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Rut Ortiz

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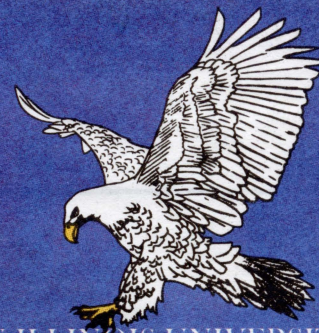
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NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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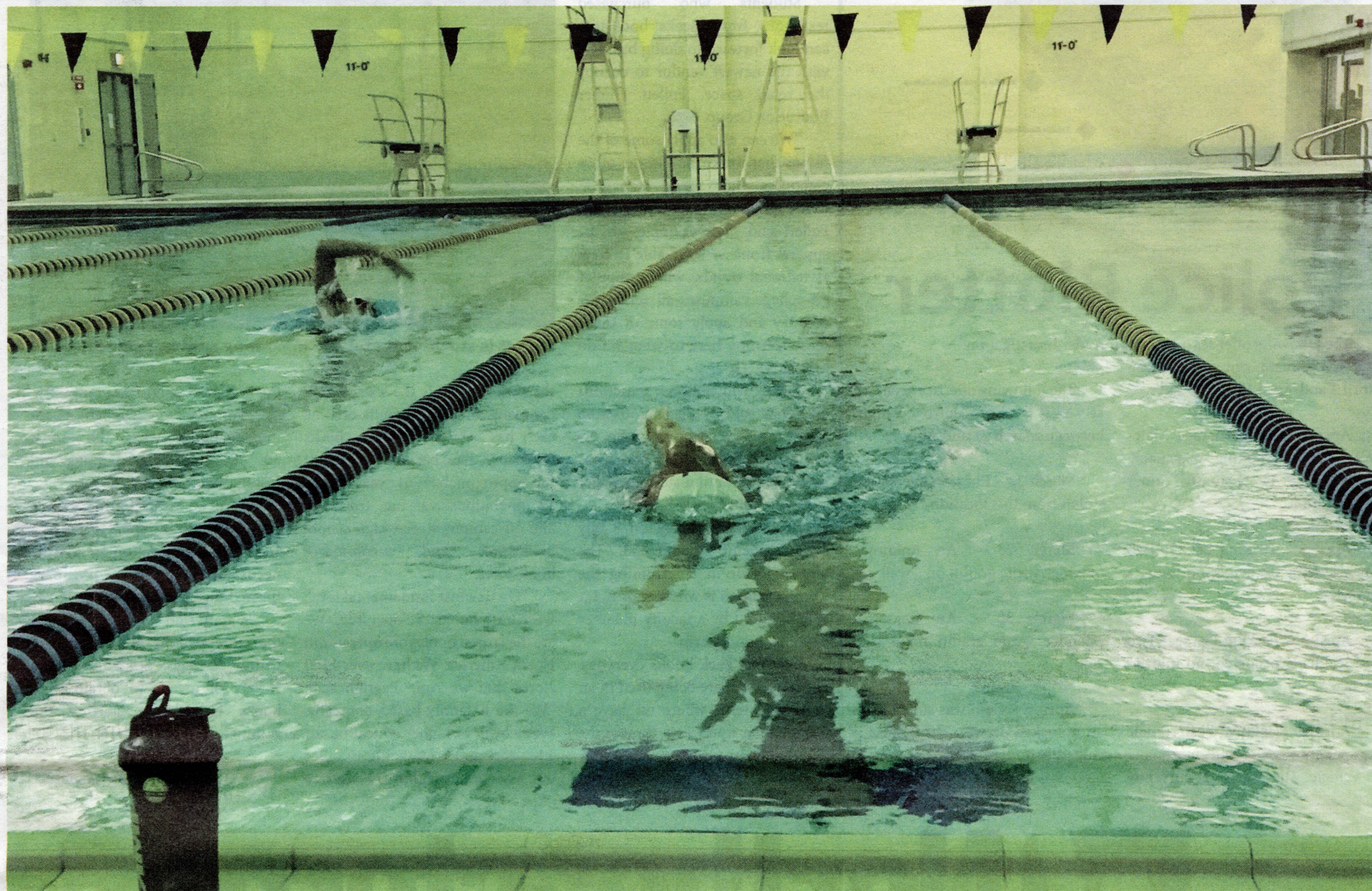


Photo by Spencer Jones

These Olympic hopefuls are hardly treading water and with the Summer Games around the corner, every meter counts.

Chasing Gold

Making Olympic Dreams a Reality

Silvia Burian and Ishtar Yakoo

The desire to become an Olympic athlete burns brightly in many young hopefuls like their own personal Olympic flame.

It is this drive that is seen in athletes just like 19-year-old Neil Contractor and 16-year-old Maana Patel who traveled from across the globe to train for their chance to compete in the Olympic Games.

This year, Contractor and Patel are training with coach Kamil Kulczycki of Sharks Swim Club in hopes of competing in the 2016 Olympic games in Rio De Janeiro. The two began their long journey in India and are now training right here in NEIU's P.E. Complex pool.

Every four years the elite are given a chance to showcase their skills—and no we aren't talking about the presidential race.

Although, the trials contain just as much cutthroat competition as any election to date, training for the Olympics is a grueling process.

The Olympics are known as a time of peace and global unity. A rule of key importance has always been the claim that during the Olympics all participants gather in the spirit of true sportsmanship. That idea carries on today and allows the event to remain one of the most anticipated events for athletes around the world.

Contractor has been swimming for eight years now. He said that as a kid, he loved and enjoyed being in the water back home in India. With the burning hot summer heat it's no wonder the pool was a favorite activity.

Still, Contractor performed a variety of activities during his youth.

It wasn't until almost coming in last place at an intense local swim meet that he became inspired to continue his training. Kulczynski explained that his co-coach was actually the one to discover Contractor while abroad.

Kulczycki was attending classes across from the pool where Contractor was training. The two made a connection and with Kulczycki's help Contractor's swim times dropped significantly at the next meet. Kulczycki began to coach Maana as well after he was introduced by Contractor's parents, who were family friends.

Patel fondly recalls the unusual and funny start of her swim career. She told the story about how her lack of appetite caused her mother concern. Her mother sent her to a summer camp where she would swim every day for forty-five

minutes, returning home she would tell her mom "Mama I'm hungry, I need food," and thus her swimming career was born.

That was six years ago, and today Patel is the fastest female swimmer in India's history. Despite this, Patel has not become complacent in her training. Both she and Contractor jumped at the chance to travel to America in order to further their swimming careers.

The two have a rigorous day of training beginning at 8:30 a.m. and going until 11 a.m. and that's just their morning workout. However, when talking about their coaches, their answers are nothing short of heartwarming.

"Oh my God! They're amazing," gushed Patel. "They're just too good. Trust me I'm not missing home at all."

While the job of a coach is

to push their athletes, it is also to nurture and help them grow.

Swimming is a fantastic method for cardio-respiratory fitness. According to Contractor and Patel, swimming is also a fantastic method for creating heart-to-heart relationships with inspiring coaches.

When asked about the transition from India to America, Contractor tells us how it all happened so fast and that it's "all thanks to Coach Kamil and Coach Komal... That was God's blessing for us."

The dynamic between the three is incredible.

In fact, it allows them to train harder. So how do they manage it all? And what about school?

In India the education systems work a bit differently.

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Mamba
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News

Following Up with Follett

Bye Bye Becks. Students can now expect a shiny new bookstore.

Rut Ortiz

Students who purchased textbooks from Becks bookstore can look forward to doing business with the newest vendor to occupy the retail space, Follett Higher Education Group.

"We can also apply some of the things that we learned in the other campuses that we've managed," Ken Pegram, regional manager for Follett said. "For example, on the apparel front ... we're able to look at national trends, what's popular on college campuses all across the country and apply some of those same learning here to what we do here at NEIU."

Follett will honor transactions on books sold by Becks bookstore according to Pegram who is overseeing the transition and is the point person until a store manager is appointed.

"We will absolutely do a buy back on them," Pegram said. "The biggest factor in determining the value of a book is whether or not it is being used by a faculty member in an upcoming term."

"We buy back books everyday. For books that are being used in an upcoming term where we have a need, we pay up to 50 percent of the purchase price for it."

One notable difference between



Photo by Rut Ortiz

Follett is stocking up for the upcoming summer semester.

the two vendors is the size of each company and the amount of time each has been in business. Becks bookstore has been in existence for approximately 61 years, with 12 operations varying from on and off-campus stores, high school bookstores and e-commerce bookstores.

"On its most fundamental level, we're both bookstore operators. We are the largest bookstore operator in North America. We have over 1200 stores that we run," Pegram said. "We are a family-based company. We've been in higher education for 140 years and we're going to tailor our assortment within the store to

the needs of the NEIU community.

"We are very much about understanding what the needs are of a particular campus and responding to that."

"I had an instructor in here this morning, for example, that has a very specific dissection kit that he needs for biology class. We have those things on order."

Pegram said he anticipates that the store will be at full capacity within 30 days. Students have a variety of means to obtain their books for classes starting the summer semester of 2016.

Continued on page 3

Campus map provided by NEIU



Police Blotter

The following offenses occurred at NEIU's main campus between April 2 and April 10:

April 2 – Parking Garage: Males were caught smoking marijuana. The offense is currently under investigation.

April 5 – Parking Lot D: Two car accidents occurred; no injuries reported.

April 5 – Parking Garage: Two car accidents occurred; no injuries reported.

April 10 – 3600 W. Foster: Male was caught driving with marijuana in vehicle. The offense is currently

under investigation.

The following offenses occurred at NEIU's El Centro campus between March 22 and April 6:

March 22 – Election flyers were stolen from this location.

March 23 – An unknown offender wrote graffiti on a wall.

March 30 – An unknown offender wrote graffiti on a stop sign.

April 6 – Cash was stolen from an unlocked drawer. The offense is currently under investigation.



