Students on NW campus and around the world struggle with how their sexual orientation interacts with their faith.

Are we OK with gay?

Viewing faith and sexual identity at NW

**BY BRIAN BRANDAU**

**FEATURES EDITOR**

Junior Ryan Rydberg is gay.

Rydberg said he came to this realization this past summer, but he’s been wrestling with questions about his sexual orientation for nearly a decade.

“I started noticing that I had different feelings than a lot of people when I was 11 or 12,” Rydberg said. “I kept telling myself, ‘This is my home town of Arthur, and I can break this down. I can push this aside.’”

The feelings never subsided. In high school in his home town of Arthur, Iowa, he had a couple of girlfriends and described himself as a typical kid but continued to feel different.

Many students have observed a tension between homosexuality and Christian doctrine, so Rydberg knew his decision to attend a Christian college would have profound implications for their orientation, but Rydberg had a different experience.

“For two years, Rydberg said he struggled with how to react to the feelings he had. “I alternated between hating myself for what I felt and hating God for what he felt about my sin,” Rydberg said. “Finally, I decided that he can love me through this if he sees it as a sin.”

The turning point for Rydberg came last year, when the student-led Gay Support Group (GSG) decided to show a film called “The Bible Tells Me So,” which chronicles different views on homosexuality within the Christian community. The documentary advocates for greater tolerance of those who have a homosexual orientation.

“It gave me a lot of hope,” Rydberg said. “I could say, ‘I can do this. This is alright.’”

He was discouraged by his family’s initial reaction when he told them this past summer.

“They actually held an intervention for me,” Rydberg said. “But now, rather than treating me like this horrible creature that’s defying God, they’re starting to treat me as a person and a son of God.”

“I alternated between hating myself for what I felt and hating God for what He felt about my sin.” —Junior Ryan Rydberg

Rydberg found his friends at NW to be more supportive. Many of them were not surprised and Rydberg believed that his relationship with most of them changed minimally.

**Principles and policies**

Most professing gays and lesbians at NW do not experience any institutional consequences for their orientation, but Rydberg had a different experience. Last year, Rydberg was selected to be a resident assistant in the North Suites but was asked to step down when he came out this summer.

Rydberg did not feel wronged by the administration, however. He was quick to affirm that the situation was complicated, and the administration was under great pressure as well.

“They requested that I step down, and I accepted that because I understood that it would be tense for everyone involved,” Rydberg said. “I’m not bitter. I would not have been emotionally ready for some of the issues that would have come up.”

Dean of Student Affairs John Brogan could not comment on Rydberg’s employment situation because of employee confidentiality concerns, but he did share the college’s position on homosexuality.

“Our policy on sexual activity is that we recognize that the only appropriate expression of sexual intimacy is between a man and a woman in heterosexual marriage,” Brogan said. “We would expect our student leaders to be able to follow, support and enforce the college’s standards and policies.

**Guys, girls rage against the razor**

**BY KAMERON TOEWS**

Lumberjack men and women of yore realized long ago that nothing keeps a flannelled body as warm in the blistery month of November as body hair.

This November, many Northwestern students joined their ax-wielding neighbors in refraining from shaving. For some, the resulting facial or leg hair has grown lush like a wild thick shrub, while others’ hair can be seen gently glistening only in a rare magical moment when the sun reflects at just the right angle off the subtle blonde stubble.

December is here and for many, that hair has already been washed down the drain. Clean faces and smooth legs are once again vulnerable to the slicing winter winds, allowing a time of reflection for those who once said no to the razor.

For many students, the act of not shaving is a communal act that brings the residence halls together. Men typically shave a few hours before November begins and then wait until December 1 to shave again, often standing together around sinks. Some women, like junior Jenna White, do the same.

“It kind of turned into a college tradition for me. I go the entire month without shaving, and then I sit in the hallway and wax,” White said.

Fern makes a dorm activity of not shaving and goes about the feat in a slightly different way with no-shave Noctober.

“In Fern, we start no-shave right after midterm break and then have a waxing and shaving party the Monday before Thanksgiving break,” said senior Charissa Thornton. “There’s food, homemade wax and always a few nervous girls.”

Despite the nerves, some girls on campus enjoy the event as a bonding experience.

“It is a fun thing that girls can do together,” said junior Sophomore Ethan Raysby and junior Taylor Biggs were participants in No-Shave November this year.
North boys would merry Christmas

BY JOCELYN VAN DYKE
Finding the perfect Christmas gift for friends and loved ones can be a challenge. But this year, junior Jeremy Bork and sophomore Josh Hollinger, along with freshmen Noah Hollinger and Taylor Johnston have provided an easy and affordable solution.

Over the past month, the quartet, along with other North Suites residents, have been working on a Christmas album titled “I Would Merry Christmas If I Could.”

