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THE DIAMOND

Defender Days returns to form

Dayna Wichhart—Staff Writer

On Friday, Oct. 15, the campus of Dordt University buzzed with anticipation. Throughout the afternoon, as students finished their final classes of the week, they turned their attention towards the concerts, games and performances of Defender Days. Last year, because of COVID-19, the university canceled the annual parents weekend. This year, the families, friends, and events returned.

“I have never experienced Defender Days before,” Nia Boentoro, a sophomore, said. “But it was interesting to see everyone get hyped about it.”

In years prior, the university held a parents weekend in the fall semester and an alumni weekend in the spring semester.

“That worked well but wasn’t perfect,” Erik Hoekstra, the university president, said.

In 2013, Dordt merged the two events as “an experiment.” They called the new combination “Defender Days.”

This year’s Defender Days weekend kicked off on Friday morning in the B.J. Haan Auditorium where the campus community filled into the building’s rows for chapel. The auditorium, packed with people from across the country and continent, received a message from dean of chapel Aaron Baart, who spoke on the importance of the unity of believers.

The mid-October celebration of all things Dordt also marks the fullest weekend for athletics.

On Saturday afternoon, the football team



Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

earned a commanding win against Dakota Wesleyan with a score of 43-13.

Across the street, the men’s and women’s soccer teams took on Presentation College. Here, the Defender women posted a 5-0 victory while the men lost 4-2.

On the hardwood, women’s volleyball

split their games against Mount Marty and the College of Saint Mary with a win and a loss, respectively.

And, on the ice, the hockey team faced off against Nebraska-Omaha for a high scoring game and an 8-2 victory.

These games provide students an opportunity

to share campus life with their families, many of which are alumni.

“My parents are coming from Nampa, Idaho,” Kelsey Evenhouse, a freshman, said. “We were super excited to go to the hockey and football games.”

On Saturday night, the men’s and women’s basketball teams kicked off their season at Late Night with the Defenders in the DeWitt Gymnasium. The after-dark event included scrimmages for the men’s and women’s basketball team, dance performances, and a dunk contest.

Here, Dash the Defender made his debut appearance as well. The official university mascot attended the sporting events throughout the weekend, taking pictures with fans and cheering on the Defenders.

The weekend did not stop with sports, though.

On Friday afternoon, 4th Avenue Jazz choir and band hosted a concert. The concert, peppered with soloists, featured the expression of the musicians and finished with a few combined pieces.

Later that evening, the B.J. Haan filled again as the Fall Music Festival featured more student musicians. The performance marked the opening concert of the year for the band, orchestra, and four choirs. After a year of masked singing, the choir enjoyed the presence of so many audience members and the audience appreciated joyful and spirited music.

The first band to perform was Campus

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FLAME fans the fire of love

Teresa Taylor—Staff Writer



Picture Credit: Teresa Taylor

A good Dordt University student knows the motto: “Don’t date before Tri-State.” Well, Tri-State (better known as Heartland Break) has come and gone. Now, it’s open season. As a means to kick off the now-permissible premarital eye contact and hand holding, Isaac Rohne, a senior business major and president of FLAME, arranged and hosted a speed dating event the Monday following Tri-State. The idea for the get-to-know-you event struck Rohne while watching a speed dating show on “some restaurant television.”

“That is the most Dordt activity I’ve ever heard in my life,” Rohne said about the dating show. “We should do one.”

On Oct. 11 at 8:30 p.m., roughly 50 students met in the lobby of Kuyper Apartments to give speed dating the ole’ college try. Here, participants were paired at random for ten, five-minute rounds, with Rohne providing a topic for conversation. Some pairings used the prompts,

while others moved in favor of more interesting conversation.

After five minutes, participants rated their partner based on the enjoyability of their chat. Rohne tallied the final scores and, at 12:36 a.m., emailed all participants with the results. Though the results came by “ridiculously narrow margins,” sophomore Sloane Zeller and freshman Joshua Baugher were named “most dateable.” While the event did market itself as a competition, neither was trying to win.

“I just went knowing that I would meet people and have fun with it,” Zeller said.

That night, the lobby filled with chattering, laughter, and chaos. In between rounds, participants searched for their partners by shouting their names into the frenzy.

“I love chaos,” Rohne said. “It gives me so much energy.”

Overall, the general populous of students claimed the event gave them an opportunity

to get past the initial awkwardness of meeting someone new.

“The only problem was I met two potential wives,” one participant said.

The event’s location in Kuyper also served to familiarize underclassmen with the area.

“My freshman year, no one ever went in here because it was the quiet upperclassmen study space,” Rohne said.

The space has been a popular one for FLAME events, but pandemic regulations limited the lobby’s versatility last year. Kelsey Bartels, a senior majoring in business administration, said speed dating provided a community building opportunity and brought the lobby back to its original, busy form. From FLAME’s perspective, the more comfortable students are in Kuyper Apartments, the more revenue its 55th, its coffee shop, generates.

So, enjoy your coffee and happy cuffing season.

TenHaken receives Distinguished Alumni Award

Georgia Lodewyk—Staff Writer

On Friday Oct. 15, Paul TenHaken, mayor of Sioux Falls, S.D., walked into a Dordt University corporate finance class wearing a plaid suit with an American flag button positioned on its lapel.

“I’m not going to talk much about corporate finance today,” TenHaken said.

TenHaken chose instead to speak about the joys, hardships, and challenges of being a mayor in a city of over 190,000 people. In 2000, the political leader graduated from Dordt. Now, over two decades later, the university alumni association chose to recognize TenHaken with the Distinguished Alumni Award. The honor was given to TenHaken in 2020, but COVID-19 restrictions delayed its presentation until this year’s Defender Days.

When a student at Dordt (then a college at the time), becoming mayor of Sioux Falls was not something he ever envisioned in his future.

“God will slap you around and totally pivot you in a different direction,” TenHaken said, “Never in a million years did I see myself as a greasy politician,”

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Defender Days return to form cont.



Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

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... Community Band—a hodgepodge of students and members from the local community. Other ensembles included Chamber Orchestra, Wind Symphony, Bella Voce, a women's choir, the Canons of Dordt, a men's choir, Chorale, and Concert Choir. In the final piece of the concert, all the choirs took the stage together to sing a song entitled "Soli Deo Gloria," written by conductor Ryan Smit.

*"It's all worthwhile.
Kind of like a
massive family
reunion."
-Erik Hoekstra*

Because some students' families live a great distance from Dordt, the weekend offers an opportunity to reconnect after some time apart.

"I was really excited to see my family," Madeline Hofer, a freshman from Freeman,

S.D., said. "They came to see me in the concert."

Also, the Te Paske theatre opened its doors this weekend for the premiere of Peter and the Starcatcher. The fairy tale comedy musical required students to spend hours rehearsing, preparing, and perfecting the show for an audience. The show, which was performed three times over three days, will remain open during the weekend of Oct. 21-23.

The weekend also included class reunions, a president's brunch, and alumni sports games.

"By Sunday, we're all exhausted," Hoekstra said. "But it's all worthwhile. Kind of like a massive family reunion."



Photo Credit: Dayna Wichhart

I'm ready to get hurt again



Contributed Photo

Connor Van Hulzen—Staff Writer

The Minnesota Vikings simply do not know how to operate as a functional, normal team. Every week, they subject their fans to roughly three hours of torture.

It's gotten to the point where I am not even able to enjoy Vikings games anymore. If they're losing, I'm upset, and if they're winning, I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop.

As they head into their week seven bye, the Vikings record sits at a perfectly mediocre 3-3.

Every one of their three losses was decided by one score, two by last-second missed field goals from kicker Greg Joseph. While one of their victories—a thorough dispatching of the Seattle Seahawks—involved little to no stress, their other two victories were won on last-second field goals by that same kicker, Joseph.

Simply put, the heartache and stress the Vikings choose to inflict on their fans is making me begin to reconsider watching their games at all.

Unfortunately for myself, the outlook on the rest of the Vikings' season after their bye week doesn't look any better.

Coming into the season, the Vikings' opponents ranked fifth in strength of schedule.

Now, as the team has a week of rest to prepare for the remainder of the NFL's first-ever 17-game season, the Vikings sit at the top of the strength of schedule rankings.

The opponents the Vikings will face through their final eleven games currently own a cumulative 40-25 record. Their schedule is a murderer's row of teams that no reasonable organization would ever want to think about playing.

The Dallas Cowboys, Baltimore Ravens, Los Angeles Chargers, Los Angeles Rams, and two meetings with the dreaded Green Bay Packers currently await a Vikings team that had

to kick a last-second field goal to beat the 0-6 Detroit Lions.

If the Vikings have any hope of making the playoffs, they need to get back to avoiding the classic Vikings blunders of turnovers at the worst possible time and missed field goals.

The Vikings' ineptitude has gotten so bad that fans are now able to predict their self-destruction.

With just over ten minutes left in the fourth quarter on Sunday, Oct. 17, the Vikings took an 11-point lead over the Carolina Panthers. Carolina had struggled all day to sustain any kind of serious offensive success, and the outlook was grim for the Panthers.

Despite this, my roommate—a Vikings fan—preemptively called the Vikings blundering the game away. And what do you know? Two Vikings missed field goals later, the Panthers had crawled their way back into the game and sent the contest to overtime.

The predictability of the Vikings' catastrophic failures on a week-to-week basis has gone from an annoying occurrence that made me upset to something that, while still upsetting, has a special brand of comedy attached to it.

I'm not exactly sure what it would take for me to stop being a Vikings fan, but if I haven't already reached that point, I cannot anticipate any other possible on-field performance would ever top what the Vikings have already done.

As far as the rest of the Vikings' season goes, I'm sure that I will continue to begrudgingly watch them throw away three hours of my Sunday afternoons with alarming efficiency.



Contributed Photo

Dordt football streaking on five straight wins



Isabel Pheifer—Staff Writer

The Dordt University football team suffered a tough loss in week one, but they have not let that dictate their recent games. Since then, the Defenders have won 5 games in a row.

Currently ranked number 4 in the NAIA for both points per game and yards per game, the Defenders have showcased their offensive prowess throughout the season. The past few games have continued the success, seeing Dordt beat their last two opponents each by more than 30.

On Oct. 9, the Defenders went up against the Mount Marty Lancers. The Defenders got to the endzone on their first possession, a touchdown pass from freshman quarterback Kade McDaniel to senior wide receiver Levi Jungling. The Lancers responded quickly, getting in for two touchdowns early in the first quarter. The defensive expertise of sophomore safety Abraham Stoesz got the Defenders back in the game by picking off a pass in the middle of the second quarter. Junior running back Anthony Trojahn was able to get in the endzone from two yards out, and junior kicker Brett Zachman connected on the extra point attempt

to even the score. On their next drive, senior quarterback Tyler Reynolds found Jungling to put the Defenders up a score with four minutes left in the half. Junior safety Zade Niklasen got an interception, giving the Defenders a chance at another touchdown before the half. The Defenders capitalized and ended up with Jungling catching a pass with two seconds left in the half, making the score 28-14. The second half went off to a blazing start, as the Defenders were able to score on their first three possessions of the half, all on runs by Reynolds. Sophomore running back Isaac Miller sealed the deal with a one-yard run, as Dordt walked away with a 63-21 win.

