

11-8-2011

## Independent - Nov. 8, 2011

Janean L Watkins

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NEIU STUDENTS AND FACULTY OCCUPY CHICAGO

P.8

CHICAGO



# Independent

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, November 8, 2011

[www.neiuiindependent.com](http://www.neiuiindependent.com)

Vol. 29 Issue 6



## NEIU Student Spotlight

By Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief

Many NEIU students face a certain level of adversity to maintain their status as a currently enrolled student. That truth is even more evident in the small percentage of African American male students on campus. Despite the challenges in navigating college life in the city, one such student makes his mark on not only the campus but also dispels any myths that society may have about the potential success and service of the Black male. That student is Roger Byrd, senior, Environmental Studies and Political Science double major.

Byrd, who hails from the south side of Chicago in the Englewood community, is a valuable member of our campus community who has taken on a full time position in the student union to plan many of the activities that release some of the pressures of exams, research papers and projects that we all face. Entrusted by director Felicia Keelen, Byrd coordinated events like the "Step It Up Game Show", "NEIU FEUD: Students v. Faculty!" and the "Ladies/LGBTQ Outreach Lounge Series".

*...Read more on Roger Byrd in  
Arts & Life, page 12*



Photo taken by Janean L. Watkins

## What's Online

*More pictures, video and  
audio of Occupy Chicago*

<http://www.neiuiindependent.com>



Check out the  
two page spread  
on Angel Velez,  
NEIU's Occupy  
Chicago hero.

Page 8 and 9.



# Independent

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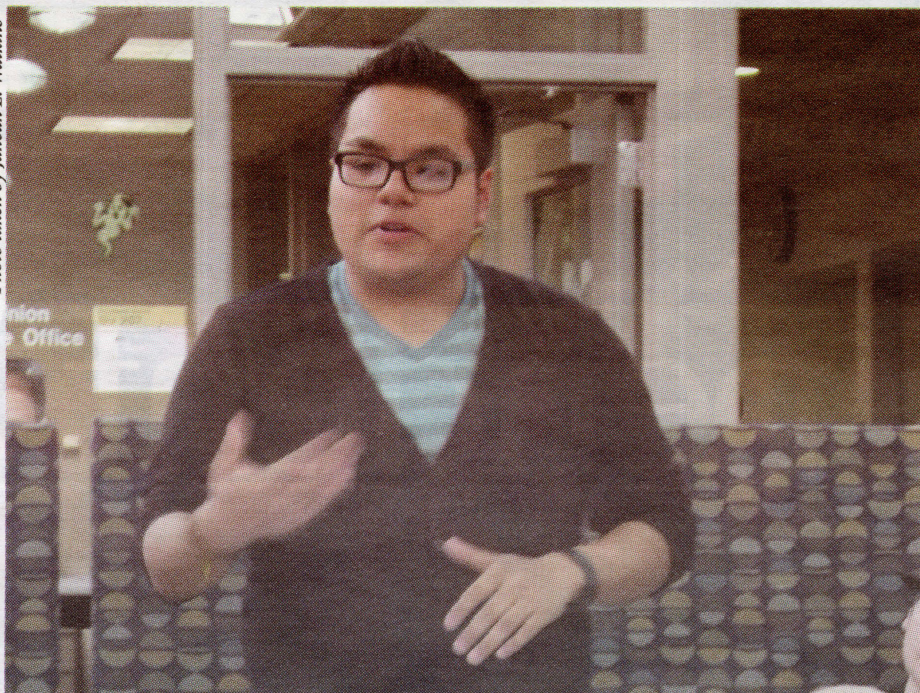
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## President's Pen - NEIU's GLBTQA

Photo taken by Janean L. Watkins



Hello to all, my name is Jorge Vargas, current president of the GLBTQA club. What is GLBTQA and what does it represent, one might ask. Well, to start off, GLBTQA stands for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning. The mission statement of our club is simple "Working to ensure all voices in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning/Queer Community are heard and represented with dignity and respect." What we try to do is provide a safe haven to students that identify as a member of the GLBTQA community. We want to make sure that, as one of the many communities at NEIU, we are represented, which is something that hasn't been done until very recently. As a club we have grown tremendously during the past few years. We are working together to improve our numbers and define the club as a support

network and resource for the GLBTQA community.

When I came into the presidency, I made it my goal to create events with the rest of the executive board that would benefit our members and educate the NEIU community on issues that affect the GLBTQA community. I have always believed and said that if we can't effect changes for current NEIU students, we can try and create a more accepting and socially conscious environment for future NEIU students that identify as GLTBQA. Another goal I have is to inspire as many people as possible to be open about who they are. I encourage members and non-members alike to use their voices positively and not let any fear or any person keep them quiet. If GLTBQA students feel their choices and lifestyles are supported and accepted, they will not be afraid to live life honestly and

freely.

So far, we have had two very successful events this past month. First, we conducted an "It gets better" video here on campus. We did this because we felt that we needed to show others that, while being GLBTQA is difficult at times, everyone is more than capable of finding enough joy and meaning in their lives to outshine the negative parts. The members of the GLBTQA club were inspired to hold this event by the legacy of Jamey Rodemeyer, a teen that took his life recently because he couldn't cope with the bullying he faced for being gay. For our second event, we teamed up with the Student Union to launch a series that will run every month called L.O.L., which stands for LGBTQA Outreach Lounge. Since we lack an actual resource center, what this program aims to do is provide a space where we can hold discussions and both empower and engage our audiences through speakers, activities and ice breakers. For this first L.O.L our main topic was the concept of coming out publically and what it means to people in the GLBTQA community. We had an amazing speaker, Antony Adams, who is a professor of Communications here at NEIU. He read the audience an excerpt of his book, which deals with coming out. Then we held an open mic where anyone that felt comfortable could share their coming out stories. Overall, this event was very meaningful and emotional. We look forward to the next one on Nov. 17, which will feature a film with a panel discussion on what it's like to be transgender.

Everyone is welcome to join the club or come to any event. We respect everyone's decisions and opinions. If interested, come to one of our meetings held every Thursday at 3:05-4:05 p.m. in the Fine Arts building, room 203.



## BOOK SALE

**Nov. 16-19, 2011**

**Ronald Williams Library**



# Around Campus

By Jeff Dutton - News Editor

## December Graduates to be Saluted

The Office of Alumni Relations will be hosting a "Salute to Graduates of December 2011" event on Wednesday, Nov. 16 in Village Square at the main campus from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. The featured services provided to graduates at this event will include commencement ticketing, cap and gown disbursement, class ring ordering, graduation announcements and photographs. Programs that will be present at the event include Career Services, Financial Aid, Enrollment Services and the Graduate College. December 2011 graduates who attend do not need to RSVP and are encouraged to visit the Alumni Relations table to enter their name for a chance to win exciting prizes.

For more information visit <http://www.neiu.edu/Alumni/Alumni.html> or contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 773-442-4205.

## Albany Park Childcare Supply Drive

The International Peace Week Committee, in collaboration with The Angelina Pedrosa Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs, will host a supply drive

for the Albany Park Childcare Center. They will be collecting notebooks, crayons, markers, construction paper, children's books and other classroom supplies for young children. A bin will be placed outside the Pedrosa Center to serve as a drop off point for donations. Collections for this drive will take place through Friday, Nov. 18.

For more information or questions, please contact Meagan Mitchell at [m-mitchell4@neiu.edu](mailto:m-mitchell4@neiu.edu) or Robert Bedford at [R-Bedford@neiu.edu](mailto:R-Bedford@neiu.edu)

## NEIU Environmental Community to Host Movie Screening

The Geography and Environmental Studies, Biology, Earth Science, and Philosophy departments, along with the NEIU Green Cycle Group and the Center for Humans and Nature, have teamed up to host the screening of the film "Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time". The screening will be followed by student-led activities and a panel discussion around the theme "Bringing Leopold Home". The panel will include Wendy Tresouthick from the U.S. Forest Service, Anja Claus from the Center for Humans

and Nature, Dr. Daniel Milsky of the NEIU Philosophy Department and Dr. Pamela Geddes of the NEIU Biology Department.

For more information contact Dr. Melinda Merrick at [m-merrick1@neiu.edu](mailto:m-merrick1@neiu.edu)

## WZRD Veterans Event

The NEIU Veterans Club, True Vine Club and Cosmic Lizzard, in collaboration with the WZRD student radio station, will host an event to honor our veterans on Friday, Nov. 11 in the Recital Hall at the main campus from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The event will begin with an introduction by retired United States Coast Guard Master Chief Petty Officer Joseph Benning honoring our veterans and will proceed with performances by the NEIU Hip-Hop Club, DJUFRO, Da\$htone and Flow Theory. BBQ chicken, hamburgers and hot dogs from Corky's of Addison, Ill. will be provided for those attending.

