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Lenny Ocasio

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INDEPENDENT

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Vol. 24, Issue 25

Free Speech Proposal tabled by President Hahs

by Mike Arch
News Editor

President Sharron Hahs had approach the four main governing bodies on campus asking for an endorsement of the proposed Northeastern Illinois University Policy and procedure Concerning Demonstrations on campus, Distribution and display of visual communications and solicitation of signatures on campus (DDS.) She has made a decision to table the policy as of Jan. 6 after receiving endorsements from two of the four major governing bodies.

The policy was an attempt to clarify a general policy about these topics that already exists. It is the clarification of current policy; the student conduct code Administrative Memorandum #56. The document was created by the free speech task force and has been refined through the process.

"As things have gotten more muddled and the process has gotten confused I withdrew the document. It's time, everybody cares so deeply about this topic and I do too and the conversations are getting less and less fruitful," said President Hahs. "We are going to stop for awhile and figure out if we should do more with this document or should we do something different. So, I withdrew the document, when the document is getting in the way of the conversation that's not helpful."

President Hahs cited the Sen. Dick Durbin speech on Oct. 9, 2007 as one of the main reasons for the document. Senator

Durbin was invited to speak about the DREAM Act and protest ensued stating that Sen. Durbin supported the war. A topic unrelated to the speech. Sen. Durbin came back with, "This is America you are entitled to free speech, but don't rewrite my record."

Sen. Durbin was one of two Senators who voted against the war in Iraq from the start. Protesters were cited Durbin's vote for troop funding as support for the war. "It is important to have free speech but part of the etiquette of free speech is not to drown out others right to free speech," said President Hahs.

"I sent it to the four groups that are shared governance and requested they considered endorsing it SGA Faculty Senate the A&P Council and the Civil Service Council. It is something new and I thought it would be a good way to generate conversation



Photo by Duncan Macnab

President Hahs has decided to withdraw a policy that affects Demonstrations on campus, distribution and display of visual communications and solicitation of signatures on campus.

on the topic," said President Hahs.

"The SGA already endorsed. The Civil Service council has endorsed it. The other two have not yet," said President Hahs. "It's important that Students use proper

channels to protest. [Protest] is used because people don't have other mechanisms for their voice and I am trying to assure that there are

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English 101 courses revised for Spring 2009

by Michelle Jacobson
Opinions Editor

Beginning next semester, all English 101 courses will be aligned to produce the same learning outcomes as part of the five-year Title V Grant that was awarded in 2007.

The revision of English 101, along with the establishment of required writing intensive courses in every discipline and the construction of the Center for Academic Writing, is part of the "Improving Retention through Academic Literacy" project which is funded by the Title V Grant.

The grant was awarded as part of the Higher Education Act based on Northeastern Illinois University's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Vicki Byard, an English professor at NEIU, was named Coordinator of the First

Year Program in Jan. 2008 and has since been working with other professors to revise English 101 syllabi to include 7 specific learning outcomes that were approved by the English Department. The goal of aligning English 101 courses is to better prepare every student for their writing intensive courses.

"We want to make sure that when students leave 101, that they'll be ready for those writing intensive courses, that they'll have the skills that they need in terms of the writing to then be able to succeed with the disciplinary writing that they'll be asked to do," said Byard.

The English Department is also hiring more full time instructors who teach only English 101. These instructors will be required to teach 7 sections of English 101 a year.

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PHI RHO ETA to colonize NEIU

by Mike Arch
News Editor

Phi Rho Eta Fraternity is bringing a chapter to NEIU. The Fraternity is to bring awareness and solutions to social awareness through mentoring. Started in 1994 at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale they strive for community development and the development of their own members.

The Fraternity strives to provide its members with leadership through a pride in manhood and honor. Promote uplifting self, and others through community involvement. Encourage members to grow through their own and others experiences, and to achieve pride in all they do, Respect for all, and promote excellence.

"We look to aid troubled young

men that have a lack of guidance, and bridge the gap between college and high school," said LaMont Taylor, Co-Founder of Phi Rho Eta. "We provide a mentoring services, each chapter adopts a high school and they have group mentoring and one on one mentoring. Every chapter must establish a high school mentor program."

Phi Rho Eta has received permission from the United Greek Council to start recruiting on the NEIU campus. The Fraternity is a not for profit organization.

"The demand we provide for is mentoring services, and the supply is the college students that focus on mentoring in high schools," said LaMont.

Currently Phi Rho Eta has seven

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Streamwood Park District Honors Alumnus

by Mike Arch
News Editor

Ruth Regenburg Andersen a teacher for 43 years passed away Dec. 9 at the age of 97. Among her legacy is that she was the last surviving teacher of the Hoosier Grove School located originally at Barrington Rd. and Old Church Rd. in Streamwood. The 104 year old one room school house building is now owned by the Streamwood Park District and was moved to the Hoosier Grove Park off of Irving Park Rd.

She took a position at Spaulding School which would be incorporated into the U-46 school district after WW II and

continue to teach there until she retired in 1976. Andersen was born in 1910 and attended the Plum Grove School near Palatine. She was an exception to the norm for her time. She Graduated from High School, and graduated College in 1933 during the Great Depression from the Chicago Teachers College.

The Chicago Teachers College would later become Chicago State University and Northeastern Illinois University.

"Her mind was sharp as a tack," said Streamwood Park District Commissioner, Rich Janiec. "She was a marvelous woman." The Village of Streamwood has proclaimed Oct.

16 as Ruth Regenburg Andersen Day. Among her duties as a teacher was stoking a coal stove and organizing special events for students.

"She would live with a local family during the week and her brother would drive her home to Palatine on the weekends," Said Janiec. "Linda Zimmerman and I met with Ruth to tell her about a proclamation that we were putting together for her through the Streamwood Park District, she was in tears about it. Unfortunately, we were unable to pass the proclamation before her death."

Continued on page 4

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A Closer Look

MIKE ARCH NEWS EDITOR

Free Speech: a right, but it's also a privilege

President Hahs has noble motives behind drafting a free speech document to provide clarifications on how to conduct yourself in regard to free speech. However, this is a touchy subject and many of the motives seem personal. I can agree with all reasons and arguments that President Hahs wants to provide for this document but I think the execution is all wrong.

Feb. 28, 2007 introduced President Hahs to the activism on the NEIU campus which she has called the CIA incident. That was followed by two demonstrations in her office. Then there was the famous Sen. Durbin incident. The first took place in a classroom, the second the president's office and the third, Alumni Hall. All three are on the restricted list for demonstrations.

The classroom during regular class sessions should be off limits but that distinction was not specified in the document. When a document such as the

DDS has at the top, 'policy & procedures' they are looked at as a way to force students to act in a certain way. Not that policy is a bad thing it is the student conduct code gives a framework in how to act, but it also puts into it the fact that if you don't act a certain way there will be negative consequences.

The First Amendment has been a very open amendment giving a whole lot of freedom to the individual. The drafters of the constitution made the freedoms of press, speech, religion, petition, and assembly the first amendment in the Bill of Rights for a reason.

Those rights deserve respect and President Hahs does understand that. That is why she said, "It is important to have free speech but part of the etiquette of free speech is not to drown out others right to free speech." That is why President Hahs was motivated to draft this document. It is also the reason why I feel the organizations that demonstrated

during Sen. Durbin's speech learned their lesson from the event and now understands the improper use of the power. After all isn't college about learning? Sometimes the best teacher is experience.

NEIU has a tradition of activism. When going through copies of the Interim the NEIU student newspaper in the '60s a chain of events with a military recruiter being struck by a student can be followed that are similar to the CIA incident. The big joke in the Independent is, 'Same NEIU different decade.'

Many students don't have the right to free speech in High School. It is the right of the school not to allow minors to engage in such activities. In college you are an adult that doesn't mean that those same high school students that have not been capable to exercised free speech in high school will know how to conduct themselves when they get to NEIU. They have no practice

and have never even been allowed to screw up in that area.

We can't expect new students to understand everything there is about this complex right. Instead of making policy NEIU should be educating, part of the mission of the school. Give new students the opportunity to learn from the prior classes mistakes.

The best way to implement this document is not a policy but a class. Free speech etiquette can be implemented in the First Year Experience Course. The best examples are right in the student newspapers that President Hahs presented to me during our interview about all the above incidents. There are also positive examples that can be found on how things are done right. You can mix in a little law, and current student conduct codes and you have a curriculum that can provide the knowledge and the freedom to choose and respect Free Speech without putting on a whole lot of restrictions.

Free Speech continued

many mechanisms to their voice."

Among the policies is a maximum of two times a semester that non-NEIU affiliates can table on campus. This policy would not affect the businesses or military recruiters looking to table. The proposal also lists areas where protests can and cannot take place." It's a university tradition to have a place where everybody goes to make their point," said President Hahs. "Some of the restricted areas are Illinois law. Others are about the Universities goal to make sure that education doesn't get disrupted. It's a mix of the Illinois law and the Universities duty to educate above all."

Adam Goldstein, Attorney Advocate for the Student Press Law Center, attorneys that specialize in first amendments rights, said that placing restricted and non-restricted free speech zones is the use of the "Arsonists excuse." He clarified by stating an arsonist goes through a city and sets four buildings on fire and is caught. In court he says 'everybody is talking about the four buildings I burnt down nobody is talking

about the eight I didn't."

