

NORTHERN
eclecta

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Northern Eclecta

Department of English

Minard Hall 320

North Dakota State University

Fargo, North Dakota 58105-5075

NDSU.WriteStuff@ndsu.edu

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contributors

to the reader

North Dakota State University is teeming with talent. The desire to draw out this oft-concealed creativity was what spurred the making of this journal last year. This year, I'm excited to present the second volume of NDSU's literary journal Northern Eclecta, founded with the aim of representing the talents of our university's undergraduates.

With Volume 1 under our belt, this year's staff was fortunate to start the semester with experience and with a system that had the kinks largely worked out by our publishing pioneers. Still, round two presented its own challenges. Due to fantastic publicity and a now-recognizable name, Northern Eclecta garnered over twice as many submissions as last year. Despite the unexpected workload, our content editors were up to the task of evaluating and selecting the best.

Throughout the process, the editors encountered a fantastic array of genres and works. The variety truly matched the meaning behind our title, which embodies both our geographical region and the eclectic nature of the artistic work we seek. Unfortunately, limited space necessitated extended and sometimes difficult discussions concerning which works to include. Still, students from all academic and personal backgrounds are producing work of an impressive caliber, and most importantly, they are willing to put it out there for others to enjoy.

We've made some changes this time around, such as including short epigraphs in the section introductions. We thought quotations by famous authors and artists served as succinct representations of our visions for each genre. The nonfiction section also features something a little more on the

scholarly side: an article that draws from the research, interviews, and personal experience of three of our staff members. In it, we attempt to flesh out the status of literacy in Fargo/Moorhead and raise awareness of the ongoing efforts to enhance it.

A final major change was to extend our call for submissions in order to give a voice to another demographic: high schoolers in the region. We opened up a contest to 12 local high schools and chose our favorite submission in each genre. Our goal was to offer these students a legitimate opportunity to make their efforts public.

Though we made some changes, we did decide to stick with what worked. That included a consistent design concept, incorporating a moth that flits through the journal's pages. The *Bucculatrix eclecta* moth shares its genus name with our journal, and we've now adopted the moth image as a logo of sorts.

Putting together Northern Eclecta has afforded the members of the Literary Publications Class (ENGL 213, 313, and 413) not just the opportunity to appreciate the imaginative creations of their peers, but also excellent practical experience in publishing. Groups came together to accomplish editing, marketing, and design tasks and each class member had one (or two, or three) important roles to fill.

Enjoy the work of skilled artists featured in the following pages, artists of both words and of images.

ABIGAIL R. GAUGERT



Rooter's Bar

ELIZABETH TAYLOR

fiction

"For sale: baby shoes, never used."

A short story by ERNEST HEMINGWAY

from the fiction editors

This year's submissions proved a unique challenge to the editors. We received everything from prose poetry and flash fiction to stylistic pieces and stories that never end - though we didn't get anything quite as short as Hemingway's six word story featured on the other page. With more than double the submissions than received for Volume I, we had a hard time narrowing down our choices to the three that appear in print.

"The Darkness Isn't Empty" was one of our few science fiction submissions—and one that we are delighted to see published, being fans of the genre. It seems difficult to stay away from the cliché, but "The Darkness Isn't Empty" is a unique experience and one we're sure you'll enjoy.

"Caught in Cupped Hands: Four Stories" is another remarkable piece. The story is comprised of four short flash fiction pieces that are complete when standing alone, but together they make one whole, thematically linked piece that will leave readers waiting for the next hundred word installment.

"Dallinger-Michaelson of 14th and Old Main" was one of our longest submissions and also one of our favorites. It tells the story of a downtown building that just decides it wants to leave one day and experience something new. But at the end you simply have to wonder why it didn't leave sooner.

If next year sees an increase in quantity and quality of submissions similar to this past year's growth, we may simply have to start flipping coins to see what gets published, or press our Editor in Chief for more space. May I have some more, sir?

KIMBERLY BALEGA, CAITLIN FOX, AND RYAN KAHLY

Dallinger-Michaelson of 14th and Old Main

Josh Longanecker

It was an early October morning, the kind where men in business suits sit outside of their coffee shops, drinking hot lattes and talking, laughing, even shouting to men on other cell phones, sipping other coffees in other coffee shops around the metropolitan Brookston area. Fall was coming early this year, it seemed, and every tree was giving up its leaves in surrender to the coming season. Cars drifted by white collared men and women on their way to another day at work in the city but in no particular hurry to get there.

10:00 A.M. inside the Dallinger-Michaelson building was the same it had been on any other morning for the past five years. Twelve stories of brick and mortar housed a news office and a law firm: an orchestra of typing keyboards, shuffling printers, telephones, faxes, and water-cooler conversations. A janitor waded his way through the sea of desks and people, absent mindedly emptying the garbage cans and recycling bins. A few individuals were already slumped over in their cubicles, glancing at the clock to check how much time was left for the day.

A man sat at a park bench outside, reading the morning's paper. There was never much new to read, it was the same local stories as it always was—the city up in arms over new taxing bills, heavy traffic still on the south part of the bridge, Girl Scouts putting on a bake sale downtown. For a big city, life went on alright, changing little from day to day; for an old man reading a newspaper on a park bench, that was just fine.

He turned to sports, and opened his mouth wide to yawn.

A breeze from nowhere in particular rustled the papers off office desks. A dozen office clerks bent over to retrieve them. A boss listlessly filled out crosswords, and his comb-over shifted from one side to the other from the current of air.

The man outside wasn't impressed with the sports news that week. He crossed his legs, and opened to the classifieds instead. A bird flew between buildings and perched on a well-manicured elm tree. Though it was well into the morning, he hadn't slept well the night before and yawned once more.

More papers flew in a gust from the air conditioners, scattering to the floor. The boss' pens rolled off his desk, and as he stooped over to pick it up he glanced across at the rising horizon past the windows; the whole office had begun sliding towards the wall.

A city street full of rolling cars, walking people, scurrying birds, and other animals all came to a halt. Every eye was focused on one old man on a bench reading his newspaper, and at the 12 story building now leaning over him. The man yawned again. The building yawned too. Feeling the air rushing past, the man lowered his newspaper and found himself eye-to-window with the Dallinger-Michaelson building of 14th Street and Old Main. The man screamed. The building snapped back to an upright position in alarm.

People picked themselves up from behind and beneath their desks. A mountain of papers, computers, and miscellaneous office supplies obscured the view of panic outside. They were murmuring – was there an explosion? An earthquake? Was everyone alright?

The screaming man outside was joined by the screams of the dozen sophisticated fire alarms inside, ushering out the employees of the Dallinger-Michaelson building to join the stunned crowd below. In a sheer bout of disbelief, no person stirred from their spot to run away from the animated building before them. A worn, embittered secretary smugly drank her coffee. Drowned out by the fire alarms, even the old man on the park bench's screams faded down to a whimper and then to nothing at all. For a minute, everything held its position like

a kite in the air, kept aloft by faint breaths of puzzlement, fearfully waiting for reality to pull it hastily down.

The building twisted first to the right, and then to the left. Slowly, it drank in the scene around it through a dozen stories of eyes. Carefully bending over again, it leaned in closer to inspect the people standing before it. Stricken colorless with fear, no one had the courage to move, and all were too bewildered to call for help. What does one say, in the face of a mountain of bricks and mortar come to life? A blue car, blithely oblivious to all, zipped and pattered its way through the crowd of statues.

Hard rock blared out through the cracked windows. The driver, in his late twenties, didn't have much patience for the waves of people in the road. Don't they have jobs or something to be doing? He took another draft from his cigarette and flicked the ashes out the window. The engine roared throatily as he accelerated past the last clump of pedestrians. Fiddling with his lighter, he didn't care to notice the profile of a building following after from the horizon.

As traffic was light on this side of the bridge, few people were witnesses now to see whether the Dallinger-Michaelson building was wading through the road after the blue car, or gliding across. Either way, it was purposefully and gracefully making its way towards the bridge. The blue car had begun to cross, and it was already becoming apparent that the architects of ages past never intended their buildings to be narrow enough to fit. Disappointed, it slowed to a halt and watched as the car drove on. Out the corner of a window it could see into the bay, and the school of fish that was swimming near the surface. The building shuffled down to the bank, and slid part of a corner into the water. The first few floors disappeared into the bay, and as the water sloshed around through the lobby and floated office supplies out the windows, it continued on.

The man in the blue car flicked his cigarette outside. Halfway across the bridge, he started fumbling with the radio and happened to look out the window. The wind had calmed down, and everything seemed to glide with a breeze of its own. A bird lazily arced across the bridge, and perched easily on

the roof of the building in the water. It landed on the normal building in the middle of a bay, the one leaning over the bridge towards him. The one that was swimming next to him.

Sparks flared as the blue car grinded to a halt against the side of the bridge. The building stopped, and leaned in to nudge the car. Once, twice, three times the building prodded at the car, but the only thing that happened would be the thing inside would make noises even louder than before.

Puzzled, the building stopped; but inside the car, the noises continued. The building realized it was being watched. It twisted left and right, gazing at all the other things fearfully returning its stare. The man inside was shielding his head from the fractured windshield but was too afraid to try and kick open the door. Assessing the situation, the building was ashamed. Returning to its normal shape, it picked up speed, rushing further and further away from the bridge. Papers and stationary fluttered out the windows, and miles away, the building coasted again onto the shore. Its bottom floors were still soaked with water, and, flooded with a sense of remorse, it sulked through the streets.

For half an hour or more the building slipped unnoticed through the hedges of its peers, moving aimlessly with no destination in particular. Away from the hustle and bustle of business as usual, here in the old downtown it could find peace and quiet; no more small pink things to hurt, and none of them to yell. All the noises were getting on its nerves, anyway. Standing by a park and an empty lot, it looked out over the horizon and warmed itself in the sun.

Hours passed. A car pulled up next to the far end of the park, and a little girl ran out clasping a red rubber ball. The building was frustrated. More things, more noises, more things to hurt. Quietly and subtly, it edged away from the empty lot and turned to go back into the city... but this time there was a noise it hadn't heard before. As the girl chased after her ball, she looked back at her mother and laughed. Neither mother nor daughter saw the building go, and neither of them noticed it now peeking over the edge of a shorter building to watch them.

For a day at the park, it was a perfect sunny afternoon. The girl ran the dimensions of the park, chasing after the ball which she had kicked so quickly away moments before. As mother and building watched from their viewpoints, one relaxed in the crisp fall air while the other furiously studied. The girl kicked the ball. The building looked around from where it was standing, and saw a red car parked on the side of the street. She kicked the ball again. The building nudged the car, and it bounced and twirled away. Chasing it down and gingerly pushing it back to where it was parked, the building returned to watch the girl.

The girl laughed, but try as it could, the building couldn't make that sound. Straining all of the water through its metal veins, a single, jovial whistle and puff of steam escaped the pipes on the roof. Drooping slightly in disappointment, it watched the girl catch up to the ball one last time before carrying it back to the car. The mother reached out her arms, and, putting the ball inside, she kneeled down and hugged her daughter. The building paused, unsure of what to think. The bird from the bay, finding the building again, descended to perch on the corner of its roof. And still they embraced, the daughter smiling past the mother's shoulder, the mother's hand caressing her daughter's hair.

The building looked up at the bird, and the bird looked down at the building. The bird left again in search of a roost more stationary in nature, and the building searched for a building to hug. Pressing itself firmly against a neighbor, the building pushed and tried desperately but received no response. Among a field of concrete and iron frames, it alone moved. The car drove away and the building was alone again. Shades fell down in disappointment in every window, and with another sigh of steam the Dallinger-Michaelson building of 14th Street and Old Main stood in an empty lot to sleep.

The sun set and it was well into the evening before the press came. A misplaced building is harder to find than the people thought, watching the search from every TV in every home and bar. An army of cameramen and news helicopters, reporters with microphones and others with notepads cau-

tiously crept up into the park next to where the building stood.

Whispering, the sound of a thousand lenses clicked and whirred; electronic eyes opened and closed in brilliant succession, and miles of magnetic tape were spent trying to capture the image of the hulking monster where he slept. The reporters were almost silent at first, each soliloquizing the scene behind them to the masses watching from home. However, in the dense crowd, elbows rubbed one another and voices rose in volume to be heard over the words of other mouths, developing the trickle of sound into a river of noise.

Somewhere, a cameraman was swept up in a passion of artistic vision and set his camera to flash. The crowd of people, the trees, and the walls of the Dallinger-Michaelson building were bathed in a moment of light. The shade from a single window drew and the light behind it flicked on. The reporters stopped speaking. The camera flashed again. So did another, and another, and another. The silence was replaced by a chorus of yelling voices, each reporter sensationalizing more than the last. In a single motion, the building opened every window, turned on every light, and stood taller and more irate than it had ever stood before.