## Upcoming events at the CCICS campus

*The Great Black Music Project Presents*

Friday Nov. 11 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
The AACM Concert Series

Wednesday Nov. 23 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Kelan Phil Cohran

Location: 700 E Oakwood Blvd  
773-268-7500 ext 114  
[www.greatblackmusicproject.org](http://www.greatblackmusicproject.org)

# Students for Justice in Palestine: The Wall

By Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) held a tabling event in the Student Union to raise awareness about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. They hope that students take the knowledge of what's happening on the other side of the world to broaden their horizons on a global level.

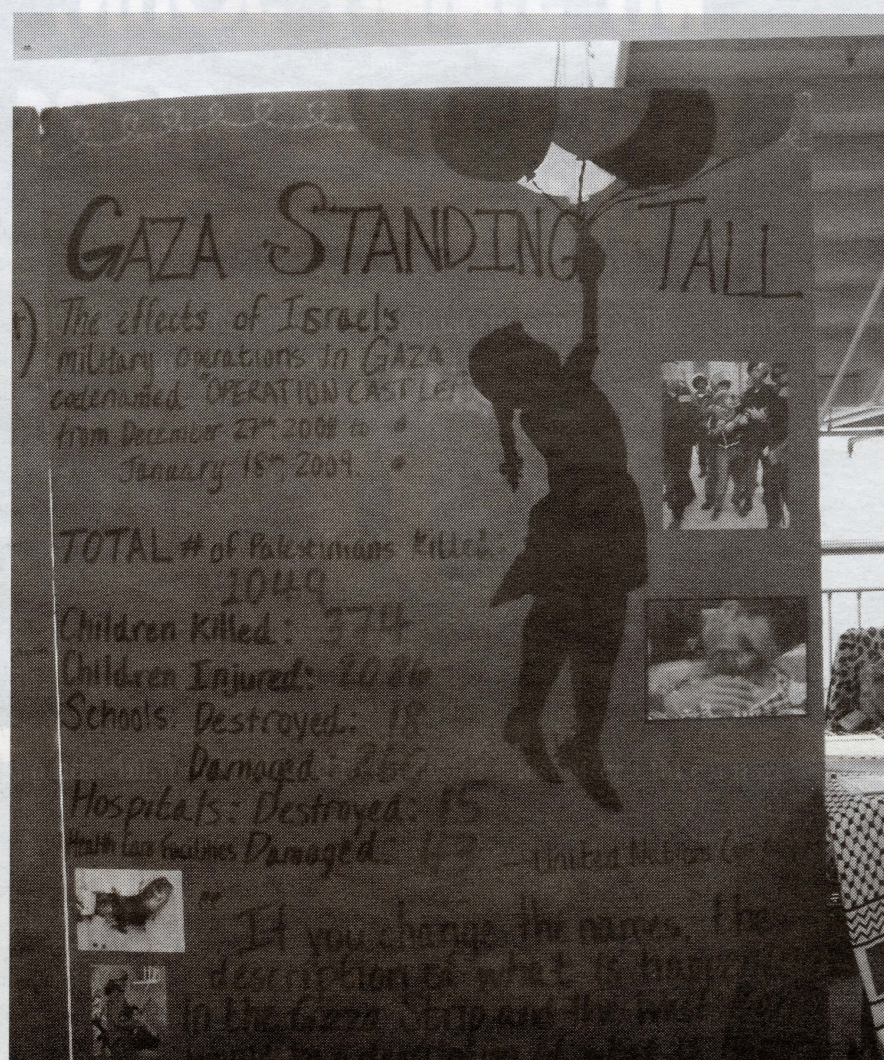


Photo taken by Janean L. Watkins

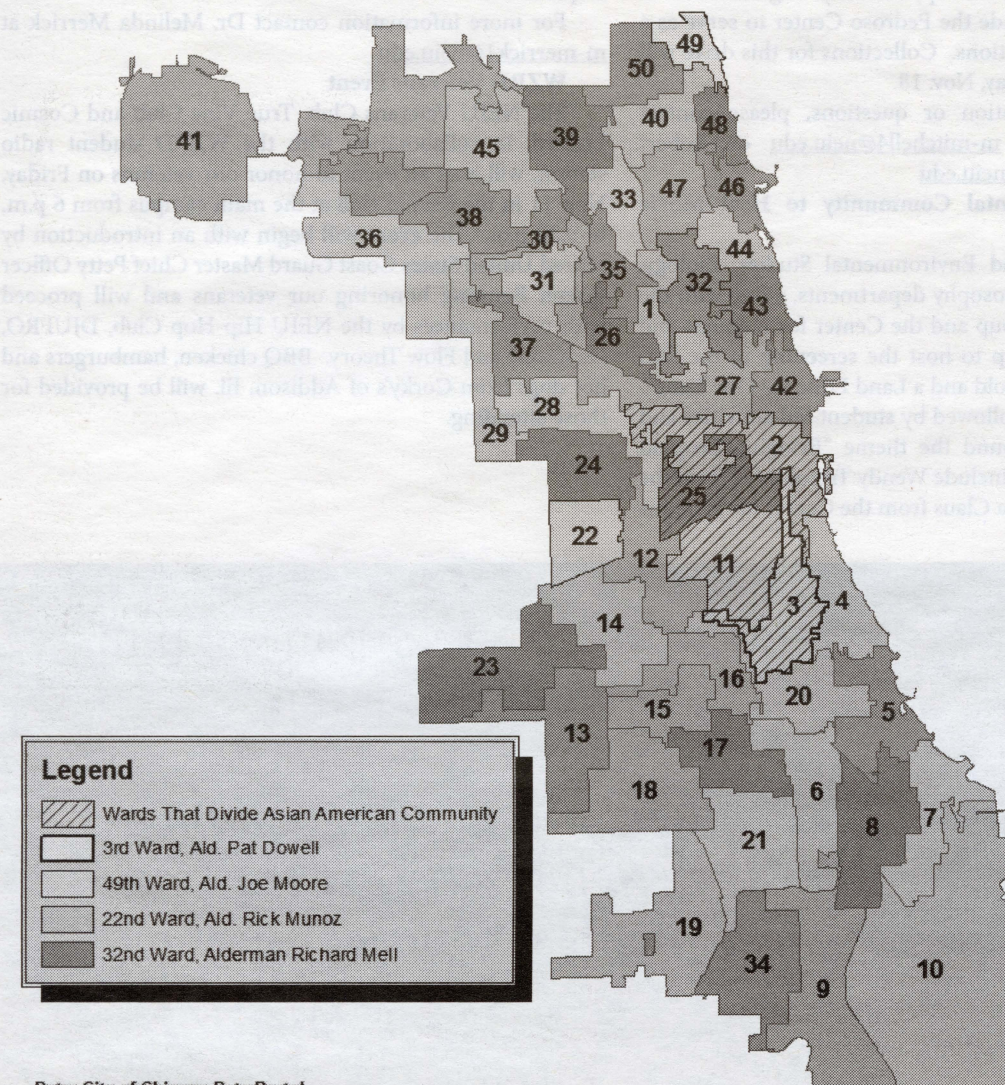
Left: SJP members stand in front of their wall display . Right: SJP Wall depicts images and information that tell the story.



# Chicago Ward Redistricting 101: Statistics, Factions and Conflicting Interests

By Igor Studenkov - Senior Staff Writer

## Current Chicago Ward Map



Data: City of Chicago Data Portal  
Map by Jeff Dutton  
Projection: State Plane Illinois East  
NAD 1983

While next year's city budget has dominated city politics over the past few weeks, another, equally important, controversy is brewing in the background. According to municipal law, every city ward must have the same number of people, so every ten years the Chicago City Council redraws the ward boundaries to account for population changes. Unfortunately, ward redistricting is not simply a matter of balancing the numbers. The City Council has several different factions, or caucus, and each faction is interested in maintaining and, if possible, increasing its numbers.

Minority representation is another concern. Under the Voting Rights Act, wards where minority groups make up more than 50 percent of the population cannot be split up in order to dilute their strength as a voting block. The state version of the act takes that principle even further, prohibiting the split of the wards where more than 50 percent of the population share the same ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and other "common concerns."

