

8-29-2005

Independent- Aug. 29, 2005

Patrick O'Brien

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NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Monday, August 29th, 2005

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 2

INDEPENDENT

CHICAGO, IL

13-TIME 2004 ICPA AWARD WINNER

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EPA tipped off about mercury spill

June chemical spill anonymously reported to Environmental Protection Agency in July

by Tom Robb
News Editor

The Environmental Protection Agency received an anonymous tip in July about a mercury spill in mid June.

When it was all cleaned up, six pounds of elemental mercury, six 55-gallon drums of high level mercury debris, and 60 cubic yards of low level mercury debris were taken out of Property Control, according to an Illinois Department of Labor investigation and a SET Environmental report obtained by the *Independent*.

The spill covered four feet by four feet area in Northeastern's Property Control and the clean up by SET Environmental cost over \$40,000.

Workers and student leaders have expressed health concerns about the spill and how the administration handled it.

The clean up

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was notified of the spill in mid July by an anonymous tip. "We're not pursuing anything as far as a penalty, but we like to be informed [of hazardous material spills] within 24 hours," EPA Representative Craig Thomas, who investigated the tip, told the *Independent*.

Prior to the July 11 anonymous tip, the EPA's National Reporting Center (NRC) had no record of anyone from the university contacting the EPA about the spill, according to Thomas.

Pete Fortsas of the Environmental Science Department was brought in to assess and clean up the spill on the day it was discovered. Fortsas stated that on the day the spill was discovered he believed someone called the EPA, but does

not know whom.

Thomas said that the mercury levels after the cleanup were only 300 nanograms per cubic meter (ng/m³), the residential standard, far below the industrial standard of 3000 ng/m³.

Karen Thompson of the EPA Region 5 (Midwest) office told the *Independent* a spill of over one pound of mercury, or two tablespoons, requires immediate NRC notification and immediate response

"We're not pursuing anything as far as a penalty, but we like to be informed within 24 hours." - EPA

by local authorities.

When asked why the fire department was not called, Facilities Management Director of Buildings and Grounds Ralph Zia said, "Our original call went to Pete Fortsas ... we know he has cleanup kits for that kind of thing ... we knew if we called the fire department they were going to do the same kind of thing we did ... we had experts on hand ... if it was a weekend, you'd call the fire department."

Fortsas said he was a volunteer and consulted scientific colleagues for advice on how to handle the clean up. At first, Fortsas attempted to use a mercury spill kit and a substance called Resisorb to clean up the spill, but soon realized the spill was larger than he was equipped to clean. After a week, SET arrived. They completed the clean up in seven working days, according to the SET report.

Workers worried

It is still not known what caused the spill or how long it was in Property Control, a source of concern to employees who work near the spill area.

An investigation by Edna Demerin-Lubuguin of the Illinois Department of Labor cleared the

SEE MERCURY, PAGE 3

UPI and university sign contract

Student clubs still in advisor limbo

by Patrick O'Brien
Editor-in-Chief

Eight months after the 20-day strike that nearly shutdown the university, the four-year collective bargaining agreement between the University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) and the university was signed and finalized in mid August, with the final signature being that of Edmund Hunt, president of UPI's Northeastern chapter.

According to Hunt, there were still issues with workload and "a lot of back and forth, but that's been settled." Workload issues were at the heart of the original acrimony between UPI and the university, a dispute that resulted in striking professors picketing the university last fall.

The contract features a 3.5 percent pay

SEE SIGNING, PAGE 3

Wizard goes off air, again

by Patrick O'Brien
Editor-in-Chief

Campus radio station WZRD, 88.3 FM, was ordered off the air by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) after their Special Temporary Authorization (STA) to operate the station expired Friday, Aug. 26. This is the second time this year the station has been off the air.

In a fax to Dean of Students Michael Kelly the day before, Michael Wagner of the FCC's Audio Division's Media Bureau said that the original 180-day STA issued in February had expired on Aug. 11, and that "any operation after August 11 is legally unauthorized."

The fax also said that WZRD's license renewal request had not been processed because, "Regrettably, staff resources have not permitted us to reach the late-filed applications for the Illinois renewal groups."

WZRD's renewal application should have been filed by Aug. 1, 2004, but was not because "NEIU inadvertently failed to file a timely renewal application," according to a Feb. 11, 2005 letter to the university from Peter H. Doyle, chief of the Audio Division Media Bureau. WZRD's license expired on Dec. 1 of last year.

According to station manager Dan Gonzalez, after the FCC receives the hard copy of WZRD's request for an additional STA, WZRD "will be back on the air by Monday or Tuesday."

Gonzalez reiterated that WZRD had followed proper procedure in filing their renewal claim, and said that due to the FCC's staffing problems, "the ball was in their court."



photo courtesy of SET Environment

Workers from SET Environmental cleaning a six pound spill of mercury in Property Control last June.

Student arrested for sexual misconduct

University: it's an "isolated incident"

by Tom Robb
News Editor

A student was arrested on July 29 for "stimulating himself" while leering at another student who was in the shower.

The student being leered at departed the shower area and called for assistance. According to police reports and NEIU Police Chief James Lyon, this occurred after another incident of the same type two days earlier in the P.E. Building showers.

The victim signed a criminal complaint and lodged a complaint against the offender with the Dean of Students Michael Kelly for Student Due Process.

P.E. Building Superintendent John Keer responded and approached the offender, now in front of his locker, after receiving



photo by Dorian Barrios

Scene of the crime, men's shower room in P.E. Building.

the complaint from a student, according to Campus Recreation Director Matt Specht and police reports.

The police report states "when he [Keer] entered the locker room he saw [the offender] sitting in front of his locker manually stimulating himself by rubbing his hands on his sex organ."

Keer demanded he get dressed and depart at once. The offender refused and Public Safety was contacted and arrested the offending student. He was taken to the 17th District Chicago Police station for processing and was issued a court date.

Specht described it as an "isolated incident," stating "I don't believe it merits a major shift in policy ... in the near future we'll get

SEE MISCONDUCT, PAGE 3

Cops catch five in Beehive

by Dorian Barrios
Photo Editor

A group of five juveniles were apprehended by university police and charged with burglary, unlawful use of a weapon and criminal damage to property on July 27.

Security responded to an alarm on the third floor of Building C, otherwise known as the Beehive, at around 6:00 p.m.

The minors were found with several office items, including boxes of pens, markers, paper clips and notepads that were determined to belong to the university. One of the juveniles was also found with a knife in her purse, which was taken into evidence.

While handling the situation, graffiti was discovered in the south elevator. Officer Matthew Paulish apprehended the minors exiting the north elevator after a search of the third and fifth floors by Officer Arturo Galindo turned up negative results.