As the people recoiled in fear, helicopters flew in for closer shots, capturing the now infamous living building from every angle. Families watched with mouths open from the safety of their homes, some with hands on their phones to dial relatives or the military or the old lady who lived next door. Spotlights and a minefield of flashing lights illuminated the building, and in the span of a heartbeat, it decided to run. So far as any witnesses would attest, it definitely ran.

People were plowed left and right by twelve stories of upset and frightened concrete. The moon lazily peaked over the horizon and propped itself on the edge of the thick, hazy clouds, painting the scene in a sick yellow glaze. Where the building went, the people followed. It tore through the trees, and the helicopters gave chase. If it crossed highways and ducked below bridges, another camera would be waiting around the corner. The park and empty lot were gone now, a city's worth of streets away. The corner of 14th Street and Old

Main was a place in the past, and the building knew it would never be going back.

Instinctively, it dodged and weaved past city blocks until the buildings became shorter, the streets became wider, and the stoplights were steadily being replaced with stop signs. The helicopters fell behind, their blades' thunder no longer echoing into the night. Past the edge of the city, the sounds grew quieter and no one was awake to see the building sliding by. In the lack of confusion the building found itself no longer running, instead it was slowly gliding to a crawl.

The sounds out here were different. For the first time it could remember, there were no cars driving by. The wind had died down, and in its place a few remaining crickets sang out from the bushes in well-manicured back yards. The only light pouring over the street was from the scattered street lights, spaced too far apart to touch. The building looked out, and up, and for the first time it was dark enough to see stars in the sky.

For a time unmeasured between those early hours of the morning, it drank in the suburban world that lay ahead. A gust of wind flicked a few leaves through the air, playfully urging the building on. The city of Brookston glowed near the edge of the horizon now, and even here there was enough light to blot out parts of the sky. Turning towards the city one last time, the building took in the toothed skyline. Things were too busy there for one particular building; maybe someday in the future, others might follow him out this way. It turned around and never looked back.

The sun rose on the Dallinger-Michaelson building, now hours away from Brookston and concrete and any other trace of where it had stood the morning before. Morning dew gleamed off a dozen rows of windowsills, and as it worked its way deeper and deeper into the great expanse of forest, the trees swayed gently against it in a gesture of welcome.

It was an early October morning, usually the kind where men in business suits sit outside of their coffee shops, shouting on other cell phones to men in other coffee shops, but this morning was different. Men put away their cell phones, and turned to the people sitting next to them. The events of the

yesterday were not the status quo, and everyone had their part to say. Cars drove a little slower that morning. The white collared men and women called in sick, and spent time with their families instead.

The city didn't know what to do with the empty lot where the Dallinger-Michaelson building had previously stood. A memorial didn't quite feel right, and no one wanted to see another metal tower take its place (just in case one day it decided to come back). The businesses which were inside had relocated, and the employees came in to work maybe just a little more motivated than before.

Fact turned to rumor, and rumor to legend. Though the fanfare is gone, and the corner of 14th Street and Old Main still remains unoccupied, the building will never be forgotten. Deep in the woods, it now chases after birds, spends afternoons warming in the sun, and waits hours at night just to see the sun rise.

If you find it for yourself, you may swear you even hear it laugh.

Caught in Cupped Hands: Four Stories

DAMON BARTA

A Visit

It had been about two years since he'd surfaced. I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever see him again. I shouldn't have wondered. He always came around. And here he was.

Still, I don't think I can be blamed for wondering. His lifestyle invited disappearance: he spent his time on mountain tops, at sea, in canyons. Places where a misstep could make a body irretrievable.

When he walked in I could tell that something had changed. His face was as placid and inscrutable as always and he walked with the same ambling gait with which he had always walked. His movements and mannerisms had always been as relaxed and fluid as mine are nervous and abrupt, and they still were. Yet, something had changed.

Whenever we got together, it was rehash, reiteration, restatement—a two- or three-day drunken paraphrase. It was again. The places he had been were always there in the background, though little was said about them. Sure, the Peruvian Andes were beautiful, but remember when we left a flaming bag of shit on the principal's doorstep?

Not that I didn't ask about them. I was hungry for news of Madrid, Prague, the Utah backcountry, Hawaii, Greenland, Mexico, Alaska. He obliged but with a casual, almost bored air: polar bears seen from a helicopter, monsoons endured inside small shacks, a near-fatal rockslide, rum-soaked games of

poker in the dingy hold of a ship. All of these things accorded the verbal weight of a trip to Wal-Mart or a baseball game he had seen on television.

We would play a lot of video games, sit in unremarkable bars drinking domestic tap beer, maybe play some basketball. He would ask me if I ever talked to Scott these days and I would say no.

Something was different this time. He mentioned more than once that a tiger shark swam right past him on a recent snorkeling trip. He recalled a scorpion bite that had occurred three years earlier. He vividly described a volcano eruption he had watched from an unsafe distance.

"What's with you?" I asked him.

"I bought a house."

A Three Hour Drive

It is a three-hour drive, but not an unpleasant one for either of them.

Much of the highway is within sight of the Columbia River and snakes along beside it. The river, too, runs north and though it appears that they are traveling together, the river is always beside him, ahead of him, behind him all at once.

There is a smelting factory just north of the border. He has worked in this factory for twenty-five years, twenty-seven if you count the strikes. The factory processes iron ore and produces some byproducts that can be sold: lead, zinc, copper, iron; and some that cannot: full stomachs, black lungs. No one would ever work here unless they had to.

One of Solomon's twins is married now. When she visits, she usually brings her husband. This time she comes ahead of him. The nearest major airport is three hours away and David offers to rent a car and drive up. Solomon says no and arranges to pick him up. Susan asks to ride along. Solomon says no and leaves to pick him up.

They are talking. Solomon tries to say intelligent things. David has been to college. Solomon describes a sculpture he

saw in a book. He knows what it is called but he can't think of the name. "It has the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and some wings."

"A chimera."

"That's it."

They are quiet for some time after. David is simply enjoying the view, but Solomon is thinking about the past, the future, and the present all at once. He thinks David does not want to talk to him.

After a few minutes, they go through a town and pass at least a dozen people holding signs. "It's a, a ..." David falters, not recalling the word.

"Picket line," says Solomon. They are quiet for some time after, both watching the river, enjoying the view.

Kansas City Christ

So this guy walks up to me outside of Oklahoma Joe's: camouflage jacket, tattered backpack, ten years' worth of beard. He either needs a smoke or he is a Jesus freak.

This happens every time I cross Border Street. Kansas is like another universe. Not that Missouri has much in the way of universe, but at least you can walk two steps without somebody asking you about Jesus. You can walk three. The problem is, there just isn't anywhere to get good barbecue there.

Oklahoma Joe's bills itself as the best BBQ in Kansas City, and it is—you just have to retry Scopes to get to it. I would go on Sunday, while everyone is at church, but it isn't open. Besides, I don't think this guy bothers with church—he probably has a telephone in that backpack with a direct line to Christ. He doesn't have the eyes of a fanatic, though. For a second I think he might just be after a smoke.

Judge not, and all that. I try to understand but it's hard not to judge, particularly when I have no fear of being judged. I think people believe in those kinds of things because they think their lives will be empty without them. They clearly haven't tried the barbecue at Joe's.

I don't have any idea what is in the sauce, but when it's slathered on some brisket it's nothing short of an epiphany. So he gets right up next to me and he gives me his pitch:

"Morning, Brother. Do you know Christ?"

"I sure do."

"Great. Glad to hear it. Got a smoke?"

I give him one. Then I buy him some brisket. I don't know what they put in the sauce, but as I watch it staining his beard I can see that I was wrong about him—he has the eyes of a fanatic after all.

Smoke

Every party was almost god. He sat among the rubble of the latest near-miss.

The bodies looked like corpses, strewn across the room, postured at unusual angles, in pickled repose. The empty ashtray had been forestalled by any bottle or can within arm's reach. He rested his cigarette on its edge but quickly withdrew it, the starkness of one thing in its place too much to bear. One of the dead betrayed himself by snoring.

A cloud of stale smoke hung in the air, refused to leave. The apartment wasn't big enough for the two of them. He was uncomfortable in the presence of something so tangible. He headed for the door, pausing to pluck an unsmoked cigarette from a limp, unmoving hand that only an hour ago had been gesticulating wildly, illustrating complexities, indicating possibilities, snatching certain things out of the air, letting others go.

Only an hour ago.

They put up false fronts to knock down, breathed life into straw men to interrogate, turned blood and dirt into a cloud. Robbed of viscosity and surface tension, these things were imbibed and inhaled, then detoxified and exhaled until they disappeared into the ether where they were nebulous, inscrutable, and could therefore be called mysterious.

An hour later the universe was still unremarkable, still as

bald as it ever was. He looked long before leaving.

Returned to the corporeal, they now lay in corners: pools of profundity, piles of platitudes, half-finished philosophies, spilled secrets now spoiled, gangrenous dreams growing stale, crumbs of youth all over the carpet.

He would not go back inside.

He saw all these things, but there was still one cigarette between him and the end. He could watch the smoke, call it mysterious. He smoked it slowly, finished it quickly, threw the butt on top of the others on the wet ground and surrendered.

The Darkness Isn't Empty

C. GRAVES

He was swimming through memories that lasted a lifetime but were gone and forgotten in an instant. Never questioning why, he simply accepted the moment. Memories of his past, long put to rest, surged to be relived again.

His soul was in turmoil as he watched his younger brother, scared but always trusting him, follow him up the tree. He tried to stop himself from going up, but his hands kept pulling and his legs kept pushing. He wanted to stop, and for a moment his struggles seemed to work, but it was only to turn his head and urge his brother on. The rough, coarse bark under his hands, the sap sticking his fingers together, the warm summer air of their world all told him this was real; it was happening. He knew what he was going to do.

It was only a joke, I was only trying to scare him, he pleaded to a god he had stopped believing in as a child. Please, let this stop, I can't do this again, please!

At the top of the tall tree, he pointed to their house. His brother peered at it intently, trying to see what was so interesting. Unable to control his body, he reached out and pushed his brother forward, laughing even before his brother's arms flailed in the air.

The startled movements of the younger boy shifted his weight on his precarious perch. He disappeared in a flash.

His brother's scream on the way to the ground rang through his ears for an eternity.

Heart pounding in his chest, he saw his brother's twisted

body fifty feet below, unmoving and lifeless on the ground.

"...a...ee..." his brother's corpse said, clear despite the distance. Hope kindled in his chest. This didn't happen before, he thought incredulously.

"...s...i...rs..."

He was breathing hard from the shock of his brother falling and the possibility that he might now live, but he tried to call out to him. No sound came from his lips.

"Bluest...is Re..."

The young, twisted dead boy on the ground moved his head to look up at his brother with dark, lifeless eyes.

"I repeat, are there any sur... .. erd? This is Repath ... shortwave emer..."

Leaning forward more, the unbelievable reality of the situation holding him captive, he started to slip from the branch. His stomach turned inside him like it was an engine trying to come to life. He tried to lean back onto the branch, but he was too slow.

The speed at which he started falling overwhelmed any other sense. He screamed, a last, dying sound in the world. Looking back up he saw his younger brother, alive, healthy and wearing a cruel smile.

* * *

"Bluestar, this is Repath. Are there any survivors aboard? Anyone at all, damnit?"

His screaming was still echoing somewhere when he woke up. He tried to open his eyes, a horrible fear still lingering, but wasn't sure if he had succeeded because everything was completely black. Breathing was difficult.

Milliseconds of blue-white light that can only come from electricity filled his life with painful light. A helpless sensation of vertigo overcame him as he saw how far from the floor he was. Minimal G. Pitch blackness. What...what the hell could have happened?

"Bluestar, Repath, can anyone respond?" The voice was growing impatient, maybe worried.

He tried to move his head in the direction of the noise but his body didn't want to respond. It felt as if he had done a swan dive off a building. A fleeting picture of his brother came to mind. Laughing, he pushed it aside with a strength that surprised him. His head moved.

"Bluestar, Repath. We are using shortwave emergency channel. Respond."

On his first trip out of orbit, his instructor pointed to the solid-looking radio strapped near the door and told him that if they ever had to use that device, then they were really in trouble. He laughed to himself and silently agreed with his long-ago training.

At least I know where to go, he thought, toward the hatch, wherever the hell that is. Moving his arms and legs got a little easier as his head cleared. It was an odd feeling, as if each part of his body was made of lead. He was sweating with effort as he made sure his body still worked.

"Bluestar, Repath. Respond please." Whoever was on the other side of the radio was determined to get a response—a determination for which he felt terribly grateful.

As he began to maneuver, slowly, he could make out the glowing strip around the radio on the wall. It didn't give off any real light, it was just a dull glowing frame in the middle of nothing. He reached out to propel himself towards it.

Pushing off from something that felt like the fabric of a chair, his weightless body started barely moving forward as the chair moved in the other direction. He put his forearms in front of his head, shielding from anything that might be in his path. A dull crash sounded behind him as the chair reached the limits of the room.

