

NEBRASKA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

ARCHWAYS

PICTURE YOURSELF | SPRING 2017 | VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1

Travels of a Stay-at-home Dad

A photographer pivots his career
to run with his family.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



*We prepare our graduates
to live and work with
purpose. We equip them
to run where they
are needed.*

About the cover

Photographer Andrew Marinkovich ('02) captured this image of his son, Leo, bounding across an alley in Stone Town, Zanzibar. "Leo is on the move—always," he said. The image immediately reminded him of the 1932 photo, "Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare" by French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Dear Alumni and Friends,

When Nebraska Wesleyan University alumnus **Antwan Wilson** ('95) started his new job as chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools in February, he said something that grabbed my attention. He told his new hometown paper, *The Washington Post*, "I run to places where I believe I am going to be most needed."

This statement might be the most concise articulation of what the Nebraska Wesleyan experience does. We prepare our graduates to live and work with purpose. We equip them to run where they are needed.

Wilson's purpose has focused on helping public schools address achievement gaps to educate every child. He's run a successful path as a teacher and administrator from Wichita, Kan., to Denver, Colo., Oakland, Calif., and now Washington, D.C. It's inspiring to witness his relentlessness on behalf of America's public school children.

I find it just as gratifying to watch the bold steps today's NWU students take on their paths. I watch the biology major who balances medical school applications with rehearsal and performance in Nebraska Wesleyan's opera. I see the student who finds the courage to tackle a semester abroad—then another semester, and another—while still graduating in four years.

I cheer the amazing professors, coaches and staff who mentor and challenge our students to take these kinds of bold steps. They, too, run where they are needed.

So do so many of our alumni. This issue is filled with fascinating examples of alumni who have put themselves on important paths.

- There's a 2002 business graduate who has changed the course of his photography career to better support his wife's work in addressing women's health issues in Tanzania.
- There's a 2014 biology graduate who has deferred graduate school to support elephant conservation in Kenya.
- There's a 1999 theatre graduate who has reached millions with comedy designed to reenergize frazzled parents.

The many bold, creative, courageous directions NWU alumni run demonstrate the breadth and vigor of our academic community.

And I'm grateful to all those who choose to direct energy, talents and resources to NWU. The encouragement and support you give is most valuable and always put to good use.



—Fred Ohles
President



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Nebraska Wesleyan University is an academic community dedicated to intellectual and personal growth within the context of a liberal arts education and in an environment of Christian concern.

Archways is an examination—and, ideally, a conversation—of how Nebraska Wesleyan University and its people relate to the world around us. That examination is academically sound, socially conscious, and continuously curious.

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Chris Dunker ('08), "Creatures Great and Small" ▶22

As a cross country runner, Chris is a four-time national qualifier and a two-time All-American. This assignment took Chris cross country (via Skype) to Kenya to interview an elephant conservationist. Chris works as an education reporter for the *Lincoln Journal Star*.



Bodil Jane, illustrator, "Creatures Great and Small" ▶22

Bodil is an illustrator from Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She graduated with honors from Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam in 2014, specializing in illustration. Bodil loves to illustrate food, recipes, animals, fashion, interiors, plants, packages and maps. Her illustrations combine handmade elements with digital techniques.



April Jorgensen, "Fail Harder" ▶24

April is a school librarian in Lincoln, where she has taught middle school for 13 years. She earned her M.Ed. with a school library endorsement from the University of Nebraska-Omaha. In her spare time, she likes to read, visit out-of-state family and watch IMomSoHard videos from the comfort of her couch.



Jill Van Hof, reviewer, "Prairie Wolves in Print: *The Adventures of Edison Matthews*" ▶12

Jill is an assistant professor of education at Nebraska Wesleyan University. She's an experienced elementary teacher whose doctoral research focused on the construct of academic optimism. That research featured case studies of low-income and high-achieving elementary schools in Michigan.

Photo by Michael Reinmiller

Photo by Shane and Sunny Photography

On Force

As a law enforcement officer, I was almost afraid to read your winter cover story, “The Matter of Lives.” I’ve grown so accustomed to articles that portray police (and by extension, me) as unjust, power hungry bullies that I feared this article would be more of the same. I was rather pleased with the article’s neutrality.

I do take issue with one implication. In the second paragraph, it reads, “Bliemeister took the stage knowing he fit the description of what Americans have seen so often in grainy video footage—officers quick to resort to unjust force.” The phrasing implies that we have seen frequent improper uses of force by the police when in fact the opposite is true. The vast majority of incidents causing public outcry over the last few years have been found justified, whether by a prosecutor’s office, a grand jury, a judge or a trial jury.

What I find missing from this article—and indeed, from the national conversation about police reform—is a sort of a *quid pro quo*. Much has been made about the need for more and better training for police officers. I don’t disagree.

What I haven’t heard is any call for those outside policing to educate themselves. When I ask people why they are upset over a particular incident, the answer is often along the lines of, “It looks really bad in that video.” Of course it does. Physical violence is never pretty, and at the end of the day, that’s what a police use of force is. I have never heard anyone refer to the legal standards used to judge the appropriateness of an officer’s use of force.

For anyone wanting to understand how police evaluate use of force, I have suggestions. First, read *Graham v. Connor*. This case has defined how to judge the reasonableness of a use of force for nearly three decades.

Second, look at the Force Science Institute’s research on action/reaction times. It’s stunning how quickly things unfold.

Third, attend a citizen’s police academy in your area. This is the *Reader’s Digest* version of officers’ most basic training. People often leave with a changed perspective on law enforcement.

Fourth, keep in mind that videos rarely tell the whole story. Something happened before the recording that caused someone to think, “Hey, I should get this on tape.” Odds are against that something being a cordial conversation between adults.

Are there racist cops out there? Unfortunately. Do unjustified uses of force happen? Absolutely. Are either of those things nearly as common as Americans are led to believe? Not by a long shot.

The theme I took from my time at NWU was that I should question my assumptions, see things from other points of view, and never stop learning. I believe that if we all did these three things, our conversation about policing would have a different tone.

Nathaniel Grimm (’07)
Milliken, Colo.

Speak to the Forward Look

As a 1967 graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, I have had a long time to observe the growth of this place of higher learning. I am 82 years old and a retired pastor, having gone on for theological education. I have a Master of Religious Education from Garrett-Theological Seminary and a Master of Divinity from Saint Paul School of Theology. I have always been proud to say that I am a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University wherever I have been.

I receive *Archways* magazine and read it with interest. Each issue seems to be more interesting in content. I look forward to receiving it. But I wish to comment on the artwork and the style of the entire publication. Each one seems very good and lights up the theme of the issue. I thank you for this. Also, it speaks to the forward look of the school and the desire to educate young people for their place in the world today. Thank you.

All in all, I wish to compliment the school in the work they are doing and encourage you to keep up the good work.

Norma Jean Andrews (’67)
Columbus, Neb.

In our last issue, **Steven Nordeen** (’72) called on alumni to submit poetry about or inspired by NWU professors (“A Suggestion to Honor”). Want to see what they wrote? Check out page 33.

Opinions expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of *Archways* magazine or Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Anonymous letters will not be printed. Letters may be edited for length, content and style.

 **Be heard. Contact us.**

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NW you

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nursing.nebrwesleyan.edu



Dawn Isaacs ('06, MSN '10, MBA '16)

Be a leader in nursing education or administration.





The USO offered American troops a break from the stress of combat and service.

NWU Historian Shines Light on USO

The United Service Organization gained fame during WWII as Bob Hope and other Hollywood stars performed for warfighters. The USO's work continues today with top acts and family services for people in all branches of the military.

The USO was the subject of a recent 60-minute PBS documentary.