“A month ago, three of my friends and I recorded a song just for the fun of it,” Bork said. “Then we decided to make a Christmas album. We are recording covers of Christmas songs, and there are also a few originals.”

Bork, who has been recording music for almost three years, is heading up the musical operation. With over a dozen songs recorded so far and over a dozen people contributing, the album promises not to disappoint listeners.

“I think a lot of people will be surprised with [the album],” Noah Hollinger said. “I feel like it’s a pretty high quality product. It shows a lot of different styles of music from dance, to classical, to acoustic, to rock and even some things that are completely ridiculous.”

As far as a favorite song goes, Josh Hollinger says it’s hard to choose because there are so many different people and genres involved.

“If I had to mention one, I’d say Jeremy Bork’s ‘From the Pole to the Suites,’” Josh Hollinger said. “It’s his original, and our goal is to get the song played at Winter Formal. We even have a dance to go with it.”

Johnston enjoys the atmosphere that goes with recording and putting the album together. He says he first got involved for the fun that the project offered.

“We have a lot of musically talented people in North, and it’s been fun to see them come together to work on the album,” Johnston said.

With the mix of people included, the album needed a unique title as well.

“Zhao and I were sitting in our room late one night thinking of a title,” Johnston said. “He wanted to come up with a play on words, and he came up with ‘I Would Merry Christmas If I Could.’”

For these guys, putting an album together is more than just sharing Christmas songs. It’s about sharing the Christmas spirit.

“We are doing this so we can raise money for [the charity] Angel Tree,” Bork said. Angel Tree provides Christmas gifts to children who otherwise might miss out on gifts.

Albums will be on sale in the Caf Dec. 5-12 for $5. After the 12th, they will be sold for $7.

• No one in Zwemer runs the music. It’s all operated by a computer system set up and totally run by the LRC.
• Three speakers placed in the bell tower blast the music across the campus. The speakers are covered in a weather-resistant sealant to protect them from the cold winter elements.
• Instead of a CD left on repeat, the computer runs a playlist specially made by a Pandora-like website for the season. The same website offers playlists for other holidays, such as Easter.
• No one has succeeded in ambushing the speakers.

Little-known facts about the Zwemer Christmas Music

Zwemer knows how to bring on the Christmas cheer with not just lights, but music as well.

PHOTO BY BOB LATCHAW
PHOTO SUBMITTED

Three cheers for ‘The Muppets’

BY MICHAEL GUTSCHEN
The Muppets’ newest movie was exactly what it should have been—ridiculous, tongue-in-cheek, full of pointless cameos and pop culture jokes and far more enjoyable than it really has any right to be.

The plot is the same mostly absurd but somewhat touching fare that the Muppets have always used, and thankfully, their humor remains completely intact.

There are few movies that are this willing to make this many jokes about their own existence or musical numbers.

There can’t be enough emphasis on the singing. The songs stick in the mind and make everything better—exactly the way that microphone feedback doesn’t. They’re well-written, well-sung, well-choreographed.

They’re just good.

Even Tex Richman does a song about how great it is to be evil and rich. That scene is probably one of the best things feeding the hungry eyes of moviegoers this year.

It’s a Muppet tradition to just get as many celebrities or Hollywood-types involved in their movies as possible. It always seems like the movie industry throws a few parties now and then, and these either result in an “Ocean’s Eleven” sequel or a Muppet movie.

But despite the constant appearances of a bunch of people that honestly have no business being in the movie, and despite how little Muppet movies are business-like, it was deeply offensive that there was very little attention paid to Rizzo. The rats showed up in about two scenes, but only for big montages or musical numbers, and didn’t actually get any lines. Come on. That’s not even ok.

But overall, “The Muppets” is a great film. See it and see it again.

BY KATI HENG

Zwemer knows how to bring on the Christmas cheer with not just lights, but music as well.

PHOTO BY BOB LATCHAW

Christmas songs we’d love to hear blasted out of Zwemer

BY KATI HENG

1. Candy Cane Children by The White Stripes
2. Jesus Saves, I Spend by St. Vincent
3. Merry Christmas, Baby by Otis Redding
4. Christmas Time is Here by Vince Guaraldi Trio
5. Christmas Is by Run-DMC

“Give us the dough on Christmas, yo!” I can’t think of any catchy rap lyrics about Christmas.

PHOTO BY BOB LATCHAW

Christmas sweets.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Top 5 Christmas songs we’d love to hear blasted out of Zwemer

BY KATI HENG

1. Candy Cane Children by The White Stripes
2. Jesus Saves, I Spend by St. Vincent
3. Merry Christmas, Baby by Otis Redding
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**Beards invade**

FROM PAGE 1
Corrine Muyskens. “We all get kind of grossed out by it, but since everyone’s doing it, it makes it easier and more fun—plus it keeps our legs warmer.”

