Contribution Photo

Freshman Preston Hoebelheinrich wears prosthetic legs after undergoing a double amputation to remove a life threatening infection from spreading further.

A leg up on the competition

By Tyler Lehman, Features Co-Editor

There was a time when Preston Hoebelheinrich had legs, but he says he can’t remember it.

The Northwestern freshman underwent a double amputation at the tender age of 6, when doctors discovered he had a life-threatening infection of bacterial meningitis.

Hoebelheinrich’s says his mother was first alarmed when she discovered unusual bruises covering her son’s body.

“She took off my jacket, and there were bruises all over my arms,” Hoebelheinrich said.

“So she took off my shirt, and my chest was covered in bruises, too. Then she took off my pants, and my legs had even more bruises.”

Three hospitals later, Hoebelheinrich’s legs were amputated to prevent the severe infection from spreading, and he received prosthetic legs. Hoebelheinrich has since lost any recollection of his life before the surgery.

“It was like I was a newborn baby, but I was six years old. It was like I had just been born,” he said.

Suddenly confronted with a new reality, Hoebelheinrich struggled to cope as a child.

“I was pissed at God for a very, very, very long time,” Hoebelheinrich said.

“I watched my younger brother learn to ride a bike before I could.”

In third grade, though, Hoebelheinrich’s life changed course. Spurred by the interest his younger brother and his mother’s boyfriend shared in wrestling, Hoebelheinrich took up the sport himself.

“My mom just wanted me to grow up normal.

Get to know the people of the Tuesday Chapel

The Tuesday Chapel Team, including (from left to right) Sarah Stofer, Sudanita, Ashley VanWyhe, Kelby Robinson, Becca Lokker, Aaron DeBoer and Emily Mahlum, perform in Tuesday’s chapel.

Aging Dylan releases album

**ALBUM REVIEW**

**BY JEFF HUBERS**

Bob Dylan is old. This fact simply cannot be denied. But does his music have a “timeless” quality? While the answer to that question is certainly debatable, the folk legend’s latest album, Tempest, reinforces the general consensus that Dylan has created something eternal with his songwriting.

The album opens with “Duquesne Whistle,” a bouncy tune with a ‘40s rhythm to it, complete with Dylan’s growly tones preaching “You say I’m a gambler, you say I’m a pimp, but I ain’t neither one.” Only two of the album’s tracks are less than four minutes long, with most of the songs ranging between five and nine minutes. Despite these lengthy tunes, Dylan’s musical poetry will likely make you listen again and again without pause.

“Narrow Way” continues with Dylan’s upbeat storytelling; the electric guitar gives this tune more of a rock ‘n’ roll sound. “Tempest” contains great music for fans of Dylan and folk music, and the folk singer’s nonchalant attitude carries on from the 90’s! In the 90’s it was “Toy Story,” but now it would have to be “Forrest Gump,” although I still love “Toy Story!”

The album’s title track “Tempest” tells listeners the story of the sinking of the Titanic, though the nearly 14 minute long tune might lose one or two listeners whose allegiances lie with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet’s edition. “Scarlet Town” has a great banjo accompaniment and Dylan’s weathered voice actually fits the melancholy tune. “Roll On, John” pays tribute to John Lennon and might be the strongest track on the album, simply because of its emotional resonance to the former compatriot of Dylan’s, who died back in 1980. Despite the harshness of Dylan’s voice (the man is in his 70s), his ability to tell a story through song has not decreased.

“Narrow Way” has a great banjo accompaniment and Dylan’s upbeat voice actually fits the melancholy tune. “Roll On, John” pays tribute to John Lennon and might be the strongest track on the album, simply because of its emotional resonance to the former compatriot of Dylan’s, who died back in 1980. Despite the harshness of Dylan’s voice (the man is in his 70s), his ability to tell a story through song has not decreased.

