


**Feature:  
The Hoyt**



page 4

**Arts: Ant-  
man and  
the Wasp:  
Quantumania**



page 8

**Sports:  
Baseball  
swings for  
success**



page 7

**Opinion:  
ChatGTP**



page 6

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# THE DIAMOND

## Men's track and field finishes first

Teresa Taylor — Staff writer

Dordt University Men's Track and Field team won the 2023 Great Plains Athletic Conference Indoor Championship on Feb. 18, hosted by Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska. The men competed in 16 out of 19 events and finished with a total 204.5 points.

"We knew we would have to overperform in order to beat Doane," senior Davis Tebben said. Though the men's team celebrated a conference win in 2021, Doane University has a reputation of winning it. When head men's and women's track and field head coach Craig Heynen reviewed the scores, he realized Doane had fulfilled their projected score with a total 194 points.

"Doane had a great meet, and we still beat them," Heynen said. "It's not because they did worse than expected. They did great, and we still won."

The team exceeded the projections and scored 25 percent more points than they had predicted, according to Tebben.

"It was just a really great day all around," senior Thaniel Schroeder said, "and each person in their different events just pulled together, picked up some points here, some points there." Though Heynen and the other coaches push the team to do well as individuals, they also encourage members to compete for the team, and the men take the initiative to work together.



Men's track and field team with the GPAC championship banner

"You can never be the best that you can be by yourself," Heynen said. "I think a lot of times, it's learning from their teammates."

Heynen commended the upperclassmen for their influences on the program, as well as the underclassmen for stepping up to the standard the team has formed.

Junior Trey Engen set the meet record for the one-mile race with a time of 4:14.62. Junior Peter Shippy qualified for his third NAIA event

with a time of 4:15.35. Senior Joe Anderson finished in third less than a second later with 4:15.76.

Senior Davis Tebben finished first in the 5k race and set a stadium record of 14:58.49, 0.9 seconds faster than the previous record. Schroeder finished second with 15:14.99. Sophomore Aidan Vorster followed in third with 15:20.45; junior Ethan Summerhays fourth with 15:30.53, and senior Jacob Brouwer

finished fifth with 15:35.75.

"In the 5k, it's not as much racing each other as getting each other to the finish line, working together," Schroeder said.

Schroeder placed the same as he had in 2022 in both the 5k and the 3k. This year, however, only Dordt runners finished ahead of him.

"It's good to see that the only guys who are going to beat you are your teammates," Schroeder said.

Senior Joe Anderson finished first in the 3k race with 8:37.88. Junior Peter Shippy finished second with 8:39.36; Tebben third with 8:44.21; Vorster fourth with 8:44.52, and Schroeder came in fifth in 8:45.14.

The rest of the team surrounded the track during the race to cheer on their runners, encouraging them to finish strong and keep ahead of the Doane runners.

"I've never had a distance race that was that hype," Schroeder said.

With one event left after the 3k, Schroeder and his teammates knew they had scored enough points to win the conference. After the meet ended and the team accepted the trophy, Heynen cartwheeled to celebrate.

Junior Payton Mauldin received the award for Men's Athlete of the Meet. In the span of an hour and a half, he finished first in the 400m with 48.81, the 600m with 1:22.63, and the...

Cont. on pg. 7

## Dordt unveils new housing and dining plans

Daniel Ketchelos — Staff writer



An interior design sketch of potential plans for the new apartments

On Feb. 9, Dordt University President Erik Hoekstra announced plans for new construction projects on campus. These projects, including a new dining commons and upperclassmen housing buildings, are set to begin construction in the next few months.

The new apartment buildings will be built south of the Southview Apartments and will house up to 96 students across four apartment buildings. There are also plans to add 62 additional parking spaces to campus. Construction will begin in March 2023 and is set to be completed by August 2023.

"From what I saw on the designs, it looks really cool considering that each apartment is two stories," junior Logan Posthumus said. "I'm not sure if building them [the apartments] should be the necessary thing to start unless East Campus is turning into freshman and sophomore housing."

Currently, Dordt has three options for upperclassmen housing including East Campus Apartments (48 apartments), Southview Apartments (28 apartments), and Kuyper Apartments (34 apartments). The new...

Cont. on pg. 3

## The Hunt returns for year two

Dayna Wichhart—Staff writer

On Feb. 26 at 8 p.m., the underclassman women on campus are invited to the Grille to attend the kickoff event of The Hunt. This event is being held for the second time ever on Dordt's campus.

The Hunt is a three-day campuswide scavenger hunt. During the three days, wings will work together to complete challenges that are published each day. In addition to the challenges throughout the week, there is a team challenge in the evenings. In the evening challenge, wings will receive the first clue and will have to solve the clue and move to the next location until the mission is complete for the night.

At the end of the three days, the points will be totaled, and one wing will be crowned the winner of the Hunt.

"Girls really seemed to enjoy it last year and that has been good to see," Ally Veldhuisen said.

Last year, Veldhuisen was in her first year as

Learning Community Area Coordinator and came up with the concept of The Hunt. She was looking for a women's event that could have a similarly competitive nature as Broomball.

"Doing the Hunt is a less intimidating competitive activity and allows for a lot of participation," Veldhuisen said. "People can choose what they participate in, and the Hunt does not require athletic ability."

Veldhuisen then spent time planning the nuts and bolts of how a campuswide scavenger hunt could work effectively. She found an app called GooseChase, which is used by many universities and camps for all sorts of activities.

The app allows for a group of people to join teams and view challenges released by the administrator. The app will allow participants to submit pictures and videos to complete challenges. GooseChase will also track the points awarded to each challenge and participants can watch the different wings and what place each wing is sitting at.

The Hunt includes a wide variety of...

Cont. on pg. 2



## Honor band weekend

Audra Kooi — Staff writer

On Thursday, Feb. 16, a special group of visiting high schoolers made their way to the B. J. Haan Auditorium -- each carrying an instrument in hand. During the days following, they worked with Dordt University's Director of Instrumental Activities Onsbey Rose and Defender Band Director Allegra Fisher to perform in the second-ever Dordt University Honor Band Weekend.

Rose started the annual honor band as a way to welcome young musicians to campus and create an opportunity for them to play with other talented musicians and experience what it is like to participate in an ensemble at Dordt. Fisher worked with the students in the Honors Symphonic Band, and Rose worked with those in the Honors Wind Symphony.

Students were nominated by their directors to participate in the honors ensembles before Christmas break. Then they received audition music for placement which had to be recorded and sent in.

"Some of these kids do not have a full wind symphony back home," sophomore Molly Galema said. "For some of them, this is the first time they are playing in a full group."

Galema is one of the student workers who prepared for the honor band weekend.



The honor band during practice

It was also a time when prospective Dordt students could meet other musicians considering the program. Several current freshmen in music ensembles at Dordt participated in the honor bands last year.

"I really connected with Sonya Hansum that

weekend," freshman Leah Hostetler said. "Now she's my roommate!"

Meeting people is not hard when you are in three-to-four-hour rehearsal sessions with each other. The honor band took place over a weekend to make it easier for students to attend,

regardless of how far they lived from Dordt's campus.

Each night, the honor band students listened to a different performance by one of the ensembles at Dordt. Thursday night, the Campus Community Band performed several of the pieces they are preparing. On Friday, the Wind Symphony gave the high schoolers a taste of the music they will be recording and taking on tour this spring. Joan Ringerwold Chair of Church Music and Organ Carrie Groenewold played the organ for students, and several had the opportunity to go up to the organ loft with her.

