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Inside this issue

Suicide prevention	2
Weeds	3
Football	4



Photos by Nick Nelson / Dakota Student

An ROTC cadet rappels down Columbia Hall as Sergeant Jared Gass (right) watches on Thursday afternoon.

Diane Newberry Dakota Student

A pair of electric blue Nikes stand on the edge of Columbia Hall's roof, the large white "swooshes" wavering in the late afternoon sunlight. Below are dozens of students and onlookers, staring quietly at the scene. From this height (nearly 70 feet), the tree-lined sidewalks and post-war houses of 4th, 5th and 6th avenue resemble miniature dioramas of the perfect American neighborhood. "Just jump over the wall!" shouts the sergeant. With one step, the owner of the Nikes begins his slow descent down Columbia Hall, hanging on to both his army-green rope and the directions being shouted at him by the sergeant that's peaking his shaved head over the building's edge. Tyler Collins, a freshman and aspiring pilot, has never rappelled off of a wall before. Though he has experience

in the National Guard, he has joined the University of North Dakota Army Reserve Officer Training Corps looking to "expand (his) military portfolio." On Thursday, Sept. 21, the ROTC coached several young cadets like Collins through rappelling down one of the tallest buildings on campus as way to inspire them and retain them within the program. "It's kind of an exciting event that can help kids build confidence and something that we do in the army is rappel so a lot of people are afraid of heights," Senior Army Cadet Haley Balzart said. "So when you do something and you look back and say, 'wow, I did that and I'm pretty confident in myself' so it's just kind of something to get students involved." Balzart said the cadets had been training for two weeks by practicing tying hip rappel seats with rope and rappelling off of a smaller practice wall in the armory. This training was led by

older cadets who had graduated from Air Assault School. Despite their training, there was obvious tension among the freshman and sophomore students as they prepared, both mentally and physically, to walk up Columbia Hall's five stories. Next to their camouflage-clad peers, they seemed particularly unorganized wearing a variety of outfits including overalls, Minnesota Wild t-shirts and even the stock UND shirts given to freshman at the start of the year pep rally. "Anyone here who does not have a Kevlar, raise your hand," shouts the cadet in charge, referring to the hard Kevlar helmets used by the Army. Most of the hands in the small crowd go up. Surveying the scene, Senior Cadets Michael Jaeger, Jon Elmore and Allen Newell stand away from the action, perhaps thinking about how similar the newer recruits are to their past selves. "Probably four years ago I

would say be prepared for the time commitment," Newell said, "If you're going to commit yourself to ROTC - it comes with a substantial amount of commitment you put in and what you get out. Like everything we've put in, we've already received back, we'll commission in less than a year so everything we've done is coming to fruition now in our senior year." The other two men agree that while ROTC has been a significant lifestyle choice, they feel they have benefitted from it. "We have a different schedule than all our peers, but we're still able to have a normal college experience too," Jaeger said. "Still have normal friends, still have different majors. There's a lot of majors in this program and so we're able to do everything that a normal student would with just a little bit more of a professional commitment while we're in college." Elmore said that one important element of the program to him

was the social dimension of it. "The biggest thing for me was it was a good way to meet friends because I'm from California and I came here in spring semester, so I didn't really know anybody and everybody in ROTC was very welcoming to me and I met some of my best friends here," he said. Students enrolled in the ROTC program can choose to either contract into the Army after their sophomore year or to leave the program. Though they lose many cadets after these first two years, Jaeger says they'll "ask any cadets that do leave the program that they still had fun while they did it; they still enjoyed their freshman and sophomore year." Tyler Collins has finished his descent, the third cadet successful in the endeavor. Today, he says he has "no regrets at all."

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Francisco Alvarado-Juarez's multimedia installation "Yerba Linda / Pretty Weed" will be featured at the North Dakota Museum of Art until January 10, 2018.