The commitment not to shave for an entire month can be intimidating for some. Oddly-placed puffs of beard or sharp, black hair growing on pasty white calves can be difficult to display in public.

However, Coly resident, junior Bryant Slagter found some important benefits in it.

“I think many people are too scared to grow out their facial hair because they think it takes a certain kind of person to have a beard, but that’s not true,” Slagter said.

Muyskens felt the pressure not just from family, but also because her pasty white calves were not up to par with her dorm mates.

“I actually got made fun of by other girls who were doing it because my legs weren’t as hairy as theirs,” Muyskens said.

Growing the fullest beard or bushiest legs summons a deep sense of pride, as bizarre as the title may seem.

Participants of No-Shave November or Noctober have more obstacles to face besides the scratchy skin and barbaric appearance; they also have to answer to those who do not understand why the razor has been tucked away all month.

“Some people are really grossed out by women’s long leg hair,” Thornton said.

“When I tell people that I can feel the wind in my leg hair, they look at me weird.”

Muyskens had to agree with Thornton.

“My dad thinks it is kind of gross, but I just respond by saying that he never shaves his legs,” Muyskens said.

Muyskens felt the pressure not just from family, but also because her pasty white calves were not up to par with her dorm mates.

“I actually got made fun of by other girls who were doing it because my legs weren’t as hairy as theirs,” Muyskens said.

Growing the fullest beard or bushiest legs summons a deep sense of pride, as bizarre as the title may seem.

Coly RA junior Tyler Zeutenhorst said he participates in No-Shave November partly because, “I want to see what I am capable of by man’s standards.”

A month free of shaving allows many NW students to fight the idea that women are supposed to be hairless while men are supposed to be able to grow beards.

“I think it’s attractive because it’s unattractive,” Muyskens said. “People are pretty grossed out by it, so it is just a fun thing to do—a month to break the norm.”

White believes No-Shave provides a chance to relive history and question the culture of today.

“I think many of us choose to do No-Shave November or Noctober to embrace what was natural and to defy what has become ‘normal,’” White said.

Perhaps some agreed to a month of not shaving to make a social statement, but many participated simply because it showed some unique way of connecting to their dorms.

Toward the end of November, Zeutenhorst was already looking forward to December 1, the day he could shave.

“Creativity is everything when it comes to shaving with my furry brothers,” Zeutenhorst said.

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**Christmas cookie secrets revealed**

**BY LYRIC MORRIS**

Those who have spent part of their lives in a small, kitchen less dorm can attest to the power of a plate of warm and gooey cookies.

Northwestern students, faculty and staff have warmed up their ovens to begin baking coveted holiday treats for this season, and they’ve shared some of their best secrets on making the perfect Christmas cookies:

- “My mom and I always add a box of vanilla instant pudding mix to our dough. It gives the cookies an extra dash of sweetness and keeps them moist and melty.” from freshman Mica Graves

- “I make a batch of frosting, divide it and give each bowl a unique color and flavor. Red is usually peppermint or cinnamon, green is spearmint and maple gives a nice sublety to white.” from junior Linden Figgie

- “Always assemble your ingredients beforehand. You don’t want to have to run to the store. And follow the recipe—if it says ‘cold butter,’ there’s a reason. Never use light margarine—it’s too watery, and you’ll need to add extra flour.” from Sodexo employee Kathy Menzlering

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considered the possibility that she was a lesbian this summer. She had never known, “Giesen said.

Brogan further said that the college’s position reflects the Reformed Church in America’s position and that the school is trying to walk a fine line. “I would say that we are attempting to balance between what we see to be a biblical understanding of sexuality and sexual practice along with the reality of our current social situation,” Brogan said. “On the one hand, we are not going to be a school where a Christian homosexual is going to feel fully embraced and encouraged to follow their sexual inclinations and feelings. “On the other hand, we want to be a place where a Christian homosexual can at least try to understand how to respond to his or her sexual orientation means with regards to her faith.

“The way that I’ve concluded is that it is a sin, but I don’t think it’s any more of a sin than anything else mentioned in the Bible,” Giesen said. “As long as I put my faith first and my love of God above anything else, I think it’s easily forgiven if I really mean it when I ask for forgiveness.”

Rydberg also believes that his Christian identity comes before his identity as a gay man. “The fact that I’m gay is secondary. The way that I live my life is more important than who I am in my life,” Rydberg said. “The gay community is often considered sinful because it’s seen as very promiscuous, but if I carry myself in a Christ-like manner, then I think I’m OK.”

Since he came to school this year, Rydberg has been meeting weekly with his former RD and the current director of service learning, Seth Currier. “He and I meet on a regular basis about spiritual formation as I deal with my sometimes conflicting views,” Rydberg said.