Over the past decade, the city's African-American population dropped dramatically, while the Hispanic population has increased. The Latino Caucus is trying to create at least six new majority-Hispanic wards. Meanwhile, the Black Caucus is trying its best to maintain 19 of the 20 majority-Black wards. The Latino Caucus has argued that the Black Caucus should give up at least two more wards, something the Black Caucus has not been willing to do as of this writing.

As the Latino Caucus tries to expand, it may potentially run afoul of the unofficial faction that can best be described as the Old Guard. This faction traces its roots to the traditional Democratic Machine. They represent wards that were traditionally ethnically white (Irish-American, Polish-American, etc). However, over the past ten years, most of these wards saw an increase in Hispanic population. What's more, these increases account for most of the Hispanic population growth in the city. In order to create more majority-Hispanic wards, the Old Guard would have to give up some of their territory. However, the Latino Caucus would face an uphill struggle. The Old Guard aldermen may not be as powerful as they once were but they still wield considerable influence. Most notably, Ald. Richard Mell (32nd ward) chairs the Rules Committee, which is responsible for approving the redrawn map.

There is also the matter of the Reform Caucus. This loose coalition works to make the city government more inclusive and transparent. The Reform Caucus' numbers nearly doubled during the last election, as several reform candidates won what were supposed to be safe Old Guard strongholds. Ald. Joe Moore, the chair of the Reform Caucus, announced that the Caucus would try to preserve as many of their wards as they can. The Reform Caucus is a multi-racial coalition, which causes some inter-caucus overlap. For example, Ald. Rick Munoz (22nd ward) is a member of the Latino caucuses, while Ald Pat Dowell (3rd ward) is a member of the Black caucus. Whether or not this overlap will have any effect on border redrawing is unclear.

Finally, Chicago's Chinese-American community has been lobbying for the creation of the city's first Asian-American ward. Over the past ten years, the Chinese-American population in Chinatown and the surrounding neighborhoods increased enough to form a majority. However, this population is currently split between the majority-Hispanic 25th Ward, majority-Black 3rd Ward, the Reform Caucus 2nd Ward and the Old Guard 11th ward. Suffice it to say, any attempt to carve out an Asian-American ward would face many obstacles and would involve very complex negotiations.

For a larger view of the ward map, visit  
[www.neiuindependent.com](http://www.neiuindependent.com)

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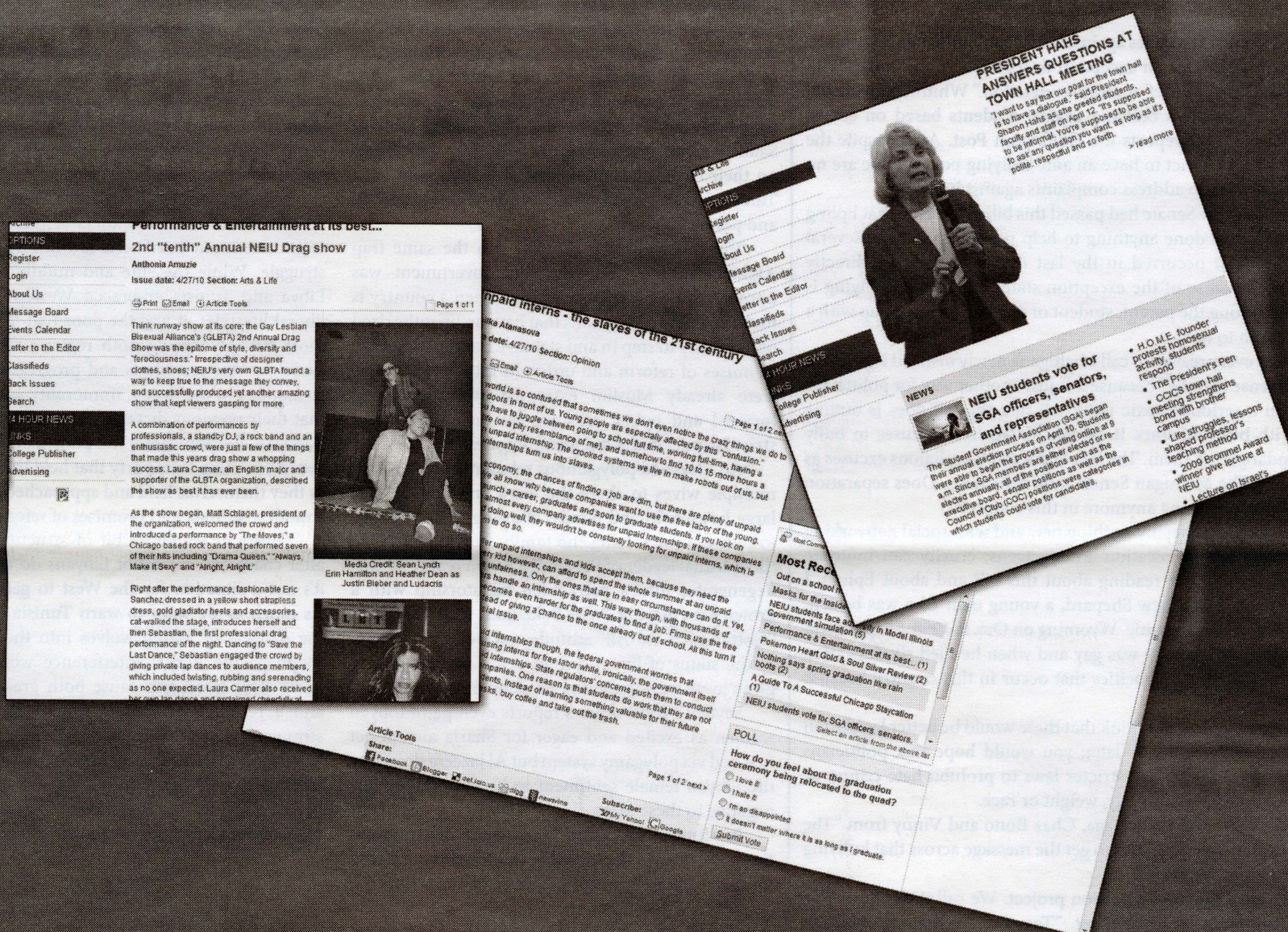
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## Editor's Note

By Dulce Arroyo, *Arts & Life Editor*

Recently, the Michigan Senate—led by the majority of Republicans—passed Matt's Safe School Law, a bill that aims to ban harassment in schools and requires every district to have an anti-bullying policy. Though the bill is named after Matt Epling, a Michigan teen who killed himself after being the victim of anti-gay hazing, there has been controversy as to whether or not the legislation will prove to be effective due to loopholes pointed out by Democrat Senator Gretchen Whitmer.

Whitmer addressed her discrepancies against the bill on the Senate floor when she pointed out how it allows for an exception to harassment for bullies who have a "sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction." Whitmer also stated that the bill "neglects to address bullying against students based on sexual orientation or gender identity," reports the Huffington Post. And, despite the bill requiring every school district to have an anti-bullying policy, there are no procedures outlined in order to address complaints against bullies.

According to Whitmer, if the Senate had passed this bill at the time that Epling was alive, it would not have done anything to help prevent his or the several other children's deaths that occurred in the last decade, which are directly correlated to bullying. Because of the exception stated in the bill, bullying is essentially acceptable as long the parent, student or teacher can come up with a moral or religious reason to do it.

I believe Whitmer has every reason to call Michigan's newly instated legislation as the "Republican license to bully" because it is just another way for politicians to put a Band-aid on a seriously toxic issue. All that the bill does is outline how to get away with bullying since it essentially legalizes excuses to bully kids, thus further endangering them. The fact that it names religious excuses as appropriate only makes the Michigan Senate look ridiculous. Does separation of church and state mean anything anymore in this country?

Bullying, hazing and hate crimes are nothing new and with social networking as the main method of communication among teens, cruelty can infiltrate their lives faster than ever. After reading about this bill and about Epling, I immediately thought about Matthew Shepard, a young man who was beaten, tied to a fence and left to die in Laramie, Wyoming on Oct. 6, 1998. Shepard was tortured to death simply because he was gay and when he died six days later, his death emphasized the horrid atrocities that occur in this country because of sexual orientation.

Even now, 13 years later, you would think that there would be better legislation against bullying nationwide. 13 years later, you would hope that politicians would step up to the plate and create stricter laws to prohibit hate crimes or bullying against a person's sexual identity, weight or race.