Devon Abler
Dakota Student

North Dakota is known for many things: the prairies, hot summers, freezing winters and weeds. Weeds are tiny invasive plants that farmers are at an endless war with, but what if there was someone who wanted these plants for the purpose of beauty? Enter the North Dakota Museum of Art and you will find an exhibit that is focused on revealing the beauty of the weeds as a collaborative exhibit. Artists come from Minneapolis, New York, Pennsylvania and Iceland, focusing on displaying the beauty and resilience of these plants. The highlight of the exhibits is a piece by Francisco Alvarado titled "Yerba Linda/Pretty Weed." Born in Honduras, the New York artist believes that nature is a metaphor for the complexity of the human condition. "Yerba Linda" is an exhibit that Mr. Alvarado has been showing throughout the world for over 25 years. Sarah Bower, the assistant to the director, was kind enough to walk me through the exhibit and explain to me the inspiration behind the theme. "Into the weeds was

curated by our director Laurel Reuter and she brought it together with this idea that weeds are something we see as something to get rid of, but weeds are something that artist can see as beautiful things," Bowser said. "She pulled together a series of nine different artists to reflect a different viewpoint on weeds. These artists come from across the United States." When most people think of art, they think of the standard paint, canvas and paintbrush. "Yerba Linda" is not found on a canvas. Painted and cut paper bags, acrylic paintings on canvas, three video projections, sound, dirt and organic material are the foundations of this exhibit that requires the space of an entire room. When one first walks into the space, it is hard to believe that this room once contained pristine white walls and floors. The paper bags line the walls from floor to ceiling, leaving only room for the canvas paintings on the walls. Dirt is found on the floor, covered by organic material, and there are wood chips that are piled on the ground to form gopher holes. Bushes made of weeds form a hedge around the video projectors as the

sounds of nature surrounds the observers. Greg Vettel, the exhibition coordinator and registrar, was in charge of setting up this event. "The walls are covered in 3,600 hand painted, hand cut paper bags," Vettel said. "This exhibit goes back to 1993. Each place Francisco goes, he asks for volunteers to help hand paint and cut the bags. There are bags that were created by people here in Grand Forks. The weeds covering the floor came from my farm." It was breathtaking the way the colors and sound collaborated together. I felt grounded within the exhibit, the smell of dirt wafting through the air and the sounds of nature echoing across the walls. Being enveloped within the exhibit leaves one feeling as though they are trapped within a wonderland of sorts. Instead of falling down a rabbit hole, one only needs to enter through a door in order to experience a new mindset filled with wonder. The North Dakota Museum of Art alternates different exhibits throughout the year. Many will only last for about two months, but the "Yerba Linda" exhibit is one that will be here

for approximately four months. Because of the size and the significance of this exhibit, the museum desires all people to experience something that people here in North Dakota may not have had the chance to experience. Why should students visit the museum? First, the museum is located behind Twamley Hall and many students walk past the building on the way to and from classes. Second, all it takes is five minutes to stop by and experience a part of UND that is not a classroom. If it is raining, stop by the museum to wait it out and experience beautiful art to pass the time. The

Director of Education, Matthew Anderson, gave his advice to students who are curious about visiting the museum. "There are many reasons why students should visit a museum. For students in general, this museum is on campus, this is the state's art museum, the admission is free, why would you not check it out? There truly is not another place like this on campus. If you are at all curious about the museum or the exhibits, stop by," Anderson said. "We have food, world class exhibitions, concerts, classical concerts in the winter and bluegrass in the summer. This is a place where

students can stop by and break up the routine of being a student and take a breath of fresh air and perspective. Stop by to feed your creativity." Students who have a passion for art can also volunteer with the museum. To volunteer, just contact the Museum of Art at ndmoa.com. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekdays and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekends. The café is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays only.

Devon Abler is a staff writer for Dakota Student. She can be reached at devon.abler@und.edu



Classifieds

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The price of Thursday night football

Is the NFL risking player safety by hosting games on Thursdays?