WHAT: PBS documentary, "USO: For the Troops"

WHO: Film features leaders: George W. Bush and Colin Powell
Entertainers: Brooke Shields, Jon Stewart and Raquel Welch
Historian: NWU Associate Professor of History **Meghan Winchell**

WHEN: Documentary debuted November 7.
USO has served from WWII to the present day.

WHERE: The USO goes wherever troops are deployed.
The film is at pbs.org/program/uso-for-the-troops.

WHY: "The USO reminds men and women what civilian life is like, what home is like," Winchell said. "And that need will never disappear."

THE FINAL: Major PBS documentary gives NWU historian the last word. "This is not just flag waving," Winchell said. "These are services that are being provided to our military. The USO belongs to them."

Nebraska Nurses Association Names Hardy Outstanding Nurse Educator



Linda Hardy

Photo by Red Feather Photography

At its annual awards reception in Kearney, the Nebraska Nurses Association honored Linda Hardy ('01, MSN '03), associate professor and assistant dean for nursing, with its Outstanding Nurse Educator Award. The NNA award recognizes innovation and expertise in teaching.

The NNA applauded Hardy as "a confident, highly motivated, experienced professor." They called her a teacher who treats her students as colleagues.

"Linda stands out as a positive role model," said one nominator. "She is an example of how hard work and determination can help you reach your goals."

THE FINAL: Personal attention to students earns nursing professor a professional honor.

NWU Students Act on Water Quality

—By Emmalie Harris ('18)

Michaela Wells ('19) and Laurel Withee ('19) recognized Earth Week last year by learning about the Flint, Mich., water crisis. A 60-minute campus lecture inspired an 11-hour drive.

Nebraska Wesleyan's Green House Project invited Geoff Stevens to campus as part of its 2016 Earth Week activities. Stevens, a social work professor from Western Michigan University, explained how Flint city managers turned to the Flint River as a primary water source to save money.

The polluted river proved corrosive. Unclean water ate away a natural coating inside the city's old lead pipes, allowing lead contamination. Roughly 90,000 Flint residents—including 10,000 children—were exposed to unsafe lead levels. Health effects in children include impaired cognition,

behavioral disorders, hearing problems and delayed puberty.

Replacing Flint's lead pipes or restoring their protective layer is a herculean task. And the impacts of lead poisoning will last a generation. Public trust is also difficult to repair.

Stevens' NWU lecture came with a challenge.

"They said, 'Since we came to Nebraska, you should come to Flint,'" Withee recalled. "So we did."

Wells and Withee spent 10 hours distributing 15,000 water bottles and listening to residents. They attended Vernon Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, which worked closely with Western Michigan University's Water Task Force. They also spoke with Flint's mayor, Karen Weaver, who shared stories of Flint's resilience.

"They're not going to leave because it's



their community," said Wells. "They are committed to sticking around and surviving, no matter the circumstance."

The trip provided them a deeper appreciation for everyday things like warm showers and cold drinking water—and a respect for the impact they can have as citizens.

"We all have the opportunity to change the world," said Wells. "And Flint inspired me to start."

THE FINAL: A campus lecture inspired a pair of NWU students to serve in Flint, Mich.

Freedom of Thought

Inmate outreach earns professor Love of Neighbor Award

—By Emmalie Harris ('18)

Eight years ago, Associate Professor of Professional Studies **James Perry** started a book club bringing NWU students together with Nebraska State Penitentiary inmates.

The shared eagerness of their interactions led Perry to expand the club into something more.

Today, "College Is the Key to Inmates' Tomorrow" gives both groups college credit: NWU students help teach introductory criminal justice while inmates earn credit and plan for better lives after prison, said Perry.

"I think that they feel like they have potential," Perry said of

the inmates. "They have a sense that they can think and they can write, and they have a brighter future than they did otherwise."

Others have noticed Perry's work. In October, First Plymouth Church in Lincoln gave Perry its Love of Neighbor Award. The honor came with a \$10,000 award that will help pay inmates' tuition.

Aunna Strutzenberg ('17) was apprehensive about working with prisoners.

"I had stereotypes of the kind of people I was going to meet," she said. "I think that going there and listening to their problems

and realizing they're struggling with things that everyday people struggle with, it makes them less of a silent figure and you can relate."

Now Strutzenberg hopes to apply her experience to a career focusing on substance abuse in the prison population.

"I knew I wanted to be a therapist, but I had no idea what direction," Strutzenberg said. "I've loved interacting with these men, and challenging them." She said the inmates have likewise "challenged my thinking."

Karlie Bracht ('17), an education major, said her



Photo by Shane and Sunny Photography

conversations with inmates have taught her lessons she'll use with future students.

"Many of the men shared stories about how from an early age they were labeled as a bad kid," said Bracht. "Saying that simple word, 'bad,' can really make kids think they're irredeemable. Now, whenever I'm with kids, I always come back to that."

THE FINAL: Lincoln church honors NWU professor for fostering exchanges with inmates and college students.



Assistant Professor of Art Sarah Berkeley uses small classes to expose NWU students to hundreds of artists.

Bold plans start here.

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And you bring us closer to an even brighter future.

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Contact Erika Paschold at 402.465.7574 or epaschol@nebrwesleyan.edu



UK, EU and OMG

Europe's future could hinge on the votes of 16-year-old Scots.

—By Quinn Hullett ('18)

In America, we trust teenagers to drive before we trust them to vote. But in 2015, Scotland lowered its voting age to 16, enfranchising the planet's youngest voting bloc. As young voters themselves, Nebraska Wesleyan students **Ryan Klute** ('17) and **Evan Mathers** ('18) wanted to learn the impact of Scotland's move.



"Sixteen and 17-year-olds are not too far from our age," said Mathers. "Researching this would make a cool connection to NWU students."

Klute knew the change was bound to evoke controversy. He was eager to explore the perspectives of older Scots.

Kelly Clancy, assistant professor of political science, gave Klute and Mathers the push they needed to turn their interest into a research trip.

"I wanted them to have a lot of freedom in the project, but remain accessible to help them process their experiences, troubleshoot problems and provide feedback," said Clancy. She watched them draft a proposal, study Scottish history and schedule interviews with Scottish politicians, students and activists. "I wanted them to actually do each piece of the process, because there's such satisfaction in that."

Today, Scotland remains part of the United Kingdom, along with England, Northern Ireland and Wales. In 2014, a Scottish referendum to leave the U.K. narrowly failed with an astounding voter turnout of 85 percent.

Last year, the U.K. held a similar referendum on its membership within the European Union. And younger Scots were among the voters. While the U.K. narrowly approved "Brexit," most Scots voted to remain in the E.U., deepening the divide between Scotland and the U.K.

As a result, Scotland is considering a second referendum to leave the U.K. An independent Scotland could then seek to enter the E.U. It's possible that 16- and 17-year-old Scots could swing the outcome of such a referendum.

Klute and Mathers' research showed that younger Scots tended to feel a strong national identity that wasn't necessarily tied to its historical U.K. siblings. That identity did not appear to influence their position on E.U. membership. That reality contrasts to the positions of older Scots, who tended to see Scottish identity as tied to Scotland's historical relationships to others in both the U.K. and the E.U.

Klute and Mathers wondered whether these generational differences had strained



relationships. Has teen enfranchisement led to rifts at the dinner table?

Quite the opposite, said Mathers. “Kids learn about the referendum and their voting responsibility at school, and then they go home and tell their parents,” he said. “They’re informants for their parents and vice versa.”

Klute and Mathers’ work won best undergraduate paper at the Great Plains Political Science Association convention in October.

They will present their work at the Midwest Political Science Association convention again this spring.