Currier could not divulge the specifics of their discussions, but he did want to make it clear that students at NW will always have a place to turn, regardless of what questions they’re wrestling with. “Any student who wants to be mentored and is looking for someone can be,” Currier said. “That’s why everyone who works at this college is here. We care about students. That’s why I do this job.”

Senior Greta Floding is the founder and head of the GSG. For Floding, the support of gay and lesbian students by their peers is of great importance. “You’re not going to be in a more loving community than this. This is a good time and a good place to accept it.” Sophomore Brielle Giesen

“What I really focused on in the beginning was creating a safe place for people to come and talk,” Floding said. “Especially on this campus, it’s difficult to be open. We actually had a member come out to us. They hadn’t come out to their family. They hadn’t come out to their friends. I was honored to provide a place for that to happen.”

Floding also believes that education of issues pertaining to the lesbian, gay, bisexual... Continued on next page
FROM PAGE 4

and transsexual (LGBT) community is important.

“Three point five percent of the population is gay, which means that more than one student at NW is,” Floding said. “LGBT teens are three to seven times more likely than their peers to commit suicide. No matter what you believe, that is just wrong for a group of people to feel so down about themselves.”

Difficult questions

The college does not observe the GSG as a campus club because of the Reformed Church’s position on homosexuality, but Floding said she acknowledged the difficulties faced by those in the administration.

“It is really hard,” Floding said. “I know I’ve made it difficult for them. What I really wanted to stress with this group is tolerance. I’d really like them to say they support us. We don’t have a stance on whether it’s a sin or not. We are solely based on support.”

Brogan acknowledged, however, that support is a difficult issue when it comes to a Christian campus’s attitude towards its gay and lesbian members.

“A student can self-identify as a homosexual and remain a student here,” Brogan said. “But at that point, as an institution, we’re not going to affirm them in pursuing their sexual desires, and that doesn’t seem to be very welcoming or safe. How do you live within that paradox?”

Brogan said the college is enforcing what it views to be a biblical position on sexuality and many students find scriptural claims to be clear-cut when it comes to homosexuality.

“I believe that homosexuality is sinful, because God designed sexuality for marriage between a man and a woman,” said sophomore Josh Hollinger. “I understand it’s a tough issue that we shouldn’t handle judgmentally or flippantly, but I definitely believe that in light of Scripture, homosexuality is sinful.”

Hollinger also resonated with the college’s decision to enforce standards of sexual orientation in its selection of student leaders.

“As a Christian college, NW has to practice what it professes to stand for as an institution,” Hollinger said. “For students who are openly gay or lesbian, while I don’t think they should be kicked out, it would seem inappropriate to place such students in positions of leadership or ministry. I realize to some people that sounds bigoted and discriminatory, but our school needs to stand for truth and act consistently with its policies.”

Even so, Hollinger said that the appropriate approach for dealing with gays and lesbians is not one of spite or malice.

“As students, we should react to openly homosexual students in one way: With love,” Hollinger said. “It’s loving for us to condescendingly look down on people who profess or struggle with homosexuality, as if we don’t have our own struggles or we’ve made ourselves righteous? No. If homosexuality is sinful, is it loving for us to tell people they are designed to be homosexual and they can never change? No.”

Brogan, Hollinger and Gross all drew a distinction between homosexual identity and practice.

Hollinger and Gross both believed that homosexual tendencies might very well come naturally as a result of the fall and that students who have such tendencies should be encouraged to fight them and be given support while doing so.

“As students we should relate with openly homosexual tendencies,” Gross said. “For students who struggle with homosexual desires may find help, love and grace as they try to ward off temptation. One’s sexuality should not affect how they are treated by others. How that sexuality is expressed becomes the issue.”

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“If homosexuality is sinful, is it loving for us to tell people they are designed to be homosexual and they can never change? No.” -Junior Josh Hollinger

Many students acknowledge that the question of how a Christian college campus should relate with openly gay and lesbian students is not a clear-cut one. Brogan believes that, regardless of students’ personal convictions on the issue, sensitivity is necessary.

“I understand that at this time in students’ lives they may still be trying to understand who they are as a sexual person, and that there’s still a lot of self-identity questions that are being formed and explored,” Brogan said. “A student who is still saying, ‘I have these mixed feelings towards members of the same sex,’ I would hope that we can provide a place where they can have those conversations in a safe environment.”
Women split with conference foes

BY TOM WESTERHOLM

The Northwestern women’s basketball team split their last two games, winning at home Wednesday night against Mount Marty and losing on the road on Nov. 22 against Morningside.