“Tempest” contains great music for fans of Dylan and folk music, and the folk singer’s nonchalant attitude carries on heavily. The album is Dylan’s 35th studio album in 50 years of recording, and numbers like that aren’t easily ignored. But despite such benchmarks in the music industry, Dylan’s latest album is good, but not spectacular. More than anything, Tempest is classic Dylan and provides listeners with throwback tastes of folk you can nod your head to, but nothing to make you listen again and again without pause.

Despite these lengthy tunes, Dylan’s musical poetry will likely make you listen again and again without pause.

What is your favorite movie from the 90s? - Who doesn’t like the classic N* Sync song “Bye Bye Bye?”

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What is your favorite movie from the 90s? - Who doesn’t like the classic N* Sync song “Bye Bye Bye?”
Tuesday Chapel Team

This year.

Who convinced you to try out for the team: Being on a praise team is something I had wanted to do since my freshman year, but I never took the time to do it. Since it is my last year on campus, I decided it was time to audition.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: Tuesday chapel praise team is a ministry on campus. I want to use the gifts God has given me to worship Him, impact the lives of others on campus by being a spiritual leader and, of course, have fun.

What is your favorite movie from the 90s: Hmmm...maybe “The Parent Trap.”

Backstreet Boys or N*Sync?

No preference.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: When I heard about the auditions, I tried out and have been on traveling worship teams the last two years.

This year, I wanted to try something different.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: I did not have a chance to be convinced by a person to be on the team, but for sure the Holy Spirit.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: I want to be meeting God face-to-face while worshiping; also, I want God to use me so that people may be meeting him.

What is your favorite movie from the 90s? “Space Jam!”

Backstreet Boys or N*Sync?

Backstreet Boys, but with Justin Timberlake.

Name: Sarah Stofer
Class: Junior
Hometown: DeWitt, IA
Where do you live on campus? Hospers, 1st Floor
What is your major? Music performance

What do you do on the team? Bass player
How long have you been playing/singing? Six years
Who convinced you to try out for the team? Ashley did, and God had a hand in it, too.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: Further my piano and singing skills, and for our team to be a humble representation of Christ for the NW community.

Name: Sun Mudiavita
Class: Junior
Hometown: Congo
Where do you live on campus? I live off campus
What is your major? Pre-med biology

What do you do on the team? Guitar and vocals
How long have you been playing/singing? I have been singing for seven years, and I have been playing for a year.

Who convinced you to try out for the team? I did not have a chance to be convinced by a person to be on the team, but for sure the Holy Spirit.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: I want to be meeting God face-to-face while worshiping; also, I want God to use me so that people may be meeting him.

What is your favorite movie from the 90s? Unknown.

Backstreet Boys or N*Sync?

No preference.

Name: Aaron DeBoer
Class: Junior
Hometown: Little Rock, IA
Where do you live on campus? In the plexes. We have a coffee shop in our basement plex.

What is your major? Music ministry

What do you do on the team? Play piano, sing and other random percussion.

How long have you been playing/singing? Since my elementary school years.

Who convinced you to try out for the team? Ashley did, and God had a hand in it, too.

What is your goal for/on the team this year: Further my piano and singing skills, and for our team to be a humble representation of Christ for the NW community.

ALBUM REVIEW

By Tom Westerholm
A & C Editor

The Avett Brothers new album hits and misses

The Avett Brothers newest album, “Carpenters,” wants desperately to find the perfect contrast between dark lyrics and major-key folk music. The Avett Brothers try to write something with a little more rock tooth. The result is an awkward, somewhat atonal song, beginning with screeching feedback and an out of place acoustic guitar, followed by a drum beat that carries on much too long before falling into a boring chorus that couldn’t stick in the listener’s head with the help of a glue gun.

Musically, the album hits its deepest emotional valley on “Winter in My Heart.” A violin and acoustic guitar make for a sad, bare bones feel, and the lyrical content, as might be expected given the title, does little to relieve the mood. It’s the kind of song one would listen to while sitting on the porch with a bottle of whiskey and a handgun, staring out into the middle distance trying to convince oneself to pull the trigger.