Clancy called this research opportunity a key part of the Nebraska Wesleyan experience. “This program allows NWU students to be the primary investigators,” she said. “It’s not only a great experience for graduate school, but also for students to understand how knowledge gets created.” [n](#)



Well-traveled

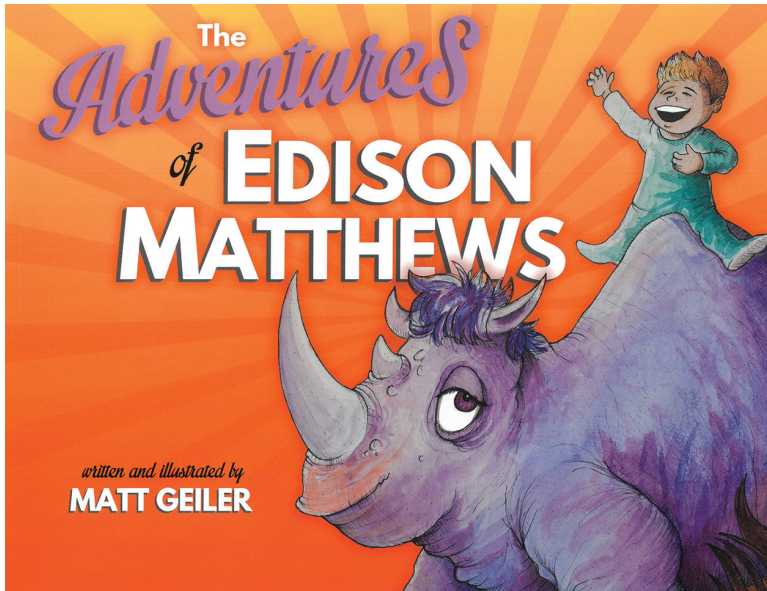
NWU students change the world by diving into it. They study, serve and perform abroad at a rate 20 times beyond the U.S. average for international study.

Portion of college students who study abroad

U.S.
1.6%

Nebraska Wesleyan University
33%

Source: Institute of International Education, 2016



The Adventures of Edison Matthews

By Matt Geiler ('97)

Sick Picnic Press, 2016 | 36 pages | \$16

—Reviewed by Jill Van Hof

Matt Geiler ('97) provides us with a delightful new read for children with his picture book, *The Adventures of Edison Matthews*. Young readers will join Edison on his many adventures guided simply by creativity and imagination.

The book begins with little Edison, tired of video games, slumped and glum by the prospect of a boring day. With a nudge from his father, Edison soon realizes that we already possess all the imagination required for a day filled with exploration.

Edison and his dad 'travel' their way around the world to ride the rare purple rhinoceroses of Africa and twirl across the stage with the best ballerinas of Moscow. Their imaginings lead them on a hike up Mount Olympus, on a soaring flight with feathery geese, and to a triumph over mummies and werewolves.

Edison and readers alike discover that a vivid imagination can cure even the most severe cases of boredom. There is no need to be gloomy at all. There is no limit to our imaginations! Children, particularly our early elementary readers, will be inspired by Edison to use their own fanciful thoughts

Edison and readers alike discover that a vivid imagination can cure even the most severe cases of boredom.

to 'travel' on fresh and thrilling excursions.

As author and illustrator, Geiler treats readers to captivating, full-color images of Edison's journey. The text, too, is differentiated with various font sizes, colors and graphics. In just one undertaking, we find Edison 'throwing smoke' past a professional ball player. Edison's power is so great the baseball catches fire! The variation in text style adds its own heat.

On each page, children can envision just how they might engage in and enjoy this particular outing. These fantastical adventures, accompanied by Geiler's drawings, are sure to provide visual appeal for children.

Geiler's work also serves as an excellent read-aloud for parents and teachers. After 'traveling' with Edison, parents and teachers can prompt children to ponder, describe, draw, or even write about where their imaginations can carry them. The quality illustrations, smooth dialogue and amusing settings will engage kids from the outset of Edison's journey and keep them engaged until the very end and beyond. [n](#)

Professor Jill Van Hof teaches children's literature in Nebraska Wesleyan's Education Department.

NW you



Upcoming Season

Musicals

- > 1776
- > 48th Street Cabarets
- > Heathers
- > The Mystery of Edwin Drood
- > Cabaret

Comedies

- > The Comedy of Errors
- > Dividing the Estate
- > Peter and the Starcatcher
(*great for kids!*)
- > She Kills Monsters

Dramas

- > Dancing at Lughnasa
- > A Christmas Carol
- > Death of a Salesman
- > Well

Dates, show times
and tickets at
nebrwesleyan.edu/theatre-tickets

Travels of a Stay-at-home Dad

—By Eric Wendt ('99)
Photos by Andrew Marinkovich ('02)

For his family's leap to Tanzania, a pro photographer shifts his focus home.

Andrew Marinkovich's ('02) success story isn't the kind you often find on the cover of a university magazine. The 30-something international business major's resume technically reads: unemployed.

He walked away from a promising job as a photographer with an Omaha studio. (Just don't call it quitting. "In popular job-changing speak," Andrew said, "I think this was what they call a 'pivot.'") And the reasons he pivoted reveal a character any university would applaud.

Andrew left his job to pack a dozen suitcases with his wife, Adrienne, scoop up their then-3-year-old daughter, Eleanora, and 2-year-old son Leo, and fly around the world together to Arusha, Tanzania.

Arusha is where Adrienne Marinkovich works as Willows International's country director. Willows operates in Ghana, Pakistan, Tanzania and Turkey to improve women's health through

education and information about sexual and reproductive health services.

Andrew said their work is often complicated by circumstances on the ground. "It can be a challenge to engage in meaningful conversations around sexual and reproductive health rights when even the most basic needs are not being met."

To help Adrienne rise to that challenge and make the most of her career opportunity, the couple decided Andrew would focus on caring for the children and "keeping the family united through an incredible adventure."

What's it like to journey over oceans and through savannas with two toddlers in tow? "Potty breaks and tantrums abound," Andrew said. So do the hurdles of immigration, language and culture. And so do moments of incredible beauty, wildness and joy.

What follows is taken from interviews and Andrew's blog, weliveintanzania.com.



Staying home was tough at first because I wasn't contributing monetarily, and I struggled with that. I'd get some jabs from the dads at school about not having a job, but it was more of a mental obstacle for me.

In reality, I couldn't work. While Adrienne had a work permit, I was on a tourist visa for the first 18 months.



It is fun to see these new things through the lens of our children. There is anticipation and joy around every turn if you have the right mindset.



Tanzania has been an interesting case study following my NWU experience in business and economics. It's been insightful watching Adrienne set up Willows International. And I've learned a lot talking with Tanzanians about how they approach business. Tanzania is working to become a developed country, but it's not as simple as throwing a switch.



Safari means to journey in Swahili, and you hear the word often here. You don't necessarily have to be searching for animals to be on safari, but oftentimes that's the case.

Sure, Tanzania has some of the best safaris in the world, but it doesn't have mountain gorillas. Time to head to Rwanda These gorillas had to feel like the paparazzi were coming in full force.



Nature has its way of helping you slow down and appreciate its power.





At first she was scared, but after one ride with Grams, I think Eleanora could have taken a trek across the desert by camel.

Here's a shot from my sister's visit.

We may never really blend in, but there is much warmth and friendliness in our new surroundings.



The camera is a ticket that's given me access to parts of Tanzanian life that I may not have otherwise been privy to. I gave a camera to one of the Maasai warriors and photographed their interaction. They were so consumed in their brother taking pictures, they forgot I was there for a while. It's hard to be incognito here. It takes creativity to help people let their guard down and be themselves with a foreigner.



For the first time in his life, Leo's had two birthdays in the same country.



You see churches and mosques next to each other in Arusha. We hear the call to prayer from our house. Most of the population is poor here, and they worry about surviving, not what god their neighbor is worshipping.