The Raiders defeated the Lancers of Mount Marty 63-57 at the Bultman Center. Junior forward Kendra De Jong led the Raiders with 23 points on 11-18 shooting, while senior guard Kami Kuhlmann added 18 points and six assists, going 3-7 from the arc.

Sophomore Sam Kleinmann was also a scoring presence in the post, putting in 14 points of her own. The first half was low-scoring, as NW went to the locker room leading 27-24. Late in the second, Mount Marty pulled to within four, but never got closer, as NW extended the lead to nine, 61-52, then held on for the win.

As a team, the Raiders won the rebounding battle substantially, beating Mount Marty 44-33. The Raiders also forced three more turnovers, 13-10.

NW looked to gain most of their points closer to the basket throughout the game, but still shot a respectable 36 percent from three-point land.

The Raiders improved to 5-4 overall and 2-2 in the GPAC. NW fell to Morningside 68-52 on Nov. 22 in Sioux City. At the time, the matchup was between the No. 1 and No. 2 teams in the nation. NW has since been knocked out of the top 25 and Morningside has dropped to No. 13.

The first half was low-scoring, as NW went to the locker room leading 27-24. Late in the second, Mount Marty pulled to within four, but never got closer, as NW extended the lead to nine, 61-52, then held on for the win.

Kuhlmann led the Raiders with 15 points, including 2-6 from three-point range. De Jong led the Raiders with nine rebounds.

“Overall it was a battle, like it usually is when you play Morningside,” De Jong said. “In the second half when they hit some big threes, and we had unanswered points. They did a good job of attacking at the end of the game, knowing a lot of us were in foul trouble.”

De Jong and sophomore Alli Dunkelberger had to finish the game on the bench after reaching their limit in fouls.

NW out-rebounded Morningside 38-31, but the Raiders shot a meager seven free throws as a team, while the Mustangs went to the line 31 times, making 27 of those attempts. NW also struggled from the three-point line, making just 6 of 22 in a game that was mostly a battle of defenses.

“We never gave up,” Kuhlmann said. “We never really felt like we were behind, and I felt like we competed very well. I think a lot of what hurt us is the amount of turnovers we had. On defense, they did a good job of pressuring us. They play an in-your-face defense that we didn’t handle well at times.”

NW was forced into 31 turnovers and managed only 15 assists. Morningside coughed the ball up only 16 times.

The Raiders next game is Saturday against Nebraska Wesleyan, and it will be played in Lincoln, Neb.

Raiders taste first defeat of season

BY MICHAEL SIMMELINK

The men of No. 8 Northwestern recovered from their first loss of the year against No. 16 Morningside before righting the ship with an 80-76 victory at home against Mount Marty on Wednesday night.

Against Mount Marty, all five of the NW starters reached double figures as the Raiders held off a late Lancer comeback to improve to 8-1 (3-1) on the season.

Junior Daniel Van Kalsbeek led the offensive attack with 21 points. Fellow junior and big man in the paint Stu Goslinga added 19 points while going 8-12 from the field goal. Sophomore Zack Leeper dropped 14 points despite going 0-6 from the three-point range.

From the guard spots, senior Jon Kramer scored 11 points, dished out seven assists and ripped down seven rebounds. Junior Ben Miller was also in double figures with 10 points, and led the whole squad with nine boards.

Leeper believes the contribution by the starters is enhanced by the chemistry the entire squad has.

“Our team is so close,” Leeper said. “It really is a brotherhood on our team.”

The Raiders shot 53 percent from the field, with many shots being taken in the paint. They were less successful from beyond the arc, making only two of their 14 attempts.

NW led by as much as 14 in the second half, but Mount Marty was down only three points with 30 seconds left. The Lancers’ potential tying bucket did not fall, and NW held on for the win.

On Nov. 22, NW dropped their contest to Morningside 102-88. Despite a career best game by Goslinga, who scored 33 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, the Mustangs shot 53 percent on field goals and had 61 points contributed by four bench players.

“We weren’t prepared mentally,” Leeper said. “We came out flat in the first half, and in the second half we just plain got beat.”

Miller was next in line with points and boards, with 16 and seven, respectively. Leeper dropped 13 points.

Going into the locker room only down by six, the Raiders kept the game close until the midpoint of the second half, in which a Mustang run made the gap 82-69 with seven minutes left. NW’s last ditch attempt at a comeback was thwarted by Morningside’s shotting.

The Raiders were out-rebounded 33-31 on the contest, which was the first time this year they had found themselves behind on the rebounding margin.

NW will look to continue their roll as they travel this Saturday to Lincoln, Neb., to play Nebraska Wesleyan. Then currently undefeated No. 5 Dordt comes to town for a Wednesday night matchup in the Bultman.

“We want to be aggressive in our next games,” Leeper said. “We want to shut down key players and make the other team’s bench and role players step up.”