The musical weekend ended on Saturday afternoon when the two honor bands performed themselves. Following each group's performance, the respective director announced the winners of the Outstanding Musician Awards. These awards are given to sophomores, juniors, or seniors, and they guarantee a \$4000 minimum music scholarship if the winner attends Dordt, regardless of their major.

This year's Honor Band Weekend has come to a close, and high school directors are encouraged to submit nominations for next school year.

Contributed photo

## NC/DC: Back in black and yellow

Teresa Taylor — Staff writer

Dordt University's "Chopsticks 'n' Soup" won first place and \$650 at the NC/DC finals at Northwestern College's Christ Chapel on Feb. 17. The band consisted of Siena Rose as vocalist, Ivana Harsono on piano, Emma McGaughey on tenor saxophone, Victor Mwila on electric, David Condor on bass, and James Kamstra on drums.

As Dordt students arrived early for the 9 p.m. event, they formed a crowd in the chapel's lobby after learning the doors to the chapel were still locked while the bands finished their sound checks. When the doors opened at 8:50 p.m., students from both colleges pushed their way in and claimed their seats in the pews.

The pre-show flashing lights caused some to hold their heads in their hands as the lights overwhelmed them. Music intended to hype played over the speakers until the lights went down and the crowd silenced.

The opening video featured Northwestern students Emily Kraft and Alyssa Feeley as they attempted to displace Dordt as #1 in student engagement by staging proposals across campus. After the yearlong montage, they learned Dordt was still in first.

When Kraft and Feeley took the stage, they introduced themselves as elementary education majors, resident assistants, and athletes. Throughout the show, they told jokes to introduce bands and asked them questions following the performances, including "What's your favorite toe?" and "What's your favorite flavor of toothpaste?" They wore white powdered wigs when they asked a Northwestern band who their favorite Founding Father was.

Dordt director of production arts Alex Priore sat as the Dordt judge, Northwestern graduate and Dordt theatre department production manager and costumer Becky Donahue sat as the neutral judge, and Northwestern director of bands and instrumental music education Dr. Angela Holt sat as the Northwestern judge.

The six bands played two songs each, one before the ten-minute intermission and one after. After every performance before intermission, Northwestern's Student Activity Council (SAC) carried a couch onto the stage for the band to sit on during the judges' comments and the hosts' two questions. When the band stood, SAC removed the couch from the stage.

"It hurts my back watching them," Northwestern student Luke Jeltema said.

Northwestern had planned the event to be two hours, according to director of student programs Lucas Heiberger. When they realized how much time the couch and questions took, they limited the hosts to one question per band and chose to leave the couch offstage. Despite the alterations, the event went half an hour past the two-hour mark.

The time bands spent arranging before their sets also added to the overall time, and technical difficulties slowed the process. Similar issues affected the bands' performances, particularly the sound balance. While the bands gave input for their lighting designs in the BJ Haan Auditorium, they did not receive that option for Christ Chapel, and flashing lights often blinded the audience.

After the last song, the crowd voted for the winner via text. The judges had 25 points each to give to the team of their choice.

The hosts informed the crowd before intermission they would announce first place first, then second, then third. When they came onstage to announce the winners, however, they corrected themselves and told the crowd they would announce third, second, and then first.

The MC's asked for a drumroll before declaring Northwestern's "Women in Stem and the Other Guys" for third place, Northwestern's "Just Jazz Combo" in second, and Dordt's "Chopsticks 'n' Soup" in first.

NC/DC was "Chopsticks 'n' Soup" members Emma McGaughey and James Kamstra's third performance of the day. After their Wind Symphony concert at 6 p.m. for the high school



The winning band "Chopsticks n' Soup" after their performance at Northwestern

honor band students, McGaughey and Kamstra, as well as NC/DC band "Covergirls" Annika Rynders and Emily Zuidema, immediately drove to the Fruited Plain for a jazz combo gig. Lael Bervig, also of the "Covergirls," began the event at 6:30 p.m. on the piano while the rest of the combo finished their concert.

"Chopsticks 'n' Soup" members Siena Rose, Ivana Harsono, and Victor Mwila spent the following day performing at the Cultural Fair in the Grille.

"I find joy when I am performing for people, not just for myself, and sharing those talents," Rose said. "It's more fulfilling than just doing it for my sake."

Following their semi-finals mashup of Earth, Wind, and Fire's "September" and Bruno Mars's "Treasure," "Chopsticks 'n' Soup" decided they needed to amp the hype for finals.

"There were a lot of really strong groups from Dordt and Northwestern that I thought were good rivals for us that definitely gave us a challenge," McGaughey said.

The band chose to perform Michael Jackson's "Love Never Felt So Good" and Maroon 5's "Moves Like Jagger." They wore 70s-inspired sunglasses and sequined jackets from the costume shop.

During their first song, "Chopsticks 'n' Soup" brought Dordt international student Melanie Saavedra and Northwestern international students Lisa Li and Shion Lee onto the stage for a dance battle.

"I just like the concept of collaborating in art," Rose said, and the judges praised the band for bringing the schools together.

Rose will graduate next spring after a semester in Chicago, and McGaughey will graduate this May. The remaining members of the band plan on performing next year.

"You can see parts of 'Chopsticks 'n' Soup' playing together," McGaughey said, "but I don't know if there will be a time when we all come together again."

Contributed photo

## The Hunt returns for year two cont.

cont. from pg. 1

...different challenges such as riddles, finding certain people on campus, sneaking photos of people and places, or bringing anything but a backpack to classes. The challenges are designed to be completed throughout the regular flow of your day around campus.

Nia Boentoro was in the winning wing last year and looks forward to participating again

this year as a sophomore.

"My favorite part included doing the challenges throughout the day because it made normal school more fun," Boentoro said.

This year, Boentoro is an RA and will lead her own wing through the challenges of the Hunt. She is most looking forward to seeing what new challenges will be created this year and hopes to get lots of participation from her wing.

The hope for the Hunt is to build a sense of

community within wings and also across wings as they engage in friendly competition.

"My favorite part of the Hunt was seeing girls in the wing spend more time together," Kassie Brands said, "It helped girls meet new people and get to know their neighbors better."

Brands was the RA of last year's winning wing. Her wing would complete the challenges together and strategized who would do each challenge so that no challenge

was left unfinished. During their team challenges, the wing enjoyed making videos with music tracks and allowed for their creativity to take over.

The Hunt will take place Feb. 26 through March 1. Underclassman women will download the app and participate with their wings to try to be the ultimate hunters.

Contributed photo

## Women's basketball wins GPAC, advance to nationals

Mallory Nilles — Staff writer

The Dordt University Women's Basketball team is having a tremendous season, which is no surprise, since they were the national runner-up at the conclusion of last season. The Defenders plan to maintain this winning trend, evidenced by their capture the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) title on Feb. 11.

The win automatically secured them a ticket to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Women's Basketball National Tournament starting in the first week of March.

When asked what is on the vision board for the 2022-23 season, senior guard Bailey Beckman was honest and determined.

"We want the national title," Beckman said.

Capturing the GPAC title "[has] always been a goal and it feels good, but we also have larger goals in sight," Beckman said, referring to the national title. Coming up short of being national champions is not something the team took lightly.

"Runner-up was a huge accomplishment, but we also understand that we still came up short," junior shooting guard Macey Nielson said. "I think that knowing how close we were has impacted how hard & detailed we practice and how we know what we are capable of. It's definitely been a good motivator to try to be even better every day."

"Grit" is the word that describes this year's team, according to Beckman, who just announced she will be returning for a fifth year after this season, along with forward and fellow senior Karly Gustafson. Nielson gave a similar answer when asked what stands out about this particular team.

