The Art of: Mourning

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Art by Zoe Chen

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In 1967, Northwestern Michigan College launched its Career Pilot Program classroom training. The program was led by college engineer and former WWII P-38 pilot Art Moenkhaus and local flying service proprietor Hogan Helms, who served as the program director until he retired in 1980. The classes were held at the old Technical Center space on West Bay campus (now known as the Great Lakes campus). Today, NMC's aviation program is only one of three available through Michigan’s community colleges.
Creativity Thrives During National Novel Writing Month

Ann Hosler
Copy Editor

In November, more than 300,000 writers around the globe commit to a single goal: write 50,000 words of a novel in one month. It sounds simple on the surface, yet the dedication and tenacity required to complete this task is anything but. A lack of inspiration, roadblocks, or not having any outline in place cause many writers to fall short of their goal.

National Novel Writing Month—better known as NaNoWriMo—will celebrate its 20th anniversary this November. The challenge to write 50,000 words of a new fiction novel’s first draft is one embarked on by both aspiring writers and well-known authors. Standouts such as Marissa Meyer (“Cinder,” “Scarlet,” and “Cress”—all three in a single month), Hugh Howey (“Wool”), Sara Gruen (“Water for Elephants”) and Erin Morgenstern (“The Night Circus”) launched their bestsellers as the eventual product resulting from this event.

There are no restrictions for participating in NaNoWriMo—all you need is some inspiration. Any fiction genre is fair game, and the project tracker on the event’s website even allows for multi-genre books. Write that paranormal fantasy thriller lurking in your mind, or simply write for the joy of it with no future plans of publication. NaNoWriMo has a thriving community that supports everyone finding fulfillment in their writing—even the “rebels” that write nonfiction or decide to revise a previously unfinished novel.

Reaching the 50,000 word goal averages out to 1,667 words per day. It is a manageable amount if you can dedicate a couple of hours to writing every day. As a student, however, this gets trickier when also balancing work and school with free time. The best approach is to pick a certain hour each day and just write as much as possible. Set up a Google calendar reminder or use a goal tracker app to encourage you to keep a writing schedule.

NaNoWriMo is worth a writer’s time even if reaching the 50,000 word goal is too lofty. A first draft of only 12,000 words by Nov. 30 is still 12,000 more than you had on Oct. 31. Participating is the chance to explore ideas, and while it’s nice to “win,” the true prize is the process of getting those words on paper.

The event doesn’t just stop after November, either. NaNoWriMo is a nonprofit with year-round support of creative writing and literacy, such as the Young Writers Program, a writing classroom workshop for grades K-12. NaNoWriMo participants can use the January and February “Now What?” months to focus on editing and revision of their November writing. A virtual summer event called Camp NaNoWriMo allows participants to join a “cabin” of up to 11 writers, announce a project, and set a word limit goal.

Writing is more rewarding when you have a like-minded community to encourage (and commiserate) with. Here in Traverse City, the TC WriMos (facebook.com/groups/TCWrimonos) welcomes writers from northern Michigan into its fold. During NaNoWriMo, the TC WriMos host write-in, writing hop, and writing crawl events, as well as a lock-in on Nov. 15 at the Traverse City District Library.

Join the NaNoWriMo community and challenge yourself to write 50,000 words this November by announcing your project at nanowrimo.org.

Emily Slater
Editor-in-Chief

This November, 200 local families will be provided with an entire Thanksgiving meal, thanks to an unlikely source: the students of Kristy McDonald’s Professional Communications (BUS231) class.

McDonald created her unique class in an effort to pull her students out of the humdrum of textbook reading and assignments and into the real world of business and project management. What has evolved is an internship-like project at TBA Credit Union, and the Grand Traverse Community Foundation that also created a deeper connection to the end result. “It’s rewarding. To get those [response] emails back, to get to distribute the boxes, was such a great experience,” says Bugai.

Every BUS231 student sent a formal letter to a local business explaining the project and seeking donations toward its final goal. Whether through monetary donations, internal company food drives, or a combination of both, local companies such as Hagerty Insurance, BATA, TBA Credit Union, and the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa have already ensured that the class is well on their way to meeting their goal.