NW wrestling squad falls short, still looking for milestone victory

BY TOM WESTERHOLM & MICHAEL SIMMELINK

No. 3 Grand View defeated Northwestern 37-7 on Thursday night in a non-conference dual.

Only three matches ended in pins on the night, and many of the matches were closely contested well into the third period.

Senior Matt Dowell got the Raiders on the board with his 4-1 victory at 141-lbs.

Sophomore Ariel Bosque battled well at 157-lbs., but fell 2-6.

Senior David Carter, normally a staple at 184-lbs., wrestled down a weight class at 174. Down but never out of the match, he lost 5-2.

The squad forfeited the 184-lbs. match.

In 197-lbs., senior Nic Leither dominated a 17-5 decision, just narrowly missing out on a major dual win for the Raiders.

Four freshmen took to the mat for NW, earning more valuable experience.

The team picked up their first conference victory on Nov. 22, defeating Briar Cliff 30-22.

The Raiders racked up four pins, which were recorded by freshmen Daniel Arceo and Brett Gudeeman, Leither and Dowell.

“Everyone wrestled hard,” Dowell said. “It was an interesting dual as only three matches went the full seven minutes, but it was good to see guys go out there and look for bonus points. Overall I saw a lot of aggression on the mat, and I think that was key in the win.”

The wrestling squad has been gaining momentum out of the gate this season, sitting at 3-1 overall, and 1-0 in the GPAC.

“We’ve changed a lot of things from last year,” Dowell said. “There just seems to be a lot more fuel than there was last year. I accredit that to a hungry set of upperclassmen and the energy that a large freshman class has brought.”

The Raiders are staying focused, in part thanks to the competition, and in part as they near an NW wrestling milestone.

“We have the opportunity to get NW’s 250th dual win against Augustana,” Dowell said. “We also can get revenge on a loss to Dakota Wesleyan from last year.”
Seniors, it’s OK to not know what’s ahead

BY EMMA LUNDGREN
COPY EDITOR

I’m preparing myself for Christmas. Not with festive holiday spirit (I had that ready in October), but with answers for that inevitable interrogation that I get every time I let foot near a person over the age of 30. “You’re a senior already? What are you going to do after graduation?”

Dread seeps into my stomach. You’d think with all this advance preparation that I should have no problem fielding the expected questions. But here’s the thing: I have no idea what I’m doing after graduation. Forks will drop. Mouths will gape. I will be held either in shocked stares or condescending you-should-be-better-prepared sneers.

“Well, I want to get into editing,” I’ll say. They will ask, “Oh. Are there a lot of jobs in that?”

I will answer, “No, not really. It’s one of those fields you have to start at the bottom and work your way up. I probably won’t get the kind of job I want right away.”

“Hmm. Well then. When do you go back to school?” They’ll say, in desperate attempt to change to a less baffling and discouraging topic by moving absurdly to the one other thing I would rather not think about during my last Christmas vacation.

The bleak mysteriousness of my future is not a surprise secret I stumble upon every time this conversation comes up. I am well aware of the adulthood that is rapidly approaching my life’s threshold, as I know many of my fellow students are as well.

This awareness can strike anxiety in any senior’s heart, and keeps us awake at night and distracted during the day with questions like: Do I really know what I want to do with my life? What if I can’t find a job I like? What if I can’t find a job at all?

“The bleak mysteriousness of my future is not a surprise secret I stumble upon every time this conversation comes up.”

These fears are not unfounded. We have all seen the mobs of people from the “Occupy” movement filling city blocks across the nation. Many participants are recent college grads disgruntled by their lack of employment.

We know that the unemployment rate is remaining unnervingly high and that, in many professions, the hiring odds do not fall in favor of those with freshly signed diplomas. And the burden of this knowledge is made heavier by people asking about our career goals before we even have careers to speak of.

I have hope we can turn the state of the country in our favor by facing our occupational realities. With so many people across the nation out of work, having any job at all is an accomplishment in itself.

The jobs we first get may not earn much, they may not be glamorous or anything like what we want to do, but they will be jobs with income.

We might just have to content ourselves with the available jobs, appreciate the experience and extra time to figure what we really want to do and realize that our goals are flexible.

So, to the people who ask, I don’t know what I will do after I graduate. And realistically, that is ok.

Ditch plastic bottles

BY KAMERON TOEWES

If we take the time and think about it, the amount of one-time use plastic containers we often use in a day is quite startling.

Everything from fast food, a meal exchange in the Hub or a sack lunch in the Cafe creates plastic waste. The campus, however, has done a good job with the resources they have been given of providing bins where we can recycle at least some of the plastics we use.