Nick Erickson
Dakota Student

Roger Goodell has dealt with heavy scrutiny and criticism thrown his way over the course of his career as the commissioner of the NFL. Goodell came into the massively profitable NFL corporation to take the reins from Paul Tagliabue. Goodell has installed small changes to the league since arriving in August of 2006. He changed a few rules, added the defenseless receiver rule into the game and added more yards being tacked onto the extra points after touchdowns are scored. One of the first things he added to the NFL was Thursday Night Football. Goodell instituted the program in November of 2006, only three months after coming on board in his current position. Goodell implementing new rules to add to player safety and preservation of their health can be seen universally as important to the future stature of the NFL. Penalizing defensive players for arriving with contact to the head on receivers who don't have time to react to an incoming defender and penalizing low hits to quarterbacks to prevent lower body injuries are all intelligent and respectable additions. So why has he introduced these new rules for defenseless players? For every personal foul that occurs during a game, whether it be a gnarly face mask, a late hit, roughing the passer, or a hit on a defenseless player, that player is fined a set amount and it's then taken out of their next game check. The largest fine you will see is for fighting, with players fined \$28,940, and the second largest is a hit on a defenseless player at \$23,152. Where does this money go? The NFL reported that \$4 million dollars per year

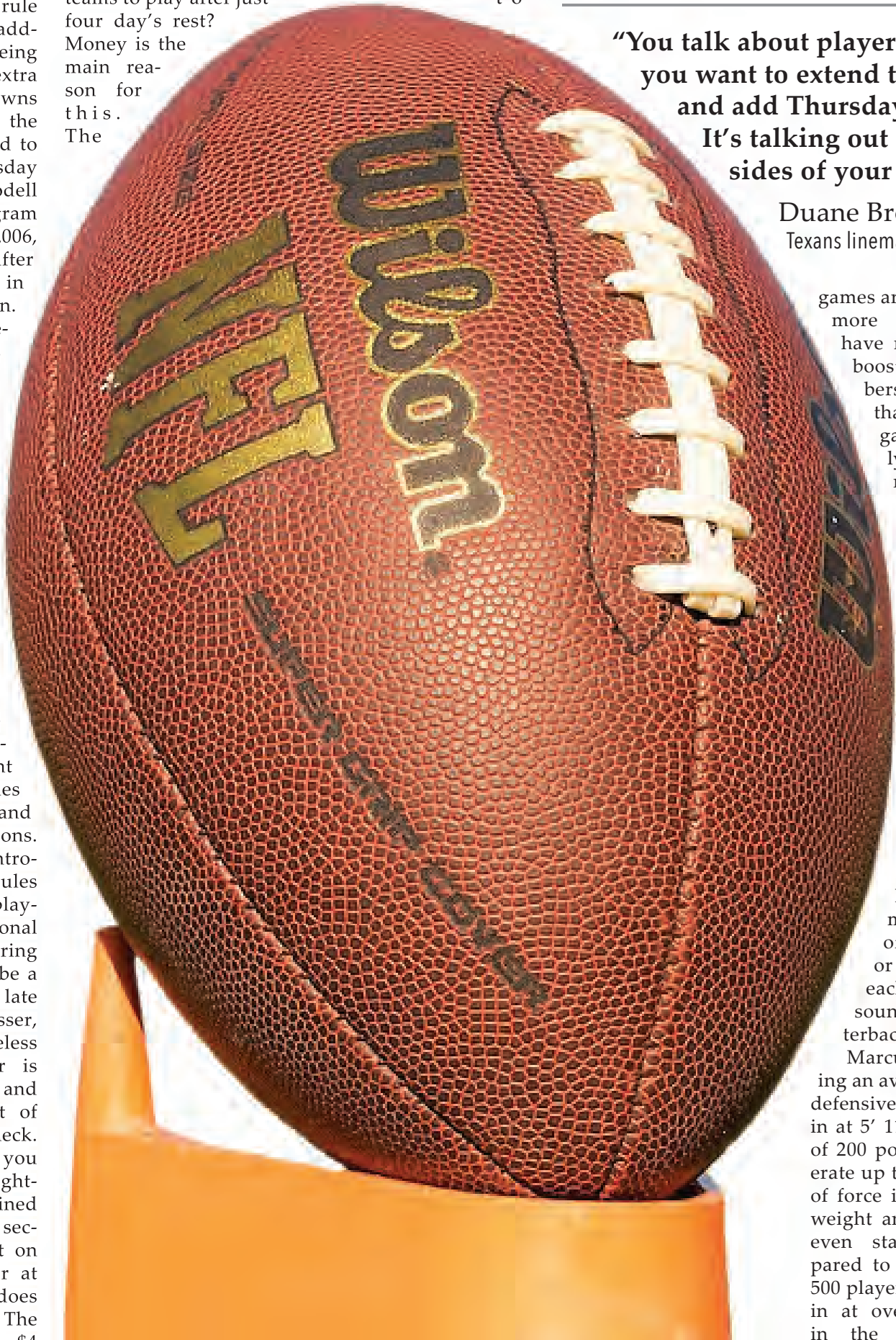
has gone to help former players. Fines currently go to the NFL Player Care Foundation and the Gene Upshaw Players Association's Player Assistance Trust. Players often wish for their fines to go to a specific charity, but the NFL doesn't cater to that wish under any circumstances. This is seen as incredibly hypocritical alongside the Thursday Night Football implementation. If he's so concerned about player safety, why does the NFL allow for teams to play after just four day's rest? Money is the main reason for this. The