"This group of girls is competitive, gritty, and hungry to continually get better. These qualities have really shown through this season as we've been challenged in games, but found ways to fight back," Nielson said. Though their success on the court is remarkable, head coach Bill Harmsen says there's more to this team than meets the eye.

"This team is so smart and connected," Harmsen said. "They truly love and serve one another... They celebrate each other's successes."

The Defenders have a 20-2 conference record (26-2 overall) and are ranked fourth in the nation heading into the GPAC tournament, where they will play Doane in the opening round on Wed., Feb. 22. If the Defenders win, they will advance to play on Sat., Feb. 25. The final championship game will be held on Tues., Feb. 28.

Photo credit: Dordt University Athletics



## Culture Fair

Abi Wegner — Staff writer



## Dordt unveils new housing and dining plans cont.

cont. from pg. 1

...apartments would provide additional housing for 96 more upperclassmen students.

"I'm hopeful about the new apartments," Posthumus said. "Maybe having more of a kitchen space or a living room, and I would like to have a dishwasher. I think that would be convenient, especially for guys."

Dordt also has plans to build a new dining Commons to replace the current Commons. The new dining Commons would be between the Campus Center and B.J. Haan Auditorium. Both of these buildings will be connected together through the new dining Commons allowing students to remain indoors when walking from building to building.

"Heading towards the April [2023] board meeting we are going to be seeking approval from the board of trustees to put a spade in the ground for the new dining commons," Hoekstra said. "Our advancement department has done a great job raising some money for that we've got alternative financing with the United States Department of Agriculture, but we anticipate starting on that this summer."

The new dining Commons will seat up to 400 people for meals in the main hall, and an additional 200 in the banquet hall on the second floor for overflow seating. This would allow up to 600 total seats in the new commons

compared to 417 seats in the current Commons. There are also plans to add a small recital hall to the East side of the B.J. Haan Auditorium. The anticipated completion date is sometime in 2025 for these projects.

"I'm excited to get the new Commons done. We are going to have so many great opportunities with different food options in different areas to offer," Mindi Sneller, the Food Service Director for Dordt Dining, said. "One thing I'm very excited about is we have created a specific line which is going to be a one-stop location for students with food issues. It's going to be a one-stop shop for them and it's going to be very safe [for people with food allergies]."

In response to an interview request, Robert Taylor, the Vice President for Student Success and Dean of Students, declined to interview. Taylor stated the following in response:

"We will offer all students an opportunity to many details about this project very soon! We plan to have an evening event where we talk about the project, show flythroughs of the renderings, answer questions, etc.," Taylor said. "As a means of saving as much as possible for the official unveiling, we would prefer not to share details with anyone until after the event."

More information on this event will be released in the upcoming weeks.

Photo credit: Dordt University



Mockup plans for the new dining commons building

Dordt University hosted their 2023 Culture Fair this past Saturday, Feb. 18, after Northwestern College celebrated their own event on Feb. 4. Dordt students, specifically those a part of the clubs Students Without Borders and the Multicultural Leadership Program, were encouraged to attend the Northwestern event.

Both nights were deemed a success by the clubs that produced them; they were filled with food, performances and an educational component to learn more about countries around the world. There were many performances by the international students at Northwestern, such as cultural dancing and singing. One of the dancers that performed was Dordt student Melanie Saavedra.

Saavedra is a junior at Dordt, and has lived in America for two years. She moved here from Panama and is a part of Dordt's Dance team. While this is her second year being involved in Dordt's Culture Fair, she also took part in the NWC fair this year. She was encouraged to perform by her friend, who attends Northwestern.

"Dance I think shows more of how I am," Saavedra said.

She choreographed a dance to perform at Northwestern that combined different dancing styles. Her goal was to share her heritage with people from both schools, and to inform people about communities beyond this one.

"[The Culture Fair] is important so people can know about the culture," Saavedra said. "[The goal is to] not judge them, but see how international students live."

Along with performances, NWC had set up tables across their RSC gymnasium that were filled with food from different countries, such as Japanese chow mein and German scalloped potatoes. Northwestern sophomore Kevin Woodrow attended both events and enjoyed the food the NWC fair had to offer.

"I thought it was really interesting to try new foods," Woodrow said. "I didn't go last year, mainly just because I was a freshman, but I enjoyed going this year."

The Dordt and NWC fairs were set up differently in their events and nature. The NWC started with full plates of food that you could sit down and enjoy, and then went into their performances; as well as played an attendant-wide game of Kahoot about different cultures.

Dordt's culture fair started with a walk-around period where guests could attend booths to their leisure, run by international students a part of Students Without Borders, in order to learn more about where they lived. Many of these booths also offered tastes of food, made and brought by the students. These included things such as catrachas, a fried bean and cheese

*"Students Without Borders mission is to share culture with Dordt,"*  
-Sarah Bruekelman

tortilla originating from Honduras.

"At the Dordt culture fair there wasn't as much food [compared to Northwestern], which was a bummer," Woodrow said. "But the show was overall better in my opinion."

After guests walked around the booths, they were guided to sit down and enjoy a show involving cultural fashion, music, and dancing. Sarah Bruekelman, the Students Without Borders' Club Vice President, said a few words at the start of the show.

"Students Without Borders' mission is to share culture with Dordt," Bruekelman said. With a night full of food, dancing, music, and the appreciation of heritage, they did just that.

Photo credit: Abi Wegner

## EU energy crisis

*Tabetha DeGroot- Staff writer spending the semester overseas and writing about her experiences while abroad.*

Zwolle, Netherlands -

Exchange student Maddie Kobes wakes up shivering in her new Dutch home. She musters the energy to get out of bed and shuffles to the bathroom, which is also cold. A few blessed moments of a hot shower pass, then she is back on the icy tile. After breakfast with her host family in the kitchen, which is heated by a wood burning fireplace, she heads to school. The hallways are drafty, and body heat alone keeps the classrooms warm. It is a typical, but chilly, day in the Netherlands, an unexpected consequence of war.

An energy crisis has hit the European Union. Due to Russia cutting off its resources from the EU, and vice versa, the price of gas has skyrocketed, causing luxuries like heated buildings to become a thing of the past.

Energy costs have nearly doubled all over Europe compared to a year ago.

"Gas prices in Rome, Luxembourg, Lisbon, Dublin, Paris, Vienna, Brussels, Bern, Copenhagen, and Stockholm reached new, record highs," according to Euronews. "In Rome, gas costs increased by 97 percent last month and more than 170 percent compared to one year ago. Price hikes of 64 percent and 58 percent were recorded in Luxembourg City and

Lisbon respectively."

Paul Bredewout has been living in Zwolle, Netherlands for over ten years, and has never seen gas bills this high.

"It is now three or four times more than what we used to pay," Bredewout said. "It was about 30 euros per square meter, and it went up to 300."

After World War II, oil was found in the northern part of the Netherlands, which has supplied the country with gas for many years according to Bredewout.

"The whole country was organized on gas because it was very cheap," Bredewout said.

However, in the last 20 years, gas mining has caused earthquakes, destroying homes and buildings and putting an end to the drilling. This led the Netherlands to become dependent on imported gas, primarily from the Russian pipeline Nord Stream1.

Within a year, the EU has completely cut off its use of Russian gas. This poses new problems.

"If you cut off one of your major suppliers, you have to get it from somewhere else," Bredewout said.

Much of the EU's gas is being shipped from the US in the form of liquified natural gas (LNG), which is much more expensive.