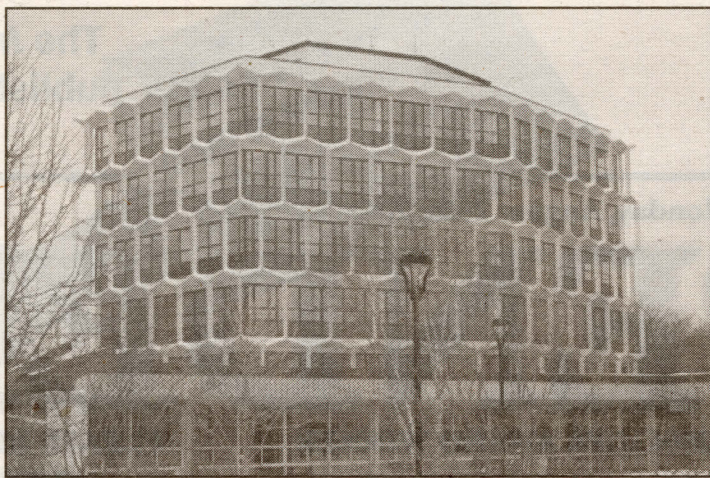


photo courtesy of Independent Archives

Joseph P. Sachs Administration building, known as the Beehive.

According to Public Safety, the juveniles said they forced entry onto the third floor office area by pushing open the access door. The juveniles also told the police that they went through the reception area on the third floor, which is regularly empty during the summer months, and took some markers and change.

According to Sgt. John Foley, the juveniles admitted to having stolen

from the university before. They were taken to the Chicago Police Department's 17th district office for holding.

According to Foley, the minors were told that they are forbidden to enter the campus under threat of arrest. He went on to state that because the university has such an open campus there is little that can be done to prevent such break-ins.

While you were away

Noteworthy news that happened this summer

by Elana Barron
Associate Editor

STEINBERG GOES ON SABBATICAL; FREDRICKS TAKES OVER

On July 1 University President Salme Steinberg began her six-month sabbatical. Janet Fredericks, the dean of the graduate college and director of international programs, has taken over the role of president in Steinberg's absence.

GOODWIN ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Daniel Goodwin retired after ten years as NEIU's first and only chairman. Goodwin gave \$400K to settle last year's NEIU teacher's strike. Goodwin discussed his retirement in conjunction with his frustration over the unsigned contract: "When we reached the agreement based on my commitment to contribute \$100K per year, I assumed we would sign the contract shortly thereafter." The contract has since been signed.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BURGLARY COMPROMISES EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Burglars broke into the Office of Academic Affairs and left with one laptop, one computer CPU and two monitors. University employees were alerted because the computers contained social security numbers and sensitive salary information.

Vice President of Finance and Administration Mark



Acting University President, Janet Fredericks.

Wilcockson said the NEIU computer network had not been hacked. Campus police believe the computers were stolen for the equipment, not the information.

LOAN RATES INCREASED

Loan rates increased 1.93 percent, the biggest rate hike increase in its history. Students were urged to take advantage of the old interest rates of 2004 by consolidating their loans. Through consolidating, students will combine multiple loans into a single payment spread over ten years, explained Director of Financial Aid Marshall Jennings. However, there is more interest because the loan is held longer.

Jennings said 290 students graduated from Northeastern this spring owing money; this is approximately 50 percent of the graduating class.

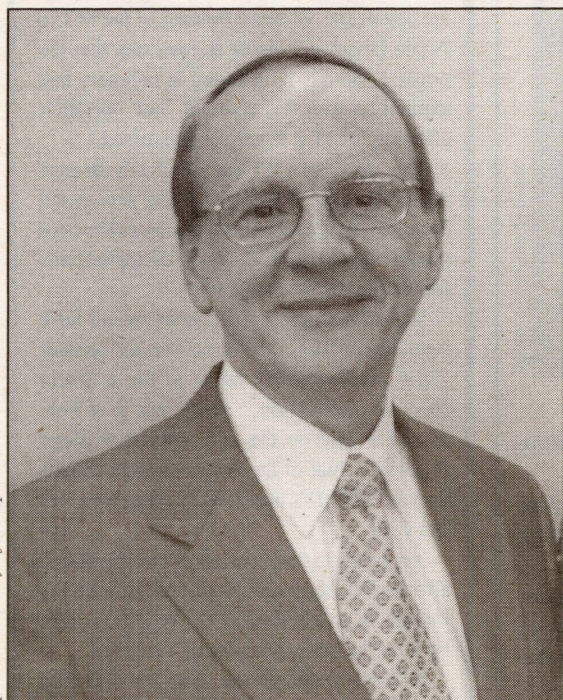
PUBLIC SAFETY HAS NEW TOP COP

As Public Safety said goodbye to Lt. Jack Baker, they opened up their doors to Lt. C. James Lyon Jr. from Florida. Lyon has experience from time spent in the Air Force, degrees in criminal justice and other related fields, and worked with the University of Central Florida's Police Department and Public Safety at Davidson College in North Carolina.

In addition to overseeing the safety at all of NEIU's campuses, Lyon will assist Public Safety in their move to an office in the new parking garage.

CHICAGO UNIVERSITIES SLASH TUITION, INCREASE ENROLLMENT

Chicago universities, such as Roosevelt and North Park, slashed tuition rates to reflect the real cost of tuition after aid packages, such as scholarships, are given. With the tuition decrease, these schools are still experiencing an increase in enrollment. Despite Northeastern's growth in enrollment, it has increased tuition.



Outgoing Board of Trustees Chair, Daniel Goodwin, retires Sep. 1.

photos courtesy of Independent Archives

A Closer Look...



University's half-baked construction projects stifle curriculum

As the new school year begins full of hope and promise, and believe me, we have a lot to hope for after the tumultuous school year we had with the strike and SGA scandals, it'll be pretty hard to top that unless people start trying really hard.

With the teachers' contract signed, the university president on sabbatical, and a new SGA president in office, we can start paying attention to the things that really matter, like our money. Tuition has gone up, and all we have to show for it is a grassy field.

Our money has been spent rather haphazardly on trivial things in the past, like the remodeling of several buildings and then fixing the errors made during the remodeling. From the looks of it, the administration doesn't seem to have its priorities straightened out yet.

Less than a year after the new parking garage was built to ease the parking troubles that we used to have, one of the old parking lots is destroyed and converted to a grassy field. The reasoning of that was never thoroughly explained. Sure it looks nice and brings us closer to nature, but was it really necessary?

When pulling the plug on lot K, it's doubtful that these people considered that the parking garage blocks off the top level when there is snow and that it is usually packed up to the fourth floor during the daytime. Later on we face the remodeling of the A wing and probably some more landscaping projects. Is that really necessary? If it isn't broke, don't fix it, right? The perpetual remodeling of the campus needs to come to an end at some point.

Northeastern is a university, not a botanical garden. The administration's number one priority should be providing the best possible programs for its students. Last year, the students had to pay the ultimate price for the administration's indifference to the university's academic program when the teachers' union went on strike. What is it going to take to make them put the students' education above all other projects?

It appears that our administrators are more interested in leaving their mark on the university than providing the best education possible for its students. Various campus upgrades have been completed while the university's curriculum has remained pretty stagnant. Occasionally a few new courses are added, but not much is ever done to improve the current offerings.

Students come to Northeastern to get an education, not to stroll around the campus. They assume that they are getting the most bang for their buck when handing over their hard earned money to the university. An attractive campus is nice but it won't save you money on car insurance. It does little to help us advance in our chosen field of study.

Beck's Books apologizes

by Joe Hertel
Opinions Editor

In response to student complaints regarding customer treatment and a no-pens policy in the textbook section of the store, Beck's Books has rescinded the controversial policy and issued an apology.

