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Independent- Feb. 25, 2009

Lenny Ocasio

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Wednesday, February 25, 2009

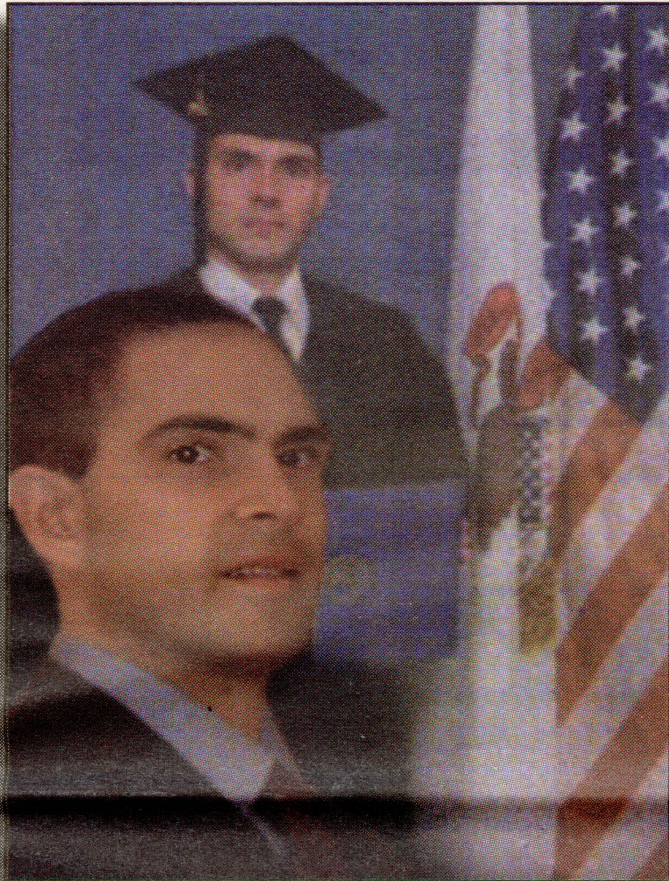
Vol. 24, Issue 29

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

MAR 06 2009

ARCHIVES

Northeastern Graduate Runs For Congress



Layout by: Victoria A. Tullock

Pictures courtesy of: www.simonribeiro.com

by Theresa Celmer
Staff Writer

Northeastern Illinois University graduate Simon Ribeiro is running for Congress in Illinois' 5th Congressional District, the seat vacated by White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel.

Ribeiro, a Green Party candidate, is running against three other opponents for the Green Party primary election on March 3, 2009. If he wins, he will be facing two other nominees for the final special election on April 7. The election for Illinois' 5th District is the only national-level congressional election being held in the U.S. right now.

Ribeiro graduated from NEIU in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He is currently

attending graduate school at NEIU, working towards a master's degree in political science.

Because of what he has learned at NEIU, Ribeiro believes he has a better understanding of economic policy. Ribeiro also believes that he can use what he has learned to create a better environment.

If he is elected, he hopes to help college students.

"I hope to deliver more federal funding and grants to students and lower rates on student loans and do my best to lower tuition rates," said Ribeiro.

He believes his education at NEIU helped him get where he is today. He said he had good teachers and that NEIU had an excellent program and is one of the most diverse schools.

Green Fee Committee Encourages Student Involvement

by Whitney Behr
Staff Writer

The Green Fee Committee met last week to discuss what they are doing with your money.

The \$3 green fee, which first showed up on tuition bills in fall of 2007, is intended to be used to promote sustainable projects on campus. The committee, composed of representatives from the student body, facilities management and the faculty, meets once a month to evaluate each project's progress.

Past project successes include replacing a maintenance vehicle with an electric car to reduce emissions and fuel costs, purchasing new bike racks to encourage bicycle commuting and installing motion sensors in twenty main campus bathrooms to reduce electricity consumption and help keep tuition costs reasonable.

In fact, the motion sensor pilot project has been so successful that the committee is looking into adding motion sensors in the bathrooms at the Center for Inner City Studies and in the tunnels that connect buildings on the main campus.

The Green Fee Treasury currently has \$101,000 to spend. There is strong interest in installing solar technology in a visible place on campus, but so far, the committee has yet to find a cost-appropriate solar project.

The committee will be hosting an informational table in the Village Square on Thursday, Feb. 26, which will include detailed information about past projects and future goals, as well as a suggestion box for students to provide their ideas. The next meeting will be held on March 31, and the committee encourages the NEIU community to attend. In the meantime, they said students and faculty can do their part for the environment and the university by turning off the lights in unoccupied classrooms. Individuals interested in more information should go to the Green Fee Committee's Web site: www.neiu.edu/~greenfee.

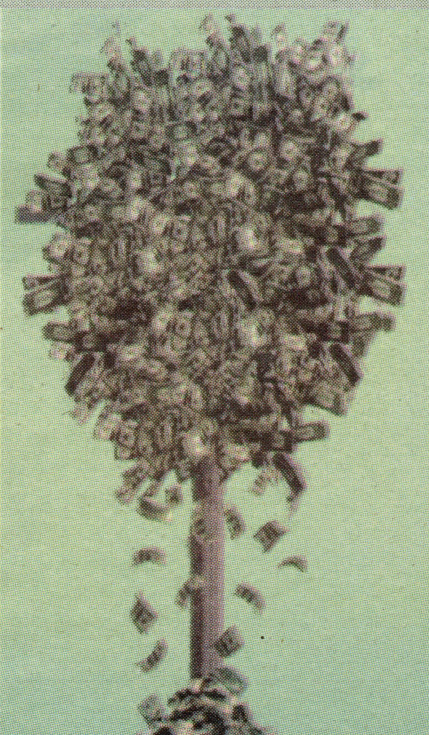


Image Courtesy of datamatch-links.com

GLBTA Attends Conference in Indiana

by Sergio Guzman
Staff Writer

Northeastern's Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Alliance (GLBTA) attended the annual Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) from February 13th to the 15th. A total of eight GLBTA members attended the conference. This year's conference was held at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind. The MBLGTACC's main objective is to educate the attendees on gay issues concerning all walks of life. This is usually achieved through various workshops and keynote speakers.

"Civil and Uncivil Rights in the 21st Century", "Historical GLBT Images in the Media", and "Does God Hate Fags? What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality" were some of the titles of the workshops the GLBTA attended. The media workshop focused on showing scenes from famous television shows and movies while detailing the advancement of the portrayal of the gay

community. Scenes ranging from "Three's Company" and "Brothers and Sisters" to "Brokeback Mountain" and "Will and

Grace" were shown. The keynote speaker for Saturday night was ESPN senior writer and columnist LZ Granderson. Granderson focused on how gay individuals in sports should come out of the closet while still playing professional sports. He then compared how these individuals could be the Jackie Robinson or Rosa Parks of their time. He also claimed the climate to come out in today's world is more supportive than ever before. This is supported by the media workshop that stated "... 19 percent of American adults have changed their views favorably towards the gay community in the last five years because they know somebody who is gay."

Not only did the gay community attend the conference, but also a handful of straight (or alliance) people. Despite the educational objectives, Indiana University made sure to support a warm and welcoming atmosphere to all attendees. This included Indiana University students giving out free hugs. Heather Dean, president of the GLBTA, is quoted as

saying, "This conference offers students of all sexual orientation knowledge in 'gay issues' affecting the world today. If only this knowledge was common knowledge to the American public, this country would be a more accepting place for the GLBT community."

"This conference offers students of all sexual orientation knowledge in 'gay issues' affecting the world today. If only this knowledge was common knowledge to the American public, this country would be a more accepting place for the GLBTA community."

Revolutions at NEIU

by Cheryl Lyman
Associate Editor

From Monday, March 9 through Thursday, March 12, Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) Academic Development will be sponsoring the conference series "The Past and Future(s) of Revolutions, A Global Exploration." Each day there will be a master class at 12 p.m. and a keynote panel presentation at 7 p.m. as well as other events throughout the day. This series will explore what a revolution is and whether they have a future, and the legacies of various revolutions and lessons that have been learned from them. Some of the topics covered will include: Revolutions Old and New; The Mexican Revolution and its Legacy; The Revolutionary Past and Radical Future of Human Rights; and Seizing Power: Fundamentalists and Liberals in the Iranian Revolution. Seminars will take place in the Golden Eagles room, Alumni Hall and the auditorium. Please visit <http://www.neiu.edu/~acdevelo/Revolutions> for information on individual seminar times and locations, as well as a list of speakers.



Upcoming Events at nEIU

Wednesday February 25

Ash Wednesday Mass
12:00 p.m.
Golden Eagles Room

Joint Solo Recital
5:00 p.m.
Konrad Pawelek- Clarinet
Matt Groters- Violin
(with Jane Kenas-Heller and Peter Benson on Piano)
Recital Hall

Marketing Club Networking Night
8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
CLS 3020

Thursday February 26

Health and Wellness Fair
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
PE Complex Main Lobby

Friday February 27

Brass Club Fundraiser Bake Sale
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Village Square

Monday March 2:

Students Against War: Conference
5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
SU 003

Tuesday March 3

*Students Against War:
Conference* 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
SU 003
Freedom of Expression
at NEIU

*Theta Chi Omega Celebrates
Receiving Beta Chapter Status*
1:40 p.m.-2:40 p.m.
Golden Eagles Room
Light appetizers served
and music by
Those Funny Little People

POLICE BLOTTER

On Jan. 6 at 11:20 a.m. in the Student Union Building an unknown offender stole a key lock cylinder from the door. The value was under \$300 and is still under investigation.

On Jan. 9 at 2:15 p.m. in the Science Building and unknown offender stole 2 NEIU projectors from the lecture halls that entered into LEADS/NCIC. The value was under \$300 and is still under investigation.

On Jan. 11 at 11:25 a.m. an unknown offender damaged a university information sign on the access road. The offense was categorized as damage to state property and has been administratively closed.

On Jan. 12 at 12:30 p.m. there was a disturbance in the Ronald William Library. The intoxicated subject claimed a friend told him he "would blow up the library." The subject was taken to the hospital for detoxification. Case has been closed.

On Jan. 13 at 12:56 p.m. in the Fine Arts Building an unknown offender stole a laptop and entered into LEADS. The

theft was under \$300 dollars and is under investigation.

On Jan. 21 at 6:59 p.m. in the Ronald William Library an unknown offender stole a victim's wallet and made a \$200 purchase off-campus. The case is still under investigation.

On Jan. 22 at 6:33 p.m. on the third floor of the parking garage a victim's car door was struck when another car pulled into a parking space. The accident did not have any injuries and the case has been closed.

On Jan. 23 at 11:22 a.m. in the Classroom Building a theft of over \$300 occurred when an unknown offender stole a laptop that another student had accidentally left behind in the class. The case has been closed.

On Jan. 23 at 12:00 p.m. in the Student Union Building a theft of under \$300 occurred when an unknown offender stole a victim's wallet. The wallet was stolen from the victim's book bag after it was left unattended. The case has been administratively closed.

On Jan. 24 at 1:07 p.m. in the Classroom Building an unknown offender smashed the vending machine glass. The officer on site inventoried all snacks. The offense has been categorized as criminal damage to state property and is still under investigation.

On Jan. 25 at 6:41 p.m. in the D Building an unknown offender damaged an automatic door, the door handle had been forced off. The case has been administratively closed.

On Jan. 29 at 2:47 p.m. on the access road near the P.E. Building a car was in an accident with a school bus. No injuries were reported and the case has been closed.

On Jan. 30 at 1:05 p.m. in the Classroom Building a theft of over \$300 occurred when an unknown offender stole a laptop from the office. The case is still under investigation.