Why did we choose to do it? ... My answer now is for growth, experiencing a different culture, adventure, new challenges and at the end of the journey, I hope there is more joy than pain.

I look at Tanzania as an incredible opportunity—for me to spend valuable time with our kids, for all of us to slow down, have family dinners and connect with a new place and culture.

It's one thing to read about what life is like for someone thousands of miles away. We hope experiencing it brings new perspectives and appreciation. [f](#)

Creatures Great and Small

To save the world's largest land animal, scientists turn to a tiny one.

—By Chris Dunker ('08)

Kenyan farmers have a pest problem. And pesticides aren't an option. But what do you do when a 13,000-pound African elephant views your field as his personal salad bowl?

When elephants forage crops, subsistence farmers often resort to running them off in altercations that pose risks to elephants and farmers alike.

Alexa Oestmann ('14) spent her winter in Kenya's Tsavo East National Park to help farmers find a better solution. There, the biology graduate interned with Save the Elephants on one of its most innovative projects.

To prevent dangerous animal/human conflicts, Save the Elephants' biologists have recruited a tiny but effective intermediary: the honeybee.

The group's Elephant and Bee Project harnesses elephants' natural aversion to honeybees. The project equips farmers with a system of "beehive fences" around fields bordering the national park. These elevated hives are connected by wires. When a passing elephant nudges the wire, it disturbs the bees. This "natural repellent" has proven 80 percent effective in encouraging elephants to forage elsewhere.

As a result, elephants avoid deadly encounters. Farmers' crops survive to harvest. And the economy receives a boost.

The fences have proved effective in 13 countries from South Africa to India, according to Lucy King, a lead researcher with Save the Elephants.

"We hope to

see this solution expand so humans and elephants can live in better harmony," King said.

Bees offer farmers more than protection. "The beehive fences serve as an alternative source of income [with] their honey and wax," Oestmann said. In a country where monthly earnings average around \$100, that extra income is meaningful.

Oestmann helped harvest and process the wax into salable products, including a lavender and chamomile cream she called "Evening in Sagalla," and a peppermint, eucalyptus and coconut "Breathe and Bee Happy" salve.

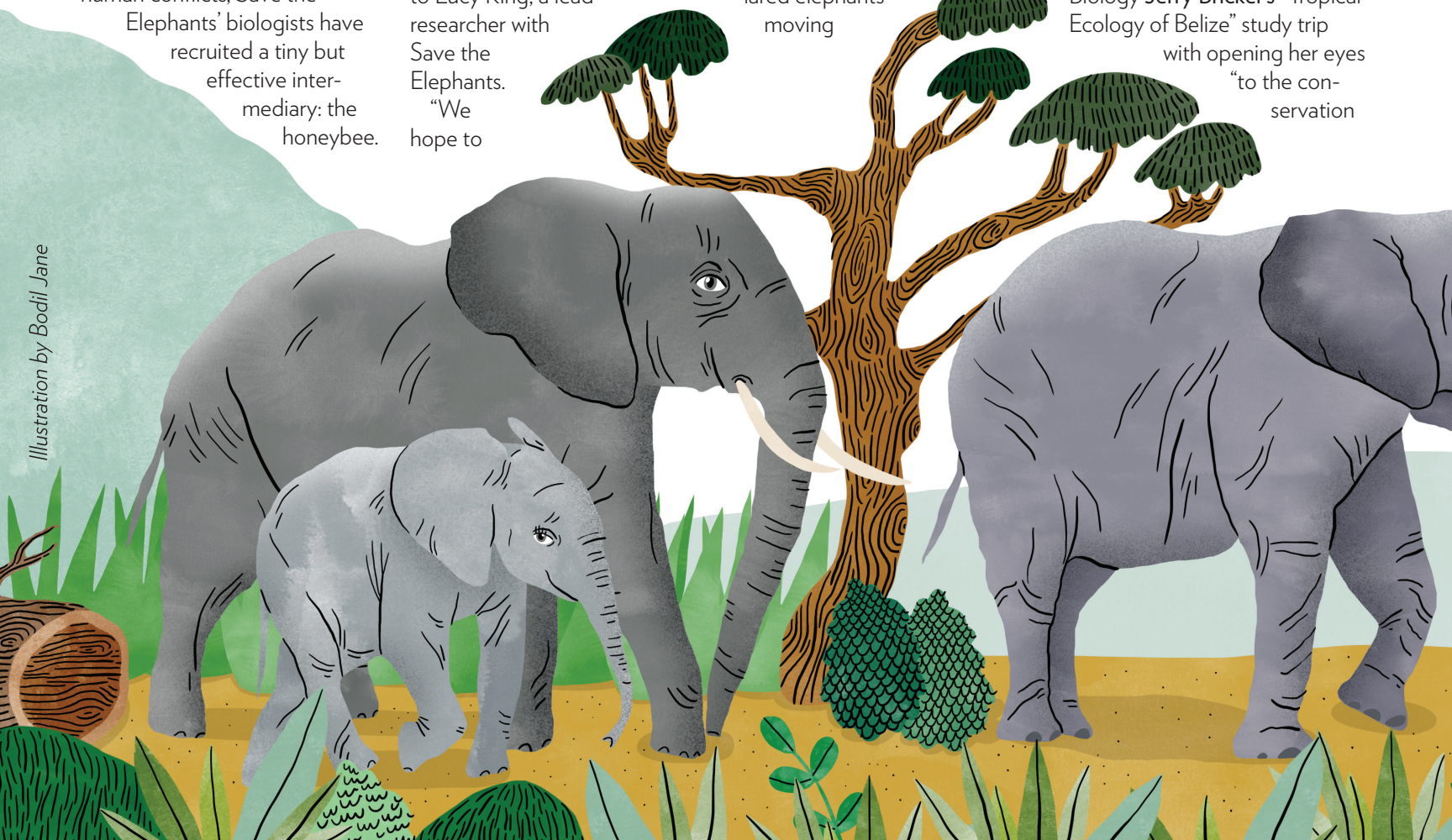
Oestmann also helped researchers track colored elephants moving

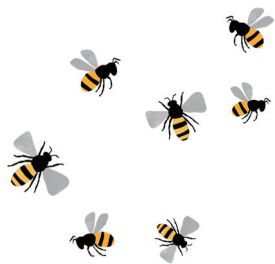
near the park. The more biologists learn about their migratory patterns, the more effective they can be in their conservation efforts. The knowledge can show them the most effective areas to install beehive fencing.

Oestmann remembered the day she spent tracking Maungu, a female foraging with her family. She watched them take dips in mud pits along their way. "It was incredible just to see these giant, beautiful animals exist in the wild," she said. "It is an indescribable experience."

Oestmann, an Auburn, Neb., native, cultivated her passion for conservation through internships and field studies at NWU. She credited Associate Professor of Biology Jerry Bricker's "Tropical Ecology of Belize" study trip with opening her eyes "to the conservation

Illustration by Bodil Jane





world” and pushing her into a career in that field.

After her junior year at Nebraska Wesleyan, Oestmann worked as a researcher at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory studying the abiotic factors that predicted seasonal bee populations around the lab’s headquarters two hours southwest of Denver, Colo.

Taking Kari Morfeld’s ‘01 elephant endocrinology biology elective, Oestmann said she connected to an internship opportunity at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan early to join an elephant research project there.

While conducting research at the institute, Oestmann taught a class about bumblebees and worked on a pollinator survey for the Virginia Working Landscapes program.

Elephants avoid deadly encounters. Farmers’ crops survive to harvest. And the economy receives a boost.

All those experiences helped make her an ideal fit for an internship in what she called “the most amazing conservation project.”

Oestmann lived at the project’s camp with researchers from Montana, Australia, Kenya and elsewhere. Together, they did without amenities like running water, air conditioning or reliable internet.


