

Volume I, Issue 1  
**THE Magazine**  
A Publication of Midland Lutheran College Journalism  
Fremont, NE 68025



Opening a New Door

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# Table of Contents

## From the Editor...

Welcome to the first installment of The Magazine. After 81 years of bound memories, we said goodbye to the yearbook publication, the Warrior, last spring. The Magazine has replaced the yearbook and begins a new experience for the journalism department. The Magazine will be released two times during the school year, one issue at the end of each semester. With the limited number of pages, we will not be able to cover all events of the semester. After some deliberation, the editors will decide on what content should fill each issue's pages. We, as a staff, are treading through unknown territory and look forward to the continual learning stretch of establishing a quality publication. We at The Magazine hope to establish a rich tradition like the current student-run media outlets, but at the same time establish its own identity among student-run media on campus. In order to do so, The Magazine staff and readers will have to be patient as it takes time to create a strong foundation of quality. We hope you enjoy this new magazine and look forward to your continual readership.

**Joe Evans**  
Editor-in-Chief



## Mission statement

The Magazine is a student-run publication features magazine for Midland Lutheran College students, faculty and community members. The publication, which will be published at the end of each semester, provides a platform for student articles on issues concerning the Midland community. The goal of the publication is to provide news in a modern fashion, while practicing ethical journalism with regard to fairness, personal and legal rights, responsibilities and accuracy. The Magazine also strives for a high level of competency in the technical aspects of journalism and also providing student journalists a professional experience.

## The Magazine Staff

### Editorial Board

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- Jan Miller Managing Editor
- David Wiegman Design Editor
- Curtis Heideman Photo Editor
  
- Leah Gurwitz Writer
- Randy Cook Photographer
- Jacob Hall Photographer
- Denise Lostroh Photographer
  
- Dr. Joyce Winfield Adviser



2  
**Editor's Note**

•

3  
**Table of Contents**

•

4

**Hail to the Chief** Dr. Titus keeps vision at the center of his new presidency

•

6

**Living in America** International student Yasuhiro Itoga finishes his degree at Midland before returning to Asia

•

8

**It Came from the Fridge** True stories from the refrigerators of Midland students

•

10

**The Buck Stops Here** Departments feel the pinch as budget concerns face the college

•

12

**Kickin' It** Midland Soccer teams build on experience in 2002

•

13

**A New Dimension** A new era in Midland football began this fall as Bob Dzuris took the reins of the Warriors

•

14

**News Briefs**

•

15

**Entertainment Recommended Records**



# Hail to the Chief

Behind the wire-framed glasses lies a pair of observing eyes with a vision. It is not your typical one-man vision; instead it is an institutional vision. It's what new Midland Lutheran College President Dr. Steven Titus hopes the college can envision one day.

"Typically when a president comes in with a vision, it becomes the president's vision and the only person invested in that vision is the president," Titus said. "When we take the time to craft an institutional vision together then all of us can be invested in it."

Titus took his first step

of the shared vision when he began his official presidency in October, two-and-a-half months earlier than originally planned.

"I couldn't wait to get here," he said. "I just wanted to get started and be a part of this place."

In the 119 years of Midland, Titus, the former executive assistant to the president at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minn., is the 13th president.

He was selected from a field of 46 who applied to fill the vacancy left by Dr. Jennifer Braaten.

Titus earned his doctoral degree in higher education administration from the University of Virginia, his J.D. degree from Marquette University Law School, and his bachelor's degree from Southwest State University.

In the beginning, Titus said he was unsure about applying for the position.

"To be honest, I wasn't really



Winter 2002

*Dr. Titus keeps vision at center of his new presidency*

**By Joe Evans**

interested in applying for any presidencies," he said. "I wasn't sure if the college presidency was the right path for me."

Despite Titus' uncertainty, Axel Steuer, who resigned as Gustavus Adolphus president last spring, nominated Titus for the position.

"He is well versed in leadership theory and practice, and has boundless energy and enthusiasm," Steuer said. "I have known him as a person of integrity who has high ambitions for Midland College."

To make sure applying to be Midland's new president and moving to Fremont with their daughter, Emma, was the right choice, Titus and his wife made one last visit to Fremont and Midland.

"My wife and I spent about an hour walking around Midland's campus last spring to get a feel for it," Titus said. "It was after that visit I knew I wanted to be in the search process."