Congratulations

To Newly Promoted and Tenured Faculty

From The Office of the President and The Office of Academic Affairs

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor:

Jacqueline Anderson, Social Work
Marcia Buell, English
Sarah Cordell, Mathematics
Mateo Farzaneh, History
Scott Hegerty, Economics
Zada Johnson, Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies
Jolanta Jonak, Special Education
Jin Kim, Social Work
Christina Madda, Literacy Education
Christopher Merchant, Psychology
Graciela Perera, Computer Science
Myles Polsgrove, HPERA
Vida Sacic, Art
Shannon Saszik, Psychology
Angela Sweigart-Gallagher, Communication, Media and Theatre
Susan Tang, Music
Kenneth Voglesonger, Earth Science

Promotion to Associate Professor:

Emmanuel Nyadroh, ABLF

Promotion to Professor:

Sangmin Bae, Political Science
Russell Benjamin, Political Science
Jon Hageman, Anthropology
Gerardo Moreno, Special Education
William Sieger, Art
Charles Steinwedel, History

ADVERTISEMENT

Follett cont.

“We do have textbook rental,” Pegram said. “We have the largest rental program and we will be bringing that to NEIU.

“We also have a price-match program. We’re up and selling right now.” So how does a student go about renting or purchasing their textbooks from Follett for the summer?

“All they have to do is walk in,” Pegram said. “Right now we have open stacks. We have staff here to facilitate and help the students determine what they want.

“Ideally (a student) will come in with a class schedule and they show us the class schedule and we help them find the materials that they need.”

The way a student can rent books by putting down a credit card as collateral but can pay the rental fee with any other means at the end of the rental period. The rental period extends throughout the end of the term with a grace period of three days.

There is a monetary penalty if the books are returned after the grace period.

Follett will also be coordinating with the university a remodel to the store’s space over the summer. Pegram described this upcoming transformation as “big changes on the horizons.”

Proposed Amendment To Re-determine Student Trustee’s Role

Pablo Medina and Steven Villa

An amendment proposed at the most recent Board of Trustees meeting could change the student trustee’s role on the board.

The amendment, which will be put to a vote during the June 23 Board of Trustees meeting, modifies the rules of order in the Board of Trustees bylaws to define conflicts of interest involving the student trustee’s voting privileges.

According to the President’s Report to the Board of Trustees, the amendment would restrict the student trustee from voting on issues relating to “faculty tenure, employment and compensation of the President and election of officers.”

Board of Trustee officers include the chair, vice-chair and

secretary positions, currently held by trustees Carlos Azcoitia, Jin Lee and Omar Duque respectively.

According to Pedro Nungaray, current student trustee, an existing statute already prevents the student trustee from voting on matters of faculty tenure, but the second and third stipulations of the proposed amendment are new.

The bylaws of the Board of Trustees, last revised in 2007, do not distinguish between the roles of the student trustee and the other trustees.

“I think that based on student concern, it is a huge concern, because it has a huge impact on the student representation on the Board of Trustees,” Nungaray said. “Seeing as how the students make up one of the primary, if not the primary, components of the university, they

should have a direct say in all facets of the university.”

Nungaray explained the reasoning behind the proposed change to the amendment was argued by NEIU President Sharon Hahs, who said that the student trustee might be unfairly denied a letter of recommendation from another trustee for voting against them in an election.

Nungaray said there was some consensus among the trustees that the amendment would have to be considered carefully because of its potential consequences.

“When the amendment was brought up, there were a few trustees that implied they were in favor of it,” Nungaray said. “Marvin Garcia noted that it is a very crucial proposed amendment that has large implications for other trustees

down the road.

“Jin Lee hinted at the fact that for any proposed amendment that’s going to impact a position such as student trustee to that degree means careful revision of the statute,” Nungaray stated, “as well as past precedents of where there have been any situations in which a student trustee has not obtained a recommendation.”

Nungaray said he hopes students will attend the next Board of Trustees meeting on June 23, for the public comment portion of the meeting.

“Try to make it to the next meeting and come and comment to show the board how very serious to take the student representation,” Nungaray said. “Because your voice is represented by the student trustee.”

Making Olympic Dreams a Reality cont.

Patel and Contractor aren’t required to be in school on a daily basis, but that doesn’t mean they don’t study as hard as they train. Both have brought textbooks and work hand-in-hand with their respective schools to maintain their education.

It’s amazing to see the way the two push themselves both physically and mentally. It’s as if they never get

tired. So how do they keep pushing past the fatigue? A protein enriched diet and inspiration.

Patel’s inspiration is her mother, whom always reminds her that, “If you’re doing anything, give your hundred percent in that.”

For Contractor, it is the goals on his wall which greet him every day when he wakes up.

“Even I don’t know how I

function, half of the body is sore and tired, you just need to wake up and do what you need to do,” said Contractor

With all of the hard work put in day in and day out, all of the motivation and support these two incredible athletes have, and all of the progress they’re making, it seems hard to believe that Patel and Contractor won’t qualify for the

2016 Olympic Games in Rio this summer.

See this and more
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available at
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NORTHEASTERN Illinois University

Student Government Association (SGA)

GOALS FOR YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

2015 - 2016

Financial Aid Office

- ✓ Explore delays in processing payments
- ✓ Create better channels of communication
- ✓ Ensuring student representation in decisions regarding financial aid

SGA Representation on the NEIU Faculty Senate (voting member)

- ✓ Input into campus life
- ✓ Provide student perspectives on decisions that affect them
- ✓ Student input into decisions on course cancellations

Course Scheduling and Cancellations

- ✓ Surveying students’ needs for advising the administration
- ✓ Ensuring student representation in course scheduling discussions
- ✓ Working with faculty and advisors to inform them of student concerns

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes (Pending for Approval)

April 12th, 2016

A.) Call to Order at 3:05

B.) Roll Call

1. Executive Board Members: President Nick Martinez, Vice President Ricky Gutierrez, Secretary Yessica Garcia and Student Trustee Pedro Nungaray

2. Senators: Arnold Garcia, , David Diaz, Dorrie Hubbard III, Edwin Ramirez, Erick Gonzales, Gonzalo Duran, Jessica Alaniz, Jose Garcia, Laura Ayala, Lily Butler-Ludwig, Luis Arriola, Roger Byrd, Shatara Mitchell, and Tremayne Houston

C.) Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes 3-29-16

• Approved

D.) Approval of Agenda

1. Agenda 4-12-16

• Approved

E.) Executive Reports

1. President

• Will like to thank everyone who ran for Student Government and we had over a thousand individuals who voted for (SGA).

2. Vice President

• April 26th, 2016 is the passing of the gavel

3. Treasurer

• The last COC meeting will be on the 14th

4. Board of Trustee Representative

• The amendment proposed by President Hahs to limit the board of trustee student representative voting power will be addressed at the next board of trustee meeting

F.) Old Business:

1. Bill B16-43: An Act to Amend the Constitution

• Passes with Acclamation

G.) New Business:

1. Bill B16-43: An Act to Ratify the April 2nd-8th, 2016 SGA Elections

• Passes with 13 Yes and 2 Nos

2. Resolution R16-6: An Act to Provide Color Printers at CCICS

• Acclamation

H.) Senate Reports:

1. May 3rd, Student Government will have a BBQ open to the public. It will be a meet and greet and they will also be getting feedback from the students.

2. Dr. Lopez will like to thank Student Government for their work for the 2015-2016 academic year.

I.) Audience Participation and Announcements

J.) Adjournment 3:47

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Student Government President Re-Elected in Razor Thin Victory

Luis Badillo

In a heated and contested race for the student government, current president Nicholas Martinez won over two challengers, among other winners.

The Student Government Association (SGA) elections held on the week of April 1 had candidates campaigning for student votes to see who would hold offices for the next year.

According to multiple sources, opponent Shatara Mitchell held a substantial lead over Martinez throughout the week of voting. However in a turnaround, Martinez won reelection with 399 votes, a mere five votes ahead of Mitchell's final count of 394 votes. Sharon Hernandez, who also ran for SGA president, accumulated a total of 299 votes.

"I was actually planning on not running again," Martinez said. "It ended up it was going to be a longer time (before graduating) than I was expecting to have."

Martinez also said that he wanted to continue some of the work that he had started in the previous year.

"I felt there are a lot of things that are not yet done," he said.

He cited projects such as a

Student Bill of Rights as well as the El Centro and CCICS advisory committee.

"That was one of the reasons I decided to run again," Martinez said. "I wanted to make sure things got saw through to the end."

According to Independent newspaper archives dating back to 2006, Martinez is the only SGA presidential candidate to serve a second term in that time.

Students may have also seen Martinez in campaign videos presented by his latest project, Independent International News, a Facebook page that formally represented the official SGA page. The Independent newspaper bears no affiliation with Independent International News.

Other students who won in the election are current SGA members in different positions. Yessica Garcia, current SGA secretary, will fill the position of vice president. Current treasurer Max Caviness will serve again in the oncoming year.

Current student trustee Pedro Nungaray will serve as a senator on the SGA, while handing off his former position as Student Trustee to Olivia Clark.

Other winners include Jessica Alaniz for Secretary, as well as

Anna Augustyn for Northeastern's member for the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Student Advisory Committee.

All eight students who ran for any of the 16 positions in the SGA senate won those seats. However, there are now vacancies there as well as in the Council of Clubs (CoC), the body charged with managing the funding that goes to student organizations at NEIU.

Students who are interested in filling these vacancies can contact the office of Student Leadership Development located at E-041B or by calling the office at 773-442-4970.

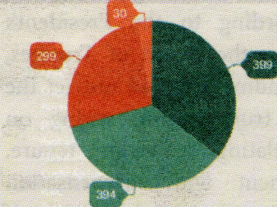
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SGA Election Results

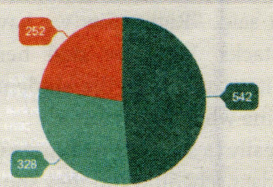
April, 2016

President



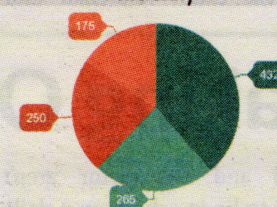
■ Nicholas Martinez (36%) ■ Shatara Mitchell (35%)
■ Sharon Martinez (27%) ■ Chose not to vote (3%)

Vice President



■ Yessica Garcia (48%) ■ Micheal Vargas (29%)
■ Chose not to vote (22%)

Secretary



■ Jessica Alaniz (39%) ■ Joselin Munoz (24%)
■ Chose not to vote (22%) ■ Joshua Carlson (16%)

Uncontested Positions

Treasurer
Max Caviness (435 votes)

Student Trustee
Olivia Clark (786 votes)

Illinois Board of Higher Education- SAC
Anna Augustyn

Senate
Aaron Schiffman (474 votes)
Jose Garcia (255 votes)
Arnold Garcia (255 votes)
Pedro Nungaray (221 votes)
Dorrie Hubbard III (189 votes)
David Diaz (187 votes)
Gonzalo Duran (166 votes)
Andre Herrera (161 votes)

Total Student Vote: 1122

Source: Office of Student Leadership Development

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The *Independent* is published every other week except during summer and semester breaks.