At Elephants and Bees, she said, “Life is very simple, but great.”

The interns, who lived in small domed tents, took turns cooking for one another in a kitchen with a gas stove and a small, solar-powered refrigerator. There was an office building, a room to process honey and a conference room that doubled as a village meeting hall.

Each morning, Oestmann set out a jerry can full of water to warm in the sun for her shower.

“They really are quite refreshing,” she said, “and you quickly learn how much water you waste when taking a proper running water shower.”

But it was her experiences out in the field looking for elephants, maintaining the beehive fences, working on a one-acre experimental “permaculture garden” and picking up Swahili phrases from farmers that have left an impact. Both for the local farmers and for Oestmann.

“From day one I was thrown into the various roles of the project,” she said. It’s a situation her Nebraska Wesleyan experience prepared her to embrace. “I learn something new every day!” 



Fail Harder

A Comedian's Guide to Parenting

—By April Jorgensen

The sellout crowd's energy is enough to put the Lincoln bouncer on edge. It's fueled by laughter, selfies and more than a little downtown wine. "Pretty rowdy," he tells me. I don't know yet that, soon enough, this bouncer will end my evening. I answer, "We moms don't get out much." My ticket sweeps me inside and up the stairs to my balcony seat.

We're here to see best friends Jen Smedley ('99) and Kristin Hensley—the parenting action heroes behind the viral IMomSoHard web videos. It's a homecoming for the two California transplants. And the welcome is warm enough to sell out two shows in Lincoln and a third in Omaha. Not bad for a duo that began posting videos to Facebook just last May.

In clips like "I Body Hair So Hard" and "I Pinterest So Hard,"

these two Nebraska moms probe the mundane and honest moments of motherhood to amazing effect. Several of their videos measure views in the millions.

Smedley and Hensley step onstage. From the balcony, I watch the moms rise to their feet, cheering as hard as they do when the school bus finally arrives to end summer break.

We rise because they get it. They get how parents need relief—how we're desperate for a break. We need a break, not just from the demands of our children, but from the demands we've somehow placed on each other.

Smedley and Hensley have built careers recognizing that reality—and using humor to help others come to terms with parenting's absurdities.

"It's ridiculous what happens in your day. There are just too many things out there on the internet, on Facebook and Pinterest about these moms who are killing it and are good at every part of it," Smedley tells me. "And it's just not true. If you're killing one part of it, you're totally letting something else slide."

Smedley shouts, "All moms have snacks in their purse, don't they? What have you got?" Moms laugh below me as I dig through my bag, looking for that 25-cent fruit bar I know is wedged down there somewhere.

Smedley grew up in Bellevue, Neb., but had no idea how popular their first Nebraska act would be. She'd performed in front of full houses as an NWU theatre major. But she didn't think this show would necessarily compare.

"We thought, 'What are we



Courtesy photo

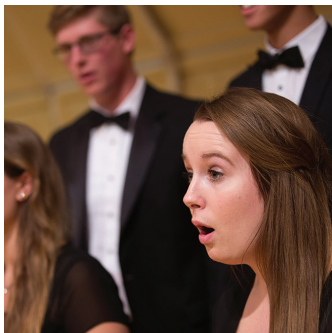
Jen Smedley

gonna sell, like 40 tickets?" Instead, they sold out the Rococo Theatre in a couple hours. So they added a second Lincoln show and another in Omaha. They've scheduled another 10 across the U.S., as well as monthly Facebook Live events.

And a summer tour is in the works. "We're packing up all the kids on a tour bus." Smedley laughs. "I'm sure we'll regret it."

ART SUMMARIES

Photo by Lane Hickenbottom



Vocal music

Nebraska Wesleyan's University Choir marked its 41st year with a five-state winter tour in January. The choir held concerts in Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Tennessee.

Photo by Lane Hickenbottom



Honors Festival

NWU Music hosted its annual high school band, choral and orchestral music festival in February. Renowned clinicians included Johan de Meij (band), Jing Ling-Tam (choral) and Tobin Stewart (orchestral).



Courtesy photo

If you're killing one part of [parenting], you're totally letting something else slide.

"Show us your snacks!" I find my strawberry fruit bar, kinked beneath my wallet. Forgotten, misshapen, par for the course, really. "Bring it up here!" they shout. From the balcony, I let my fruit bar fly. I let it fly so hard.

The live shows leave Smedley

feeling so much more connected to their fans. She tells me it's that connection that makes her feel like what she's doing is worthwhile. She's liberating people from just a little bit of that weight.

"If I can make anyone feel better about their day for just a

moment, then I feel grateful for what I get to do," she says.

Her reach in that work is about to get even bigger. She and Hensley have partnered with Rob Thomas (of Veronica Mars fame) to star in a 30-minute sitcom based on their web series.

My bouncer reappears. "Did you throw something?" Um ... When they asked for snacks, I ... He gestures for me to follow. My mouth hangs open. "You have to leave. Right now." But ... I'm a mom ... My embarrassment swells. My head feels like it's spinning, end-over-end, like a flying fruit bar.

As a comic, Smedley says, you have to be willing to go there. To lay it all out, with honesty. "We've discovered that the more honest we are in these videos—if we even feel a little bit nervous about telling our failures—then we're on the

right course."

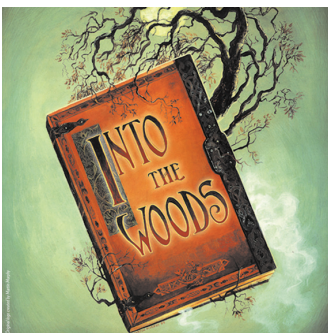
Smedley believes faked perfection is the sadder joke. Acting like you've got it all figured out—like you're not trying (so hard) to keep it all together—may be the biggest parenting fail there is. Because you're asking others to believe your act. You're asking them to follow you into your mistakes.

How honest is that?

"I mean, no matter what we're doing, like, even being on the phone with the TV people," Smedley says, "I'm still like, cleaning dog poop off someone's shoe at the same time."

So I decide to tell her about my fruit bar. My bouncer. My early exit from her sold-out show. "I guess I mommed too hard."

Smedley laughs a forgiving laugh. Mommed too hard? "There's no such thing." [n](#)



Musical theatre

NWU Theatre wraps up its spring season with a show for musical lovers. *Into the Woods* is one of Stephen Sondheim's greatest achievements. Shows run from April 20 to April 30. Visit nebrwesleyan.edu/theatre-tickets for tickets.

Photo by Geoff Johnson



Fine arts

Senior art majors use the next few weeks to complete work on their senior exhibition, which will open April 25 at Elder Gallery.

NWU Announces Plans for Athletic Practice Facility

Nebraska Wesleyan University has announced plans to build a new athletic practice facility that will house the Prairie Wolves' wrestling program and serve other intercollegiate and intramural sports programs beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Nebraska Wesleyan's Board of Governors approved the practice facility project at its January 27 meeting.

"It is an exciting time on our campus and I am looking forward to the completion of the new practice facility," NWU Athletic Director **Ira Zeff** said. "This facility will be a great addition to our first-class athletic complex."

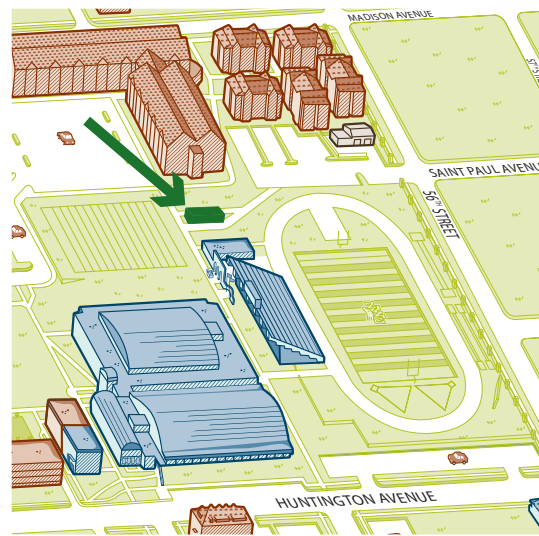
The new facility will be built north of

Abel Stadium.