Titus is not treading new water becoming Midland's president. He said his previous work experience under Steuer was helpful in many ways. "There's really nothing that prepares one for this position (president)," Titus said. "I worked as close to the president as one could. I oversaw many day-to-day operations at Gustavus Adolphus and played a key role in institutional policy making and budgeting."

Titus is learning firsthand nothing can entirely prepare one for being college president. There's something new for him to do every day. Attending meetings, meeting students, paper work and getting brought up to speed on current issues fill his schedule to the brim.

The one constant thing he is doing is meeting people and spending time with them, listening and learning about Midland. In order to gain a student's perspective of Midland,



Joe Evans

President Dr. Steve Titus takes some time out of his day to get acquainted with a few students. One of Titus' main objectives is to find out what students enjoy about Midland.

Titus spent an entire day shadowing a few students to share in their daily regimens. Being connected and communicating with the students is important to Titus. He said if the president is disconnected from the students then the president is disconnected from the institution's purpose and mission.

"Part of my job as president is to be the chief storyteller of the College," Titus said. "I can't very well tell the stories if I don't know the stories. The stories are in the classrooms, residence halls and on the field. They're everywhere and that's where I need to be."

In all that has transpired since last spring, Titus feels he belongs at Midland.

"I really enjoy life and the work I do," he said. "I love higher education. There is no place I'd rather be."

Upon his observations of Midland thus far, Titus said he notices the love and loyalty people have for the College. He also thinks the faculty is a real strength.

"When I talk to students, the

common theme that emerges is faculty," he said.

As far as improvements go, Titus said the College could improve its planning and institutional priorities.

"The clear priority from the Board of Trustees is resource development in terms of human and financial," he said.

The expectations community members, faculty and students have on the president are high and Titus realizes the responsibilities set forth on him. He admits he is not at all a perfectionist, but he sets a standard for him to live authentically, in the sense to be aware of the gifts and talents he has been blessed with.

"There will be some great days," he said. "There will be times when I get a lot of credit for things I have little to do with. There will be dark days when I get blamed for things I have little to do with. I have to be careful not to judge myself too critically to either one of these spectrums. The best standard I can set is to show up each day authentically."



# Living in AMERICA

*International student Yasuhiro Itoga finishes his degree at Midland before returning to Asia*

*Story by Jan Miller • Photos by Denise Lostroh*

There is a student on campus who has visited 14 countries, has two pet crocodiles that are three feet long each, and has a passion for shopping.

Maybe you have seen him around and just never gained the courage to talk with him because you think you will have nothing in common with him.

He is like any other student at Midland Lutheran College.

He doesn't like cafeteria food, thinks Fremont is boring, and hangs out with his friends on the weekends.

He is Yasuhiro Itoga, known Yasu.

Itoga, a senior international student from Surabaya, Indonesia, chose to attend college in the United States and major in marketing because it is well known for marketing strategies.

He currently has a job waiting for him in Shanghai, China after he graduates at an international marketing department.

Itoga decided to come to the United States for a college education because everything about his life back home involved an aspect of American life already.

"I was already eating American food, watching American movies and wearing American clothes so I decided to go to America," Itoga said.

Itoga looked at colleges across the country like every other prospective student. He looked into colleges in Boston and really wanted to attend Hawaii State University.

"I really wanted to go to Hawaii," Itoga said, "It's warmer there."

His parents also had an opinion where they thought their son should attend college.

A friend had recommended Midland to Itoga's father, because Fremont is a smaller community so Itoga would be able to focus on his education instead of other distractions.

So guess who made the final decision?

After traveling 25 hours, Itoga arrived in Fremont, Sept. 14, 2000. This was Itoga's first experience traveling to the United States, so he was nervous.

He said he was really surprised traveling from the airport in Omaha to Fremont because the scenery was not appealing.

"There was just cornfields," Itoga said.

Itoga describes Fremont as too small, too slow and very quiet with nothing to do.

This is quite different than his hometown of Surabaya, Indonesia. Surabaya is a major city that is much bigger than Omaha.

Surabaya is more like the size of Chicago. He misses the Asian

atmosphere of the city back home and the warm weather.

He said the winters are too cold here, so that motivates him to just stay inside and do nothing.

He also misses eating fresh seafood since Fremont isn't exactly close to any large bodies of water.