As far as how these policies would effect media organizations such as the Independent and Que Onde Sola, President Hahs said, "This is not their document. The state of Illinois has

"We are going to stop for awhile and figure out if we should do more with this document or should we do something different. So, I withdrew the document, when the document is getting in the way of the conversation that's not helpful."

laws that [Student Media Organizations] will not be restricted in the different parts of the newspapers. These belong to the students and it is in the University policy and Illinois law that these are free agents."

The current policy is referred to as

Demonstrations on Campus in the student handbook gives broad guidelines as to where and how demonstrations should be conducted. President Hahs had looked at these guidelines and talked about how this idea of clarifying the guidelines with the DDS came to be. "Before I became president in Feb. of 2007 there was a task force called the Free Speech Task Force. The goal of that group is to take all of our existing policy to see if it was clear enough and to see if it should be brought together instead of being in three different places and to see if we should add or subtract anything," said President Hahs.

"I didn't know we had this group working. Then we had the CIA incident fall of 2007. Sen. Durbin came and we had that incident. The task force had never submitted their reports. I found out about this and looked at the report and said, 'this looks fine pending legal review.' The First Amendment is complicated. We sent it to the board of trustee's attorney and he made a few suggestions. We incorporated his suggestions and went back to the task force, because after everyone put in their input it became a long and technical document," said President Hahs.

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English 101 continued

Some other goals of the revision and alignment of English 101 are to get students more used to using electronic resources such as Blackboard, to provide a smoother transition from the English Language Program into English 101, and to define grading standards for every section so students who take 101 feel confident

that the grade they're getting is what they would get with a different teacher, according to Byard.

Since the grant is for five years, some long term goals are to develop hybrid classes that are both online and in the classroom, to develop strictly online courses, and to address English 102 and make sure there is more similarity across sections of that course as well.

PHI RHO ETA continued

chapters. Most of them are in Illinois. The Delta chapter located at the University of Louisville is currently inactive because many of its members are in the military and are currently serving in active duty. There are currently three colonies established. They are at Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois

University, and Eastern Illinois University. The Beta Chapter is a Chicago City wide chapter and is based out of Chicago State University.

Phi Rho Eta will have informational tables during the month of Jan. They then plan to have an informal informational meeting in Feb. To be followed by a formal informational meeting.

Ruth Andersen continued

The proclamation of the Streamwood Park District was signed at their Dec. 16 meeting. This proclamation as well as the one from the Village of Streamwood in Oct. will be hung in the Hoosier Grove School Building.

"Ruth knew she was going to pass away very soon and written a letter for friends and family," said Janiec.

In the letter from Nov. 27 Andersen said, "At this point I am very ill and believe this to be my last Christmas on Earth. I will be 98 on Dec. 14. There are plenty of things I wanted to do. I wanted to learn to play the piano. I wanted to learn how to drive, and I

wanted to travel to Europe. Still I have led a long, happy and purposeful life."

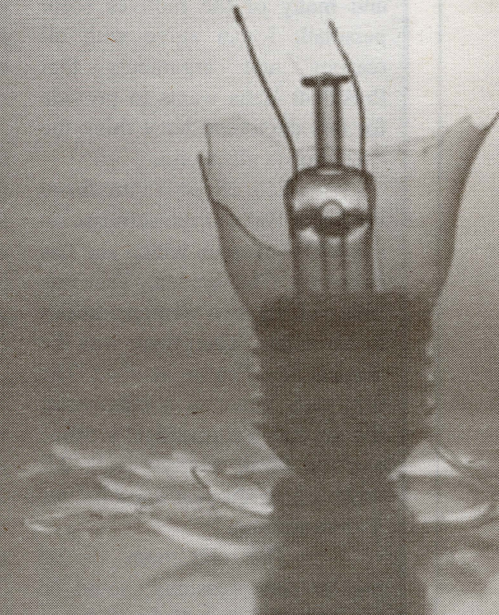
"I have many fond memories of the Christmas season in the country schools where I taught for 23 years; a skating pond outside of the school where children pushed me around on a sled, Christmas programs where students sang songs and put on small productions, and a fresh cut Christmas tree in the corner of the one-room. One of my biggest joys has been receiving cards, letters, and visits from former students and their descendants."

"I would like to thank all of you for the love, support and joy you've given me throughout my life. May yours be filled with success and happiness."

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Commentary

EDITORIAL

Stress

It might seem weird to write about stress at the beginning of the semester. However, it seems even weirder to talk about relieving or preventing stress during a time where everyone would be feeling stressed out. But now, with the economy in such bad shape, stress can start before classes really get moving. It is best to be fully aware just what stress is and what it can do to you.

Stress is a normal part of life. There is no such thing as a day without stress. There can be days with little stress. During the school year, it is difficult to image a day when your stress levels are where it should be. According to familydoctor.org, stress is caused by "the body's instinct to defend itself." Your body is primed for action with nothing to do with that energy. This builds up and causes feelings of anxiety, fear, worry and tension.

The amount of stress in our lives is highly dependent on certain factors such as physical health, the quality of social relationships, the number of responsibilities we carry, and the number of changes or traumatic events that have recently occurred in our lives. People with poor nutritional habits, who do not get enough sleep, or those who are ill are unable to fully handle the pressures of everyday life and so have higher stress levels.

Excess stress can show itself with a variety of symptoms that manifest differently for people. The most common physical symptoms are sleep disturbances, muscle tension, headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, and fatigue. Other symptoms include nervousness, anxiety, overeating or loss of appetite, loss of enthusiasm or energy, and mood changes.

There is now evidence, on WebMD.com, which shows that extreme stress is one of the causes to a variety of diseases or conditions. These include "anxiety disorders, depression, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease, some gastrointestinal diseases, some cancers, and even the process of aging itself. Stress also affects the regularity and severity of migraine headaches, episodes of asthma, and fluctuations of blood sugar in diabetics."

It is important to take breaks when things seem overwhelming. The weekends are a time to relax, not to party all day and night. If you need to, take mental health days to get yourself back on track before everything starts to accumulate. Create a routine that suits you and allows you to get all your work done. It could end up helping to plan a course of action when life throws something unexpected at you. Here at Northeastern, there are a few options available to deal with stress. Campus Recreation, located in the PE Complex, offers Mind and Body classes like Yoga and Pilates to combat stress. Exercise too can help alleviate stress levels in the body. The counseling office located below the cashier's office has trained professionals who can help as well. The resources are there, they just need to be looked for.

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This leopard should be in stripes

by Adam Salamon
 Staff Writer

They say a leopard can't change his spots, and that seems to be a good way of explaining the corruption charges facing Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich. The son-in-law of famous Chicago Alderman Dick Mell, Blagojevich is well schooled in the corrupt "pay-to-play" schemes of Chicago politics. Allegations of corruption started surfacing against him in 2005, during Blagojevich's first term, with the first hints coming from Mell himself, after Blagojevich shut down a landfill that was owned by a relative of Mell's wife.

Mell was furious at Blagojevich, and in the middle of their public squabble, Mell accused the Governor's chief fundraiser of selling state jobs for campaign contributions. While Mell later recanted the accusations, they still caught the ear of Illinois State's Attorney Lisa Madigan who alerted U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald about them.

Fitzgerald then launched an investigation that first became public in 2006 when long time Blagojevich political advisor and fund-raiser, Tony Rezko, was indicted on corruption charges stemming from an alleged kickback scheme involving state pension funds. The charges made national news later when it was discovered that Rezko also had ties to then Presidential candidate Barack Obama. Obama was never charged with any wrongdoing, but that didn't stop his political opponents from trying to make it an election issue.

This was only the tip of the iceberg for Blagojevich though, and in December of 2008, claiming the Governor of the State of Illinois was involved in a "political corruption crime spree," U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald had Federal Agents arrest him outside his Chicago home. Although the charges weren't made public, the Federal Prosecutor laid out such a long list of alleged scams and frauds that it would

even make jailed ex-Governor George Ryan blush.

Among the biggest allegations made public was a charge that Blagojevich had tried to sell the appointment to the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President-elect Obama. The attempt was so blatant and despicable that U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald felt compelled to remark that, "the (Governor's) conduct would make Lincoln roll over in his grave." Blagojevich also allegedly tried to extort the Tribune Co. by threatening to withhold state funds to the bankrupt media giant if they didn't fire Tribune editors critical of the Governor. Apparently, Blagojevich is not a believer in the constitutionally protected freedom of the press.

As if that's not appalling enough, Blagojevich also allegedly tried to shake down Children's Memorial Hospital in an effort to get a kickback from the \$8 million dollars the state gave to the hospital to help fund pediatric care for needy children. A statement released by Children's stated that the hospital refused to participate in the Governor's scheme and that "if such allegations are true, Children's Memorial, pediatric physicians and the children of Illinois have been victimized" by Blagojevich.

You might think that with all these horrendous charges facing the Governor that he might consider putting the people of Illinois first and stepping down from his post, but that's not how machine politics work in this state. In a defiant, almost comical press conference, Blagojevich claimed the federal charges were the fabrication of a "political lynch mob." The fact that the charges were federal, not to mention apolitical, had no bearing on his bizarre claim.

The cherry on top of Blagojevich's miserable Governorship was his direct refusal of President-elect Obama's wish he not appoint anyone to his vacated U.S. Senate seat. In a clear rebuke of the future President, as well as of many other state politicians,

Blagojevich nominated Roland Burris to the vacated Senate seat. The move so revolted members of Congress that the Senate has blocked him from taking his seat there. Like many other politicians from our state, including Senator Dick Durbin, Obama has also called for the Governor to step down.