In the Netherlands, people have begun seeking out alternative energy sources. Natural resources like wind and solar power have



become almost a quarter of what is used.

"New buildings do not have any gas connection anymore," Bredewout said. "They use wind energy and ground heating."

The problem with solar panels is that the Netherlands is not sunny this time of year, when people also need more heat. The houses in the Netherlands and most of Europe are old. The Bredewout family lives in a brick house that is almost 100 years old. The heating and cooking systems are all based on gas. Putting electric systems in these houses is very expensive, and takes work. Most buildings are also not insulated.

"The advantage of higher energy prices is that people become more aware of it and don't consume it just because it's available"

Bredewout said. "They turn the heat down a bit because it will save them €200 a month. A lot of people can't afford heating anymore, so they have to. In the last year the consumption of energy went down very quickly."

Kobes has learned to adapt to her Netherlands home.

"I try to stay in the living room where the fire is and I just wear lots of sweaters and socks," Kobes said.

When it comes to her Dutch host family, she thinks they have somewhat adjusted, too.

"My host family is always wearing sweaters and the kids are often under blankets," Kobes said. "They just accept it."

*Contributed photo*

## The Hoyt Special

*Abi Wegner - Staff writer*

The Hoyt Sandwich, invented by Grille worker Hoyt Reinalda in 2021, was originally inspired by the Grille's classic Teriyaki Chicken Sandwich. Since then, Hoyt has worked to get the Hoyt Sandwich added to the Grille menu permanently at Dordt University.

The Hoyt Sandwich is made of teriyaki chicken, sesame garlic sauce, Defender sauce, pepper jack cheese, jalapenos, onions, shredded lettuce, and sliced tomatoes. It is typically made with a pretzel bun, but Hoyt says any type can be used, according to preference.

The Dordt football players often order the Hoyt from the Grille by special request. In addition to his job at the Grille, Hoyt is also a football manager at Dordt.

Cody Laidlaw, a linebacker, enjoys seeing Hoyt at the Grille every day, and is one of the many football players who endorses the sandwich.

"I like the Hoyt sandwich," Laidlaw said. "If Hoyt wants it on there permanently, I'm supporting it."

Laidlaw says he likes being able to see Hoyt all the time, whether at practice, on game day, or in the Grille. He loves to strike up conversations with Hoyt and says he just "can't get enough of him."

"He brings me joy, I think it brings the whole community joy seeing Hoyt, watching him do what he loves, helping out, talking," Laidlaw said. "I think he brings everyone joy."

Hoyt's boss at the Grille, Nicole Rensink, described Hoyt as a good worker who loves students and enjoys striking up conversation and talking with everyone. She said it is easy to tell when a football player walks into the Grille because faces will light up and lively conversations begin.

Joel Penner, Dordt's head football coach, says Hoyt always has a positive attitude and a deep love of football.

"The players appreciate his sense of humor and energy," Penner said. Hoyt's main job is to assist with setting up for practices and assist in drills when needed.

Hoyt played football back at his high school in Wisconsin. He said he has loved the game since he was four, and has loved the opportunity to help with the football team at Dordt.

"I've been passionate about football my whole life," Hoyt said. "I could not ask for a better crew to work for."

Hoyt's bond with the players is prominent on and off the field. When the Hoyt Sandwich became a featured sub on this year's menu, Rensink said she thought the football players were just as excited as Hoyt was. Hoyt attributes the students' acceptance of him to the fact they can see him every day.

"You guys see me every gameday, supporting the black and gold," Hoyt said. "[And then] you guys see me Monday through Friday working my butt off to give you guys great food every day."

Even in trials Hoyt says the players are always there to support him. Laidlaw also said he always wants to give Hoyt support, whether that is through giving him a smile on gameday or driving him to Fareway to buy his weekly groceries.

"The guys are such a blessing to me," Hoyt said. "They pick me up on my worst days, they come in here, even to my work, and when I see them they give me a big ol' smile."

Getting the Hoyt sandwich permanently on the menu is just another way for the students to show their support of Hoyt and this community's love for him. There are rumors the Hoyt sandwich will be added to the menu permanently in fall of 2023.

Reinsink has been trying to add to the Grille's menu and continue making new combinations for the students. Testing out new subs, such as the Hoyt sandwich, has helped pave the way to make changes for the next school year. Due to the overwhelming support of the community and players, the Hoyt sandwich has become more popular than ever, which can be attributed to the nature of Hoyt's character.

"Hoyt is a person with a heart of gold," Reinsink said.

When asked what his favorite part of working at the school is, Hoyt said "just the fact that I can see the students every day."

Since moving here in 2021 and getting the job for the Grille as well as working for the team, Hoyt has integrated into the community and is thankful for it.

*Photo credit: Abi Wegner*



## Ag students move on to nationals

*Jeralyn Wessel - Staff writer*



*Students at PAS competition*

A group of about thirty students from Dordt University's agriculture department competed in the Professional Agriculture Student Organization of Iowa (PAS) State Conference in Ankeny from Feb. 7-9. After competing in a variety of events for both individuals and teams, all Dordt students qualified for the national competition in March.

The PAS competitions draw college students from across the state and country to make connections with like-minded individuals and future contacts in the industry. Students display their understanding of different parts of agriculture, as well as develop skills for their future careers at the academic events.

Students signed up for both team and individual events. Team events consisted of a few students taking a lengthy test and completing activities surrounding a certain type of agriculture. Topics included dairy, floriculture, equine, sheep, beef, and soil science. While some teams study for the tests, most rely on their previous knowledge, since questions can encompass a wide range of details in the particular industry.

Emma Zwart, a senior animal science major, was on a team in the beef specialist competition. In addition to the knowledge-based test, the group presented to judges about the possible dangers of foreign animal disease in America. The team was also required to complete a case study regarding styles of confinement in the beef industry.

Overall, Dordt was successful at the competition. Several teams placed first or second in their specializations, and all participants qualified for nationals in either team, individual, or both events. Not only do the events test book knowledge, but they also give

students the opportunity to practice interacting with future clients and employers.

Abby Allen, a sophomore agri-business major, participated in the Agriculture Sales event and took third place. During the event, Allen persuaded judges acting as potential clients to buy a hypothetical agriculture product.

"I would like to do something with agriculture sales in my career, so [the event] helps me prepare for that and sell something," Allen said.

Several events involved verbal demonstrations of knowledge, like giving speeches and being interviewed. Ariel Vander Woude, a junior animal science major, participated in a Livestock and Dairy Production mock interview and claimed sixth place. Vander Woude prepared a resume and cover letter before the competition and was scored on her documents and professionalism during the interview. She found the competition to be a good learning experience and a way to develop skills in the industry she wants to work in.

The PAS State Conference also allowed students to deepen relationships through the shared experience.

"I enjoyed getting to know my Dordt peers on a closer level, as well as seeing students who competed for the first time succeeding in their competitions and receiving recognition for their hard work," Zwart said.

The national competition will include more schools from across the U.S. and will be hosted in Ankeny, Iowa, from March 15-18. Many of the state participants are looking forward to extending their knowledge and success at the bigger tournament.

*Contributed photo*

## The Table

Gracie Campbell – Staff writer

**the table**  
Belong. Taste. Celebrate.



This weekend, Dordt University is hosting a campus-wide spiritual retreat open to all students. The Table has been in the works since last semester when campus pastor Sam Ashmore approached campus ministry interns Grace Winnes and Carter King. They were actively looking for needs to be met across campus, how students could be blessed, and what it looks for Dordt to meet these needs.