“I noticed that the team worked well together to give many players an opportunity to shine,” Dordt junior and self-proclaimed DU football mega fan Greichaly Kaster said.

On Oct. 16, Open Space Park was packed full of current students, alumni, and many other Dordt fans to watch the Defenders take on the Dakota Wesleyan Tigers for Defender Days.

“To see all the alumni back in town and be able to play in front of previous Dordt football

players with them supporting us was really special,” junior cornerback Aren Van Hofwegen said.

“I noticed that the team worked well together to give many players an opportunity to shine.”
-Greichaly Kaster

The Tigers got on the board first with a field goal early in the first quarter. Dordt then scored on its next two possessions, one on a 35-yard run by freshman wide receiver Josh Bush and

the other on a pass from Reynolds to sophomore tight end Hayden Large. The Defenders scored again in the second quarter on a 59-yard run by Bush, as well as a field goal by Zachman to make the score 24-6 heading into the half. In the second half, Jungling was able to score twice on catches of 26 and 72 yards respectively. Trojahn muscled his way into the end zone to get the Defenders on the board one last time. Dakota Wesleyan got one touchdown late in the fourth quarter, but it was not enough to stop the dominance of the Defenders. Dordt managed to grab an exciting 45-13 win on Defender Days.

“It was a really great atmosphere to play in,” Van Hofwegen said. “It was a good day for football and a fun game.”

The next two weeks will be the ultimate test for the Defenders, as they face two tough opponents. On Oct. 23, the Defenders will face conference foe Morningside, ranked number three in the latest NAIA Coaches Poll. The following week does not get any easier, as Dordt will match up with in-county and conference rival Northwestern, who comes in ranked second in the most recent poll.

Photo Credit: Dordt University Athletics

Women’s golf beats single day scoring record at conference

Ella De Jong—Staff Writer

Dordt University’s women’s golf team broke their single-day scoring record with 336 strokes at the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) tournament on Oct. 5, 2021 at the Bluffs in Vermillion, South Dakota. The last record was set in spring of 2019 with 339 strokes.

“When that happened, I was really excited for the team,” Rachel Bostwick, a sophomore golfer, said. “Everyone else was really excited. And, we shot not only ten strokes lower to beat it, we shot twelve strokes lower.”

The Defenders finished fourth out of twelve teams, while only four strokes behind third place, Briar Cliff. Bostwick became a key factor in the success for the Defenders. She finished ninth overall at GPAC with a score of 169. Her ranking surprised her as she thought her score would not rank high enough to finish high in conference play. On day one she tallied the lowest score of the team with an 83, while she shot an 86 on day two.

“The hardest parts of the course were staying in the fairways,” Bostwick said, “and not going into the hazards. There were a lot of hazards, and a lot of trees. So, if you got into them, it was kind of hard to get out and the roof wasn’t the best. The rough was thick enough that if you got into it, you might get into some trouble.”

Bostwick also had trouble with her group feeling rushed. They were slowing other groups down, so they had to speed up their shots as a unit. Bostwick stayed focused through it all. She said even though she faced challenges on the course and other things like missing class, she concentrated on her game.

“We were all feeling good,” Bostwick said. “I was feeling good, ready to go and start

playing.”

Kerri Kroeze and Emily Knoche were also key components in the new scoring record for the program and fourth place finish. Kroeze recorded an 86 on day one and 84 on day two to give her a final score of 170 strokes and a twelve-place finish. Knoche notched an 82 on day two, the lowest overall scoring for one day out of the Defender’s women’s golf team. She finished nineteenth with an overall score of 172. Gianna Van Klaveren finished 24th and Bailey

“I really appreciate all the time and effort they have been putting in.”
-Jon Crane

Weg finished 32nd.

The women’s team had been preparing for this tournament since the beginning of the year. They golfed the same exact course in Vermillion, South Dakota about a week before. After the first GPAC day at the course, they knew everybody had to focus in order to break the single-day scoring record. The women’s golf team will finish the GPAC tournament by playing the second two rounds in the spring.

“I really appreciate all the time and effort they have been putting in,” Jon Crane, the men’s and women’s head golf coach, said. “And the results showed it.”

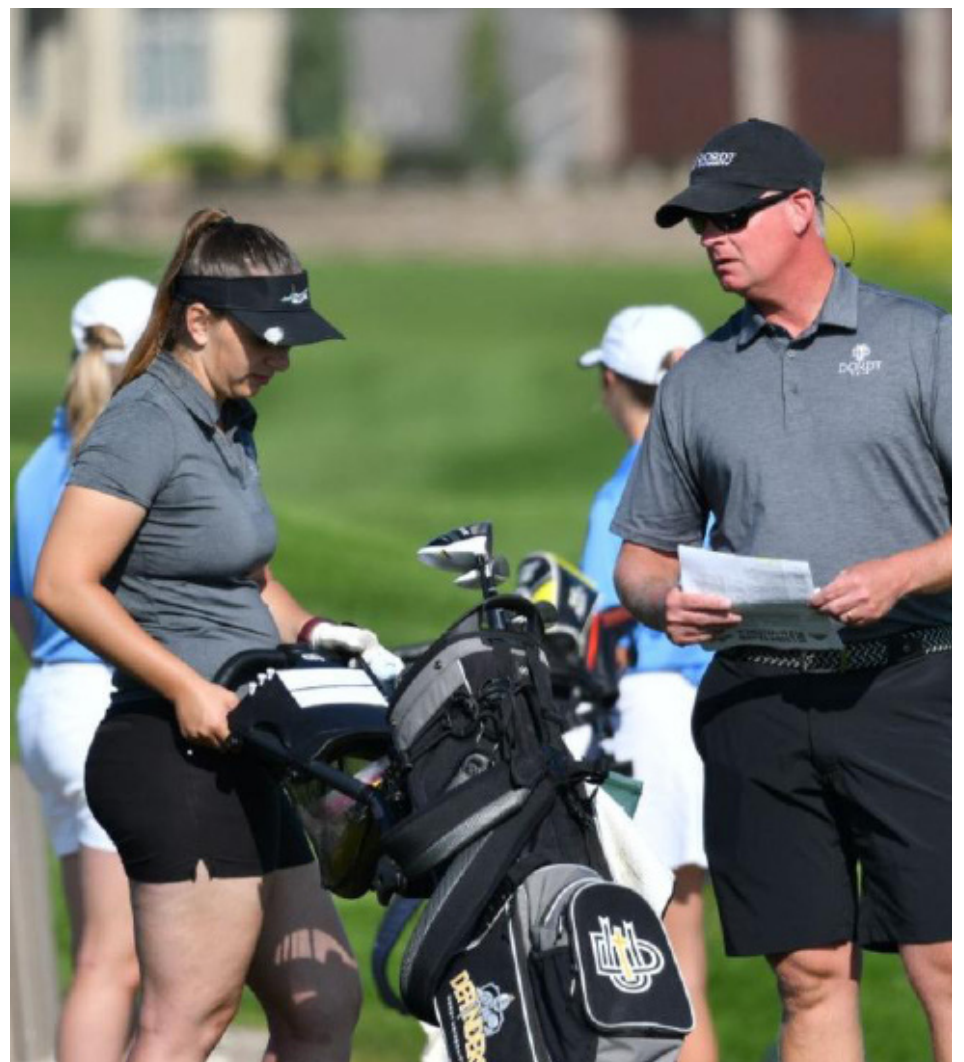


Photo Credit: Dordt University Athletics

Art seniors explore print-on-demand

Glory Reitz—Staff Writer



Photo Credit: Glory Reitz

On a Thursday afternoon in the Campus Center gallery, nine art seniors arranged a display of canvas bags, stickers, pillows, pins, and a variety of other household items. That evening, they hosted a reception to introduce their exhibit: “Developing Design.” The show features their processes of learning the nuances of print-on-demand and will be open until Nov. 5.

Most of the students, all enrolled in David Platter’s art Senior Seminar, had never worked with print-on-demand services before. This project, a class assignment, required them to sort through their finished art pieces, choose a few, then pick what to print it on.

“The biggest thing is trying to figure out what pieces to use on this, and what options would look the best,” said artist Acacia Phillips.

Phillips knew she wanted to use a clock as one of her pieces from the beginning. The challenge of the assignment arose when trying to find a piece of past artwork that would fit the object. Eventually, she settled on a marble design from a set piece she’d painted for the university’s theatre production of *Northanger Abbey* in 2019.

In contrast to the soft marble swirls of green and blue, Phillips’ wall hanging is full of bold neon stripes on a black background. The piece came from the background of a poster she designed.

Anneka Bakker, a classmate of Phillips, used a logo of the word “rest,” inspired by a chapel sermon. She printed the swirling blue lettering onto a mug, a bag, and a notebook. Bakker said she envisioned the piece as a quiet companion in moments of everyday life.

Bakker said the senior seminar has brought camaraderie to the classmates, and she’s enjoyed seeing how far they’ve all come since freshman year. This particular project has shown them how to transform their work into a new, high-quality format.

“We were given the assignment,” Bakker said, “to take old work that we had already made in our previous years here at Dordt, work from our portfolio and... give it a new breath of life by interpreting that art through a new medium.”

The gallery exhibit opened on a Thursday night, just before Defender Days took over the

campus. A variety of Dordt students and family filled the gallery to see the art and support the artists.

Annika Rynders, a sophomore saxophone performance major, said her favorite part of the exhibit was seeing the diversity of the art. She said the new forms of expression bring the art to

“I think it’s inviting us to engage with the art, rather than just look at a photo.”

-Annika Rynders

life.

“I appreciate how some of the pieces are interactive,” Rynders said. “I think it’s inviting us to engage with the art, rather than just look at a photo.”

Dalton Moore, one of the artists, is an architecture and art history double major. Print-

on-demand is far from his normal medium, but his leanings shine through. One of Moore’s pieces is a set of coasters, printed with a circuit board design, what he called an homage to his usual, “logistical” style. The other two are travel photos, taken in his travels to see architecture.

“They’re two very different regions,” Moore said, “so it was just sort of personal memories that happened to play in very nicely.”

Not everything fell together neatly. Moore said his coasters were the last piece to arrive – a week before the exhibit opened. Phillips’ clock arrived with a bubbled backing. She peeled it up and glued it back down flat, but the nerve-wracking moments helped teach the students to work with real-life problems.

David Platter, Assistant Professor of Art, and the senior seminar instructor, said that kind of experience is what he hopes for in the class. He had the students compare the quality of their products to find out which service provided the most professional product and would be most useful in the future.

“The world has become open, even in terms of what a student can produce,” Platter said. “And so, tapping into that, giving that agency to students to make something really of a professional level quality [is a goal].”



Photo Credit: Glory Reitz

Fall Music Festival celebrates collaboration and community

Aleasha Hintz—Staff Writer

While the athletic teams of Dordt University ran, passed, and tacked in their respective sports during Defender Days weekend, the university’s musicians endured a marathon of singing and playing. On Friday, Oct. 15, the Campus-Community Band, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Symphony, Concert Choir, Chorale, Canons of Dordt, and Bella Voce all collaborated to showcase the abilities of the music program to visitors at the Fall Music Festival.