Given the subject (the loss of romantic love), the song feels excessively and heavy-handedly dark.

Admittedly, “Winter in my Heart” is the darkest song on the album, though “Through My Prayers” gives the title track a solid challenge for that belt. But the lyrical darkness moves from song to song seamlessly. “The Once and Future Carpenter,” talks openly and comfortably about being ready for death (“And when the black cloak drags upon the ground, I’ll be ready to surrender”), while the finale (named, ironically, “Life”) discusses the fleeting nature of our humanity (“We’re not of this world for long”).

“The Carpenter” is musically light and conceptually grim. Thinking about death in any capacity is difficult, and The Avett Brothers spent the entire album trying to think about death in just about every capacity, which will turn away some listeners and attract others.

It’s tough to fault “The Carpenter” for its darkness, but its also difficult to laud it for the somewhat forced bravado with which it presents that darkness.
Sophomore Teresa Odera is selling jewelry and accessories to raise money for Sports for Life, an organization that assists students with tuition and club sports in her home country of Kenya. Odera is spreading the word about the need to give back to her community through this fundraiser.

Odera, a native to Nairobi, Kenya, is selling African jewelry to benefit a fund that supports education in her home country. Proceeds from the jewelry support Sports for Life, a program that assists students with tuition and club sports in Kenya.

There's one guy who couldn't even afford to go to school and now he's doing pre-med,” Odera said. “He got that help from the fund that I'm raising money for.

Sports for Life gives opportunities to students who might not otherwise receive support.

“It is through this program that people have come to the United States for the first time and even left their city for the first time,” Odera said. “We want to be able to give them a good education.”

Sports for Life has also helped Teresa with her own education. To help with her education, Teresa worked with some at-risk students who made a lasting impression on her.

“You listen to some of their stories and you just want to cry,” Odera said. “We were just trying to open people's eyes up to what they can do with their lives.”

One problem of particular concern in Kenya is early pregnancy. Through the mentoring process girls are shown alternatives to pregnancy, such as involvement in sports and continuing their education.

Odera is now giving back in a bigger way by raising money for Sports for Life. The jewelry she sells comes from two different sources: a woman who lives in the slums in Kenya and the students involved with the Sports for Life program.

Along with raising money, those involved with the fund are learning business skills such as how to be an employee and how to manage money.

For sale are beaded necklaces, dangling earrings, and bracelets strung with stones. There are also a number of handbags for sale. Prices range from $5 - $30.

“I've made a little over $100 and I only started this semester,” Odera said.

By the end of the month, Odera said she hopes to have retail in Orange City’s De Koffiehoek & Bistro and Sioux Center Center’s Butler’s Coffee & Cafe. The jewelry is also for sale on Etsy.com under the account: DweleDesigns.

When asked how much money she hopes to raise for the fund Odera answered simply, “As much as it takes.”

Jewelry and accessories may be purchased from Odera by contacting her at teresa. odera@nwciowa.edu.

More than an accessory

Wrestling with adversity

BY KATIE KREBS

Sophomore Teresa Odera, a native to Nairobi, Kenya, is selling African jewelry to benefit a fund that supports education in her home country.

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Sports for Life has also helped Teresa with her own education. To receive aid from the fund, she had to meet certain conditions, one of which was mentoring young girls.

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Northwestern’s faculty this year took in a fresh crop of professors, including a consultant in international economic development, a magazine editor and a specialist in medieval history.

Dr. David Befus, associate professor of business, spent the last two years overseeing post-earthquake business reconstruction for Compassion International in Haiti. He has also served as international director of microfinance for World Vision.

In addition to his work in business, Befus has a variety of teaching experience. He is a former faculty member at Azusa Pacific University and Westmont College.

“I think the interaction of the professors here is quite special,” Befus said. “This place is as friendly as Disney World, and people here aren’t even being paid to be friendly.”

Unaccustomed to small-town life, Befus said he was surprised by the safety that NW students feel.