Deadlines are eight (8) days prior to the issue in which a contribution is to appear. Views expressed in letters are those of the university community and not those of the Editorial Board.

The 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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All Work, No Pay: Education Suffers When Teachers Don't Get Paid

Sylvia Burian

Recently, an email was sent out informing the student body about the newly appointed Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the NEIU Foundation, Liesl V. Downey.

This email from our President noted "this may seem like an inopportune time to make an appointment" but, "It is vitally important to continue the work of the campaign for our future."

I couldn't agree more. Personally, I think my future, along with the future of every other student, should indeed be viewed as vitally important. So when I thought that a new position had been added I was appalled.

Originally I had assumed that this meant there would be another dip into our already diminishing bank account. To my great relief it was simply that she had only just been appointed. Downey has already been acting in the same capacity for some time.

So, why the email to let us know of her official appointment when it doesn't really change anything? Good PR. Downey's job is to help raise funds for student scholarships, which makes the administration look like it's taking steps towards helping us achieve the future we deserve.

However, in my search for what I thought would be an increase in pay, I found something almost as bad: The Faculty Salary and Benefits Database.

It is my understanding that without teachers there can be no school. I will concede that it is important to have a strong administration to support our faculty. Recently it seems as though our faculty is anything but supported.

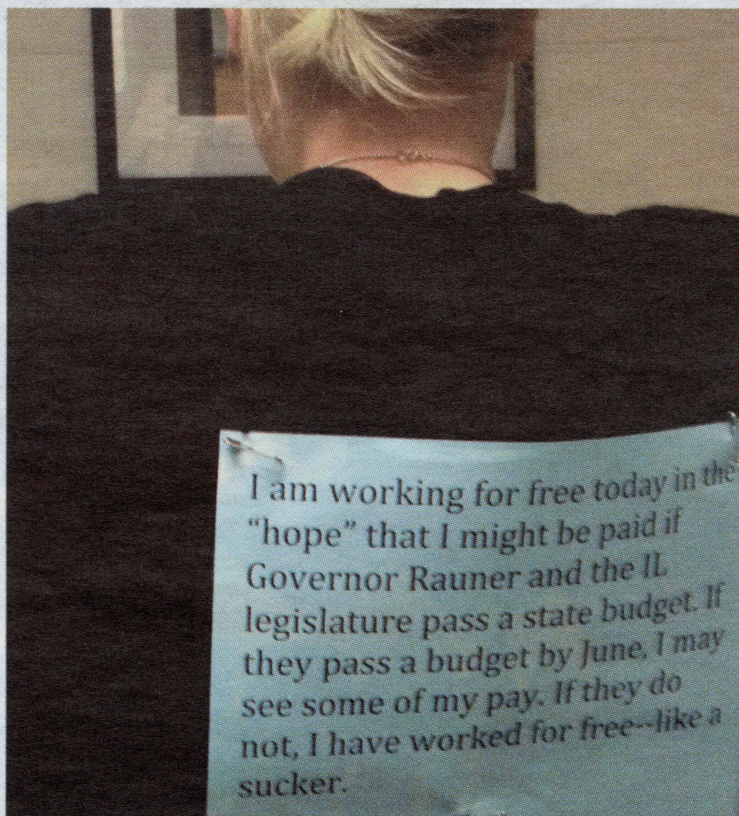


Photo by Mary Kroeck

Dr. Angela Sweigart-Gallagher of NEIU's CMT department wears her feelings about budget cuts and furlough days on her back.

For example, the furlough days that have recently become required for all faculty, staff and administration affect my learning. How? Well, by taking away two class periods our professors then have to make a decision: Do they attempt to cram an excess amount of material into a shorter amount of time or do they cut something from the syllabus? Either way my ability to grow as a student has become affected.

Full disclosure: my parent is an instructor. But, I'm not writing this opinion piece because I've run out of funds for a summer vacation or even funds for my tuition. Actually,

I almost didn't write this piece at all simply because I did not want to appear biased. However, I think this is something that needs to be said. As many of you are aware we have had to cut our professors' paychecks by 20 percent. Now, I would not mind if teachers' paychecks were cut to save the jobs of other school employees, like our janitorial staff or other NEIU laborers. But this does not seem to be the case.

According to the Illinois Board of Higher Education's database our president makes nearly \$300,000 a year. We have 14 vice presidents each making over \$100,000 a year; that's

not including senior administration officers, unit directors, or other administration who all also make over or almost \$100,000. In total that's about 127 people. You do the math.

There are countless articles regarding faculty pay cuts and yet even though the administration is taking furlough days, it impacts them differently because people like our university President and the Vice Presidents are making more money than many of our teachers. If the school really is so desperate for money, why does it not turn to a larger source of income and make cuts at the top? Why not demand the administration take some of the heat?

As I stated earlier, an administration is important. I'm not saying fire them all or cut their paychecks in half. The problem is not how much money they make. I have no qualms with the administration leading a successful life. The problem is with the inequality. How can there be such a large gap in the administration and faculty salary? It is the administration's job to help support the faculty. It is the teachers who make the learning possible. Exactly what has the administration done to try and find a solution to this growing problem? Well, the most recent email from President Hahs included an attached copy of a resolution passed by the Board of Trustees. The resolution states that the Board "strongly encourages a swift and thoughtful approval of fiscal year 2016 budget." Now how's that for problem solving?

Questions or opinions?
Follow us on
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and let us know!



Public Education vs. Prisons

Pablo Medina

Which would you rather see people in: a maximum security prison or a well-furnished educational institution?

While the nine public universities of Illinois are suffering from the lack of funding from the state and are in serious danger of closing, the state's prisons are still receiving funding, according to Nonprofit Quarterly.

Rauner is continuing to state that the prison system needs reform. However, the programs that help ex-convicts transition back into a world outside of their jail cells and help keep juveniles out of the prison system are facing major challenges because of the lack of a state budget.

According to the Northwest Herald, Rauner emphasized the goal for correctional facilities to utilize effective rehabilitation, rather than simply shelter criminals.

The article quoted Rauner as saying, "This is critically important work. This is not partisan work. This is good government work, and this is human service work."

Well unfortunately, even the goals Rauner favors are in danger because everything he touches withers and dies.

WBEZ reported in December that the 2016 budget impasse would severely impact Redeploy Illinois, a program that counsels juvenile offenders of minor crimes. The program helps them get their lives back on track instead of facing jail time. Many of its centers are being forced to turn new participants down or shut centers down due to lack of state funding. According to WBEZ, the program saved the state \$30 million and kept nearly 500 kids out of jail in 2014 alone.

Yes, prison reform is critically important. So why is this program not receiving its funding?

It's pretty insulting to me that a man who aims to cut public education and leave troubled teens in the dust to suffer and face imprisonment would also believe in prison reform.

How does he think this reform happens without education and public services for those most in need?

Many students in Illinois are in financial limbo. Some institutions, like the Illinois Institute of Technology, are telling students they need to pay the school what they were supposed to receive in MAP grant funding. This is to cover for a shortfall because the state hasn't paid the schools and, without that funding, the consequences to the institutions could be severe.

I think Rauner should step down from his position of authority. He clearly has no desire to help anyone that lives in this state other than himself. Like a true businessman, students, disabled citizens, and delinquents are just numbers to him.

I strongly support reform for convicted felons, because I believe in second chances, just as I believe that education molds a person. If you can help someone realize the positive purpose they have in the society they inhabit, they can change.

The movie "Dogs on the Inside" has shown me that inside the hardened presence of inmates is a human capable of trust and love for another. That is why it frustrates me

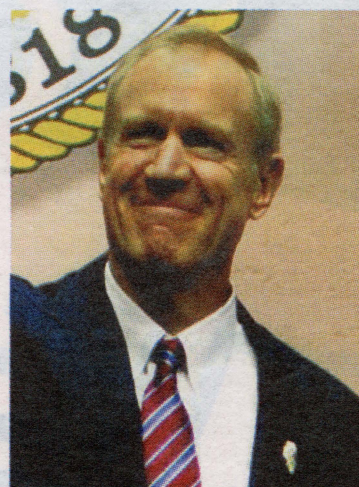


Photo by U.S. Air National Guard, Staff Sgt. Leelan Buehner, Flickr via Wikimedia Commons

Gov. Rauner continues to fail in passing an Illinois budget and citizens are suffering.

that politicians like Rauner can't get this budget passed and people are suffering.

Both public schools and the prison system need help from the government to build the next generation of safe and educated citizens. The real criminal is reclining back in his seat in Springfield, watching the state crumble from his indifference.

Ashes to Ashes: Is Catholicism Crumbling?

Mary Kroeck

I remember a time in Pilsen when there were several Catholic schools and churches, each with their own large congregations and traditions. It seems today like those traditions aren't a concern of the Archdiocese of Chicago who is looking at the financial bottom line.

Growing up, I was a parishioner of St. Paul's Catholic church. I went to grade school at St. Paul/Our Lady of Vilna and played basketball against the kids from St. Ann as well as the other elementary schools in the area. I attended Girl Scouts at St. Stephen's. I could always see the beautiful bell towers of St. Adalbert's in the near distance, a church that's been in the community for over 100 years. The neighborhood was a community of faith in more than one regard.

As a student, I didn't just go to classes Monday through Friday and that was that. It was expected that students (and parents) were involved in the church at night and on weekends and many were—as altar servers, lectors or choir members. All of that has changed. Many of the Catholic schools that existed in the area have closed in recent years, including my alma mater.