Throughout the entirety of the concert, families and friends filled the B.J. Haan Auditorium to the brim. Some visitors spilled over into the bleachers in the loft. That evening, crying babies and jovial chattering echoed in the space.

“My mom always loves being there,” Hannah Hansum, a member of the wind symphony, said. “For people that have family that live far away, I know they have said they enjoy [Defender Days] because it gives their family a reason to come.”

Defender Days celebrates university alumni, students, families, and collaboration. The Fall Music Festival seeks to highlight it all.

“You’re not going to sleep, but you’re going to leave with joy,” President Erik Hoekstra said about the weekend, just before praying over the concert.

He was right. The concert did not end until well after 10:00 p.m.

The different instrumentalists joined together on a tuning note, then the concert began. The ensembles showcased various sounds, from the gentle, pining of the Chamber Orchestra to the high, melodic choruses from Bella Voce.



Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

The selected songs did not carry an overarching theme, according to Hansum. Instead, they seemed to reveal the tastes of the conductors.

Before the intermission, the Wind

Symphony performed “God of Our Fathers,” joined by Concert Choir and Chorale. The piece was highly collaborative, and band and orchestra director Onsbay Rose and choral director Ryan Smit put their talents together to

make it happen.

“It’s a true testament of what we are, and what we can provide for our students,” Rose said. The song was personal to Rose, as he used it to propose to his wife. Since then, a choral element has since been added to the song, and Rose was able to share something personal with the audience.

The song was the last piece before intermission, and rightly so. The crowd cheered and whooped for the performance and gave a standing ovation.

The theme of connection, though not explicitly found in the songs, was present for each of the conductors.

Carrie Groenewold, conductor of Bella Voce, brought a personal touch to the performance as well. The last song they performed was called “At the River.” Groenewold dedicated it to her father, who is recovering from cancer.

Ryan Smit, conductor of Canons, Chorale, and Concert Choir, wrote a song to be performed by the combined choirs. The song is inspired by Dordt University’s motto: “Soli Deo Gloria.” The motto is a Latin phrase, and is translated, “Glory to God alone.” Much like “God of Our Fathers,” “Soli Deo Gloria” received an standing ovation from the audience members.

During the performance, the department introduced a new way for donors to interact directly with Dordt’s music program. The program has been dubbed the “Dordt Music Patrons,” and is a yearly donation with different sponsorship levels, furthering the department’s mission of sharing the gift of music in a way that glorifies God.

God's will and The Last Duel

Mikaela Wegner—Co-Cheif Editor

When I heard the likes of Adam Driver, Matt Damon, and Ben Affleck were starring in a movie together, I didn't give *The Last Duel* a moment of hesitation.

On Oct. 16, a day after its release, I saw the new Ridley Scott film at an AMC theatre in Omaha, Nebr. The theatre, not quite the Cinema 5 experience of Sioux Center, had over a couple hundred seats per screening room. I arrived at the theatre with my boyfriend just ten minutes before showtime. I wondered, "What seats will be left?" But, upon entering the theatre, only two others were seated. For a Saturday night, I was shocked.

I would soon learn that even a star-studded cast like cannot make *The Last Duel's* plot appealing.

The story takes place in the knight-filled 1300s where lords and ladies ruled by the divine right. Based on a true, story, the movie is divided into four chapters that concern the alleged rape of Marguerite de Carrouges by Jacque le Gris. The first chapter shows the perspective of a heroic husband: a version of Jean de Carrouges (Matt Damon) that treasures his wife and brings her justice. The second portrays le Gris (Adam Driver) as a helpless romantic seduced by Marguerite (Jodie Comer). And, finally, the "truthful" perspective, is that of Marguerite's. She is, according to the film, a women taken advantage her aggressive and narcissistic husband that is subsequently abandoned to be raped.

The plot is disgusting. I believe that without film's statement of its historical validity, viewers would hate Ridley Scott for portraying humanity as so despairingly evil. I exited the theater silent and nauseous, feeling similar to how I did after first watching Schindler's List.

The film's editing was abrupt, keeping the viewer uncomfortably stuck in the jolting pace of its narrative. Also, almost ten sex scenes added to this effect. Still, the understanding that Marguerite de Carrouges was living through hell amidst all of this made me the most uncomfortable. I felt like a bystander to her abuse. I didn't do anything to stop it, I just kept watching.

I could not watch rape scene, but instead pressed my eyes into my hands. The sounds were haunting, and I felt, for the first time, violated by a movie. At the scene's end, le Gris threatens Marguerite with her life, should she tell anyone about the rape. Then he leaves her. Alone. Abandoned.

For what it's worth, *The Last Duel* accurately

portrays the dehumanization of women during this time period as objects owned by wealthy men for the purpose of sexual pleasure.

Next to the rape scene, the most disturbing part of the film came from the courtroom scenes. Here, Marguerite, months pregnant from the rape, sits before hundreds of men who accuse her of either dreaming the rape or initiating it herself.

The courts decide that the only way to settle the truth is through combat. Through a duel, God will reward those who honor the truth and kill those who do not.

I would love to know how many times "God's will" was mentioned in this movie. It was distorting to me how God was used as the justification for so egregious actions—that things must have happened in terrible ways because God wanted them to happen. I cannot imagine how Marguerite must have felt, everyday believing how much God must have hated her.

Though this justification of "God's will" exhausted me, it made me think of how exhausted non-Christians must be of us. How often have we used "God's will" as reason to our own action, or explanation to other's situations?

"I'm going to take this course because it's God's will." "I'm going to quit because it's God's will." "I'm going to break up with my boyfriend because it's God's will." "I'm going to go to cheat on my wife because it's God's will." "I'm going to go to Dordt because it's God's will."

I have heard every one of these arguments, I have used most of them as well. What in the world does "God's will" even mean?

This world is so absolutely broken and so completely manipulative to the point that I do not believe God's will is termed the way it was ever supposed to be.

In Proverbs 6:9, the author writes "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." How dare we make our plans and attribute them to God's will? How small do we think God is?

I don't believe we can predict anything to be God's will until after it happens. After watching this movie, I am so disjointed by myself and other Christians that we are so arrogant, thinking we have the power to know God's will.

If I was Marguerite de Carrouges, I wouldn't want to be a Christian either.

2 kooky, 2 creepy – too much



Gretchen Lee—Copy Editor

Contributed Photo

The Addams family is a cornerstone of Halloween pop culture; they're a kooky, creepy, mysterious, and spooky satire of North American nuclear families, providing lighthearted fun with a dark twist. There have been many iterations of the Addamses over the years, including newspaper comics, live-action television, a cartoon series, a live-action movie trilogy and, now, in the latest reboot, 3-D animated movies. As a fan of the live action *The Addams Family* and *Addams Family Values* as well as the first animated film, I was excited for the release of the sequel. Sadly, *The Addams Family 2* falls a bit short.

Based partially on the 1973 cartoon show, *The Addams Family 2* sees the Addamses heading out for a family road trip in their Victorian-style RV. As they traverse iconic sights across the U.S., Pugsley attempts to find love, Wednesday ponders her place in the world, Morticia and Gomez attempt to prevent Wednesday from finding out that she may not biologically be related to the rest of them, and Fester begins to turn into an octopus.

This film has some high points. First, it's full of several excellent Addams-style hijinks and solid one-liners. Subverted expectations and off-the-wall puns are a signature of any Addams media, and this film certainly delivers on that point. The beginning of the film is also incredibly well-executed, with a fun plot and entertaining action sequences that definitely had me laughing. Besides humor, the classic feelings of family love were also present, and, in the more serious moments of the film, these elicited excellent emotional reactions from the audience.

However, once the movie hits the second act, the storyline becomes too full. The writers try to weave too many plotlines together, making the end of the film overwhelming. That, and the addition of too many extended musical sequences that started off amusing and grew cringy all too fast, made the film feel overall dissatisfying. I would have far preferred that the movie stick to the road trip hijinks, Morticia and Gomez's evasion of the private agent, Pugsley's futile attempts at attracting girls, and Wednesday's Shakespearean musings at the darkness of existence.

In the midst of the messy plot, however, I did appreciate the callbacks to prior versions of *The Addams Family*. The references to the lesser-known animated show in both the movie and the credits sequence felt like a proper tribute. There were plenty of references to some of the original comics and older films as well, which was fun to see. It almost would have been enough to maintain the Addams vibes of the film, were it not for the strange, modern evil-scientist twist at the end that brought the characters too far out of their usual, gothic surroundings.

In the end, this movie felt a little too much like a twisted ball of *Despicable Me*-flavored twine and not enough like the fun, twisted family film I was hoping for when I heard about this sequel. It failed to live up to the precedent set by the first movie and tried too hard to fit too much into an hour and a half. It did have fun moments and quotable lines, but *The Addams Family 2* might be the first film I've seen where I was hoping for less, not more.

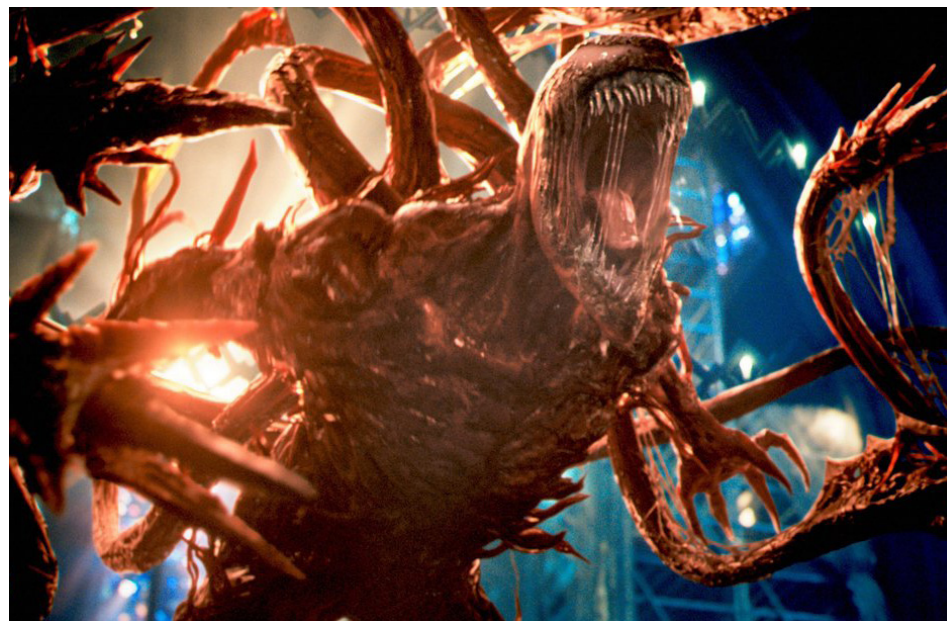
Venom 2: A little weird

Gretchen Lee—Copy Editor

Considering the fact that the last time I saw *Venom* I was suffering from food poisoning in an airplane over the Atlantic Ocean, I didn't have high expectations coming into the second installment of the series: *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*. Because I didn't have much memory of the last movie, and relied pretty much entirely on trailers to inform my understanding of the film before the actual screening, I was completely unprepared for how funny and heartfelt this movie actually was.