I know it takes extra work to throw a soda bottle or a juice bottle from the Simply To Go station at the Cafe in a recycling bin, but it is a habit we Northwesterners students need to pick up on. I see a good many students take the caps off bottles, make sure they are empty and toss them into a recycling bin, but I also see a huge number of people throw recyclable containers into the trash. It is frustrating to see, but also understandable. It is difficult to see what impact recycling one little juice bottle will have on the huge world, so it is also difficult to use extra energy to recycle it. However, I think one of the biggest reasons for a lack of recycling is because it is not on peoples’ minds.

I would guess that for many, the fact that a bottle is recyclable rarely crosses their mind. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but I think some education on the positive impacts of recycling will help us understand its benefits.

“I would guess that for many, the fact that a bottle is recyclable rarely crosses their mind.”

I wonder if NW would be able to go without disposable water bottles. After some conversations, Sodexo has agreed to incorporate reusable water cups instead of water bottles for its catered meals.

Could NW students find alternatives to taking bottled water from the Simply To Go station? Using one’s own reusable bottle for water makes much more sense than constantly using the disposable containers.

Juice containers become a bit trickier since students cannot enter the Cafe and fill up a personal bottle with juice, but as of now, this is a possibility for water.

I am pushing for a removal of disposable water bottles in the Simply To Go station. Students can fill up water bottles in drinking fountains located all across campus. We have the opportunity to do something on this campus that can positively impact our environment.

Conversations are under way to make changes in Simply To Go, but student opinions on the issue, whether for or against, are needed.

Love your neighbor even if they’re gay

BY NATE JOHNSTON
OPINION EDITOR

Hate the sin, but not the sinner. This lovely piece of advice is often applied to the issue of homosexuality.

When I see the way that Christians treat the issue of homosexuality, I do not see many things that point to Christ. Many Christians have let charged, personal opinions guide their theology rather than God’s own words in the Bible. As a result, there is an unjustified and skewed hate for homosexuality in many Christian circles.

This narrow-minded view of homosexuality common to many Christians is a stumbling block. It’s time for Christians to have a perspective check that is grounded in God’s own words in the Bible.

An easy way to find out if something is indeed a sin is to search the many lists of sinful activities in Leviticus. Leviticus 18 offers 30 verses worth of regulations about unlawful sexual relations. God said to Moses in verse 22 “Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.”

This sentiment is expressed again in Leviticus 20:13. The language in this passage is even stronger demanding that the offending homosexual be put to death.

By all implications, the Old Testament law tells us that homosexuality is a sin. It would be unwise, however, to end our biblical search in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, we find that Christ came to set us free from the law. So I think that it would be wise to check out some New Testament sources as well.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, “Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

In this NIV translation, Paul clearly states that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God. This statement, however, was not Paul’s main point. Paul’s main idea here is that all wrongdoers are condemned. Homosexuality is just one of many sins which is included in a list of sins that are equally condemning.

Homosexuality should not be placed on a pedestal and labeled as a sin that demands harsher punishment than other sins. Our current way of thinking has blown the issue of sexuality way out of proportion. The Bible places sexual sins in lists that fall under the umbrella of sin. The big problem for us as humans created in God’s image is sin as a whole.

“Our current way of thinking has blown the issue of sexuality way out of proportion.”

Given what the Bible says, I think it is hard to deny homosexuality is a sin, but the beauty of God’s grace is that it allows sinners to trust in Christ and have freedom from their sins.

Homosexuality can be Christians. A sexual sin does not separate someone from God more than any other type of sin. In fact, I think that God would find the whole concept of classifying sins to be quite ridiculous. We are condemned to eternal death from the moment we are born. It is our existence as sinful human beings that has condemned us, not the individual sins that we commit.

I believe that Christ would call us to act in love and compassion. Christians ought to love homosexuals and show them compassion like they would another human being. They should not judge and condemn homosexuals as a worse type of sinner.

Love your neighbor even if they’re gay

Ditch plastic bottles

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Art Exhibit
Students will display their artwork in Korver Visual Arts Center’s Te Paske Gallery Dec. 2-15 during the annual Northwestern/Dordt Student Art Exhibit. An opening reception is scheduled for 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 2.

Winter Formal
The Winter Formal dance will be held at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3. Admission is $3 per person and $5 per couple. The Fruited Plain in Sioux Center is offering dinner for two for $20. Dinner vouchers can be purchased at the Student Development Office.

Coly Christmas Bash
Coly Christmas Bash will begin at 9 p.m., Monday, Dec. 5. Students are invited to walk through the decorated wings of Coly and vote for their favorite.

Chapel
Monday
• Orange City Elementary concert
Tuesday
• Chapel music team
Wednesday
• Chaplain Harlan VanOort
Friday
• Christmas caroling

Student directors show skill
BY TYLER LEHMANN
Seven student directors will present plays starring fellow students next week as their final exam for directing class. In the two-day event, six one-act plays will be performed the first night, and one full-length play the second night.