"Bluestar, Repath. We are attempting to locate you. Please respond on the shortwave."

The sound was getting closer. It was almost deafening to his fragile head. The framed glowing strip—tape really—was becoming more distinct. He reached out, trying to grab something so that he could change his direction and align himself better with the radio's position. His hand brushed against something that wasn't completely solid. He clawed at it, got a

grip, and pulled his body closer so he could push away from it more easily.

His fingers slowly sunk into something that felt like a vegetable gone to rot. Realizing what he was holding onto, he stifled his reaction—to tense up in disgust and get away from it—and focused on aiming toward the radio. Pushing off, his mind unconsciously categorized the thump of a dead, limp body colliding with a solid console behind him.

“Bluestar, Repath. Are there any survivors? Please respond, over.”

He crashed into the wall holding the radio. A tremendous dull pain raced down from his shoulders to his legs. Wincing with his jaw clamped together, he tried to stop the rest of his body’s continued momentum and keep to the wall.

He reached out to the radio and fumbled with the pressure strap holding it in place. Finally rewarded for his efforts, he fingered the transmission key.

His voice startled him. I must be in worse shape than I supposed, he thought. “I’m...I...”

It took a second to fall into old habit. He began again, slow and determined, “Repath, Bluestar. We’re...in pretty bad shape over here.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, Bluestar, who’s speaking?” The voice was suddenly anxious. He winced and turned the volume down to a manageable level.

Who’s speaking? It was a good question, one that took longer than he felt comfortable to come up with an answer to. “Lieutenant Maekel!”

“Are there any other survivors, Lieutenant?”

“Not sure, I ... I can’t see a thing really.” He thought about the body he had pushed away from earlier. “No. No one’s alive on the flight deck.”

“Can you access a terminal? Bring the computer online? We need to try to interface with it to...to locate you.”

“Everything’s out. It’s completely dark. I can’t see a thing.” His voice didn’t seem to carry any further than the radio. The darkness seemed immune to his voice.

Maekel waited, weightless, his body barely touching the

wall, cradling the radio with one hand, clutching the grip handle on the hatch with his other. After a few minutes of complete silence, the only sound he could hear in the lightless tomb was his heartbeat.

Without warning, the voice cut through his thoughts.

"Lieutenant, we need you to make your way to the generator room. Follow the red arrows if there is no light. This needs to be done a-sap."

He stared at the radio, confused. Why the generator room, he wondered. He tried to determine possibilities. Unfortunately, his lack of engineering knowledge brought him up short.

"...erator room, this is an order...ajor Chenton. Do you copy?"

His had been trained to insure that everyone was broadcasting legally and that any unknown transmissions were recorded and analyzed. He didn't even have access to the generator room and no reason to ever get access to it. Maybe if the power were as completely out as it was now, then it would be easier to get in. Or, if this Major Chenton really wanted in, he could probably find a way. Maekal had heard of his determination before.

Every conclusion he reached told him that there was no point in going to the generator. Besides, wandering around in pitch blackness with dead and injured people wasn't all that great of a prospect...

"Roger that. Heading to the generator room," he added with a bit of doubt. The last probably got lost in transmission, though. Emergency shortwaves were a technology from hundreds of years ago, but he had to admit, they were reliable when needed.

He glanced through the hallway toward the red arrow. He was amazed at how much darker it was, At first, he had thought the flight deck was in complete darkness, but in comparison with the hallway he could now see shapes moving around aimlessly – shapes he tried not to think about. If they were insured, then they would all be revived anyway and enjoy their time off getting used to a new body.

Hooking the radio to his belt, Lieutenant Maekel launched himself from the doorway into what he now considered absolute darkness. The red arrow grew larger in his weightless flight.

Twice during his journey through what seemed to be utter darkness, he heard voices. Each time he heard them, he stopped and yelled out—but every time he yelled out, he got no reply. Encouraged that there might be other survivors, he checked every open door.

At the twelfth red arrow, he turned a corner and saw that the room ahead had some sort of light coming from it. Excited, he pushed himself towards it.

Everything in the room was shaded red. Across the room he saw tables with small boxes secured to them. A chair, slowly turning in the air, startled him as it passed near his face. Cards, game pieces, and other things he couldn't identify in the low light littered the air.

He scanned the room, detached, for any sign of someone living. One person's forehead was perfectly flat, like someone landed a ship on it. Another body had been ripped apart, only his torso visible. Whatever had hit the ship had done so when no one was expecting it.

In space, a ship moves with incredible speed, and everything and everyone inside the ship moves at that same speed. However, if the ship stops suddenly, the things and people inside it keep moving—until they hit the edge of the ship or something else inside it. These guys had hit the walls of the ship with incredible force. Or maybe the edge of a table in one case.

Strangely detached from the gruesome scene in front of him, Maekel looked around for the source of the light. Attached to the wall on his right, one of the emergency lights had survived the impact. The lens was covered in something red, blood he assumed, which made everything in the room appear red with shadows.

Standing in the hall looking in was easy. He had seen death many times. Everyone in the military had. Going into the room was another matter. He swallowed the trepidation

building inside him, took a deep breath, and launched himself toward the light.

Game pieces floating in the room bounced off him. Papers in his path clung to his arms before he shook them off. What he hadn't seen from the doorway was the blood in the air, spheres of all sizes hovering in the space between the floor and the roof.

Floating toward the light, he tried desperately to change his path...but it was for naught. He tried to move the blood with his hands...but that just made it worse. One large sphere would break into smaller ones, each looking as if it would burst from any random motion as it tried to retain a spherical shape. When the blood hit him, it was strangely cold and thick. It clung to him like oil.

The blood startled him—he just wasn't ready for it. Panic started to creep up on him. He clawed at his face, but the sickly, cold blood desperately hung on. He was no longer concerned with the light, the fast approaching wall, or being rescued.

The growing intensity of the light stopped his momentary madness and helped him focus on his objective. He cushioned his landing on the wall and tried to regain his breathing. His heart was hammering in his chest and his bloody hands were shaking. At least now he had something to take his mind off his surroundings.

The emergency lights were circular, compact, and built to withstand substantial impact. The bulbs were filled with gas and ran off an internal battery. He tried to wipe off the blood on the lens but it had dried. He unlatched the light and tried to decide his best path for getting back to the hallway.

With the light in his hand, the darkness of the hallway suddenly seemed forbidding. How easy it would be for him to just quit...

A voice somewhere in the ship made him jump, his reflexes pushing him away from the wall a little.

"Hello?" His voice cracked like a guitar string breaking.

"HELLO?" He yelled out louder this time. In the red room, with dead, misshapen bodies floating around, the sound

of his voice scared him. His heart began racing again.

"Hello?" He couldn't think of anything else to say, his mind wasn't working like it should, but at least the voices stopped.

Scared, wishing that this wasn't happening, he tried closing his eyes, but that didn't help. He knew where he was and the only way to get out was to make it to the goddamn generator room. Why couldn't the power be on? Why couldn't they track his ship on radar? Why couldn't someone else be alive? Why did there have to be fucking blood on him?

Self pity wasn't going to help him. He learned that a long time ago. After his brother had died, his mother had eventually left him. Growing up alone meant depending on himself and self pity was something he couldn't afford if he wanted to make something of his life—at least that's what one of his counselors said.

With a little more composure he pushed himself off the ceiling back toward the wall. Then he then crouched, aimed, and pushed off the wall with his legs toward the hallway.

This time the trip seemed to take much longer. He had pushed off the wall harder than he should have, but the door to the hallway seemed an infinite distance away.

In his path, a mutilated torso was slowly turning, blood orbiting it like some fucked-up moving piece of art. He couldn't help himself—he pointed the light toward the torso. Slick intestines snaked out slowly. They looked alive.

Knotting up his gut, he forced his eyes from the torso and said a short prayer to a god he had stopped believing in long ago that he might get past the body without a collision. Terrifying images of tangling with the torso ran through his mind.

The hallway door was so much closer now—and the blood and debris took a backseat in his mind. The corpses he was leaving behind he would see again one day...if they were revived. Calmness returned with each inch he made toward the door.

With his left hand outstretched he caught the edge of the door. As he shifted his momentum to bring his body through the door, his pant leg caught on something. Turning his head and bringing the light to bear, he saw a fist holding onto his

pants. He screamed.

The sound coming from him wasn't his own...it was unrecognizable. Somewhere in the back of his mind he was worried about the noise he was making, but that was only a fleeting thought. One of the dead had grabbed him.

Shaking his body, twisting in the air, and kicking with his legs, he did everything humanly possible to get free. The hand held tight.

"Hel..." the corpse said.

His twisting and turning slowed down. The sound came through to him. Would a corpse talk? Maybe. He stopped his panic and shined the light more carefully. The fist had an arm. He followed the arm down to a body. The body had a face.

"Oh God, man, one second," he said a little shakily. His training quickly took over. He let go of the light and tried to help the man on the floor.

"Are you okay, man? Jesus you scared me!" The realization that he wasn't the only living person aboard flooded him with selfish relief.

"God it...it hurts...I'm...stuck..." the voice was soft, clumsy.

"I'll get you out but first, are you okay to move?"

"I think so, I just got banged up pretty good. I..."

"Yeah?"

"I think I just woke up. I thought I was in hell, man."

"Hey, you probably would have been better off sleeping, even with nightmares. Here, let me get you the hell out of this room, at least."

Maekel grabbed the man's shirt and, with his legs now under him, pushed off the floor toward the hall. He pulled the injured man out with him effortlessly.

"I'm Lieutenant Maekel. Repath is out there trying to find us right now. They need us to get to the generator room for some reason. I'm headed there now."

Maekel waited for a response.

"You still with me, buddy?" He tried to say cheerfully.

"Hey!" He slapped the guy's face lightly, a friendly wakeup. For the first time he noticed how cold and stiff the guy was.

When he still didn't get a response, he reached out for the

light floating in the air and pointed it at the man. He saw that the chest was caved in. This guy had been dead for awhile.

"But..."

He couldn't take his eyes off the body.

"But who was..."

Something was definitely wrong. He was covered in blood, cradling a corpse in his arms, and was hearing voices.

The radio came to life. "...ogress ...aekel?"

The dead man's eyes were wide open, a stupid grin splayed across his face as if he were laughing at some unknown joke. Maybe it was a grimace? Maybe...it really didn't matter.

"Maekel, do you...Your progress?"

"I'm uh..." He didn't know what to say. "I'm talking to dead people" somehow didn't seem to be the right answer.

"Please repeat, you broke up."

"I'm not uh...not there yet." He didn't take his eyes off the body in his arm.

"We're short on time. You need to get to the generator a-sap, Lieutenant."

"Sure thing, boss."

Lethargically, he looked around for the red arrow. It wasn't really glowing anymore, but he could make it out. Looking down at the lifeless body one last time, he pushed it away and tried to shake the feeling that the filmy, dead eyes were following him.

The generator room came to him in a blur. He wasn't sure how long he had been following the hallway toward it but the entire time he kept picturing the stupid corpse, checking behind, expecting to see it following him. It wasn't.

The bodies he passed showed the same death-by-collision as the others had. It didn't bother him much—as long as they didn't ask him questions.

"Repath, Maekal. I'm here if you still need me." His voice sounded hollow even to him.

"Roger that. Can you see anything?"

"Yeah, I can see."

"Near the containment area is a panel, X-29. It should be to the right of the door. You need to unlatch it."

He shined the light toward the door. Sure enough, a metal gray panel with white lettering showed itself to be X-29. Unlatching it was easy; all the panels had pressure latches on board.

"Repath, I have the panel off."

"Do you see the two valves? You need to open them."

He stopped his hands from blindly doing what they were told. "Won't that pressurize the generator room?"

It took a minute for the voice on the other side of the radio to respond. "Yes."

"...Isn't that..."

A new voice came through from the other side. He wondered what had happened to the other one.

"Lieutenant Maekal, this is Major Chenton. We need you to pressurize the room. With no gravity, any reaction will still be contained inside the shielding, but it will be enough for us to find you. Do you understand?"

Something was wrong. The haze he had been in since the red room lifted from him like a sun burning through fog.

"Major, I'm just a comm officer, but I know that if I pressurize that room—even if it doesn't completely react and melt down the ship—if you can pick up the radiation on your sensors, I'm a dead man." He waited a response dubiously. Something was definitely wrong.

"Lieutenant, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but as you can guess we were attacked. Right now, we have less than a minute before we can no longer fight back. A carrier is moving past your position right now, and we need to turn your ship quite literally into a bomb. Do you understand this? We have four birds left and they are bringing their carrier to orbit position."

The silence hung in the air like a patient friend. He was going to die. Sure, he would be revived, but willingly dying, especially for the first time, was hard. What if he couldn't be revived?

"Maekel, we don't have much time, it's now or..." He reached down and turned the radio off.

A million things went through his mind as he stared at the

valves. One question stood out above the rest: Will I still be me? It wasn't something he ever considered before. Now that the moment of his first death was on him, it terrified him.