"I am thrilled for the opportunity that this facility will provide to our current and future student-athletes," NWU Head Wrestling Coach **Brandon Bradley** said. "Nebraska Wesleyan's administration is committed to doing this project right, and it will be a first-class facility for the Prairie Wolves."

Nebraska Wesleyan completed its first season of varsity wrestling during the 2016-17 school year after bringing the program back to campus.

Zeff concluded, "This new practice facility will provide a great space for our wrestlers to build a tradition of success." [n](#)



WINTER SPORT SUMMARY



Photo by Chris Smithberg

Women's basketball

This program's trajectory is inarguably upward, with the Prairie Wolves posting their first winning regular season (13-12) and highest win total since 2001. NWU's leading scorers return to carry that momentum into next season.



Photo by Chris Smithberg

Men's basketball

With the graduation last year of an all-time great in Trey Bardsley, there were questions about how this program would respond. NWU answered with an 18-8 record, an Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference regular season championship and a school-record 144 points in a non-conference win over Kansas Christian.



Photo by Lane Hickenbottom

Men's swimming

This young program flexed its muscles with an Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championship. NWU won all three of its duals and took second in each of its invitationals, including the 12-team Pioneer Classic and the nine-team Liberal Arts Championships. NWU was led by junior phenom, Garrett Cadotte, who lost only one individual race all season.

Women's swimming

NWU dropped its duals and couldn't quite break into the top half of teams in its invitationals. Still, this squad set several school records and was named a Scholar All-America team by the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America.

Wrestling

NWU wrestling took its lumps in its first season in the nationally renowned Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. NWU finished 1-9 on the year. With work underway on a new practice facility, the future of this new program looks bright.



Photo by Andrea Holka



Photo by Steve Wolman

Indoor track & field

NWU produced nine All-Americans and four national champions at the NCAA III National Championships in Naperville, Ill., March 10 and 11.

The Prairie Wolves' 4x400 relay of Elizabeth Jones, Abbie Hunke, Kaylee Jones and Katie Krick set a school and facility record with their blistering 3:46.95 effort. Kaylee Jones brought NWU from third to first before handing the baton to Krick, who slammed the door on Washington University in St. Louis and IIAC sibling Wartburg to cement the win.

Teammate SteaVen Becker threw her way to All-America status in the shot put with a mark of 44-2.75 to finish sixth.

On the men's side, Chandler Petersen continued NWU's strength in the high jump with a fifth-place finish (6-7.5). And the 4x400 relay team of Tanner Dewey, Garrett Teel, Zach Holka and Michael Merical took eighth with 3:20.03.

In Dubuque, Iowa, two weeks earlier, the women took the IIAC team indoor crown while the men took third.



NWU's campus is a classroom for Professor of English Gerise Herndon and her students.

There are many ways to *leave a legacy* at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Interested in making a gift to NWU while receiving fixed income payments for life?

> Maybe a **charitable gift annuity** is for you.

Want to make a future gift without affecting your current lifestyle?

> **Including NWU in your will** might be the right option.

These are just two of many different kinds of planned gifts, all of which have a lasting and powerful impact on NWU and its students.

Contact: Brenda McCrady, director of planned giving,
at 402.465.2129 or bmccrady@nebrwesleyan.edu.



MYSTERY PHOTO

Photo finish

Several of you may recognize the former congressman on the left. But who is the Plainsman giving him a run for his money on the right?

Send your responses to:
Eric Wendt
Nebraska Wesleyan University
5000 Saint Paul Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68504-2794
ewendt@nebrwesleyan.edu

ALUMNI PAGES

You're a part of the Nebraska Wesleyan community—no dues required.



Shelley McHugh ('91)

Director of alumni relations
5000 Saint Paul Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68504-2794
smchugh@nebrwesleyan.edu
402.465.2123

Update your contact information, professional details and more in our alumni directory at alumni.nebrwesleyan.edu

MYSTERY PHOTO REVEALED



Elementary, dear Watson

You cracked the case on this missing person.

Your “mystery man” is **Mike Walton** ('82). Mike was a friend of ours throughout our time at NWU from 1978 to 1981. He was a sports reporter for the *Plainsfolk* and edited some for the yearbook, I think.

He also helped us with a little-known Christian newspaper circulated at Nebraska Wesleyan at the time, called *The Salt*.

It was good to see the reminder of him in *Archways*. Thank you!

—**Bruce** ('81) and **Maureen (Post)** ('83) **Stahr**
Walton, Neb.

That is a picture of my friend, Mike Walton. He was the sports writer/photographer for the 1980 yearbook. I believe that was his yearbook staff picture.

—**Mitch Ernst** ('80)

I think this is Mike Walton. He lived in Burt Hall. I'd say this was around 1977 or 1978.

—**Dan Schuttler** ('81)

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Encourage family members to apply to NWU today.



Proven Reformer Heads DC Schools

In a unanimous vote on December 20, the District of Columbia Council confirmed **Antwan Wilson** ('95) as its next chancellor of D.C. Public Schools. He began work on February 1.

Wilson leads a school system facing persistent challenges in the form of what the *Washington Post* called a “yawning achievement gap” between the city’s white and minority students. Wilson has made a career out of addressing such challenges.

“In Denver, he was solely interested in working as a principal in the system’s worst school,” the *Post* reported. “He accepted a job leading the Oakland Unified School District at a time when the California system faced declining enrollment and was in financial disarray.” Today, he turns his attention to schools in the nation’s capital.

Wilson said, “I run to places where I believe I am going to be most needed. It’s 100 percent possible to educate every child. Sometimes people say that’s unrealistic, but I just don’t believe that.”

T. J. McDowell ('94) is a lifelong friend of Wilson’s. “We talked throughout our college years about our plans to teach and lead in public schools,” he said.

“He struck me by his ability to connect and engage with students from varying backgrounds, using his own life story as an example and to communicate high expectations,” McDowell said.

McDowell told the D.C. Council’s education committee, “He

views public education as the way to close achievement gaps and help all students live up to their potential.”

As chancellor, Wilson will emphasize increasing student

engagement and family investment in neighborhood schools. “I want families to have public school options they are proud of and recommend to their neighbors because their children are thriving,” Wilson said in his remarks to the education committee.

He said that a community’s pride in its public schools tends to increase alongside student engagement. Schools can foster that engagement through experiential courses and activities like speech, debate, choir and foreign languages.

“If you can offer those things, then you’ll be attractive to families,” Wilson told the *Washington Post* before his confirmation.

Randal Ernst ('83, MAHS '07) directs Nebraska Wesleyan’s Master of Education program. Nebraska Wesleyan’s young M.Ed. program is a product of the same university culture that



Chancellor Antwan Wilson will deliver Nebraska Wesleyan’s commencement address on May 6, where he will receive an honorary Doctor of Pedagogy.

It’s 100 percent possible to educate every child. Sometimes people say that’s unrealistic, but I just don’t believe that.

fostered Wilson’s success.

Ernst commended Wilson’s holistic view of what makes a thriving student. “It’s more than test scores,” he said. “It’s academic achievement in combination with student well-being. Antwan understands that.” [n](#)



Photos by Emily B. Photography

A new organization wants to show young people how a solid self-image connects to healthy decisions and happy lives.