“We keep getting more and more every week,” says Bugai. Each company is assigned a student liaison, allowing the chance for students to gain on-the-job experience while utilizing professional communications skills. Students are split into two groups—marketing and logistics—in order to cover the broad range of moving pieces the project requires.

Armed with the knowledge that many students suffer from food insecurity and are heavily dependent on school meals for their main source of nutrition, the BUS231 class wanted to make sure their Thanksgiving boxes went above and beyond the needs of just one meal. The boxes will be filled with everything necessary for a family Thanksgiving meal, as well as snacks and extra food to lighten the burden of an extended holiday weekend. “Ideally they could use that throughout the whole Thanksgiving break and then they can come back to school fueled up and ready to continue learning,” explains Bugai.

The experience of seeing such a massive project through from start to finish carries more weight than just a good final grade. On Nov. 25, the class will personally hand out a Thanksgiving box to each of the 200 families, wrapping up nearly three months of hard work and challenges. Marketing team member Cassidy Cowly says the stakes and pressure sometimes felt higher than other classes, but that also created a deeper connection to the end result. “It’s rewarding. To get those [response] emails back, to get to distribute the boxes, everything. It’s just so rewarding.”

Donations from the community are welcomed and will be accepted up until Nov. 25. In addition to monetary and food donations, items such as turkey basters, decorative tablecloths and paper products, games, and crafts are all being sought. To donate, go to nmcfoodforthought.weebly.com.

Class Project Feeds 200 Families This Thanksgiving
Create TC was founded with the purpose of welcoming the community to enjoy the heart of Traverse City. Troy Daily, a native and local entrepreneur, started the organization with co-founder Jeremy Smith, a Michigan local with a background in artist management and music venues. The duo now shares their passion of craft beverages and love of the outdoors with a unique twist to festivals.

On Nov. 9, the Flapjack and Flannel festival runs from 1pm to 7pm in the parking lot at The Little Fleet. Festival goers can enjoy a mixture of brews, pancakes and music. Wear a warm flannel and be ready to have a fun evening while tasting beers from more than 10 breweries: Iron Fish, Right Brain, Jolly Pumpkin, North Peak, Bowers, Strong Brew, Odd Side, Griffin Claw, Cheboygan, Earthen Ales, and more.

Along with a wonderful variety of brews there will be delicious flapjacks from the Daily Blend and Glendale Ave. Live music will be played by the Jonathan Timm Band, The Pocket, and The Pistil Whips. Adults aren’t the only ones invited to have fun—the Flapjack and Flannel Festival is kid friendly with a few games in the mix.

“We wanted to do something fun that fit the season, but a little out of the box,” said Daily. This festival returns for its third year, and around 1,500 people are anticipated to attend. General admission tickets are $30 through Nov. 8 ($35 on festival day) and include one pancake and two drink tokens (2-8oz pours each). For the younger audience, tickets are $10 and include a non-alcoholic drink token and one pancake. VIP ticket sales are limited (only 100 available) and priced at $65, which includes eight drink tokens, one-hour early entry, and two Flapjack and Flannel Festival koozies.

This festival is associated with Traverse City Beer Week, which runs from Nov. 8 through Nov. 15. “We live in a great place, northern Michigan,” Daily said. “I want to share the great atmosphere with community before the holidays hit.”

Warm up with a plate of flapjacks courtesy of the Daily Blend and Glendale Ave.

Flapjacks, flannel, and craft brews get everyone smiling at The Little Fleet.
Veterans Struggle to Become Students

Randi Upton
Staff Writer

Adjusting to civilian life is already difficult for most veterans, and becoming a student is a completely new set of issues to deal with. Many who return to college at an older age struggle with things that their younger counterparts do not understand. These struggles are further complicated when entering college in a post-military life.

The first study to look at the burdens of mental health and day-to-day life of veterans at the community college level was published in the "Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability." A total of 211 student veterans participated in the 2017 study and reported on a variety of issues that plagued them and their families.