In an e-mail sent to student Tara Adkins on Aug. 8, Mike Small, manager of the campus bookstore stated, "We have decided to abolish this policy at least for right now."

Small also apologized to Adkins for, "being treated so rudely at our store." Adkins had complained to Small about the way she and other students had been approached when trying to comparison shop by writing textbook information in their notebooks.

Small defended the initial need for the policy. "A large number of our books were being damaged by students who would write down information on top of the new books."

He pointed out that "the covers would become dented and damaged to the point that they could no longer be sold as new."

The no-pens policy was initially reported in the *Independent* on June 1, 2005, when student

Patricia Swewczyk reported a confrontation with bookstore employees when she tried to copy book titles and prices.

At the time it was alleged that no signs of the policy were posted in the store. Subsequent to the incident, signs were posted clearly throughout the store.

Both Swewczyk and Adkins complained about the rudeness of some of Beck's employees, which prompted Small to explain, "I know sometimes our employees get frustrated by the fact that several thousand dollars in damage have occurred each semester. However, that is no excuse for rudeness."

According to Small, it was the first time in the 50-year history of Beck's Books that a no-pens policy was instituted at the store. It decided to implement the policy due to increasing damage done to books, such as removal of shrink wrap to copy information within the books, indentations on covers from heavy writing on the books and students mishandling materials.

For the time being, according to Small, the policy will be rescinded in the hopes that students will be more careful in handling the textbooks when copying information.

Indecent exposure on the pool deck

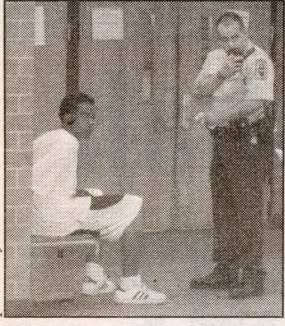


Photo by Tom Robb

This teenage boy flashed a female lifeguard.

by Tom Robb
News Editor

A juvenile was detained by Public Safety for exposing himself in the pool area. The youth, here as part of Family Day, exposed his "private area" to a female lifeguard, according to Chief Jim Lyon of Public Safety and an NEIU Police Report.

According to the NEIU Police report, the offender stated that he, and his friends were hot after playing basketball and thought of going into the pool to "cool down." The report further states that when a lifeguard asked if the offender was wearing swim trunks, the offender turned to her, dropped his shorts to his knees, stating "No, let me show you." He was wearing no other articles of clothing.

The report states the offender was "showing nothing but his 'private areas.'" At that point, the lifeguard contacted public safety.

The *Independent* was on the scene and observed Public Safety Officer Arturo Galindo standing over a juvenile who was in handcuffs and was later escorted away and issued a criminal trespass warning. No charges were filed.

Misconduct

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

together as a staff and look at if we need to step up patrols of certain areas." Specht said he would be meeting with Chief Lyon to discuss the issue.

Dean of Students Kelly stated that in addition to criminal proceedings, the offender would face an investigation and possible sanctions from Student Due Process.

Kelly also described the incident as "an isolated incident." Though he would not comment on specifics of the case, Kelly stated, "There is nothing we can compare this to ... sexual harassment is a serious matter."

"The P.E. Complex is safe ... There is security in the P.E. building just as all the other buildings," said Kelly.

There is no officer posted permanently at the P.E. Building or any other building on campus. Two to three Public Safety officers patrol the entire campus at any given time. According to Chief Lyon

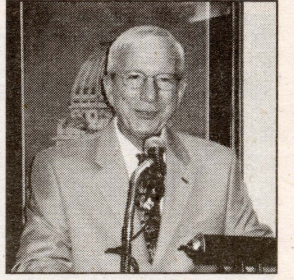
there was one officer and one sergeant on duty on the day of the incident.

Responding to staffing levels in Public Safety, Kelly responded, "Despite the small size of the force, they respond quickly."

Two days earlier, Public Safety had responded to the P.E. Building on a report of a man stimulating himself in the showers. It was later determined that this was the same individual that was later caught on July 29. Two officers and one sergeant were on duty on July 27 at the time of this incident.

Public Safety Officers were hampered in their investigation, as a camera set near the entrance to the P.E. Building was not recording. Chief Lyon stated that a temporary camera has since been put in place and a contractor had been contacted to make repairs. Although labeled an "isolated incident" by several administrators, there was also an incident of indecent exposure just over one week later on the pool deck.

Husband and wife retire after 17 years of service



V.P. for Facilities Management, Joseph Kish.

The Kishes celebrate at retirement party

by Andrea Zelinski
Business Manager

Amid several laughs and a couple tears, almost a hundred people huddled in the Golden Eagles room to bid farewell to Joseph and Paula Kish at their retirement party Thursday, Aug. 25.

Both have been working for the university since 1988, with Joseph as the Assistant to the Vice President for Facilities Management and Paula working in Human Relations. Their last day is Aug. 31.

"You're an amazing, wonderful group of people," said Paula. "I'm going to miss you and love all of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Northeastern "was more like a small town. Everyone knew everybody," Joe said with tears welling up in his eyes. "We'll be back."

Signing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

raise for most members of the union. There are also stipulations for promotion pay, excellence pay and union members who have recently completed a degree.

The particulars surrounding professors who had worked as student club advisors has still not been settled. As a precursor to the fall 2004 strike, UPI members resigned their positions as club advisors over a dispute in pay, causing the clubs to operate without advisors. Student Activities has since assumed some of these duties.

According to Tony Courier, an assistant in Student Activities, there are some faculty advisors who are currently advising student clubs without compensation. Clubs without advisors are still operating with the assistance of Courier and others.

Hunt addressed the issue by saying, "The union's only position on that is that union members be compensated for their work." Hunt also characterized the situation as an "administrative issue" between Vice President of Student Affairs Melvin Terrell and Provost Lawrence Frank. The issue is that the Provost's office pays professors and the Vice President of Student Affairs administers the program.

According to administration sources, there has also been speculation that club advisors may be paid with Student Activity fees.

Compensation for advising clubs was formerly handled by Provost Frank, but it is unclear which department will administer the program and pay professors for their work.

Mercury

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

university of wrongdoing after a Northeastern worker informed them of the spill and complained of respiratory symptoms. The *Independent* contacted Ms. Demerin-Lubuguin; she refused to comment.

University employees who work in and around the area are upset that the university did not notify them about the spill or offer testing.

Vice President of Finance and Administration Mark Wilcockson responded to those concerns: "If they were exposed to mercury vapors it would have been for a fairly short period of time; there's no one who works down there."

Wilcockson referenced a Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) guideline stating that "prolonged exposure" to mercury vapors is defined as eight continuous hours.

Inventory Records Supervisor Jack Kearney argued with Wilcockson's response, stating that he currently spends only about one hour a day in the affected area, but his office used to be in Property Control and that the administration does not know when the spill occurred.

Further, Kearney had three student aids who worked with him in Property Control. Kearney and another worker, who requested to remain anonymous, are currently seeking medical tests for mercury exposure.

Patrick O'Brien contributed to this report.



Student union.

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Advertisement

Editorial

You get what you work for

Some people choose the college or university they want to go to; some people have circumstance choose it for them.