Attending a NW football game, Befus sat behind a group of students who got up from their seats midgame, leaving behind a cell phone and wallet. Befus said he called out to alert them.

“They just looked back and smiled, ‘We’ll be right back.’ The phone and the wallet were saving their places,” Befus said. “That’s something you should never do in Miami, but it’s a demonstration of how special this place is.”

Befus is the author of “Where There Are No Jobs,” which has been listed as one of the top 25 books on social enterprise.

Dayne Logan joined the communications department after serving as an associate managing editor of four monthly magazines for Anthem Media Group, a communications firm based in Kansas.

“I come from big cities and large state schools, but I like the intimate feel of NW,” Logan said. “I’m getting to know my students on an individual level, and that’s something that was difficult to do other places.”

Already in his short time here, Logan has learned much from his students about life in Orange City.

“Don’t pick tulips, don’t even try to do anything after 8 p.m. and never go for evening walks near the golf course. Apparently that’s a public disturbance that results in the police being called,” he said.

Even so, Logan said he looks forward to his future at NW. “I’d say both the town and the college are places that punch above their weight,” he said. “They’re small, but they have a lot to offer.”

However, Logan said he isn’t quite prepared for everything Orange City has to offer.

“Tulip Festival is a terrifying proposition,” he said.

In addition to his teaching role, Logan also serves as faculty advisor to the Beacon.

Katherine Meyers, lecturer in history, is teaching in place of Dr. Bob Winn this year while he is on sabbatical.

“The noise level before I start class is very high, indicating that the students know one another well and enjoy talking to one another,” she said.

“I sometimes have difficulty getting their attention to start class. In other places I have taught there was not that much interaction between students before class.”

Previously, Meyers taught in New Mexico.

“NW is much smaller and definitely more friendly. Everyone gets to know everyone else and there is a sense of shared purpose among faculty and students that I am really enjoying,” she said.

Though Meyers said Orange City has given her a good impression, she teased that her arrival was disenchanting.

“The first thought I had when I got to Orange City was, ‘it’s not orange,’” Meyers said.

Try our Drink of the Week for 8 out of 12 weeks and receive a FREE insulated, ceramic to-go cup.

This week: Thai Iced Coffee
Upcoming: Mae Verde

PHOTO BY EMILIE BERRY

Logan brings experience in magazine editing to NW’s communications department.
Leadership trumps policy in 2012 election
BY TYLER VERMEER

This will probably be the biggest and most influential presidential election of our lifetime, and we as a campus community had the opportunity to hear one of the candidates speak.

Whether you agree with Mitt Romney’s policies or not, it was an honor to have him speak to us and see and hear firsthand what he thinks needs to happen both domestically and overseas.

It was fantastic to see all those who came out and made signs for the rally Thursday night and those lined up all the way to Vogel Paint to hear the former governor speak. It shows that this campus is informed, involved and has a passion for this country.

“We need a leader to provide clear directions for the United States to weather this storm. We need a president who will be able to come up with a sane budget, an economic plan for growth and the courage to take a stand against Iran. This leadership was present on campus last week, and it was evident throughout the rally that Mitt Romney has the gumption and experience to make the tough decisions.”

But if nothing else, the rally sparked a lot of talk and chatter about politics. There aren’t many things more important that we could talk about at this time in our lives. We have an unsustainable national debt, the Middle East is about ready to blow itself up, and too many people are out of work. We, as registered voters, have been given the opportunity to decide which direction we want this country to head.

But with this opportunity comes great responsibility – the responsibility to choose a candidate who we can trust to protect our rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and provide stability to the government. Today there is a lot of division in what this looks like. We could compare all the policies of both the candidates side-by-side, but I really think that what we need now, more than tax breaks and rolling back regulations, is leadership.

“We need a leader to provide clear directions for the United States to weather this storm. We need a president who will be able to come up with a sane budget, an economic plan for growth and the courage to take a stand against Iran. This leadership was present on campus last week, and it was evident throughout the rally that Mitt Romney has the gumption and experience to make the tough decisions.”