He reached out and, with some effort at keeping his hands from shaking, turned both of the valves to open. After a moment a comfortable warmth crawled through his body. He turned the radio back on.

"I wish my brother had been insured when he died," he said to no one in particular.

The response was a horrible, crushing sound that assaulted his ears. Before he could react, the far wall rushed at him with amazing speed.



Bowl

JOSHUA ELKE

poetry

Poetry is thoughts that breathe,
and words that burn.

THOMAS GRAY

from the poetry editor

Selecting the poems to include in this edition of Northern Eclecta was a challenge. Seventy-eight poems were submitted and the eleven that you see here are the result of many hours of reading and discussing. We worked to select poems that used language to effectively create an image that was relevant to our audience at NDSU. We also wanted to share poems that demonstrated the variety of subjects and themes that are important to the community.

We worked to include poems that address diverse themes from the struggle for communication to remembering the past. There are poems that reflect both the inspiration and intelligence of nature. Our poetry ranges in tone from light and playful to serious and contemplative. We hope you enjoy the variety and appreciate the talent of the NDSU community.

TISH JACOBSEN

Indite

Thoughts released from the bondage of your mind,
unchained from the confines of your soul,
for a moment they are free.

Your writing flows like a surging waterfall
tumbling over the edge of a cliff,
swiftly rushing towards the earth below.

Words drop from your lips to the page.
Forced from the safety of your inner chambers,
they are thrust into a world of uncertainty.

Your breathing quickens as they hesitantly
plunge into the unknown
like a miner entering the interior of a dark cavern.

Your pulse quickens with passion,
as your thoughts mark the virgin paper
with trembling care and terrified excitement,
like a man exploring his new bride for the first time.

You are hesitant to let others read what you have created
for like a baby teetering forward
with his first steps, you are fearful
of where and how your words may fall.

Will your brainchild be dashed to pieces?
Your work torn apart and left to bleed on the editor's desk?

It is impossible to be certain of the future,
to have confidence in the unforeseen is folly.

But do not fear the ending, for you create it.
Release your words and watch with pride
the ripples they create.

KATIE OLSON

God's Fish Bowl

Raindrops start slow...one after another,
A tsunami washes over the land,
Time moves an hourglass' telling sand.

Under the cruel ocean grey no evening--
Mannequins communicating mouthless,
Fish nibble on faces, Fool and duchess.

In the dark ocean sound does not move far--
Who needs a face full of color and light,
Awareness is but an immoral blight.

Talk to me face to face...your eyes in mine,
I must know you are truly animate,
Swimming for the surface of intimate.

S. K. KRINKE

below the hill

five windows arranged in an arc
purple curtains splashed on yellow walls
a light breeze shifts them, brushes against your leg

it taunts you, beckons you out to play
the cool green grass waits, no thistles seen from here
"bare feet welcome," it says

the hill slopes, trees gather close
green darkens, gives way to wooded valley
the shaded brush and bracken call, waiting

from your windows you survey
city and wooded ravine, smog and fog
the one is your day, the other, night

dusk falls, you're free to roam
no watchful eyes to withhold, walls to restrain you
the night has come, the forest is yours

night creatures scatter, footfalls too loud
twigs crunch and break, grasses bend and fall
you come to the bottom, creek flowing quietly

hours pass, quiet contemplation, reverie
sleep never comes, only rain
the dark falls silent, birds begin to sing

you can taste the dew upon the leaves
the rush of morning's light
falls upon the trees, wakes the bugs, mice, squirrels

time to go, up to the house on the hill
the wide spaced room in clashing colors
is calling you back to its dust and stillness

CAITLIN FOX

In Remembrance

A long hallway

Bulb swinging loosely from the wire dripping out of the ceiling

"Ching ching" the pull chain swings

Lack of interest

A low frequency electric hum

Paint chips around the radiator speak of decades of indecision

White, blue, cream, brown, and white again

Only the tiles where the floor meets the wall speak of the former glory

Beneath the layers of dust and forgotten ambitions

JENNA BARENTHSEN

The Scent of Life

In a desert, there's a flower.
Despite the burning sunlight, always standing straight,
Smiling at the sky, never losing,
She knows how to take life.
Bending forwards, backwards,
Swaying left and right from the merciless raging wind,
She tolerates and adapts.
But never dies or is pulled out.
She knows how to accept life.

Throwing yourself
Into the vividness of life,
Turning your face to the frenzied fear and
Facing with joy and happiness.
Feed yourself
With the nourishment of experience.
Every feeling for every moment.

We all have a flower inside.
And wind carries this scent.

HYEKUNG PARK

I Hope You Understand

We were happy

I want to think we were happy

The future, miniscule portions of the shared history

The attic, the basement, second story

A house; our home

Drippy cold water, always cold

Windows in the shower

Looking out over the ruined urban landscape

Slanted ceilings three feet above our heads

Beautiful parks with hiking trails and clear running streams

Pristine look of the lake in the middle of the night

Glamorous people through clouded eyes

And you were never there—always alone

Alone with the crazies, the crackheads, the whores

I will destroy this place

That I worked for, wanted, invested in

Smashing Breaking Ripping Bashing

My hands will blister and bleed from the effort expended

Bruises form but no one notices

We will see it burn to its crooked foundation

Always slanting to the right

It's too bad you had to see it go down from inside
But how could I destroy this place without you?
I hope you understand

SUZANNE DEGRUGILLIER

Defining a Black Bird

A grackle sits atop a wire,
scrutinizing with an eye like an old garbage barge.
Swallowing the earth into a foul, black, old-world gaze.

The filth of grime and feather is unkind beauty,
to this bird for poets and madmen...
A cold muse,
in the troubled minds of guilty men.

Laughing at the ignorance of art and pen.

Laughing dry without a smile,
that a black bird is just a black bird...
Not a dark angel of cold moon nights,
or a romanced reaper of the lost.

Because, a grackle will sit atop a wire,
and freeze in its stupidity in winter.

KIMBERLY BALEGA

Time to Part

Every breath I wasted,
Every thought, every word.
Let the cleansing hasten,
These feelings so absurd.
How I regret the hours lost,
The very death of time.
Your heart, I hope, burns for loss,
As fierce and hot does mine.
How you possessed my very heart,
Like some spirit draining life.
So in these words, I hope to part,
Giving end this clenching strife.

CADE KRUGER

To Marie

You grew so slow when I was home
and I thought you wouldn't change,
then I was gone for awhile,
quickly a queen you became.
Once I saw your sparkly eyes flashing with wit,
now your eyes seem deep,
joking and laughing still,
but wondering, questioning too.
Mystery cloaks what is ordained for you,
you'll walk into the unknown,
Joy fills my heart as I wait,
wait to see to what you'll lay claim.

MATTHEW KRAEMER

Paste

I brush away the plaque of the day,
Brush it hard and long.
I cannot let it stay a day;
I need it gone right now.
If left to sit a little bit
Deteriorate, I will.
I spit the grit, it cannot fit,
Rinse it all away.
Fresh and new, ready to chew,
Another day's dirt awaits.

TIFFANY KIMBALL

On Rebuilding

Broken, scattered; the driftwood and soiled rags
Of a once-whole sailing vessel lay upon the fractured shore.
A memoir of yesteryear; a discovery for tomorrow,
An existential pardon of self-reflection turned sour.

Consequence results in action.
Action results in well-formulated plans.
No sleep for the weary,
And no work for the rested.

A scribble upon the notebook of her life;
What is done, is done.

A glimpse of some eternity, vanished
In the cacophony of the mind's eye;

A story told and retold for the generations.
A tombstone for the desolate miser
And an unmarked grave for the dearly departed.
Seeing was believing.

Across the coast, expansion and restoration begin.
A shoreline blaze consumes the wreckage, and
Slowly, dismally, a new storm wavers on the edge of the horizon.
This one will not succeed
in destruction.

JAIME LEA JENSEN



Vik, Iceland

CLAYTON KNUDSON

nonfiction

Insist on yourself, never imitate....

every great man is unique.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

from the nonfiction editor

The quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson chosen to open the non-fiction section for this year's edition of Northern Eclecta is a great representation of work that was submitted. From the submissions, the three articles that were chosen for the journal were each unique and truthful representations of the authors that wrote them. While each author presents themselves individualistically, I feel that all students at North Dakota State University can relate to all of the different experiences they share.

"Pomp and Happenstance" is a beautiful account of a high school girl watching a graduation that should be her own. The author, Leah Elliott Hauge, is incredibly honest and vulnerable as she describes the complicated feelings that come with finding yourself, feeling alone, and then receiving love from an unlikely source.

"This One Goes Out to Kenmore" is an upbeat, fun account a girl's relationship to food. Leah Marie Hana Wolter uses humor and unique style in her writing of disappointments and successes in relationships, education, and competitions all by the way of food.

"Confessions of a Polish "Terrorist"" is an explanation of a campus event that most students at NDSU can remember. Stan Kwiecien explains the events of the day from his point of view, never taking himself too seriously, and offering some laughs upon the way.

CARLY BOETTCHER

Pomp and Happenstance

LEAH ELLIOTT HAUGE

I'm walking to my high school's commencement exercises. My family isn't coming because I'm not participating, and why would rational individuals subject themselves to a commencement ceremony unless obligated to? I'm not sure why I'm even going. I guess for some reason I want to see all these people one last time. That--and I'd told Mr. Larson I'd sing with the choir.

Graduates pass me in cars with their families, all wearing their caps and gowns. Every commencement ceremony I've gone to before has made me envision my own graduation. I go to this one knowing that this is supposed to be it, but it's not. My graduation won't ever come with "Pomp and Circumstance" and a cap and gown. It will come after I complete the summer school course of the computer class that I failed because I didn't turn in enough of the assigned work.

I arrive at the Marriott Center on Brigham Young University's campus, descend the endless flight of stairs to the floor and take my place next to the juniors in the choir. I listen to their chit-chat:

"Can you believe how fast this year has gone by?"

"Won't it be weird next year without all the seniors?"

"You know what's scary? Next year that's gonna be us."

"Oh my gosh! That's so sad. I don't wanna leave high school!"

They go on, making plans for the summer and next year,

discussing the injustice that only seniors can go to the all-night party that the school sponsors every year to keep kids from drinking on graduation night. I sit silently in my isolated world. I know I'm not one of them.

I look through the audience to see who I know. I spot Mrs. Koffard, the dance teacher whose class I failed because I only showed up during the first two weeks. I see Mrs. Clifford, my Spanish teacher. Hers was the only class I liked going to this term. I remember when she taught us the preterite verb conjugations to the tune of "The Mexican Hat Dance." Some of the other students thought she was goofy and eccentric. She is— that's why I like her. She's taking next year off from teaching because she's expecting her first baby in October. I went to see her earlier today. We had our first English conversation while she cleaned out her room. Somehow it came up that I didn't have a yearbook. Mrs. Clifford was a bit taken aback to hear this. Immediately she offered to buy one for me. I accepted and thanked her profusely as she signed it.

I'm remembering the D minus Mr. Brower gave me in drama. I know it's more than I earned. After I figured out that I didn't need his class to graduate, I quit caring or trying, just like I quit caring in computers. But I need that credit in computers, so now I'll have to go to school during my vacation. I'm more upset about that than I am about not being able to participate in commencement.

The audience rises in rippling waves as the members of the class of 1998 file in and take their places. They all look the same in their caps and gowns: like huge, royal blue ants, hundreds of them. Those caps are pretty funny-looking, unless that's just some sour grapes talking in the back of my mind.

Everyone remains standing while Senior Class Vice President Tabitha leads the Pledge of Allegiance. Tabitha is the embodiment of the high school world that I'm not a part of. She has money and looks and boys trailing after her like tin cans on the back of a honeymoon car. All year I've watched her in her pristine world of primping and prom and friends and football games. She seems to find satisfaction in these things. I can't understand why. The frivolity of it all makes me crazy

and I've wanted out for months. Commencement is the final fiery hoop I have to jump through before I can leave.

Now the orchestra has to play a piece. As if inflicting "Pomp and Circumstance" on us wasn't enough! This stupid program is already going to be too long. I feel a blister forming on my left heel because I walked a mile and a half in my Sunday shoes. I wish I were home soaking in the tub and listening to Sarah McLachlan. The orchestra's song ends and the school principal, Mr. Merrill, begins to drone. I tune him out. He's not talking to me anyway. I'm not a graduate.

I look through the program. How many more speakers are after Mr. Merrill? Two...and then the choir's song... then one more speaker... and then the graduates have to walk through. I heave an audible sigh. I look at my classmates in their caps and gowns. They're all hanging on Mr. Merrill's every word. Even the juniors are listening. The audience is in darkness so I can't people-watch anymore. I try to escape into my own thoughts but Mr. Merrill's voice is penetrating. He goes through the usual commencement ceremony clichés and I forgive him for it, until he utters the most unmitigated travesty I've ever heard in my life: "As you go out to make your way in this world, I want you to take this as your creed: 'I am a nacho, and the world is my dip.'" Everyone else laughs hysterically. I look at my watch for the millionth time.