Itoga was born in Japan to a Japanese father and a Chinese/Indonesian mother. He moved to Surabaya when he was 6 years old.



*Senior Yasu Itoga has a unique advantage related to his career path of marketing. He is able to speak four different languages and has visited many countries.*

When he was in high school he visited Scotland and New Zealand.

He also visited friends and relatives in Australia, Malaysia and Singapore.

Itoga has a younger brother who is attending college in China.

Itoga is fluent in four languages: Japanese, Indonesia, English and Malaysian. He is currently learning to speak Chinese.

Outside of traveling around the world and learning how to speak foreign languages, Itoga has other interests.

Itoga works for campus security, which he says makes him more confident and gives him good experience in a leadership role that will later help him in his career.

"I love that job," Itoga said.

One of Itoga's favorite hobbies is going shopping in Omaha.

Some of his favorite stores are Abercrombie & Finch, Banana Republic, The Gap and J.C. Penney's.

Itoga's favorite American pastime is the family barbeque.

He enjoys the warm feeling of family community and can't pass up eating steak.

Overall Itoga sees himself as a well-privileged young man for being able to experience a variety of cultures through his traveling and meeting new people.

He is able to challenge his own mind by viewing other aspects of the world.

These experiences with traveling to other countries will be useful with his career in marketing management.

Itoga's culture experience in America also gives him an edge in his career field compared.

He had the opportunity to live in different cultures and gain knowledge of how business operates in another country.

"I am a unique person because I have been to so many countries and speak four different languages," Itoga said, "I am glad to have friends around the world that I can connect with."

Itoga has many similar interests to the rest of the student body at Midland.

Yet he has many experiences from other countries he has visited as well to share with others.



*Yasu checks on some security equipment before he begins work. He said he loves his campus security job because it makes him more confident and it is a good experience.*

# IT Came From the Fridge

Story and photos by David Wiegman

*True stories from the refrigerators of Midland students.*



Senior Jeremy Marburger and junior Bryant Kaden keep their refrigerator stocked with the essentials: Mountain Dew, cheese slices, sandwich makings and a leftover hamburger.

Like something out of an old science fiction movie, the food in the back of a student's dorm refrigerator waits patiently for the chance to go bad or escape.

"Last year one Sunday morning we were getting ready for church and noticed a green ooze dripping out of the fridge. We opened the door and there was a stream of mint ice cream coming from the freezer part. It was bad; our poor carpet," junior Lora Jewell said.

"My freshman year over interterm, my roommate opened the refrigerator's door and

unplugged it, but didn't clean it out. So the ice from the freezer melted and flowed onto the molded food and it all went onto the carpet and I had to clean it up with a toothbrush and some pine sol," senior Melissa Ehrhardt said.

"A friend of mine left some pears in his fridge until they turned black," junior Claire Hruska said. "Even after he took them out and cleaned everything out, the smell still wafted out whenever the door was opened. People would come over and ask 'What's that smell?' and it was because someone

opened his fridge five minutes ago."

"My roommate left macaroni and cheese in our fridge for a month. It was pretty gross. I made her dump it down the toilet," sophomore Rhiannon Wagner said.

"I tend to keep things in [my fridge] even after I know they've gone bad and I won't eat them anymore because I'm too lazy to throw them out," senior Jeremy Marburger said.

Some people use their refrigerators for more than just storing food.

"I've kept flowers in my fridge

before," senior Amber Yancy said.

"I had a sheep brain in my fridge," senior Sarah Perley said. "It was for my anatomy class. I took a cross-section of it home so I could study the parts for the test."

Some students use their refrigerator more than others.

"I don't really use my fridge much because most of the snacks I buy are like popcorn, chips and granola bars," junior Bryant Kaden said. "The only thing I need to keep cold is my pop."



Junior Lora Jewell and senior Melissa Ehrhardt keep a healthy balance of grapes, carrots and cupcakes in their refrigerator.



While the outside (above) of junior Ben Schroeder's refrigerator would seem appropriate for the state, the inside contents (right) are unmistakably those of a college student.



"I keep a lot of Slim Fast in my fridge because I'm calcium-deprived and I like the taste," junior Lindy Bartels said.



Sophomore Rhiannon Wagner and her roommate take advantage of their refrigerator's large size and built-in freezer to keep more food fresh than most college students can in their smaller units.