Just because you can't afford Northwestern doesn't mean you have to settle for less from the school you attend. If you believe landing here at Northeastern is a step down, you probably will get what you settle for: a mediocre education.

After going here long enough, you can sometimes hear the letdown in people's voices when they explain that they go to Northeastern Illinois University, not Northwestern, not the Northeastern in Boston, but the school tucked away on Bryn Mawr Avenue. The one that's cheap, cheap, cheap.

There are certain things in life where money should be no object, and in a perfect world everyone would have the opportunity to attend an Ivy League school. This is far from a perfect world, and some students are forced to choose their university based on their pocketbook.

That is not a good reason, however, to allow ourselves to be defined by the size of the check we cut to pay for tuition. There are other ways to get what you pay for.

You could start, incoming and existing students, by forgetting that you are here for any other reason than to become great at something, whether it be business, computer science, history, education or theater.

Forget the voices that throw brickbats towards the school you call home. Remember that you control your success, not the college name on your degree.

This past summer, a *Chicago Tribune* editorial questioned the low graduation rate at Northeastern and suggested it was a reflection of the poor training given to Chicago Public School students who enroll here.

"There are lies, damned lies, and statistics," Mark Twain said. No numbers can do justice to the work put in by the 11,000 plus students here. Although it does take longer to graduate here, it is because it is difficult to finish a four year degree on time when you work 20-40 hours a week, as so many of our students do.

It's hard to explain that to people who haven't walked the walk here, so forgive them.

Remember, this is only a mediocre education if you make it one.

No wheelchair left behind?

by J. Louis Bracich
Special Contributor

In the half a decade that I had been attending this university, one thing had been nagging me: the existing situation for the disabled.

NEIU has yet to provide equal access when it comes to the disabled, nor do they have any development with them in mind. I say this from what I have witnessed and experienced in the five years here. If there are future developments in the works, kudos to the university.

My first obstacle attending NEIU was the computer lab in the basement of the classroom building. Many times I have aided a fellow student in a wheelchair or have talked with fellow students about the difficulties in accessing this lab. Unlike the labs upstairs on the second floor or the new ones in the B-wing, these doors must be manually pulled. For someone with physical disabilities, he or she may have a hard time opening the doors, or they simply wait, praying someone sees them and helps. The excuse that the B-wing has ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant entrances because it is new and the Classroom Building lab doesn't because it is old, is no excuse. The ADA was passed over a decade ago, giving the school enough time to install an automated door.

Speaking of automated doors, the construction of the automated door in the A-Building exit facing St. Louis Avenue has always intrigued me. The design itself makes no sense. Someone in a wheelchair must attempt to swivel around to activate the door, then (unlike everyone else) must maneuver their chair into a small tight entrance.

The only major restructuring to aid the disabled that I have seen has been the front lobby of the Science Building, but here again we find problems. Like the design of the St. Louis Exit, the need for the disabled seems to be only an afterthought. The original lobby had two expansive automated doors with side rails. Today the automated door is located off to the side, which, in my experience, has been

turned off many times. Why leave this door shut off during normal business hours?

If neglecting access for the disabled were a criminal offense, the people who build and manage the facilities of this place would be on death row. The biggest evidence of this sheer neglect is in the Science Building.

A disabled student who has difficulty walking or operating a manual wheelchair must climb the series of steep ramps inside the Science Building. The only viable elevator is the freight elevator that is not clearly marked and located at the back of the building. Further, the lounge area, a bathroom and vending machines are off limits because it is only accessible via some steps.

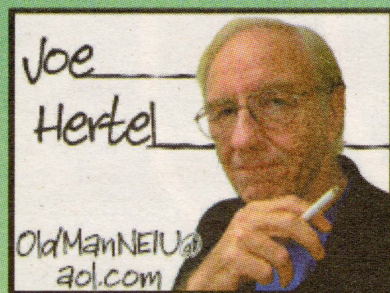
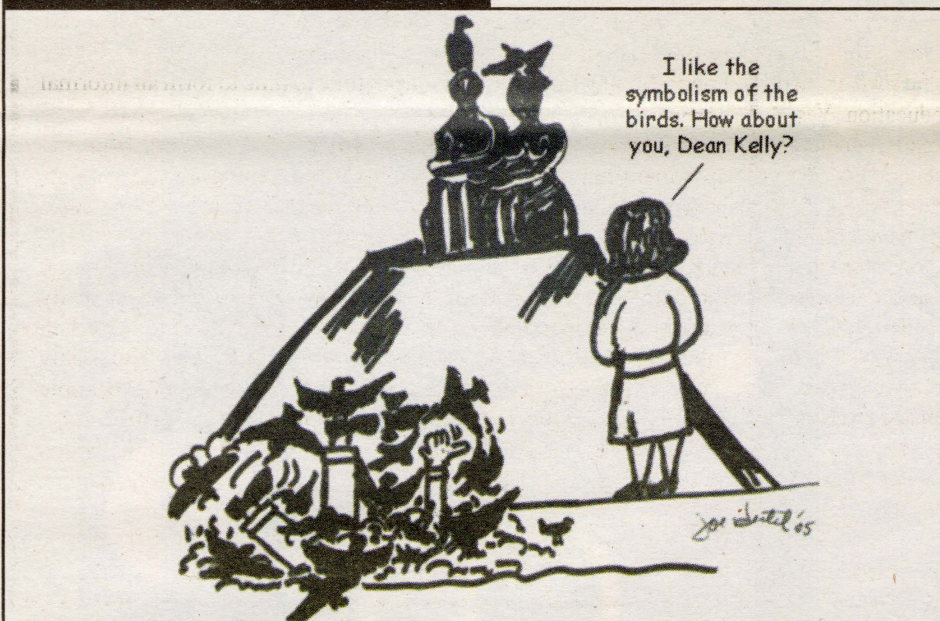
Besides the lack of proper doors in places (like the entrance of the A-wing by the counselor's office), it has been this university's abstention from educating disabled people on emergency situations that has great cause for alarm. In the five years I have been here, no one has told me what a disabled person should do in event of an emergency.

If you were physically disabled, especially in a wheelchair, and were located on an upper floor and a fire broke out, what would you do? Should you be trapped on the third floor of the Science Building or the Library, could you escape? Those with the privilege of walking could simply flee down the stairs, but what about those who can't?

J. Louis Bracich is an alumnus of NEIU and the former business manager of the Independent.



Another point of view



Old Man on Campus

Klatu verada nicto

It started with three television shows I watched as a child in the 1950s: "Captain Video," "Space Patrol" and "Space Cadets." I believed in other worlds, other life forms and the real possibility of space travel.

Those three early shows with their cardboard props and flimsy sets, which even to an impressionable child appeared phony, inspired me to plan future journeys to the moon and beyond.

There were many movies that also impressed me. "War of the Worlds" and other space monster movies of the late fifties were okay entertainment, even though I did not understand yet that the "monsters" were really symbols for communism and fascism and unknown terrors of the nuclear age.

The movie that impressed me most was "The Day the Earth Stood Still," where

we were warned of our violent and aggressive ways by a space messenger, Klatu, whom we, of course, killed out of our ignorance and fear. The famous line, "Klatu verada nicto," (roughly translated means, "Klatu lives not") is forever imprinted in my memory banks.