On Jan. 31st at 11:10 a.m. in the Science Building a theft of over \$300 occurred

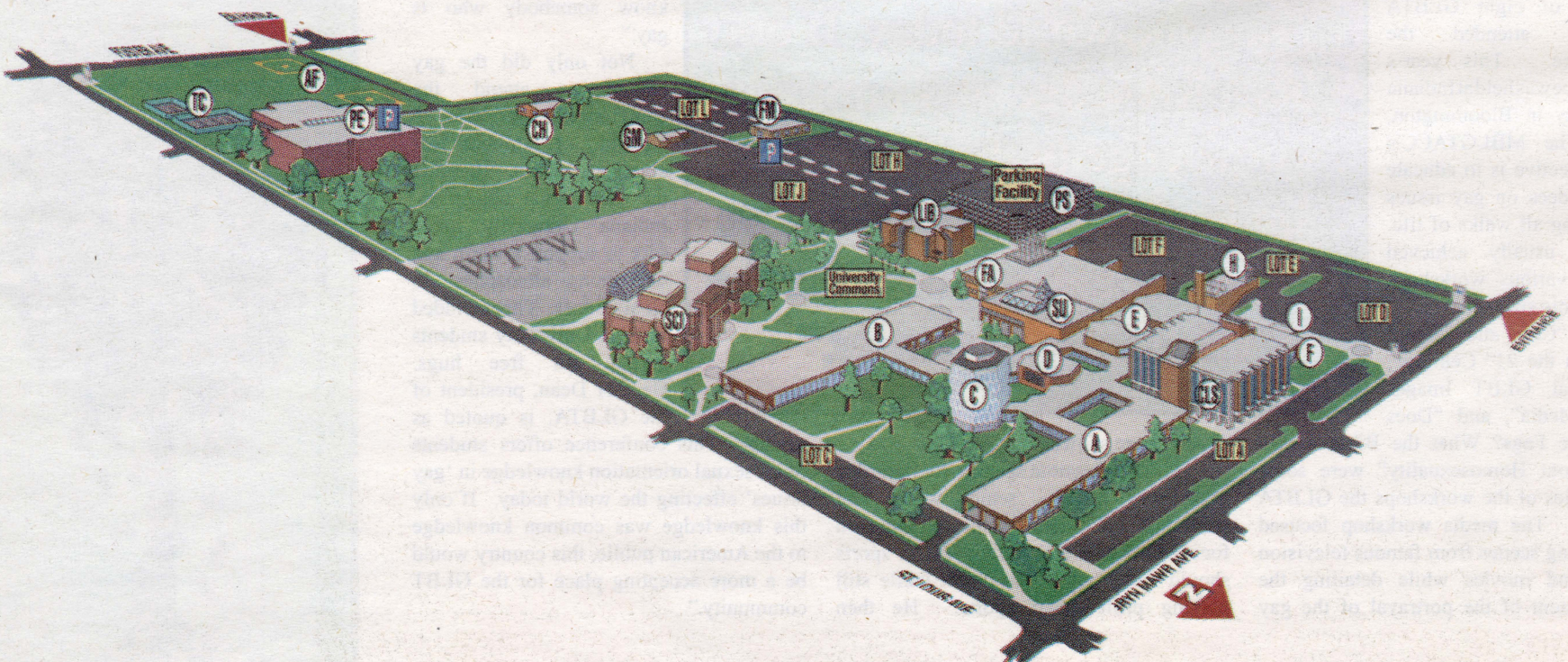
when an unknown offender stole a laptop after a student left it behind in class. The case is still under investigation.

On Feb. 2 at 9:55 a.m. in the Classroom Building an unknown offender wrote graffiti on a stairwell door. The case has been classified as criminal damage to state property and has been administratively closed.

On Feb. 4 at 11:40 a.m. an unknown offender paid for food with counterfeit money. The case is considered deception/forgery and is under investigation.

On Feb. 12 at 2:40 p.m. in the Classroom Building two juveniles were found in the building when campus was closed. The juveniles were issued a warning and released to the custody of their parents. The case has been administratively closed.

On Feb. 19 at 3:48 p.m. in the D parking lot a motor vehicle offense occurred when a complainant reported that an unknown offender struck his vehicle. The case was considered a hit and run.





A News Perspective

Michelle Jacobson Features Editor

Stimulating College Funding

\$787 billion, at least in my opinion, seems like an almost intangible sum of money. I don't even want to think about how many times 787 billion dollar bills laid flat on the ground could circle the planet. However, this is the amount of money in President Barack Obama's stimulus bill, which was signed on February 17. There is much debate as to whether or not the stimulus package is a going to actually stimulate the sagging economy.

As far as higher education is concerned, however, I think the stimulus plan could be very beneficial for college students.

According to the Associated Press (AP), an estimated \$32 billion of the stimulus package will be spent on higher education. A large part of that money will be spent to raise the amount of the maximum Federal Pell Grant.

The Federal Pell Grant is a need-based grant awarded to low-income undergraduate students. Currently, the maximum Pell Grant is \$4,731, but Obama's stimulus package will

raise the maximum amount to \$5,350 beginning July 1, 2009 and to \$5,550 for the 2010-2011 school year.

According to Kathleen Craine, the Assistant Director of Financial Aid at NEIU, about 3,000 students receive the Pell Grant each year. Although \$500 and \$600 increases may not seem like a big deal compared to \$787 billion, with upcoming tuition increases the extra Pell Grant money definitely won't hurt.

Another part of the stimulus plan that affects colleges, according to the AP, is the raise of the tuition tax credit to \$2,500. The stimulus will also make the tax credit 40 percent refundable. This is beneficial to returning students who are not eligible for the Federal Pell Grant or other grants and scholarships.

Al Cordero, a returning student at NEIU, says the tax credit helps returning students go back to school. "At the end of the year, we know it's gonna come back to us," said Cordero about the money he spends on tuition.

With the large amount of money that

is about to be doled out across the economic board, it is good to know that the government thinks it is important that some of that money assists college students.

With the economy the way it is, right now is both a scary and relieving time to be in college: scary, because job prospects after graduation look less and less appealing every day, and relieving because still being in college means we can be hopeful that the economy might be better when we graduate.

I would love to know what the students of NEIU think about Obama's stimulus plan and the money being used towards higher education. Do you think college students deserve more than raised Pell Grants and tax credit? Do you think the stimulus plan isn't going to help you at all? How many times can 787 billion dollar bills circle the planet? Please feel free to answer these questions by commenting on my column at our Web site at <http://www.neuiindependent.com>. I'll publish the best comments in our next issue.



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The *Independent* is a public forum for the community and university around Northeastern Illinois University.

The *Independent* is completely student run and receives no prior review of its content by anyone other than its student editors.

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

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Jimmy John

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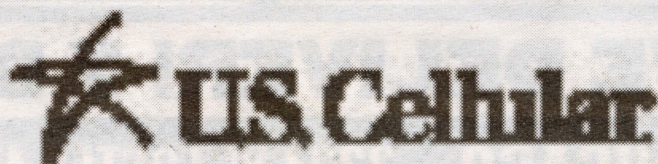


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Do you think there should be some form of housing for NEIU students? What kind?

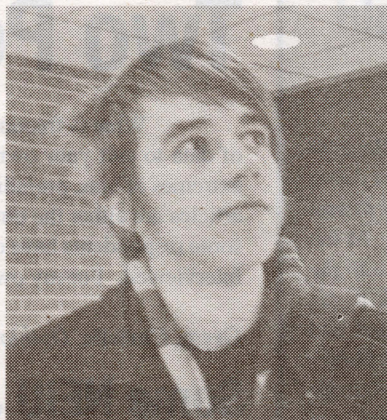
Here's What You Said:

photos and captions by Tracy Ellen



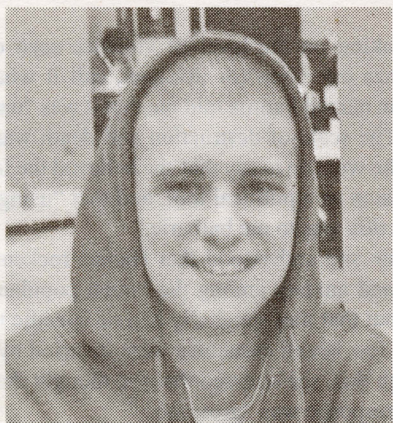
Danielle Galian,
freshman

"I could see why certain students would want dorms, which would eliminate the transportation time and students could feel more of a connection with NEIU, but Northeastern sets itself apart by being a commuter school."



Richard "Chainsaw" Jones,
freshman

"Dorms would be an excellent addition for many of the far commuters but looking at the size of NEIU, it is just unnecessary. Half a city block just doesn't seem big enough to have a whole section for living. This is a small school and living standards aren't needed."



Bobby Daniels,
freshman

"Yes, there should be apartments and/or dorms because it will make it easier for students to commute, make friends, and get more involved in school."



Kate Krismer

"Sure there should be more housing opportunities for students, like apartments and dorms because a lot of students commute from far distances."



Ashley Henry,
freshman

"Yes, because a lot of people that travels a long way to get to NEIU. Housing should be walking distance to the campus."



Tzophiah Seidner,
junior

"Yes, NEIU should have apartments and dorms housing available to students because a lot of people come for the education program and I have met people who had to pay more for rent and pay more for gas for commuting."



Crystal Loza,
senior

"No there shouldn't be no use for housing since most students commute and they live in the area."



Andy Dreyer,
senior

"The coolest thing would be if I lived in any apartment around the school. I would choose my own and the school could maybe subsidize 25 percent or 50 percent and instead of cramped dorm rooms, students could choose their own place to live."



Ellie Conant,
junior

"Yes, anywhere safe to live for students and a short commute."



Wahab Mahmood,
junior

"Yes because there's a lot of students looking for apartments and there should be a housing available close to campus so it wouldn't be as expensive, and it could add towards the tuition."

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Commentary

EDITORIAL

Should You Stay Or Should You Go?

When you think of the phrase "starting off the new year with a bang," you think of it as an expression of doing something unique, different or crazy. You don't really expect something to actually explode, at least you hope not. At the beginning of the Spring '09 semester, a man walked into the library stating that a friend of his was going to walk in the building and "blow it up". NEIU police were called and apprehended the man. Yet, because of this, the entire library building had to be evacuated. It actually turned out that the man's threats weren't genuine, and he had apparently also been drinking.

Still, a bomb threat is obviously no joke at all, and many students on campus at the time of the incident didn't know what was going on until the official e-mail was sent out. So, should more have been done? This is not a question of implementing some new guidebook or employing a group of people whose job is specifically to handle campus-wide notifications; our school already has a guidebook that's very helpful and Public Safety can do the notifications themselves.

Should more of the campus have been evacuated? Perhaps neighboring buildings such as the Fine Arts Building, the B Building or the Science Building? In the case of a bomb threat, you never really know whether it's genuine or not, and in the cases where it is genuine, what kind of bomb it is. If by any chance there was a bomb on campus, and it was an air borne chemical threat, what's to stop those dangerous chemicals from being blown onto another part of campus where unaware students might also be exposed?

Granted, there's the factor of possibly spreading panic to the general student body. This would be counter-productive to authorities, especially during times of crisis, when it would be ideal for the authorities to avoid mistakes. Imagine how this might occur, that is, if the entire school was informed of an apparent bomb threat on campus. In fact, this question should be posed to you, the reader: What would you do if you were informed of a bomb threat on campus? Would you move to the safest location on campus, or would you forget about your schoolwork and just go home?

After thinking this over, the mind races with scenarios of what could happen. Chances are that most people would try to get away from the threat as quickly as possible, and with so many people leaving class and urgently looking for a safe way out, the confusion could easily conceal anyone who has bad intentions. It's understandable when you look at the authorities' point of view.