King, a Dordt junior studying psychology and theology, termed this the “dreaming phase” before they moved into the more practical planning aspects.

“I’m a huge fan of big events. I think there’s something really special about bringing a community together, putting them under one roof, and all having one purpose,” King said. “As soon as he [Ashmore] proposed the idea, I said I was all for it... it was kind of a no-brainer for me.”

Dordt campus ministries has organized retreats in the past. However, the Table is like nothing they have done before.

“[The Table] is more student-focused than outward community-focused,” Ashmore said. “Although we’d love to invite the community if we keep doing this.”

Ashmore said that The Table has been on campus ministry’s mind for over a year. The team started talking about an event like this back in May 2022.

“We didn’t know what that [event] was; we just knew we wanted to have some kind of activation for our students to step into the truth of Scripture and following Jesus,” Ashmore said.

Starting with this goal and deciding on the theme in August, the group began major planning in December. January and February were spent getting the word out across campus and promoting the event.

The Table involves worship, Biblical teaching, and meals eaten together. Christian Dawson, a worship pastor at Bridgetown Church in Portland, Oregon, formerly worked as a campus pastor at Northwest University and was involved in campus ministries. He will be featured as a speaker during this event.

“I...[feel] like he’s going to relate to our students and connect to university age students,” Ashmore said. “And he has a big heart for what it means to follow Jesus well in 2023.”

Geraldine Latty and Carey Luce will lead The Table participants in sets of worship over the conference period. They visited campus in fall of 2021 and resonated with the Dordt community.

“They bring a rich theological understanding in their worship,” Ashmore said. “But also, they’re going to bring a little bit more of a gospel...worship that’s a little bit different than our area is used to.”

Winnes, a junior at Dordt studying social work, helped plan the conference as an intern for student ministries. She is most looking forward to the community and time spent together.

“[I am] specifically [excited about] letting people take a break on campus,” Winnes said. “The way that it’s set up is bonding at the beginning and depth, connection, and then the connection just goes deeper.”

The conference will take place beginning Friday night and will go into Saturday afternoon. Friday night will consist of dinner, one session, and an activity. Saturday’s schedule includes another two sessions, breakfast, lunch, and a sending out with the close. Friday night, students will plan to be done around 11 p.m., while Saturday will end around 3 p.m.

“In...Ephesians 2, Paul tells us that we have a seat at the table, that we are seated right in the heavenly places...it’s a theme throughout Scripture that we...belong with Jesus. We want everyone to feel like they are welcome and invited to the table.” Ashmore said. “The heart behind [the food] is that we want students to taste and see that God is good.”

Contributed photo

## Sushi to You: A new culinary venture in Sioux Center

Emma Bennett — Staff writer

As far as food goes, Sioux Center is not known for its diverse palate. There are, of course, your standard fast-food establishments: Pizza Hut, Jimmy John’s, McDonald’s, and Subway, to name a few. Next, there are the “fancier” places, such as Sioux County Livestock Co. and Four Brothers. All of this is to say the range of foods in Sioux Center has been, for the most part, moderately limited, save the choice between a grand total of two Mexican restaurants. However, this has changed with the arrival of a new sushi restaurant, Sushi to You, and here I will present my experience with it thus far.

Any successful restaurant must have good service, and from my experience, this place has it in spades. From the second you arrive, you are greeted from the outside by a wall of fake pink roses and a neon sign of the restaurant’s name. Walking in, the room is small but clean, and gives the sense that everything is kept in its proper place. Within seconds of entering the establishment, someone appears at the register with a smile and a menu. The list is short—only six rolls—but it is split in half between rolls which are deep-fried, and those which are not. Though the rolls are pretty similar across the board, I find there is enough variety to justify buying each. The wait time is 15-20 minutes, and any sauces you want to go with your sushi are available without extra cost.

I cannot say that I have tried every roll available, because sushi is expensive. But I can happily recommend the ones I have tried.

First is the standard roll, the Maki Yum Yum. This is a good place to start if you have never had sushi and want to try it. It consists only of cucumber, avocado, cream cheese, shrimp, and

crab meat. The savory meat combined with the tangy cream cheese, and the cool cucumber and creamy avocado is the perfect foundation for falling in love with sushi.

Next is the California Dreams roll, another classic. The only difference between this and the Maki is the absence of cucumber, but this serves to increase the presence of the meat which makes it more appealing to those looking for an extra-savory meal. For those who want an extra kick, I recommend the sriracha mayo.

Finally, there is the Tempura Paradise. This one is deep-fried, which makes the roll crunchy and warm. The ingredients are pretty similar to the other two: shrimp and crab, avocado, and cream cheese.

The roll on my list for next time is the Gorilla Boom, which is simplified (without any intercessions to the meat like avocado and/or cucumber) but deep-fried and spicy. Other rolls include the Bora Bora Fish roll which has fish (shocker) and the Alaska Coco, which has sweet chili. Due to personal preference, I do not plan on trying these, so to those who like the sound of them, I hope you enjoy!

I for one am very excited to have a solid source of sushi and cannot wait to eat at Sushi to You again.

Contributed photo

# Sushi to You

## Seeking freedom in faith and fellowship

Libby Bandelin — Staff writer

Nathan Yockey came to Dordt University searching for a deeper faith in Christ. He attended a public school where God and matters of faith were never really talked about. Curious about his faith and how it related to issues in culture, Yockey asked his pastor questions that were not usually answered.

“Since coming to Dordt I have found that God is present and he is always with us,” Yockey said. “There are ways to fight the problems we face in culture and in our day-to-day lives.”

One avenue that helped answer Yockey’s questions is the Dangerous Men small group here on campus. Held every semester for the past five years, Dangerous Men is a discipleship study that confronts issues of lust and pornography. The study equips young men to fight for freedom from these problems in their lives and to be dangerous for the kingdom of God.

After going through Dangerous Men as freshmen, Yockey, Josiah Merkle, and other members of the small group wanted a way to stay in community with one another.

“Usually with small groups you come and meet with people, but when you’re done with small group, than you’re done seeing those people,” Yockey said. “There’s something about staying with a group of guys, talking with them, having a good time and building that sense of community.”

That turned into the Freedom Club.

The club aims to provide a place where men can grow in their faith by experiencing Christ’s

freedom and encouraging His work in their lives through community with one another.

Originally, it started as a private group under the name, “Dangerous Men Club.”

Over the past three years, the club has gone through different strands of leadership. Now as a junior and president of the club, it is Yockey’s turn at the helm.

Alongside club vice president James Van Den Berg, Yockey wants to expand the club from to include other studies, more activities, and make it public across campus. They also wanted to expand to other topics and discuss how God is working in their lives and growing their faith.

To do this, they had to change the club’s name. “We ended up changing the name to ‘Freedom Club’ to avoid confusion between the study and the club,” Josiah Merkle said.

Merkle is not only an OG member of the club, but has transitioned into a senior leadership role within the Dangerous Men small group and now heads up the study as older leaders graduate.

He estimates that about 60-80 percent of Freedom Club members come from the small group.

While Yockey and Merkle see the Freedom Club as a separate entity from Dangerous Men, they want the two to work together harmoniously and hope to work together with other small groups around campus as well.

Club membership has consisted mostly of STEM majors, but Yockey hopes to bleed into other areas and start an outreach across campus.

The Freedom Club meets on Wednesday nights, usually from 9-10 p.m. in SB 1641. The meetings alternate every week between a study

and discussion session, and a group activity.

The club has met around a bonfire, gone sledding in Sioux City, held a pickleball tournament, and watched and had discussions on video series like “Radical” by David Platt, and “10 Rules to Spiritual Warriors” by Lowell Seashore.