Within the next few months,

several Pilsen parishes are slated by the Archdiocese to be consolidated. Parish congregations will be joined together and churches will close. The reason—there isn't enough money to keep them open and the Archdiocese believes that in a few years there won't be enough priests to go around.

The construction so desperately needed to repair the crumbling bell towers of St. Adalbert's may never happen. Instead, they're being told to shut their doors and no one knows exactly what will happen to the church after. For all I know, it could be completely torn down.

Crux, an independent Catholic news outlet, published an article last year that stated people are turning away from Catholicism at a higher rate than any other denomination. It's really not hard for me to understand why.

While these closures are certainly hitting close to home for me, I firmly believe that people don't always leave the faith simply because their parish closes. They leave the Church because they feel left out, pushed out, and left behind.

The Church keeps losing members of the faithful, yet encourages them year after year to "come home." Come home to what? Another church where no one speaks to each other, signs of peace

are mumbled, there is no sense of community, and the traditions that made a parishioner care about the wellbeing of their church and their faith are not taken into consideration by another parish? Not to mention the fact that women are still not seen as equals.

In the Roman Catholic Church women still aren't allowed to become priests. In fact, most nuns take a vow of poverty while many priests can still own property. Where's the equality in that? If that wasn't bad enough, LGBTQ people of faith are often shunned by the Church. They aren't allowed to marry in the Church and their civil unions are not recognized by the Church. Add it all up and you have some great reasons to "come home."

The Bible teaches that churches are places of worship but truly living faith is based upon what happens outside of those designated walls. Each individual is a church of God, made in God's likeness.

While that belief is great, it doesn't stop a person from facing complications when you want to make a sacrament in a specific Roman Catholic Church and you're not a parishioner. Then you have to jump through circus hoops to express your faith—even in death. I learned recently that if you want a Catholic burial and you haven't



Photo by Mary Kroeck

Silvia Villanueva and her son, Osvaldo, joined dozens of members of St. Adalbert's in a prayer vigil and march in Pilsen on April 15 to protest the church's closing.

been an official parishioner of a Church for a while, it can be a real headache to get someone buried unless your funeral director is well connected to a church.

It's heartbreaking to see so many parishes close, especially because I truly believe it's not because people don't care about their faith. In spite of all these things, I still consider myself to be a Catholic because the faith is so ingrained in me. However, the way I practice my faith and the things I believe in don't always neatly align with the patriarchy that is Catholicism. I've had to come to my own understanding of my faith and the Church and that process has not been easy.

My mom has told me more than once that I should start my own church. Maybe I will one day. For now, I would be really happy if Catholicism woke up, changed some of its male-dominated ideology and started treating people as equals no matter what. That's how the faith grows. Maybe if those beliefs were mandated by the Church and put into practice sooner there wouldn't be a shortage of priests now and parishes would be thriving.

If the Church can't adapt to the desires of its people and recognize that some of its traditions are outdated, I'm afraid it won't just be old churches that crumble. The faith itself may perish as well.

Four Keys to Success: How to Not Hate Your Job

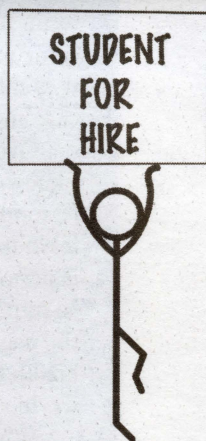
Cecilia G. Hernandez

The job market is tough, but it doesn't have to be a total drag. I was recently checking out Craigslist for any job openings a sophomore could actually get. I constantly asked myself, "What do I want in a job? What do I need from a job?" Money obviously came to mind, but after some thought, I came up with four qualities that a job must have so that I don't end up hating it as much as I hated my last job, especially over the summer.

1. Find a part-time job. If you're just working for yourself, with no other serious responsibilities

besides a few small bills, there's no need to invest so much of your time into a company that couldn't care less about you and your personal goals. Sure, full-time employees have more benefits than a part-time employee, but keep in mind they're also giving more to the company. Their life revolves around their job. Unless you intend to build a career within a company, stick to part-time. You'll be making decent bank while still having enough time for other external hobbies you might enjoy.

2. Find a job or paid internship within your interests and career path. My biggest pet peeve is wasting time and effort doing something that will



lead me to a dead end—where there's no foreseeable future. Find a job that seems fun (or at least tolerable) to

you.

3. While trying to find a job within your interests, make sure to ask your employer about their philosophy on higher education. Ask as soon as you can, even while being interviewed, if this part-time job would interfere with your summer classes or fall semester schedule (if you plan to stay at the job longer than the summer months). Yes—actually ask straight up, without hesitation—talk to them about this. You want to make it clear from the beginning that your education is a priority to you. (If you don't mind missing class for a job, that's your decision, but if you do, let them know.) Take your education

seriously. Trust me, you'll thank me later, especially if and when your boss asks you "Do you really need to go to college?" after requesting you change your availability to better suit their schedule. Ask first, just to avoid confrontations later.

4. Lastly, the location of a job can be very important. I tried finding a job that was in between NEIU and my home so I can work as much as I can, while still arriving to class on time.

For assistance with your resume, cover letter and general job hunting, visit NEIU's Career Development Center: neiu.edu/carrerdevelopment.

Graphic by pnx via Openclipart and Mary Kroeck

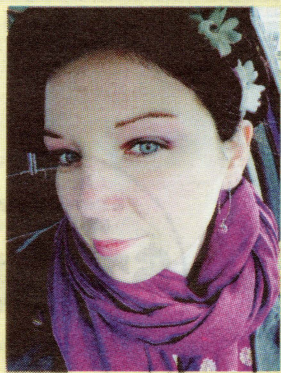
Golden Perspectives: Editors' Edition

"What did you love most about being a part of the Independent this year?"



Spencer Jones
Sports Editor

The moment that stood out for me this semester working for the Independent was going to the Associated College Press conference in California. It taught me so much and I believe I gained the trust of some of my fellow editors through that bonding moment. Side note: Pablo + a mechanical bull = must see TV!



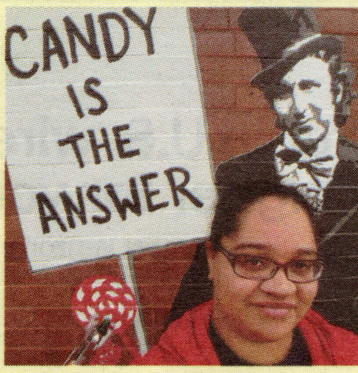
Mary Kroeck
Opinions Editor

The highlight of my time at the Independent this year was winning first place at the Illinois College Press Association for critical review. Being acknowledged by professionals in the field for work that I did for fun with super cool people was definitely the cherry on top of a very sweet time at NEIU.



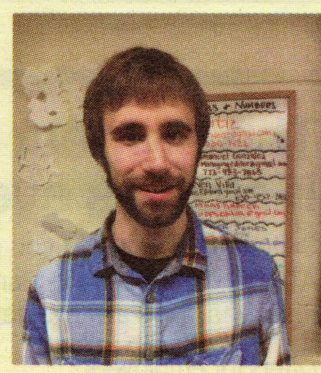
Rut Ortiz
Editor-in-Chief

During our Tuesday open meeting on Jan. 19, we were all working together. Our office was full of talented individuals and what happened next was a thing of collaborative beauty. It was the perfect combination of brainstorming and sidesplitting laughter. I'll never forget it.



Robin Bridges
Social Media Editor

Our 54th birthday party! This year the Independent turned 54 and I got to walk around with Goldie and show off our work. I love showing the paper to people, especially if they haven't seen the paper before. I'm proud of everyone who takes part in it.



Steven Villa
News Editor

I just like looking at the words. I like working with everybody at the Independent. We got a coffee machine now. You should go join the Independent. Find us in the tunnels underneath the bookstore.

Photos by Independent Editors

Bird's-eye View

An Opinions Q&A Column Exploring Curiosities

By Mary Kroeck

Q: Everyone keeps asking me what I'm going to do after graduation. The truth is I don't know. I want to be able to say something smart since I'm getting my degree. I don't know what to say though since I'm still looking for a job I'd feel really happy in and have a lot of worry about paying my student loans. Any advice?

Sincerely,
Lost for Words

Dear Lost for Words,

It's okay to not have an answer to that question.

That question can generate the same kind of feeling as having people ask you why you're single, not married yet or not doing any of the other conventional things people of a certain age tend to do. If I was honest, I could have answered those questions by saying, "It's absolutely none of your business," or "My worth is not defined by my relationship status" or "I'm not with someone because it's scientifically proven that boys mature more slowly than girls and I haven't found someone who can keep up with me yet." They probably would have looked at me like I was crazy.

To avoid confrontation, I started to go with "I'm too busy for a relationship," which wasn't a total lie, but the truth was I make time for the things I care about and for a long time dating wasn't something I cared about a whole lot.

You can spend a lot of time coming up with an answer to your query. You can think of a succinct one-liner like "I'm going to be working for (insert your dream company here)." When they press you about what you'll be doing tell them exactly what you want to be doing. Just because you don't have an offer from your dream company yet doesn't mean you won't in the future, so you're not actually lying. You could also be as funny as you want and say, "I'm going to take over the world!" a la "Pinky and the Brain." Hey, if Donald Trump can try to do it, why can't you?

Words have power. There really is something to the old mantra of fake it until you make it. If you don't know what you at least want to be doing, it makes it a whole lot harder to get there. Spend some time thinking about your real goals and what you really want post-graduation. The more you do that, the easier that answer will be.

Q: Does anyone actually read this column?

Fondly,
A Curious Editor

Dear Curious Editor,

I hope the answer is yes. Of course, I don't actually know if that is the right answer. However, for the sake of all the trees that died to make the paper this column is printed on, I would like to think the answer is yes so they didn't die in vein.

It's certainly been a challenge to write these responses week after week and I have no idea if the column will continue after I graduate this term. It's neat to think that some other student out there at NEIU has some words of wisdom they can impart to another class of students and they might be writing an advice column after I graduate. I hope that's the case and I hope they make it their own.

