps. Even under the tacky neon lights, she looked very sophisticated. The audience applauded somewhat graciously, and the girl looked pleased with her performance.

Then came the next contestant. It was hard not to stare as she paraded out in a skirt which barely covered her backside and a leather top that exposed half of her breasts. For a moment it was unclear if she knew this was the evening gown category, but it was soon obvious that she knew exactly what she was doing. The crowd became hysterical. Where there had once been polite clapping, there were now whistles, stomping feet, and hollers from the audience. It was as if the crowd's attitude had changed as drastically as the dresses. She danced around, teased a few of the judges with her cleavage, and proudly walked off the dance floor. Contestant number two had set the tone for the evening and there was no turning back.

While the dresses continued to appear skimpier and skimpier, it was the boxer short portion of the contest that truly changed the bar's atmosphere. The girls were each given a pair of standard boxer shorts and were told to wear a shirt of their choosing. By the time this category began, the girls had used a pair of scissors to trim their shorts down to scraps of cloth. One girl even asked the others if they thought enough of her butt was showing. The responses didn't matter. She cut another inch off the shorts anyway and was left with an elastic band and a small piece of the boxers which fell down over her underwear. The "shirts" that the girls chose for themselves became bikini tops and bras. Even contestant number one, the only girl who had worn a true evening gown, was down to a skimpy string bikini and what was left of her shorts. The second outfits allowed the girls more mo-

bility and flexibility than the dresses had, and the dancing became more aggressive. Girls began contorting their bodies in order to get a rise from the crowd and some even removed their "boxer shorts," playfully throwing them at the judges. By the time the last contestant finished this category, the men in the audience had seen so much bare skin that shouts of "Take it all off!" did not seem out of place and I wondered for a moment if the girls might not just do it.

The third category closely resembled the previous one. The girls came out in tiny boxer shorts, although no alterations were needed for these as the Coors Company used very little fabric to make them. The significant difference in this part of the competition was the use of props. The girls had used their time between events to locate cans of whipped cream and bottles of beer. As each girl walked in front of the judges, the props were used in sexually explicit ways. Later in the evening, one girl proudly recounted how she had poured a bottle of beer down the front of her body and how the crowd had gone wild. Another girl was finally told to tone her "act" down after she and a judge became too friendly during her whipped cream stunt.

As I sat and waited with the girls downstairs while the scores were being tallied, I asked them why they wanted to be a "boxer girl" so badly. "Free drinks!" was the immediate response from the group, followed by nervous giggles. A few girls really wanted to be in the calendar. They figured it was a rare opportunity to be somewhat famous in Grand Forks. A few could not honestly explain why they had entered, but the free drinks had convinced them to stay in it. One girl even said she had wanted nothing to do with the contest, but that her boyfriend had pushed her to enter. Probably for the prizes, she said.

While these girls had danced and flirted so confidently on the dance floor, their behavior downstairs was not so bold. They complained about how awful their hair was or how fat they looked in their costume. Could the insecurity they showed downstairs be their key motivator for entering the competition? When they walked on the dance floor, they were the center of attention and the men loved them. It was obvious that the girls didn't care why the men were paying so much attention, as long as the attention was for them.

While the alcohol had given the downstairs a party atmosphere during the competition, by the end of the night the girls' buzzes were wearing off and the mood was much less upbeat. As the girls began to sober up, many realized just how tasteless their performances had been. Looks of embarrassment crossed more than a few faces. Finally the judges were ready to announce the winner and the girls made one final trip up the stairs.

The young women who had participated in this contest were not stupid nor were they immoral. These contestants were nice girls who had let their desperate need for acceptance cloud their better judgment. The girls truly believed that by being a contestant, and possibly a winner, their lives and their feelings of self worth would improve. Instead, they had been used by the men in the audience, cheapened by the judges, and exploited by the bar, and they did not realize it. As the names were called, I did not bother listening. I simply turned my back and walked out of the bar because there were no real winners that night.

Nicky Sailer

Death Forgotten

The ghostly moon is brushed by seven mallards taking flight;
The swamp is cloaked by heavy mist, hidden by dark night;
The distance bears a fading groan, a grieving mother cries;
An eagle vainly spreads its wings and peers with hungry eyes.