sheer fact that those two organizations exist in order to help former players with assistance in medical, emotional and financial issues goes to show that it's well known that player safety really is an issue and Goodell sincerely doesn't care as long as he's making money. The NFL not only wants to own Sunday and Monday night; they also want to make Thursday feel like a national holiday every week as well. This is incredibly ignorant

towards the player safety dilemma that Goodell continues to harp about, is he actually in the business of trying to protect players? On Jan. 29, 2015, the NFL decided to make a statement after all of the players had been making statements about how they dislike Thursday games. They reported with their health and safety report that an average of 4.8 injuries occur during Thursday games compared to 6.9 injuries per game on Sunday and Monday.

A person looks at that, and would probably argue that Thursdays really aren't that dangerous. Understand the relevance in the "per game" piece. On Thursdays, there is only one game being played and on average 4.8 injuries occur. On Sundays during the regular season, taking into account two, four, or six teams have a bye week, you have either 12, 13 or 14 games being played on Sunday and Monday. Of course the Sunday and Monday

the NFL's concussion protocol. Even with mild concussions, where players don't lose consciousness, their symptoms can last days, maybe even weeks. A lineman sustains a mild concussion during a game and stays in the game and finishes the game, and may not feel the full effects of the concussion immediately. He may feel fine and his symptoms can go unnoticed. However, then comes the next week. Allowing his noggin to recover for seven days is a lot better than shorting that recovery process by four. Texans lineman Duane Brown spoke on the issue in 2013. "That Friday, everything was hurting; knees, hands, shoulders," Brown said. "I didn't get out of bed until that night. I didn't leave the house at all. You talk about player safety, but you want to extend the season and add Thursday games? It's talking out of both sides of your mouth." Brown was rather young when making his comment at the age of 28 with six years of experience in the NFL, he should theoretically be more enabled in the recovery process. This just goes to show you that no matter your youth or experience, you still need a substantial amount of recovery time. A large number of Americans love the NFL and love watching it every night it's on. But the importance of player safety is what should be taken into consideration the next time you decide to watch Thursday nights. Know that the players are most likely still sore and in pain from their Sunday game four days before. Thursday nights don't have to be cut out of the NFL schedule, they should just be wise in the scheduling. Have a team coming off of a bye week play Thursday nights, not a team that is just coming off an absolute slaughterfest four days prior. Let the players recover, and you'll see more prosperous times in the NFL.



NFL photo courtesy of pixabay.com Creative Commons

“You talk about player safety, but you want to extend the season and add Thursday games? It’s talking out of both sides of your mouth.”

Duane Brown, Houston Texans lineman

games are going to have more injuries; They have more games to boost their numbers. Considering that the Thursday games are actually pretty close in relevance with those numbers, it's showing that arguably, more players are actually being injured Thursday nights. The majority of hits that occur during football games on any given Thursday, Sunday or Monday night occur at the line of scrimmage. Lineman of 275 pounds or more ram into each other at the sound of the quarterback's cadence. Marcus Trufant, being an average-size NFL defensive back weighing in at 5' 11" and just shy of 200 pounds, can generate up to 1,600 pounds of force in a tackle. His weight and size doesn't even stand out compared to the more than 500 players that weighed in at over 300 pounds in the 2006 training camps. Players have gotten even bigger it seems since then. When they continuously take these hits at the line game after game, they need time to rest and recover. Concussions often go undetected, even under

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