# the Buck stops Here

*Departments feel the pinch as budget concerns face the college*

*Story by Emily Kampschneider • Special to The Magazine*

An unsteady economy, new projects and unanticipated student enrollments are parts of a budget shortfall of the 2001-02 academic year. The deficit left Midland Lutheran College administrators in a tight situation and forced a spending freeze in all college departments.

John Klockentager, interim president, said a number of factors led to the freeze announced at the beginning of the 2002-03 academic year. One part included the economy impacting fund-raising.

“(It) didn’t allow us to reach our goals that we had set for ourselves and the development and the fund-raising area for this past year,” Klockentager said.

He also said the past president, Dr. Jennifer Braaten, played a role.

“(Braaten) was so energetic about growing and moving this institution forward and as she used to say, ‘raising the bar,’” he said. “We budgeted everything pretty tightly, and what that means is we had high expectations from development and we had high expectations in terms of where our enrollment was going to go both in new student enrollment and returning student enrollment.”

He said goals then were not met. “Whether it was development or student enrollment or fund-raising, we didn’t get to those points and that caused us to be in a deficit situation this past year,” he said.

The spending freeze affects equipment and traveling that will be enforced for the entire year, Klockentager said.

In the end, the projected budget shortcomings equaled \$950,000 where \$500,000 was less than expected monies in fund-raising, \$300,000 was expected in financial aid, \$100,000 less was in due to fewer part-time students enrolling and \$50,000 more than budgeted in operation and maintenance expenses.

To manage the budget problem, Klockentager said he and the administrative council started working this past summer. Starting this fall, three positions were held, including Elva Jones, diversity director, and Chuck Sacks in the development office, and some part-time positions.

Through these actions approximately \$850,000 was saved.

Klockentager add that it was not as drastic as other institutions in Nebraska. He said that the University of Nebraska-Omaha cut 33 positions and a couple programs and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln eliminated a hotel the institution operated and cut faculty members.

“We weren’t in a situation where we impacted programs or people and I’m very pleased about that situation,” he said.

Yet different departments and programs have been somewhat affected by the spending freeze.

In the athletics department, Steve Schneider, athletic director,

said the teams have had to do with less equipment such as fewer game footballs and no new cleats for the football team. He said there has just been some rearranging.

“We are in charge of finding money in other parts of the budget,” Schneider said.

As for traveling, Schneider said student activities were not affected by the freeze, but professional growth was. For example, he said he usually attended an annual NAIA national convention that took place in September.

“We miss the opportunity and business meetings, but I’ll keep in contact with members and via Internet,” Schneider said.

Despite the changes, he said he understands the situation at Midland and knows that other institutions are in a bind just the same.

“I’d be surprised if people are taken a back by this because it’s happening across the nation and our situation is not as serious as other institutions,” Schneider said.

In the science departments, Dr. Gary Carlson, natural science professor, said there were a few items that he would have purchased if not for the budget freeze. Some items include a map for a geology class, telescopes to be repaired or replaced and items for professional organizations like the Arboretum he is involved with.

“As the year goes on there will be other things on the list,” he said.

Yet, Carlson said he has adjusted, looks at it as more of an inconvenience than a problem and will do what it takes to get along.

“At this point I hope that the cooperation that I give to the institution will help end this budget situation,” Carlson said.

In the maintenance department, Jean Nick, director of custodian services, said workers have also changed routines. She said they have used old vacuum cleaners that were to be replaced, paid more attention to measuring chemicals and stopped purchasing more expensive chemicals.

“We’re back to the basics with soap and water,” she said.