The black eye given to our state by this apparent scandal should not be underestimated. So shocking are the allegations against Blagojevich that the F.B.I. special agent assigned to the case, Robert Grant, boldly stated that, "if (Illinois) isn't the most corrupt state in the United States, it's certainly one hell of a competitor." Welcome to machine politics, Illinois style, special agent Grant. It's a place where corrupt politicians are the norm and clean politicians are the exception. What a shame.

Blagojevich has learned much of his political trickery from a master in Chicago machine politics, boss Dick Mell. However, he wasn't smart enough to learn a lesson from the last Governor of the state, who is doing time right now in a federal prison on corruption charges himself. Perhaps it was just too hard for Blagojevich to change his spots, but I bet this leopard will soon be wearing stripes in jail, right where he belongs.



Graphic by Michelle Jacobson

Nationwide resolution: Change sex ed

by Michelle Jacobson
 Opinions Editor

While people make their own personal resolutions for 2009, there is one resolution our country needs to make, and with Barack Obama beginning his presidency this year, this resolution could become a possibility. The United States needs to collectively overhaul sex education programs to assure that children are not only being taught abstinence, but safe sex methods as well.

A study released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention evaluated data from 2006 and found that the nation's teen birth rate has risen for the first time in 15 years.

There are many possible factors to blame for this increase. The rising cost of birth control and its unavailability, in some areas and the

media's glamorization of pregnancy could be possible culprits. However, I'd like to place the bulk of the blame on education, particularly abstinence-only education.

Abstinence is the sure-fire method to avoid unwanted pregnancy. Everyone learns that at some point or another throughout their education, and it is obviously the safest method of birth control. However, an education program that only teaches abstinence is a mistake because it does not allow children to explore other options, such as safe sex.

Supporting a safe sex education program doesn't mean you're telling teens to go out and have as much safe sex as they want. Most teens are smarter than adults realize, and they need to be trusted to make the most well-informed decision they can make when it comes to sex. Ideally, if more teens know about safe sex practices,

fewer teens will get pregnant and that national average of teen births will decrease over time.

The way Barack Obama can help fulfill this resolution is by his continued support for the Prevention First Act. The act plans to, among other things, increase funding for comprehensive sex education that teaches both abstinence and safe sex methods. Included in the act are also provisions to make contraception more accessible and to end insurance discrimination against contraceptive services.

When this issue is resolved and teens both know more about safe sex methods and have access to contraceptives if need be, hopefully statistics will reflect the change and the teen birth rate will decrease. I believe that teens can make smart decisions about sex; our country just needs to give them the chance to prove me right.

Honesty not always best policy

by Whitney Behr
Staff Writer

It's difficult to maintain a conversation with just about anyone this time of year without falling into a conversation about New Years resolutions. Whether their goal is to lose weight or quit smoking, folks love to share their hopes for the New Year.

Recently, a friend of mine decided he's going to be more honest with people. It sounds like a perfectly reasonable goal, but how possible is it? There are paradoxical clichés a plenty on the subject. On one hand, we have your grandmother saying honesty is the best policy and on the other hand we have your cynical friends telling you the truth hurts. Most people would argue that both are true. How can this be?

How can something that hurts people be the best option? Most social people would like to avoid hurting other people because, to throw in another old phrase, we were taught if we don't have anything nice to say, don't say

anything at all. How can we place equal value on being nice and being honest? How can we be both and continue to stand up for ourselves? It is this paradox that has all the nice people of the world lying to everyone they meet and all the honest people being written off as unkind.

As much lip service as we give honesty, you'd think we'd reward people for being truthful, but the fact of the matter is we don't.

Say your aunt gave you yet another hideous sweater for your birthday. The first year she did it, your mother saw that you hated it and warned you with her eerie Mom telepathy that you'd better not say what's on your mind. You knew full well she meant business and that to defy her was to instigate a major family incident, so you lied. You told your aunt you loved it and made a point of wearing it when you knew you'd be seeing her. Since that first time, you've gotten similar horrible sweaters ever since and lied every year, digging yourself deeper into this pit of little white lies and getting buried alive

in consecutively uglier sweaters.

In this hypothetical situation, your mother made it very clear that honesty was not, in fact, the best policy.

Not only is honesty often not rewarded, we aren't taught how to handle it. This is what makes the movie *Liar, Liar*, in which a man is unable to lie for an entire day, so interesting. Throughout the film, he not only answers questions honestly, but he volunteers true information that most people would have withheld. This gets him thrown in jail, not to mention almost ruins nearly all his personal and professional relationships. It really speaks to our inability to deal with this honesty we keep insisting we want.

We lie for a variety of reasons. Many lies that are told are told for the purpose of sparing feelings. Sometimes, though, it's just easier to lie.

I don't know if my friend will stick to his resolution to be more honest with people. I just hope it doesn't do more harm than good.

VOICE OF THE CAMPUS

Welcome!



Hello to everyone to a new semester here at Northeastern. For those who are returning students, welcome back. I hope this semester is just as good as or better for you than the last semester. To new students, welcome to Northeastern and good luck in all your classes. As a former transfer student, I know that sometimes this university does not always give you all the necessary information to make your way around the campus. Here's some information that could prove useful to you.

Building names are a bit tricky. You will notice on your schedule that there is a letter next to your assigned classroom. This is the building that the classroom is in. Many of the buildings are just called a letter or are abbreviated. Building B is always referred to as "the B building" while the Classroom Building is written as CLS on class schedules. While these instructions might seem like common sense for some people, there are still stories about people arriving a half hour late to a 50 minute class because they could not figure out the schedule. I remember walking into my intro to theatre class late because I mistook the FA, Fine Arts, Building for the F building which houses Stage Center Theatre. It was embarrassing at the time but now I can look back at it and laugh.

The first thing that you will be asked to do in any of your classes is to register for NEIUport. It is your one stop to all of your pertinent information. There you can view your financial aid, see your assigned counselor and their email address, and your class schedule. It also has links to Blackboard, which is one resource that many teachers use religiously, and NEIU email, another resource teachers rely on. It makes your lives easier to activate your NEIUport account as soon as possible through the NEIU website (www.neiu.edu).

Spring is a great time to get involved with the university. Clubs are always looking for members. For a full list of clubs, look at the Student Activities Office website at www.neiu.edu~SAO. There is also a calendar of events that show the meeting times for some clubs and organizations. One organization near and dear to me is, of course, the Independent. We are always looking for new writers and photographers who are willing to learn the ins and outs of journalism. Our staff meetings are the same day that a new issue comes out. Our next meeting is January 27. I hope to see some of you there.

As always I would love to hear from readers. My email is L-Ocasio@neiu.edu. Please don't be afraid to contact me with questions or complaints about the Independent or NEIU. I would be happy to be of service and answer any questions you might have or direct you to someone who can help.

Nixing the nicotine

by David Mitchell
Staff Writer

As any well-informed Illinois citizen will already be aware, January marks the one-year anniversary of our status as a "smoke-free state." Now, if you also happen to be a well-informed American (a title a bit harder to come upon,) you will also know that a total of 23 states and commonwealths across the country have set in place similar restrictions with regards to smoking in public including New York, Florida and Maryland. The complete list is available (along with plenty more valuable non-smoking info) at no-smoke.org. These standards have been put into effect in order to create a healthier, cleaner environment for the non-smoking public. The ban extends outdoors, too. In the city of Chicago, lit cigarettes are not allowed within 15 feet of any non-residential establishment. This is only a taste of the new non-smoking world that is being constructed around us. The world at large is even stepping up and banning public smoking- Europe being at the head of this front.

The recent developments in second-hand smoke safety are nothing short of triumphant. Only 25 years ago not only was it acceptable to smoke in the smoking section of any restaurant or bar, but also on airplanes, buses, trains, coffee houses, department stores, cubicles and

offices, movie theatres, banks and even in classrooms. The result has been unheard of levels of asthma, emphysema, lung cancer, heart disease and stinky overcoats. These are all diseases (or, in the case of the latter, states of moderate discomfort) that can kill (or just annoy) people and are caused by the presence of second-hand smoke in areas where non-smokers spend time. Is it the fault of the non-smokers? Certainly not. Being that the smoker is voluntarily creating a harmful environment for his or herself, they also create a harmful environment for those around them. We all need to share spaces. Everyone has to work, many of us have to use public transportation, we all enjoy eating out... everyone ventures outdoors every now and then! We all have the right to exist in a clean and healthy world.

However, not all these tactics set in place are effective. I'm sure many of you have come across a "truth" ad in your time. The "truth" ads utilize fear tactics and attack the wrong evils. They always go after the tobacco companies, calling them "big tobacco." True, these companies employ questionable marketing and advertising tactics, such as the one they are most noted for- marketing tobacco to minors. This is certainly an evil practice and should be addressed. However, it is

not the real enemy, here. The enemy is nicotine, the drug that is found in tobacco smoke that gives smoking its lure. I cannot think of a single person that started smoking because they thought that the ads were nifty or the slogans were catchy. "Big tobacco" would have nothing to market in the first place if smokers stood to gain nothing from making that (relatively inflated) purchase of a pack of cigarettes. But as it is (and always will be as nature dictates), the tobacco leaf, when smoked or chewed, produces the chemical nicotine and releases it into the bloodstream of its consumer. As long as the product is available to be produced and creates the insanely large income for producers, someone is going to produce it. There is no stopping tobacco companies as long as it is legal. Nicotine is powerful. I can't say for certain if any people reading this have seen the commercial for one of the many "stop smoking" aides out there that depicts a nicotine craving as a horde of angry little monsters buzzing around inside your head and, when satiated, all settling down and going to sleep. Whoever came up with that really understood a nicotine addiction. Notice that I said nicotine addiction as opposed to cigarette addiction. There needs to be a distinction

that will help many people understand why smokers exist. I reiterate that a cigarette is merely the vehicle for nicotine to enter the body- the cancerous, dangerous, filthy and smelly vehicle (not dissimilar to my high school car...). However, despite all these facts that often make ad campaigns such as "truth" somewhat obsolete in my mind, they do not miss the point entirely. The real goal of the groups that fund these outfits is to get information out into the world about the real dangers of both first and second-hand smoke, and the evidence of the presence of that knowledge in the world is readily apparent.