The valedictorian and salutatorian give their speeches and now we get to sing. I watch Mr. Larson's hands closely, trying to make every note perfect. Our song ends and I sit down with a tinge of sadness. High school choir is officially over now, and I don't know when I'll be singing again.

Somebody from the school board says her piece and the presentation of the graduates begins. Who are these people? I went to school with them and never met them. As I watch the parade of unfamiliar faces, I feel more like an alien than ever. The cheers of complete strangers going out to other complete strangers are the final testimony that I never belonged here.

Finally it's over. Everyone rises and the Marriott Center floor is suddenly flooded with people. I want to leave as quickly as possible, but I'm drowning in a sea of weeping rela-

tives and bobbing blue, square caps. I try to swim toward the tunnel that leads outside. Suddenly, someone is touching my arm and I turn to see who it is.

"Congratulations, sweetheart!" Mrs. Clifford gives me a big hug, squishing me against her pregnant belly. "You're all through. Now you can call me Michele." She's treating me like I'm wearing a cap and gown and just walked through with all the graduates. I don't know what to say. Why am I getting choked up? Her pretty, green eyes and Mexican face look concerned. "How are you doing, hon?"

"I'm alright," I answer weakly.

"Are you going to the senior all-night party?" she asks, pulling me close. Of course I'm not. I don't have the thirty-eight dollars for that or anyone to hang out with even if I did.

"No," I say in that same small voice.

"Do you wanna go?" she asks, still holding my face close to hers.

I think about it. What would it be like to actually belong and participate in something to do with high school for once? "Kind of," I answer.

"You're going!" she says. And with that she takes my hand and begins pulling me through the crowd.

Now the tears that have been brimming in my eyes spill down my face. She sees them and pulls me back into another hug. "Thank you," I manage to get out of my tightening throat.

She can't possibly fathom how much this means to me. I always participated and excelled in her class and she didn't know me in any other setting. We only spoke Spanish in the classroom, so the deepest conversation we ever had was about the color of my carpet. She has no knowledge of my depressive episodes or anxiety attacks that began in third grade and have increased exponentially throughout high school. She doesn't know that I've never felt like I belonged anywhere in my entire life; my peers have never had any use for me. But now my funny, beautiful, free-spirited Spanish teacher is showing me such compassion and acceptance. Why is she doing this for me?

"I love you, Leah," she says in my ear, and then pulls away.

A man approaches us. "This is my husband Chad," says Mrs. Clifford. "Chad, this is Leah, the girl I was telling you about. She was my best student this year."

"Hello, Leah," Chad greets me heartily. "How are you?"

I reach out to shake his hand. "I'm fine," I say, realizing that must sound like a lie, given the snot and tears running down my face.

"Annette," Mrs. Clifford calls out. One of the assistant principals comes over to us. "Annette, this is Leah. She wants to go to the party."

"Alrighty," Annette says, smiling. "We'll take care of her."

I look at Mrs. Clifford in disbelief. She sees the uncertainty on my face and tries to reassure me. "Have fun," she says. "That's all I ask."

"Okay," I reply. Annette takes me to a phone so I can let my parents know that I'll be home late. My dad answers, hears my still-shaky voice, and asks what's wrong.

I feel my throat tightening and new tears coming to my eyes. "Everything's fine," I tell him. "Do you know what Mrs. Clifford did for me?"

This One Goes Out to Kenmore

LEAH MARIE HANA WOLTER

Apparently a dog is a man's best friend, understandably so. I know many men who are quite dog-like, so this makes sense.

However, diamonds, how are diamonds a girl's best friend? When "dog's best friend" dumps me or stands me up for a date, diamonds don't call and make sure I am okay. When I fail a test, I can't go running to diamonds and expect comfort or a listening ear. After a haircut, when I leave the salon and I'm crying because I have a mullet, and I asked for a trim, I can't cry on a diamond's shoulders.

When I am stressed or I have problems, there is only one place for me to go: the fridge. Food is my best friend. The Kenmore and I go way back. Probably further than I can even remember. And I do have a feeling that we will be together a long time, possibly forever.

My earliest memory of food is in America. Stop laughing. I was adopted from South Korea. When I first arrived in the States, I was not fond of my father. My time was spent with my mother and only my mother. The day I finally decided that my father was an okay guy was the day I realized what made him different than my mom; he had a bag of Sunkist oranges. Without those delectable wonders, I cannot be certain as to what my relationship with my father would be like. We delighted in orange after orange. Since then, we have conquered whole hams, entire crock pots of salsa, (we thought it was a spicy tomato stew) and weird random concoctions that only a

father can produce.

Unfortunately, not all of my experiences with food have been positive. In high school, three guys with “bigger appetites” invited me to partake in a contest. Steve, Ben, and I would be eating Double Cheeseburgers and Tony would be substituting McChickens: mistake number one. Steve and I would be competing against Ben and Tony: mistake number two. I ordered for the group.

“Yes, I’d like 30 Double Cheeseburgers and ten McChickens, please.”

For a minute, I received only an awkward and astounded stare.

Finally, she managed to mumble, “Excuse me?”

I restated, “30 Double Cheeseburgers and ten McChickens.”

She put in the order and didn’t even ask if I wanted any fries with that. Which I didn’t.

To make a long story short, I ate 5½ Double Cheeseburgers, by far, more Double Cheeseburgers than ANYONE else. Ben and Steve both stopped at five. We looked at Tony as he finished off 5¾ McChickens. One or two more bites and we would’ve won. I still secretly resent Steve for letting me down and for being such a wuss.

In my first semester at the North Dakota State College of Science, in English 110, Ms. Dusek asked us to brainstorm possible writing topics: hobbies, things we enjoy, anything we could write a 2½ page descriptive paper about. Hobby? Enjoyment? One thing came to mind: Jack Link’s Teriyaki Beef Jerky. Ms. Dusek was hesitant at first, but said that if anyone could accomplish it, it was me. So I did. A 2½ page paper about my favorite, glorious, beefy delight. My professor submitted my proclamation of love to Headwaters, a published collection of students’ original work. I thought to myself, “Self, if my paper is good enough to get published, what else can it do?” I decided to find out. I forwarded my essay to Jack Link’s and received coupons for two free bags of beef jerky with no expiration date. I had hit the mother lode.

My final “food” moment I have to share is bittersweet. I started dating my boss’ son. I know, bad idea. I found out that his family loved to hunt. Deer. Mmm...venison. He decided to

share this meaty goodness with me. I acquired venison sticks, jerky, and even a couple of coils of sausage.

Terrified of commitment, I ended it. Three days later he called me. He said he had something urgent to ask. I instantly replied, "You don't want your deer meat back, do you?" Apparently his inquiry had something to do with why we broke up. Or something like that. Thank God.

I am 20 years old. Right alongside my parents, the fridge has watched me grow up. Oranges brought my father and I together; Double Cheeseburgers tore Steve and I apart; my love for beef jerky helped me ace a class; and deer meat, well, let's face it: deer meat is just downright delicious.

Food. Sometimes delicious. Sometimes nutritious. Always edible. And if you let it, food will change your life.

Confessions of a Polish “Terrorist”

STAN KWIECIEN

April 16th, 2007. Not my fault. It was a pretty horrific incident that happened that day at Virginia Tech, and my thoughts are still with the families affected.

April 17th, 2007. This one...well, yeah, I guess you can sort of blame it on me. It still was not my fault, but if you don't believe me, I will not hold it against you. Those of you who remember the event (or religiously keep newspapers) will recall the incident on our campus that happened that afternoon. The Fargo Forum stated on page 1A April 18th, 2007 that “an unattended duffel bag was found at the bus shelter in front of the Union at 1:30 p.m.” They shut down seven campus buildings for two and a half hours because of my “unattended duffel.” I don't care if it was an accident or not; that has to be a record somewhere. The longest, largest, accidental, unintentional campus scare or something like that. At any rate, here's my side of the story....

There I was, minding my own business and fretting over my next Calculus II exam. Those of you who have taken MATH 166 with a certain department chair will understand (those of you who haven't, ask a friend who has, he's rather infamous for insane test problems). I was riding the 13A bus to get to my job at the downtown campus and it couldn't have been more than 15 minutes for me to get from the Union to the downtown campus, up to the ITS office on the fourth floor, and unlock the door for me to realize that I had forgotten my

gym bag. I assumed I had left it on the bus, so I called the Ground Transportation Center and said that I thought I had left my gym bag on bus 13A. I described it to them and they said, "If we see it, we will pull it off the bus and it will be waiting for you at the GTC." So I waited...and waited...

It must have been around 3:30 p.m. when one of the older technicians came up to the desk to replace me and asked, "Hey, what do you thin of that whole bomb incident on campus?" At this point I had no idea what she was talking about and I feel I should explain why. If you spend a few hours in the computer lab at the downtown campus towards the end of the semester you won't find a lot of people. It is quite, and a fairly easy shift to work. Curiously and casually I posed, "What bomb incident?" Apparently, someone had reported a suspicious looking black gym bag outside the bus stop a number of hours ago...

I called the campus police immediately.

"Hi-my-name-is-Stan-Kwiecien. I'm-a-campus-technician. I'm-working-at-the-down-town-help-desk! THAT'S...MY...GYM...BAG!"

"Hold on...we'll connect you with the officer on the scene."

I repeated my verbose explanation to the officer. Before he could respond, I heard a blast, not unlike someone getting shot.

"Umm...is it black...and...gym shorts...and...shampoo? We...went...just...detonated it..."

I only heard part of the conversation because of the static, but the voice on the other end sounded sorry.

Flabbergasted from shock, we eventually agreed there would be someone to pick me up from the lobby of the downtown building. This was another fun experience. The officer who picked me up decided to search me (you know, just in case I had more shampoo in my backpack). Upon seeing mysterious boxes wrapped in duct tape, the officer froze and sternly asked what was in them. Never have I seen anyone so afraid of duct tape. Inside the boxes, however, was not a bomb, or even shampoo...it was a deck of cards for a card game I play with my friends. I explained, rather stupidly, that Magic: The Gathering is, "well...it's like sports cards for nerds.

You know?"

There is no quick and easy way to describe the game without using that phrase. So I was driven to the "scene of the crime" where more cops and even the head of the Red River Bomb Squad talked at me some more. They gave me the quick run down.

"You didn't mean to do any of this?"

"There wasn't anything actually explosive in the bag?"

"By the way, the paper is going to want to get a statement from you."

"Sorry about blowing up your gym shoes."

I just nodded with a blank look in my eyes.

At this point, the entire experience was all still rather surreal. It didn't really hit me until later, when I was in the police station claiming what was left of my belongings, all of which were conveniently collected in a black trash bag because, "Well, we could have brought your bag with us, but honestly, there wasn't much left of it" the officer said.

I have to say, all in all, it was a rather interesting afternoon. Most of my stuff was outright destroyed, and the stuff that wasn't destroyed looked like it had survived the beaches of Normandy. I explained to my co-workers, my friends, and most embarrassing of all, my family the circumstances of the afternoon. My co-workers held a party for me the next day and my friends actually had a pool going whether or not the bag was mine (one of them won \$30), and my family...well... suffice to say, I'm still the butt of every terrorist joke at Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. When they heard, my parent said jokingly, "You know, of all the members of our family, we figured you were the least likely to make the FBI's 10 most wanted list. You jumped from seventh to first in the span of a day. What ever are we going to do with you? You crazy, Polish terrorist?"

I must say that I didn't walk away from this matter completely empty handed (curse me and my optimistic tendencies). I did have the majority of my belongings in a large plastic trash bag, and when the paper mistakenly printed that I was a Computer Engineering major (I am in fact a Computer

Science major) my old Computer Engineering advisor got together \$40 and a nice card to hand to me "for bringing the department publicity."

So that's what happened. The truth in its entirety, unad-justed by media reports. Personally, I don't blame the police or the bomb squad. I blame whoever it was that called in the bomb threat. Clearly someone, somewhere, was over-reacting. So with the confession out of the way, here is the apology: I'm sorry to the administration for freaking everyone out. I'm sorry to the teachers for ruining a few classes (and apparently four tests as well).

Finally, I'm sorry to the students for only affecting seven buildings and not more of the campus.

Should the need for another unintentional campus scare exist (good God I hope this doesn't happen again...), I suppose I might be able to rise to the occasion and leave another bag full of something somewhere. Maybe I can branch off and try a bag full of office supplies. Who knows what the future may hold, eh?