Disgraced reporter Eddie Brock, and the parasitic, brain-eating alien cohabiting his body, *Venom*, become entangled with insane serial killer Cletus Kasady when they accidentally find his mass grave. After Kasady is infected with a new parasitic alien, created from the combination of Eddie and *Venom's* blood, Kasady begins wreaking havoc on the city and it is up to *Venom* and Eddie to stop him. Of course, this will require the unlikely duo to work out their personal conflicts and employ the help of Eddie's ex-girlfriend, Anne.

There's a lot to like about this movie. Besides the entertaining level of insanity in the plot, Eddie and *Venom* make a fantastic set of main characters. Their co-habitation situation allows for some of the most consistently entertaining dialogue I've heard in a superhero movie. Aside from the fact Eddie shares his body with an alien, he's a very relatable protagonist: he's



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messy, nervous, and exhausted in a way most everyone can understand. *Venom*, too, makes an excellent main character. Even though he's a mostly-viscous mass of black goo, his pent-up aggression and desire to act are palpable throughout the whole movie. In the end, he continues to be a character audiences wish to cheer on. Side characters like Anne and her

fiancé Dan are also fun to watch. Both are capable people in a strange situation, and they add an element of class to the movie that makes for a well-rounded cast.

It is a good thing, however, that the cast of characters is strong, because the plot was otherwise lacking in strength. The exposition at the beginning had some off-kilter pacing that

made it difficult to invest in Cletus Kasady's storyline. Kasady was a somewhat interesting villain, but I felt just about any other generic villain could have replaced him and, as long as that villain was infected by Carnage, it wouldn't have changed the movie in any decipherable way. Carnage himself was rather bland. His motivations were unclear and the audience didn't spend enough time with him to truly connect in any way, positive or negative. However, the sheer intensity of his power did allow for some entertaining fight scenes. The conclusion of the movie did a satisfactory job of wrapping up the main plot, while leaving the end open for another film. Without spoiling anything, the after-credits scene was also a tasty little morsel of movies to come that had the whole theatre gasping in shock and excitement.

Overall, this movie is one you watch for the characters. I've always thought that, as long as your main characters are relatable and well-written, audiences would rather follow them into a poorly-written plot than a poorly-written main character running into a fantastically-written plot. This movie follows that principal: even though I thought the storyline itself was lacking, I still enjoyed watching *Venom* and Eddie's hilarious and heartfelt dynamic. I look forward to seeing where these two characters go in the future and how they will connect into the MCU.

4th Avenue Jazz: An enchanting ensemble



Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

Lexi Schnaser —Staff Writer

On a busy Friday afternoon, thanks to a crowd of family, friends, and alumni visiting for Defender Days, 4th Avenue Jazz vocalists kicked off their first concert of the semester with a bright arrangement of Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To." The vocalists all appeared excited, relaxed, and ready to perform their lively repertoire for the audience spread throughout the BJ Haan.

"I thought that Friday's concert was a lot of fun," sophomore Annika Rynders, who plays alto saxophone for 4th Avenue Jazz Band, said. "I think the crowd was engaged and excited about what we were doing."

4th Avenue Jazz is a unique feature of Dordt University's music department. The group is composed of two ensembles: 4th Avenue Band and 4th Avenue Singers. The band is directed by Kevin Linder and consists of 15 to 20 students who perform various jazz pieces. Friday's repertoire ranged in styles from Victor López's "Mambo Hot" to Frank Meacham's "American Patrol."

The second group that shapes 4th Avenue is the vocalists. Made up of 16 students from the Chorale and Concert Choir, the 4th Avenue singers are a primarily acapella group directed by Ryan Smit.

"It's very different than any other ensemble on campus," Liz Frisbee, a soprano for the 4th Ave. Singers, said. "I like that we can move around, be more expressive, have a good time and not worry about having to stand perfectly still and straight and look at the director."

Each 4th Avenue Jazz concert contains three parts: the singers' performance, the band's performance, and a combination performance where the band and vocalists come together to perform.

"It's harder than you would think, because there's a lot of counting involved and having to pay attention to what the other ensemble was doing," Frisbee said.

The combination of instrumentalists and vocalists is "something that's really unique to

Dordt, I think, getting to rehearse with a group of singers and practice in a setting like that," Rynders said. "That's something I look forward to every time."

Jazz music comes from many cultures, from the Latin American Mambo to pieces written during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Performing music that reflects different cultures creates a fun and meaningful atmosphere for the musicians.

"Jazz has a very powerful message if you know what they're talking about," Rynders said. "I love being able to share that with other people."

Dordt musicians, whether in ensembles or personal studies, focus much of their time on classical music. 4th Avenue allows these musicians to learn and share a different type of music they may not otherwise.

"The ensemble is very good at supporting one another and encouraging each other to use the unique gifts that we have," Frisbee said. "This is a style of music that isn't performed a lot at Dordt, so 4th Avenue gives ensemble members an opportunity to improvise or do something that is outside of their comfort zone."

As a saxophone performance major, Rynders loves the diversity of music she can perform with her instrument, particularly jazz.

"In high school I was very involved in jazz, so I knew coming to Dordt that one of my favorite things on campus was going to be jazz," Rynders said. "[4th Ave.] is a great way to expand my repertoire. In the future, I could go and play with a jazz group somewhere or even start my own."

A fun style of music for both player and listener, jazz creates bridges across cultures and communities and allows for expression of joy and worship in a unique way.

"Because it was originally created by breaking the rules and going against the norm, jazz is truly a way you can express yourself," Rynders said.



Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

Peter and the Starcatcher: Where you get to be a boy for a while

Emma Bennett—Staff Writer

On Saturday Oct. 16, I attended the Dordt University Theatre Arts Department's production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. I had never read the book or seen the play before, so I arrived with no expectations. Upon entering the theatre, I discovered to my delight that the tickets I bought for my mother and I sat us in the very front row. I chatted with a friend sitting near me before the opening curtain and he informed me that the show was interactive. Now, more nervous, I settled into my seat as the lights dimmed and the show began.

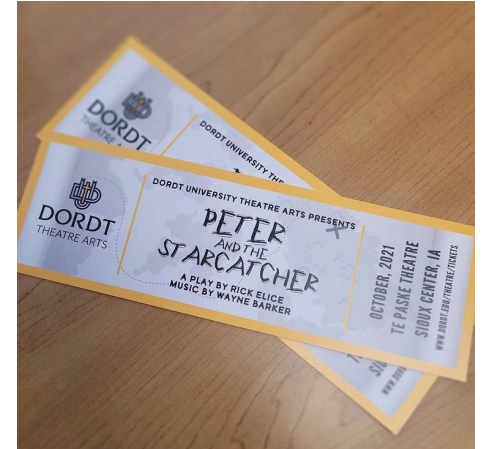
As soon as the play started, my nerves dissolved as the actors scrambled down the aisles and scattered onto the floor in front of the stage. The plot focused on the adventures of three boys: Ted (David Skinner, senior), Prentiss (Lynn Smit, freshman), and Boy (Sam Landstra, senior). These "lost boys" are sold by their schoolmaster into slavery to the king of Rundoon, and are marched aboard a small ship called the Neverland. This ship, unbeknownst to them, carries the cargo of two trunks: one full of sand and the other full of "the Queen's precious cargo."

Lord Leonard Aster (Hans Dykstra, senior) is tasked with protecting the Queen's cargo and accompanying it to Rundoon. But Aster has another matter to tend to as well: his daughter, Molly Aster (Sommer Schaap, junior). Molly begs her father to let her go on his "mission," but he refuses. The lord sends Molly aboard the Neverland for a safer, slower passage, while he leaves on the Wasp. Here, the play really kicks off.

Once at sea, Molly forms a friendship with the lost boys, and especially Boy, as she leads them to food and introduces them to bedtime stories. The growing fancy between Boy and Molly was endearing to watch unfold on stage, as well as the power struggle between Molly and Prentiss, the self-proclaimed leader.

The plot takes a turn when the Wasp is overtaken by pirates and Molly discovers that the trunks were swapped. The Neverland now holds the important cargo that she must return to her father. As it turns out, Molly is a Starcatcher-in-training. In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the starcatchers are a group of people who safeguard a magical, transformative substance called Starstuff.

During this ship-jacking, pirates board the Neverland, a melee breaks out, and the weather-beaten ship cracks in half. Amidst this frenzy, Boy is given the name of Peter by the show's villain, the dreaded pirate captain Black Stache (Sam Walhof, senior). Unfortunately, Peter is thrown overboard by the pirate only moments



Contributed Photo

later, and Molly pushes the trunk into the sea for her growing love interest to float to Mollusk Island.

Arriving on the island, Peter is fully swept up in his adventure with Starstuff. The young boy encounters fish—now turned to mermaids—a tribe of scorned cooks bent on destroying anyone who is English, and even a giant, flying crocodile.

Eventually, when everything is resolved, Peter finds himself unable to leave the island due to his contamination with the Starstuff and he is forced to part with Molly. Despite the sadness he feels, Peter finds that this island, with its magic and his friends, is everything that he had always been searching for: a home.

Peter and the Starcatcher was incredibly entertaining, and the packed theatre roared with laughter often. Black Stache, as a poet pirate looking for a purpose in his villainy, was often prone to comical misuse of words and corrected by his first mate, Smee (Nathan Hopkins, sophomore).

On the other hand, the play offered heart-breaking depictions of Peter's past, which contributed to his distrust of grownups. He starts out as lost and longs for a family. This made the play's ending bittersweet, as Peter was so close to having a typical family with Molly and Lord Aster. However, the audience is not left unsatisfied as they, along with Peter, discover a new type of family that is present on the island. The actors were fantastic to watch and embraced the childish elements of the play, readily leaning into its ridiculous scenes. They made use of the minimal set and unconventional props to create a truly magical experience which the Dordt community will remember for a long time.



Photo Credit: Robin Suing

Defender Days



A Halloween movie guide for dummies

Gretchen Lee—Copyeditor

Beyond the world of Hallmark, only a few holidays are consistently the focus of themed movies. While Christmas, in my opinion, still reigns as king of holiday films, Halloween certainly comes in at a close second. With such a wide variety of quality films to choose from during the spooky movie season, it can be difficult to choose which ones should make your marathon list. Below, I have listed a variety of films for movie-watchers of any sensibility to choose from so you can prioritize the best of the best.

Hocus Pocus – In this classic Halloween movie, three sister witches rise from their graves to fulfill a curse from long ago. Filled with humor, hijinks, and Halloween spirit, this is a family-friendly film that you and your roommates will be quoting into the off-season.

What We Do In The Shadows – This mockumentary by Taika Waititi is a hilarious and meaningful look into the lives of four vampires living together in New Zealand. Filled with wonderful turns of phrase, off-the-wall humor, and quirky characters, *The Shadows* provides a unique look at a popular Halloween trope. It's hilarious, gruesome, and surprisingly relatable. Above all, however, it is extremely quotable and a wonderful film to experience with your college roommates.