In the early 1960s, "Space, the final frontier," opened up with the debut of "Star Trek," an intelligent, well balanced presentation of space monsters and socio-political relations with other-world neighbors.

I went with the crew of the Enterprise "where no man has gone before." As the years passed, spaceships became starships in new series and movies, and the Federation grew through peaceful negotiations and winning wars with more hostile enemies.

It was life among the stars. It was belief that there is more than just us out there someplace in this vast universe. It still is, and there are those who believe as I do that it will

happen one day.

I won't be like the guy Fry on "Futurama," frozen for a thousand years and able to see it happen. I'll be dust for a long time when we finally do begin to seek out new life forms, hopefully spreading the gospel of intergalactic peace and goodwill.

But if certain theories of space visitation are correct, then we might never make it to the stars. The powers that be who already traverse this universe, this galaxy, maybe don't want us and our barbaric behavior tainting the karma of the stars. Perhaps they have been watching us and our world situation. Perhaps they have cause for concern in letting us join the Federation that already exists. Perhaps we are more like the Borg, always ready to conquer and assimilate others rather than live in peace.

If we believe there is someone out there and they already have visited and are watching

us, then it must be for one of two reasons. First, to see if we, as a world of diverse race and culture, have learned to live in peace and are ready for space travel and contact with other worlds. Second, they will come and tell us we are a threat to the universe and will prevent us from going beyond our own solar system ... or destroy us altogether.

So, if that time comes, will we still be so warlike that we will kill the messenger out of our own fear and aggressiveness? Or will we, on our own, learn to live in peace with each other. There is really not much time left to decide our fate. We might just blow ourselves to bits without any outside alien help.

As for me, I side with Klatu. We need to change our ways if we are going to get anywhere in, or for that matter, out of this world.

Dear Editor,

Welcome, freshmen, to Northeastern Illinois University. Some of you came here for the reasons that 1) it's cheap and 2) its academic reputation is summed up in the word "Northeasy."

But upon arrival you noticed our motto, "Committed to Excellence," and you begin to worry. "What the heck," you thought, "the only things I excel at is computer games and puking peanuts and hurling beer up and down Clark St. after the Cubs blow another game. Maybe I don't belong here."

Well, I'm here to reassure you. Let me begin with a quote from a paper of one of our students:

"The previous garden symbolized true love out of liberty with flowers, however now God's garden has been tainted with tradition and commands which take away the original intent put forth from God of the Bible, who did not make robots, nor force people out of fear to comply with dictates that zap life and love."

Now you may be thinking "Wow. That's deep. I didn't understand a word of it. Maybe I should go to Truman College." So let me, as promised, reassure you: It's gibberish! And here's the really good news: It was written by a student in English literature – a graduate student – a graduate student with a B+/A- grade point average! So what are you worried about?

Well, maybe you're worried that you have really basic problems with the English language. You've recently arrived in this country and have picked up only a few basic phrases, like, "Do you have a sister?" Or, "Back home they say I look like Brad Pitt." Or, "Hey, pretty woman, when you danced on the floor, I like the way you shake your rectum." And now you hear that Northeastern Illinois University, in its commitment to excellence, requires all students to pass a language competency exam before they can graduate. Calm yourself and take a look at two written statements from a

student who passed the exam: "There are some classes that professors have different way to grade. Sometimes I think some professors are too easy and some are too hard, even though it is the same course but different section." So what are you worried about?

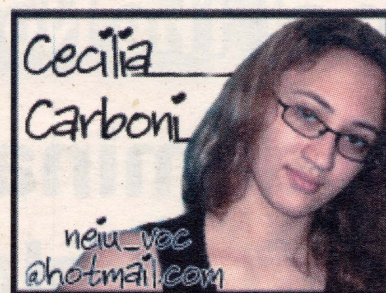
Looking ahead at the big picture, President Steinberg has stated that she wishes to increase enrollment at Northeastern in the future. Here's your first quiz: Are you more likely to increase enrollment by a) raising standards, b) lowering standards c) both of the above? Come on, even a Cub fan can figure that one out.

Of course, the faculty at Northeastern can be distinguished from the institution. And there are indeed many fine faculty members who maintain standards in their courses and are truly committed to excellence. So here's my final word of advice to you: AVOID THEM!

Good luck and go Cubs.

Harry White
English Department

Movin' on up...



"Cut the umbilical cord," he said to her. "Let her be independent. She'll be fine."

And thus the speech ended.

My mother's oldest is spending her first night

in her own apartment. That slightly furrowed brow shows me that she doesn't know whether to smile or cry. She doesn't know where I'm headed or how far from her I will be. Neither do I, nor does anyone leaving home for the first time.

Since NEIU has no dorms, there really isn't any intermediate step between living at home and finding your own place. To many parents, a dorm is part of the whole college experience, and they know that even dorm life provides certain safety nets. Once they're used to you being away, the apartment deal is much easier to deal with.

We are a commuter college. You're expected to commute.

Many of you have the option of leaving your parents; some of you already have. Some of you might think it's something that will never quite happen, as I believed just two weeks ago. Even a larger percent of you have already established homes and families, or might even have a child of your own that's heading off. It's an experience tinged with anxiousness and excitement.

The benefits seem obvious when it's a conversation in your head. You can be closer to your frequent destination and save on gas. But then you have rent to pay and all those bills that simply didn't exist when you were at home.

Water bill? Where did that come from?

You don't have to deal with your family's annoying habits. But you do have to deal with newfound annoyances from your roommates, as well as new neighbors.

Ah, roommates. If they were close friends before, they might be getting closer than you ever anticipated—especially if you buy one of those transparent shower curtains.

Same thing goes for their friends. And there's the ever-present risk of a spontaneous collection of people you don't quite know slipping into your home from time to time to form an informal party.

I already banned excessive amounts of drinking from my apartment to protect my carpet. As I found out at the apartments in Urbana-Champaign, I don't like waking up to find my shoes soaking wet for no explicable reason.

The first night though, with that cliché Chinese takeout on the bare living room floor, is strange because you cannot really fathom the scope of what you are undertaking. "What am I getting into?" you ask. How do you assure your parents when you hardly know if your expectations are feasible? What are these next couple months going to do to the direction of the rest of your life?

You just have to take that dive. Doing so doesn't mean you disconnect from your family completely, a context both parents and child will often fall into believing. It's just a way of finding out how capable you are of flying from the nest.

And if I crash, I owe it to my luck not to burn.

MAIL BAG

We need to know the truth

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to the article printed in your Aug. 2 edition of the *Independent* regarding the mercury spill that occurred on June 21.

I am absolutely appalled that the mercury spill situation was not taken more seriously by university officials at the onset of the spill. As a student leader I have many questions that remain unanswered. Why wasn't the EPA informed of this matter immediately? Additionally, as your article points out, the source of

the spill has still not been located, so what are the risks to the students on our campus? Were any student aides exposed to the mercury spill when it initially occurred? Does mercury evaporate and permeate in the air and cause harm? Should the university community start to worry?

We have the right to know!!!!