If there were a bomb threat called in, it would be easier to prevent a worst-case scenario if there were less people walking around. Less confusion can save lives; so this isn't a jab at the police, nor at the schools policies and guidelines. Though, after saying that, it's not as if the entire faculty and student body at NEIU would run around screaming, "BOMB! SAVE YOURSELVES!" No, the people here are better than that.

If people thought more should have been done on that day in January, perhaps things could change and more precautions could be taken in the future. Quicker campus-wide notices that are performed in a calm and collective manner, for instance. Maybe even evacuating neighboring buildings, just in case the worst should happen. In any case, the worst did not happen and no one was hurt. But with every incident that takes place, there are always questions that run through a person's mind, such as what could happen and what can be done to prevent that dreaded worst-case scenario.

If you feel more should have been done, feel free to leave a comment under this editorial on our Web site at: www.neiuindependent.com

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor must be signed with an address and telephone number for verification. Submissions must not exceed 250 words. Letters are subject to editing for space and style at editor's discretion. The editor reserves the right to omit any work submitted. Letters are on a first-come first-served basis.

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Gaza and the Israeli Elections: Two Points of View

What is freedom of speech? Is it the freedom to focus only on your own point of view, or to manipulate a body of data to suit your own purposes? The press coverage of the situation in Palestine has seen too much of the terrible extremes of bias, prejudice and omission, so I thought that I would let some students speak for themselves. The following articles are either the direct quotes or paraphrased words of current Muslim and Jewish students here at NEIU, and since some respondents have chosen to remain anonymous, for the sake of fairness I have changed all the names of those I have interviewed. For my own part, I hope and pray for peace, therefore my main reason for this exercise.

Gregg Christie, *Opinions Editor*

Some NEIU Jewish Voices:

by Gregg Christie
Opinions Editor

I will start with Joshua, who has served a number of years in the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces), so he has seen the situation in the 'occupied territories' first-hand. When I asked him if the recent Israeli operation in Gaza was executed with an appropriate amount of force, he replied that in actuality it didn't go far enough. " Hamas has not been taken out," and "the rockets keep flying," was his reasoning. He pointed out that since the IDF withdrew from Gaza in the summer of 2005, Hamas has launched over 10,000 rockets into Israel, and that it was "nothing less than a miracle" that the casualties were so light.

Abraham, another veteran of the IDF, pointed out that the United States would have responded with even more force had rockets been launched onto its own soil, and Joshua agreed, saying, "Sure, America wouldn't stand for that for five minutes!" They both emphasized that Israel's security issues were paramount. It was also pointed out that IDF soldiers are given rigorous training in protecting the lives of civilians during combat operations, yet success at this policy is all that much harder when Hamas is caught launching rockets from a school compound.

As is also the case with any other government, their primary focus is to protect their citizens. The rocket attacks have had the effect of disrupting lives and businesses, and have instilled great fear among the Israeli populace, which in turn places pressure on the government to take action.

I pressed both of them with the question, "Doesn't a strong military strike into a crowded urban area just serve to bolster the opposition, thus further enabling the endless cycle of violence?" Their responses were given without any hesitation. Joshua stated that, "the object is to destroy the military opposition." He pointed out that the IDF's main goal was targeting Hamas's technical and military ability to create effective opposition. Abraham stated that the rocket strikes on Israel don't leave the government with much choice, and that "it is a job that must be done."

They were both in agreement on the sovereignty of Israeli territory, and that the removal of over 600,000 Jewish settlers from the West Bank would prove a near impossible task. It would be an operation that, according to Joshua, might also lead to a civil war within Israel itself. Joshua was also adamant in his assertion that the Jewish people have deep spiritual ties to the land, which includes those sacred sites found in the West Bank. He also said that were Israel to abandon their holiest sites, which represent the very essence of Judaism itself, then "they're denying their relationship to the land altogether." For his part, Abraham was more concerned with the city of Jerusalem, which all three people I interviewed agreed was the spiritual capitol of the Israeli people.

Finally, I come to Rebecca, a political science major who, like her counterpart on the Muslim side of this debate, is concerned mostly with peace. She says that, "Israel has the right to exist, especially after being recognized as a legitimate government. Palestine, however, doesn't simply cease to be just because Israel exists."

She goes on to say that both sides have the right to protect themselves, but for her this doesn't mean "provoking each other," as she puts it. She feels that this is at the heart of the "endless cycle of violence" alluded to earlier. She summed up her viewpoint by stating, "Both sides need to learn to swallow their pride and negotiate if peace is to be had."

On a final and somber note, these respondents were also doubtful of the future. They all thought that the impending right-wing coalition government would

See Jewish Voices, right

Some NEIU Muslim Voices:

by Gregg Christie
Opinions Editor

Speaking on the level of violence seen during the recent Gaza operation (or invasion, call it what you will), a woman named Fatima told me that it was "uncalled for, unjust. The scale of destruction and death was very shocking." She went on to say that she believed the Israelis used the invasion as a political tool, and that "using force to win an election was to me barbaric."

While she understood that Hamas rockets were causing fear and anxiety among the Israeli populace, she also pointed out that they generally had no specific targets and that very few Israeli casualties were incurred by these attacks. Given this, she stressed that she thought the scale of the Israeli response was "grotesque."

All the Muslims I spoke to during these interviews shared the belief that the Israelis, as one person phrased it, were using their "Holocaust Mentality," as an excuse for their actions. Ibrahim went so far as to say, "The recent words and campaign promises of those right-wing [Israeli] candidates remind me of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party of Germany. They complain about the Holocaust and then they talk about putting all the Israeli Arabs on trucks and expelling them from the country? It is shameful!" Fatima expressed somewhat similar sentiments when she said, "Didn't the same thing happen to them fifty or sixty years ago? Wouldn't this make them care more about the Palestinians?"

Medina, on the other hand, said that she cared most about peace and she thought that the violence displayed by both sides was unacceptable. She raised an interesting point when she said, "My opinion about the conflict in the Middle East is that I think it is unnecessary that we have the U.S. helping the Israeli government while watching the Palestinians die." When I asked the Muslim respondents about the Obama administration's hopes that they might work with the new Israeli government towards a peace settlement, the response was very mixed.

Ismael said that any peace deal must include withdrawal of the settlers from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, but he added "I doubt that the Israelis would ever agree to that." Ibrahim just shrugged, shook his head and said, "I don't see the possibility of peace with Israel." Fatima explained that, "There is a lot of hope and expectations among Palestinians [for Obama's team], but also the fear that they will be disappointed again." Two people also pointed out the controversial appointment of Rahm Emanuel as the president's Chief of Staff, expressing that Muslims neither like nor trust him.

What I saw during these interviews was a mixture of sadness, anger and frustration, and most of them expressed doubt for the future. For me, the most poignant words came from Medina, who said, "I think that both sides should try to come to a resolution where you don't see young children and civilians dying. It takes people to make people, but it also takes people to kill people."

Discussion may be continued online at our Web site www.neiuindependent.com

Jewish Voices, continued

not be willing to concede much ground during any future negotiations, thereby forcing the Palestinians to give in even more. They all seemed to agree that peace was unlikely in the foreseeable future. This conclusion sounds familiar, doesn't it?

When “Progressive” isn’t Progress

by Adam Salamon
Staff Writer

Politically, I consider myself to be a liberal leaning moderate. However, while my political views may lean toward the left, I am still nauseated by the extremes of both sides of the political spectrum. Both believe in narrow ideologies that smack of elitism. Ultra-conservatives, who don’t believe women have the right to have abortions and that homosexuals don’t deserve the same liberties as heterosexuals, make me ill with their sanctimonious garbage. Similarly, the far left’s insistence on trying to use education as a tool to push their political agenda also makes me sick. Why, you might ask, do I say this? It’s because what may seem like “progress” to those in charge of instructing and schooling our nation’s future may, in their politically correct attempt to “progressively” reform the education system, actually be harming America.

James Robert Brown has defined the term “academic-left” in his book, “Who Rules Science?” (Harvard University Press), as a “set of academics who have left-wing views.” However, fear of the academic-left does not just come from students like me, who worry about a balanced approach to political and social viewpoints in the classroom, but from many educators themselves. Harry White, an English professor here at NEIU, in a letter to the editor of the Independent dated Jan. 27, 2009, correctly stated that he felt the biggest threat to academic freedom came from “within (typically from the left)” of the education system itself. Professor White complains in his letter that teachers are now given orders in “what their syllabi must include,” and “which subjects should or shouldn’t be emphasized or taught” from various persons and committees within the

academic profession itself. White goes on to say that academic interference is not taking place just here at NEIU, but that it is in fact a nationwide phenomenon.

Apparently, those from the academic-left don’t believe you or I are smart enough to choose our political or social beliefs wisely, so they have decided to push us through their biased curriculum into those choices they deem correct. If this isn’t a case of misguided elitism, than I don’t know what is. I believe that we are intelligent enough to make informed decisions about these topics once we have heard both sides of the argument and have gathered all the relevant facts. Apparently, those in charge of education don’t think as highly of us.

Because of this, we are getting teachers and texts that emphasize the accomplishments of one side of the political spectrum while bashing or omitting those with opposing or dissenting views. This is especially obvious in my major, history, where the old vision of an American “melting-pot” is no longer accepted as a proper description of our society. Students are now taught to view our society as a patchwork of peoples and cultures that never mix. I find this counter-productive because while assimilation may not be beneficial to American society, amalgamation is (as in, to form into an integrated whole). Call me old-fashioned, but I still believe that “united we stand, divided we fall.”

Proof of this line of thinking can be seen all over academia and includes the assigned textbooks here at NEIU. One of my U.S. History texts, “Out of Many” (Prentice Hall), is a perfect example. The title, taken from the great seal of the United States, is the translation of the Latin, *e. pluribus*, which means “out of many.” What is missing from the title is

the word “one,” or *unum* in Latin. Here the academic-Left, by leaving off the unifying word one, seems to be telling us that yes, we Americans are out of many, but no, we are not to view ourselves as a united “one.”

I live in a diversified community just outside of Chicago, and my children’s school district reflects this fact. While in 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that a “separate but equal” education was unconstitutional, “progressive” educators from the left have been pushing curriculums that are causing exactly this very thing to happen in my community, as well as in other liberal leaning communities across the nation. The school district’s controversial Two Way Immersion Program (TWI), where courses are taught in Spanish and English on a near equal basis, has caused such segregation in the schools within the program that, whether intentional or not, the policies may actually be in violation of the Supreme Court ruling. Add to this the fact that the district is also imposing an African-American pilot program, resulting in even further racial divisions within these schools.

In a country where people have died to secure their civil rights, is it fair that the leftist progressives within academia are allowed to implement policies, curriculums, and texts that espouse their warped ideology to the detriment of education as a whole? To me, the answer is clearly no. It is fine to want to have a more worldly view taught in schools, but segregating our classrooms, ripping people’s political beliefs and bashing those opposed to their brand of biased education seems flat out wrong. Just because something is labeled “progressive,” doesn’t mean that it is necessarily progress.

It’s time to work together

by Jonathan Gronli
Entertainment Editor

We’re in trouble when it comes to our economy. The Democrats blame the Republicans. The Republicans blame the Democrats. The progressive-minded people, like me, would rather take a more realistic approach.

It’s all of our faults. Certain choices led us to the economic woes we’re in now. It ties into almost all of our choices, from the over-reliance on fossil fuels, to having an economy based on retail consumerism, and includes the people we elect into public office.

Honestly, the last big economic plan an American leader had that made any sense whatsoever was The New Deal. It made jobs when we were hurting for them. More jobs meant more money. More money meant more sales and higher ability for economic trade on international levels. It also meant more money going into the government, which, ideally, would go back to the people in goods and services. Reaganomics ended up using almost the exact same premise, but because of the “trickle-down” economic effect it was a ridiculous idea. It had the opposite effect and forced us into a recession.