Instead, we see celebrities like Lady Gaga, Chaz Bono and Vinny from "The Jersey Shore" use social networking sites to get the message across that bullying can be deadly—and that it has to end.

"My mother and I have initiated a passion project. We call it the *Born This Way* Foundation," said Gaga in a statement. "Together we hope to establish a standard of bravery and kindness, as well as a community worldwide that protects and nurtures others in the face of bullying and abandonment."

Gaga even met with President Obama to come up with possible anti-bullying measures, as well as publicly offering her support for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

However, while celebrities are using their fame and fortune to help oppressed, abused and discriminated teens throughout the country, it really makes me wonder why this should still be an issue. Don't get me wrong—I am well aware that where there is progress, there is still prejudice. However, living in a world that has been through centuries of murder, war and hate, is there really no end to the subjugation and cruelty?

Clearly, this country is in dire need of a better rule to abide by than just being told to "love thy neighbor." Until the government gets it right, we might just have to keep following singers and actors on Twitter in order to find out where progress is being made—and how we can be a part of improving our flawed society.

## 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.

Send letters to: Independent, E-049, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625 or to: [theneiuiindependent@gmail.com](mailto:theneiuiindependent@gmail.com)

**Opinions expressed by contributors are solely the views of the individual writer, not the NEIU Independent Production staff.**

## Tough Times Ahead of Tunisia and Libya

By E.N. Haddad - *Copy Editor*

Things are looking up for North Africa. With the capture and near-immediate death of Libya's former dictator, Muammar Ghaddafi, Libya is now free to remake its political and governmental infrastructure in the image of more liberal and successful countries. Tunisia held its first democratic election on Oct. 23 during which more than one party ran without guns to their heads and the "winning" party didn't get a staggering 99.9 percent of the vote. Having sent their former dictator scurrying into the waiting arms of Saudi Arabia's Al Saud family with only the clothes on their backs and millions of dollars in gold bars, Tunisia seems poised on the brink of governmental and political reform.

The two countries also fall into the same trap Afghanistan fell into when its government was uprooted during the early 1990s. When a country is unstable, there are factions that have an unauthorized opportunity to step in and stabilize the situation with promises of reform and order. In Libya's case, there were already Muslim extremist groups stepping forward and public calls for the reinstatement of strict Islamic Sharia law and polygamy.

An idealized polygamous relationship allows for multiple wives to share the work and upkeep of a large household and family, allowing their husband to focus on increasing the family wealth and being the spiritual leader of the family. But in reality it often degenerates into a patriarchal dictatorship with a grown man playing "Wife Pokémon" with a subdued "Gotta Catch 'em All" attitude and women relegated to the status of livestock and being sold, traded or given away with the full permission of Sharia law.

Several Western news reports even paint Libyan women as excited and eager for Sharia and to get married via polygamy system but Al Jazeera describes the Libyan female sentiment to be overwhelmingly negative to these ideas.

In Tunisia the Islamic Ennahda Party swept the polls during the election. Although considered moderates among Muslims, most of the world has

a knee-jerk reaction to any group that identifies itself first and foremost by its fundamental roots in Islam and for good reason and one word: Taliban. The group has promised not to revoke the rights and freedoms set down in the Tunisian constitution from 1959, rights such as women being allowed to wear what they want, drive and work and own things like businesses, their children and their own bodies. But they are a reform party that is based on Islam, how will they mesh their ideas into the liberal francophone sort of lifestyle of Tunisia that includes bikinis, beer and beach parties?

The key to understanding how a country could want to trade one dictator for an even more restrictive council of Sharia law lies within the class struggle. While the elite and middle class of both Libya and Tunisia embraced Western culture and liberal lifestyles, it was the poor that felt oppression most strongly during both regimes. They came to associate Western ideals and progressive structures as markers of the deceit, immorality and corruption that their previous dictator was rife with. When the Tunisian election came, the poor made their voices heard by voting for a party that held the same beliefs as they themselves held and approached politics with a modest attitude and promises of reform and order.

Tunisians wanted a bit of structure and sanity after chaos and no doubt Libyans do too. However, it's not a situation for the West to get involved in. As much as we want to warn Tunisia and Libya of the dangers of letting wolves into their pasture to shepherd the flocks, interference would do more harm than good and cause both great resentment and a resurgence of anti-Western sentiment. The stronger the West objects, the more strongly Sharia-ruled countries will believe they are on the right path. It is up to the Tunisian and Libyan citizens to decide what the next logical step towards healing the scars of decades of oppression should be.



Anti-government demonstrations during the 2010–2011 Tunisian uprising

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



# Caricaturing Tolerance & Extremism

By Syed Ahad Hussain - Opinions Editor

Charlie Hebdo (Charlie Weekly), a French satirical magazine, joined the ranks of Danish newspaper, Dutch filmmakers, Swedish artist, US Facebook cartoonist, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, by placing the prophet Mohammad on the front cover as a 'guest editor' of its November 2011 issue with a caption reading '100 lashes if you don't die from laughter,' to salute the victory of an Islamist party in Tunisian elections. Earlier that day, the office of the magazine was bombed and its website was also hacked and replaced with an image of the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the words "No God but Allah."

How stupid is the decision made by the magazine of celebrating victory of an Islamist party in such an offensive way? And how idiotic bombing the office sounds? Freedom of speech does indeed grant one a license to mock sentiments of almost everyone in the world but here's where ethics enter the picture. Mocking a religious figure can definitely hurt the hearts of million of its followers which, in my opinion, can be unethical in the sense that the magazine has a huge proportion of Muslim readers. Now, after the eruption of controversy, sentiments of millions of Muslims living all over the world are hurt.

Reuters.com reported that, "The weekly

Charlie Hebdo defended 'the freedom to poke fun' in the four-page supplement, which was wrapped around copies of the left-wing daily Liberation on Thursday, a day after an arson attack gutted Charlie Hebdo's Paris headquarters." So far, nobody has come forward to take responsibility for the attacks made against Charlie Hebdo. Also, according to the New York Times, the magazine prides itself for its ironic and vulgar material which targets pretty much everybody. They are kind of like the magazine version of South Park.

French authorities condemned the attack as an assault on the freedom of the press. "Freedom of expression is an inalienable right in our democracy and all attacks on the freedom of the press must be condemned with the greatest firmness," Prime Minister François Fillon said in a statement. "No cause can justify such an act of violence." The Associated Press quoted Mohammed Moussaoui, head of the French Council of the Muslim Faith, as saying his organization deplores "the very mocking tone of the paper toward Islam and its prophet but reaffirms with force its total opposition to all acts and all forms of violence."

France has been known for creating laws that have been very restrictive for Muslims

(whether they meant it or not), because they have required not wearing face coverings, like the burqa, which several Muslim women wear as an outward symbol of their faith. France is a region where Islamophobia exists between the Muslim and non-Muslim people due to the attacks in Europe by groups claiming responsibility in the name of Islam.

"In a climate of European religious tension and fear of Islam, to create an amalgamation of all types of caricatures of the Islamic faith is highly regrettable," the Grand Mosque of Paris said in a statement. In 2008, Charlie Hebdo was the center of a controversy after it fired a cartoonist who wrote an allegedly anti-Semitic drawing and article about President Nicolas Sarkozy's son Jean, which the paper published. A court later ordered the paper to pay the cartoonist compensation for unfair dismissal. The cartoonist denied his drawing was anti-Semitic," Wall Street Journal further adds.

BBC News pointed out some interesting facts about Charlie Hebdo, that, "the paper has never sold in enormous numbers - and for 10 years from 1981, it ceased publication for lack of resources, mainly because as a newspaper, Charlie Hebdo suffers from constant comparison with its better-known and more successful rival,

Le Canard Enchaîné. Both are animated by the same urge to challenge the powers-that-be." The reason is simple, the paper took an easy way out to get famous, enraging extremists and getting worldwide attention.

Even during the prophet's lifetime, some people were being both verbally and physically abusive to him but, the man of peace, tolerance and love never hit or cursed them back. Instead he prayed for their well-being and begged God for their forgiveness instead.

How then, can his true followers be mean, violent and radical extremists? Everywhere in the Qur'an and throughout the prophet's sayings (Hadiths) there's nothing preached but of peace, love and harmony. The bombing of the magazine's office is an act of extremism and hatred and the bomber can never be Muslim for extremists are NOT, and never can be, Muslim by any means. Extremists don't belong amongst people of faith; in fact they don't belong anywhere. Their sole religion is extremism, not Islam. Let's spread the true message of Islam; the message of peace, tolerance, equality and love.