The Mummy and The Mummy Returns – Is *The Mummy* (1999) strictly a Halloween movie? Absolutely not. Is the scene with the scarab beetles crawling under people's skin traumatizing enough to make it fit on this list? 100 percent. This double feature follows Rick O'Connell, Evelyn Carnahan, Ardeth Bay, and Johnathan Carnahan as they unleash curses, wrangle mummies, yell a lot, and invent romance in 1920s/30s Egypt. These movies have mummies, found family, and some of my favorite one-liners of all time.

Ghostbusters – If you watch this 1984 icon for no other reason, at least watch it for the soundtrack. In this classic piece of pop culture, a group of friends hunt down slimy ghosts and become revered heroes. It's a highly referenced

and spoofed film that rounds out any Halloween movie marathon.

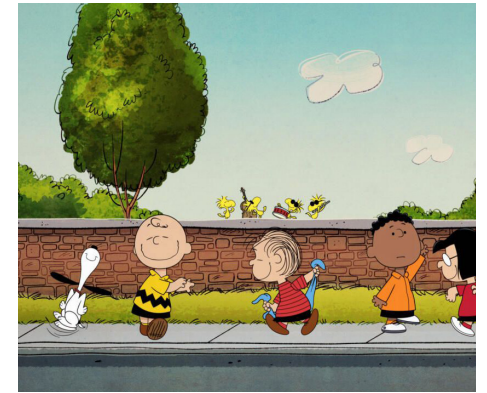
The Addams Family and The Addams Family Values – The Addams family, in any format, is a foundational corner of Halloween movie watching. Follow along with this surprisingly functional group of people as they deal with the arrival of suspicious relatives, nosy neighbors, petty girls from summer camp, an overly-normal newborn, and a series of explosions in a double-feature that is fit for the whole family; cooky, creepy, or otherwise.

It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown – A classic film for the whole family to enjoy. The Peanuts gang prepares for Halloween as Linus waits for the arrival of "The Great Pumpkin." It's got all of the classic Peanuts' humor and quotable lines, as well as a healthy serving of Halloween fun.

The Conjuring – These movies are properly scary. If you want to dislike looking in mirrors, walking down dark hallways, and looking at the ceiling or under your bed for a few months, this is the film series for you. Beyond the ability for *The Conjuring* to keep delivering unique and unsettling frights, however, is an interesting over-arching storyline and fascinating lore that will keep you interested throughout the entire saga.

The Nightmare Before Christmas – It's a Christmas movie. It's a Halloween movie. It's the perfect movie to get you in the Halloween and Christmas spirit at the same time. Follow Jack Skellington, the King of Halloween, as he upends two worlds and learns the importance of Christmas. This Tim Burton classic has a unique design and storytelling format that makes for an excellent viewing experience. It also has an ideal Halloween soundtrack that you can sing in the car with your friends on the way to a corn maze.

The Shining and Doctor Sleep – If you're a fan of Dutch angles, psychological horror, music in the minor key, and creepy children, this is the double-feature for you. From the mind of Stephen King, the Overlook Hotel



Contributed Photos

corrupts the mind of Jack Torrence, a writer hired to care for the building in the off-season. After he fails to defeat his demons, his son, Danny Torrence, returns as an adult to attempt

to slay them himself. Overall, it's an excellent series for anyone looking to never feel safe in a hotel again.

Pray Away: The fears of the queer Christian community

Lauren Hoekstra—Staff Writer

I'm not a big crier during movies, but this documentary had me crying in my apartment, alone, several times. My tears for the season finale of *The Good Place*, or *Hachi*, or *Les Misérables*, have all been shed for reasonable, plot-related reasons. *Pray Away* impacted me in a different way.

Kristine Stolakis's documentary follows survivors and previous leaders of the "ex-gay" movement. The film opens with a man named Jeffrey McCall holding a sign reading "Trans 2 Christ" and asking to pray with people outside a grocery store.

He tells people he "lived transgender before, and left everything to follow Jesus Christ." McCall is a current leader in the conversion therapy movement, believing someone can "pray away" an unwanted sexual orientation or gender identity. He created the Freedom March, which gives voice to people who, like him, have become straight through the power of prayer.

In one scene, McCall receives a phone call from a woman. She tells him Freedom March is inspirational to her and gives her hope for her 20-year-old son, a transgender girl. She says when her child came out, she told him he was a boy and he left.

McCall tells the woman, "It's a strong spirit that wants to force you to call him a woman and he's not." He tells her to "stand in faith with this" and continue to love her "son" as a male.

Despite the feeling of "ick" that I get while watching McCall do exactly what my non-affirming parents would love to see me do, I feel an intense sadness as I watch him go about his life, almost as if he's trying to convince himself of something he isn't quite sure is true.

The film goes on to follow Yvette Cantu Schneider, Michael Bussee, John Paulk, and Julie Rodgers as they journey towards self-



Contributed Photo

acceptance. Many of them also spent years trying to convince themselves of something they weren't sure about.

In the seventies, Michael Bussee helped start what is now known as Exodus International, a leader in conversion or reparative therapy and "curing" homosexuality. Exodus is the foundation of the film, and all four featured individuals rest on their experiences with Exodus.

John Paulk, former Board President of Exodus, was once the most visible ex-gay in the United States.

Paulk testified how, after attending restorative therapy, he was no longer gay. In the film, however, he notes that he based being gay on behavior, not feelings. He married a woman and remained loyal to her, signifying that he was no longer gay.

In another segment of the film, two women take engagement pictures in a museum in

Washington, D.C. The film cuts to a woman scrolling through a website with "Amanda and Julie" plastered across it, with countless images of the couple.

Julie Rodgers, one half of the future couple, explained how she learned that "Gays are really, really bad. Dirty and scary and bad" at a very young age. She came out at 16, and her frantic mom sent her to meet with a man named Ricky Chelette at Exodus-affiliated Living Hope.

From 16 to 25, Rodgers stayed with Living Hope. Every week, she met with Chelette to discuss deep emotional and sexual baggage in a way similar to therapy, but with a confessional element. She felt compelled to tell Chelette everything. She wrote in her diary, "God forgive me for having such evil flesh," a sentiment that echoes the thoughts of many queer people raised in the church, including myself.

Near the film's end of the film, we see a gay man crying to an interviewer who likely holds a

similar role to Chelette.

The interviewer asks the man, "How does it feel to be broken as I look at you?"

He is unable to answer for a while. Then, through tears, he chokes out, "I just feel like a really bad person." My own eyes filled with tears watching this scene, too close to my own heart.

These thoughts echo what I've thought countless times. As a queer individual raised in the church, this feeling of dirtiness and "bad"-ness is all too familiar.

The focus shifts back to McCall at the second annual Freedom March. Several people stand on stage and praise the name of Jesus, saying things like, "Have you ever laid on the floor and said 'Jesus take this away from me because I want to follow you, Jesus. I want to be your son or daughter.'"

Because of the pain I felt hearing these words, mirroring those of the people who've hurt me, I could not watch rest of the film. I couldn't bring myself out of the pit they sent me to.

Although I couldn't see, I could hear. Michael Bussee ended the film poetically, saying, "As long as homophobia exists in this world, some form of Exodus will emerge. Because it's not the organization and it's not even the methods that they use. It's the underlying belief that there is something intrinsically disordered and change-worthy about being gay."

The documentary is heartbreaking, cathartic, riveting, and devastating. The people hurt by the ex-gay movement both inspired me and reminded me of the pain I have been through. But Bussee's quote holds true: as long as there is homophobia, there will always be organizations like Exodus.

Journalist Existentialism

Lydia Jayaputra—Staff Writer

I read through an article of mine the other day and thought, “My goodness, who cares? Who cares about any of this?”

The article was my first ever for *The Diamond*, so my apathy, to be fair, may have been driven by my inexperienced writing. My apathy was not from my subject—I loved the people I reported on and believed they deserved a well-written article. But, for whatever reason, rereading the article gave me a pessimism about journalism in general. If I didn’t care, why would anyone else? It’s Dordt. It’s a small university. Did its people really need a newspaper?

I looked through other articles in *The Diamond* for inspiration. There were articles about new professors, sports teams, enrollment and COVID-19 statistics. Also, there were opinions about COVID-19 and opinions about other article’s opinions.

My fellow staff members on *The Diamond* care about these topics. Other people care about them too, or else they wouldn’t read the newspaper. I’ve been on both sides. I’ve cared enough to read the newspaper, and I’ve cared enough to write for it. So why did I find myself apathetic? And more importantly, how could I

stop this feeling?

The paper’s editors often say that if you don’t know something, ask someone who does.

This brings us to Lee Pitts, a journalism professor at Dordt and faculty advisor to *The Diamond*. He’s been involved in the newsgathering industry since 2001 and is a true professional of the business. He’s also a great guy because he supplies the writers with free pizza at our budget meetings. If anyone could help with my journalist’s existentialism, it would be him.

“Why do newspapers matter?” I asked him.

“If we want to have a fully functioning community,” Pitts said, “people in that community need to be informed about what’s going on with their neighbors, and they need to notice things that are broken that need to be fixed.”

That is, *The Diamond* is Dordt University’s doctor’s visit. It’s the university’s way of staying healthy. Though the campus’ education students are familiar with their world, for example, and the engineering students relate to their peers in their own bubble, the two spheres don’t always interact with each other. *The Diamond* works

against this. It works against “Dordt illiteracy,” as Pitts puts it.

But, for all the good that journalism does in a community, the industry has its shortcomings as well. The agreement between the journalist and the reader is a “two-way street,” according to Pitts, where readers favor biased, self-serving articles instead of well-informed, fair journalism.

“They are essentially choosing their sugar over their broccoli,” Pitts said. “The media responds by giving them what they want.”

And, within this “vicious media cycle,” Pitts said, “the responsibility is on [the reader] to seek out and support good journalism.”

Likewise, the journalist is responsible for the betterment of their community. For Pitts, his journalism career wasn’t a money maker—it was an essential for his neighbors far and wide.

I still felt apathetic. Later that night, following the interview, my computer received an email from a past source for an article. In the email,

the interviewees thanked me for my article: “We so appreciate your time and creative expression,” they said. “Thank you and God continue with you in it all.”

Wow, my article mattered to someone, I thought. Sure, it was the people I interviewed. Still, it made them happy. It gave them joy. They felt represented at Dordt.

The email squashed my apathy. I read it over again. While Pitts argued on behalf of journalism for thirty minutes to no avail, my interviewees gave me 61 words of praise and I got all excited again. I was wrong when I thought knowledge would kill my apathy, it was validation that did it.

My motives notwithstanding, there are some

good points to be taken here. While I think journalism is a flawed way for communities to stay healthy, I also think it is the most effective and realistic way for communities to stay healthy. I would prefer we all chill by a huge campfire and take turns sharing our vulnerabilities, but let’s get real. Journalism, when done right, is the next best way to know who is hurting and help them.

Journalism is not always done right, but what did you expect? It is run by flawed humans who write about other flawed humans. These articles are then read by—you guessed it—flawed humans. The opportunities for failure are everywhere. And even if every newspaper followed Pitts’ advice, flaws would still exist. Still, these flaws are a horrible reason to abandon journalism altogether because journalism serves an essential purpose to the community: information about how to love your neighbor.

As Pitts said, the “vicious media cycle” is caused by both the journalist and the reader, which means the responsibility to end such a cycle belongs to both.