Then there’s George W. Bush. His decisions forced us into one of the highest debts this nation has ever had. He applied old, flawed thinking (Reaganomics) in new, more flawed ways. They were so flawed that not even one of the things that bolsters our economy most (war) helped. Let’s face it; the economy of war tends to be good for the American economy for some reason.

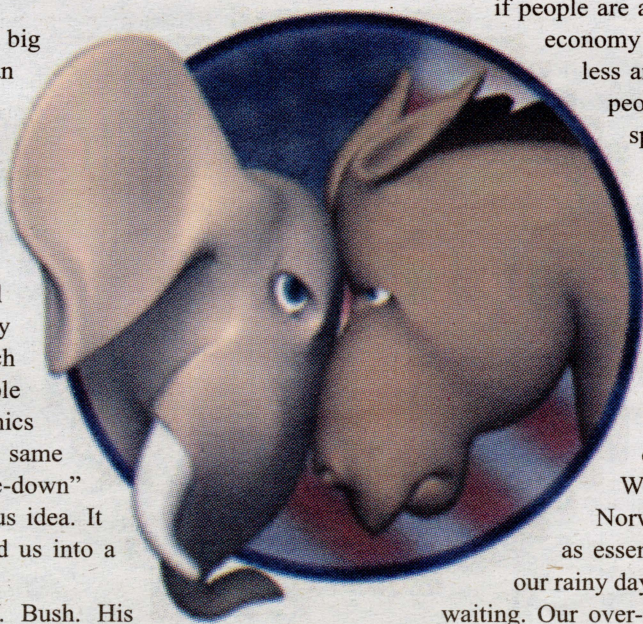
Then again, these same problems exist on the state level as well. We are generally getting screwed over by our

leadership, and no one really wants to call them on it until they’re caught in their game, i.e. Blago. Much like business, there has to be a higher level of accountability in our government.

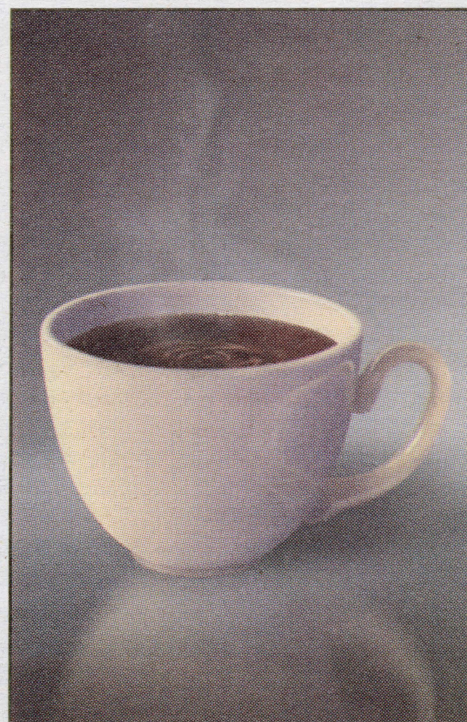
It’s not just our elected leaders’ fault. It’s our fault too. It’s our consumer complex that sustains the bulk of our economy, not international or interstate trade. The majority of our economy is built on us buying stuff, occasionally crap we don’t even need. Other countries have their economy largely based on trade, and they use their resources wisely. Examples of this will come up later. The problem with an economic system that’s largely based on retail consumerism is that if people are afraid, they’ll spend less and the economy will get worse. People spend less and more people lose jobs. More people lose jobs and more people spend less. It’s a brutal cycle.

We also tend to use resources in an unwise way. We rely too fully on fossil fuels because even though it’s more expensive in the long run, it’s cheaper right now. We also spend more time importing things, oil for example, when we have massive reserves in different areas of the country. We could take a lesson from Norway, who keeps their oil reserves as essentially a rainy day fund. This is our rainy day, and we’ve got no fund like that waiting. Our over-reliance on fossil fuels actually puts us at the mercy of foreign interests when we could take care of ourselves. Sure, the cost to convert to “green” energy and technology is expensive. Maintaining it is not. It would also open up more jobs, and America could use a better job market as a whole.

It’s time we take responsibility for our actions and choices. It’s time we work together to fix the economy along with the other problems in American society.



More Caffeine Please!



by Theresa Celmer
Staff Writer

It’s a few minutes before class and you find yourself dozing off. So what do you do? You buy a soda pop that contains caffeine. According to *Answers.com*, caffeine is defined as a drug that affects the central nervous system. Besides soft drinks, caffeine is also found in energy drinks, coffee, chocolate and over-the-counter pep pills. A cup of instant coffee has 60 milligrams (mg) of caffeine. As far as soft drinks go, Coca Cola Classic has 34 mg., while Diet Coke has 45 and Mountain Dew 55 mg. The energy drink Red Bull has 115.5 and caffeine pills such as Vivarian contain about 200 mg.

I am sure that everyone like myself has used caffeine to help them stay awake for a class or cram for an overnight study session. But the question is, should caffeine be used for these purposes? I believe that it should. I think that caffeine should be used because it is cheap, and it is easier for students to grab a cup of coffee if they don’t have enough time between classes to take a nap.

As for the positive effects of caffeine, it makes you feel less drowsy, and helps you focus and pay attention in the classroom. Once, I almost fell asleep in the news office before class, so I actually had to put down my ginger ale and rush to the cafeteria for a Pepsi. After drinking the Pepsi, I didn’t feel tired anymore and was able to be alert instead of falling asleep at my desk.

I know all too well that the negative side effects of caffeine can be pretty bad. If I don’t have at least one pop a day, I get a good-sized headache. This is not a good state of mind to be in, especially for concentrating on homework or even taking a break and watching TV. Nobody wants to do that with a headache, now do they? I’ve also had the experience that in having caffeine after a certain time of night, I have trouble sleeping. Instead of dozing right off, I toss and turn, stare at the walls all night and am very tired in the morning.

Even though I have experienced some of the negative side effects of caffeine, I still think that it helps students like myself get that extra source of energy. Whether it’s that cup of coffee in the morning or a pop during lunchtime, I believe that a little bit of caffeine goes a long way if not overly abused. As students, caffeine helps us to be in a better mood in the morning instead of being tired and crabby. It also helps us to focus on our schoolwork and to get it done properly. So next time someone asks me what I want to drink, I will say, “More caffeine, please!”

ENTERTAINMENT

Promise in an "Illusion"

by **Sabrina Gasulla**
Staff Writer

Albert Einstein said, "Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one." Einstein's questionable knowledge of neoclassical French theater notwithstanding, this is precisely the theme of Pierre Corneille's "L'Illusion Comique," written two and a half centuries before Einstein was born. Stage Center Theatre is tackling the relationship between reality and illusion this semester in a production of "The Illusion," an adaptation of Corneille's play by Tony Kushner, directed by Northeastern faculty member Christopher Leonard.

In "The Illusion," Pridamont, an aging and coldhearted lawyer, seeks out the infamous sorcerer, Alcandre, to find out what has become of his estranged son. What he gets is a series of visions featuring the image of his son. Pridamont, Alcandre, and her servant follow the young man through increasingly perilous rivalries and thorny romances. All the

while, the young man's identity is in question as his name changes repeatedly. When discrepancies and contradictions in the visions trouble Pridamont, Alcandre dismisses them offhandedly, saying one cannot expect coherence in visions when it is absent in life. Constantly, and quite literally, we are reminded that the threshold between reality and illusion can be crossed back and forth and consequently its boundaries are not at all definite. Not until the very end does Pridamont, as well as the audience, learn the truth about the prodigal son and his fate. And as far as twists go this one is certainly unexpected.

Kushner's adaptation of Corneille's original work focuses on the underlying themes and simplifies the language to allow them to resonate with modern audiences. At its core, "The Illusion" offers up both hilarious and tragic circumstances surrounded by a pressing question: what is reality?

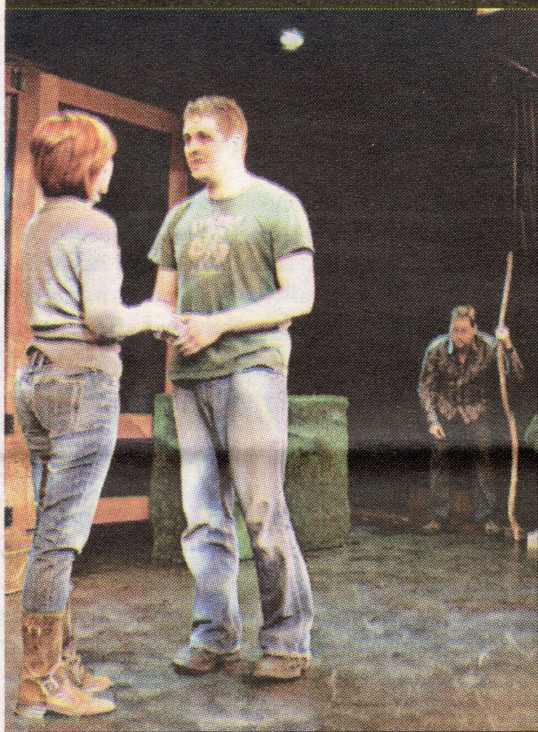
The cast and crew transmit a sense of understanding of the importance of this question, especially as it relates to the

stage. Though the existence of an indeterminate supernatural realm from where Alcandre's conjured memories come from adds a mystical dimension to the story, it certainly does not make for an entirely fantastical setting in this production. Quite the opposite, it seems to heighten the awareness that things are not always as they seem. Magic can offer truth and often the things we perceive to be the most real of all, like love, turn out to be illusions. Theater is not just pretend.

The actors enthusiastically embrace the wit and irony that quite possibly make Kushner's adaptation an improvement on the original. Their comedic timing is impeccable and makes this play not only thought-provoking, but hugely amusing as well.

The world of "The Illusion" is a magical place, an entertaining place, and above all, a very truthful place.

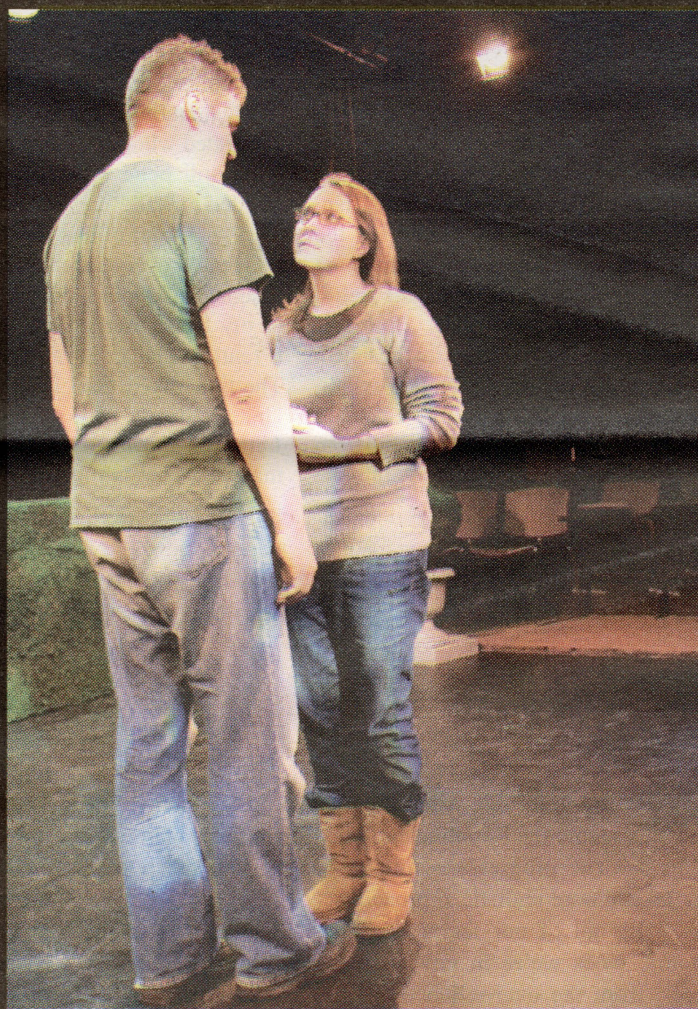
"The Illusion" runs Feb. 26-28, March 5-7 and 12-14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Stage Center Theatre in building F. For reservations contact the Stage Center Box Office at (773) 442-4274.