## Somalia: Millions at Risk

By Aaron Schlessman - Contributor

Until the recent drought and famine hit the news, very little was being discussed in the United States regarding Somalia beyond the occasional pirate attack. Few people had ever heard about or understood the depth of violence and poverty that the country had been enduring for decades. Even now it is difficult for many of us to grasp the magnitude of what the Somali people are enduring as a result of clan wars, Al-Shabaab terrorism and now the current famine. The lack of a stable government amplifies the problems created by these issues and the only way that hundreds of thousands of lives can be saved is through outside help.

Over four million people have been affected by the drought and famine in East Africa. This is over half of the country's entire population. Cholera and measles are sweeping through refugee camps scattered about the region, preying on a population with weakened immune systems and widespread malnourishment. Analysts expect that the coming rainfall in autumn will only worsen conditions and result in equally severe water-borne diseases, like malaria and typhoid.

Such conditions are eerily similar to what Somalia faced in the early 1990s. However, a key difference between now and then was the willingness of the world to provide assistance. The region was given huge amounts of food and aid through the guidance of an American-led operation that was coordinated with the United Nations and hundreds of thousands of lives were saved. The scale of today's famine is much larger than it was in

the 1990s, so what is going happen to these millions of people if they do not receive similar support?

Since 2001, the United States has spent over a trillion dollars on the "fight for freedom" in Iraq and Afghanistan. In just the last year alone, over a billion dollars have been spent by the U.S. and NATO allies to bring down the "tyranny" in Libya. Without spurring a discussion about the questionable foreign policies of the U.S., I use these examples in order to raise the question of national priorities - or, human priorities. Helping Somalia has no hidden agenda. If these people do not receive aid, they will die. It is that simple. They will starve. They will succumb to disease. They will suffer.

I request everyone to do something - anything - to help the Somali people. Funds are already being raised here at NEIU. You can learn more at:

[www.neiu.edu/~jsclub](http://www.neiu.edu/~jsclub)

This particular cause is raising money for the Doctors Without Borders effort in Somalia that is working against both disease and hunger. Donations are being accepted online all month and will be finalized on Nov. 29 with a closing bake sale in the Student Union. However, even if you can't donate at NEIU, you can donate to the Red Cross. Donate to Action Against Hunger. Call or write a Congress member and explain that supporting Somalia is important to you. Do something, Somalia genuinely and truly needs our help.



**Primary sources?**

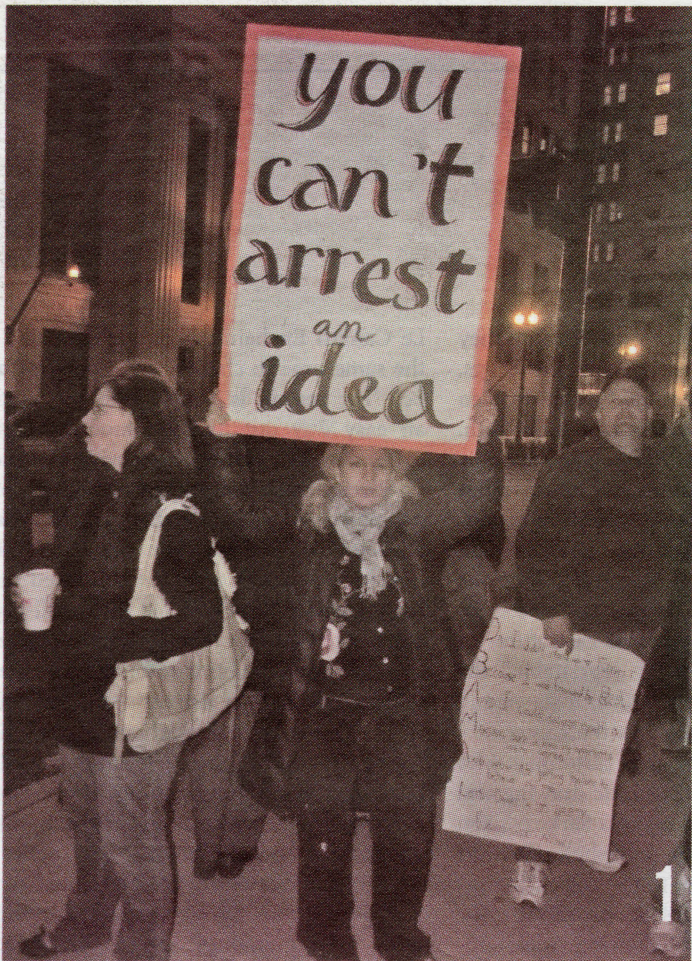
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# NEIU Students and Faculty Occupy Chicago

By Jacklyn Nowotnik - Staff Writer and Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief - Photos by Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief

For the past five weeks, Chicagoans have taken to the streets to be a part of the "Occupy" movement. Participants come from a wide range of backgrounds; from housewives to small business owners. As with many branches of the "Occupy" movement across the country, this group also contains a large number of college students. Finding NEIU students and faculty among those counted as "Occupiers" is no exception. On the temperate fall evening of Saturday, Oct. 29, Angel Velez, Educational Leadership graduate student and Abhijit Banerjee, Environmental Studies professor were found among the throng of protestors chanting, "We are the 99 percent!"

"It's important to show your support for this important issue right now, not just for the U.S. but for the whole world. The fact that politics is completely taken over by corporate interests, we're talking about the banking industry, the oil industry...I don't think there are specific or narrow demands. It's been brought to our attention that politics shouldn't be taken over by such powerful interests," said Banerjee about the reasons he and others are occupying. Organizers for Occupy Chicago have come up with a 12 point list of demands that are meant to reflect the central idea behind the reasons for occupying. However, many of the protestors don't know about them, don't fully understand them or are wary of narrowing the focus for fear of exclusion.

Peter Leeds, Forbes magazine contributor, wrote in the Oct. 11 issue, 'Whether you are for Occupy Wall Street or against it, there is no question that they would have more success with one clear overarching goal, which would solidify support and serve as a marker for progress.' His sentiment is akin to what Occupiers are calling, the 'one percent'. Regarding goals and demands, Sarah Witford, Occupier of Chicago, said, "I think the demands are very clear - economic justice. If you try to put everything this diverse group wants into one or two demands, you're going to lose the strength. Not having one set of demands is where our strength comes from, because anybody can come and ask the government for a redress of our grievances."

Interestingly, despite the variety of tactics being employed by Occupiers to bring more attention to the movement so that their messages are being heard, protests have been peaceful and no contraband has been found among the crowds. From beating large, up-ended plastic vats with huge logs, to offering themselves up for a night in jail or being maced - no tactic has proven too extreme in ensuring that the messages of the 99 percent are heard. On Sunday Oct. 16, at 1:30 a.m., Velez said that he was arrested for breaking a city ordinance for, "staying in a Chicago Park District park (Grant Park) after 11 p.m." He was one of many who made the choice to go to jail for the cause. "Arrest won't deter me, we have to be persistent. Its reality, we're going to keep coming here and doing what we have to do. We can't be quiet," Velez said.

Regarding the arrest, Winston Rysdahl, Student Trustee, stated, "I support the Occupy Chicago movement; I understand the importance of it." However, not many people join in that sentiment. Current presidential candidate Herman Cain stated in an interview, "I don't have facts to back this up but I happen to believe that these demonstrations are planned and orchestrated to distract from the failed policies of the Obama administration. Don't blame Wall Street, don't blame the big banks, if you don't have a job and you're not rich, blame yourself! [...] It is not someone's fault if they succeeded; it is someone's fault if they failed."

(Continued on pg. 9)



1. Melanie Parke holds a sign that reads "you can't arrest an idea".  
2. The crowd slowly grows on the corner of Jackson and LaSalle in preparation for the Occupy Chicago march.

3. L- Yvita; R- Amanda, "Banks are steadily getting richer, meanwhile, my mom has to borrow money from friends and family just to pay our mortgage." - Yvita  
4. Angel Velez (center) walks among fellow Occupiers in a march around downtown to raise awareness.





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The question then becomes: what about students like Velez? He is currently a graduate assistant at Proyecto Pa'Lante where his duties include engaging in research at the program, as well as to understand the Latino student dropout rate at NEIU. The 25 year old, Logan Square resident has also made his mark in the arena of community service. At Total Resources Involvement Benefiting Everyone, Inc. (T.R.I.B.E.) he has worked diligently to mentor at-risk youth in charter schools to provide them with life skills, so they can be successful throughout their lives. His work is a testament to his commitment for social change.