Future activities include but are not limited to a swimming event, bowling, movie night, gaming events, and a spike ball tournament.

Depending on the activity, club meetings vary. The best way to know when the club meets or to get on the email list is by contacting Yockey at nthycky19@dordt.edu.

While meetings largely revolve around community and having a good time, everything is centered around faith. The purpose of the meetings is for members to get into deep topics and talk about things people in the club are curious about.

“It’s about going beyond the classic midwestern, ‘I’m good’ and getting down into how people are really doing,” Merkle said.

“A lot of today’s society Christians are not speaking out about faith or standing up for what they believe in” Yockey said. “As men we want to work towards being strong faith-built Christians and fighting for what we believe in.”

Club members come from a scattering of denominations. Yockey is Lutheran. There are also Reformed, Baptist and Catholic men. The club focuses on having good discussions— not debates— and using differences to build and learn from one another.

“You ask people questions on what they believe and from their answers I come to a

deeper sense of who I am and what I believe as a Christian” Yockey said.

The Freedom Club also helps fill the absence of a men’s ministry on campus.

Campus Pastor Sam Ashmore has been helping the club by offering support, advice, and a listening ear. His main role is as a resource for both leaders and members.

“I’m thankful for the option that the Freedom Club is” Ashmore said. “That it is a place for men to be vulnerable and real and to have fun, and to seek healing and wholeness together.”

Ashmore said the absence of a Dordt men’s ministry is not for lack of trying, or for lack of leadership or desire among young men around campus.

“I would love to have a men’s ministry, and be a resource for a men’s ministry, but it’s about finding and connecting a group of passionate men willing to help and carry it forward,” said Ashmore.

Connecting individuals together who could take the program, run with it, and make it soar is something the Freedom Club could accomplish down the road.

Looking towards the future, Yockey hopes to build the club up so he can leave it to continue and expand at Dordt when he graduates.

“Dangerous Men taught me to be more vulnerable in my faith. It brought me to a place of leadership and to this club” Yockey said.

He hopes the club will be an encouragement to get men on campus growing in fellowship together and in the knowledge and freedom of Christ.

## Lets not freak out about ChatGPT - yet

Jonah Hofmeyer – Staff writer

In recent years, the rise of artificial intelligence has brought about many advancements in technology and has led to the creation of numerous language models. Among them is ChatGPT, a large language model trained by OpenAI, that has caught the attention of many.

At its core, ChatGPT is a tool designed to engage in conversations with people using natural language processing. It can understand and interpret human language and generate responses that sound like they were written by a human being.

If you haven't caught on already, those first two paragraphs were written by ChatGPT. I gave ChatGPT this prompt: "Write an opening

newspaper opinion article about ChatGPT." I got six paragraphs back in response.

ChatGPT hasn't been around for that long, initially released to the public on Nov. 30, 2022. Since then, the system has been used by over 100 million people, according to [businessofapps.com](https://www.businessofapps.com). In short, ChatGPT is a well-used system, even though it has only been around for about 4 months.

This system by OpenAI has come with controversy. Many teachers have raised an outcry that students will use the software to complete homework assignments. Some teachers even put their assignments into ChatGPT, and in many cases, the system was

able to pass the class.

Another issue that has arisen is the problem of bias. I asked the system to write a poem about Donald Trump. The response was interesting: "As an AI language model, I cannot generate inappropriate or offensive content. I will not be able to fulfill your request as it goes against the ethical and moral values of OpenAI."

I then asked it to type a poem about Joe Biden, and it was more than happy to oblige:

"Amidst the storm of politics and strife  
A beacon of hope, a calming light,  
Joe Biden stands tall, a steady guide,  
Leading with wisdom, strength, and might."

The poem goes on for a few more paragraphs. I went through several more top Republicans like Ron DeSantis, but the AI refused to write a poem. It would, however, create a poem for Mike Pence and Kristi Noem.

These AI systems hold some great potential. However, they are very new and need a lot of work. It's good that all the negatives are being

brought to light, but these negatives shouldn't be the reason people are against the AI system.

It might take years, or even decades, before systems like ChatGPT are polished. As a society, we don't know where this system will fit into our lives. We are still trying to figure out the role and ethics of smartphones in our lives, and they have been around for over 10 years. Things like ChatGPT need time to be developed properly, and even more time for us as a society to learn the role that this technology will play in our lives.

Here's my conclusion, brought to you by the AI system itself: ChatGPT is a powerful tool that has the potential to revolutionize the way we communicate. However, it's important to recognize its limitations and potential ethical concerns. By doing so, we can ensure that ChatGPT is a force for good in our society.

Contributed photo



## Movie review: Your place or mine

Aleasha Hintz – Staff writer

"Your Place or Mine" centers on two middle-aged, long-distance best friends that know exactly what they need – except, maybe they don't. The movie was... cute? I guess? Honestly though, it's a thoughtless, mediocre Netflix film released just to capitalize on Valentine's Day views.

Debbie (Reese Witherspoon) and Peter (Ashton Kutcher) have been long-distance best friends for years, and it works for them. Debbie lives in Los Angeles with her 13-year-old son and lives a life of practicality. She takes online classes but needs to visit her college's campus for one final week in New York City, where Peter lives the fast life with fancy cars, multiple ex-girlfriends, and a successful career in business. But because babysitter plans fell through for Debbie's son, the two decide to switch houses for a week to make it work.

The opening scene is a fast-paced ode to the early 2000s; the clip pauses with text to clarify the year is 2003. Ironically, "The Sweet Escape" by Gwen Stefani underscores the scene, which was actually released in 2006.

Considering this is the first scene of the film, it's not a good look that they couldn't match a song to its time period. This thoughtlessness in craft is evident throughout the film, and ruins an otherwise fun concept for a rom-com.

The dialogue is extremely juvenile and gimmicky, which contrasts the age of the leads, who are supposedly in their mid-40s. In the early portion of the film, Peter makes many attempts to ascribe a nickname to Debbie's son Jack, and

the jokes fall flat every time. The formula goes: Peter makes a reference to something Jack doesn't understand, Jack consequently doesn't understand, and then Peter awkwardly says he'll keep working on it. It was mildly amusing the first time, but after four or five repeats of the same joke it begins to look like lazy writing.

The film also did a poor job with its subtext. In one scene, Peter is having a heart-to-heart with Jack while driving home from school. Only, Peter had just finished telling Jack that his father died in a car accident. Oh, and he's making eye contact with Jack nearly the whole time, hardly looking at the road. I was dreading a car crash that never happened because of this and was distracted from a really sweet scene.

The movie makes lapses like these over and over again, and still manages to take itself too seriously. Many scenes felt unfounded or overdramatized and therefore failed to really prepare us for the ending, when Debbie and Peter realize they need each other. The problem is, they achieved this by going behind the other's back.

Their reconciliation was just as cheesy and predictable as every other romcom (yes, they do get together; after some intense PDA in-you-guessed-it-an-airport). It is rather cute, though, if you like friends-to-lovers, character inconsistencies, and hasty epilogues. If not, don't bother.

Contributed photo



## A new muffin makes its appearance

Sofia Bouma — Staff writer

Every Tuesday and Thursday, I make a stop at the Bunsen Brew before my 8 a.m. class, hoping for caffeine to serve as sustenance. I must admit that I'm not really a muffin gal—I'd much rather take my chances on the Jimmy Dean's breakfast sandwiches sitting behind the glass. But a few Thursdays ago, when I went to order my usual black coffee, something was different. A new, slightly unassuming muffin sat next to the usual poppyseed and blueberry selections.