Over the course of the semester, I've tried to think of advice I wish I knew sooner and share it in this section. I think the most important lesson I wish I really understood sooner is this: Life is crazy, but if you learn to roll with the punches, it can be a really incredible ride. Nothing is permanent. Everything is a work in progress. Don't beat yourself up so much that you can't see past a problem. Don't get stuck focusing on the negative. There really is always some reason to be thankful you have breath in your body, to wake up in the morning, and to try to make the world a little more awesome.

Whether you've read this column before, or this is your first time reading it and you got to this sentence—thank you. I hope you've enjoyed my Bird's Eye View of things and hope it's helped you, in some small way, to fly a little higher.

Got a Question or Comment? Post it on our Facebook page!

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Graphic by Mary Kroeck

Sports

Cubs' Schwarber Out For Season

Christian Gralak

DON'T PANIC! I repeat, DON'T PANIC!
Cubs fans should know something: It's all going to be OK!

The news is a bit old now and I'm sure most fans already know the terrible turn of events that took place opening week in Arizona.

But once again, Cubs fans should know, it will be OK.

Two weeks ago, on April 7 during Major League Baseball's (MLB) opening week, the Cubs were in Arizona playing the Diamondbacks.

In the bottom of the second inning, Jean Segura blasted a ball, which wound up being an inside-the-park home run, to deep left-center field.

Kyle Schwarber and Dexter Fowler got caught in each others paths as they sprinted to grab the fly ball and harshly collided.

Schwarber was ultimately carted off the field after lying helplessly on the ground as the team's medical trainers rushed to aid him.

The Cubs made an announcement later that day that Schwarber's injury was just a sprained ankle and that his x-rays looked good.

Unfortunately, the MRI taken the next day showed that Schwarber had fully torn ligaments in his left knee (ACL and LCL). His ankle sprain was also severe. The injury requires surgery.

The team has placed Schwarber on the 60-day disabled list, but he'll likely be out for the season.

To fill Schwarber's position, the Cubs have called up infielder Munenori Kawasaki.

Javier Baez is likely to be called up from Triple-A Iowa as well, as soon as he recovers from a left-thumb bruise.

However, the Cubs have been blessed with a plethora of talent in their system, so there should be no need to worry about the

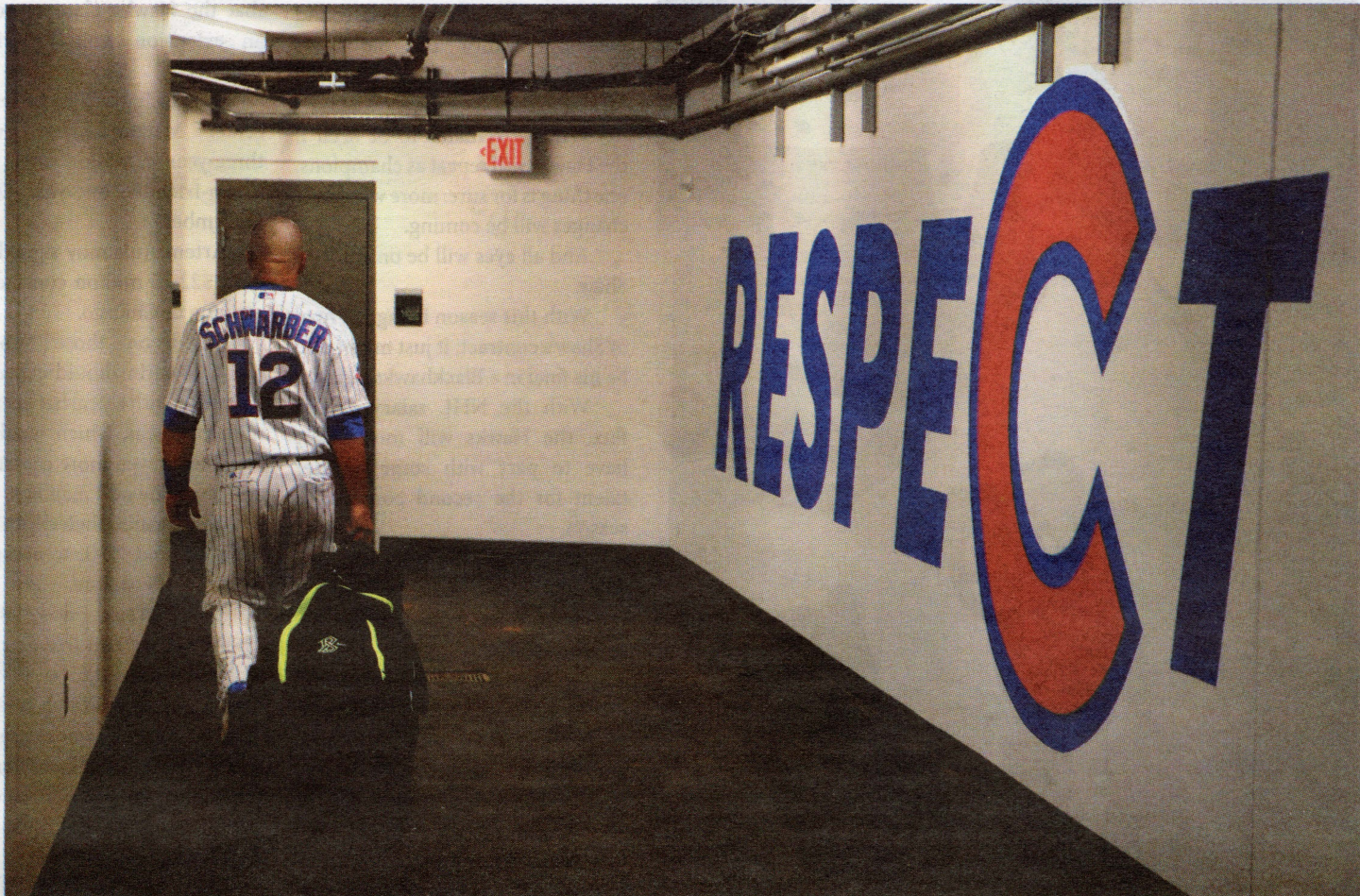


Photo by Chris Sweda of the Chicago Tribune

Kyle Schwarber is out for the season. Can the cubs recover from this set back?

loss of Schwarber just yet.

Third baseman Kris Bryant and second baseman Ben Zobrist both have the necessary experience to play in the outfield if it's needed and Tommy La Stella can easily play third and second base.

Baez, who is a natural shortstop, has even been playing some outfield and third base in Iowa, which should give Cubs' manager Joe Maddon even greater flexibility with his lineups.

Last season, Schwarber became a fan favorite because of his power.

As the fourth overall pick in the 2014 draft, he debuted with the Cubs last season and set the franchise record of five home-runs in nine postseason games, passing Aramis Ramirez and Alex Gonzalez who are tied with four.

According to The Chicago Sun-Times, Schwarber said, "I think I'm going to come back better.

"There's going to be a lot of hard work put into this rehab. I look at it as I've got a whole year to prepare for a new season. Obviously, there's going to be some bumps in the road

along the way.

"I'm going to push myself as hard as I can to be back healthy 100 percent, so wherever that timetable leaves me, I'll be ready."

Schwarber also took to Twitter to thank fans for their support:

"Thank you all for the encouragement. This is a test of character and plan to attack it head on. This team is special and fun to watch! #Cubs"

If they continue to produce runs the way they have been so far, it will feel as if the Schwarber injury never happened.

Golden Eagle 5K Puts Spring In Students' Step

Laura Rojas

Ready. Set. Click! Nowadays there seems to be another new reality TV show about competitive running and obstacle course races coming out one after another. Why run when you can watch someone else do it?

Now is the time to actually get active and try it out for yourself. NEIU's Golden Eagle 5K is coming up on May 1.

This will be the ninth annual Golden Eagle 5k race at NEIU. The race will begin at 9 a.m. and racers will have to run for 3.1 miles.

The race will consist of three loops around the school using mostly Central Park, Bryn Mawr and St. Louis.

The starting and finish line are at the PE building parking lot and the path will also cut through the school courtyard a few times.

Martha Montes, associate director of campus recreation, explained how difficult it was to get the full five kilometers for the race without actually crossing streets, due to safety reasons.

There are two divisions per women's and men's groups. Racers under the age of 40 are in one division while the other is 40 and over.

There will be a first, second and third place awarded for each division. There are no overall placements, however.



Photo by Martha Montes

The Golden Eagle 5K is for more than just the running club.

Early bird registration has already ended but there is still a chance to register prior to race day online. Race day registration is also an option, but that is cash only.

The fees from the race go towards paying off the costs of the race itself as well as the shirts and medal prizes that the racers will

receive.

Montes said the whole race is set up by student and staff volunteers. Most are from the NEIU running club which started the Golden Eagle 5k back in 2008.

An ambulance is set aside just in case of major injury. Montes immediately knocked

on wood since they have not had to use the ambulance yet.

There has generally been a 100-120 participant turn out yearly, comprised mostly of current students.

The race's sponsors are: Chicken Works, who helped with t-shirt production, American Campus Communities, and Athletico, who offer post-race stretches for racers.

Children can run as well, so long as the parent is always alongside the child. Montes said she has even seen parents jog with a stroller in this 5K..

"It's about promoting a healthy activity among our Northeastern community," said Montes. "It's a great first time race for those people who have never done a race."

She said that doing this race in a familiar and safe environment, and being given the ability to do a race for a more inexpensive price than usual may spark some people into actually doing some of those tougher races.. There are plenty of other runs to try such as Spartan races, Battle Frogs, Rugged Maniac and more.

Spring is in the air. And there is no better way to take a deep gulp of fresh air than with a light and fun run.

To register, visit neiu.edu/campusrec.

Cap Constraints May Cost Blackhawks in Offseason



Shaw may be on the way out.

Brett Starkopf

The Blackhawks are currently in the middle of their first round matchup against the St. Louis Blues but some attention should be turned to the offseason.

While it remains to be seen if the Hawks will repeat as champions, one thing is for sure: more wholesale changes will be coming.

And all eyes will be on Andrew Shaw.

With this season being the final of Shaw's contract, it just might also be his final in a Blackhawks sweater.

With the NHL salary cap in flux, the Hawks will most likely have to part with some top-tier talent for the second consecutive season.

According to TSN's Frank Seravalli, the figure will either remain at \$71.4 million or increase to \$74 million.