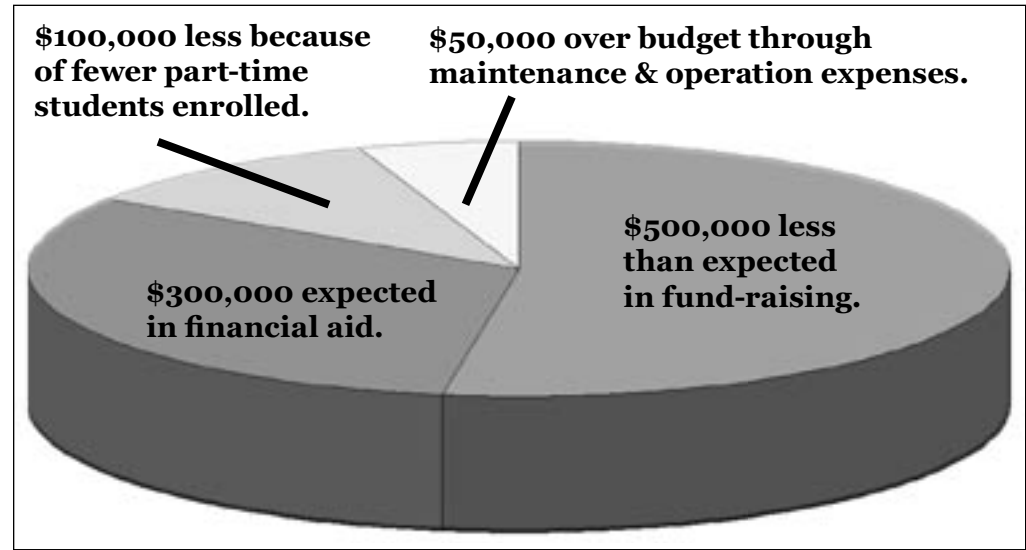
Also, no overtime is allowed which cuts on cleaning time.

“That’s a big change, but so far we have managed,” Nick said.

Klockentager said he has already looked at the budget for the 2003-04 academic year, which is about six months early.

He also said the battle is just starting for the council and the new president, Dr. Steven Titus.

“In fact, a tough couple of new years are ahead of us and our new president is fully aware of our situation,” Klockentager said.



The pie graph is a visual breakdown of this year's budget deficit

## Campus Projects: Clarkson Elementary School and the Cafeteria get facelifts as Midland expands

### Clarkson Elementary

Plans are being made for the Clarkson Elementary building that was purchased last spring.

Joe Sjuts, vice president of finance, said the building could be used for other educational programs.

“English Language Learners and the Early Childhood Development Center may possibly and probably be moved to the Clarkson building,” Sjuts said. “It would give our education students kind of a hands-on environment for education.”

Former Interim President John Klockentager said no certain use of the building will start until Fall 2003.

“At the moment the building is basically sitting empty,” he said. “We are maintaining the utilities to keep it in good shape and keeping the exterior in good condition to keep the community happy.”

Klockentager said grants are currently being written for aid to renovate the interior of the building.

Sjuts said the Clarkson elementary building will be beneficial to the whole college.

### Cafeteria

With this year’s budget freezes, the cafeteria was able to get a little financial assistance this year from Sodexo Marriott. Sodexo Marriott covered nearly 75 percent of the cafeteria renovation expenses.

The renovation began May 20 and was completed Aug. 1. The changes made to the cafeteria included new storerooms, offices, carpet in the private dining rooms and dining hall, a broiler, two soup kettles, a dishwashing machine, ceiling tile, wallpaper and all new surfaces. Maybe one of the most important changes was the added seating. The dining hall can now seat 310, a 50-seat increase.

*Information contributed by Leslie Bochart and Curtis Heideman*

# Kickin' It

Story by Curtis Heideman

## Midland soccer teams build on experience in 2002

"It has been an interesting year," head men and women's soccer coach Dan Sullivan said. "It has been a learning process for me."

Sullivan, as opposed to many of his young players, is not a freshman in the realms of coaching both a male and female team. He coached the men's club soccer team and the women's NAIA team last year and has had prior experience.

"I was an assistant coach at a school that had the same situation, so I was an assistant for both teams," Sullivan said. "Being the head guy is a little bit different and it has been a little bit of a learning process."

How does one start a new men's program, coach a women's program and see success in

both? Teamwork. Not just from the players but from the staff.

"I have a good staff for both the men and women and that's helped out a lot," Sullivan said. "I think the product on the field has been excellent and I think that's down to the assistant coaches being able to pick up the slack when I am with the other team."

Sullivan came to Midland with a plan and some goals for the Warrior teams to attain.

"In my first year with the women's program we hoped to be competitive which we did," Sullivan said. "We were 4-11 and we lost a lot of close games. We wanted to be over .500 the next year, which was accomplished, and now next year we want to challenge for the conference title

and I think we can do that."

The Lady Warriors qualified for the conference tournament for the first time in school history, taking a step closer to a conference title.

The Lady Warriors' conference tournament berth was not the only first in Midland soccer. This year the Warrior men started their first year of NAIA conference play.