This information may not motivate you to read good journalism. I get it. My own search for information didn’t motivate me either. So, as a writer, let me help motivate you in the same way I was motivated: Thank you. Thanks for reading this weird experiment of an article. Thanks for reading my hard work. Thanks for reading *The Diamond*. Thanks for reading about Dordt and about the world, because, in Christian terms, all those articles are about your neighbor. By reading about your neighbor, you’ve given yourself more power to help them. I appreciate it. We appreciate it.

This is Halloween

Elise Wennberg—Staff Writer

HALLOWEEN. FREAKING. SLAPS. OKAY?

No matter what age, gender, or how swamped with schoolwork you are, there is always time to get free candy.

Okay, maybe that isn’t true. But who doesn’t want free candy, an excuse to watch some scary movies, and a reason to dress up, whether it be letting out your inner closet nerd, you’re not-so-hidden nerd, or just throwing on a jersey and calling yourself a hockey player?

Halloween is a holiday for all ages, be it for children who are excited to dress up as their favorite superhero, teenagers who want to dress up as their favorite superhero, and adults who, yes, want to dress up as their favorite superhero. Sometimes the elderly will even flex their muscles and pull out their Superman costume... though not everyone wants to see that.

When I was six years old, my family of five took a trip to Disney World. I don’t remember it well (at all), but I do remember wearing a Belle dress from *Beauty and the Beast*. I was obsessed with her.

I think my obsession was because the princess didn’t fit into the “maiden in distress” trope. Whatever the reason, I loved that dress and meeting Belle was the highlight of my trip.

I don’t know if it was the dress or actually meeting Belle, but I felt powerful.

I wore that costume the upcoming Halloween, displaying my tiara and fake gold shoes. I was walking royalty.

Halloween gets a bad rep when it comes to the Reformed Church. I was shocked to learn that people in Sioux Center do not celebrate Halloween. It seems like such as loss for kids.

There is concern regarding Halloween because it originates from the pagan Celtic religion and druidic priests. However, most people view this as mere folklore or long past dead traditions that people do not practice anymore.

October 31 is also known as All Hallows’ Eve, which is known as the night before All Saint’s Day (November 1st), which takes place the day before All Soul’s Day on November 2. The word Halloween actually means “hallowed eve,” and is celebrated as a holy evening by the Catholic Church.

It is important to note that these holidays and events are not the same of Halloween but share similar practices and gave birth to what Halloween is today.

There are people in the world who see Halloween as a way to praise Satan and celebrate darkness, but those who love Halloween for its Westernized traditions are purely there for the entertainment values.

Halloween also brings a sense of nostalgia.



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Naturally, dressing up and running around with friends is a huge part of the holiday, but a lot of the fun came after the tricking and treating: the Great Candy Exchange.

Once everyone settled, stripped some of their layers off to cool down, and chugged a glass of water, bags of candy dumped into piles on the floor commenced the trading frenzy. Sometimes this process proved more difficult depending on who I was trading with...especially when it comes to my brother, who shares a similar taste in candy.

“I’ll give you three of my Twix’s if you give me two of your Reese’s!”

“...Okay. I’ll give you another Reese’s if you give me your blue raspberry Airhead.”

“What?! No way! I only got one!”

“Do you want my banana Laffy Taffy?”

“No, give them to dad,” (my dad has a weird love of banana flavored candies, especially the banana Runts).

But all rules were off when it came to parents. They had free reign over all the candy, which made me take out my favorites and hide them. I learned pretty quickly that all was fair in candy and war.

The lesser wanted candy was then put in a community bowl for the whole family to eat. I tried to make my candy last for at least a month or two, although with my intense sweet tooth, it sometimes proved a difficult feat.

The stigma that follows Halloween should have long since passed, as it is not a day of evil, but of fun, maybe some mischief, and enjoying time with friends and neighbors.

It’s a commercialized holiday giving people a reason to dress up, express themselves, decorate the yard with giant blow-up pumpkins, carve real pumpkins, or have skeletons pulled out the closet and onto the porch -- all while pigging out on candy.

So, in conclusion: candy slaps, dressing up slaps, and being with friends slaps, meaning Halloween freaking slaps.

The rotten side of Halloween

Glory Reitz—Staff Writer

Halloween is an ugly day, and Christians need to stop pretending otherwise. I’ll concede that dressing up is fun, and I can’t complain about the day-after candy sales. Yet, while we call it a “holiday,” Halloween and its seasonal “spirit” is anything but holy.

This isn’t a comfortable topic. Who wants to skip a fun holiday, or turn down an invitation to a haunted house? Perhaps you’re not even a Christian, and you don’t think “personal holiness” applies to you. Though it can be awkward and unpopular, filling yourself with goodness and light lifts your spirit, regardless of where you begin. Halloween brings darkness, and it will drag you down.

According to Nicholas Rogers’ book *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, the date seems to be rooted in Roman feasts and the Celtic “Samhain” festival. In Celtic tradition, it was a time of darkness, as supernatural forces spilled from the ground and roamed the countryside. To keep the spirits at bay, Rogers said, the Irish built bonfires and made sacrifices – animal, and possibly human.

In a 2019 Vatican News article, Christopher Wells claims the date for the Catholic church’s intentions as All Hallows’ Eve. It’s a vigil to remember Christians who’ve died and is followed by a day of prayer on Nov. 2 for those in purgatory.

It’s not uncommon for holidays to have mixed cultural and religious histories, and Christians have successfully overwritten pagan holidays before. We celebrate Christ’s birth on the date of two old Roman holidays and his resurrection in place of another. While Christmas and Easter eclipsed the old holidays, celebrating Halloween doesn’t set any Christians apart from the world.

The Catholic church still uses the day to focus on mortality and the end times, but at least in the American culture I’ve seen, such solemn thoughts aren’t on the forefront. Halloween has been a day of fear and death throughout history, from warding off demons with glowing turnips to ketchup-blood on gory costumes.

When the Bible tells us to dwell on “whatever

is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable ... excellent or praiseworthy” (Phil. 4:8 NIV), I doubt “spooky season” qualifies. Ghouls, witches, zombies, and vampires fill front yards, movies, and Walmart aisles. If we repeatedly expose ourselves to, and celebrate, this kind of darkness, it’s sure to touch our minds and souls.

In another way, the Halloween hype and its yearlong counterparts (horror movies, demon-chasing TV shows, etc.) dull our sensitivity to evil. Around this time of year, I see blatant displays of monsters and black magic in public places, sometimes “cutesy” and sometimes “scary” – depending on your aesthetic, I guess. Either way, our repeated exposure develops an ignorance of truth and the reality of evil.

The normalization of this darkness simultaneously aggravates normal human fear – which everyone lives with – and hardens us against recognizing it, so we can no longer avoid it. This kind of downward spiral affects everyone, not just Christians.

So, what should a Christian be doing on Oct. 31? No matter how many op-eds I write, Americans will continue to hang ghosts and plant tombstones in their front yards. The church as a whole has similar constraints. Christians can’t just force everyone to stop celebrating Halloween. We cannot erase the day or ignore it – but we can write over its darkness.

If you are a Christian, I’d encourage you to treat the day with a little extra prayer. A condemnatory response probably won’t help anyone out a lot, but gently declining to participate may provoke reflection in those around you. Love your neighbors, enjoy and share your candy, and try to keep your mind clean.

Whatever your beliefs, as you select your movie marathons, costumes, and decorations, consider the meaning behind them, and what you celebrate in life.

Canadian Thanksgiving

Corina Beimers—Staff Writer

I was asked many questions on October 11. For Canadians on campus, it wasn't just another Monday, it was the second Monday of October, which means Thanksgiving. Canada and the United States share multiple holidays, especially major ones like Christmas, but not Thanksgiving. Why? Why early October instead of late November? How is Canadian Thanksgiving different from American Thanksgiving? Do we eat turkey? Were there pilgrims? Did the Mayflower make a pit-stop in Newfoundland?

We eat poutine and moose in our igloos. There were no pilgrims, we magically appeared out of nowhere. It's called the Mayflower Jr. And we actually don't call it Canadian Thanksgiving, it's just Thanksgiving.

Time for a Canadian history lesson.

While most of American history dates back further than Canadian history, Thanksgiving is one area we may have the Americans beat. American Thanksgiving is connected to the 1621 feast between Native Americans and Pilgrims, while the original Thanksgiving can be dated back to 1578 in Canada. We celebrated our first Thanksgiving with a delicious meal of biscuits, salt beef, and mushy peas. Martin Frobisher, an English explorer, arrived in eastern Canada when searching for the Northwest Passage. The crew gathered, ate, and took part in a church service that gave thanks to God for bringing them there. While it wasn't declared an official holiday for a few hundred years, after the establishment of the Canadian Confederation, the roots of Canada's Thanksgiving run deep.

Why the second Monday of October? Canada has strong ties to Europe. Although now an autonomous country, we were once under British rule and currently are still part of the Commonwealth. Long before America celebrated Thanksgiving, there were traditions of celebrating the harvest in the month of October in Europe. For years, Thanksgiving was celebrated sporadically, then once it was made annual, the date moved around several times throughout the months of October and November. In 1879, Nov. 6 was named the national holiday to celebrate Thanksgiving. This date changed after the world wars, as Nov. 11 is Remembrance Day in Canada, a day observed by the Commonwealth to remember and honor those who served in the wars. The Canadian Parliament declared in 1957 that Thanksgiving would be held on the second Monday of every October.



Contributed Photo

Another reason for the earlier celebration only reinforces the stereotype that you all think we live in an icebox, but reality is, Canada is further north. This means that it gets colder earlier, forcing our harvest season to be earlier than America's. Having Thanksgiving in early October allows the celebration to actually coincide with the completion of harvest in a majority of the country.

What else is different about Thanksgiving up north? Like most things, excluding hockey and beer, Americans tend to be more extreme and passionate when it comes to celebrations, while Canadians are a bit more relaxed and low-key. We love Thanksgiving in Canada, don't get me wrong, but we don't have the same massive parades, glorification of football, or school pageants with Pilgrims and Native Americans. We gather with our families and friends and eat a turkey dinner just like Americans, but there may be a different level of investment. It's not even a public holiday in some of our east coast provinces, and in Quebec, with its Catholic roots, the holiday is usually understated. We don't have the craze of Black Friday the day after because Christmas is still a long way off. We save that for Boxing Day. Also, when we eat a salad that means a dish based with lettuce, not whipped cream or marshmallows.

Didn't understand a Canadian term used in this article? It takes about two seconds to Google it or ask your Canadian friends on campus and they will appreciate it. We do share a fairly massive land border, after all.

Heartland Break returns

Sydney Brummel—Staff Writer

As senior nursing major Hannah Burgsma returned from nannying on Wednesday, Oct. 6, she looked forward to how she could spend the upcoming Heartland break, beginning the following morning. She considered going to the Omaha Zoo, finding fun activities in Sioux Center, or even making a quick visit back to her home in Canada. What she did not plan on was her roommates convincing her to go to Chicago as they packed the car to leave. Ten minutes later, Burgsma hopped in her roommate's car and departed for Illinois, backpack packed and no idea what would happen next.