Shelly Rao and Nick Shea



Harold Le Boyer and Brad Cantwell



Nick Shea and Colleen Mc Cready



From Left to Right: Brad Cantwell, Barbara Berndt, and Harold Le Boyer

All photos by: Tracy Ellen

Reclaiming the Vagina



Photo by Tracy Ellen

Phaydra Babinchok and Angelica Schab listen attentively while the FMLA are reading the script.

by Sabrina Gasulla
Staff Writer

The ladies of the NEIU Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance want to talk about vaginas and they want you to listen. Come March, NEIU will host performances of the acclaimed “The Vagina Monologues” at Recital Hall and El Centro.

Eve Ensler wrote the first version of “The Vagina Monologues” in 1996 and has revised and added to it since. The monologues are based on interviews conducted by Ensler from which she gathered anecdotes and personal feelings from women toward their sexual drive, relationships, and violence.

Initially, Ensler performed the monologues as a one-woman show. Today the material is presented at colleges all over the country to benefit anti-violence groups. As part of the V-Day movement, student groups put on performances of “The Vagina Monologues” and choose organizations geared toward helping victims of violence and abuse receive the profits.

The Monologues are honest, unapologetic and often profoundly funny. They question the negative connotations of words like “cunt” and “pussy”. They range in mood and gravity as they tell stories of rape, childbirth, pleasure, anger, confusion and female mutilation. They seek to provoke thought by shocking audiences, sometimes even by making them uncomfortable.

The fact that conversations about the female experience can upset and embarrass people should disturb us in and of itself.

Ang Schab, one of the performers, described her ultimate goal for these shows. “It’s all about trying

to get power into the word and make it not so taboo,” she said. Several of the cast members remarked that most women don’t talk about their vaginas, many don’t find the conversation necessary or even appropriate. They hope the performances will incite more dialogue so women will be able to converse candidly about the subject and be empowered to speak up against violence.

Contrary to popular belief, the show is not exclusively for women. Men can find truth and hilarity in the monologues as well. The aim is not to idolize the vagina as the be-all and end-all of womanhood, but to illuminate the fact that sexuality and identity are inextricably linked.

Some critics (male and female) have bashed “The Vagina Monologues” for excessive use of vulgarity, and for glorifying promiscuity and the orgasm. This, to me, misses the point altogether. The monologues endeavor to redefine vulgarity and to do away with the negative subtext of female sexuality. Ensler suggests that sex is an ordinary, commonplace thing and an integral part of a woman’s identity, not a crude or “dirty” subject.

This is the third year NEIU will host performances of Ensler’s play. This time the beneficiaries will be Impact, an organization that strives to reduce instances of violence by teaching self-defense and prevention; Young Women’s Empowerment Project, which focuses on harm reduction and providing guidance to young women in the sex trade industry; and the Quetzal Center, which offers support to abuse victims.

Performances are March 2 and 3 at Recital Hall on the main campus and March 4 at the El Centro campus, all beginning at 7:15 p.m. Tickets are \$7 and will be sold in advance at Village Square or at the door on the night of the performance.

Don’t feel this

by Michael McNelly
Photographer

Comedies, especially feel-good comedies, have the purpose of making you feel good and getting you to laugh. That’s pretty obvious, right? They part the clouds of a bad day to let the light of satisfaction shine through. One could say watching one of these movies has a feeling equal to getting a new, cute little puppy. It makes you feel happy, even if you don’t know the reasons why.

I normally despise feel-good comedies. They are degrading to the brain and can be almost complete carbon copies of each other. The reek of commercialism and corporate manufacturing makes my gag reflex go haywire. Due to repetition, they are the epitome of comic and creative constipation. You’re waiting for either a laugh, or for the movie to end, but end up waiting for another hour and a half. It’s a waste of time.

If you thought that was corny, wait until you watch “The Rocker”. It’s about a drummer (Robert Fishman played by Rainn Wilson) who is in a band called Vesuvius during the 1980s. Eventually, the band has to make a choice: whether or not to leave the drummer and play one of the biggest gigs in their career. They choose to leave the drummer for prolonged fame. Too bad for Fishman or “Fish.”

I think Rainn Wilson is pretty funny in “The Office,” so I hoped he would be at least somewhat funny in “The Rocker” despite the horrid trailer.

It wasn’t. I laughed twice throughout the whole movie.

Anyway, ‘Fish’ eventually gets a real job and is fired from it. He’s forced to leave his girlfriend’s apartment and ends up living in his sister’s loft. Her son is in high school and happens to be a member of a band called ADD (short for Attention Deficit Disorder).

Wow, a catchy name.

ADD loses their drummer and Fish takes over. They don’t claim fame until a video on YouTube catches the eye of Matchbox Records. The video is composed of Fish drumming naked during a rehearsal session. They get famous, have an argument and, in the end, get back together and ‘rock’ their hearts out. They put Vesuvius to shame after their lip-syncing disaster.

“Rock” was said only because the music was not rock at all. It was commercial pop. One would think the title “The Rocker” would at least include rock songs. Maybe my perspective on rock music is drastically different than other people’s views.

Oh, so the parts where I laughed were when Fish swallowed a fly while screaming through the emergency exit on top of the tour bus. The other “funny” part was when Christina Applegate asked, “Do you know what a PILF is? It means a Person I’d Like to Stab.” I have a strange sense of humor. So what?

If you want a mindless, manufactured feel-good comedy to watch, then this movie is for you. If you want something with substance and actual humor, don’t watch it.

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PRESENTS

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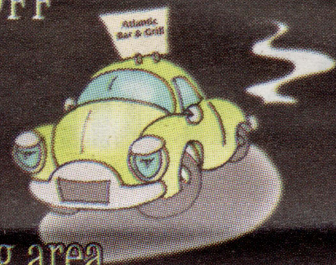
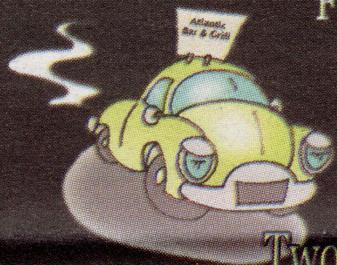


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STUDENT UNION

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EL CENTRO ~ 3119 North Pulaski Road ~ 4 - 6:30 pm ~ Mask Making and King Cakes

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March 2

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Student Union

Book reading starting at 10:15 am

Music from 2:30 - 3:30 pm

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with story reading, cookies, and milk!



Student Organization Saturdays

March 14 - Mr. GPhiO Pageant, sponsored by

Gamma Phi Omega Sorority

Alumni Hall at 7 PM. Email: neugphi@yahoo.com for more info

April 25 - KPE's Family Day

Interested in having a student organization meeting or event on one of the above dates? Please contact Felicia Keelen at 773.442.6099

Email at fkeelen@neu.edu

Student Union Art Exhibits

The Student Union is looking for student artists to display work on the 2nd floor of the Student Union from March 2-18. Please contact Delta Bleahu d-bleahu@neu.edu or Esmeralda Guerrero e-guerrero@neu.edu by Friday, February 27, if interested.

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Is Taken any good?

by Nick Vracar
Staff Writer

The answer is yes, but only for the most part. "Taken" is the king of action movies that can really only be enjoyed for the spectacle of it. It is also a rather short film that moves so quickly that by the time the credits have started rolling it might feel like only moments since the movie first began. That said, what "Taken" lacks in stamina, it makes up for in presentation, giving a tightly woven story that doesn't hold back any punches.

"Taken" is the first American film from French director Pierre Porel, but the more notable credits come from the writers, Luc Besson (wrote and directed the "Professional") and Robert Mark Kamen (wrote the original "Karate Kid"). Outside of Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace and

Famke Janssen, the cast is mostly unrecognizable, although that might be a good thing. Not every movie has to be filled with stars, and the actors are convincing enough.

There are three points where the movie stumbles that are worth mentioning, however. The first is the overall plot of the movie, that being the father traveling to Europe to save his lost daughter. This might make for a simple emotion to tap in to, but the daughter spends most of her un-kidnapped moments being pretentious and annoying, and the film kind of wants you to care about her survival. There are quite a few other people, presented in the exact same predicament as the daughter, who gets brushed aside and forgotten.

The second stumble goes over the beginning of the movie. It takes a little while for the film to get going, to introduce the characters and for Maggie Grace to finally

become kidnapped. I already mentioned that the movie was short, clocking in just over ninety minutes, so by the time the actual plot starts it only has about an hour left to wrap itself up. This lack of time to present story or plot information in any manner but fast leads to my third problem with the movie.

Liam goes about his attempts to rescue his daughter either by his own wits or through others, and his routes tend to follow two lines. Either he makes an assumption about what he has to do next, or some nice and surprisingly available piece of technology points him in the right direction. For example, he manages to track down the address of one of the bad guys via a description of the color of the house.

"Taken" is a fun movie. It's well made, tightly shot and Liam Neeson is better than ever. My suggestion is to watch "Taken," but wait for it to come out on DVD.

Image courtesy of sxc.hu.com



by Jonathan Gronli
Entertainment Editor

Beyond the veil of madness

Gone to the movies with the King of horror...

be back eventually

Stephen King has been one of the most celebrated horror authors ever since he started breaking into mainstream fiction in the late 1970s. Many of his books, and some of his short stories have been adapted to, or referred to, in films. Now there is a 'new' release from the master of horror, which celebrates some of the stories that have been adapted to film: "Stephen King Goes to the Movies."

The "new" means that even though the stories are old, there are new insights from the King himself. This does mean that there are only about 12 or 13 pages of new content. Seeing as how those pages of new content are covering different topics, like how the story came into being, and where directors and actors were right with their decision for character portrayal, it is worth it.

These stories cover King from the early days of

his career to the current day. They mark off the high notes of cinematic King lore. Even though they are reprints of old stories, it is a good buy - if you don't have the original books that these shorts are in. So, rather than buying three or four books, you'll be able to get six of his most memorable short stories in one book.

Sadly, the biggest flaw with this book is the fact that it neglects so much as well. It doesn't pay attention to "Apt Pupil," which is on King's top 10 film adaptations. It completely forgets about one of Stephen King's short stories that happened to be adapted into the film "Quicksilver Highway," which he worked on with Clive Barker. It ignores "Stand by Me," which is one of the most beautiful King short story-based films ever released. It ignored "Secret Window," which, for

the style of movie, worked. It even forgot "The Mist," which through the special features of the DVD, you learn was one of the few films based off his own work that made him jump.

Even though what is in the book is incredible, there is only so much that it tries to take on. This is but a glimpse in to the mind of Stephen King, though there is so much more that can be taken on. Sure that would make the book longer, but for hardcore King fans, do you really think we would care? We love and respect King as a writer because most, if not all, his material speaks on many levels to us.

He talks religion and spirituality with us. He talks science and the existence of aliens with us. He takes all of our questions about the world and works them into different contexts, making even the most mundane topic frightening or

exhilarating. He makes some of the most apathetic of his readers actually think about and research things.

There are only so many ways that you can take different topics, but he finds new ways and leads them into the light. He is a storyteller who has inspired many potential writers. He has also given so many different storytellers in different media a bigger break, including Mick Garris and Sam Raimi, to name two who were helped by Stephen King, whether it was by his praise or by the opportunity for film adaptations.