A Literate City: Linking Literacy Services to Meet the Needs of Fargo/Moorhead

ABIGAIL GAUGERT, CARLY BOETTCHER, CARMEN SCHATZ

The literate citizenry of Fargo/Moorhead spans from pre-schoolers learning the alphabet to professors researching and publishing regularly. But literacy encompasses vastly more than the ability to read; it's about developing knowledge in technology, culture, and basic skills to function in day-to-day life. Fargo/Moorhead needs a center focused on helping those at all levels of literacy with all types of literacy. Beyond just reading, this literacy center would be an active, dynamic place for all kinds of language learning.

As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship." In the United States, literacy is an essential component of democratic citizenship. However, statistics citing that the United States is lagging in literacy have led to fears of a literacy crisis. Educators have been taking action to reverse the trend, and North Dakota is no exception. Community members are responding by assessing needs and developing plans to enhance the status of literacy. In the vibrant college environment of Fargo/Moorhead, college students will be a valuable resource in this endeavor.

The Value of Literacy

Such a compelling need for literacy hasn't always existed, but as technology advances and international competition threatens Americans in the job market, literacy has exceeded

"luxury" status and become a necessity. According to USA Today, "Throughout the 20th century, the U.S. economy not only sustained global dominance but provided satisfactory employment for the marginally literate. Today, that economy is being replaced by an increasingly complex information-based economy that will reward only those who have the skills to serve its changing needs."

Jerome T. Murphy, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, identifies the consequences: "Adults with limited literacy skills pay harsh penalties as citizens, parents, and workers. A lack of basic skills can keep people from even entry-level employment." His solution was "bringing together an ambitious program of scholarship with a focused, practical action agenda and offering immediate assistance to educational programs that serve adults." Fargo/Moorhead is following his lead by developing plans to consolidate the literacy services available.

Children's Literacy

Literacy is required across all age levels and backgrounds, and we cannot ignore literacy training among younger students, Fargo's future adults. "No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy," as stated in the article "A Child Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area" from the Los Angeles Times.

According to a 2004 report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Alliance for Excellent Education, "approximately 8 million young people between fourth and twelfth grade struggle to read at grade level. Some 70 percent of older readers require some form of remediation." The 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress also shows that 37% of fourth graders were reading at or below basic levels.

The website for one reading intervention program, Scholastic's READ 180, affirms the importance of literacy for students: "Students who do not have strong literacy skills find themselves at a serious disadvantage in social settings, as civil participants, and in the working world. A recent call for work-

place preparedness from high school graduates...intensifies the importance of remediating and nurturing students' reading abilities." These programs help the students to gain reading ability that will lead to success in both their educational and personal lives.

Reading initially comes to mind when considering literacy, but writing is a skill that goes hand-in-hand with it. One successful project that has caught the attention of NDSU instructors is 826 Valencia, a California-based nonprofit tutoring and writing center whose popularity has spread to Seattle, Chicago, and other major cities. The purpose of the 826 centers is "[to support] students age 6-18 with their writing skills, and [to help] teachers get their students excited about the literary arts." They offer workshops, field trips, and publishing services, and each center is located behind a creative storefront, Valencia's being a pirate supply store. One can purchase designer glass eyes, message bottles, and Jolly Roger-emblazoned flags while waiting for a tutoring session.

Author Dave Eggers introduced the idea to Fargo when he spoke at a North Dakota Arts and Humanities conference held on the NDSU campus in 2006. Eggers, writer of *A Heart-breaking Work of Staggering Genius* and editor of the internet magazine *McSweeney's*, opened the center in 2002 and told of its success in engaging children in the writing process. Likewise, teaching essential literacy skills in a unique, fun environment is something that could benefit Fargo, if the community is willing to support it.

Fargo's Literacy Needs

Beyond the need to address child literacy, the 2004 North Dakota Needs Assessment for Adult Literacy lists the individuals most in need of adult education and literacy services, among them immigrants, the homeless, and the incarcerated.

Although only about 1.5% of the adult population of North Dakota is foreign born, the report states that more refugees are entering the state now than ever during the past ten years, and "this strongly suggests immigrants and their families will play

an increasing role within the North Dakota economy in the future." Thus, this will be one area toward which literacy efforts will need be directed.

However, enhancing literacy among immigrant populations while celebrating their cultural diversity can present a difficult balance. Terrence Wiley writes in the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, "Regardless of the approach used to measure literacy, a major limitation of most national assessments has been their lack of attention to literacy in languages other than English. For the past two decades, the United States has been undergoing its second greatest period of foreign immigration. . . . By failing to survey literacy in non-English languages, 'literacy' is confused with 'English literacy.'" He explains how employers, educators, and policy-makers use literacy as a "barometer" of an individual's ability to participate in society, but that we limit ourselves with our own ideas of what it means to be literate. He adds: "In the process of assessing literacy we run the risk of imposing 'elite' standards on the population as a whole and of stigmatizing those who fail to meet these standards." He issues us a fair warning, for when we help those of different backgrounds to gain the literacy that we deem essential.

As for the homeless adult population, the North Dakota Needs Assessment proposes that "The Department of Public Instruction will partner with other providers to make literacy services possible for homeless adults. Adult literacy services would provide life skills instruction linkages to community resources, self-esteem support, and preparation for employment." Finally, it reports that many incarcerated adults "lack the basic educational, social, and job skills necessary to perform as productive and responsible members of society." Although it will be impossible to attend to each of Fargo's needs immediately, two community literacy summits have already served as initial steps in addressing what's lacking in literacy in Fargo/Moorhead, as well as to bring attention to the current nonprofit organizations already working to improve literacy in the area, such as the public libraries, the Fargo Adult Learning Centers, and CHARISM.

Past Literacy Efforts

In the spring of 2007, the Literacy Core put on the first annual Fargo/Moorhead Literacy Summit. The Literacy Core is the name that Dr. Andrew Mara, an English professor at NDSU, and a group of students taking an Introduction to Writing Studies class at the university, came up with to represent the group while working to put together the Literacy Summit. After the success of the first, a second Literacy Summit was held in the fall. The focuses for the first summit were literacy among new Americans, university involvement, and childhood literacy. The Literacy Core felt that there was a need for this gathering due to the lack of data on our community's needs regarding literacy. Present at the Literacy Summit were a variety of interested community members, including representatives for profit and non-profit organizations and university employees and students. The overall goal of the literacy summit was to identify the needs of the people in our community, to see what is already available to citizens, and to determine what else can be done to promote literacy in Fargo/Moorhead.

The first of the three focuses of the night was literacy among new Americans. No two people are the same, and some members were concerned that there is not enough care focused on every individual's different needs. Pam Strait of the Fargo Public Library said, "There needs to be a coalition that integrates all forms of literacy for new Americans." One idea brought up at the meeting was to get foreign exchange students and other university students with experience in a foreign language to help new Americans in their literacy efforts. Many students in the tri-college area are interested in contributing to the community's literacy needs, but often don't know how or where to get involved and lack the motivation to carry through on their good intentions. One idea brought up was service learning, which is working with the university for a class or project. The university can provide more resources than students could find on their own, which makes this one of the best methods of contributing to the community. Students

often feel they get as much out of the experience as the people they are serving. If you are not in a class that is participating in a service learning project, you can always help by tutoring or volunteering for an organization.

Childhood literacy may be one of the biggest concerns of our community. The ability to read and write is a vital ability to students and without it, their learning would be severely hindered and they could lose interest in school in general. After-school tutoring could be a good way to help young students learning to read and write. Community businesses are doing their own part in encouraging children to read by instituting reading programs to give children incentive to read more books.

The second annual Literacy Summit expanded and furthered conversations that the previous summit started. One main area of conversation in the second summit was the possible creation of a database that lists the organizations and opportunities available for our community. By understanding what is available, more people can use these services and can contribute to their causes.

There are plenty of other ways that the Fargo/Moorhead community can improve literacy; the community just needs to come together to address its local needs. By keeping permanent records of the literacy rates in the community, creating more teamwork among the universities, and staying involved with the elementary and high schools in the area, we can all help to eradicate literacy problems and address the needs of our community.

Current Literacy Efforts

In order to enact any of the valuable ideas that summit attendees have dreamt up, funding will be required. NDSU English professors Amy Rupiper-Taggart, Andrew Mara, and Kevin Brooks, along with other members of the community, are leading the charge by composing a proposal to get the plan off the ground.

When discussing their passion for literacy centers, Drs.

Rupiper-Taggart and Mara are practically giddy. Rupiper-Taggart proudly declares how she bought her then-infant daughter a onesie at the famous 826 Valencia store in San Francisco, and Mara grins when listing the imaginative themes of the franchise's various stores throughout the country, such as pirates, spies, dinosaurs, and time-travel.

The two professors want the Fargo/Moorhead community to be able to share in their passion. The pair recently submitted a proposal entitled "A Proposal for Fargo Literacy Coalition and Clearinghouse" to the Community Project Award established by NDSU. The proposal requested funding to hold monthly breakfasts with area literacy supporters, providing a chance to unite efforts and share ideas. However, they hope the monthly breakfasts will be a baby step towards the real thing—a literacy center in Fargo similar to the 826 stores. The recently submitted proposal also asked for financial support for Web hosting, an International Literacy Day event, and a public literacy summit and enough funding to pay the salary of a graduate student who would write larger caliber grants or proposals for the literacy center.

While Rupiper-Taggart "loves the idea" of the 826 franchise, she knows it would probably not be practical in Fargo. The focus instead, Mara explained, would be on what the community needs. They hope the breakfast meetings, and eventually a literacy center in Fargo, will take some of the burden off of those who are currently working to promote literacy in the community, who may be wearing "many hats."

Mara stressed that literacy centers serve more than just the "non-literate." They hope a literacy center in the area would serve the needs of various age and cultural groups, including youth of all ages and new Americans. The literacy summits had been held to identify those needs.

Rupiper-Taggart and Mara anticipate college students having the opportunity to volunteer their time to tutor literacy students or to conduct research for the center, but they do not foresee the center being built on a college campus. The space must be easily accessible and located where people would

not feel alienated. The ideal location would be in downtown Fargo, especially along Broadway. There has been a discussion of partnering with the historic downtown Fargo Theater, but nothing is set yet, explained Rupiper-Taggart.

A literacy center in Fargo is not a novel idea. Rupiper Taggart said that when she first started teaching at NDSU in 2002, she came with a plan to build a center. Since then, students who have taken the Introduction to Writing Studies and the Literacy, Culture and Identity classes at NDSU as well as English Department faculty and staff have been involved in discussions about a literacy center in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

Rupiper-Taggart has submitted similar proposals for literacy centers the past few years, although none have been successful. She said she has gradually improved on each proposal every year since she first submitted one and feels that this year the project will be funded. She joked that Mara will serve as a good luck charm since this is the first year he was part of the proposal-writing team. They will both have their fingers crossed until May 2008, when they expect to hear of the funding committee's decision.

As for a possible theme for a literacy center in Fargo? That's still up for debate, but ninjas, Sasquatch, and Vikings have all been brought to the table, the instructors said with a laugh.

Conclusion

In our increasingly technological world, literacy is not only important, but essential to live a fulfilling life. Ensuring that everyone in our community is not excluded from having literacy in their lives is, currently, virtually impossible. However, the construction of a literacy center in Fargo/Moorhead would make that task somewhat easier, especially with the area colleges offering time and resources.

While building a literacy center and improving literacy in our area will not be easy, it is something our community must work towards completing. Because in the words of Kofi Annan, "Acquiring literacy is an empowering process, enabling

millions to enjoy access to knowledge and information which broadens horizons, increases opportunities and creates alternatives for building a better life."



Night Train

TAYLOR KROSBAKKEN

high school selections

Quality is never an accident;
it is always the result of high intentions,
sincere effort, intelligent direction
and skillful execution;
it represents the wise choice
of many alternatives.

WILLIAM A. FOSTER

from the high school editors

The High School Contest was conceived during our Literary Publications class discussion on who to include in the current issue of Northern Eclecta. We decided that a High School Contest would be a new and novel idea. Many high school students never get the chance to have anyone other than their teachers see their work, and we wanted to encourage young people in the area to participate in a legitimate contest.

All of the high schools in Cass County were contacted and invited to participate in the contest. The best from each genre were selected for inclusion in this year's issue:

Art

Jamie Hohnadel, Kindred High School

Fiction

Aidan Horvath, Fargo North High School

Photography

Taylor Krosbakken, Fargo North High School

Poetry

Ashley Drewry, Kindred High School

Next year, we hope to extend the contest next year to a more diverse geographical area.