I believe that the world is, however marginally, healthier thanks to the efforts of our government to lawfully prevent public smoking. With all these new fronts being set in motion I think that if nothing else, the youth of our nation are getting the message. Many adolescents think of smoking as "uncool" and understand, better than any other generation, the dangers of the nicotine-infused lifestyle. With all this knowledge in hand, I believe we are closer than ever to the reality of a 100% smoke-free world.

ENTERTAINMENT

Images courtesy of wallstation.com



Achievement unlocked: zombicidal maniac

by David Mosher
Online Editor

Valve, the creator of *Left 4 Dead*, is known for quality games. A game stamped with Valve generally means a game of promise, a promise of quality, fun, and stability. And sometimes perhaps a bit of originality, which happens to be *Left 4 Dead*'s best feature.

Left 4 Dead's premise is simple. It's the zombie apocalypse (again—how often does this occur?) and you play as one of four survivors. The survivors are somehow inexplicably immune to the zombie virus and must battle the hordes of zombies to survive.

The game itself is relatively short. There are four different campaigns that each start with the same premise. The four survivors start in one area with health packs and guns and must make their way through the level to the next safe house, a place where they can rest and recover before venturing out once more. At the end of each campaign there is a finale where the survivors are finally rescued. Of course, there are plenty of zombies in between.

The zombies are more than the brainless brain-eating buffoons that are showcased in many survival horror films. They are fast, sprinting, climbing, and zig-zagging humans of death bent on taking a chunk of your leg home as a souvenir.

In addition to these regular zombies, there are also a variety of special zombies that can incapacitate survivors so that you must rely on

your friends to save you. Each has its own special ability, whether its pouncing you so you cannot move, dragging you off a cliff, or killing in a single hit.

And now, the originality comes into play. *Left 4 Dead* is a game best played with friends. While there is a single player game where the other three survivors can be

controlled by artificial intelligence (bots), the most fun is had playing online headsets and friends. It blurs the line between a single player and a multiplayer game to great effect. Each campaign can be run with any combination of human players and bots. In addition, there is an online only versus mode available, where the fun really shines.

In versus, it's four vs. four; four survivors that battle through each campaign while being attacked by four players playing special zombies. At the end of each round the

tables turn, and the survivors become zombies and vice versa.

Real, human played zombies are something that'll give a survivor nightmares if played properly. They set traps, attack together, and are generally vicious little creatures. Besides, there is something oddly compelling about pouncing one of your buddies as a zombie, attempting to tear him or her limb from limb.

No campaign is quite like the one before it. Zombies are placed in different areas in different densities that attack at different times. An artificial intelligence director controls all of this. The AI director fine-tunes the game in real time. If the survivors are hurt badly, there may be fewer zombies. If they are doing well, an extra special zombie may come into play. All of this is designed so the survivors will barely make it into the next safe area.

Graphically, the game shines. The added film grain and special lighting makes it seem like you're playing a movie. And while the game is based on the aging Source engine, this adds more to the game than it detracts. Sure, it doesn't look like *Crysis*, but it'll also run on a much wider scale of computers.

Four campaigns, only two of which are playable in versus, leaves something to be desired. But given that no two games are alike with the unpredictability of human companions and the AI director, it seems it'll be a while before it'll get old. Valve has already announced upcoming additions to the game as well. Overall, it's well worth your money, as long as you have a few friends to enjoy it with.



A "boomer," one of the special infected in *Left 4 Dead*.

The flop currently known as Far Cry 2

by Jonathan Gronli
Associate Editor

Yeah I know, cheesy pun for a headline but who cares. This review is covering *Far Cry 2*. In some ways it's a good game. In other ways it's just tedious and irritating. I wanted to like this game but I really couldn't.

The world in the game is an absolutely gorgeous African landscape that changes quite a bit as the civil war that's going on ravages the land burning it, blowing craters into it or filling it with many corpses whether it is man, woman, child or random animal. The story is great with a weapons dealer only known as The Jackal (kind of based off the real life terrorist Carlos Ilych "The Jackal" Ramirez) starting another war in another random African nation. Your job, regardless of what role you take, is to find and kill the jackal. Regardless of what role you take you

also happen to catch malaria so you're living on borrowed time while you're not getting meds, which you have to buy, which you either have to find cases of diamonds on the map or complete different missions to make diamonds to buy said meds and other supplies. So to survive you're dragged into perpetuating the war.

There are some ways this game really works. Graphics as stated earlier are gorgeous. Weapons work and jam realistically. In-game physics are realistic. You're working off of a 24-hour day. The environment works as it work in real life with dry land burning easily, rainfall puts out fires, you shoot a branch with a high enough caliber weapon you can shoot a branch out of a tree, etc. So the environment is incredible. First aid animations when you

get injured enough are beautifully done as well whether you're ripping bullets or shrapnel from your body, wrapping a burn or setting a broken bone. The controls are intuitive and reactive so that you normally don't get hung up on things.

The buddy system is useful because you usually have help of some kind.

They help you get different supplies. If you are killed or almost killed in battle they occasionally pull you to safety, revive you and then cover you until you heal your injuries. They give you advice on other ways to do missions. They are just

options in terms of the gameplay. Since advice on finishing missions was brought up the game also allows you to scope out an area before you proceed to mark any patrols or snipers positions in an area that you're going if there are enemies there so that alone gives you quite a few ways to go through the game.

Then there's the problem of the world is just too big.

I mean sure it's beautiful but if you have to be driving 10-15 minutes just to find

an enemy to shoot it's just not fun. I mean when there is action it's exhilarating but when there isn't really all you can do in the game is pop pills when you need them, drive and pray you run across, into or over something interesting that you'd have to through at one time or another. Another gameplay mechanic that really doesn't work is the diamond locator that is built into your GPS unit. It pretty much only tells you which direction a case with diamonds is in. So once the antenna of your GPS has a flashing green light you have to stop and slowly spin your

somewhere where you can get a job, driving until you find the location of where you're supposed to go because occasionally the mapping system doesn't work and the driving is just as irritating because, unless you willfully drive like a moron there's nothing happening until you find an enemy to chase you. It's boring if you have to drive 10-15 minutes minimum to find something to do.

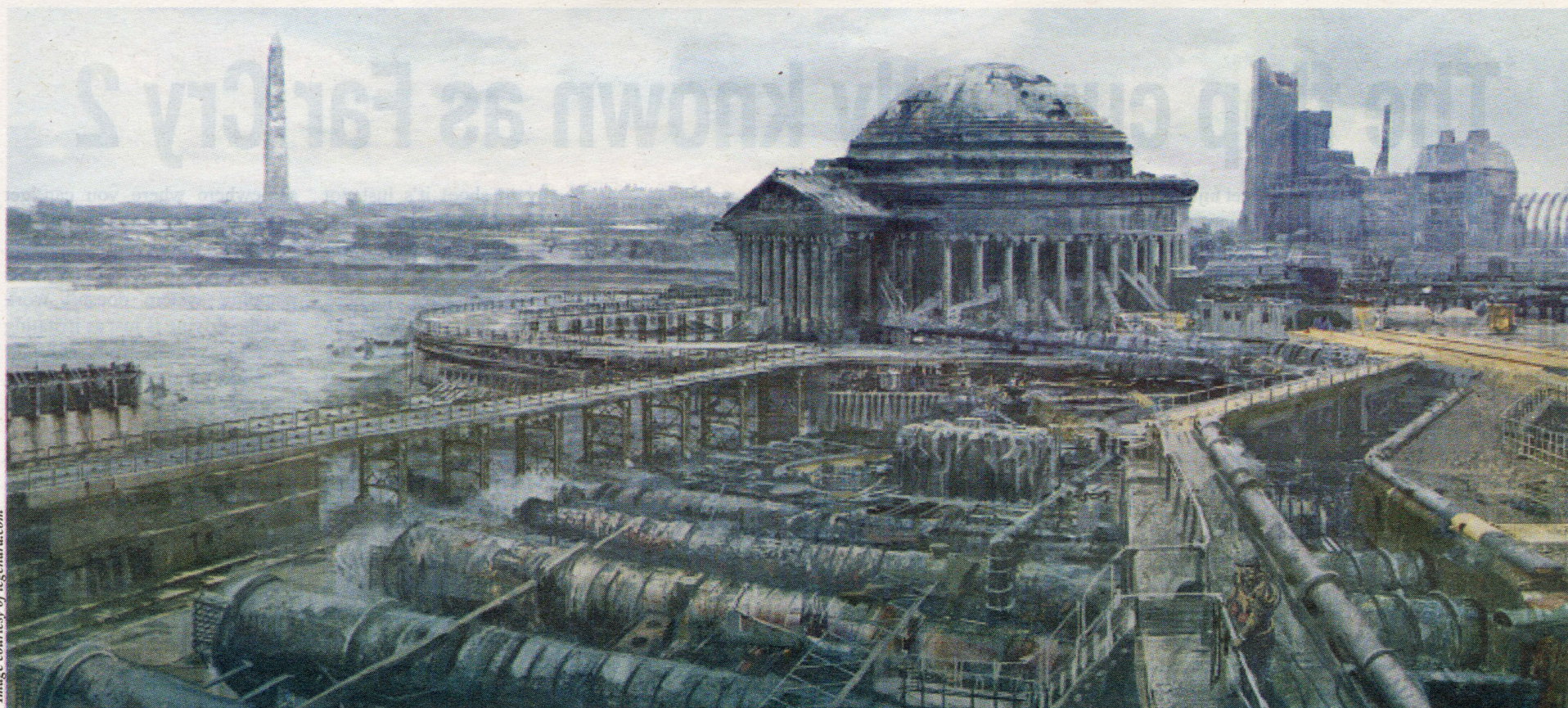
There are also occasionally glitches that end up popping up for no apparent reason. I occasionally found my character running in a field and then running into an invisible wall that shouldn't exist