Sure, one of the complaints about Stephen King is that his writing style is too formulaic, pulpy even. However, is that necessarily a bad thing? It's familiar, even though he still finds ways of taking readers off guard, even if it is through being painfully

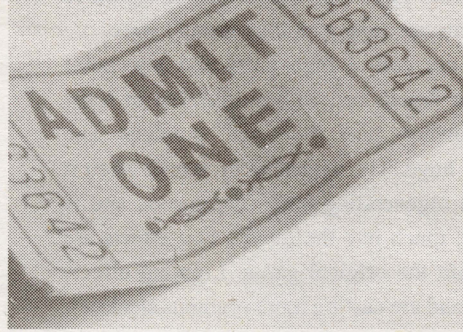
vulnerable ("Hearts in Atlantis" being a shining example). The sign of a good writer is that he/she is able to knock avid readers, who are hardcore fans of theirs, off balance with a wide array of believable emotion. Stephen King is always able to do that while making readers laugh, cry, squirm, wonder or scream in surprise or confusion.

In that respect, "Stephen King Goes to the Movies" is absolutely perfect to show the depth and range of his repertoire. Fans of Stephen King SHOULD, without a doubt, buy this book.

If you wish to know more about the pantheon of contemporary horror fiction, Jonathan Gronli can be reached at jon.gronli@gmail.com.

Boobs, butts, and a moral?

by Lenny Ocasio
Editor-in-chief



The movie "College" follows three high school seniors, Kevin, Morris and Carter, on a weekend trip to Fieldmont University. "College" follows the standards of a college drinking movie. They have fun, then it gets bad, and then they get even with the bad guys.

Kevin is a photographer for his school paper. He thinks of himself as a

responsible, slightly uptight person who can have fun without going crazy. His girlfriend calls him a loser. This is exactly why she dumps him just before the trip so she can enjoy the rest of her senior year. He sets out on the trip with intent to prove to her that he is not boring and that he can go crazy.

Morris is the intellectual geek who is being forced to apply to Fieldmont by his strict parents. He is hopeless with girls and looks like he should still be in middle school, not high school. The only friend he has is Kevin, but even that friendship is undermined by Carter's presence. Morris' future depends on a scholarship interview that weekend, or at least that's what his parents told him.

Carter is the obligatory obnoxious fat guy who is in most college drinking movies. All he thinks about is getting laid and partying. He does not seem to have a

filter between his mouth and his brain. What spews out of his mouth either can be annoying or extremely funny.

After a disastrous dorm room assignment, the three decide to strike out on their own and end up being taken in by a fraternity. The Beta Chi frat is the worst fraternity on campus. They have a history of brutal hazing which resulted in a suspension when one of their pledges ended up in a full body cast with his jaw wired shut. They still keep him around to throw things at him. The leader of the Betas is Teague, a "Fight Club" Brad Pitt look-alike, who decides to have a little fun with the "pre-frosh." From stealing their money, to housing them in a basement with leaky pipes and rats, to deserting them in the country with no clothes, Teague thinks up many ways to torture the three.

Things get even worse when three sorority girls decide that they prefer the

three boys to anyone else. One of the girls, Kendal, is one of Teague's old one-night stands and she is disillusioned by men, especially men she knows have lied to her. But, of course, Kevin is lying to her as well when he tells her that he and his friends are freshmen. Teague then sets out to make Kevin's life a living hell.

On many points, this movie sets out just like any college or teen movie. The moral, on the other hand, hits you over the head, unlike other college movies where the moral or point of the story is buried under the sex and drinking. The moral is to like who you are and not let others influence your actions.

This movie has been called the modern version of Animal House. It is not quite that. It was made to be an entertaining movie. It accomplished that, no matter what movie was its inspiration.

Image courtesy of sxc.hu.com

The fresh, young sound of American Bang

by Gregg Christie
Opinions Editor

The Nashville music scene invaded Chicago this weekend in the form of a new breed of southern rock. This relatively new band called American Bang opened for The Pretenders on Sunday night at the Riviera Theater, performing a short set for the tightly packed audience of mostly middle-aged rockers.

The aging '80s era quasi-punk, black leather jacket & teased out hair crowd was treated to a lively performance by four hairy, young and hard-edged boys from Tennessee. Yet it was no surprise that they were enthusiastically received, because their music quite simply rocked!

At times one could hear echoes of early punk, and

many of their songs were delightfully crunchy, with tight rhythms and simplistic structure. At other times you could hear elements of pop music in their melodies. Sometimes it was their southern roots showing through, especially in the slower numbers, but the songs were never trite or boring. They seemed to bring a fresh, new sound to the subgenre of southern rock. The guitar playing was rarely lacking, demonstrating a hard-working band that constantly rehearses, and tended to focus on playing in close harmony, conserving their songs' energies instead of drifting off into long and pointless guitar solos.

Lead singer and guitarist Jaren Johnston sort of reminded me of Axl Rose, with stringy hair and a bad boy attitude. At one point he took a hearty pull on a whiskey bottle, exclaiming, "Oh! Scotch, Scotch, I love Scotch!"

The crowd ate it up, cheering him on into the next song. My own heart tugged hard with every glance at his gorgeous guitar, the same SG Classic that Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath, and so many other great rockers, have used in the past with devastating effect. The throaty, deep twang of an SG is just not to be missed, and his playing added a rich, meaty tone to their songs.

Their lyrics were simple and to the point, all about love, heartbreak and just having a good time, which fits the band's onstage image to a tee. They wormed their way into everyone's hearts that night, and in terms of youthful energy and a fresh and original sound, they far outshone the headline act. Basically, I saw American Bang as a fine example of a good time party band, so if that sounds like your kind of thing, then they are not to be missed.

American Bang vocalist,

Jaren Johnston

by Daniel Dziedzic
Staff Writer

When you think of Nashville, Tennessee, it's hard to think of anything other than its long history of great country and southern rock musicians, like Hank Williams and the Allman Brothers.

With places like the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville has been an epicenter of music for many years. It recently has helped catapult four young men, known collectively as American Bang, into the rock spotlight. I had some time to speak with lead vocalist, Jaren Johnston about the band's current tour with The Pretenders and recent EP release *Move to the Music*.

While the band has only been together since 2005, they have already opened for the likes of southern rock giants ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Jaren attributes his rapid success to his love of music from a young age, being inspired by bands like The Sex Pistols and Dead Kennedys.

Their swift success, however, came by a combination of solid music playing and smart marketing skills. As they were starting out in Nashville, the band would

plaster the town with flyers for their shows, hyping the band up as if they were already a nationwide act. Well, it appears they do, in fact, have the goods to back up the hype, as Warner Bros. has recently signed them, and in addition to their EP, they have a full-length album scheduled to be out in Aug. 2009.

The band did have a small controversy when they started out. As they began playing shows on the east and west coasts, their original name, Bang, Bang, Bang, was not as original as they thought. Worried about other bands with similar names possibly accusing them of stealing it, the band needed a new one. They sat in a hotel in L.A. for two days coming up with, as Jaren put it, "some of the worst names you could think of," in search of one that would help push them over the top. While drunken brawls and controversy over who actually picked the name ensued, the band knew they were just a bunch of good ol' American boys from Nashville and thus became American Bang.

Speaking with Jaren, there was a strong sense that the band loves nothing more than to play music, party and have fun. Their laid back attitude helped get them on their current tour, which they were asked to join only two weeks before it began. The band will be touring throughout the Midwest in February and finish up in Texas on March 1.

Image courtesy of sxc.hu.com

I've been to Hell it's almost like coming home

by Jonathan Gronli
Entertainment Editor

"Silent Hill" is a great psycho-spiritual survival horror franchise. Sure, they've had their high points like "Silent Hill 2". They've also had their strange, broken low points like "Silent Hill 4: The Room. Silent Hill 5: Homecoming" is in a weird state of limbo, being one of the best and one of the worst in the series thus far.

The story is very much like the story of "Jacob's Ladder." You play through as a veteran of war who returns home to find out that his little brother disappeared and his father is dead. Something sinister is circling around the plot that doesn't seem quite normal, even for a "Silent Hill" game. That something sinister is the topic of whether or not you're actually alive while trying to survive this little slice of Hell on Earth.

Gameplay is done in a very new way compared to the games of the series. Conversations have been adapted into trees, like those in "Mass Effect." Different branches/responses will garner different reactions. They

will also have different effects on gameplay, depending on how you treat the characters. One of the things that most people both loved and hated was the fact that the combat controls were revamped to be more fluid and natural than in earlier games. Rather than combat controls playing like you're someone who largely survives on dumb luck, you're playing a soldier, so it would only be natural that you'd at least know how to fight. Still, this made things a bit easy to play through, and that could be maddening. You can also better survey your surroundings, since movement and camerawork are controlled with the analog sticks rather than being locked in certain places. There is also the ability to look at the world in first-person view.

Music and sound are usually the high points of the series. The music has been suffering a bit since they started incorporating lyrics, forcing out the emotion of certain songs. Also quite a bit of the soundtrack tends to sound like variations on the general score for "Jacob's Ladder." Sure, it worked, and Akira Yamaoka is still a genius at inciting emotion. It just doesn't work with the

songs that have lyrics. The sound design and the acoustics of the environments are creepy, as they usually were.

Visuals are both a high point and low point for the series. The visuals can be beautiful, but in some ways they are nowhere near "next-gen" graphics. The environments are huge. The degenerating world when it shifts to hell and regenerating back is gorgeous and is done in real-time, much like the movie. Fog effects are almost on par with the original game. Lighting effects are getting better and are casting more ominous shadows. Character animation is about on par with "Silent Hill 2." Monster animations at times are much better. Other times they are about on par with "Silent Hill 3." Sometimes it works. The visual atmosphere is still pretty creepy as well.

The game works as what it is. It just isn't something that really sets itself up as something special. This is only a buy if you are a diehard fan of series. If not, just rent it.

Image courtesy of sxc.hu.com

FEATURES

Think Outside the Spring Break Box

by Sabrina Gasulla
Staff Writer

Year after year, thousands of college students flock to the same hotspots in search of the “ultimate spring break,” a concept that seems restricted to boozing in the sun until a mild form of amnesia manifests. Las Vegas, south Florida and Cancun all conjure up images of endless parties and even lengthier bills. If you’re not into stifling crowds, the harsh spotlight of “Girls Gone Wild” cameras, and huge price markups on everything from hotels to flip-flops though, the options may seem limited at first. For some people, the secret to a great spring break lies in going against the grain and avoiding the top destinations. Here are some alternatives so you can party it up and actually relax come March.

On the Road

The best part about traveling by car is freedom. You do not even need a definite destination. Some of the best spring break trips start with a car, a map (GPS is nice, but not always the most reliable), and the notion that driving south will lead you to warmer climes. Although to be fair, planning usually goes hand in hand with saving money. A good way to save on lodging is to work connections. Look through your friends list on Facebook or ask your dad’s

friend’s aunt if you and your friends can crash for free while on the road. The best road trips are ones that take into account the trippers’ interests, not necessarily what’s hot for Spring Break 2009. Are you into music? Why not stop to pay respects to the King in Memphis, or travel along the Mississippi delta to discover the roots of blues? Or maybe you want to mix things up and visit the Grand Canyon after you’re all partied out in Las Vegas. The possibilities are endless. There is a lot to see outside the big cities and the trip itself can be the best adventure of your spring break.

Fun In The Sun

What do South Padre Island, Texas, Panama City, Fla. and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico have in common? The answer is relatively low prices, sunny beaches and insane nightlife. Another thing they have in common is a complete lack of character or individuality. These touristy spots exist almost exclusively for the parties, and sightseeing is limited to bright club signs and scantily clad tourists at jam-packed beaches. If you are looking for a beachy spot where you can do more than drink and tan, Miami, Fla. and San Juan, Puerto Rico are both great options. For astonishing diversity in culture, shopping, architecture and gastronomy, it doesn’t get much better than Miami, and San Juan’s mix of Latin dance clubs with a historic city backdrop is truly unique. South Beach has by far the best nightlife in Miami

and can get pricey. You can save money by staying a few minutes away in Miami Beach or further inland into Miami proper. Hostels are only a good deal for small groups. The parties at both spots are beyond comparison and have the added bonus that the locals-to-spring-breakers ratio will maintain a healthy balance.