While in Chicago, Burgsma and her roommates explored a bit of the city, visited the Bean, ordered from the famous Starbucks Reserve Roastery, and watched the sunrise from a beach of Lake Michigan. The group also stopped in Pella on the way there and back to break up the drive.

"It was super fun," Burgsma said. "It was also good to have time to go to a physical place that was different than campus."

Burgsma and her roommates were several of many students who took advantage of this break by leaving campus. Some went home to their families, visited other cities out-of-state, or simply enjoyed relaxing activities around the Northwest Iowa area.

Like many other students at Dordt University, Burgsma shared that, although she did not realize it at the time, she needed a rest from the rigorous routine of classes and other school-related responsibilities.

"It was good to be thinking about something

"A few days is good for students to decompress; to truly get a new perspective"
-Hannah Burgsma

other than school," Burgsma said. "Stepping away from campus helps you come back to it with a new perspective and start fresh."

Burgsma talked to her peers on campus, seeing how they experienced this mid-semester break. Most students agreed that the two days off were not only helpful, but also necessary.

A bug catcher's life

Zac VanderLey—Staff Writer

It's a sunny, Sunday afternoon and Eoghan Holdahl lowers his sweep net over an unsuspecting blue damselfly in the Dordt University prairie. The junior agriculture major, holding the net to the ground, then squeezes the top of the net and pushes the bottom into a Ziplock bag. The damselfly, commonly mistaken as a dragonfly because of its long, skinny body and two sets of wings, drops into its enclosure.

"I don't think I have one of these yet," Holdahl said.

After securing the damselfly, Holdahl treks through the prayer garden and other parts of the prairie. As he walks, grasshoppers jump from grass to brush and branch to branch.

"This is the best place to catch insects, mainly ground beetles," Holdahl said of the lower brush section of the prairie.

Holdahl marches through the shorter section of brush, swinging his sweep net back and forth on the ground in a sideways S motion. After avoiding a bee that flies up at him, he continues to move the net, nabbing different types of insects. Once he stops netting insects and unfortunate arachnids, he forces the now-caught creepy-crawlies into the bottom pocket of his net before returning to the entomology lab.

"Wow, look at all the different types of insects," Holdahl said, pointing at the insects he dumped into a larger Ziplock bag from his net. "I think that's a cucumber beetle... and look, that's a striped cucumber beetle."

A variety of beetles, flies, small bees, and grasshoppers mill around in the large Ziplock bag, which Holdahl eventually places in a freezer.

"This might have been one of my best hunting days yet," Holdahl said.

Holdahl, a rural South Dakotan, spends around one to two hours every Saturday hunting for insects to add to his collection, which now represents around 11 orders of insects and 70 individual specimens. His collection even features the pirate bug (also known as the no-see-um). While he enjoys hunting, the collection is required for his Entomology and Pest Control class. The class, taught by professor Jeremy Hummel, is highlighted by the insect collection assignment.

Holdahl, like the eight others in his class, began collecting over the summer. While working at a plastics factory in Hospers, IA, one of his co-workers, a 30-year-old ex-crack addict with missing teeth, called Holdahl into the bathroom. There, a cicada killer the size of a

small finger rested on the wall.

"I'm going to kill it," the coworker said.

"No, I need it for my insect collection," Holdahl said.

"Fine, I'll just knock it out."

The coworker hit the cicada killer with a mop, knocking it to the ground. Holdahl pounced on the insect and placed it in a bag.

For others in the class, like Joseph Kamstra, insect collecting has turned into an interstate enterprise. The senior environmental studies major received two praying mantises in the mail from his mom in California. A mantis must be gutted before it is pinned in the collection box.

"You can't understand insects and their role ecologically if you don't have some concept of the diversity of insects," Hummel said.

An insect collector himself, Hummel fell in love with entomology after he took the same course years ago from former agriculture professor Christian Goedhart. After Hummel completed the class, he continued collecting, identifying, and pinning insects in his spare time. This hobby led him to the master's program at the University of Alberta.

"It is almost like a mini-internship," Hummel said.

A large part of the course focuses on the skill of identifying insects. Around 5.5 million different insect species exist according to the 2017 annual review of entomology. Other experts estimate as many as 30 million unique species of insects exist.

"[God] has an inordinate fondness for beetles," J.B.S. Halldane, an early twentieth century British evolutionary scientist said. While Halldane, given his lack of religion, meant his comment as an attempt to critique the idea of a designer, the multiple layers of armor protecting beetles' wings; the different colors, sizes, and shapes of beetles; and the vast number of unique beetle species lead Hummel to deem the quote "profoundly ironic."

On Oct. 8, Holdahl had planned on completing homework, but instead opted for a bike ride. As he passed the clocktower, he screeched to a halt, noticing a thin creature out of the corner of his eye: a brown mantis. He didn't have a bag on him, so he ran into the Campus Center. They didn't have any extra trash bags, so Holdahl ran back out to the mantis, took off his shirt, and wrapped the insect in the piece of clothing. Shirtless, Holdahl rode to and walked through the Science Building. And, entering the entomology lab (which smells perpetually of moth balls), Holdahl inspected his recent catch: all in a day's work.



Photo Credit: Zac Vanderley

"They all looked pretty tired," Burgsma said. "A lot of people had a bunch of things leading up to break so I think a lot of people really appreciated it."

This year's fall break—often referred to as Heartland or Tri-State—differed significantly from last year's. Due to the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the administration's desire to keep all students in one place, there was no long weekend for students to break up the fall semester. Instead, there was a single day of no classes on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2020.

Last year, Burgsma and her friend went to Town Square coffee shop in Orange City and spent the majority of the 14th studying for an exam they had the next day in pharmacology.

Later, she had supper with another friend off campus. With classes starting at 8:00 a.m. the next day, Burgsma had very little time to truly appreciate a pause from her busy semester.

"It definitely wasn't a break from school," Burgsma said. "In a real break you have at least a couple of days to rest so that you don't have to study your entire break."

As Dordt enters into the second half of the semester, students can agree it's good to have Heartland break.

"A few days is good for students to decompress; to truly get a new perspective and fresh and come back ready to tack the rest of the semester until Thanksgiving," Burgsma said.

TenHaken receives Distinguished Alumni Award cont.

cont. from pg. 1

... The now-mayor graduated with a degree in graphic design. He found a career in web development, fascinated with the development of the internet and the growth he saw in the industry. TenHaken recalled how “big of a deal” Myspace became, and what it was like to be part of the first class at Dordt with email addresses. After earning his MBA from the University of Sioux Falls, he started his own marketing agency company, Click Rain. In 10 years, the company grew to 35 employees, aiding political candidates, businesses, and hotels with their digital marketing strategies. TenHaken’s work with political candidates taught him that a candidate’s use of the digital media and online platform can make or break a campaign. In 2018, he left the company and decided to run for office.

“I think it’s our role as Christians to always try and find an empathetic angle.”
-Paul TenHaken

“We were making all this money, business was growing, but [I asked myself], ‘Is this what God put me on earth for? What’s my kingdom impact?’” TenHaken said. “I felt like God wanted me to expand my mission field.”

TenHaken fully expected lose the mayoral office to two other candidates with actual government experience. But his experience with campaign management through digital platforms provided one of his biggest assets, and he was sworn in as mayor in May of 2018.

Back in the corporate finance class, TenHaken

showed the students a picture from the day. He raised his hand and swore the oath with his wife by his side.

“It was one of the hardest days of my life,” he said. “I was really nervous. I knew it was what God wanted me to do but I really didn’t want to do it. I look skinny. I lost a ton of weight. It was stressful, running for office.”

TenHaken recalled when the sheriff’s office deposed him to a criminal investigation right before being sworn in because of false charges from his opponents: “I see why God brought me through that really hard time of being elected,” he said. “I really needed that coat of armor to get through what I’ve experienced these past few years.”

The mayor’s next four years as mayor were

full of unforeseen challenges. In September of 2019, three tornadoes touched down in Sioux Falls, causing damage that city officials were not able to assess until morning. At the time, a number of the city’s tornado sirens failed to sound due to human error. TenHaken and his team worked to fix the issue, creating more fail-safes so the error never would occur in the future.

“When something screws up, whether it’s your responsibility or not, you have to own it,” TenHaken told the business class. “I like to think of God standing on my shoulders.”

TenHaken described his political life as being thrown “pitches in the dirt.” At times, he is approached with difficult scenarios with no right answer or safe middle ground. In 2020,

his decisions related to COVID-19 proved to be one of these pitches.

“It’s been one of the silliest and dividing and polarizing issues I’ve ever dealt with,” TenHaken said of wearing masks.

Because of his policies and leadership, a number of people have given death threats to TenHaken and his family: “You take away my First Amendment, then I’m going to use my Second Amendment rights on your family,” TenHaken said, recalling the threats.

These situations show TenHaken the brokenness present in the world—a brokenness he works with every day.

“There’s a lot of hurt people in the world,” TenHaken said. “I think it’s our role as Christians to always try and find an empathetic angle. Why is that lady against cops? Why is this person so hell-bent on 500 marijuana dispensers over town?”

TenHaken said the greatest danger of the modern thought process, especially when it comes to politics, is forgetting to live with Christlike empathy. It is when society forgets to look to other perspectives and lives in what the mayor calls an “echo-chamber”—when one only follows and likes people that believe the same things as they do. It may be unconventional and uncomfortable to understand a completely different thought process, but TenHaken has learned to navigate the tense situations.

“I miss the private sector. But God has made it very clear that he’s got me where he wants,” he said.

At the Distinguished Alumni Award ceremony, the mayor’s nominator said, “Paul has pushed for excellence while maintaining integrity in all the various roles and fields he has entered since graduation from Dordt in 2000.”

Throughout the day, TenHaken left the various classes he spoke at with a single question:

How do we live our lives?

“When you look at your career and impact, you are two to three generations away from being forgotten. The only thing that will live on is your impact on the kingdom.” TenHaken said. “We are put here on earth to witness.”



Contributed Photo

GRExit

Katie Ribbens—Staff Writer

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is a standardized test for graduate school admission. Essentially, it is a grown-up version of the ACT or SAT. It is divided into a writing section, a verbal reasoning section, and a quantitative reasoning section.

However, many graduate schools are waiving their GRE requirement due to COVID-19 and the challenges of taking the test at a public center.

Educational Testing Services (ETS), the nonprofit that owns the GRE, is providing a new, at-home testing option. With this change, students can once again take the GRE. Graduate schools are considering whether they wish to restore their GRE requirements, and many are not.

The flood of waived GRE requirements has been termed as the GRExit, according to Science. The peer-reviewed journal states that 50 percent of molecular biology Ph.D. programs dropped the GRE requirement, while only 10 percent of chemistry and psychology Ph.D. programs dropped the requirement.

In 2018, only a handful of schools waived the GRE requirement. As of Oct. 8, over 402 graduate programs are no longer requiring the GRE, according to graduate admissions at the University of North Carolina.

Why the discrepancy? Should the GRE be waived once and for all, or is there a place for standardized testing?

ETS recommends that graduate programs use several factors to evaluate an applicant, rather than constraining them to their GRE scores.