character until you have a solid green light. Then you have to head in that direction until you either find the case or for some reason or another the light started flashing again. Then you have to spin until the light is a solid green light again and head in that direction. It's tedious, irritating, unnecessary and not fun. If you were that broke you'd just do some job and make money that way. But then you'd have to worry about driving

in a wide open world like that. Did I mention that I was also being chased by one of the warring factions in the game while I was on foot and they were driving. I died because of running into the invisible wall syndrome. Mind you things like that don't always happen. It's just occasionally you run into an invisible wall for a few seconds and then the invisible wall remembers it can't exist and fully disappears. It pissed me off because that meant I had to reload, re-receive the mission, redrive over there, refind any diamonds that I might've picked up and risk dying the same way again.

If you want to give the game a shot, it is worth at least a rental. If you want to buy it either get it from newegg.com so that you don't have to spend over \$50 on this game. Hell if you can find it used get it that way if you're still interested.





Awww. Look at the pretty mushroom cloud

by Jonathan Gronli
Associate Editor

Fallout was a fun RPG series that allowed you quite a few different opportunities to either be the good guy or be a total asshole for fun. The premise for

the series is simple. Nuclear war happened and now most of the land in the United States is an irradiated desert wasteland. Think *Mad Max*.

Fallout 3 is the newest installment to the series, and in some ways it is one of the best. In other ways, it really isn't

anything special. To start, the graphics of the post-apocalyptic world are gorgeous, even though most of the world you're going around in is largely just ruins, charred trees, desert wasteland and the Potomac River, which can give you radiation poisoning.

The gameplay can be a bit

unforgiving because of the fact that quite a few things can up your radiation count and if you get too high a radiation level you're dead. Also if you don't play nice until you're strong enough, towns will try to kill you. Though, as stated earlier, you can be an ass. You just have to be willing to pay the consequences, which can be pretty much anything from people just shunning you to people outright trying to kill you.

The 'story is pretty cool. You were brought up in Vault 101, though you and your father think you both have been there pretty long due to brainwashing by the overseer. One day your dad escapes the vault, and you have to break out of a vault on lockdown with security personnel who are armed to the teeth hunting you relentlessly. You follow the trail to the town of Megaton, and then the story pretty much goes in quite a few different directions, due to side quests and the main quest. Some of these storylines include the complete destruction of the town of Megaton.

The world is a wide open one, with a lot of gameplay possibilities, so replayability is pretty much on par with massive games like *Morrowind* or *Oblivion* from the *Elder Scrolls* series. Due to the size of the area, unless you have no life while gaming, there is no way you'll be able to see and do everything. However, there is one small problem with the endings. They don't show the effects of your decisions. I mean you might help a town prosper but you really don't see that. You might kill an entire town, then again, if you do that you already know what the future of that town is: either resettlement or a mass grave. The game has about four endings, each pretty much saying whether you were a good guy who was virtuous, a good guy who lacked certain virtues, a virtuous prick or just a prick who didn't care who he stole from or killed. So the endings can be a bit anticlimatic. There is also a distinct lack of real boss battles where there are multiple opportunities to kill a big high level bad guy. Then again, they were focusing on building up the story, so I really can't complain about that.

Honestly this game is a good buy. It's a bit quirky in terms of some aspects of the game, but based off of other recent releases, this is where your money would be best spent if you have a high-powered gaming rig of a PC, an Xbox 360 or a PS3.

Stage Center Theatre Auditions

January 13, 2009:

1:30—3:00 p.m. & 6:00—9:00 p.m.

January 14, 2009:

1:30—3:00 p.m. & 6:00—9:00 p.m.

Auditions for 4 plays;

2 Main Stage, 2 Studio

In the F Building, Main Stage

For audition slot call 773.442.5975

**Bring prepared monologue, resume, and
head shot**

Two sources of inspiration for your days

by Micah Roberson
Features Editor

The two books are *This I Believe* and *This I Believe II*. They were edited by Jay Ellison and Dan Gediman. They were also released in association with NPR.

Both books are short stories from various authors containing life themes,

life-guiding philosophies that have led the lives of the various authors contained in both books. Some are funny, some are tragic, some are polite, and some are blunt. Some of the short stories will touch you at your core while other stories may sound redundant. The overall effect that I experienced after reading both books could be described as a true inner growth.

For me, the interesting story about how I received the books resembles some of the short stories contained in the books. I was handed book number one by an administrator here at Northeastern Illinois University and I promised I would read the book over the airwaves while I was an on-air announcer at the radio station. I kept my promise to the administrator and read the book aloud over the radio station airwaves with the hope that something I read would help someone in addition to me. I read at least half of the book over the air and completed the remainder of the book privately, while in a period of transition.

I underlined some of the parts that impacted me while reading the books. Book one begins with a comical story that is filled with wisdom that is applicable to many situations that a person will encounter in life. The story is entitled 'Be Cool to the Pizza Dude' by Sarah Adams. She lists: "Principle 1: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in humility and forgiveness. I let him cut me off in traffic, let him safely hit the exit ramp from the left lane, let him forget to use his blinker without extending any of my digits out the window or toward my horn because there should be one moment in my harried life when a car may encroach or cut off or pass and I let it go." This is a beautiful lesson and if this lesson was practiced by more people, there would be less violence overall. The lesson from the short story is that it's good to "back down" over small things that will ultimately prove to be meaningless, like someone cutting you off while driving. Feel free to insert another "small thing" that you and I can forgive someone for.

Another story of interest was titled 'Remembering All the Boys' by Elvia Bautista. It's the story of a young woman who visits the grave-site of her murdered brother and describes how some grave-stones have red bandanas and some have blue bandanas but she visits and places flowers on both grave-stones regardless of what gang the deceased was affiliated with. That story is touching because it reminded

me of a complex reality that I don't have the solution to, and that is the death and murder of young men and women due to gang violence. However, I learned from this story that death brought an equality that wasn't achieved while the young men from different gangs were alive and now at the graveyard the young men sit side by side in everlasting peace. The story reaffirmed my personal belief that gang murders don't have to exist.

Also from book two there was another touching story titled 'I Will Take My Voice Back' by Quique Aviles. The author states: "I am a poet and an actor. I am also a crack addict and an alcoholic, and that's how a lot of people see me: a pipe head, a drunk, a problem, an epidemic, a disaster area." The brutal honesty is amazing. The story reminds me of a lesson that I've learned too, from experience and observation: some people see the negative as being the greatest portion of a person, and some people see and search for the negative of people first as if the negative side of a person is the complete person. Don't misunderstand; the negative qualities within some people are enough to cause a person to keep a healthy distance. But the negative part of a person is not the complete person, and if you encounter someone whom you judge to be a negative, bad person, that person has wisdom and love and other good qualities too.

As I searched for a quote to end this book review, I realized it was best to leave it free of an additional quote. The books were about articles submitted by common, 'everyday' people possibly like you but definitely like me. The books gave common folks a voice. I think I recall a few famous names in the books that submitted stories and their stories were selected and included. The selection process for the short stories contained in the books makes it fresh and unique, which makes the books an interesting yet quick read. I'll let you, the reader add some concluding sentences here because the book reinforced the lesson that I've previously learned that everyone has a voice. What is your concluding sentence for this article?

THIS I BELIEVE

THE PERSONAL PHILOSOPHIES OF
REMARKABLE MEN AND WOMEN

FOREWORD BY STUDES TERKEL
EDITED BY JAY ALLISON AND DAN GEDIMAN
IN ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

Image courtesy of spiritlink.com

Diversional Discourse

by Cheryl Lyman
Entertainment Editor
cheryl.l.lyman@gmail.com

New changes, old diversions



Welcome back! I hope everyone had a good break, and is rip-roaring to go again. I had planned on stepping down from the paper for this semester, due to several issues, which I won't go into. Something about this paper though, seems to suck me back every time I think of moving on. This is the last time, however, that I will not be coming back to the *Independent* as the Entertainment Editor. Starting with the next issue, Jon Gronli and I are switching places, and he will be in charge of this section. I hope he continues to bring diverse articles to keep you entertained. I will be continuing with this column here, but because I hadn't planned on being part of the paper this semester, I did not write anything for this issue; so,

for now, please revisit a column which ran for the April 8, 2008 issue.