Alternative Travel

Sure, volunteering in sunny Costa Rica sounds appealing, but how do you get there? Most alternative break organizers will provide you with food and lodging at your destination, but they will not cover your travel expenses. Fortunately, there are plenty of volunteering opportunities close to home. Nonprofit organizations like United Way and Habitat for Humanity offer opportunities to work in the U.S. Gulf Coast and be a part of the rebuilding effort there. For nature fans, the American Hiking Society plans trips on which volunteers can spend time in some of the most beautiful parks and forests in the country while helping revitalize hiking trails and campgrounds. Alternative spring breaks have seen an enormous rise in popularity in the past several years, especially among college students. These trips offer a chance to travel and get to know a place in a much deeper way than regular tourism allows, as well as the opportunity to do something valuable and kind for others.

Student Spotlight: Chad Codak

by Michelle Jacobson
Features Editor

It isn’t rare to see Chad Codak, a senior finance major, sitting in the Student Union cafeteria using his laptop or greeting friends in the halls of Northeastern Illinois University on any given day.

As the Chair of the International Business Conference, he has been on campus a lot lately getting everything ready for the conference on March 2 and 3. I had the opportunity to sit down with Codak to talk about the conference and his experiences at NEIU.

MJ: What organizations have you been involved with?

CC: Intervarsity Christian fellowship, Life Catholic Students, Financial Management Association, Marketing Club, Business and Management Club, APEX, Student Government... just to name a few.

What are you most involved with right now?

The International Business Conference. I’m the chair of that and that I’ve been working on it for a year and a half. It’s two weeks away and I’m really pumped up.

Could you explain what the conference is about?

Sure. The International Business Conference brings executives, CEOs, vice presidents of various businesses, public administrations like government agencies, to Northeastern. And they’re all focused on Latin American business transactions. The vice president for UPS is coming. Basically they’re here to instruct all students, not just business students, about the opportunities of employment in the business world, what they do in their jobs, how they impact global economy and what they think about the future.

So what does your job entail?

What doesn’t it entail might be easier. Coordinator of the conference. Scheduling. Communication. I’ve learned more by taking on this responsibility, as far as marketing classes go, as far as management classes go, as far as finance classes go, as far as accounting classes go, than I have in any of my actual classes. If you could just imagine the knowledge you gain from something like this, I’d compare it to an intensive internship over the course of a year. It’s just phenomenal things, like just last week, delegating responsibilities to individuals. There is a core group of committee members, there’s six of us, who have different tasks and responsibilities. Like one person right now is completely in charge of speaker and speaker introductions, and if I find people who are interested, I send that information to her. It takes a little burden off myself because, I gotta admit, last month I was not sleeping through the night, tossing and turning, just worrying about everything. I sat down with one of the advisers and kinda explained to him what I’m going through and he just said ‘you know, I don’t think you’re delegating enough.’ So that was a thing that I learned from this process is that other people are there to help out on the committee, they are there because they wanna help, so give them something to do. I have a person in charge of all the food requirements. I have

a person in charge of all my hall set-ups. Somebody’s in charge of promotional materials, *Independent* advertising, flyers, pamphlets. The list goes on. It’s overwhelming.

So any big plans for after the conference?

Not doing the International Business Conference. Not worrying about it. But you know what, you can’t. You can’t just stop. You do have to debrief. One thing that I want to do with the core committee is to, the week after, get together and just write notes. What was bad? What was good? What can change for next year? Not we personally because most of us will be graduating but for our successors. A unique thing that I wanted to do is to write a personal letter of reflection to whoever’s replacing us and just give them a heads up.

So you will be graduating...

In May. Hopefully. Fingers crossed.

What are your plans for after graduation?

Not graduate school right away. I’m in the GMAT test prep course right now, but I’m planning on taking the GMAT after graduation. I heard the score’s good for five years, so hopefully in three years I’ll be in graduate school. But after graduation hopefully look for a position somewhere. My interest is teaching personal finance to the individual, so I can maybe do community college teaching sessions. I’m working right now at the Chicago Park District as an intern in finance. So I really don’t know, but what I really desire is to just help people with their finances. Not really go in the corporate direction.

In your years here, what had been your most memorable moment?

The first thing that popped in my mind was giving the commencement speech at graduation. I was just excited to get the opportunity and I think I’m probably the only non-graduating senior to give a commencement speech. And just to explain the situation behind that, it switches every year. So this year, the College of Education will be presenting their student to speak, and the prior semester I was chosen because I wouldn’t get the opportunity to speak at my own graduation.

What would you say to the student body of Northeastern if you could give them any kind of advice?

When you’re a freshman, worry about your studies. See if college is right for you. For some people, it’s not. It’s



Photo by: Tracy Ellen

unfortunately a true reality. When you’re a sophomore, get involved in one club or maybe two, not officer positions. Just do something. When you’re a sophomore, learn about what’s on campus. When you’re a junior, become an officer. Take that step. Be a leader. Try something. Go to the Student Activities Leadership Exchange program. Go to networking opportunities. There’s things to do on campus. Everybody says, ‘Oh, it’s a commuter campus, nothing happens.’ That’s completely a lie. There’s a lot of things to do. There’s talent shows, music recitals... there’s so much to do that students just don’t take advantage of. As a junior and an officer of a club of your choice, don’t spread yourself too thin, because remember that studies are still important. As a senior, try to get an internship and try to wean yourself out of clubs, because you’re gonna have to eventually go out of Northeastern.



Social Networking Extravaganza

by David Mosher
Online Editor

It's fun to think of what college may have been like years ago. 10 years, 20 years, or even longer. Colleges have been around a long time, and as they have evolved, so too has the technology that surrounds them.

Did our parents message each other over Facebook to find out when they could study together? Did a "25 Things" note initiate that spark of interest that later led to your birth? I'm guessing not, but you're still here anyway.

I can only begin to extrapolate what may have occurred on campuses decades ago, but it is interesting to look around at the present.

Study groups meet in chat rooms. Text messages for possible lunch locations. Facebook

messages for everything from complaining about professors to letting everyone know you'll be attending an NEIU Stage Theatre event.

Indeed, Facebook has become such an integral part of campus life that it has evolved from a noun into a verb. "Facebook me" is a rather common saying in many classrooms.

It's hard to say if we're better or worse off than leaving messages on each other's answering machines. Surely it allows us to schedule meetings and discuss homework more quickly and efficiently than ever before. But is the time saved overshadowed by the time lost?

While many have undoubtedly used Facebook or MySpace for the activities listed above, the sites are also used for more than that. Much more.

Did you hear that Kelly broke up with Drew? He found out through Facebook! Or that Samantha likes mustard on grilled cheese sandwiches, according to her "25 Random Things About Me" note? What exactly are we discussing here? Are these meaningful uses of our time? Can I write an entire paragraph with question marks?

The answer is 42. And in addition to that, I'd venture to say no, these are not complete wastes of our time.

What Facebook does on a Web site is what has been going on for generations and generations, just in a different form. I highly doubt our parents didn't have some way of wasting time together, discussing the

latest gossip at the soda pop stop. We just do it through computers as well as face-to-face.

So don't feel too bad if you're procrastinating a little bit on that term paper. We all do it; you're not alone. It only becomes a problem if you end up not turning that term paper in. And that's your own fault anyway, not Facebook's.

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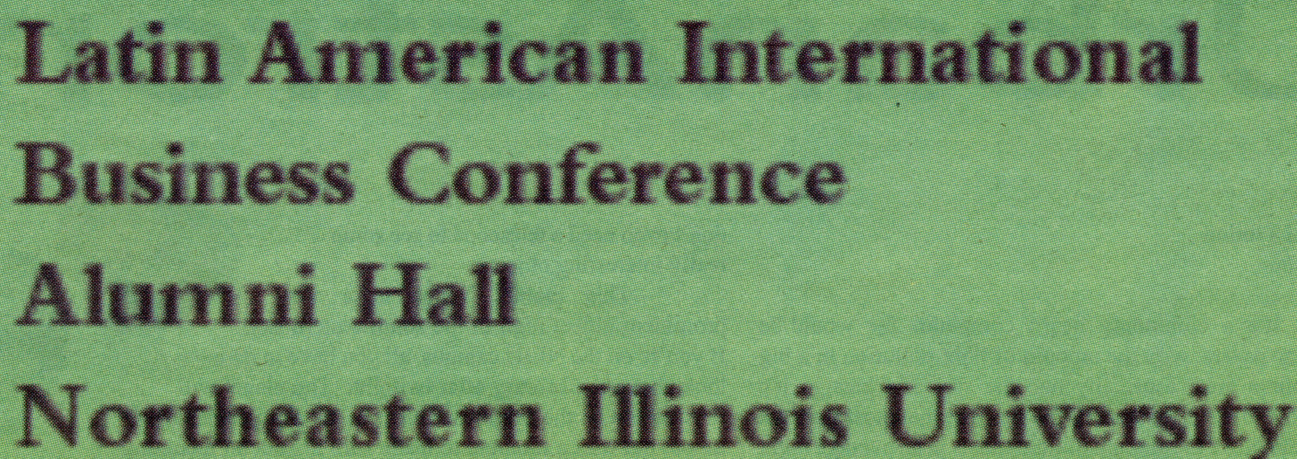
The Department of Communication, Media and Theatre is looking for great short videos for

The Second Annual NEIU Video Festival

Eligibility is limited to current NEIU students and alumni. Submissions must be received by

4:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 31, 2009.

For more information and entry forms, please e-mail Cyndi Moran at c-moran1@neiu.edu



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Act 1 - 14:45 am
Journalists Latin America
William Bonatti
Madrid
El Mundo, 12/3

10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Juvent: 30m Exhibit Development by a Chicago
Juvent Entrepreneur
Scott Zerk
Director of Child Business Development
Detroit Council

11:15 - 1:20 pm
U.S.-and Latin-American Trade Relations:
Government Role
Paul J. Jordan
Office of International Operations - Western Hemisphere
U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service
U.S. Department of Commerce

1:00 - 2:00 pm
Adding Globalization Work
COM4 Book Per Semester
COM4 Student Panel

8:30 - 4:05 pm
The Changing Marketing Landscape:
Successfully Marketing in Latin America
Tatiana Vozna
San Jose Network Ltd.

5:40 - 6:55 pm
Non-Commercial Sources of Financing for Trade
and Investment
Dawn A. Evans
Principal
Evans International

7:05 - 8:10 pm
*Using Free Trade Agreements:
 Practical Advantages & Potential Traps*
 David G. Fergus
 Partner in Barnes, Richardson & Colburn

8:20 - 9:45 pm
Mexico and Latin American Markets:
Opportunities & Concerns for U.S. Companies
Dr. Ralph Blidnerman
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Urban Astronomy

by Nicki Timian
Staff Writer

It's a commonly heard complaint for would-be urban star-gazers: with the amount of light pollution in a big metropolitan area, especially one the size of Chicago, it's impossible to see any stars. While it is true that most stars get overwhelmed by the amount of light that is in an average night sky here in the city, it might be surprising to find out that it can often be much easier for a beginning urban astronomer to find cosmological objects in the sky. Why? If you've ever looked up while out in the country, you probably noticed that there are a LOT of stars out there. In fact, there are so many that even if you use a star chart, it might be harder for a beginner to find even iconic constellations like the Big Dipper. In Chicago, though, the light pollution only allows the brightest stars to shine, making constellations fairly easy to find. You

don't even need a telescope to see some really interesting objects.