Like What You See in that Selfie

—By Quinn Hullett ('18)

Ashley Wood ('14) is chief executive officer and cofounder of SELFiD (Self Image Defined), a nonprofit she developed after a two-year battle with exercise-induced anorexia. During her recovery, Wood realized that if she wanted to be healthy enough to help others, she needed to do more to care for—and about—herself. SELFiD exists to support the kind of self-image that leads people to healthy choices in every phase of their lives.

The organization urges young people to adopt holistic, healthy lifestyles as essential parts of their individual identities.

Theirs is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

“We recognize health is more than nutrition and exercise,” said Wood. (Picture the cross-fit vegan with a 70-hour work week and an “ignore it until it goes away” approach to stress.) “So we strive to figure out what you need to continue to grow and move forward as an individual.”

Wood aims to help others restore their physical, mental and emotional well-being. She has the help of alumni in that mission.

NWU classmates **Kayla Ott** ('14) and **Brandon Peterson** ('14) are Wood's partners and SELFiD cofounders. Ott serves as chief communications officer; Peterson is chief operations officer.

“Each piece of health is broad, but everyone has their own habits that meet those needs and contribute to their happiness,” Ott said. “I want to help them realize that.”

“I want people to be happy, and when they are, they're more apt to do things for others,” added Peterson.

Nebraska Wesleyan's Panhellenic Council helped SELFiD get off the ground in 2015 with proceeds from their annual bake sale. And as NWU Greek alumni, the cofounders plan to maintain its connection with Nebraska Wesleyan's Greek community.

“Reaching out to NWU is a no-brainer when thinking about communities ... that have a passion for missions greater than themselves,” Wood said. “NWU is more than simply our alma mater; we personally know the professors, the current students, fellow alumni, coaches, admissions counselors and everyone in between. In fact, we consider them family.”



Ott, Wood and Peterson lead SELFiD.


We recognize health is more than nutrition and exercise.

When planning SELFiD's first promotional campaign event last fall, Wood turned to that family. She invited Professor of Communication Studies **David Whitt** to speak at their “No Filter Needed” event. Whitt accepted and spoke with gusto about the self-acceptance behind his own happiness.

“I'm unabashedly a geek and I embrace it,” Whitt said. “The friends I had growing up were geeks—we were into the same stuff, like Star Trek, Star Wars, Doctor Who and comic books—and they and my family helped inspire me to embrace my geekdom.”

Whitt brought current NWU students with him to speak from their experiences about finding health and happiness.

“I have a 12-year-old sister, and I know what a rough age that is. So I wanted to help people feel confident with their bodies and their esteem at this age,” said **Amanda Hilger** ('17) of Lincoln.

“Middle school was tough,” remarked **Caitlin Bentzinger** ('17) of Panama, Neb. “It would have been nice to have something like SELFiD then, and to have people in my life to go to beyond family or friends.” 

A Prescription for Poetry

Alumni honor teachers “building writers over in Old Main.”

Steven Nordeen ('72) is a professor of pathology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. At Nebraska Wesleyan University, he majored in physics. Yet some of his biggest influences were actually NWU professors of English: the late Mary Smith, Leon Satterfield and Bill Kloefkorn.

In our last issue, Nordeen wrote *Archways* with “a suggestion ... to honor these three incredible faculty.” He invited alumni to submit poems about or inspired by them. We broadened that call to include all forms of writing about any influential NWU professor.

The response was heartwarming. Alumni sent in more poetry and essays than we have room to print. They included Samuel Renken ('01), an Omaha financial advisor, horse wrangler and award-winning poet. He called Smith, Satterfield and Kloefkorn “three geniuses who'd bleed for Nebraska Wesleyan—good people who spent decades building writers over in Old Main.”

Renken offered the following, which appeared in his first book, *Where to Start* (Logan House Press, 2011). We reprint it here with the author's blessing.

Good Friday, Reading

—for and after Bill Kloefkorn

The man who never knew anyone
who was not a poet held me
again, captive and throat thick,
holding back the best tears,
full of beautiful impossibility.

And you keep doing it
to me, all the long week before
Easter, when I read and reread
Drinking the Tin Cup Dry,
knowing the channel cat's smooth
belly, the thick effluvium of Kansas
and Nebraska, the peckerheads
and troublemongers, the way
you watched with your binoculars,
as you say, “familiar now as a loose necktie,”
Halley's Comet. This is the same faint racing

light I watched cross the black western sky
as a boy, knowing if I were man enough to survive,
I would see it again with all the long years
stacked between my life and its desperate arc
around the expanding universe. I read your poem
for Nicole Ann one day after she is born
and talked on public radio with two poets
so cryptic in verse that I am lost to their words,
let alone the intended meanings.

I don't call them dolts or hard-ons,
but they know nothing of silage,
of young lovers holding the day
away together, they know nothing
of the way a landlubber digs
spade smooth caves,
have never felt the rock

and chalk, the Jayhawk
just a bird, their Loup lady
nothing like a river.

On Good Friday
reading in the Buick
while my wife buys eggs
of pastel and candy to fill them
and my firstborn sleeps in the backseat
sun, I inhale your verse and listen
to jazz, soft and cyclical,
on the same Wyoming
public radio station.

The music stops
and the news is of pirates
off Somalia's coast and tornadoes
in Texas. I wonder who it was
that last held these poems,
the person who was to return them
to the library on the second to last day
of December in 1998,
when I was about to be
in your far-reaching classroom
learning to call myself a poet
because you did. I wonder
if that reader was writing
into a rising sun,
breathing deep the stars
other dogs forgot to look for.
The radio host announces
the suction was so powerful
the shoes were ripped from some women's feet,
and I know, no matter how it happened,
that sounds about right.

In our fall 2016 issue, we were happy to republish an essay Mary Smith wrote in 1971, in part because it gave us an excuse to list her as an *Archways* contributor. We get to list Mary Smith again in 2017—this time, for **Mary (Byam) Smith** of South Jordan, Utah, who shared this memory of her fellow Mary.

From One “Mary Smith” to Another...

Thinking about you, “Mary Smith”
Holding the same name does this for me
Hearing your laughter still
Seeing your uniquely shaped body.

Remembering you fondly, “Mary Smith”
Having only limited encounters in the fall of ’82
Etched in my memory a single office visit
Prominently placed and easily retrieved.

How different the two “Marys” were
One outwardly confident, filling the room
Sharing her bigger-than-life personality
Not yet a Smith myself, still attracted to this one
Seeking a place in her story as many students before.

This “Mary Smith’s” life story changed forever
One short, single visit so many years ago
Boisterous laughter and an eye-squinting smile
Rising amidst the clutter and warmth of that room
With a deep sorrow hidden beneath it all.

Maybe the connection for all “Mary Smiths”
Desperately wanting to embrace others
Often tethered down by life’s circumstances
Rising up beyond them to be present
Sharing joy beyond boundaries of hurt and pain.

Then came a poem from **Steven Nordeen** (’72) of Aurora, Colo.—the alumnus whose letter sparked this project. He said, “While Bill Kloefkorn directly influenced or edited a number of my poems and continues to influence my work, this poem arose directly from learning to love the land from reading his work.”

Furrow Poem

—for William Kloefkorn

Standing astride the fresh-turned furrows
I see the thunderheads, wild and rough-hewn,
rising in the west.
The wind washes cool against my face
seeping into sun-chiseled cracks
on forehead and cheek that speak of summers
spent scratching the black Kansas soil.
I press that soil between my palms like a prayer,
for the summer storms have come again
to ride herd upon the earth.

I remember once when the rains never came.
Father squinting into the hot breath of August
as if to extract from it some small moisture
until at last the angry earth reared up
fouling the skies of Kansas and Dakota,
Iowa and Oklahoma, filling father’s nostrils
and lungs until he coughed up blood and better
understood the promise of God to Abraham.