Velez's involvement in the Occupy movement began three weeks ago, "because I'm a graduate student, I don't have a lot of time to do the community organizing that I was doing before, so this is a great way for me to contribute to society," Velez said. His reasons for participating in Occupy Chicago are in line with the reasons of many others. None of those reasons seem to suggest that they are jealous of people who are financially successful, as many opponents of the movement have insinuated; only that the disparities and gaps between the wealthy and impoverished, despite their efforts, are unjust.

"First of all I joined it because of my background in Justice Studies...I learned how to question society and the system we live in. Occupy Chicago is questioning a big part of our system. It questions the greed of corporations and their ideals in regards to profits." Velez went on to explain, "It affects me directly as a person...Every day, I am reminded that rich people make billions of dollars every year, while I only make \$550 a month. It is unacceptable! I see many broken schools in our poor neighborhoods and don't understand why they can't share their wealth with poor people so we can better our schools and our communities. An example [of this] would be people who are working in top executive positions at corporations and people who are working the factory...The people working in executive positions at corporations can afford everything, while the factory worker can't even afford the product they are making. That is a serious flaw of the system."

Velez hopes that students can be their own researcher, look up the information about income disparities and find out why there is an Occupy movement for themselves, "after you find the information, make the decision whether or not you want to join the cause," he stated. Information regarding the reasons behind the Occupy movement can be found in many places. Witford said that the information could be found in your next social conversation, "two months ago, they were only talking about deficit and budget cuts and now they're talking about income inequality. We're now having an honest discussion about income inequality for the first time in 30 years."

As Occupiers chant "One - we are the people, two - we are united, three - the occupation: Is. Not. Leaving," their message is being written into the annals of history. Let it forever be remembered that members of the NEIU community were there to contribute to the cause. "Over 4,000 people protesting were there for different causes that stemmed from corporate greed. I felt a sense of solidarity and an understanding of a general purpose." Velez noticeably retreated into himself and then continued saying, "the media portrays us as a leaderless movement but we are a movement made of leaders."



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5. Occupiers catch the attention of passers-by on the corner of Jackson and LaSalle.

6. NEIU professor, Abhijit Banerjee, shows his support as he holds a sign that reads, "Too big to let others live."



# Arts & Life

Arts & Entertainment

## The Odd Couple Review

By Shantez Tolbut - Staff Writer

The NEIU Stage Center offered students and staff a chance to see another classic Neil Simon play, "The Odd Couple" directed by Lisa Cantwell. This cute, hilarious and grungy comedy had the audience tickling with laughter during Oct. 20-22, 26-29.

The play's setting involves a couple of divorced bachelors—Oscar (played by Nick Shea), your typical messy cynical guy and Felix (played by Rand Ringgenberg), the shy, compulsive neat freak that leans towards traditionally female related chores around the home—that move in together after one of the guys goes through a particularly hard divorce. As they progress, we see the conflicting interests colliding and escalating for an interesting climax.

It was a treat to see the use of the audience space and the entire stage used for an added touch of entertainment. Ringgenberg did exceptionally well in bringing out the complexity and humanity in a guy who despite his anti-social tendencies, really just cherishes his family. Shea captured the essence of a broken man trying to cope with a difficult situation—while still struggling to maintain a sense of his masculinity.

"It was interesting how Oscar and Felix got to know each other," said Ringgenberg on his chemistry with Shea. "I guess you could call that magic."

The other actors who played the roles of their close friends Speed, Murray, Roy and Vinnie created a genuine atmosphere of a weekly poker game that added on to the "bachelor-esque" feel of the play, even though some of the other characters were clearly still married.

Brad Cantwell, the actor who played Speed, particularly liked the 1940s atmosphere in the play. "I really enjoyed re-creating the poker game scene where the men would get together without their wives for a night of smoking, food and cards," said Cantwell. "The show required a cast that could create friends and neighbors and I think that we [accomplished] that."

Towards the end of the play, Oscar brought the Pigeon sisters over to dinner for a delightfully twisted end.

Ann Dernbach, the actress who played Gwendolyn Pigeon, excitedly shared her experience with the production.

"One word. Magical. That's the term that I use for a good show," she said. "Lisa was the glue that held us all together—she is amazing! I have never been disappointed working with The Stage Center Theatre."



For Cantwell, the magic didn't stop there as she spoke very highly of her time working with the cast.

"My cast was adorable!" said Cantwell. "Everyone was very close knit, it was exciting to see them develop from the first day of rehearsal to every night of the performance. Each person in the cast brought something unique on stage to make this show fabulous! They were a delight to work with. Pure magic. I love them!"

The show was, overall, a great success and a delight to watch. Be on the lookout for the next Stage Center play of the 2011-2012 season - Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare on Dec. 1-3, 7-10 at 7:30 p.m.

Left to right: The play's characters - Vinnie, Murray, Felix, Speed, Roy and Oscar all trying to enjoy a game of poker.

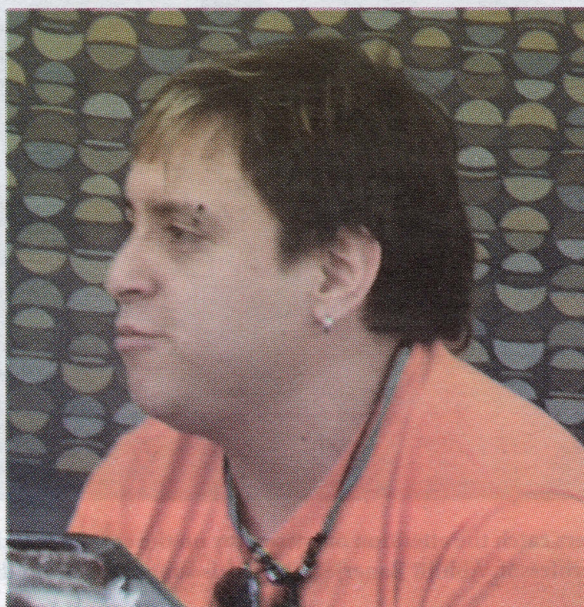
## LGBTQ Outreach Lounge - Sponsored by the Student Union

THEME - COMING OUT STORIES: WHAT IT MEANS

Coverage and Photos by Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief



"I'm fine with someone saying your sexuality is wrong - but, okay, how can we best live together?" Professor Adams.



Above: Professor Tony Adams reads from his latest book, "Narrating the Closet: An Auto-ethnography of Same-Sex Attraction."

"As long as people show up and support, even if they don't identify as LGBTQ - We appreciate it." - Jorge vargas, GLBTQA President



Left: Student, Juan Ortiz, tells his coming out story and shows attendees how it looks when you're supported by family.

Above: Students make a pledge declaring their freedom.



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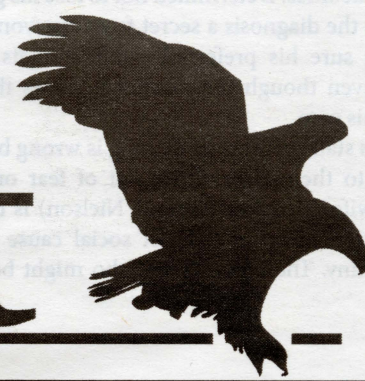
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In December, we will only have one print issue of the Independent. Instead, during your winter break, head on over to our website at [www.neiuindependent.com](http://www.neiuindependent.com) to get your December News, Opinions, Arts and Life!