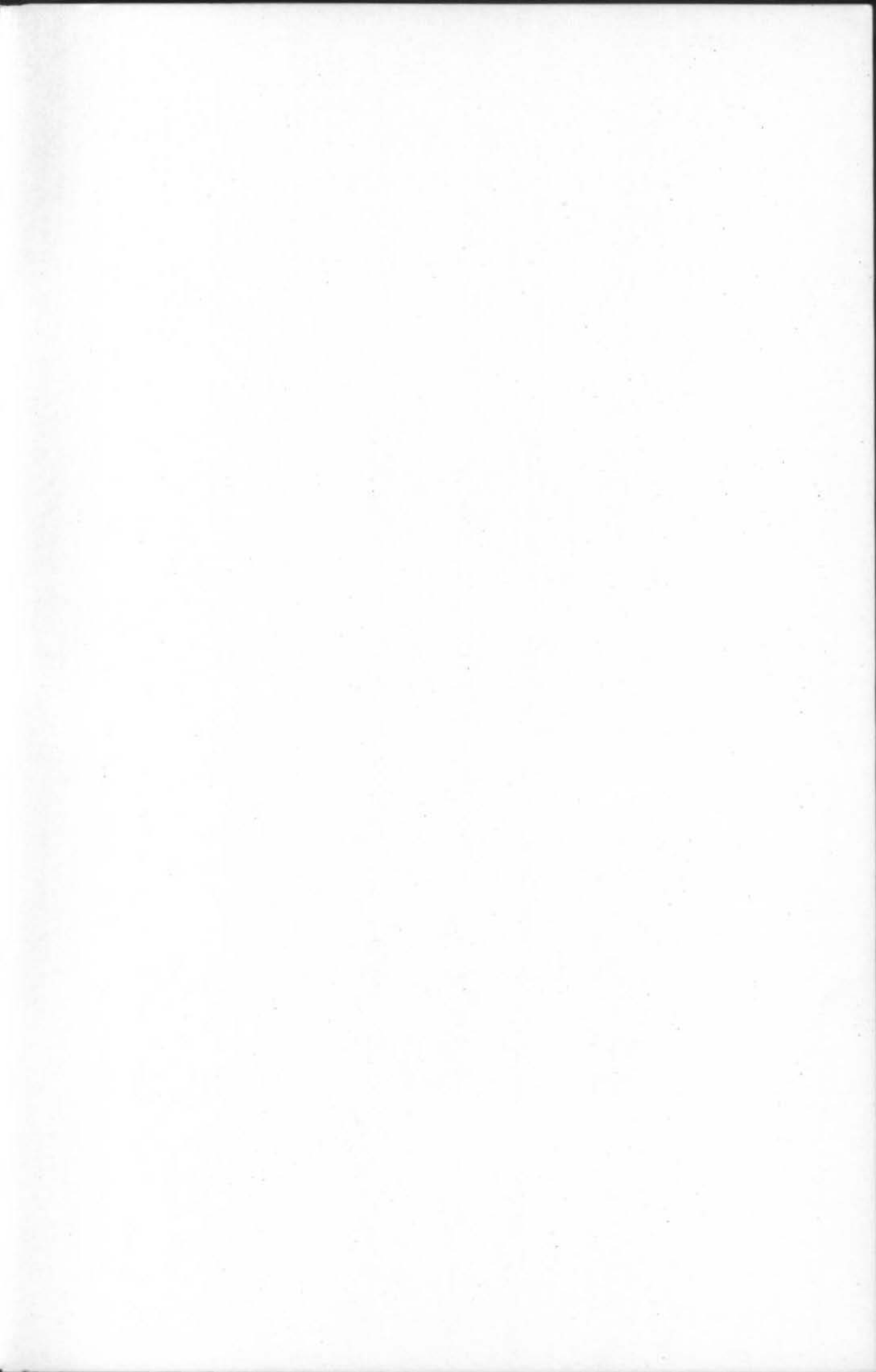


Jeanne O'Neil

North Wall



1875



the Forum

University of North Dakota
Honors Program
Robertson-Sayre Hall
Box 7187
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7187

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9223-0066