JENNA BARENTHSEN, DANEALLE CARTER, CAITLIN FOX,
RYAN KAHLY, MIKE LUNDBERG, AND CASSIE OSS

On The Way Up

Heart beats cold
For love long lost
Tears fall down
Dust to dust

Soul climbs up
Stairs so long
Not looking back
Singing a song

Weep for me not
Child and mother
Remember me always
Be strong my lover

Never fall down
On that path to bear
You'll live on
Smile, know I'm there

ASHLEY DREWRY



Serpientes

JAMIE HOHNADDEL

Battle

AIDAN HORVATH

The darkness is oppressive. A flash of lightning gives you another glimpse of the enemy marching toward you across what used to be a field, but is now just a mire of deep mud. The spots of light from their torches weave to and fro as they slog through the muck. The rain is a constant, deafening drum on your helmet, and it has found its way into every seam of your armor. You hope your enemy's swords will not do likewise. Another lightning flash illuminates the battlefield. The enemy is closer now. In the brief instant of light, you can see the bright emblem of their nation on their surcoats and various coats of arms on their shields. You tighten the strap on your own shield and draw your sword, shining in the dim light of the flickering flames of your army's torches held by some of the lighter troops throughout the ranks. More lightning reveals the enemy once more, shimmering ghosts, frozen in time if but for a moment. You see that their weapons are also at the ready.

Through the wind you hear the horn blast, signaling the charge. The time has come. You lurch forward, the saturated ground sucks at your feet, but you manage to pull them free and begin running. The ground is treacherous, but you keep your balance, lest you fall and be trampled by your fellows. Your breathing echoes in your helmet, as puffs of vapor explode into the air from its confines and quickly dissipate. You can't see the enemy's torches anymore. You don't even know

how close you are to them. All you can see is your sword bobbing in front of you and the absolute darkness beyond. Then there is a final flare of lightning, and you see the soldier in the enemy's colors, only a few feet in front of you, his sword ablaze with the glaring light, his eyes hidden in the depths of his helm.

As darkness once again engulfs you, you flail your sword out where you last saw the soldier. A clap of thunder erupts at the same moment your sword hits, muffling the sound of breaking armor, and the snapping of bone, but it does not cover the horrible death-cry of your first kill. You don't have time to reflect on what you have done. Without breaking your momentum, you wrench your weapon out of the former soldier and raise your shield, bracing for impact.

You are aware of one of your allies running with you on your left. You lose track of him as you slam into the next rank of enemies. The impact knocks over the man in front of you and he falls into the mud where he will most likely be crushed under the combatant's feet and drown. You turn to your left in time to see another enemy soldier plunge his blade into your ally's belly. The pitiless weapon juts from his back, bathed in scarlet. A fierce roar tears from your throat as you heave your own sword in a downward arc at your foe's arm, cleanly slicing it from the man's shoulder. Then you reverse your blade, slashing the enemy diagonally from his hip to his collar. The man lets out scream as a crimson stain blooms across his chest, and he falls. Your ally collapses, emitting sickening gurgling noises as he sinks into the sludge.

You continue the charge along with the rest of your army, and soon you are pressed in a mass of bodies as the two sides converge. As you wrestle in the midst of the chaos, your sword is torn from your hand. You throw your shield up to protect yourself as you unsheathe your small dagger. When you lower your shield, all you can see is a helmet only inches in front of you. You thrust the small blade up under it. The man wearing the helm chokes and coughs as you pull the dagger from his throat, then slumps to his side onto another of your adversaries. As this warrior turns toward his slain comrade you jam

the knife into one of the eye sockets of his helm. Your opponent jerks, and dies without a sound.

Another man in enemy colors steps over the bodies of his friends toward you. This man is not wearing a helmet and brandishes a wicked mace, which he swings, clipping your left shoulder. Sharp pain explodes where the mace grazed you and you let out a short yelp. You swing your shield wide and knock the mace from your opponent's grip. He then lunges at you with a wild yell. As he closes, you quickly pull your dagger forward. It finds the man's neck, and you jerk your arm back, slitting the man's throat. His eyes fix on you, terribly blue, wild and desperate. Then he stares blindly as thick blood seeps from his wound and his mouth, dyeing the crisp, bright colors of his garments to a deep red, almost black in the weak torchlight.

The enemy line that you were engaging begins to break and run. You try to pursue them, but another series of horn blasts sound through the din of battle summoning you back to your defensive lines. A contingent of the enemy army must have broken free of the assault and moved to attack your reserve troops. You look around and can barely make out the outline of a banner, weakly illuminated by a number of torches around it. As you squint through the rain you realize that it is your army's banner, moving toward the besieged reserve line. You trudge toward it along with a few other men, moving as fast as you can.

Your right arm burns with fatigue and your bruised shoulder makes it difficult to carry your shield, so you sheath your dagger and let your arm hang limply at your side. Your neck and back ache and you wish you could just sink into the mud and rest, but your men need you and you carry on.

As you walk you notice a man, submerged up to his waist in the muck. He calls out to you and you wade over to him. You see that he is a member of your army and you help him to his feet. There is a deep gash on his right leg. You tear a long section of his surcoat to bind his leg with, and then you retrieve his sword and help him stand. The man had lost his helmet and would not survive another skirmish, so you begin

walking toward another section of your defensive line to drop him off.

After a grueling few minutes of hiking knee deep in filth, you approach the edge of the battle. A few more men hurry from the line and support the injured man. He pats you on the shoulder in thanks before they take him back toward the camp.

By now you are exhausted, but your reserves are still under attack so you start off down the line toward them. Soon the battle comes into view. A small number of your troops are trying to work their way around the fight to flank their attackers. You hurry to join them. Unfortunately you have miscalculated and you have gotten too close to the enemy before your troops could catch up. A few of your adversaries have noticed you and are now moving toward you. Your heart begins to pound and panic threatens to overwhelm you. But this turns out to be an advantage as your fear chases away all fatigue. You bellow as you charge the group. A few of them falter at the ferocity of your attack and you heave your borrowed sword in a powerful swing, catching the closest man on the side of the head.

His helmet collapses under your blade and your foe tumbles into the muck. Then you push your sword into another man's abdomen. He gasps and doubles over as you withdraw your blade. Another man charges you and raises his weapon, a long bastard sword. You parry the huge sword but the man's momentum isn't broken and he tackles you into the mud, crashing down on top of you. He pulls on the hilt of his weapon and slams it into your helmet. Your ears ring and your head explodes with pain. You can't get your eyes to focus and your attacker sways in a double image. Even though you can't see clearly you can tell that he is about to deal a finishing blow.

There is a loud thud and suddenly the man's weight is lifted from you. You try to roll to your side but you are still dizzy. As you flounder in the mud a strong hand clasps your shoulder and hauls you to your feet. You clutch at the man who is assisting you until the world stops spinning and you can get a good look at him. It's one of the men who was trying to flank the enemy. Both of you make your way back to the battle,

where your army has gained the upper hand.

Before you even reach the fray your enemy is in full retreat. They turn and run, slipping in the mud and tripping over the living and the dead alike. You begin to give chase halfheartedly. Several of the enemy are overtaken and cut down. Even more of them throw down their weapons and fall to their knees in the mud waiting to be taken prisoner. As the heat of battle cools in your veins your muscles begin to ache and your shoulder hurts ferociously; so, you decide to take the opportunity to cut your chase short and apprehend a man who threw down his shield nearby. You pull him from the mud and he does not struggle as you escort him back across the field, toward your camp.

You don't remember most of the long slog back to the camp, only haunting images of dead men and the moans of the dying. Your blood freezes as an unbearable shriek shatters the air. No physical pain could cause a man to scream like that. You snap your head around and see one of your comrades splashing into the muck next to a battered corpse that must once have been his brother. The man's scream rang continuously until he ran out of breath to sustain it, and would continue after a ragged breath. You turn away in shock and continue putting one foot in front of the other as the cries of grief turn to sputtering sobs.

Finally you stand on solid ground next to the line of enemy soldiers who were taken captive, the rain has stopped and the first light of dawn is peaking over the horizon. You reach under your chin and release the strap of your helm. It's an incredible task to haul the helmet from your head, your shoulder throbbing the entire time. Finally, the heavy helmet is off and you drop it on the ground at your feet. Flecks of scarlet leap from the tarnished metal, sprinkling over the grass, and it strikes you as an atrocity that the peaceful, living blades of grass should be bloodied like their merciless, steel counterparts.

You reach down to clean the blood from the grass, only to discover that your hand is covered in more blood than your helmet is. Looking down at yourself, you see that the bright

blue of your surcoat has been almost entirely replaced with an ugly, dark, reddish brown. Sudden sickness overwhelms you and you double over, retching where the blood from your helmet stained the grass. As you gain control over your guts, you scramble to unclasp your belt and tear the fabric from your armor, which bears a similar stain. You collect your helmet and head back toward your tent.

Your soaked boots squish as you limp through the encampment. The fire pit near your tent is still alight and you hobble over to it. You pitch your surcoat into the flame and turn away as it is consumed and throw your helmet down. It rolls and then settles right side up, its bloody face gazing up at you. There is a large dent where you were hit by the man with the bastard sword.

Water drips from every inch of you as you undo strap after strap, letting the rest of your armor fall into a heap next to your helm. You unbutton your gambeson and lay it out to dry.

Now you are shivering in the brisk morning air, but nonetheless you remove your shirt and lay it next to your gambeson. A dark bruise is spreading across your wounded shoulder and part of your chest. You shiver as a light breeze touches your skin. More of your comrades begin trickling into the camp, still in full armor. A number of camp followers rush to aid the wounded and to gain tidings of loved ones. A nurse hurries over to you and begins examining your shoulder and head. You are mostly unaware of her except when she gives your bruised flesh a particularly stiff poke. She quickly binds your head in white fabric and hurries off to another man who has a deep gash on his leg.

You wander back to the edge of the field. Quiet moans mingle with the morning bird songs. You know that when night falls again the field will be as silent as the dead who dwell there.

You are suddenly aware of a man sitting next to you. He has a short, grey beard and shoulder length hair of the same color. His eyes are sunken and weary and his expression as hard as granite. Many scars on his face and arms indicate that he is a veteran.

The horrors of the battle still haunt you as you watch the sunrise with your silent companion. You remember the scream of the first man you killed as clearly as if it was happening at that moment. You remember the nauseating sounds of the men who had their throats slit or their bellies cut open. But the most terrible thing you remember is the look in the eyes of the man who wielded the mace as he died. A small cry escapes your mouth as you reflect and you are suddenly overwhelmed with grief and guilt. It's all you can do to keep back the sobs that threaten to choke you. The old man looks up at you and his eyes soften.

Then he mutters, "The first one is always the worst." At that you sink to the ground, exhausted and hurting in body and soul alike. You pray to God that the old man's words are true.



Machinery in Trees

AMY BELLEFEEVILLE

photography

Where there is perhaps a province in which
the photograph can tell us nothing more
than what we see with our own eyes,
there is another in which it proves to us
how little our eyes permit us to see.

DORTHEA LANGE

from the photography and art editor

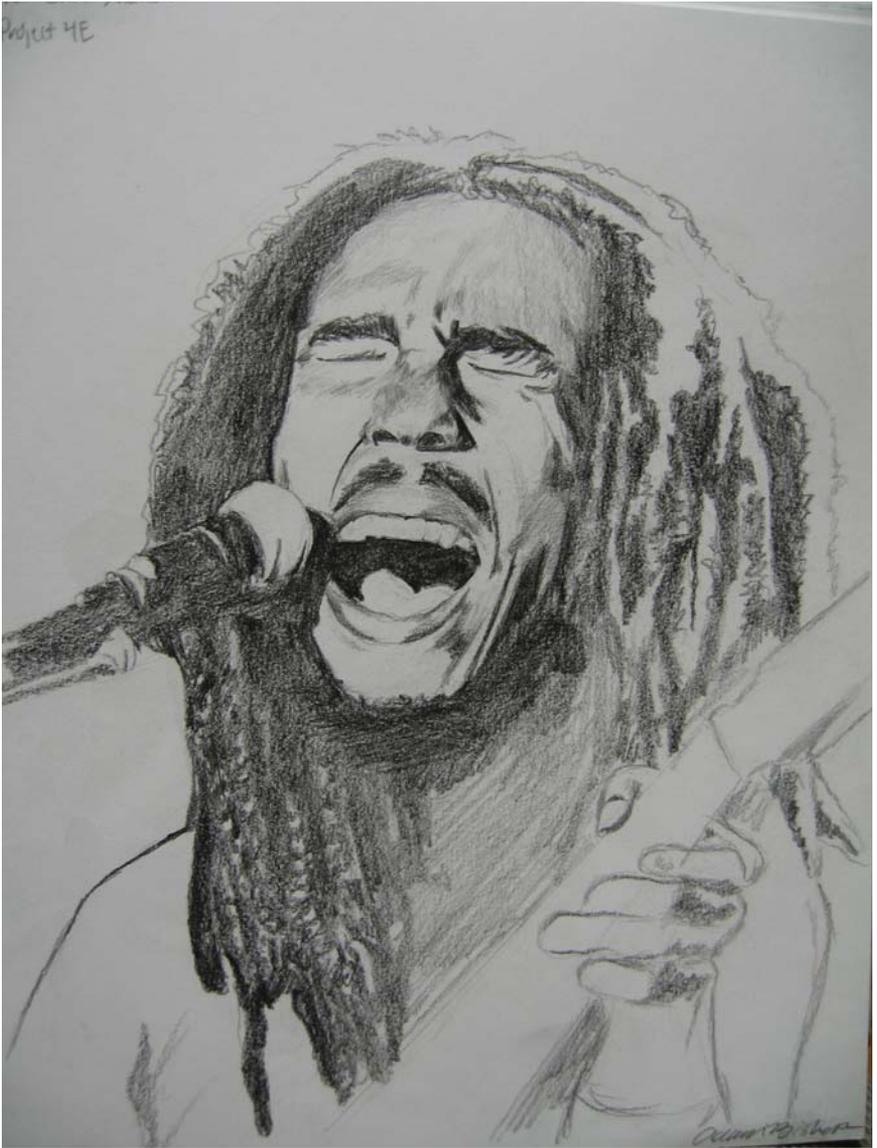
We received many wonderful submissions and appreciate the interest and enthusiasm of the NDSU undergraduate students. Sixty-six submissions were sent in for review and nine items were selected for publication. Five appear in this print publication and four other pieces appear on the website where the on-line publication can be seen.