Whether you are a liberal, conservative or anything between, this is a huge year. This year will determine how we handle $16 trillion of debt, the millions of Americans who are unemployed and the conflicts in the Middle East.

As Christians we need to pray for our leaders and pray that God raises up the proper man because this election will affect us for the rest of our lives.

Fountain vandalism upsets Fern Smith Hall residents
BY LAURA ECKLUND

The once peaceful and luscious sound of flowing water that accompanied the ears of Fern Smith Hall residents and visitors to the cafeteria on a daily basis has quickly been replaced with the persistent tap-tap-tapping of thrown stones.

What apparently started out as a random thought of ‘Hey I wonder if I can get a rock into the hole of the Fern Fountain’ has escalated into a vandalizing and disrespectful competition partaken of by many groups of guys, and some girls, on campus.

I realize the sentiment behind the need to make our own fun in small town Iowa is important, yet must we stoop so low to desecrate the highly regarded and valued Fern Fountain?

While it may seem like just another rock spewing water to the average Joe (or Jill), this fountain holds a dear place in the hearts of many Fern residents.

The constant tapping between the hours of 3 and 7 p.m. every night disturbs and annoys the girls residing on the east and north wings of Fern. But more than that, the aftermath of this quaudry has blown up into yelling out the Fern windows, applying band-aids to a hurt community via the fountain, engaging in out-of-context scripture battles and casting passive-aggressive judgments on those from both sides of the issue.

Friends, do you realize how much bitterness and strife this dilemma is stirring up on a college campus that so strongly emphasizes community, community, community?

While the ladies of Fern Smith Hall are hurt and grieving over these great acts of disrespect, we are a forgiving and accepting community that will work toward reconciliation with the perpetrators. This appeasement would be much easier with some sort of reimbursement or compensation for the emotional distress that has been caused, but we will settle for this game coming to an end once and for all.

Fountain Abroad
Spanish lessons in political correctness
BY NATE JOHNSTON

SEVILLE, SPAIN – Political correctness is a phrase that does not seem to exist in Spain. I realized this a few days into my study abroad experience in Seville, Spain. My roommates and I decided to set out and look for a cheap soccer ball. We had no idea where to buy such an item, so we decided to simply start exploring local stores.

Close to my apartment there are several little bargain stores of varying quality. They contain items organized in no particular fashion. Most of these stores have strange names and are owned by Asians.

When my roommates and I returned empty-handed to our apartment, our host mother asked us where we looked for a soccer ball. We started to describe these stores to her, and she quickly told us what they were called. When she called them “chinos,” I was sure that I had heard her incorrectly. She reassured me that it was the correct name. Chinese people typically run these stores; therefore, their stores are obviously called “chinos.”

Spanish culture, the language included, is far more direct than Americans are used to. For example, it would be common for a Spaniard to call a black individual “negro” because their skin is, in fact, black. Spaniards think of these statements as descriptions that do not have any implications, positive or negative.

It is also common for a Spaniard to say “you look like you’ve gained weight” if they see you for the first time in a while. They mean no harm by such a statement; they just want to show that they have noticed and they care about you. As with most cultural differences, this issue is not black and white, and, therefore, must be addressed objectively. As I said earlier, Spaniards mean no harm with their descriptions, and they are certainly not using any vulgar or offensive words. Rather than using racial slurs, they are using descriptive words.

In the United States, we value political correctness because we live in a diverse country that has a history of racial prejudice. As fine young Americans, we feel a justified pressure to respect diversity and focus on our shared identity as Americans and human beings rather than draw attention to our obvious differences.

Now, however, I have begun to wonder if our social pendulum has swung from discrimination, past the middle acceptance and into the opposite end of being afraid of openly acknowledging differences. Growing up in rural Iowa as a white, middle-class, American male, I have had no choice but to learn to practice political correctness. I have forever been afraid to call a black man “black” or someone who looks Asian “Asian” because I do not want to be offensive.