Student Body President
Evelyn Nazario-Rose

MAIL BAG

SGA President welcomes students back

To my fellow student body:

On behalf of the members of the Student Government Association (SGA), I would like to welcome you all to the 2005-2006 academic year here at Northeastern Illinois University. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the students that voted during the Spring, 2005 elections, especially those students from the Jacob Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies and the students of El Centro. Thank you for believing in me. I promise to work to the best of my abilities to be your voice when you feel you aren't being heard.

Since the summer, the members of NEIU's SGA have been working extremely hard to

make sure that this year will be one of educational enrichment for the students at all three of our campuses. We are also looking to help motivate students, faculty/staff, and the administration for the purpose of regenerating school spirit back on our campus and we need your help in order to do it. The student government offices are located next to the *Independent* newspaper and across from Health Services. We are encouraging all students to take a more proactive approach with your education and become involved on campus. If student government is not your niche, there are over 70 other student clubs and organizations that you can select

from. The most important thing is that you get involved and share in the governance of your education. Yes, this is a commuter campus, but there is much more to this school than just classes and the computer room.

Again, I want to welcome all of you to NEIU. My office is located in E-047A and my office extension is 4286. If there is an issue that you feel needs to be addressed, or if you have any ideas to help improve student life here on our campus, e-mail me at neiusgapres@yahoo.com.

Have a great year and I wish all the best in your future endeavors.

Student Body President
Evelyn Nazario-Rose

Is the customer always right?

by Joe Hertel

Opinions Editor

The recent flak over Beck's policy of no pens in the textbook section brings to mind whether the customer is always right. They ain't.

I've seen some of the customers at Beck's in action and sympathize with Mike Small, manager of Beck's, and his staff who have to deal with these arrogant, self-righteous, belligerent students who think they can run roughshod through the place.

They rip open shrink-wrapped books and materials, tear through packaging to handle supplies, and bend, fold and mutilate poster board and paper items. They then complain about the employees who try and stop their trail of vandalism.

There is a segment of the student body who show no respect for the property and rights of others on this campus. They see themselves as the center of the universe and their arrogant behavior attests to their ignorance. They complain that they have to leave their book bags at the front of the store, but it is a policy simply because in

the past too many students were dropping things into those bags without paying for them.

The no pens policy was enacted for the first time in the 50 year history of the store because too many students were manhandling and mishandling the textbooks. This can only be attributed to the callous and disrespectful treatment of Beck's inventory by the students themselves.

This ain't an open market area, folks. Beck's is here on campus for the students. It's a store catering specifically to students and it is the actions of the students of this university who dictate those store policies. There are no "outside" customers. Students must accept the responsibility for bringing these policies upon themselves because of their own behavior within the store.

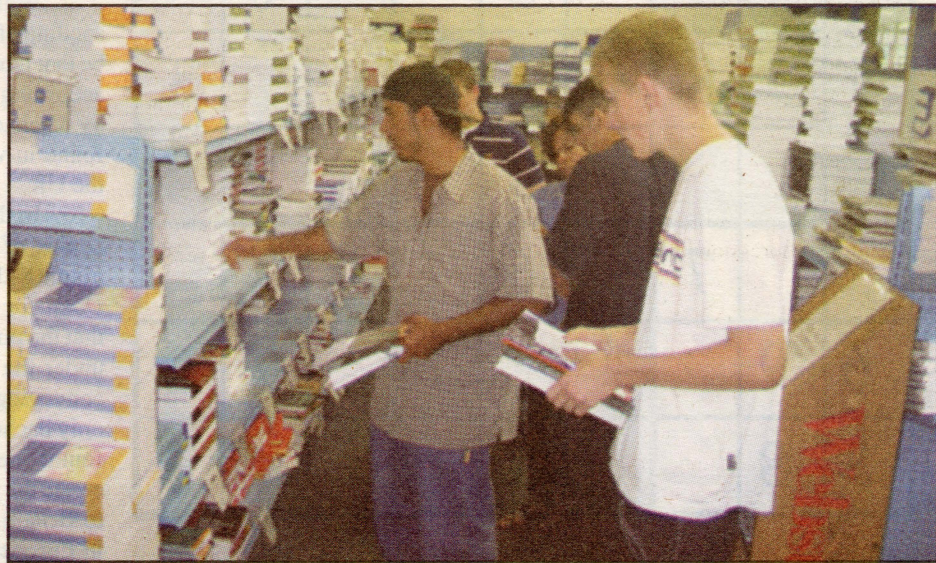
Instead, certain students become even more belligerent and dare the employees who confront their in-store destructive behavior to call the cops. Rudeness begets rudeness, my fellow students. If you act like a jerk, expect to be treated like one.

Due to student complaints, Beck's has now apologized to the offended students and

currently rescinded their policy of no pens in the textbook area. Let us now see if students will be cooperative and act like responsible adults by treating the inventory with respect as they comparison shop. Let's see if they will stop damaging the merchandise and respect the

property of the bookstore.

We complain about high prices at Beck's. Has anyone ever given thought to the fact that part of the cost of our books covers the damage that certain infantile students inflict upon them?



Adeel Asif, Beck's employee, helps students during the back to school rush.

photo by Dorian Barrios

Eagle's Nest

Lifestyles of the Northeastern Community



Firefox dominates Microsoft Explorer

by Jessica Moen
Senior Staff Writer



When it comes to the internet, people are always looking for faster, safer, and better ways to surf. Many people are unsatisfied with Microsoft's default browser, Internet Explorer (IE). It has too many pop-ups that can't be blocked, and it's just not that fast. A safe and fun alternative for most people is Mozilla's Firefox.

Blake Ross, who was only in ninth grade when he started piecing together codes for Mozilla, created Firefox three years ago. Ross had help from Ben Goodger, a programmer from New Zealand, who was only 24 at the time. It was created as a much needed alternative to IE. Firefox was originally called Phoenix, and it went through several name changes before it finally became Firefox. Its logo consists of an orange fox whose body is enflamed and wrapped around the Earth.

Ross and Goodger claim that they have no problem with Microsoft, they just didn't believe that Explorer was cutting it, and therefore, wanted to create a much better browser. In fact, the browser was quickly picked up and used by many people who had originally used IE. The fact that it runs much faster than IE, and that it will even run on Mac and Linux systems, made this browser

a fast hit with web surfers. Best of all, the browser is completely free and can be downloaded right from the website, www.firefox.com.

The original browser did not have much to offer, but it did have some special features that IE didn't have, such as a download manager. Also, Firefox originally didn't contain a search option, but it did have its own pop-up and spyware blocker, which it still has today. Firefox actually contains less pop-ups than IE because IE has its own Microsoft pop-ups that cannot be blocked. It also has significantly less spyware for the same reason, and for what is left, it has its own spyware software.

Another good feature of Firefox is the fact that you can install many different plugins to your browser, such as a feature that blocks out any ad that is on the page, even non pop-up ads. It has a number of options that you can play around with as well, which are all available from their web site. Of course, since it is a fairly new program, it still has some expanding to do. It still has some bugs that are being worked out, but Firefox is comparatively better than IE. It's easy to see why Firefox became such a big hit.