Diversional... all right, this is not a word found in any dictionary. I knew this when I named my column. I wondered if anyone would call me on it (especially my English instructors) but the only people who did were my copy editors. They asked me if I meant diversionary. Of course I didn't. If I had meant diversionary I would have used it and not diversional.

The word diversion is a noun that means 'that which diverts.' Divert is 'to distract, to amuse or entertain'; sounds like something I can relate to and something that many college students need once in a

while. Hence, some form of the word diversion was appropriate. Divergence would have worked with the word discourse, if I used a connecting word, such as in 'discourse of divergence' but that wasn't quite right either. Adding the -ary suffix, making diversion an adjective (and a proper English word), would change the meaning to 'relating to that which diverts.' Closer, but it still was not quite there. The suffix -al would change the word into 'action, process.' So then, diversion becomes a process of 'that which distracts, entertains or amuses.'

'Discourse' technically is defined, according to my word processor dictionary, as 'a serious and lengthy speech or piece of writing about a topic';

however, it also tells me that it can be 'a unit of language, especially spoken language, that is longer than the sentence.' I purposely decided to take the parts of these definitions that I liked and put them together to make the word mean 'a unit of writing about a topic that is longer than a sentence.'

I then joined this with my already modified 'diversional' and my column title became Diversional Discourse. Then I mangled the whole definition that I pretty much made up anyway into - A process of diverting, through a unit of writing, about a topic that is distracting because it may entertain or amuse.

Books, music, movies, theater, video games, food and daydreaming all come to my

mind when thinking of things that divert me from what I am supposed to be doing. I have spent many, many hours getting caught up in something entertaining instead of doing homework, or writing my column, which is now two days past deadline since I couldn't think of a great topic for this issue and wiled away hours doing anything but sitting down to work on it. As I was falling asleep after a long day of doing nothing constructive, except for rehearsal of course, I realized that I could use that for my column.

I certainly hope that I have managed to give you a little break from whatever it is you are supposed to be doing, and that my diversional discourse worked.

Living life in reverse

by Jonathan Gronli
Associate Editor

I'm just going to come out and say it. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is one of the most bizarre, but one of the best movies I have seen in the past couple of years. It's a moving story that covers life in its fullest.

Honestly, this movie is like another telling of Brad Pitt's breakout movie *Legend of the Fall*. It follows the main character literally from birth to finding himself, with everything that entails. It then follows by telling the rest of the story until he dies. Much like *Legend of the Fall*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is told through someone else's mouth. Unlike *Legend of the Fall*, the person who ended up telling the story was reading through Button's (Brad Pitt) journal. Also, unlike *Legend of the Fall*, Brad Pitt's character in

this movie is born old and his aging is reversed, starting off looking and feeling like he's in the rip old age of his late 80s and dying looking like he's six months old.

The movie is a tale of love, life and loss. Button was born the day WWI ended. He lived through the Roaring '20s and Great Depression, served in WWII, etc. You see him when he's able to take his first actual steps at the age of 7. You see him during his first time with a woman, at the age of 12 or 13, when the tugboat captain who hired him takes him to a brothel. Hey, at that time he looked about 60, so do you think a captain or anyone working with child labor laws would second guess it? You see him get to meet his father, who abandoned him at birth, for the first time at the age of 15. You watch him live and die through both his eyes and the eyes of those who had the most influence in the way he grew up. The entire story of

Benjamin is told through his journal read by the child of his lover, and then through the words of Benjamin's lover in a New Orleans hospital before Hurricane Katrina hits.

The entire film is gorgeous. The soundtrack is perfect for the film. The camera work is just right. The lighting is perfect and accentuates the mood of each scene. The film's casting is top-notch and the chemistry between each person is believable. The special effects work just the way they are. There really isn't much else that can be said. Sure there are some editing quirks, but then again, even the best films out there had problems.

This movie is a gem in cinema. Due to its oddity it might be an acquired taste. Still, it is one of the finest films released within the past five years, or if you want to go back with films that are similar to it (*Big Fish* and *Legend of the Fall*) the past 15 years.

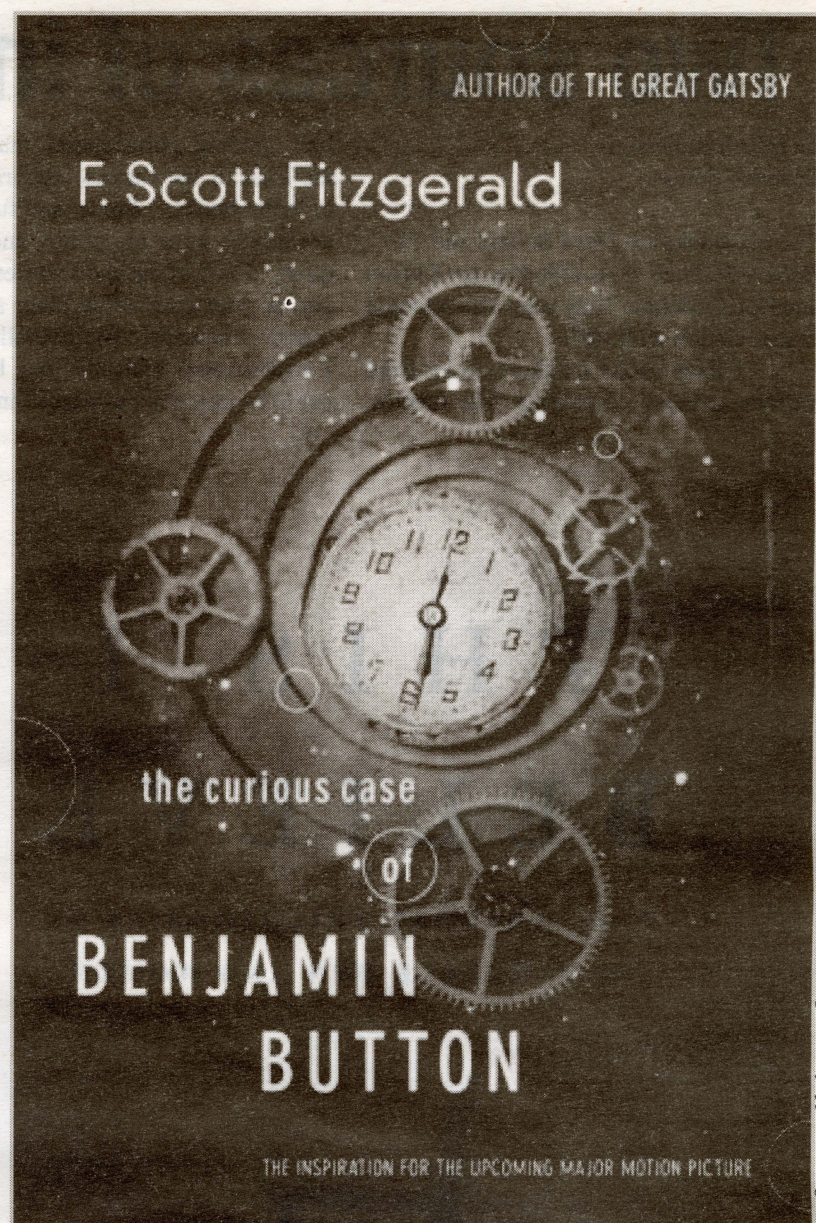


Image courtesy of firstshowing.net



by Jonathan Gronli
Associate Editor

Beyond the veil of madness I WAS OUT! I WAS OUT!

These words follow most good or at least exceedingly bizarre horror movies. It was in *1408*, different *Hellraiser* movies, as well as other horror movies and most student experiences at NEIU.

Sometimes you end up right back where you started. These words follow most good, or at least exceedingly bizarre, horror movies. Yes that was intentional. Think of it as a poor attempt at being humorous. Getting stuck back at step one is just one of life's little surprises. You think you're safe when really you're just as screwed as you were, if not more so at that time.

The thing that this goes off of is the idea that you might have escaped a horrible situation and think that you're now on safe ground. Then, the big indicators that your safe ground has been tainted happen, like the walls bleeding and random stuff flying around the room, usually at you. The worst of your ordeal is about to begin. And you thought you were safe. HA!

It's actually kinda fun to see situations where everything goes to hell, sometimes literally, in a film, book or game. Then again, when it happens in real life, it just gets interesting and horrific, if the person didn't deserve it. If they

did, it's just hilarious. However, we aren't talking about real life so I digress.

One of the films that managed to pull off this beautiful sense of dread is based on the simple potential for being safe is the Japanese version of *Premonition*. A lot of the movie returns to previous events whether they happened in story time or delving into the back the story. It's all about how something as mundane as a newspaper, through a small twist of fate and telling the future, can become terrifying. The ending itself is doesn't really garner much hope of resolution since [spoiler alert: skip to the next paragraph if you don't want to know] the main character is dead and his daughter sees the ethereal newspaper that predicts nothing but death.

Another one that manages to pull that off is John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness*. It is a film that makes the most mundane everyday object, a book, unsettling. Why? You literally get sucked into the story. What was once fiction becomes your reality. Being that this film was essentially a call to the Lovecraft cultists out there, Lovecraft crafted books like with this same primal dread of "What if it's not over?"

Stephen King, one of

the masters of modern horror, pulled this off beautifully with *1408*. *1408* followed Mike Enslin through the ordeal of getting stuck in an evil hotel room that has the ability to get people to kill themselves or just die of natural causes. Halfway through he thinks he escaped, when in reality the evil of the room is just screwing with him by giving him one of the best and worst emotions people can have, hope. Even when he finds a way out and the movie ends, it is implied that he might not have actually fully gotten out. He could've died in the fire he started in the room. He could've survived. He could've started hallucinating in a way that would be tolerable for him in the room. The movie has a great deal of resolved conflicts but it isn't entirely sure whether or not the conflict regarding the room is truly over.