The devil was in that dust; father knew that
still he sweat and swore on a stack of anvils
to fashion his crop.
Each copper dawn he stalked, tight-lipped, to the fields
gone hard as horseshoes beneath the dust,
returning tired and silent, tempered by locust and drought,
steeled to outlast what he couldn’t control.

I stand like my father facing to the west
Sifting good topsoil through my fingers and,
when I see the thunderheads riding herd upon the earth,
I am assuaged.

Finally came this essay from a current student, **Callie Rodina** ('17), of Olathe, Kan. To her, Mary Smith is a garden with hydrangea under a pink stone obelisk. Satterfield is a nice bench to sit with a book north of Old Main, and Kloefkorn is a writers' series and a bur oak planted a year or two before she was born.

The professor Rodina chose to honor is herself an alumna—likewise just a little too young to have direct experience with the three professors who sparked this assignment. The players may be younger, but the experience she describes is vintage Nebraska Wesleyan.

Talea Cares.

I am confident in saying that every professor I have had through my time at Nebraska Wesleyan University has been incredibly passionate, intelligent and validating through their educational philosophies. I am also confident in saying that there is no other professor that is as genuinely compassionate as Prof. **Talea (Schroeder) Bloch** ('06) in the Theatre Arts Department.

Talea is well versed in many different educational backgrounds with her Nebraska Wesleyan triple major in music, theatre and history education, which is why I think I find such comfort in learning from her leadership and knowledge. She both is extremely qualified and understands the unique experience of being a student at Nebraska Wesleyan.

If I were to share everything I have gained from knowing Talea, this magazine would be similar to a phone book, so I thought I would share a small fraction of what I have learned from her that has changed me as a student and a person for the better.

From being a student in her "World Theatre History" course, I was able to retain historical information easier than I ever have, mostly due to her distinctive style of teaching that is collaborative and experiential. Her extensive writing skills also offered me a head start towards research writing in upper-level classes that I now feel more than comfortable tackling.

Along with the more traditional education she offers, she also is an incredible vocalist. Being her vocal student for one semester was more beneficial than years of work I had with previous musical teachers. I can guarantee that any other student in her classes or vocally would easily agree that Talea goes beyond the

high expectations of a Nebraska Wesleyan professor, and does so with grace and authenticity.

Personally, Talea has given more to me than I could ever thank her for properly. Despite my original perspective of college walking into my freshman year, I now realize that university life is much more than solely getting an education. Talea was present for that realization and has been ever since.

Unfortunately, college isn't full of exclusively good moments, no matter how much we aim for that, my peers and I face great challenges personally throughout our four years at Nebraska Wesleyan.

It is incredibly admirable of Talea to be such a large support; my trials here at NWU have been validated constantly by her. From tearful visits in her office, to listening to valuable advice across the table at a coffee shop, Talea has shown me an overwhelming amount of compassion for not only myself as a student, but for me as a person.

Talea cares. She cares and sees you as a person long before she sees you as a student. I have not been her student for over a year, but if I needed an essay to be revised, advice about a career, or validation over the phone, she would be there. There is no doubt in my mind that she would do what she has done for me for any other student who needs it.

The faculty at Nebraska Wesleyan University are exquisite educators, educators that you won't find anywhere else. I am glad that I was able to cross paths with one who so greatly transformed my life. Thankful is an understatement when referring to NWU and Prof. Talea Bloch. [n](#)



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Chelsea (Beshaler) O'Connor ('10)

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That's why NWU offers the region's
only MSN/MBA joint degree.

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nursing.nebrwesleyan.edu.



Susan Klanecky ('96)

Combine great care with business savvy.



Calendar

May 6

Commencement

Graduates take their “final walk” as students at 9:40 a.m. Baccalaureate follows at 10 a.m. at First United Methodist Church. And the university awards both bachelor’s and master’s degrees on Taylor Commons at 1 p.m.



APRIL



Photo by Chad Greene

23

University Choir concert

NWU’s award-winning choir joins the Omaha Central High School Choir in this free concert in O’Donnell Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

25

Internship showcase

Internships play a growing part in our students’ life-changing experience. Come to Smith-Curtis classrooms to learn what they’ve been up to. Choose from dozens of presentations beginning at 5:15 p.m. and running through 8 p.m.

26

Student Symposium: Celebrating Research and Creative Endeavor

Hundreds of NWU students present results from research and creative projects during this daylong symposium of student work.

29

NWU softball

The Prairie Wolves wrap up their regular season against Loras College at University Place Park. First pitch is at 1 p.m.

30

NWU Theatre: Into the Woods

The spring season’s final performance is at 2 p.m. in McDonald Theatre. Don’t miss Stephen Sondheim’s fairytale musical mash-up.

MAY

1-4

Finals week

Send your prayers and positive thoughts to campus as students gear up for final exams.



Photo by Chad Greene

25-27

NCAA III track & field national championships

Alumni in the Geneva, Ohio, area can back the Prairie Wolves on the national stage at Mount Union College. Check NWUsports.com to learn about qualifying student-athletes.

Mark your calendar for these alumni events. All are welcome.
Contact Shelley McHugh (91) for details at smchugh@nebrwesleyan.edu or 402.465.2123.

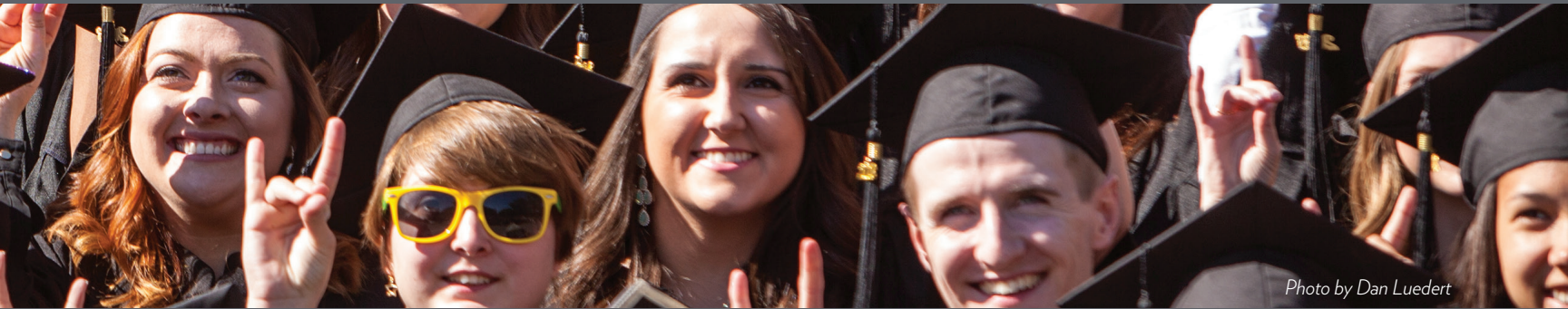


Photo by Dan Luedert

JUNE

7-10 Great Plains United Methodist annual conference session

Grand Island's Heartland Event Center hosts this year's conference. Events begin at 7 p.m. on June 7.



20 College World Series tailgate

Join us at the NWU tent outside the Old Mattress Factory between 4 and 7 p.m. for some CWS tailgating fun.

UPCOMING

SAVE THE DATE

July 17 Alumni Royals tailgate

Join us in Kansas City for a pregame tailgate ahead of the 7:15 p.m. game against the Detroit Tigers. Regional area alumni should watch their mailboxes for details.

September 28-October 1

HOMECOMING

Football vs. Loras College Class reunions Saturday, September 30

- ▶ 2013-2017 ▶ 1997 ▶ 1977 ▶ 1966 and earlier
- ▶ 2007 ▶ 1987 ▶ 1967



Photos by Dan Luedert



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