Rookie, Artemi Panarin, will receive \$2.55 million in bonuses for finishing in the top-10 in scoring among forwards.

The Hawks are responsible for \$2.3 million reported the Chicago Sun-Times' Mark Lazerus. Panarin, a restricted free agent after next

season, led all rookies in goals with 30, 47 assists and 77 points. Lazerus also reported in January that the Hawks plan to work out an extension with Panarin this summer.

In March, the Hawks rewarded center Marcus Kruger with a three-year extension after signing a cap-friendly, one-year deal last September.

Artem Anisimov signed a five-year, \$22.75 million contract upon arriving in Chicago.

Based on those two deals alone, Panarin should expect to be rewarded with a deal between \$4-\$5 million a year, which would leave the Hawks even more cap-strapped and Shaw the odd man out.

They can use their depth both in the AHL and NHL to compensate for Shaw's departure.

Dale Weise and Brandon Mashinter are also free agents next season and could be a cheaper option to play a limited role on the third or fourth line next season.

If Weise or Mashinter don't work out, the Hawks have Ryan Hartman and Kyle Baun in Rockford.

They have a bevy of talent

under contract in Rockford, as well as some cheaper options they acquired at the trade deadline.

Baun signed a contract extension through the 2017-2018 season in March. He brings a physicality that can be a viable bottom-six forward option. And is cheaper than Weise.

The Hawks will also have to address their needs defensively and will have limited funds to do so.

The Hawks will also have to think even further to the future.

If the Hawks do end up resigning Shaw, that will most likely mean that next season will be Teuvo Teravainen's last.

Teravainen is three years younger than Shaw, has a bigger upside in terms of offense and has also shown some promise defensively this season.

However, General Manager Stan Bowman has dealt with cap issues nearly every season since assuming duties in 2009 and has three Stanley Cup championship to show for it while vying for a fourth.

The best case scenario would be the \$74 million cap and trading Bryan Bickell's \$4 million, though both of those happening is unlikely.



The WNBA's reigning MVP, Elena Delle Donne, has her hands full after her latest statements.

Lower Rims, Lower Expectations

Spencer Jones

It seems that there is always scrutiny pointed at women's sports. This time the issue of lowering the rims in women's basketball takes center court.

Chicago Sky forward and the 2015 WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne has personally decided to make this her top priority going into the league's 20th season.

The ultimate goal for Delle Donne is to see a drastic change in the WNBA from the NBA.

"We do every single thing on the court that the men do, other than the dunking. And, obviously, there is a handful of athletes who can dunk," Delle Donne told For The Win, an online publication. "I

might even get pushback from fellow WNBA players, but I stand by it. It would bring a whole different viewership to the game and it'd be fun."

Her point that lowered rims would possibly bring more excitement to the game is accurate in some ways, but it wouldn't necessarily be a deciding factor in increased viewership for the league.

Some of her key points, which are supported by UConn women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma, are that lowering the rims from ten feet could decrease the number of missed layups and three-point shots, plus shooting percentages would go up.

Continued on page 11

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Remembering the Black Mamba

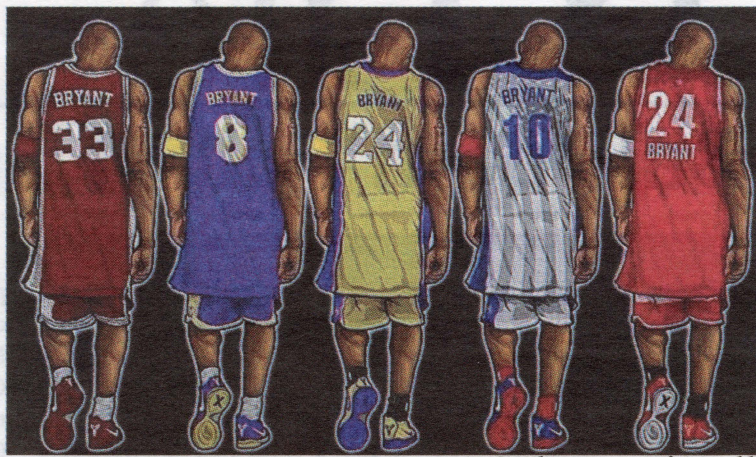
Marcus Mateo

Kobe Bryant played his final game as an NBA player on April 13, 2016. In typical Mamba fashion, he went out the same way he will always be remembered: a champion, a ruthless assassin with tenacity and ferociousness that was unrivaled.

Being a native of Southern California, I grew up watching the Lakers. You could say I was a fan from the womb. When I was a little kid, I remember countless family gatherings. The three constants I fondly recall were eating delicious food, running around with my cousins playing hide and seek, and watching the Lakers on one of those old big screen cathode ray televisions that were the size of a fridge.

As a lifelong fan of the Lakers, I grew up watching Kobe play his entire career. For 20 years Kobe Bryant has given me a plethora of great sports memories. I can't even begin to tell you how many times I've yelled and screamed, jumped around excitedly and may have even cried on occasion watching him play the game of basketball.

It's funny how someone's name can be synonymous with an action. In his case, it always has something to do with acting like you're shooting something into a target. Whether it's a basketball hoop or a trash receptacle, it makes no difference when you succeed in making the shot. Only one word describes it: Kobe!



Graphic courtesy of Artmobb

My favorite Kobe memory has to be from the 2005-2006 season. It was the last year he donned the number eight before switching to 24. That year Kobe was a monster. He scored over 40 points in nine straight games, threw down 60 in three quarters against the Mavericks, and dropped a ridiculous 81 on the Raptors. But the game I remember the most was game six against the Phoenix Suns in the postseason.

I was watching that game with my dad. It was the fourth quarter and the game was coming to a close. After almost an entire 48 minutes of blaring indistinct sounds and shouting obscenities, my dad figured it was game over. He had enough of watching the game. I think he went outside to take a walk and cool off. I, on the other hand, still believed. I still clung to the chance that a come-

from-behind win was possible, and number eight would prove it to me.

Kobe made the game-tying layup just before the end of the regulation game. Then in overtime with only 6.1 seconds left, Kobe recovered the tip-off at the half court line, ran down toward the top of the key, faded away and just buried it in the bottom of the net over two Phoenix defenders. I was yelling and bouncing around like a maniac. My dad walked in and he just watched me going crazy and looked at the television. We both start screaming.

In his final game Kobe Bryant racked up 60 points. It was a fitting end to a storied career wearing the purple and gold.

From humble beginnings as a rookie, to being vilified by all that didn't don his team's colors. Kobe Bryant left the NBA a hero. For that, I would just like to say thank you, Kobe.

Lower Rims, Expectations Cont.

"What makes fans not want to watch women's basketball is that some of the players can't shoot and they miss layups," Auriemma said in an interview with CPTV Sports via usatoday.com. "How do we help improve that? Lower the rim (from 10 feet) Let's lower the rim seven inches; let's say 7.2 inches to honor Title IX. If you lower it, the average fan likely wouldn't even notice it."

In the WNBA, there are great players, and then there are players that make you wonder how they made it into the league.

The same can be said with any sport.

Delle Donne stands firm in her argument though, and the push-back that she thought she would receive was more of an aggressive shove.

Phoenix Mercury's star player Diana Taurasi has been the most vocal against lowering the rim.

She was asked by ESPN's Kate Fagan about the subject, and she boldly stated "You might as well put us in skirts and back in the kitchen."

Taurasi has been echoed by a majority of the players in the league.

New York Liberty guard and former teammate of Elena Delle Donne, Epiphanny Prince, said in an Instagram post "As of lately there has been too many gimmicks going on over the last few years, we moved the three point line back,

made the lane bigger... I just can't believe that we are that damn boring, so why has the league lasted 20 years or better. JUST LET US PLAY! I can't remember the last time we had a skills challenge or three point shootout at the WNBA All-Star game. It's other way to bring more fans, revenue and excitement to the game, instead of lowering the basket."

Just let them play is exactly what they should do.

Women's basketball is as competitive as men's.

When a player dunks in the WNBA they are celebrated because they're now a part of history.

So far Lisa Leslie, Michelle Snow, Candace Parker and Brittney Griner have been the only players to dunk in a WNBA game.

The focus for WNBA players has never been on dunking though, as many more have shown their abilities to dunk during practice. Lowering the rims wouldn't guarantee that these numbers will change.

If the main reason for lowering the rims in the WNBA is because of missed shots, we should reevaluate the training that these players are going through. We should first look at their mechanics and work on those first before we try to change rules that affect everyone in the league.



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Arts & Life

'Die Fledermaus': A Ballroom Full of Surprises

Pablo Medina

Costume ball rivalries, two men speaking French to humorous effects, and mysterious figures create the lavish and energetic performance that is Die Fledermaus, German for "The Bat."

Composed by Johann Strauss II in 1874, NEIU Opera Director Sasha Gerritson adapted the three-act comic operetta for a four-night run at the auditorium, from April 6-9 for an English speaking audience.

With the adaptation came Gerritson's own comedic hints and developments, but it remains faithful to the composer's original story while displaying her creativity for the modern audience.

Taking place in the ballroom and jails of Victorian Vienna, mastermind Dr. Falke tells a story of a night of flirtatious escapades of mistresses and high-class men attending a costume ball.

That very night, one attendee, a married man named Gabriel von Eisenstein, is sought after by authorities for a sentence of eight days for insulting a police officer.

Through the events of the operetta were passionate moments of classic humor, true love and song professed strongly from the cast members.

Leads Jessica Fisher, Chris



The masquerade is in full effect.

Photo by Pablo Medina

Hatcher, Wellington Da Silva, Erica Sauder, and DaRell Haynes carried the plot forward with great emotion and flawless vocal performances.

One really fun joke that stuck out in my mind was seeing Haynes as Eisenstein discuss his fluency of French with Hatcher as Dr. Falke.

"Oui-oui... euh, café au lait!" Haynes states in his attempt to upstage rival Frank, (Carlos Rodan).

Maybe it's just the random nature of the joke, but I fell in love

with it as soon as I heard it.

Another fabulous performance was that of the charismatic Prince Orlovsky, played by mezzo-soprano Music Graduate, Jennifer Lennon. Every moment of dialogue was attention-grabbing and hilarious, blending well with her powerful singing. Her presence as the formal Viennese prince is notable as soon as she steps into the scene.