Additional Sources:
www.flexbeta.net
Wired Magazine



Nature Hidden.

by Deborah Goldbaum
Copy Editor

Although Northeastern's campus is in an urban setting, signs of nature surround us. This is especially true at the North Park Village Nature Center. The nature center was created to help the urban citizens interact with the nature around them.

The nature center has trails, a discovery room, public programs, and workshops and classes. According to the Chicago Park District, it has trails that "take people through woodlands, wetlands, prairie and Savanna." It also has a discovery room at the North Park Village Nature Center which is interactive and has a hands-on table of nature objects.

The center also has public programs for preschoolers, school-age children, families and adults. Two other programs at the Nature Center are the eco-explorers summer camp and an outreach program.

Along with these programs there are a variety of workshops and classes, including yoga for adults, seniors and children. Other available classes are a photography class and a nature art course for both kids and adults. They also provide classes on mushroom identification and a theater hike.

The center is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. everyday, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

The center is located at 5801 N. Pulaski Road in Chicago.

SUDOKU

An international sensation

by Jenni Lada
Features Editor

If you've checked out a complementary issue of the *Red Eye* from one of the dispensers in front of the school or a recent issue of the *Chicago Sun Times*, you might have noticed a blurb on the front page declaring the arrival of a new puzzle by the name of Sudoku. This new game from overseas seems to have taken not only the city of Chicago, but the whole country by storm.

With a name like Sudoku (or its alternate spelling of Su Doku), your first conclusion may be that it originated somewhere in Asia. In fact, according to *The Book of Sudoku* compiled by Michael Mepham, the game could be first found in various magazines in newspapers in the UK.

In the past ten years the Japanese found copies of this variety of puzzle and started placing them in certain magazines. In *Su Doku for Dummies*, Edmund James relates that the puzzles could be found in publications under the title "suji wa dokushin ni kagiru," conveying the meaning that the numbers are only bachelors. It was there that Wayne Gould found them, devised a program that could create the puzzles on his computer, and headed to Britain. The puzzles then began appearing in European papers and on the internet under the name Sudoku.

The first thing you notice about the puzzle is that it is essentially a large grid. There are nine cubes put together to make one larger cube. Inside each smaller cube are nine boxes. The object of the puzzle is to use the numbers one through nine inside each cube. The trick though is that each row of numbers both across and down also must have the numbers one through nine, with no doubles.

This may seem exceedingly simple at first, but once you set into your first puzzle frustration will set in. There are some helpful tricks to remember though. First, look at the entire puzzle as a whole, not at individual boxes. You may find that in the top three boxes that two of them share a common number.

Looking across and down can help you instantly discover spots where the third number must be. In the top of each cell you might want to write in the upper corner what numbers could possibly fit. Writing above each box what numbers are missing can also help eliminate confusion when trying to see at a glance what numbers are absent.

The most important thing is to not get too annoyed about one puzzle. If a line or box is bothering you, come back to it later. Don't lose heart if you can't solve a puzzle on your first try. When you are just starting, have a pencil with a good eraser handy and just have fun.

The great thing about Sudoku is after you finish one, you're left with a sense of accomplishment that leaves you with a sense of pride that gets you addicted and ready for more.

8	6			4			9	7
1	3		9		8		5	2
		9		1		3		
	4			5			6	
5		8	6		9	4		3
	1			8			2	
		7		6		9		
6	9		4		1		7	8
3	8			9			4	6

image by Jenni Lada

Around Campus



Organic Matter: Noelle Allen and Eric Wert

Drawings that explore the peculiarities of the natural world

August 29-September 30 in the Fine Arts Center Gallery. It's free. A reception with the artists will be held Friday, September 16 6 - 9 p.m.

2005 Coat Drive

The A&P Council, in association with the Civil Service Council, is searching for new or gently used children coats to donate to a charitable organization. Coats can be delivered to D-039 or D-039a below the Cashiers by November 30th. Check the progress at <http://www.neiu.edu/~aandp>

NEIU Women's V-Ball Club welcomes all NEIU female students to join and play Women's Volleyball. Open Gym schedule:

When: Wednesday, August 31 from 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.

Place: PE Building in Auxiliary gym 4 & 5. Please be on time and ready to play.

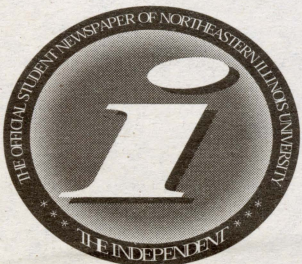
If you're interested in playing, contact Ana Gonzalez at Neiuvballclub@hotmail.com

Important dates to remember:

August 29-31: The Graduate College will accept applications for December 2005 Graduation.

August 29: First day of weekday classes.

August 29-September 7: Last opportunity to change your registration by the Touchtone Telephone Registration System.



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The Independent is published every week except during semester breaks. Deadline is five (5) days prior to the issue in which a contribution is to appear. Views expressed in letters are those of the university community, and not those of the Editorial Board.

The Chief Editor is responsible for the content of the Independent and views presented do not necessarily represent those of the administration, faculty, or students.

The Independent is a member of the Illinois College Press Association and Associated Collegiate Press.

Independent,
Northeastern Illinois University, Room E-049,
5500 N. St. Louis Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60625

Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Friday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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1999 Nissan Sentra GXE Limited Edition. 68K the car is in excellent condition. Call (847) 791-0050.

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Swim coach needed. Great part-time opportunity for current/ex swimmer! State Championship Masters Club looking for talented coach with experience. Up to 10 hrs/wk, up to \$22/hr, based on experience. Respond ASAP. Email: sulli560@comcast.net; ktbmail@sbcglobal.net

The INDEPENDENT is looking for writers, photographers, editors, cartoonist and designers who are looking towards advancement. Will pay. For more information, e-mail neiu_independent@yahoo.com.

The INDEPENDENT is seeking business-minded students interested in working in a small

environment. Looking for administrative assistants, sales representatives and students who can work on marketing plans. For more information, e-mail Andrea at neiuadvertising@yahoo.com.

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Personals

Do you enjoy reading "Old man on Campus?" Do you want to read more? Check out his blog site at <http://bughouse.neiu.edu/oldman>.

Oh, goody gumdrops!!



Limit one ad per person/organization per issue. Ads must be 20 words or less. There is a 25 cent charge for each word over 20 words. All classified ads must be ordered in person at the Independent office in E-049. For more information, please call Andrea Zelinski, Business Manager, at 773-442-4585.

* This rate applies to members of the NEIU community only. An NEIU identification card must be presented at the time of purchase.

Name: _____ Date: _____
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AD AS IT IS TO READ:

Side Splitters

Joe Clipart

Class, what can you tell me about the Macedonians?	They're nuts from Hawaii?	Why is it always me?

by Joe Hertel

When hunger strikes on campus

How to fend it off

by Anna Zimowska
Staff Writer

When you first get to Northeastern, Pizza Hut and deli sandwiches can keep you amused for about three months, but after you hit year number six, it's pretty much coming out of your ears. Let's face it, there aren't exactly an abundant number of choices of where to eat on the NEIU campus. If you exclude vending machines and bringing your own lunch, you're basically left with three choices: Beck's Bookstore, Café Descartes and the cafeteria.