The Midland Lutheran College men's soccer team not only made the transition from a club team to a GPAC (Great Plains Athletic Conference) team this year; they upped their level of play to stay competitive with NAIA teams.

"The team is brand new," Sullivan said. "We won five games, and the last few we were competitive."

The players were also satisfied with their play this season.

"(The season) went really well," senior defender Justin Hope said, "We had some tough losses, but we have had some good wins as well."

The transition from a club team to an NAIA team was not easy; in order to be competitive in the conference, the players had to make mental changes, senior forward Andy Marking said.

"You had to approach the season differently," Marking said. "You had to conduct yourself in a more

continued on page 14



Curtis Heideman

The Lady Warriors overcame many challenges, including the weather, to earn their first conference tournament berth.

# A New Dimension

## A new era in Midland football began this fall as Bob Dzuris took the reins of the Warriors

Bob Dzuris had the long-time goal of becoming a head football coach. Dzuris accomplished his goal by becoming the new head coach at Midland Lutheran College. Being the assistant coach last year, Dzuris said stress levels have not increased and one of the only main differences of being head coach is the increase of paperwork.

"Dzuris has brought a little bit of urgency in working towards higher success immediately," senior captain Jason Roberson said.

Dzuris and his Warriors started their 2002-football campaign Aug. 10, two weeks before their first regular season game, at the Wheat Bowl. The Wheat Bowl is the only NAIA bowl game.

"It was great experience and lots of fun," Dzuris said, describing the Wheat Bowl.



By Leah Gurwitz

"Even though it was a small-town event, they made you feel as though you were at a big-time ball game."

Dzuris' duties as coach stem beyond the sidelines on Saturdays.

He has to recruit through out the year for new players. He looks at the students' academics before seeing how big and fast they are as players. Since Midland is a challenging school, Dzuris said he wants to make sure the players can handle the school load. They then see how good of a player they are and what type of environment they come from including a big or small high school.

"We deny no man a chance or opportunity to play," Dzuris said.

Dzuris' objective is to make sure everyone has the equal chance to not only play but also succeed in the Midland environment. He said

he tries to ensure the success of the potential players by visiting them more than once, observing them to see if they could handle a diverse campus and if they are open to a new coaching style.

Overall the most important thing is for the coaches to be able to get the maximum production out of the players, Dzuris said. This is only possible if the players are here for four years. If they don't meet the requirements they won't play.

"Although not having the season we expected to have," Roberson said, "I think as a program we have made large leaps."

In the future Dzuris and the rest of the football team has plans of winning a conference championship. But more important to Dzuris is having the right players



Courtesy PR Dept.

Senior fullback Scott Olsen plows through a Dakota Wesleyan player.

wearing the black and white uniforms.

"The main goal is to have good kids who have good time management skills and who represent Midland as being a good team," Dzuris said.



# News Briefs

## Homecoming 2002 Wrap-Up

Midland Lutheran College celebrated a "Wild with Pride" Homecoming Oct. 4-6. Events started with the induction of a the king, senior Andrew Feeney and queen, senior Monica Brumfield. After coronation, a pep rally was held in Hopkins arena to cheer on the football team for Saturday's game against Concordia. The Warriors lost 14-0. Other homecoming events included a barbeque, building animals out of canned goods and a dance

## MLC ranked amongst best colleges

According to the 2003 U.S. News America's Best College report, Midland ranks amongst the best colleges in the nation. MLC is positioned in the second tier out of four of the midwestern comprehensive colleges offering bachelor degrees. The ranking system relies on measurements that education experts believe to indicate academic quality and doesn't rely on nonpartisan views of what matters in education. Each college is ranked in areas of peer assessment; retention, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, graduation rate performance and alumni giving rate.

## Volleyball team finds success in season

The volleyball team had its share of ups and downs this season. The Warriors collected a pair of wins over Dordt College, whose only conference losses came from Midland. Midland was nationally ranked four times this season, reaching as high as No. 11. They were regionally ranked every week. The team finished with a 25-14 overall record and a 10-6 GPAC record. Senior outside hitter Shalan Wewel earned First Team All-Conference honors for the second consecutive year. Junior middle blocker Janelle Sager earned Second Team All-Conference honors. Junior middle blocker Jackie Kohler and senior libero Brandi Truksa earned Honorable Mention All-Conference honors.



Randy Cook

## Soccer teams continue to grow

continued from page 12

professional manner on the field and mental preparedness became more of a factor."