# Independent





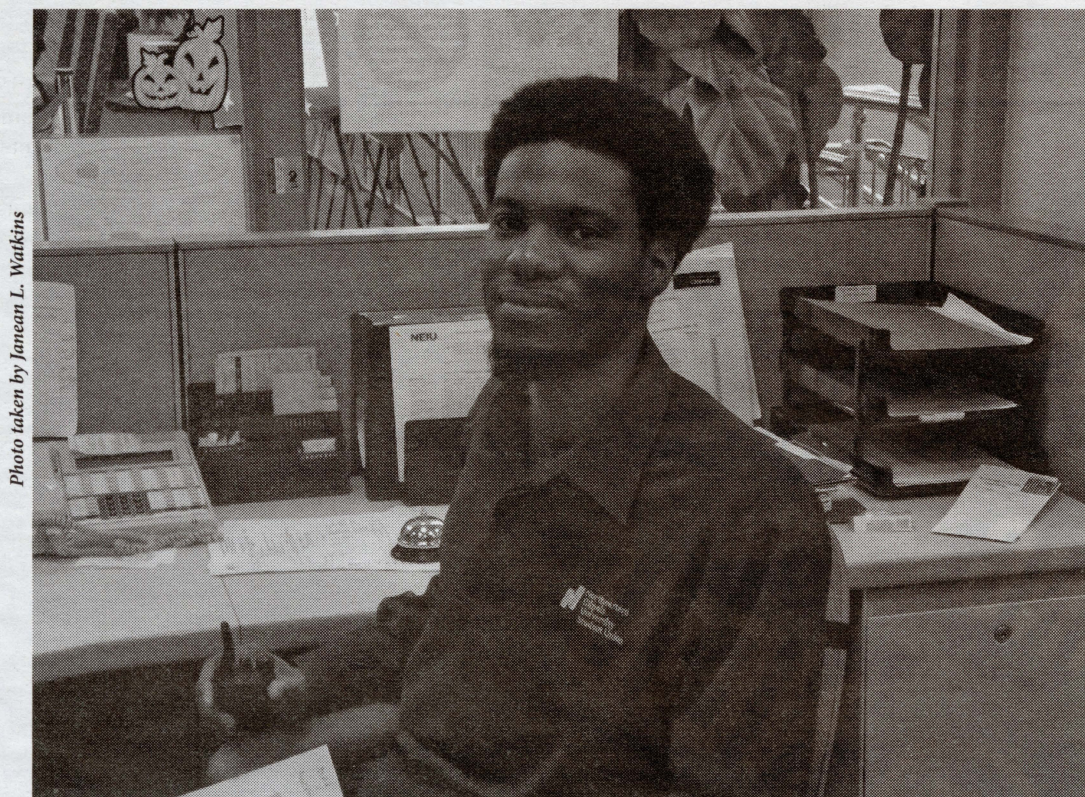


Photo taken by Janean L. Watkins

**Student Spotlight - Continued from the front page**

Byrd explained that the Student Union is trying to build programs that stem from not only themselves as an entity, but that are in line with the vision of its current administrative head, Dr. Frank Ross. He feels that they're headed in the right direction. "The goal is to bring the campus community more programs that are modeled with our 'Three E's' in mind, empowerment, encouragement, and engagement. It was important for us to offer students activities with these core values at their center," says Byrd. And these monthly activities have been noticed by others to do just that. "We never had anybody from the student Union come to use to ask for help with a program that was by us, for us," says Sophomore GLBTQA President Jorge Vargas.

Byrd has aspirations of specializing in Environmental Law, following in the footsteps of our 82<sup>nd</sup> Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr., Byrd would like to, "come up with renewable energies to make us independent from foreign oil and release us from backlash from oil dependency," he says. As Lead Program Coordinator for the student union, Byrd is starting where he is. With plans to revitalize the Poet's Corner program, and start a developmental program for men he calls I.M.A.G.E., Independent Men Achieving Goals in Education, he hopes to carry out the goals of empowerment, encouragement, and engagement among the university's male student population, "I.M.A.G.E. needs promotional support, we want groups to co-sponsor the program, and we need the administration to be a part of it. I think it's important that we show students that we're an NEIU family," Byrd explains.

The single most important thing that Byrd feels he's learned as a student is that, "encouragement and hope make a big difference. I hope for a better society here, and outside of the classroom." He also hopes to set an example for his younger siblings, as the oldest of seven children – having four brothers and two sisters, this South Shore High School graduate is that his efforts can pave the way for them in the future. Byrd says, "Hope is a powerful tool, something we need to spread here on campus."

**"...encouragement and hope makes a big difference. I hope for a better society here, and outside of the classroom."**

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## "Boss" Gives Complex, Exaggerated Look at Chicago Politics

*By Igor Studenkov - Senior Staff Writer*

Chicago has a long history of strong-willed mayors that have wielded their political power with impunity, using legally questionable means to implement their agendas. Anton Cermak, Richard J. Daley and his son, Richard M. Daley, are just some of the more prominent examples. So, when the Starz channel announced that it would produce "Boss," a show about a fictional Chicago mayor, critics and political junkies took notice.

"Boss" stars Kelsey Grammer as Tom Kane, a mayor who has been in power for over 20 years. In the opening scene of the pilot episode, Kane discovers that he is suffering from an incurable neurological disorder that will eventually destroy his mental faculties. Determined not to lose his grip on power, Kane keeps the diagnosis a secret from everyone and focuses on making sure his preferred candidate gets elected state governor, even though the candidate shows that he has an agenda of his own.

Kane's staff suspects something is wrong but keeps their suspicions to themselves either out of fear or respect. His estranged wife, Meredith (Connie Nielson) is trying to keep her reputation intact as her pet social cause comes under media scrutiny. The only person who might be able to help

Tom is his daughter, Emma (Hannah Ware) but she is busy dealing with her own problems. Through it all, Sam Miller (Troy Garrity), an investigative reporter, is poking around, determined to uncover Kane's secrets no matter what it takes.

Chicago's long history of corruption and dirty politics is referenced heavily throughout "Boss," even more so than in "Chicago Code." The show was filmed in Chicago and it frequently utilized the lesser-known parts of the city, which further adds to the show's tone.

Much of the show hinges on the performance put on by Grammer, who is largely known for comedic roles but most people forget that he started out as a dramatic actor. Also, as his performance in this show proves, he still has what it takes to put on a compelling, dramatic performance, veering between subtlety and bombast with ease while staying perfectly in character.

The rest of the main cast is just as good, since even the less prominent stars and some of the big players put on surprisingly complex performances. The script is clear and able to be understood at a casual glance but upon careful examination reveals foreshadowing and subtext that further enhances the viewing experience. This show benefits from

repeat viewings, so it allows the viewers to discover narrative layers they may have missed the first time.

There is no doubt that Chicago politics is a gold mine of potential plot lines. Indeed, the pilot makes references to real life political scandals in a way that suggests the screenwriters did some thorough research.

At the same time, many details are exaggerated to the point of ridiculousness. Tom Kane is more ruthless and far more willing to resort to violence than any recent mayor. While some of his actions—inserting his candidate into a gubernatorial race a few weeks before the primary, confiscating phones and recording devices from the aldermen—may make for great dramatic moments, they break suspension of disbelief for anyone familiar with the city politics.

The cast is good enough to give even some of the more ridiculous scenes a measure of credibility, but there is only so much they could do. In the end, the show's appeal may depend entirely on how much the viewers know about the real-life events and individuals that inspired it. But, for this reviewer, it was a stumbling block that the show couldn't quite overcome.



# Mexican Folk Music Event Celebrates Dia de los Muertos

By Joe Daddario - Staff Writer



Pichardo stands alongside his tools of the trade.

Photo by Joe Daddario

*“Some people think music is disappearing but it’s not,”*



Photo by Dulce Arroyo

Victor Pichardo, music director of Sones de Mexico, visited Northeastern Illinois University on Nov. 2 for a lecture and performance in honor of Dia de los Muertos. Dia De Los Muertos, or Day of the Dead for non-Spanish speakers, is a holiday that occurs on the first two days of November celebrating and honoring friends and family members who have passed away. The holiday incorporates bright colors, traditional music played on some not so traditional instruments, dancing and food. Dating back to the Aztec and Mayan cultures, it is believed that on these two days the spirits of those who have passed come back to visit family members.

Pichardo explained that at night of the

holiday, the song “Llamada de Animas” (“Souls of People”) is played to honor and welcome the ancestors. Some of the instruments that are used are rattles (*ayoyotes*), mandolins (*concha*), ritual drums (*huethueltl*), conch shells, violins, reed flutes and turtle shells.

After explaining his instruments, Pichardo educated the crowd with information on the songs he played. For example, contrary to popular belief, “La Bamba” isn’t the same song every time it is played and sung. According to Pichardo, it is a song that adds energy and starts the fun wherever it is played. It’s a fast paced and exciting song partly made up on the spot.

Pichardo also shared his favorite style of music, huapango. Huapango is part call and response, and Pichardo said he liked how it involves everyone and gets people moving.

“Some people think music is disappearing but it’s not,” said Pichardo, after playing a few songs for the crowd. “It’s still here.”

This was clearly evident, as many people in the crowd were bobbing their heads, tapping their feet or even mouthing some of the words. Pichardo went down to Pilsen, a largely Hispanic neighborhood, to play music and celebrate Dia de Los Muertos until four in the morning the night before. The celebrations for this holiday are both engaging for outsiders and people that have been around this tradition for years. It is something special that everyone should be a part of.