Beck's Bookstore is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Your food options there are pretty much what you would find in a convenience store: nutrition bars, candy, chips, juices, pop, microwaveable soup, tuna salad, crackers, and TV dinners, such as Dinty Moore's roast beef and gravy.

Café Descartes, located in Village Square, is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and on Saturday, 6:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. At Café Descartes you can pretty much get your basic coffee shop fare: coffee, cappuccinos, lattes, iced and frozen drinks, a good variety of teas, muffins, bagels (they have cream cheese but no jelly, though jelly can be found in the cafeteria), some sandwiches and yogurt parfaits, like the ones from the cafeteria. The sandwiches and parfaits are more expensive there, however, than the ones found in the cafeteria.

The cafeteria (located downstairs in the Student Union)

has the strictest hours of the three options: Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There you can find a more complete meal, rather than the smaller bits and pieces from the other spots. There's Pizza Hut, Deli Signatures (which used to be a Subway, but still has basically the same food despite the change in name), 3 Squares (a grill), Juan's World (restaurant style meals with big portions) and a soup stand. On Friday there is usually a buffet at Juan's World.

Always remember to check the prices of some of your basic choices because there can be a large difference, and a short walk can help you save some of your cash. Even though you can get better deals at the cafeteria, the café and Beck's have better hours. Hours are especially short on Friday, so keep that in mind. There have been numerous petitions passed around about the cafeteria during service hours, but no changes have happened yet (feel free to take on this task, especially if you are a wide-eyed and hopeful freshman).

Once you have sampled everything on the menu, remember to keep checking out Juan's World and the soup stand because the menus vary from day to day.

FOR A QUICK COMPARISON:
20oz Dasani water - \$1.75 at the café, \$1.00 at vending machine, \$.97 at Beck's


Bagel with cream cheese- \$1.35 at the café, \$1.10 at the cafeteria
Muffin - \$2.00 at the café, \$1.10 at the cafeteria
Small coffee - \$1.40 at the café, \$1.25 at the cafeteria

Beck's Bookstore

Fall Hours

Mon. Aug 29	8:30 to 8:30
Tues. Aug 30	8:30 to 8:30
Wed. Aug 31	8:30 to 8:30
Thurs. Sept 1	8:30 to 8:30
Fri. Sept 2	8:30 to 7:00
Sat. Sept 3	8:30 to 1:00
Sun. Sept 4	Closed
Mon. Sept 5	Closed
(Labor Day)	
Tues. Sept 6	8:30 to 7:30
Wed. Sept 7	8:30 to 7:30
Thurs. Sept 8	8:30 to 7:30
Fri. Sept 9	8:30 to 3:00
Sat. Sept 10	Closed

Last Day to return books for a full refund is Tuesday, Sept. 6th, 2005. Receipt is required. SHRINK WRAP BOOKS ARE NON RETURNABLE IF UNWRAPPED.



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Let's Get Personal

Kish has planted his last tree

When Joseph P. Kish was first hired by the university in 1988, the school was adding the finishing touches to the PE Complex. Buildings B, C, D, and E had seen better days, and the Fine Arts Building, well, there was no Fine Arts Building.

Then Kish came along. As the Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management, he helped make Northeastern what you see today. For the past 17 years, he's had more than a hand in giving the university a physical makeover, and he'll be leaving it all for retirement on Aug. 31.

"What I'm most proud of is bringing a coherence to the university's physical facilities," said Kish, 65. "What we tried very hard to do was make [the university] look and feel like one campus. I think we're almost there."

Kish is the man who spearheaded the landscape design of the Campus Commons area located outside the Student Union, which provides a clean, attractive and practical gathering area for students. He is also the guy who managed the development and planning of the Parking Complex, Building B and C renovations, and construction of the Auditorium, just

to name his most recent endeavors.

Over the years, his goal was to help provide a physical unity to a campus spotted with different types of architecture. With that challenge, Kish was charged to be the caretaker of the campus, which included maintaining the classrooms and hallways we pass through each day. He ran the long-term projects we've seen unfold during the past several years.

"It was almost a self-fulfilling prophecy because as we improved things, others started taking care of other things better," said Kish reflecting on the past 17 years. "Previously, the floors were littered and they sorta got swept up, and they were littered again. But once you started cleaning them and shining them, they're pretty well respected."

Northeastern was a different place back then, he said. In 1988, people smoked in the halls, even in the classrooms. "There's just cigarette smoke, candy wrappers and everything all over the place. It was almost like no one cared."

Obviously, things have changed—as has Kish.

Kish served in Viet Nam twice, with tours of duty including company commander of two battalions and advisor to a district chief. One of the battalions developed airfields, base camps, roads and bridges. He also served as president of the Higher Education Facility Officers, otherwise known as APPA.

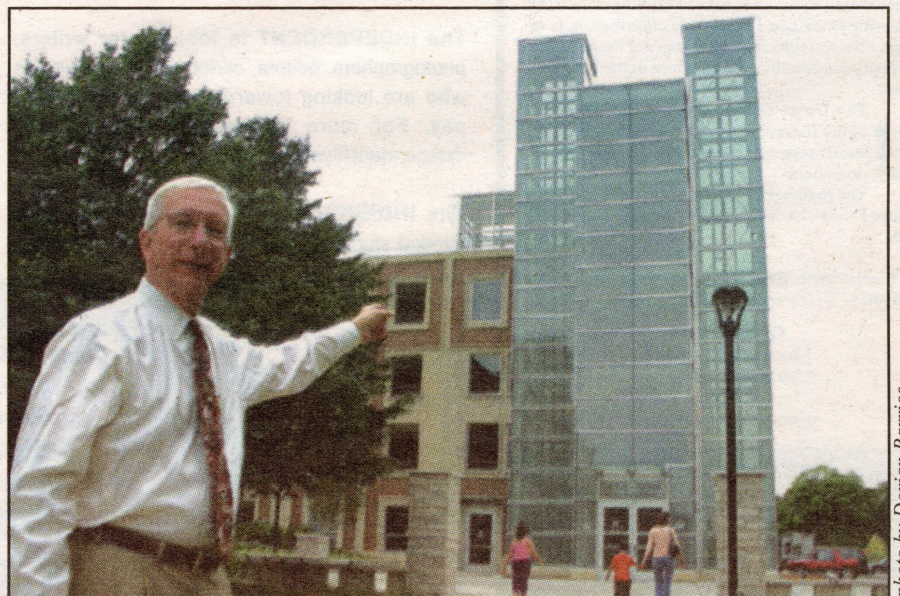
Upon leaving Northeastern, Kish said he'd miss the relationships with both people and things. Looking back, Kish believes he "probably planted most of trees on campus."

"I'll miss it, but, you know it's time to close the chapter and go on to a new one," he said, smiling. Both Kish and his wife Paula, who works in NEIU's Human Resources department, will retire to Texas as early as next week. During their marriage of 43 years, they have raised five children and are

expecting their eighth grandchild.

He said he won't miss going to work every day and was looking forward to playing more golf. Kish borrowed a quote he once found in a golfing calendar: "Golf is a way of claiming the privileges of age and retaining the playthings of childhood."

"That just struck my fancy," Kish explained. "We've got to be able to admit that we like to have fun. You're never too old."



Joseph P. Kish points to one of his many projects.

photo by Dorian Barrios

Advertisement