"When I'm onstage, I try to remain as true to the author's original intent of the character

I'm playing as possible. I also try to keep each performance fresh whether it's the first or the last, I try not to become stale. I love feeding off the energy of the audience and going on the journey with them," said Fisher.

Sauder's performance as Rosalinda balanced the housewife and her Hungarian Countess disguise.

"She's a woman in charge and she never apologizes for what she does," said Sauder.

Accompanying the vocal performances was the spirited orchestral music, conducted by Music Chair, Dr. Richard Shayne Cofer and performed by faculty and members of both the NEIU String Orchestra and Wind Ensemble.

Together, the orchestra and cast brought out the charm and energy of songs such as "Happy is He who Forgets" sung by Da Silva and Haynes, "Mein Herr Marquis/The Laughing Song" sung by Fisher, and the closing chorus song "O Fledermaus, o Fledermaus."

The visual production of "Die Fledermaus" was charming and memorable, with a classical elegant design of the sets and attractive period ballroom attire.

Shout-out to Broadway Costumes and Shapiro Production Management for creating such a wonderfully original and compelling look to accompany the plentiful talent onstage.

This adaptation of "Die Fledermaus" is one of the finest performances I have witnessed from NEIU's Department of Music, with plenty of heart put into it in every place of input imaginable.

From the cast and direction of the opera to the music and visuals, "Die Fledermaus" was a memorable production that demands attention and pulls out all stops to convey pure awesomeness.

'New Country' Brings New Life with Sweet Sass

Hailey G. Boyle

Country music's bad boy Justin Spears is getting married in the morning. But tonight, he'll kiss a man, get blackmailed, come face to face with his ex and his uncle will try to kill himself.

It's a country song come to life.

Written by Mark Roberts, creator of "Mike & Molly" and executive producer of "Two and a Half Men," "New Country" is his latest brain-child.

This play uses lessons Roberts learned from the sitcom world and applies them seamlessly to the stage.

Roberts plays Justin's backwoods Uncle Jim and proves he's more than just a writer. His deadpan delivery

steals the show and has the audience slapping their knees, but Jim turns on a dime and delivers some of the most heartfelt moments. The same man who brought a blow-up doll to his own nephew's bachelor party is minutes later holding a gun in his mouth.

Enter Sharon, portrayed by Sarah Lemp, Justin's ex. The tragic nature of the character when paired with her sardonic humor and no-nonsense attitude was a tall order, but Lemp handles it flawlessly, and she can carry tune too.

Director Ian Streicher gets an A+ for casting.

The chemistry between Roberts and Lemp is so perfect, it has you wishing for a spin-off play just about Jim and Sarah where they

ride motorcycles off into the sunset.

Matt Gall brilliantly handles the self-entitled Justin, but adds nuanced layers that almost make you feel sorry for the guy. His life is falling apart but his actions are the direct cause. Karma is a thing, Justin.

"New Country" plays through May 14, 2016 at The Den Theatre located at 1333 W. Milwaukee Avenue.

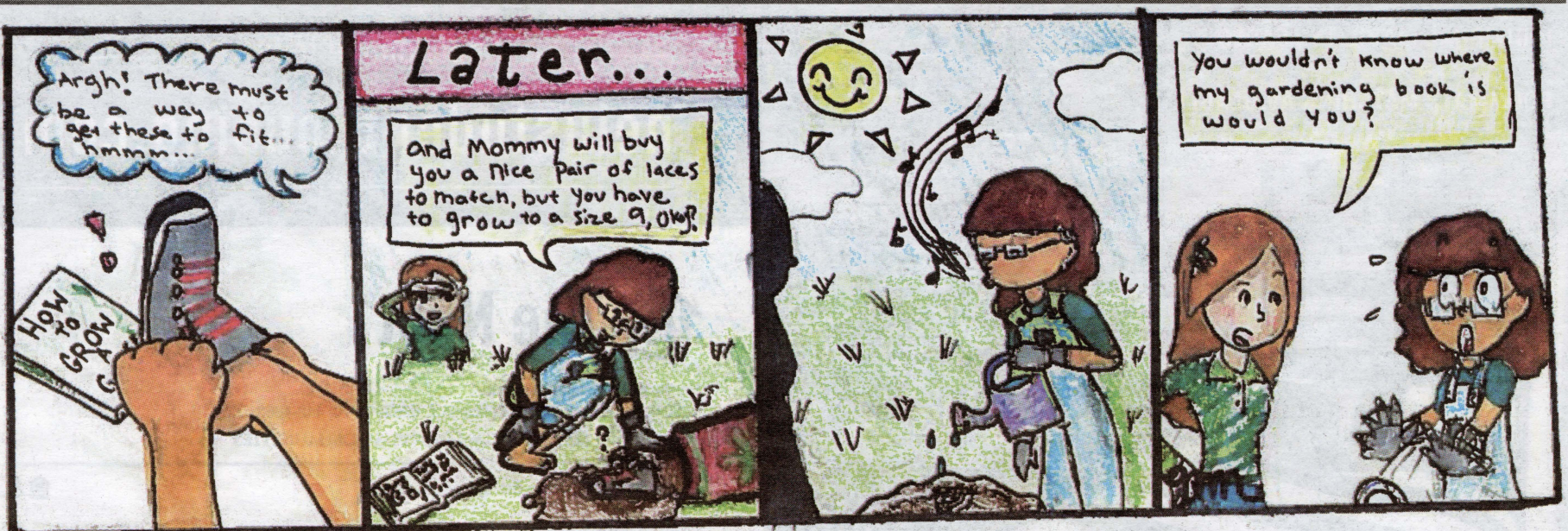
Performances run Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., with additional performances on Saturdays at 4:30 p.m. Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$45 each and may be purchased by calling the box office at 1-800-838-3006 or by visiting www.NewCountryThePlay.com.



Photo by Fair Trade Productions

COMIC'S CORNER



Seeds Corner



The Weeping Sky

The sky is crying
She weeps and moans
With her thunderous roars
Her face is cloudy
And her heart is torn
Her tears pour down on us
And we run for cover
Because
We don't want to catch her sadness
Once her wailing winds wrap around you
There is nothing more you can do
The weeping sky with her sorrows
Has gotten to you too

-Najlah Iqbal

Najlah Iqbal is currently majoring in English and Secondary Education. She has been writing ever since she could hold a pen. She has performed her poetry at various open mics, and has had her poems published in past Seeds issues. This poem—"The Weeping Sky"—was published in the Fall 2014 edition. She enjoys reading the works of Robert Frost, Mahmoud Darwish, and contemporary artists such as Kevin Coval.

About Seeds-

From poetry to prose, to sculptures and photography, Seeds hopes to provide a medium through which the members of the university community and beyond can showcase their talents in the visual and literary arts. We are the avenue to diversity at NEIU in artistry; it is embraced and encouraged.

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-Jane Goodall

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Making a Hit: Rick Grossman Discusses 'Bullets Over Broadway'

Mary Kroeck

"Bullets Over Broadway" is a musical comedy by Woody Allen about the making of a Broadway show. The Chicago premiere of the Tony nominated show begins April 19. Independent was able to talk to one of the show's stars, Rick Grossman. Grossman plays Julian Marx, the show's producer.

Independent (IN): Can you talk a little about the show as a whole?

Rick Grossman (RG): "Bullets Over Broadway" is a musical based on Woody Allen's 1994 Oscar-winning film. It is the first one of his pieces – films or stage plays that he had previously written – that has been turned into a musical. So, it was kind of a new venture for him. It follows, very closely of course, the screenplay he wrote with Douglas McGrath. It's set in the 1920s in New York and it deals with the world of theatre and how crazy things can happen when theatre needs financing and where that financing can come from. In this case Julian Marx, the role that I play, is looking to produce the play by a young author, David Shane. He has trouble getting the money for it, but he finds it in an old friend who is a New York mobster. The mobster is certainly willing to finance the production provided that he can

get a role for his girlfriend in the show. That leads to a lot of twists and turns that are hilarious and make for a lot of laughs and a lot of entertaining musical numbers throughout the evening, done by a cast of ultra-talented performers.

IN: Chicago has a lot of mob history. Even though this is set in New York, how do you think it will relate to a Chicago audience?

RG: I think of all the cities that we play throughout the country it will resonate tremendously with Chicago audiences because of the history of the mobsters in the 1920s. Really, I think people who relate at all to that era relate more to what was going on in Chicago and the most notorious mobster that was out there at the time – Al Capone, who ruled Chicago. These are the kind of characters that we see in "Bullets Over Broadway," but it's all done in a very comical tone. Although there are lots of machine guns that go off in the show and of course the costuming is very much of the 1920s, gorgeous costumes from the the multi-Tony winner William Ivey Long, it has that flavor, the speakeasy flavor, to it (from) the clubs that were prevalent in New York and, particularly, Chicago. So those people in Chicago who know of that era will certainly relate to this tremendously.

IN: Since the musical is closely

based on the film, is there anything that's really different about the stage production that might surprise an audience?

RG: In the film you see the mobsters kind of walking around and being menacing to a point. You see that in the show as well. What then becomes very surprising is that these mobsters who are carrying pistols and shooting of machine guns then break into song and dance. One of the greatest male tap numbers to be seen on the Broadway stage is incorporated into this production. It's something that's unexpected and the audience goes absolutely crazy when this happens. It's probably one of the key high points, if not the high point, of the show. It really just makes it so much fun for the audience to experience that.

IN: Is there any kind of advice that you would give to young performers or those who are just starting out in their acting career?