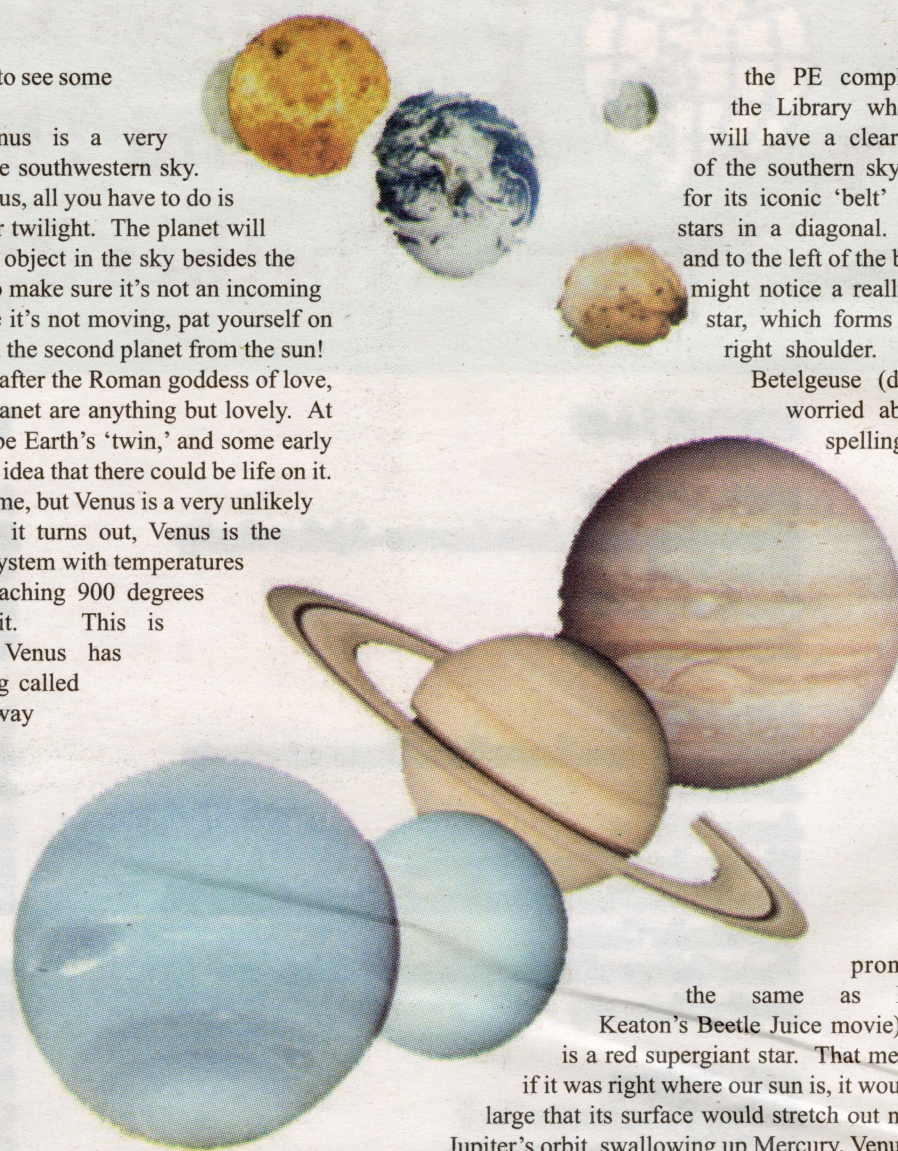
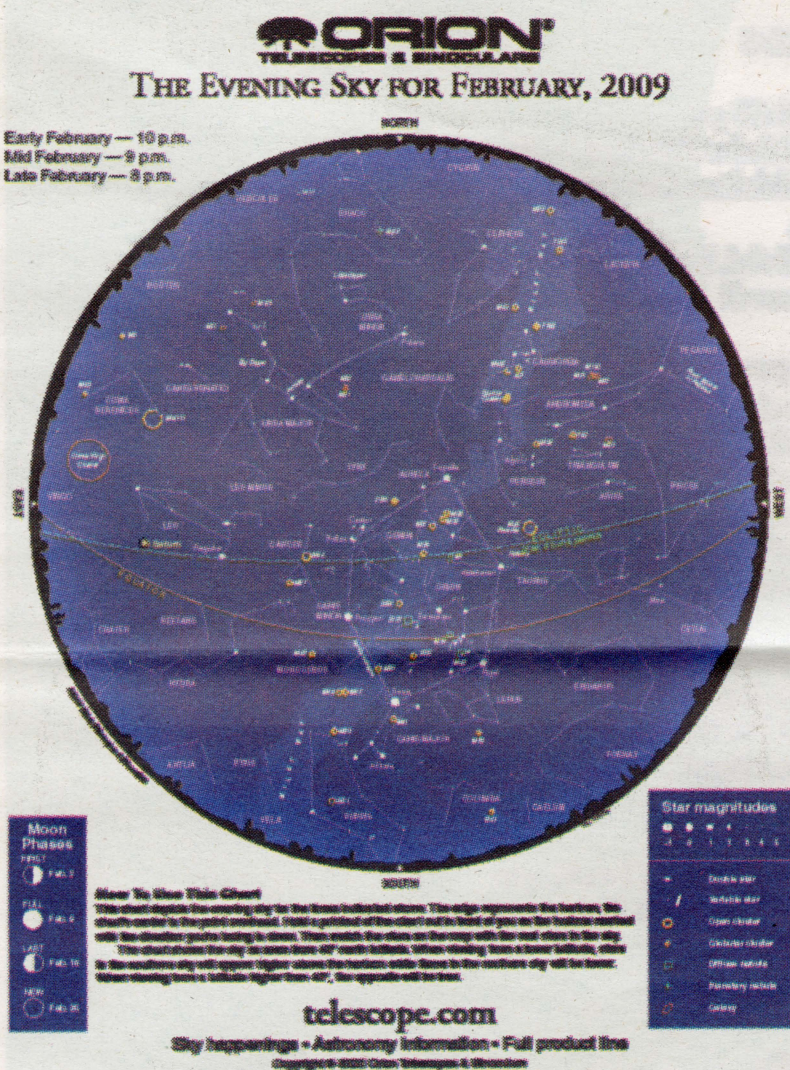
This month, Venus is a very prominent object high in the southwestern sky. If you're on the NEIU campus, all you have to do is look above the Library after twilight. The planet will most likely be the brightest object in the sky besides the moon, but wait a moment to make sure it's not an incoming airplane. When you're sure it's not moving, pat yourself on the back. You've just found the second planet from the sun!

Venus was named after the Roman goddess of love, though conditions on the planet are anything but lovely. At one time it was thought to be Earth's 'twin,' and some early scientists even proposed the idea that there could be life on it. They didn't know it at the time, but Venus is a very unlikely place to look for life. As it turns out, Venus is the hottest planet in the Solar System with temperatures

nearly reaching 900 degrees

Fahrenheit. This is because Venus has something called the 'runaway

the PE complex and the Library where you will have a clearer view of the southern sky. Look for its iconic 'belt' of three stars in a diagonal. Above and to the left of the belt, you might notice a really bright star, which forms Orion's right shoulder. This is Betelgeuse (don't be worried about the spelling - it's



greenhouse effect' - like Earth, Venus also has problems with carbon emissions. Although the planet doesn't have to worry about cars or factories, Venus is covered in hundreds of active volcanoes, which spew sulfur and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, trapping heat and making Venus absolutely unlivable. It's an important reminder of how greenhouse gases can get out of control, and something to keep in mind about how things could turn out here on Earth.

Another prominent object is the constellation Orion, which rises in the south. If you're on the NEIU campus, the best place to search for it would be in between

pronounced the same as Michael Keaton's Beetle Juice movie), which is a red supergiant star. That means that if it was right where our sun is, it would be so large that its surface would stretch out nearly to Jupiter's orbit, swallowing up Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. Needless to say, it's a REALLY big star.

On top of being rather large, red supergiants also have short lives (only a few million years) and have a tendency to end their lives by exploding in an event called a supernova. Despite being about 600 million light years away from us, when Betelgeuse 'goes supernova', it could possibly be an even brighter object in the night sky than the moon. Actually, Betelgeuse could have *already* gone supernova, but because it is so far away from us, light from the star takes 600 million years to reach us. It is an interesting thought to leave you all with - when you look up into the night sky, you are looking at light that has taken millions of years to reach you. So in effect, you are looking into the past.

For extra help locating other constellations, you can print up this free star chart to get started: http://content.telescope.com/rsc/img/catalog/lc/starcharts/02Feb09StarChart_clr.pdf

The Stamp

By David Mitchell
Staff Writer

How many times a week do you leave the house in sweats and gym shoes? How often do you walk out the door dressed to the nines? How often do you wear your very favorite outfit? Now, obviously these questions are somewhat irrelevant if you are a gym teacher and have to wear sweats, don't happen to own any nines to dress to, or are a nudist - and therefore have no favorite outfit. But, if you're like most of us, you have at least a vague idea of what kind of image you're projecting most of the time through your style choices. We've all heard (and been raised to pretty much accept) that (unfortunately) the way you look will affect how onlookers may perceive you. Does it then follow that the way we look will affect how we perceive ourselves? Think back to the best day of last week - what were you wearing? Personally, I had on some grey jeans and a black v-neck sweater over a white button-down shirt - one of my favorite outfits. I remember it vividly - I was energetic, friendly, and generally on top of my game. However, I also remember the worst day of my week - I woke up late, had bad hair and an argument with a good friend of mine. Incidentally, I was wearing jeans that didn't quite fit, old tennis shoes and a

Dressing up Your Mood

hoodie that's been around since I was in high school.

Let's face it - if you don't look your best, it's a lot harder to feel your best - especially when the weather is the way it's been lately - cold, grey and rainy or snowy. When the weather gets like this, some people fall victim to a certain type of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder. According to <http://www.mayoclinic.com>, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is triggered by seasonal change - especially the transition from summer into fall and then winter. As things get colder and darker and the world retreats indoors as the days get shorter, it's an accepted fact that moods tend to get grimmer. However, one way to combat the slumping feeling that comes with drudging through these last, frigid days of winter is to lighten up your style!

Try going through your wardrobe and picking out not necessarily your favorite pieces, but the ones that make you feel the best. It could be that the blazer you rarely don gets your blood pumping and really helps you do your best work at the office or in class. Maybe the scarf you bought last year is exactly the splash of color you need to work up the perky courage to approach the guy or girl you've had your eye on. There is a diagram you can find online at <http://www.color-chart.org> called "Color Mood Chart" that will illustrate exactly what different colors have to do with your

mood. These colors have the ability to put you in a certain mood, elevate an already-existing mood, and draw your attention to them as they hang in the closet when you feel the corresponding emotion, making you perpetuate your mood to yourself and to others. Color has as much to do with your state of mind as the seasons do. Think of the correlations - there are 'spring' or 'fall' colors just as designers release their spring and fall collections. It's all about the way things are marketed. Designers and their marketing teams know what looks good to people at different times of the year and when they are in different states of mind and they use that information to their advantage and make plenty of capital off it.

It's never a good idea to dress yourself for someone else. The most important part of personal style is that it is just that - personal. None of us will ever look the same and we shouldn't want to. Identity is vital to our happiness and unique to our personalities. However, if you know what makes you feel good and it comes in the form of a sweater, an up-do and a favorite pair of jeans - why not use it to its fullest mood-enhancing capabilities? So the next time you wake up on the wrong side of the bed, just remember that the perfect remedy for a case of the "Mondays," "Tuesdays," "Flag Days..." whatever... is dressing on the right side of your wardrobe.