Jacob's Ladder always gives a certain level of comfort but then you're back where you started in a demon-filled world. You think you're out but in reality it's just going to get much worse from here. Your friends will die. You'll get taken into a hospital that is literally hell. You'll hear the voices telling you repeatedly to dream on indicating that something is wrong. You'll be told repeatedly that you

are actually dead and when everything resolves itself, you are, without a doubt, dead having bled out on an operating table in Viet Nam years earlier than you think it is.

This false escape premise is linked in with paranoia and sheer insanity. The thing that makes books, movies and games following the premise of "did I really escape and am I really safe" memorable is the insanity behind it. There is a certain logic to the machinery that makes up good horror entertainment. It's just something that few people would dare to dwell on. Why would they decide to ignore the logical insanity behind the premise? It's simple but is to be answered with a question. "What if it was right and we are simply doomed regardless of what we think?"

Japanese movies like *One Missed Call*, *Infection*, *Ringu* or *Ju-on* also follow this premise. People do something that might've seemed like the right thing but in the end it makes it worse. An evil spirit's sphere of influence goes beyond its normal bounds (*Ju-on*). The sole survivor just dies from the infection that was spreading through the staff of the hospital, and she thought she was fine (*Infection*). The evil spirit that was killing people possesses the main character and

the cycle starts back up again in a different way (*One Missed Call*). It balances out in a weird way to make security and the resolution of the events worse than being hunted.

The Korean movie *Into the Mirror* and the recent remake *Mirrors* followed this in a strange way where you think you've escaped but you've just been sucked into the other side of the mirror. That ends up being a problematic ending because all the questions that arise from the turn of events. What about the demon that was being fought? Did it escape? Is it dead? Am I dead? How did I end up on the other side of the mirror? Is this completely FUBAR ([expletive] up beyond all recognition/[expletive] up beyond all relief) series of events really over or is it just going to go downhill from here?

There's a lot that goes into this topic though and it is a pain to try to stick to word counts with really in depth topics like false senses of security. So if you want to know more by all means get in touch with me and we can talk it out.

If you wish to know more about your being doomed, Jonathan Gronli can be conjured at jon.gronli@gmail.com

FEATURES

Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater celebrates 32nd Anniversary celebration with a December 20 concert

by Micah Roberson
Features Editor

The Auditorium was nearly filled for Ensemble Español's spectacular 32nd Anniversary concert. The event was a treat to the eyes and ears and by the conclusion of the event the audience gave a standing round of applause that lasted for a few minutes!

The performance began with three couples in stunning blue outfits wearing tap shoes and holding small instruments that made a rattling sound. Then a trio of dancers emerged onto the stage, a male dancer accompanied by two female dancers. The trio wore white costumes. This group primarily danced at the center of the stage.

Next, First Dancer Jorge Perez emerged onto the stage accompanied by a female partner and they both performed a dance that made use of a lot of the stage area. Both were dressed in white,

with Jorge clad in a white vest and slacks, while his female dance partner wore a flowing skirt. Next, a group of dancers emerged and the larger group began performing a dance routine similar to the dance done by Jorge and his partner, and the entire stage was utilized.

Next came a folkloric dance presentation. The folkloric dance style is native to Spanish small towns. The folkloric style uses bagpipes, flutes and drums, and traditionally, both young and old alike from the town participates.

The folkloric scene dancers arrived on stage without shoe taps and included male dancers styled as Spanish fishermen who utilized sea-shells as instruments, a traditional part of Spanish folkloric dance. The female dancers took the stage wearing long, loose green skirts and wide straw hats with ribbons, while the men wore tight spandex pants with a bell bottom flair at mid-calf and white button up shirts and vests. I got a sense

of the Spanish countryside while viewing this scene. The folkloric dance portion of the program was followed by intermission.

After intermission, there was a dance where the performers stood in place and made a tapping sound with their boots. The women wore long black skirts and black jackets.

Next was a solo dance to a guitar song by a woman clad in a long blue dress and black shawl.

The next scene consisted of eight women seated in chairs, clapping while clad in long blue dresses that had three layers of flair. Five men emerged wearing grey suits with blue shirts similar in color to the blue dresses that the female dancers wore. Next, six women emerged onto the stage, each in a different colored outfit.

Next, there was a performance by a solo guitarist. The lights were turned off and the spotlight was placed on the guitarist who sat alone in a chair. His passion for the music that

he played was evident, as his performance involved a lot of body movement while playing the instrument.

The final scene, entitled *Bolero* was a captivating display that used the entire stage and created the illusion that the on-stage performance leaped out into the audience! Initially, five women in large, red dresses appeared on stage beneath dim lights, and under the dark lights it appeared as if the women were apart of the stage floor, because they were hunched over very close to the ground. After a brief period of time male dancers emerged. What followed was a spectacular display of large capes, twirled in circles by several dancers and yellow fans carried by other dancers. This twirling display created a tremendous finale of sight and sound! It was truly marvelous!

The concert began with a magnificent slide show that included photographs from the Ensemble's recent trip to China,

where they visited the Great Wall and the Forbidden City among other highlights. Dame Libby Komaiko founded the Ensemble in 1976. In 1983, Libby Komaiko was awarded the Lazo de Dama de la Orden de Isabel la Catolica, which translates to "Ribbon of the Dame." Don Juan Carlos I, then King of Spain, awarded the highest honor that the country bestows on foreign nationals when he awarded Libby Komaiko with the Ribbon. In 2008 Dame Komaiko won the 2008 Outstanding Partnership Award for their partnership with Joyce Kilmer Elementary School in Rogers Park.

The concert included three styles of Spanish dance: Classical, Folkloric and Flamenco. You don't want to miss their performances in 2009!

Finally, here's a factoid taken from the beginning of the performance: Spain has the richest and most diverse dance culture in the world, with over 10,000 dances. Interesting!

A second chance for life

By: Mike Arch
News Editor

Carrie Lowell can be seen on occasion looking at deceased possums on the side of the road. She keeps a pair of gloves among other tools available in her automobile for those kinds of occasions.

It's not the deceased animal Lowell is interested in; she is looking inside the pouch of the possum for pinky possums also known as baby possums. She rescues the babies and takes them to Fox Valley Wildlife Center for care.

"When you find the babies it's rewarding," said Lowell. "Just because a mother possum is dead does not mean the babies aren't still alive."

Once rescued Carrie brings the pinky possums to the Fox Valley Wildlife Center in Elburn. They are state certified wildlife rehabilitators that care for animals so they can be re-released into the wild.

Lowell refers to herself as "the crazy lady poking at dead animals on the side

of the road," when she thinks of what other people might think when she is rescuing possum pinkies.

"I just see a dead animal on the road; I don't know if it's a mother carrying young at first."

Lowell offered some tips in rescuing pinky possums: "Never try to feed baby possums. They are wild animals. Just keep it warm and get it to a wildlife shelter."

The reason Lowell has a soft spot for possums is because "they are misunderstood animals. Most people think they are aggressive, but they are gentle animals with poor eyesight."

"[Possum's] tails look like a rat, but they are not even closely related. Possums are marsupials which makes them more like kangaroos. Most people think their teeth look mean but the only way you will see them is if you corner one. This is easy to do because they're slow."

Lowell's work with animals doesn't stop with possums. She works with



photo courtesy of ssc.hu

Aside from saving baby possums, Carrie Lowell will also foster rabbits who are mostly found in kill shelters until a permanent home is found.

the House Rabbit Society. She will foster rabbits until a permanent home is found. Most of the rabbits the organization rescues are from kill shelters.

Some of the work the society does is rabbit ownership education, which is

mainly done over the phone; an example is litter box training. Special rehabbing when a rabbit has been abused, that consists of the rabbit learning to trust humans again. "Some rabbits are abused in really bad ways, such as having their ears cut off," said Lowell.

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All the Shades of Grey

Power

by: Micah Roberson
Features Editor

I've learned something about power recently, something that I didn't realize. Power means to some that you can do what you want regardless of

how it affects someone else. Power can even allow for you to not worry about consequences. I've recently learned through observation that encountering consequences for actions can be avoided if you have power, but consequences for actions can be taken to an extreme if a

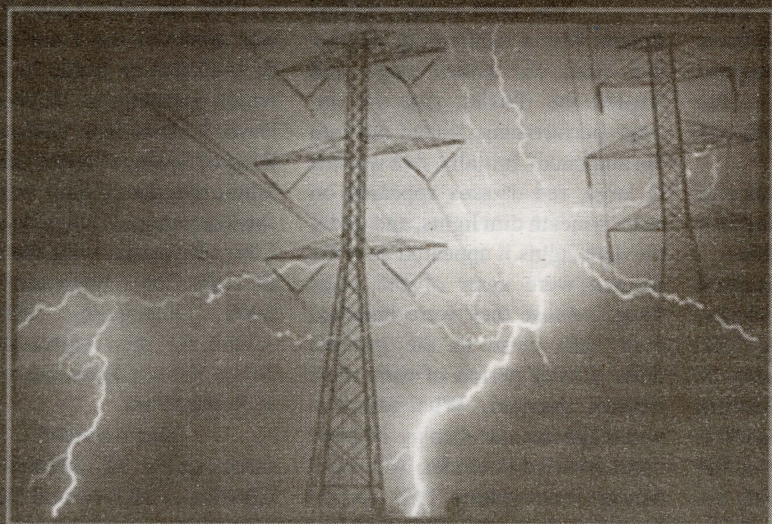
person lacks power. I've also recently observed that the severity of a committed crime isn't a factor if you have power. Again, if you have power, you can do what you want. A person with power can be abusive.