Although the club team created a transition for some players, it gave the team valuable experience and something to build on.

"It was nice to be able to have the club team to provide us with some players and a little bit of a framework," Sullivan said. "It meant not everybody coming in was a freshman so it really worked out nicely."

With the forming of a new program some may think leadership would be lacking on and off the field. This was not the case. Leadership roles were filled across the board.

"Andy Marking has been captain of the team," Sullivan said. "He is a senior and he has been with the club program. He is a very good player and has been an incredible captain."

Hope believes Marking's leadership was an asset to the team.

"(Andy) stepped it up and did a wonderful job leading the team," Hope said.

With many freshmen aboard the men's soccer ship, positions should continue to be filled.

"It was a young team this year and a lot of underclassmen were able to fill important roles," Hope said. "They will continue to be leaders throughout their Midland career."

Another problem with a first year team (and any team for that matter) is that of recruiting high school players to become Warriors.

"Last year in the recruiting process we had several players who liked the idea of a first year program," Sullivan said. "We had others we lost because they didn't know what was going to happen."

After a positive start, the coaching staff looks to have a good year recruiting for the second season.

"With the fact that we have been competitive this year I really look to have a great recruiting year," Sullivan said.

Hope believes that with only a couple of seniors stepping off the field, a good recruiting year, and talented underclassmen coming back, the men's soccer program is going to be a force to reckon with.

"The only place for the soccer team to go is up," Hope said. "Look for Midland to be very competitive in the next couple seasons."

# Recommended By Joe Evans

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## Nirvana *Nirvana*



For those alternative music listeners who don't own a Nirvana album, you might as well buy this one. Fourteen tracks spanning three years, including their previously unreleased single "You know you're right." Buying this album is cheaper than buying three albums.

about this 18-year-old is the fact she writes and plays her own music, which offers rare teen-age artist sincerity.

## Tonic *Head on Straight*



The band's fourth album offers a mixture of songs. About half of the album is rock ballads and the other half is something else. While it is not as hard rock as their previous efforts, the album has the ability to speak to some lyrically.

## Something Corporate *Leaving Through the Window*



The pop/punk group brings an interesting sound with them on their debut full-length album. Mixed with the usual punk guitar riffs are the gentle sounds of the piano. The majority of songs are geared towards the underdog or the "unpopular" person, while the rest are aimed at anyone who has had a crush on someone. If you are a punk fan, but you can also tolerate a little Emo, then you should enjoy this album.

## Pearl Jam *Riot Act*



This is the band's seventh studio album and no matter what they release, they will always have their dedicated fan base. The band still maintains their sound on this album, with the oh-so recognizable vocals. While this album is good, it would be better to hear live. Pearl Jam is a live performance band and this album proves that. Nevertheless it is Pearl Jam and any true fan of the band will buy this album. If you aren't a big fan, wait to see them in concert instead.

## Rascal Flatts *Melt*



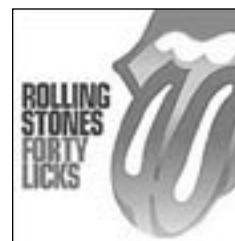
Welcome to my token country CD recommendation. I don't know too much about this trio, but whenever I flip the channel past the country video channel I see their video for "These Days." Of what I do know about this group, I believe the group has probably grown as artists on this second album. I'll let you be the judge on whether or not you should buy this record.

## WWE *WWE Anthology*



This three-disc set compiles all you die-hard wrestling fans' favorite entrance music. I don't know if I would recommend buying this one new, but maybe if you have a few bucks lying around someday you can buy this CD used.

## Rolling Stones *Forty Licks*



I know, another greatest hits collection by the band that won't go away. This two-disc collection offers the Rolling Stones' classics. It also includes four new songs. If you're all about adding to your CD collection, go ahead and pick up this album. You should be set, unless the group releases another greatest hits album next millennium.

## Nas *Lost Tapes*



This album is loaded with tracks that never saw the light of day on non-bootlegged albums or mix tapes. The songs are not your radio friendly songs per se, but they do strike a chord among the streets and offer some interesting messages.

## Avril Lavigne *Let Go*



The album has been out for a while now, but after some deliberation, critics alike have determined this Canadian to be the real deal. The album offers a mixture of ballads and semi-punk songs. Maybe the most respected thing