The first one-act performed will be “The Lives of the Saints,” directed by junior Keely Wright. The comedic play tells the story of two absent-minded women who muse on life, death and Polish jokes while preparing a funeral breakfast for mourners.

“A challenge has been staying on top of things,” Wright said. “Picture an absent-minded, frazzled director trying to remember everything while keeping things moving. That’s me.”

A performance of “10,000 Cigarettes,” directed by junior Tiemen Godwaldt, will follow. A dream-like drama, this play looks inside the mind of a smoker.

Junior Abby Bierly’s production of “The Universal Language” tells the story of a woman seeking a cure for her stutter. The comedy will involve characters reversing gender.

“Code Blue,” directed by junior Jill Black and written by Jeff Barker, a theater professor currently reversing gender.

Senior Heather Platt will present “A Matter of Husbands.” The comedy tells a story of a wife who mistakenly believes her husband is unfaithful.

Concluding the first night will be “In the End: A Zombie Drama,” directed by sophomore Megan Weidner. The drama follows a man in post-apocalyptic Ohio who wrestles with his assignment to kill the living dead.

The following night, the full-length play “Eurydice” will be performed. Directed by junior Ali Sondreal, the play is a retelling of a classical Greek myth through a fresh pair of eyes.

“It’s really fun getting to be so creative with things and deciding how to make everything fit together just so,” Sondreal said.

All seven plays will be performed in the Proscenium Theater. The six one-acts will take the stage starting at 6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 7, and “Eurydice” will be performed at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 8. All performances are free and will have open seating.

Celebrating Christmas with ugly sweaters
BY GILLIAN ANDERSON
Students are preparing for the annual ugly Christmas sweater party, an event returning for a fourth year.

“This is an unrelated tradition,” said senior Amber Maloney. “A Facebook event has been started, inviting everyone at Northwestern. Anyone can join. It is open to all. Even graduates are invited. If people have been invited on Facebook, they can also invite their friends to come with them.”

Last year the party was held in the Vanderhill Cottage.

“It was 10 guys that put it together,” said senior Zachary Dieken. “People would just go to Bibles [for Missions] and buy ugly sweaters. We encouraged them to bring anything ugly. Some guys wore turtle necks, and others wore sweater vests. People had interesting stories about how they got them from their parents or grandparents.”

Each year there are new elements added to the party.

“Originally we wanted to make a Christmas card of all of us wearing our ugly sweaters,” said senior Jordan Kruse. “We even had a chocolate fountain.”

They also played Christmas music, sang carols and watched movies. Toward the end of the party they put on a light show.

“We had lights on the house and one of the guys timed it to a music box,” Dieken said.

This year the party will be held from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 10 in the Bolks East Apt. B. There will be refreshments in apartment 202 and games in apartment 231.

All students are welcome and encouraged to wear an ugly Christmas sweater.

‘Powerful sound’ sets tone
BY BRITTANY LEIKVOLL
The annual Christmas Vespers service, hosted by Northwestern’s music department, is coming this weekend.

This year’s concert will be centered around the theme of Magnificat, a Latin term meaning “my soul magnifies,” and is Mary’s hymn of praise in response to the angel’s declaration that she would bear the son of God.

“Magnificat” by composer Imant Raminsh, will be performed by the A cappella Choir and will be accompanied by associate professor of music Dr. Juyeon Kang on the piano. Several other NW music ensembles will be performing, including the men of Heritage Singers, the Women’s Choir, the Chamber Orchestra and Brass Choir, and the Handbell Choir. Scripture readings will also be incorporated throughout the service.

Senior Amber Maloney is looking forward to the event.

“It’s my final year participating in Vespers, so in some ways it’s going to be sad, but I’m very excited,” Maloney said.

“Some of the songs we’ve been preparing since the beginning of the semester, so we’re eager with anticipation.”

Senior Bob Latchaw has enjoyed preparing for the concert.

“I really like the songs by all the ensembles that are accompanied by the organ. It’s a really powerful sound that sets the tone for the evening,” Latchaw said.

Senior Anna Barlett described Vespers as reminding her of angels.

Maloney agreed with Bartlett’s feelings toward the concert.

“I love the spirit of Vespers: the decorated chapel. What a grand way to start the Christmas season,” Maloney said. “It brings out a unified spirit—the ensembles, the audience and the heavenly hosts.”

The Christmas Vespers Service will be directed by professor of music Dr. Thomas Holm, lecturer in music Glee Crippin, professor of music Dr. Timothy McGarvey and associate professor of music Dr. Heather Josselyn-Cranson. It will be held in Christ Chapel.

The services are taking place 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3 and 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4.

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