Our committee discussed the photographs and art work frequently during the submission period and after the deadline. Once the deadline had passed we began narrowing down the submissions by first looking for quality in a piece such as was the photograph in focus or did the art piece seem original. We then further narrowed the list through discussions of which pieces appealed to us and could almost tell a story by itself. In our discussions, when a comment was made that a piece was boring it was dismissed as a possible choice.

We'd like to thank Mel Stone, a professional photographer living in Fargo, North Dakota, who assisted the group in making our final selections for publication.

We hope you enjoy the photographs and artwork in this year's publication.

JACLYNN DAVIS WALLETTTE



Bob Marley

ADAM BISHOP

contributors

Success is not the key to happiness.

Happiness is the key to success.

If you love what you are doing,
you will be successful.

HERMAN CAIN

KIMBERLY BALEGA, *Defining a Black Bird*, 40.

Kimberly Balega is a senior in the studies of English, Zoology, and Communications. Her main genera when writing poetry focuses on animals and the wild world, as does most of her writing, and she hopes to one day be able to turn her love of the animal world into inspiration for a paid writing career.

JENNA BARENTHSEN, *In Remembrance*, 36.

Jenna Barentsen is a senior at NDSU expecting to graduate in December with an English major and Music minor. She enjoys traveling around the world and recently spent several months living in a rural villiage in Kenya, Africa. She has an eclectic array of interests including British Sci Fi, Romantic literature, and horticulture. She has filled her living room with an assortment of houseplants, tropicals, and several carnivorous species. The inspiration for her writing comes from everyday things and experiences.

DAMON BARTA, *Caught in Cupped Hands*, 11.

Damon Barta is a senior majoring in English.

AMY BELLEFEUILLE, *Machinery in Trees*, 82.

Amy Bellefeuille is a sophomore majoring in Public History at NDSU. She attended John F. Kennedy High School in Bloomington, Minnesota, where she had the opportunity to take photography classes. This photograph was taken in a small grove of trees where an old farm house and barn still stand, near fields that were being combined on a farm in western Wisconsin, in November 2007.

ADAM BISHOP, *Bob Marley*, 86.

Adam Bishop hails from Maple Grove, Minnesota. He is a second-year student at North Dakota State studying Landscape Architecture. His interests have always been art or something related to or encompassing the art field. Architecture seemed the most logical major to go into since he strives to establish design solutions using his given sense of artistry. Adam still

loves to draw and throughout his younger years he's been in drawing and design competitions even winning a 1st and 3rd place ribbon at the state fair.

This particular drawing of Bob Marley was sketched in 2006. It really was never meant to be finished due to the fact that he was just practicing some shading and cast shadow techniques for his architecture class in his sketchbook. The upbeat vocals of Bob remind him that when your stressed just remember, "don't worry bout a thing, cause every little thing gonna be alright!"

CARLY BOETTCHER, *A Literate City*, 61.

Carly, Boettcher is a junior at North Dakota State University majoring in English. She is originally from Westhope, North Dakota. Carly was a Literacy Core member at the first annual Literacy Summit and has enjoyed being a part of the Northern Eclecta staff this year.

SUZANNE DEGRUGILLIER, *I Hope You Understand*, 38.

Suzanne Degrugillier was born here in Fargo. She is currently a sophomore, majoring in English. She wrote this poem as an assignment for a creative writing class she was taking at the time. Her inspiration for this poem was past experience/ places/ people she had known.

ASHLEY DREWRY, *On the Way Up*, 73.

Ashley is currently a sophomore at Kindred High School. Her hometown is Davenport, North Dakota. She came to writing this poem when her English teacher gave her class an assignment to write six papers. She chose to do a poem for one and that is how "On the Way Up" came to be.

JOSHUA ELKE, *Bowl*, 28.

Joshua Elke is a Fargo native majoring in Natural Resource Management. He strolled across this scene while hiking in the Rockies; closer examination made him question his impact on nature. How it arrived on the mushroom still puzzles him.

AMELIA K. FELZ, Arch, Northern Eclecta website.

Amelia Felz grew up in the small town of Three Forks, Montana, in the southwest corner. She is a junior studying Public Relations and Journalism with a minor in Management Communication. She has always loved taking photos and is inspired by basic shapes in nature and how they interact with others. This photograph was taken in St. Louis, Missouri, from the train station looking at the Arch.

CAITLIN FOX, below the hill, 34.

Caitlin Fox is a junior majoring in English. She gets inspiration from her crazy family, the crazy ravine in her backyard, and her even crazier friends. She also thinks writing about herself in the third person is crazy, so that's the end of that.

ABIGAIL R. GAUGERT, A Literate City, 61.

Abigail Gaugert, native of Alexandria, Minnesota, is graduating this spring with an English degree. She hopes to eventually use this degree to impart grammatical knowledge to the masses and/or compose earth-shattering works of literature. In the meantime, she's satisfied with tutoring students in writing and opining in the school newspaper.

C. GRAVES, The Darkness Isn't Empty, 16.

Christopher Graves was born in Inglewood, California. He started reading Stephen King novels in 5th grade and has been hooked ever since. His favorite genres are Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror. Eventually, his aspiration is to become a full-time writer—if his wife doesn't mind him lounging in the house all day.

LEAH ELLIOTT HAUGE, Pomp and Happenstance, 49.

Leah Elliott Hauge is a senior majoring in Music and dabbling in writing. She grew up in Fredonia, Arizona, until moving to Provo, Utah, her last year of high school. Her writing has appeared in The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead and she also main-

tains a blog on Myspace. Leah lives in Fargo with her husband Ray and son Frederic.

JAMIE HOHNADL, Serpientes, 74.

Jamie Hohnadel is 16 and a sophomore at Kindred High School. This piece was for her art class; they were asked to create an optical illusion. She didn't want to use the usual dots and lines to trick the eye, so she decided to use something with life and movement instead!

AIDAN HORVATH, Battle, 74.

Aidan Horvath is a junior at Fargo North High and has lived in Fargo for most of his life. His family is part of a medieval recreational group for all of his life, so the middle ages have always interested him. So, when he wanted to try writing something in second person point of view, a chaotic battle scene was one of the first things to come to mind.

JAIME LEA JENSEN, On Rebuilding, 44.

Jaime Jensen is a junior majoring in biochemistry and molecular biology. She enjoys applying abstract, right-brained reasoning to the cold, analytical thought processes required of scientific theory in order to stimulate a movement toward cognitive and innovative investigation of the world at large.

TIFFANY KIMBALL, Paste, 43.

Tiffany Kimball is a senior majoring in English, minoring in art. She is originally from Bismarck, North Dakota, and is a transfer student from Bismarck State College.

CLAYTON KNUDSON, Vik, Iceland, 46.

Clayton Knudson is a sophomore Anthropology major from Harvey, North Dakota. His picture was taken in August of 2007.

MATTHEW KRAEMER, To Marie, 42.

Matthew Kraemer is a senior majoring in classics and philosophy. He's from Grand Forks, North Dakota, and this is his first time published.

S. K. KRINKE, God's Fish Bowl, 33.

Shawn Krinke grew up in Rhame, North Dakota, a tiny town of less than 200. He is an English Education major with aspirations of authorship. Communication, or the lack thereof, was the inspiration for this poem. Communicating today is like being underwater or packed in cotton.

TAYLOR KROSBAKKEN, Night Train, 70.

Taylor Krosbakken is a senior at Fargo North High School. He took this photo of a train in Harvey, North Dakota, in February of this year. His idea for this photo was to try to capture the movement of the train in a blur by using a slow shutter speed.

CADE KRUEGER, Time to Part, 41.

Cade Krueger was born in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and lives there still with his parents. His major is Construction Engineering and is just finishing his sophomore year. His poem was basically inspired by a relationship and some of the feelings he had at the time, he just decided to vent a little and write something creative and came up with the poem.

STAN KWIECIEN, Confessions of a Polish "Terrorist," 57.

Stan Kwiecien is a junior at NDSU studying Computer Sciences with a specification in debugging. He resides in Moorhead, Minnesota, but occasionally visits his parents in Renville, Minnesota. Over 21 years he has ridden in the back of 13 police vehicles, but never once been arrested.

ANNA G. LARSON, Untitled, Northern Eclecta website.

Anna is a senior majoring in journalism. She grew up in Fargo, North Dakota. Always noticing her surroundings, she became interested in capturing life with a camera. The street scene

evokes typical downtown city life in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

JOSH LONGANECKER, Dallinger-Michaelson of 14th and Old Main, 3.

Josh Longanecker is a sophomore at NDSU studying Management Information Systems. He is not witty, insightful, or particularly good looking, but he does like to write stories for children from time to time. Your children might be reading something of his, someday. Cool, huh?

MEGAN MOYER, Bridge to Oblivion, Northern Eclecta website. Megan Moyer is a senior English major who is originally from Mandan, ND. The photo was taken while on vacation in Spearfish Canyon, South Dakota, where her family owns a lake cabin. While hiking one day she came upon this bridge that seemed to lead into oblivion and snapped this shot.

KATIE OLSON, Indite, 31.

Katie Olson is a Fargo native majoring in Spanish Education and International Studies with a minor in Child Development. She enjoys learning other languages, traveling abroad, hiking and other outdoor activities.

HYEKYUNG PARK, The Scent of Life, 37.

Hyekyung is from CBNU (Chon-Buk National University) in Jeon-ju city in South Korea. She has been an exchange student for two semesters majoring English Literature. Her interests are not usually composing poems, but she is really glad her poem has been published! The poem is indicating her attitude about life.

CARMEN SCHATZ, A Literate City, 61.

Carmen Schatz has been on the Northern Eclecta staff since its introductory issue in 2007. She is a junior double-majoring in English and journalism, with a minor and grew up on a farm outside of Linton, North Dakota. After graduation, she wants to become a technical writer. She wishes she was able to go to

a literacy center, like those discussed in the staff article, when she was a child because she has always been passionate about reading.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR, Rooter's Bar, x.

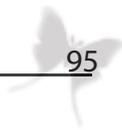
Named not after the famous actress Elizabeth Taylor—but simply for the elegance of the name alone—Elizabeth was born and raised in Owatonna, Minnesota, and now is awaiting graduation in May where she will receive a B.S. in interior design. Since she was little she has had an appreciation for photography and its powerful impact. While shooting one night, she came across Rooter's Bar, and felt compelled to capture the well-known college bar in a different light.

LEAH MARIE HANA WOLTER, This One Goes Out to Kenmore, 54.

Leah Marie Hana Wolter is a junior at NDSU majoring in Business Administration. She went to high school in Breckenridge, Minnesota, the home of the Cowboys.

KRISTIN YOUNG, Gymnast Scale, Northern Eclecta website.

Originally from Valley City, North Dakota, Kristin Young is a senior at NDSU. Her major is Zoology and she has a minor in Art.



This volume of Northern Eclecta represents the second attempt to produce an ongoing publication at North Dakota State University. Its goal is to provide undergraduate students with a place to publish their creative and scholarly work as well as to give them an opportunity to learn the process of producing a publication. Students enrolled in English 213, 313, and 413 during Spring Semester 2009 were responsible for the content selection, design, and production of this issue. These classes will be offered again during Spring Semester 2009, and students who are interested in editing, document design, desktop publishing, and graphics are encouraged to enroll.

Submissions of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, photography, and artwork created by students who are enrolled at NDSU as undergraduate students with at least 3 credits during Fall Semester 2008 or Spring Semester 2009 (or both) will be accepted through February 21, 2009. If you would like more information on this process, please send your inquiries to NDSU.WriteStuff@ndsu.edu.

Finally, if you would like to help with the publication of student writing, a process that emphasizes the importance of literacy both for those who submit their works for possible publication and for those who edit and produce the journal, we would welcome donations in any amount. Checks can be made payable to "Northern Eclecta" and sent to this address:

Northern Eclecta
Department of English
320 Minard Hall
North Dakota State University
Fargo North Dakota 58105-5075