RG: Sure. Of course I've been there, done that. Going into this profession, not only do you have to be prepared for it in today's market as what we call a triple threat; if you want to get gainful employment you have to be proficient in acting, vocal/singing, movement/dancing. It requires a lot of discipline to do that. You have to be focused to do it. The other thing that you have to be



Photo by Matthew Murphy

Tap dancing mobsters are just one of the things that await viewers of "Bullets over Broadway."

prepared for is – I always tell this to young actors going into the business – your primary job is not going to be as a performer. Your primary job is to audition, because that's what you're going to be doing probably 90 percent of the time. That's what you have to focus on. When you get the jobs from the auditions, well, that's the gravy. But you cannot have the expectation that you're going to go into every audition or any audition and get that job. Certainly that's what your objective is, but to have it as an expectation, I find those people who go into it with that mindset don't last very long in this business because the rejection is constant. You can be auditioning three, four times a day, four or five days a week, and nothing can come of it. You just have to keep plotting away and going after it. If you have that constitution and you have that resilience and if you have the talent,

ultimately something will come your way. That's what you have to be prepared for. You have to be strong and you have to be kind of tough-skinned and not take it personally because you get rejected for many different reasons: because your hair is the wrong color, because you're too short, you're too tall, you're too thin, you're too fat, you're too young, you're too old. These factors have nothing to do with one's talent. The earlier a young actor can recognize that and deal with that, the more successful they'll be.

"Bullets Over Broadway" runs at The PrivateBank Theatre, 18 W. Monroe St., through May 1. A limited number of day-of-show student rush tickets will be available for select performances for \$25 with a valid ID. Limit two tickets per ID. Visit BroadwayInChicago.com for more information.

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An Unpopular Opinion: Defending 'Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice'

Hailey G. Boyle

Everyone told me not to see it. A friend of mine begged me and told that I was crazy to spend my money on it. Since it is currently sitting at 28 percent on Rotten Tomatoes as of April 17, 2016, "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice" must be a truly awful movie.

I disagree.

Yes. I am about to defend "Batman v. Superman."

First off, let me just say that I did not love this movie. I can see that it is flawed and that there are things wrong with it. That being said, I believe this film is getting a lot of unnecessary hate.

I keep seeing complaints online that this movie got nothing right. Nothing!? Really!? What about Ben Affleck? That's right, Affleck, the guy every nerd on the Internet raged about was absolutely amazing in his portrayal of an older, more jaded Batman who's fed up with the crime wave of Gotham and starts branding his villains with his bat logo.

I keep hearing from my friends, "that's not Batman!"

Clearly, you haven't read a single comic in your life, because Batman is pretty dark. He's the DARK Knight! This is a man who saw his parents get murdered right in front of him as a little boy, so he dresses

up like a giant bat and beats people up. You could say he has a few psychological issues he needs to work through.

As crazy as the branding is, I do love it. It's a logical next step in Batman's progression and it's something we have never seen with an on-screen Batman before. Team Batfleck all the way!

Jeremy Irons' Alfred was a total badass and even made a joke about the Christian Bale voice from the Nolan films.

Wonder Woman is more of a glorified extra, but her character works. I loved everything about her. Gal Gadot lit up as the Amazon princess and I can't wait for her solo movie. It's perfect casting on DC's part.

Here's where the movie falls apart:

Superman: The superhero just took a back seat in his own movie. His name is in the title and he just blended in the background?. I'm not discounting Henry Cavill, he was quite likeable, but his storyline was just boring and didn't really offer much to the plot.

This is a sequel to "Man of Steel" and he did nothing.

Lex Luthor: Although I commend Jesse Eisenberg for committing to his role, which made him different from all the other on-screen Luthors; I hated his character. . His weird, Mark-Zuckerberg-in-desperate-



Photo by Warner Bros.

The DC Trinity comes to screen for the first time.

need-of-Ritalin impression was really uncomfortable to watch. He stands out for all the wrong reasons.

The plot also doesn't make much sense. The reasons for Batman and Superman to fight are clearly established on Batman's side, but it's barely hinted on Superman's and it falls flat. If you look at director Zack Snyder's previous work, you'll see a similar pattern..

"300," "Watchmen," "Sucker Punch," are all light on plot, but visually beautiful films with well-

choreographed action.

The Batman warehouse fight scene is one of the best fight scenes put into film—ever.

It looked like it came straight out of the Batman Arkham games. It was visceral; it was gritty; it was brutal and had just the right amount of humor to keep it from getting too dark. It puts all the fight scenes in the Nolan trilogy to shame.

You could take a still-frame shot from any one of Snyder's films and hang it up on a wall. His films are

works of art. But when it comes to the story, his films fail and "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice" is the latest victim of that.

This film had so much potential, but it lacks focus and tries to do too many things at once. If only they tried to make a coherent plot, this movie could have been much stronger.

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Shirley's 'New Taboo': A Book Review

William Castro

"New Taboos" is a small collection of writings by John Shirley. It consists of a short story, two essays and an interview with the author.

Shirley is mostly known for writing cyberpunk science fiction, which deals with futuristic concepts and how society interacts with them. This society is a dystopian future. He is a forerunner of the genre with his classic novel "City Come A-Walkin'", published in 1980.

The short story "State of Imprisonment," plays on classic cyberpunk themes.

Set in the near future, a privately owned Arizona prison has grown so big, it fills out the majority of the state. This prison has connections ranging from congressman to media figures, who want to keep profiting from it.

Power outages are a regular occurrence and facilities are run down, due to advanced security systems.

Two prisoners are bracing to escape. They've heard rumors that the prison doesn't actually stretch throughout the state, and it's just a myth to scare the prisoners. It's a plot that works in setting the general atmosphere, but not the most original.

It might be that I'm just too sensitive, but the dialogue has some really unnecessary profanity. Shirley really wanted us to know that these were hardcore prisoners, but I felt

like he was trying for an image a bit too hard. Let the words come out naturally, Shirley.

Meanwhile, a journalist is writing an article about the prison, trying to uncover all the rumors she's heard. She's in debt and it's her last ditch effort, plus she knows someone that "owes" her this story, but something happens and she's now a prisoner.

This story presents some nefarious acts, including sex slaves, organ donors and a sassy transgender prisoner.

"How long have I been here?"

"Bout two days, girlfriend. I'm Hortense."

What a stereotypical cliché.

That might be my main gripe with "Imprisonment." It would have succeeded as an '80s science fiction movie, but it doesn't work today. Shirley's commentary on privately owned prisons is fine, but the execution is lackluster.

It's hard to see past this possibly interesting world because of the actual story. He attempts to provoke the reader with a real world issue, and that's great. Authors should be thought provoking.

But, Shirley messes it up with weak dialogue, stereotypical characters, and some boring rehashed plots.

Maybe if it were a full novel, it could have gained momentum and given the reader enough time to warm up to Shirley's prose. Overall, it was an entertaining, though mindless read.

Next is his essay, titled "New Taboo." The gist of it is: what if there was a universal taboo against big corporations and their immoral ways?

The answer: We would be better off because they would stop doing irresponsible things. I agree with the sentiment, but it's nothing new.

It reiterates the idea that really big companies get away with things they shouldn't and we shouldn't like that.

His second essay is much more grounded.

Titled "Why We Need Forty Years of Hell," in which he talks about the only way humanity will stop destroying Earth is by facing harsh consequences. The severe repercussions of climate change, pollution, fracking, etc. will force humanity into shape.

Believing we will "achieve a collective progressive consciousness as a result of the revelatory shocks." It's blunt and provides an actual, original, thought.

Last is the interview with Shirley, which should be read first.

It's a good introduction to who he is and what he writes about. His answers are detailed and informative. He has had a long and interesting career from writing screen plays to writing songs for the Blue Oyster Cult.

You learn more personal details and learn about the hustles he had to go through. It allows you to get used to his style.

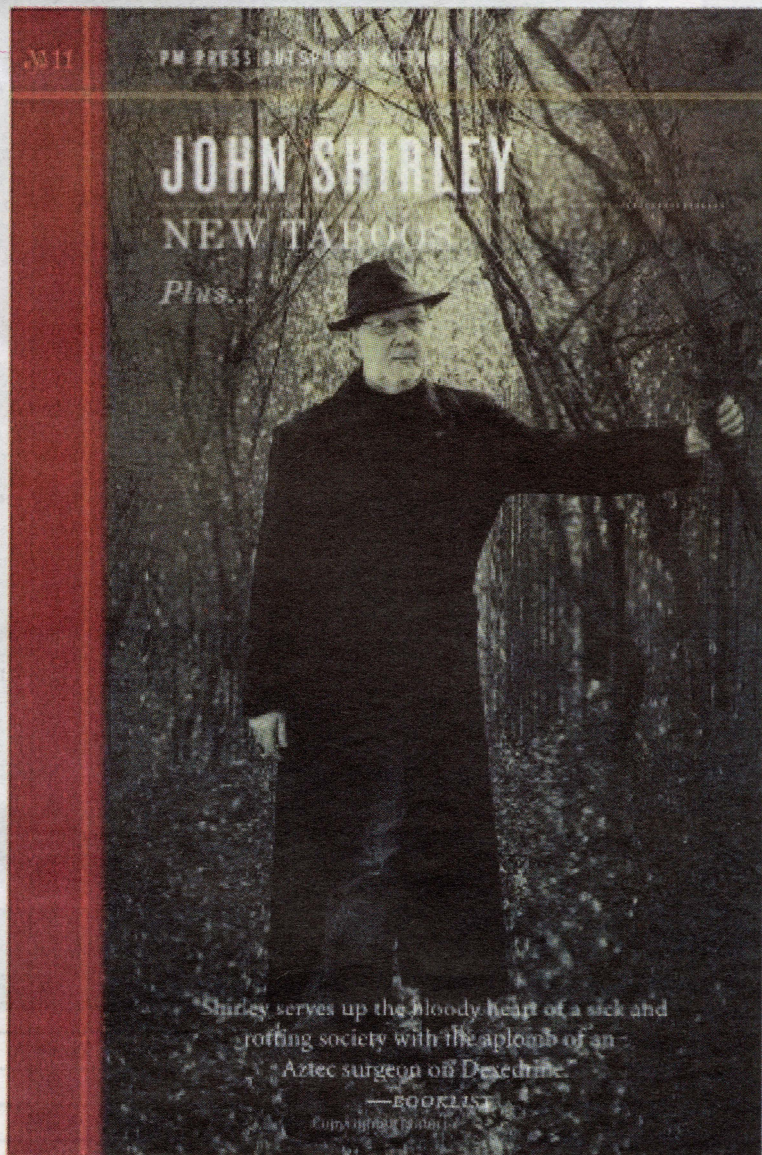


Photo by PM Press

"New Taboos" mixes social commentary with sci-fi outlaw adventure.

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