I walk on eggshells to maintain political correctness, and I obscure obvious truths to avoid offense that may be taken if I were to make a simple observation. In the U.S., this is normal for me, and it is deeply instilled in my personal values. Now I am being exposed to a new form of acceptance in which difference is accepted while still openly noticed.

Beacon Abroad
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NW drops match-up of ranked squads

BY MICHAEL SIMMELINK
SPORTS EDITOR

The No. 17 Northwestern football squad had its hopes of an undefeated season dashed on Saturday night in Sioux City after losing to No.4 Morningside 34-7 on Saturday night. Both teams were ranked in the top-10 at the start of its season, winning three in the top-10. Northwestern has also had a successful season so far, winning two games in five days. The Raiders have been struggling with consistency in their passing game, and have been missing key players throughout the season. The defense, on the other hand, has been solid, holding Morningside to just 7 points. Northwestern's offense has been led by quarterback Eli Groenendyk, who has thrown for over 1,000 yards and 10 touchdowns so far this season. The Raiders will look to bounce back against Benedictine College on Saturday night.

Golf teams see early season wins

BY TOM WESTERHOLM

After winning consecutive meets and receiving the GPAC Golfer of the Week award, it’s safe to assume that junior Kyle Stanek is feeling pretty confident about Northwestern’s season. “Our whole team is really solid,” Stanek said. “Any one of us can beat each other on any given day. That’s just how good our team is. It’s not like one player is predominately the best out of any of us.”

Stanek placed first out of all golfers as NW won the Midland Fall Invite on Aug. 31 with a score of 71. Junior Ryan Kiewiet and sophomore Jay Monahan finished in a tie for fifth at 75, and senior Mike Dykema tied for ninth with a 76. Junior Lane Malenke finished tied for 13th with a 77.

On Sept. 6 and 7, the Raiders won the Siouxland Invite at their home course, Landsmeer, in Orange City. NW’s golfers made up the entire top four of the invite, as Kiewiet (143), Malenke (144), Monahan (145) and Dykema (146) led the pack for the Raiders. Stanek rounded out the top 10 with a 149.

After winning the Midland Invite, Stanek was named GPAC Golfer of the Week for his efforts. “It was a really good confidence boost for me,” Stanek said. “I’ve gotten a bunch of second-place finishes, but this was my first win, so I was really happy about that. It was definitely a good day.”

The Raider men have started the season strong, and according to Stanek, there’s no reason to expect them to slow down.

“We are going to be as good as we were last year, if not better,” Stanek said. “We didn’t lose anybody, and last year we won the conference, so that was a big confidence booster.”

Stanek also pointed to NW’s homefield advantage as a reason why they will perform well. “We have a really good opportunity to win the GPAC this year since we have home field advantage,” Stanek said. “In golf that’s a huge advantage, knowing the course and the way the greens are going to break.”

The NW women’s golf team also had a successful start to its season, winning the Midland Invite on Aug. 31 and placing second in the Morningside Invite on Sept. 7.

Most notably, the Raiders finished the first GPAC qualifying meet in second place on Tuesday, currently behind Dakota Wesleyan by two strokes. “If we play our best, we know we can get first,” said sophomore Emma Wynja, “but Dakota Wesleyan is a good team, and we want to stay close to them and keep ourselves in the running for the last meet.”

Wynja led the Raiders on the afternoon at qualifier, and finished tied for first with an 83. Junior Taylor Kline is in third place for the Raiders after shooting an 85.

At the Midland Invite, junior Jess Locker and Wynja tied for third with an 87 to lead all Raiders. Kline also tied for ninth, as the Raiders took the meet by one stroke over home team Midland.

At the Morningside Invite, the Raiders finished one stroke ahead of third-place Morningside. Wynja led the Raiders by finishing fifth, followed by sophomore Betsy Wallin in sixth and Kline in seventh to give NW three in the top-10.

The GPAC Qualifier will resume on Oct. 3, in Lincoln, Neb.