Dr. Luralyn Helming, professor of psychology at Dordt University, agrees with this assessment. She acknowledges the problems

with the test: it is biased against certain groups of people, such as those that do not have access to tutoring services. Helming also agrees that the test is, to some extent, measuring how well the student can take a test.

Tiana Schroder, a senior pre-physical therapy student at Dordt, plans to take GRE on Oct. 30.

“I feel like it’s a measure of how fast you can take your test,” Schroder said. “The knowledge that seems to be on the GRE doesn’t appear to correlate very well with what my major is and what I’m hoping to do in the future.”

She is attempting to find time to study in her free time with a full course load.

“It could prevent me from getting into grad school if I don’t get a certain score,” Schroder said. “I’m going to give it a shot. It just kind of feels like it’s a useless hill to climb over to get there.”

Sydney Stiemsma, a pre-occupational therapy senior at Dordt, took the GRE in September. Like Schroder, she is not sure it measures her readiness for grad school.

“I studied to do well on the test, not to be ready for grad school,” Stiemsma said.

While she did not particularly enjoy the experience, she cannot think of a better way to narrow the pool for admissions.

Helming believes that the GRE should also be measuring analytical thinking skills, analysis of information, ability to do math, and vocabulary. She does not think some of those skills should be the final decision point in admission, but it would be problematic if a student did not have any knowledge in these content areas.

The GRE is a computer adaptive test, meaning its questions will be easier or harder

based on the student’s answer to the question before it. Students must adapt to the changes in the test as they continue, a life skill that falls beyond the content of the GRE.

“Your ability to work under pressure to timed tests is important in grad school,” Helming said. “If you can’t adapt at all and figure it out at all, you’re going to struggle in grad school.”

For students used to being at the top of their class, the GRE percentiles can be daunting.

“It’s a much narrower field than even other

people who went to college. It’s actually the big fish, little pond effect,” Helming said. “You went to a much more prestigious pond.”

In the end, the GRE offers a convenient way for graduate schools to evaluate applicants in a standardized way. The rest of a student’s application is subjective. The GRE provides a standardized tool for evaluation, so long as graduate programs are aware of its biases and limitations.

“It’s not going to make or break your application,” Helming said.



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The Back Page

In defense of the defender

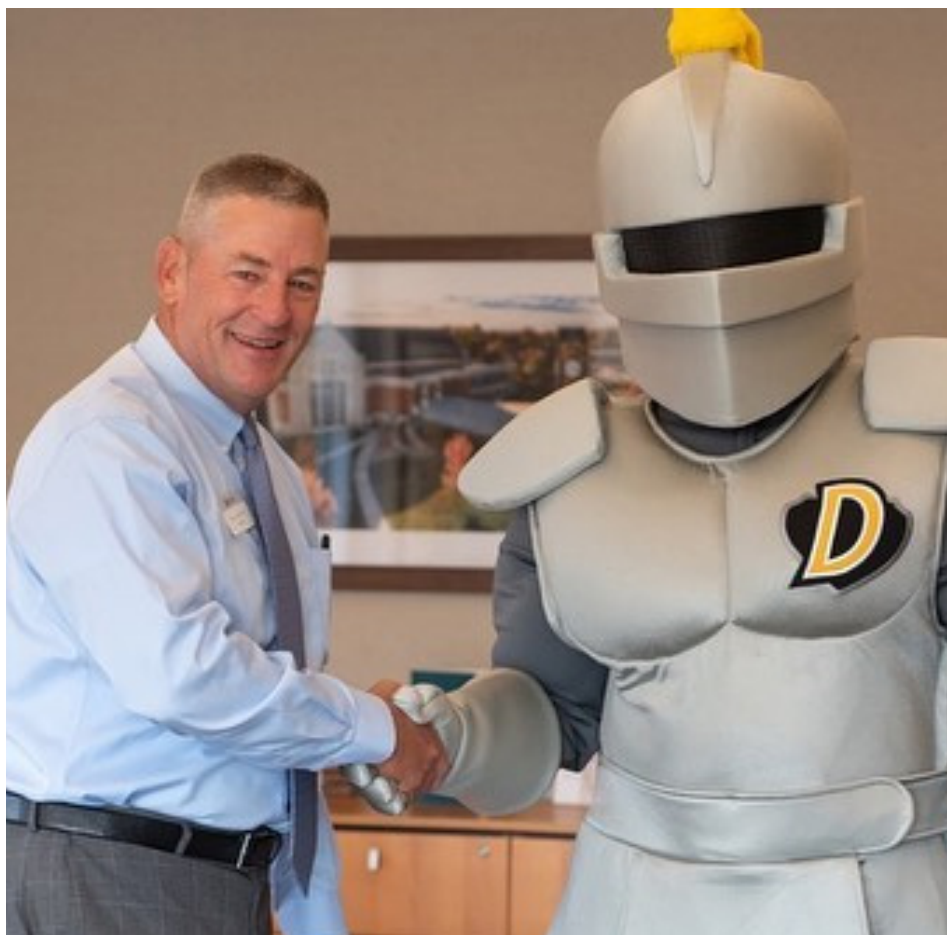


Photo Credit: Dordt University Marketing and Communication Department

Sam Landstra—Staff Writer

Oh, shut up.

I've seen a lot of things from my front porch. I've heard every square inch of criticism levied at this university. I've even called the college out myself, too.

The buck stops here, though. This is malarkey. It's beyond it, actually, and you've provoked these bones to rise from their rocking chair and scream nonsense at you darn kids.

The criticism of Dash the Defender has got to be the lowest form of criticism of all time. I mean, really. It's a conductor at Julliard assessing the trumpet solo of a fourth grader. The brat picked up the instrument five days ago, and you're penalizing the kid for an overly rushed crescendo. It's discounting Peppa Pig for the show's failure to comment on race relations. That is, it's not the point.

I've heard it all.

"We don't need a mascot, it's idol worship."

"Those size twenty-eight stompers make me insecure about my bodily proportions."

"It's a waste of our tuition dollars."

"If predestination applied to mascots, Dash the Defender would go straight to hell."

Listen here, twenty-somethings. Your opinion doesn't make you special and your criticism isn't God's gift to the neighborhood. And, at this point, I'm worried you'll hurt the little guy's feelings.

The mascot is for kids. I'll say it again because I didn't think you were paying attention. The mascot is for kids. It's not for you. It's for children who don't care if the overly plush knight looks like the Michelin man

with a helmet.

This university does not exist for the sole purpose of your agreement with it. It's alright, take a deep breath. The marketing team does not open and close their meetings with talk about you. They probably don't even know your name, and that's going to be okay.

I've been around the block enough times to know how this story goes. The university does something, anything, and the students dislike it. They hate everything about it. Then, the students graduate, the thing or decision in question does not, and the university wins.

Whether you are a freshman or a senior, your collegiate life expectancy at this institution is capped at four years. At the end of eight semesters, you will die. The object of your criticism will not. That is, Dash the Defender is eternal. His oversized gloves will shake the hands of basketball recruits for the rest of time. The critique of the mascot is no more profitable than Sisyphus' task of toiling a rock up a hill.

When you complain about Dash, his name, or the general feeling of doom you experience when peering into the black void of his visor, you're the dad at his two-year-old's birthday party who tells the kiddies that the magician is a high school dropout who drives a beat-up Jetta with a spoiler plate. It sort of ruins the cake and presents for everyone.

So, shove it. Let the kids eat their cake.

The newest addition to the university's iconography isn't for you, and you'll graduate in seven months.

I've got back pain medication to take.

Dash the Defender: It could be better

Zac VanderLey—Staff Writer

This past weekend at Late Night with the Defenders, the university's new mascot premiered: Dash the Defender. Other than the fact that Dash's get-up looked a little to similar to Walmart's clearance section, I was pleased that Dordt added a mascot. The addition of Dash to the university's iconography is something that students, recruits, and kids will enjoy.

But it just could be better.

The biggest, or should I say, quickest, problem is the name: Dash. It just doesn't make any sense. Now, I'm not certain what the process of naming the mascot involved, but the word, on the surface, has little to do with a defender. Maybe Dordt is fully embracing the success of our cross country and track teams. But I (and virtually everyone who uses the word dash) associate dash with a smaller, less clunky, and somewhat quicker character—like Dash from the Incredibles, or a jackrabbit, or some mascot that connotes speed and agility.

Let's go across town. Dash the Red Raider makes more sense, I'll be honest.

Possibly, Dordt went for the Scandinavian origins of the word. In the 1300s, 'dash' implied a quick and violent strike. Maybe this explains Dash's foam, Claymore-sized sword.

I'd like to think 'dash' is a play on the formal "dashing." For example, a female character from a Jane Austen novel would tell her man he looks 'dashing.' But I wouldn't characterize Dash the Defender as a knight in shining armor—he's more like an unwanted Spirit Halloween costume.

A part of me hopes the squat mascot is an ironic critique of the tall, lumbering dutchmen of Dordt's campus. Or it would be interesting if the name served as a critique of the slowness of fully armored knights. But sadly, it seems the university selected the name of "Dash" because it was catchy and alliterative.

However, it's not even the best form of alliteration.

See, the short 'a' sound in 'dash' contrasts with the short 'e' sound in Defenders. Sure, they both start with the letter 'd', and Dash is a one syllable word, but there are names that would make more sense. Personally, I like Dex the Defender. It keeps the short 'e' sound through the name and is more of an Anglo-Saxon, guttural word than 'dash.'

Recently, in one of my writing classes, we talked about the differences between Latin and Anglo-Saxon words. Longer, more elegant words are classified under Latin origins—words such as think, pick, help, eat, and drink. The quicker, more guttural sounding words are Anglo-Saxon: imagine, select, assist, consume,

and imbibe. While this also reflected the social class differences of the time, it has affected the way language developed, and specifically, how the English language was created.

All this to say, a mascot like a Defender should use a more Anglo-Saxon words for the sake of clarity and meaning. For example, Dirk, Diederik, Draiden, and Daan are all possibilities.

The mascot's name also could have been an intriguing place to use a classic Dutch name. A title such as Dolf, Dries, or Duif would have characterized the mascot much better than the name of some small child's new puppy.

Some people will say that the name doesn't matter; it's all just for fun, right?

Wrong.

Words matter. Names matter. As someone who loves philology, it's integral that we as a people learn how to use words correctly based on their origins and current connotations. If I was writing a story from the perspective of a character in royalty, I would intentionally choose elegant and more Latinate words while saving the slang and other improper words for different characters.

We were all named for a reason, and Dash was probably named for a reason, but whatever the reason, the name is a bit off.

Words all hold some connotations for us, even if we don't realize it. Some of these connotations exist in our personal experiences with the word: maybe our mom used to use it, or we had an elementary teacher misuse the word, or someone consistently mispronounced it. All these experiences shape the way we view and use a certain word. But, in words, there is a certain level of objective connotation. Dash, for example, connotes speed and agility. This will not change for some time. And Dash the Defender will never and should never exhibit these characteristics.

I'm certain Dash will be a fun addition to sporting events. Young kids will take pictures with the stumbling and bumbling but overall jolly Defender. But once these same kids learn what 'to dash' really means, they will be a bit disappointed in the name of one of their childhood superheroes.

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