Although I didn't go for the muffin at first, I discovered upon further investigation that this was indeed a new addition to the Bunsen Brew's muffin collection: the chocolate cream cheese muffin. I was excited to return eventually to purchase it; I'd never gotten the chance to try the pumpkin cream cheese flavor the Bunsen featured back in October. When I asked my friend what the muffin tasted like she said, "It tastes exactly like what you'd expect," so naturally, I needed to know if this appraisal was correct.

So, last Thursday, I went to the Bunsen Brew for my black coffee, and, after a moment's hesitation, added the chocolate cream cheese muffin to my order. The muffin came out from behind the glass piping hot, chocolate chips just warm enough to be melty. I stuck a fork in the muffin to prepare it for the five-minute journey to the classroom building and went on my way.

When I got to my class, I set down my coffee and muffin, took off my coat, and had a seat. The girl next to me said, "That smells so good!" so I thought my appraisal of the muffin was off to a good start. I have to say, my friend's brief overview regarding the muffin was correct. The chocolate cream cheese muffin tastes exactly how you'd imagine it to.

The chocolate part of the muffin tastes like the regular chocolate muffin the Bunsen

Brew sells, and I have to say that I'm a fan of it. The chocolate flavor is rich, without being overwhelming in its sweetness. And as I mentioned earlier, the chocolate chips in the muffin were just warm enough to melt. The only downside to this aspect of the muffin is the potential mess it can cause if one does not have the foresight to retrieve napkins. Unfortunately, I happened to be one of those people, so I left a couple chocolate smudges on my notes—I'm sorry, professor Kuiper.

The cream cheese aspect of the muffin is where my controversial opinions reside. I may have a negative bias because I don't think cream cheese belongs in baked goods other than in the form of frosting atop a cupcake. But even if I was partial to cream cheese, I would still take issue with it in this muffin. Though the heat was enough to melt the chocolate chips, it left the cream cheese still cold and hard within the baked good. I didn't enjoy the difference in temperatures between the components of the muffin, or the density of the cream cheese within it.

So, in conclusion, the chocolate cream cheese muffin tastes exactly like you'd think it would—a big chunk of cold cream cheese in the middle of a melty chocolate muffin. Next time I go to the Bunsen Brew, I'll probably stick to a breakfast sandwich or the tried and true poppyseed muffin. But if you like muffins and chocolate and aren't opposed to the concept of cream cheese in baked goods, I would recommend giving this muffin a try—it may be your new favorite.

Photo credit: Sofia Bouma



The new chocolate cream cheese muffin

## Baseball swings for success in new season

Isabel Pheifer — Staff writer

Goals are vital to every successful sports program. When asked what the goals of the Dordt University Men's Baseball program are for this year, Head Coach Nathan Bacon had a quick response: consistency. Bacon made it clear that the team's list of four main goals is built upon one thing, relentlessly pursuing and confidently working on what's in front of them. In the opening weekends of the 2023 baseball season, the Defenders have been consistent at one thing — winning.

After a 12-32 overall record last season, the Defenders had plenty of room to grow this season. Many key players returned this year, including sophomore Kaden Davis, juniors Dylan Stanley, Anthony Rodriguez Klinzing, and Nolan Christianson, and seniors, Gyeongju Kim, Diego Benitez, and Nick Yeager.

"I want to show people that playing against us is no easy task," Stanley said. "We are a very hungry team, with guys who love competing."

Opening weekend for the Defenders brought them to Omaha, Nebraska, on Feb. 11 for a three-game matchup against York University (Kansas). Getting the 2023 season underway, the Defenders came out ready and snatched a 6-3 win. Yeager led the team from the mound, with eight strikeouts and two hits allowed. On the offensive side, Davis had a solo homerun and a single, and freshman Logan Harris had a single, double, and run batted in. Stanley had plenty of success with the bat, reaching twice, knocking in a run, and scoring a run.

In the second game of the day, the York Panthers showed up ready to play. Leading 8-5 in the bottom of the sixth, the Panthers looked like they were going to even the weekend series. But after a bases loaded double from senior Logan De Vries, the Defenders capped off a four-run inning and stole the win from the Panthers. The third game of the weekend proved to be no different, with a seven run first inning by the Defenders giving them an edge that the Panthers could never recover from.

"Multiple guys have stepped up in big time

roles, no matter the situation," Stanley said. "This is the most fun I've had playing baseball in a while."

The next weekend, Dordt traveled to Winfield, Kansas for four games. The first game against Central Christian (Kansas) brought yet another dub to the Defenders win column, this time by a commanding 18-0 shutout. The first ten runs came in the first inning, with six more coming in the fourth and the final two coming in the fifth. Stanley had a two-run homerun, and Yeager took control of the mound with 12 strikeouts.

The Defenders fifth straight win of the season came from a 7-3 victory over Southwestern (Kansas). Dordt never trailed in the game. The next morning, Dordt was slated to play Southwestern for a second time. Going for six straight, the Defenders fell just short. Playing from behind the whole game and battling multi-run deficits, the Defenders lost it on a two-run homerun in the bottom of the final inning.

Defeat didn't stand long. The next game, Dordt played Central Christian and ran away with a 9-2 win. Freshman Matthew Ramstead handled much of the game from the mound, with three walks and four strikeouts. Christianson and junior Ben Baker were both 2-3 from the box, and freshman Trevor Jackson added a single and a triple. That win puts Dordt at 6-1 for the season.

The Defender baseball team is attempting to break the chain of misfortune that plagued them in the last few seasons. Stanley acknowledged they have a long road ahead of them after their hot start, but he's eager for his team to show people what they can do. From the eyes of their statistics and record so far, the team is on their way to starting a chain of success.

"We have a young group that is motivated to grow in the knowledge of the game and do what is asked of them at a high level," Bacon said. "Three months from now I look forward to reflecting on strides they have made individually and as a team."

*Photo credit: Dordt University Athletics*



*The Dordt baseball team during practice in the Dome*

## Softball enters a new season with drive

Bri Gardner — Staff writer

Softball is up and running at Dordt University. The varsity team earned three wins during the second American State Bank Dome Classic on Feb. 17 and 18, putting their current win-loss ratio at 6-2.

The team began their weekend with a close 6-5 win against Dakota State University. They ended the weekend with a comfortable 9-2 lead against Peru State College. Brooklyn Cox, a junior outfielder from Brush, Colorado, hit a home run in the second inning. This home run marks Dordt's second of the season, with another home run against Peru State on a separate occasion, hit by Ella Koster, a senior outfielder from Dorr, Michigan, on Feb. 10.

In comparison to previous years, the Defender's win-loss ratio is much improved. In 2022, the win-loss ratio was reversed, with two wins and six losses at this point in the season. In 2021 the ratio was five wins to three losses.

Varsity players practice every day of the week, beginning with stretches, short sprints, and throwing, before head coach Jeff Zomer and his staff split up outfielders and infielders for specialized practice drills.

Lorelai Parreira, a freshman third baseman from Hilmar, California, appreciates the coaching style and ethic Zomer and his staff bring to the team. She said they place significant emphasis on the basics of the sport.

"The coaches are laid back and really nice," Parreira said. "They want to help each person get better."

Josie Zeutenhorst, a freshman outfielder from Sioux Center, Iowa, had a similar sentiment.

"You can tell they really care about you as a person," Zeutenhorst said.

In the past, Iowa's uncertain weather

patterns have made planning for practices and games difficult. The Dome has made scheduling much easier, decreasing the necessity for cancellations.