I considered how my actions might change if I had power. I wondered if I would be abusive too. It appears that history shows that people in general dislike being abused but when given the opportunity, the same people will be abusive. In other words, everyone hates to be the victim of oppression and abuse. History shows that most groups of people have been oppressive and abusive to another group. This pattern in history supports the saying that "what goes around comes around."

Why do groups of people get to be both victim and perpetrator of abuse? Some would say this is an example of balance. I disagree. My personal opinion is that people are victim and perpetrators due to choice. Some people would say that a person or group would choose to be victimized too. I disagree. People are often victimized by abusive force being enacted upon them, not by a desire to be a victim. The choice that I referred to is the choices that an individual makes daily that affect other people. No, I'm not as "green" as I should be in terms of the environment because I know about global warming. I

don't recycle as much as I know I should. The choices I make because I'm not as "green" as I could be and not recycling as much as I could are affecting people, plants and animals and the atmosphere. I guess I have the answer to my question "if given power would I be abusive?" With the little power I have I don't always place my used plastic and paper in a recycling bin. I'm contributing to a slow death of some living things. No, I haven't fired a gun at anyone and I don't desire to. The death that I contribute to is slower and not as readily apparent and visible because I don't see the damage done to the environment and even to myself.

So now that I've learned that the potential to be abusive is within me, what will I do? What will you do? We already know. This article wasn't about recycling though. It was to help explain some of the things that are presently occurring and will continue to occur. It was Mahatma Ghandi who said, "be the change that you want to see." I know, change is difficult. But hopefully after reading this article everyone can realize that if given the opportunity individually we can be just as evil as everything we've witnessed that we didn't like or we can be just as good as the best people in history. I know it's not easy. But we have the *power* to be our very best. Don't abuse your power by the choices that you make that affect other living things.



POWER
POWER CORRUPTS. ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY.
BUT IT ROCKS ABSOLUTELY, TOO.

www.despair.com

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by: David Mosher
Online Editor

The recent announcement that Apple will no longer be attending the MacWorld Expo after this year is yet another blow to the electronic event community. It seems these large scale events are becoming less and less of a priority to the companies that attend them. Even the large scale venue Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) has toned down its yearly event. The reasons for this are varied and

many. As with many things, it boils down to money. These events are lavish, costing the companies millions in return for a momentary spotlight on new products. However, that spotlight has been dimming.

Many online buyers neither know of nor care about these extravaganzas. Indeed, the average consumer finds out about new products primarily through advertising and word of mouth.

The other part of the problem is the products themselves. A company that is a main attendee to a large event is beholden to its time schedule. There lies the problem. People go to these venues expecting new products, expecting something fun and new. This in turn holds the company to release something fun and new each time it attends this event, constricting it to the time table of

the event rather than its own independent time table. It is for this reason, more than any other I believe that these large scale events are disappearing.

A company that holds itself to someone else's time table has a problem. I believe it is why Apple is no longer attending the MacWorld Expo. How many updates can they bring to the I-Pod every single year? Soon enough the little handheld will be a full-blown computer, something the I-Pod touch is already leaning towards.

While many attendees will most likely be crushed at Apple's disappearance,

Macworld
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image courtesy of macworld.com

in the long run the move is beneficial to the company and most likely going to be beneficial to those who love new products. It gives Apple the freedom to release when it pleases, which will (hopefully) be larger, exciting releases. Anyone who has followed Apple lately knows that some of its announcements have been less than exciting.



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Sports Rec

The NEIU Golden Eagles WIN!

by: Florin Trinca-Pasat
Sports Editor

WIN!! WIN!! That's what the NEIU-Golden Eagles have done against Columbia College, a school that has had the program for many years. The NEIU-Golden Eagles has played together for just six games and have been able to keep up with teams such as Kennedy King College, Robert Morris

College, St. Xavier University, and Olive Harvey College. In a recent tournament Olive Harvey College defeated three other college teams by 30+ points, yet the NEIU Golden Eagles lost to them by only three points in that tournament.

The game at home in the P.E Complex was a battle ground ready for war in a clash resembling David vs. Goliath. Columbia College came in ready as ever, skilled from

playing many years together, physically fit, experienced on the road and ready to show their game face. The first encounter against the NEIU-Golden Eagles, a team of few fans, no university support and a lot of character and determination, awakened the basketball ghosts of the past to defeat Columbia College. In the second and final game of the 2008 semester before the spring term starts, Columbia College wanted to draw blood

from the new born Eagles, however little did they know that the NEIU-Golden Eagles had the NEIU-Wall of Fame for inspiration and a hard training camp during the fall to inspire the team to realize that this game was a must win to end the fall 2008 term on a high flying tone.

At 12 p.m. on a snowy Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008 the game started and the battle began. With six minutes in the game the score was 11-11, at three minutes and eight seconds, it was 28-17 for the Eagles. The Eagles committed three fouls and Columbia committed 10 fouls against the NEIU-Golden Eagles, putting them in foul trouble early in the game which gave the game to the unpredictable Eagles. Once the NEIU-Golden Eagles had their claws on the score and were in control of the game they just soared higher and higher into their favorite environment, the winning environment. With 30 seconds left in the game the NEIU-Golden Eagles won by an amazing score of 56-39 (final) to defeat Columbia College two times in a row.

WHERE WERE YOU????!!!! 30 proud NEIU-students and fans showed up to support the team, your university team. What you missed was a show by the Color Guard, music by DJ Blakish, seeing Columbia College's basketball team, seeing and meeting the NEIU-Golden Eagles basketball team and head coach Cyril Nichols, the P.E. Complex Wall of Fame and much more. It's never ok to jump on the band-wagon because it can tip over if too full, but if you show support by giving and being there at home for home games the wagon can be built just right so it keeps on going and never tips over or breaks down. Sportsmanship helps the university and student life here at Northeastern Illinois University. GO!! Eagles GO!!

For comments e-mail: mildflorin@yahoo.com



NEIU basketball team, The Golden Eagles, (In front from left) Jelani Thomson, Esosa Ogbomo, Tristan Sims (Senior Captain), Marcus Zych (Captain), and Jovani J. (In back from left) Florin Trinca-Pasat (Senior Captain), Joseph M. Carter, (Coach) Cyril Nichols, Antonio Breashears, Walter Antequera, and Ronald Baskins strategize their next move during a time out on Dec. 7 in the Phys Ed complex.

After the game, feedback... from NEIU Basketball Coach Nichols

by: Florin Trinca-Pasat
Sports Editor

Did everything go as planned?

Yeah, we won.

How do you feel about that?

This is a college basketball program and the people we play are tough. We're not playing bad people, we're playing really good basketball teams.

How do you feel about the players?

You know what, I got all the respect for all the players. These guys come out here and the way they compete and play are the most

amazing things on the planet. These guys don't have scholarships.

How did you feel before the game? Did you guys think you would have a great victory?

I'm always nervous, because anything could happen in an athletic contest. Like the NE-Patriots, everyone thought they were going to beat the NY-Giants, but they didn't so I'm never comfortable before a game.

A lot of stress on the coach right?

Yes, oh yes.

-NEIU Coach Nichols

SGA President Jason Garcia interviewed about Golden Eagles basketball team

by: Florin Trinca-Pasat
Sports Editor

What do you think about the basketball team?

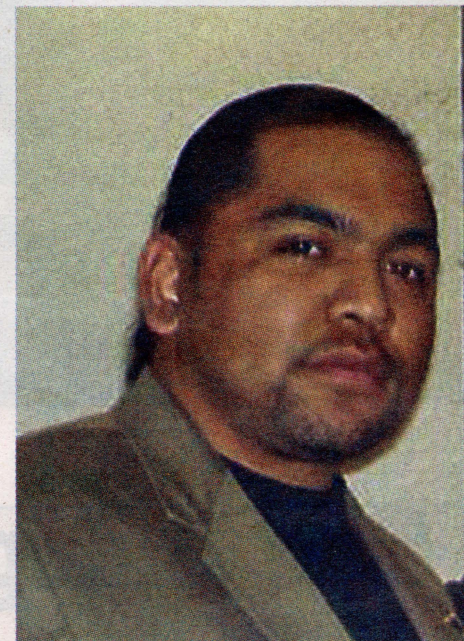
I think it's great. It's great for student life, we had a great time today. We're all happy to be here, they all work so hard. I think it's good for the future of NEIU.

They used to have a team before right?

Yeah, back before when I was a student here. And now they have it back, I'm here for their support. One of the guys here is from the student government and we're going to try to work with them as much as possible with the administration so we can make this happen to give some sense of pride. It was great to see them and have other schools over here and it's awesome. It's a great feeling.

How do you think we could gather more people for the games?

Actually, I think it will be worthwhile, but it's going to take a lot of time and effort, and I know we have a dedicated group of individuals. This is what we're here to do. I think we can all agree that this is good for



student life. No matter what it's going to take, we're all here to support. It's not going to be easy, but I think if we get united again as a university, we can definitely do it.

-Jason Garcia NEIU student

Any Feedback e-mail NEIU-sports editor at mildflorin@yahoo.com

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