## Good Eatin’

By Janean L. Watkins - Editor in Chief



For many of us, midterms have passed. But now we’ve reached the second half of our fall semester, and this time calls for tapping into our energy reserves to boost up for the last few weeks ahead. Here’s a quick and easy recipe that’s sure to help our preparations for that final stretch!

### Toasted Wheat Pita Greek Salad

#### Ingredients

2 cups romaine lettuce

½ cup canned garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained

2 tablespoons low-fat vinaigrette

½ teaspoon pepper

½ cup sliced cucumber

1 whole wheat pita

2 tablespoons feta cheese crumbles

**Preparation:** Slice wheat pita into slender strips. Lightly toast until nearly browned. Combine ingredients in a bowl and toss thoroughly. Blend in toasted pita. Chill for 20 minutes if desired.

## Spectrum Leadership Retreat

By Shantez Tolbut - Staff Writer



During the weekend of Oct. 28-29, a group of about 14 NEIU students (myself included) traveled to the Stronghold Retreat Center in Oregon, Ill for the Spectrum Leadership Retreat; this year the themes were multi-culturalism and social justice.

The group met at the NEIU main campus and took a two-hour bus ride to Oregon, unaware of what was to come. As we arrived, we engaged in a couple of icebreakers and then we were instructed to cook our own food—which ended up being one of our community building/bonding activities. Through cooking and cleaning up for one another, we began to know each other more personally. One of our other activities was reading a Dr. Seuss story and then analyzing ways by which storytelling can be a form of activism, as well as seeing how it applies to today’s society in a more general sense.

Next, we watched a short clip of an autobiography of an important figure in Spanish history and proceeded to analyze the significance of the activism and resistance we saw. After a long day of socializing and bonding, we were free to retire for the night in preparation for the early day ahead. As early as 8 a.m., we all got up to eat breakfast, since we had a long day of activities ahead that would have us share personal experiences. Some of these would include revealing and realizing things about ourselves and others in order to become more effective leaders.

One of the most successful activities of the entire retreat was making our own Leadership Map, which was done by

using good old-fashioned markers, glue, scissors and magazines to make collages. The purpose of this was to see how each individual came to want to become a leader through their own stories and reflections. Furthermore, we came to the identity portion of the retreat, where we had to define and identify with various core identities to get a better understanding of our privileges and disadvantages.

After this, we had a guest speaker, Derrick Gunter, M.Ed., from the Achieving College Excellence Program at Loyola University Chicago, to lead us into a very interactive discussion about conflicting identity. At the end of the retreat, the students all felt like they had gained something socially and personally valuable from participating in such a thought-provoking event.

One anonymous participant spoke to me about how eye-opening this experience was for her.

“Before this retreat, I was aware of elite systems in place but I was really confused in my role in all of that,” she said. “Now I have a better idea of what others experience. This will add to the humanity part of my leadership training.”

As for myself, I feel like it was very well put together, educational and a thoroughly enriching experience that made me feel connected to all who participated during this trip.

The L.E.A.D. program welcomes students to participate in the various events they hold throughout the year. For more information, contact Veronica Rodriguez at V-Rodriguez9@neiu.edu.



# ManOnTheStreet



By Dulce Arroyo and  
John Gonzalez  
Arts & Life Editor and  
Contributor

## What are some ways you cope with stress during midterms?



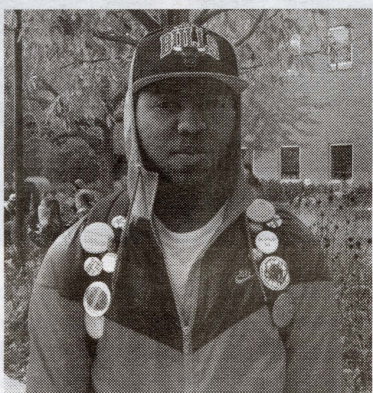
"Going to the library more often, like the one at DePaul because it's open until midnight. I'll also buy energy drinks to study and go to sleep early to wake up early."

- Paulo Ramirez, Junior



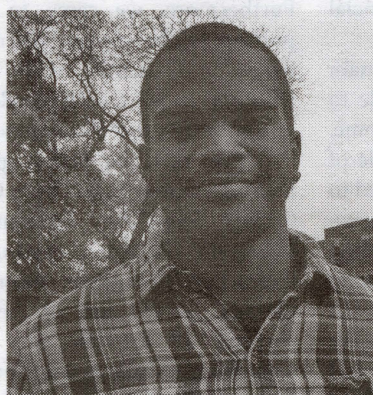
"Reading calms me down; right now, my favorite book is *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Or I'll just take it easy and watch "Pretty Little Liars" or hang out with family members and friends."

- Hamdi Mohamed, Freshman



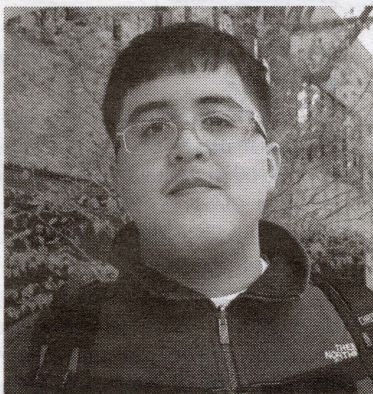
"You have to be mentally prepared for midterms, so I'll go to the library and have some me-time. I'll stay there for hours to study and look over my notes."

- Corvez Walls, Sophomore



"Midterms are overrated because people just get hyped up about a test that they think is like a final exam. But if you just pay attention in class, midterms aren't that big a deal."

- Dyamond Thompson, Freshman



"I tend to sleep more when I'm stressed. I'm a little bit more focused to study for a test after I take a nap."

- Omar Fernandez, Freshman



Come celebrate 89 years of Sisterhood, Scholarship, and Service with the lovely ladies of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Sigma Eta Chapter at Northeastern IL University. We would love to see you all there. It's not just for undergrads but for the grad as well. For more info and to RSVP go to our Facebook page "The Stunning Sigma Eta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc."

— Soror Sheakila McNeal

# *Sigma Eta Chapter* at NEIU

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# ..:Seeds:..

## Literary Arts Journal

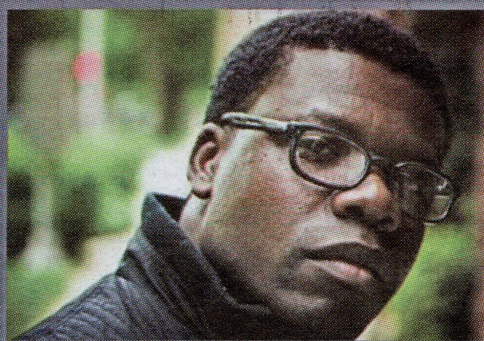
# Winter Release Celebration

Come join us for live art, acclaimed speakers, and food! Every attendee will receive a copy of the journal.

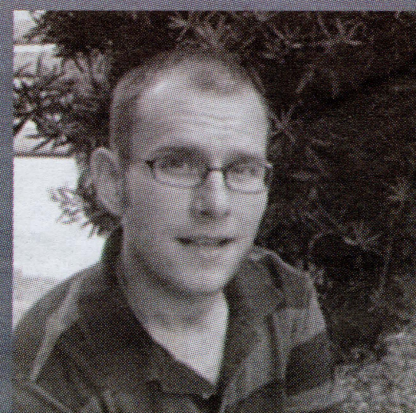
November 11th  
6:00PM — 9:00PM  
Golden Eagle's Nest



Erick von Alroth set out to learn everything he could about Metalsmithing in May of 2007. In 2010, he graduated summa cum laude from NEIU with a focus in studio metal arts. He worked as a Metals instructor at Beverly Arts Center. In September 2011, he created Frankenstone. He now works as a proponent to the arts as well as an artist.



Avery R. Young is a writer, performer and teaching artist. He is a Cave Canem Fellow and his works have been published in AIMPrint, Callaloo, Spaces Between Us and many other anthologies and periodicals. He is also featured on Urban Audiology: The Art of Audio Truism and other compilations.



Tony Adams studies and teaches about interpersonal and family communication, sex, gender, and sexuality. He has published journals such as Symbolic Interaction, and books such as The Handbook of Critical and Interpretive Methodologies. He is also the author of Narrating the Closet: An Autoethnography of Same-Sex Attraction.