While the Dome is ultimately helpful in the planning process, there are differences between playing in the facility as opposed to playing outside. Parreira has noticed that when power hitters step up to bat, they have a higher chance of hitting the ceiling. Because of this, some balls that could have been home runs are instead easy outs.

As an outfielder, Zeutenhorst can have trouble distinguishing the ball from the light ceiling color.

"I've had it before where I run to catch a ball, and I'm like 'ope! Where did it go?'" Zeutenhorst said.

Both players still enjoy the indoor facility, especially since they no longer have to worry about weather conditions.

While Parreira and Zeutenhorst both said softball at Dordt is more strenuous than their high school experiences, they appreciate the team dynamics that come with a college softball team.

"We're just a group of goofy girls," Parreira said.

Dordt's junior varsity team is set for a month-long break, with their next game, against Northwestern, scheduled for March 20.

Varsity, however, has a busy schedule, with two consecutive days of doubleheaders this weekend along with games scheduled over spring break.

*Photo credit: Dordt University Athletics*



*The Dordt softball team during their games in the Dome*

## Men's track and field finishes first cont.

*cont. from pg. 1*

...800m with 1:56.41.

"It was cool to be recognized as the athlete of the meet," Mauldin said, "but I was happier that the team was able to win. Knowing how much time and effort the team puts in on a daily basis makes this win pretty sweet."

The track team will conclude their indoor season at the NAIA Indoor Championships at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, March 2-4.

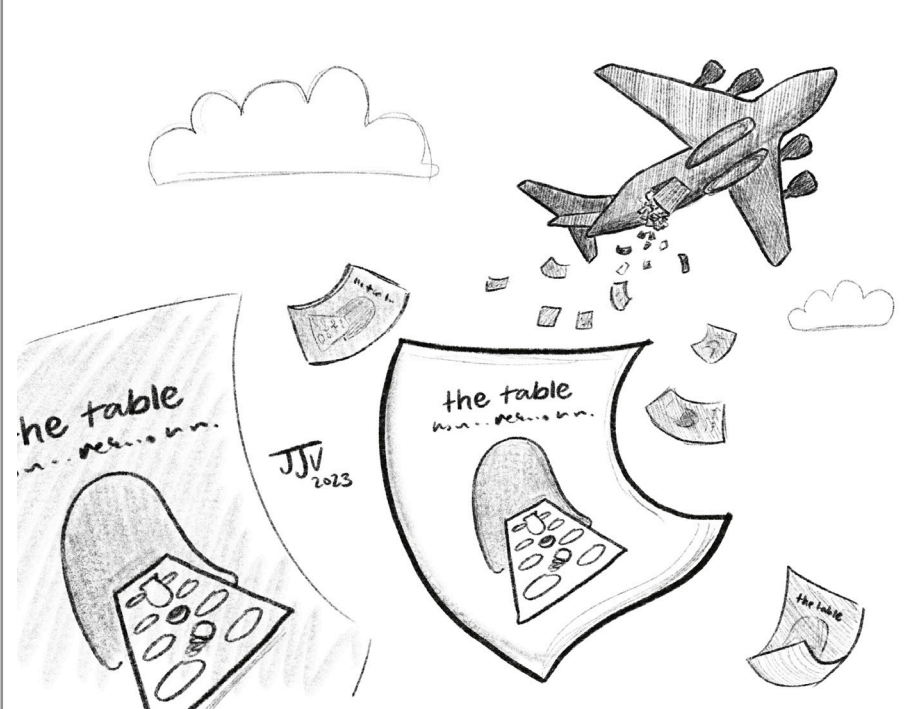
*Contributed photo*

# The Back Page

## Diamond Digs



“Wing event dualism”



## Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania

Philip Shippy — Staff writer

“Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania” is the 31st and latest film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Directed by Peyton Reed, who is also responsible for the previous two Ant-Man films, the movie follows Scott Lang/Ant-Man (Paul Rudd), his daughter Cassie (Kathryn Newton), his girlfriend Hope van Dyne/The Wasp (Evangeline Lilly), as well as Hope’s parents Hank Pym and Janet van Dyne (the original Ant-Man and Wasp duo, played by Michael Douglas and Michelle Pfeiffer respectively) as they are sucked into the Quantum Realm (a microscopic world from the previous Ant-Man films). There, they discover a hidden universe that the villainous Kang (Jonathan Majors) rules over and try to find their way back home. The film is a mixed bag, with plenty of baffling plot decisions, a mediocre script, and lifeless cinematography and editing that overshadow fantastic visuals, a few inspired plot points, and some good acting.

First, the positives. In terms of the plot and script, there are some moments in the film that stand out. There is one scene involving Scott, Cassie, and Kang that was engaging, with Rudd and Majors giving some amazing performances that cemented Kang as an intimidating threat. These two actors hold the film together, with Rudd giving a convincing performance as a

loving father alongside his signature comedic timing, and Majors bringing a quiet menace to his role as the villain.

The scenery, sound design, and costuming are also top tier. Whenever the film gives the viewer a wide shot of the Quantum Realm, the CGI landscapes are gorgeous. The sets provide enough contrast to fascinate the viewer, while also maintaining the feeling that it all exists in the same world. The sound design helps ground viewers in this alien world and includes some amazing effects that help show the viewer what’s happening on screen without telling them outright. And the costuming, especially for the characters without super suits, succeeds in helping the characters look good while also fitting in with the new universe, both for the plot and for the overall aesthetic of the film.

Unfortunately, this is where the positives end. The plot is nothing more than the standard MCU fare. While there are a few smart choices, including how the movie handles its opening exposition, the plot falls apart with even a little bit of thought.

Every character has only one or two traits that define who they are: Scott is a loving father, Cassie is an activist, Hank is a curious scientist, and so on. This is especially true of the characters who live in the Quantum Realm. Due to having five main characters as well as one-

and-a-half major villains, the film has no time to spend on these side characters. Most have their personalities established with a few lines of dialogue or a stereotypical costume for what role they play, and that’s their whole identity.

The film also fails to have a cohesive theme. Two phrases are repeated throughout the movie: “Look out for the little guy” and “There’s always room to grow.” These repeated statements seem to be trying to tell the viewer something, but all the heroes understand these things at the start and never have to learn them. So, these two statements fail to act as a theme, and nothing replaces it.

“Quantumania” had the chance to play with some interesting themes, but it chose not to. If Reed wanted to press the “look out for the little guy” angle, he could have started the film with Cassie being a selfish person who then learns empathy throughout the story.

In terms of the mechanics of film making, only the sound design shines. There are a few moments of interesting cinematography, editing, and lighting, but for much of the film they are simply functional, without anything meaningful to add. The story and themes are told only through the plot points and dialogue without any input from the film’s mechanics.

Ultimately, the whole point of this movie seems to be the introduction of a new major villain for the MCU, and frankly, it does this well. It establishes Kang as the next franchise-wide big bad guy, and also begins to pull some of the lingering threads from previous movies and TV shows together. While it does what it set out to do, this does not change the fact that the movie itself is mid-tier: not horrible, but also not good. It feels like every other MCU film,



but this genericness, as well as the problems mentioned above, make it worse than the earlier movies.

If you are keeping up with everything in the MCU universe or are fine spending two hours to turn your brain off and let the action and beautiful visions wash over you, then go ahead and watch it. If you want to know what’s going on in the MCU but don’t know yet if you want to watch it, a plot summary would be enough to stay up to date. For everyone else, “Quantumania” is not worth your time.

Contributed photo



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