ONLINE THIS WEEK @ beacon.nwciowa.edu

Men’s soccer defeats ranked opponent • Volleyball hangs on to win streak against Morningside • Cross country season preview

Women’s soccer evens record with win

BY DALTON KELLEY

The Raiders have been hot this past week, with two games in five days. On Saturday, Sept. 8, the women’s team fell 0-5 to the Benedictine Ravens at home. “We have been struggling with connecting passes in the final third, which affects our scoring opportunities,” said sophomore Tyler Farr. “Now that we have watched tape, we are working at making passing a seamless uniform across the board.”

After the tough loss, Northwestern rallied back by winning its next game on the road in Omaha, Neb., against the College of St. Mary on Wednesday night. “So far we have done really well with connecting passes out of the back and through the midfield,” Farr said. “We are communicating a lot more this season, and the team dynamic is amazing.”

The final score of the shutout was 4-0 and included goals from four different Raiders throughout the night. Freshmen Mattie Ostrowski and Michaela Gibson, junior Alyssa Duren and sophomore Jenny Niemeyer found the back of the net for the Raiders.

“This season has been amazing so far, and so many people have been doing amazing work,” Farr said.

The team stands with a current record of 2-2-1. The next match will be tomorrow at 5 p.m. in Oskaloosa against William Penn.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL SIMMELINK

Junior Nate Van Ginkel locks down in pass coverage on Saturday against Morningside. Van Ginkel totaled 4.5 tackles, one for loss, from his linebacker spot in the 34-7 loss.

PHOTO BY EMILEE BERRY

Sophomore Tyler Farr receives a pass in Saturday’s 5-0 loss against Benedictine College.
Earthquake rocks NW students

BY JULIA LANTZ

Northwestern students studying in San Jose, Costa Rica, had a shaky start to their semester abroad when a 7.6-magnitude earthquake shook the country’s Pacific coast.

The massive earthquake struck early in the morning on Wednesday, Sept. 5, only eight days after the NW students arrived in the Latin American country. The quake woke up junior Erin Anderson when it shook her bed.

“My room is connected to the laundry room, and when I woke up to my bed shaking and saw my mom in the laundry room, I assumed she had just turned on the washing machine,” Anderson said. “But as I became more alert, I realized that it was probably more than the washing machine, considering the entire house was shaking and the furniture was moving.”

Seniors Brittni Donahue and Jen Angus were already awake when the earthquake struck.

“Honestly, my first thought was something along the lines of ‘Sweet, my first earthquake!’” Donahue said.

Angus had been warned by her host family of occasional tremors, so when she felt the earthquake, she was not too concerned about it.

“I just figured it was normal,” Angus said.

Angus, Donahue and Anderson had no idea that the last time Costa Rica was struck by an earthquake of such a high magnitude was back in 1991. That earthquake had the same magnitude (7.6) but proved to be more damaging, and killed 47 people. The most recent earthquake turned out to be less devastating because it was much farther below the surface and resulted in only one death.

According to Angus, there was little damage to her host family’s residence.

“A few things fell off of shelves and such in my house from the shaking, but nothing serious,” Angus said.

According to Angus, life in San Jose basically returned to normal as soon as people calmed down. She was able to go to school that same morning.

The Costa Rica study abroad program is currently taking six weeks of classes consisting of lectures, guest speakers from Costa Rica and field trips. Following this six-week period will be a 10-day trip to Nicaragua, two weeks of classes and a one-month practicum outside the city of San Jose.

“Even though we came here as students, we want to explore as tourists,” Anderson said.

The girls can check one thing off their list: a true Latin American soccer game.

“We had our jerseys on, we waved the flag, and we learned the chants,” Anderson said.

Despite the shocking start to the Costa Rica study abroad trip, the NW students say they are enjoying their time in San Jose. For more highlights of their trip throughout the semester follow Anderson, Angus and Donahue, Katie Nelson, Melissa Hassman and Carrie Engen on their blogs or Facebook pages.