The study revealed that one of the most frequent dilemmas of the veteran-to-student transition is the lack of community. In the military, there is a common brotherhood in the ranks that simply does not exist in campus life. Veterans may find themselves angry and frustrated, even at orientation, and it feels like it all goes downhill from there. They come to class, do not talk to anyone, and then go home when it is all done for the day. The feeling of isolation on top of the regular struggles of adulthood and college that others already face, with the shadow of mental illness hanging overhead, may spur a veteran to either show lower academic achievement or drop out within the first year of college.

Northwestern Michigan College was not always as veteran-friendly as it is today. David Hosler, an instructor in NMC’s Computer Information Technology program, had a much different experience when he attended the college in the early 2000s. “When I started at NMC as a student, we did not have someone in the role that [NMC point of contact for Military and Veteran Services] Scott Hertzberg fills,” Hosler explains. “Our POC was a student employee that worked 15 hours a week, so getting in touch with them was extremely difficult. There was no on-boarding process that veterans went through, and we were left on our own without direction.”

Struggles include juggling education and employment, dealing with the entire Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) system, families and children, as well as acclimating to a civilian world while having mental or physical illness and injuries. The study in the "Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability" concluded that: student veterans have difficulty relating to their student peers, they struggle with the demands of being a successful adult and student, and situations or events on campus (even if it is just a class) may trigger memories and intrusive thoughts.

To many veterans, these conclusions may seem obvious. Veterans are vigilant at all times, some without even realizing it. They choose classrooms in visible areas and pick seats near the door where all entrances and exits are visible. Noise cancelling headphones drown out all the extra chatter—or no headphones allow them to hear everything.

At NMC, there are classrooms and groups that veterans may not utilize or join. One problem area is Scholar’s Hall basement. This is the place for some of the English and writing students in the classroom. Hosler states, “There’s no windows and I feel trapped when I go down there. As a student, I avoided taking any of my classes in closed spaces like that.” Hosler ensures that his students have the freedom to sit where they want in his classroom, and notes that most veterans sit either near the door or in the back corner where they can observe everything.

“As faculty, I greatly enjoy having fellow veterans in the classroom, and I can pick them out on the first day of class. Being a veteran also, from a different era, we can trade stories and build a rapport,” Hosler adds. “We may only see these vets for a couple years as faculty, but we are all brothers and sisters.”

The troubles of every veteran student is different, but the bottom line of both the study and real life is the same. Veteran students need extra services to help this growing population as more and more take advantage of their GI Bills. This transition into college life at NMC has improved, but there is always more that can be done in a changing environment.

NMC now has a strong support network and system for veteran students on campus. For the second year in a row, the college recently ranked second by Military Times in its national “Best for Vets” two-year school rankings. Scott Herzberg, point of contact for Military and Veteran Services at NMC, works with every veteran applying for college, from orientation to graduation. He works to ensure the needs of veterans, active duty, reserve, and National Guard are met, at home and in the classroom.

Support for NMC’s student veterans includes help with fees and books if financial aid gets held up, access to registration in the earliest available window, veteran-based events that are also important for the community and school, a veteran's lounge built for the peace of mind and solitude a veteran may need with the option to mingle with other veterans, as well as understanding teachers who respect a student’s mental health needs.

“Things have improved amazingly since Scott [Hertzberg] took his position, and he is one of the best parts of this college,” Hosler says. “Herzberg is just a single part of the equation that makes NMC such a great place for vets now—but he's the proverbial linchpin that keeps it all together.”

Veterans Day Events

Randi Upton
Staff Writer

Monday, Nov. 11 is Veterans Day. Every year on this day, local and nationwide companies offer goods and services for veterans.

These are the places offering services:

Local
• 8am to 2pm: Deerhaven Dental is offering free dental services for veterans. First come, first serve basis. 5217 N Royal Dr in Traverse City.
• 9am to 6pm: Salon 14 (formerly Love Hair) in Traverse City will offer complimentary haircuts.
• All Day: Free fee day for all national parks, including Sleeping Bear Dunes.
• 8am to 8pm: Rico’s Cafe at 5790 US-31 in Grawn is offering a complimentary buffet for veterans and active duty military personnel.
• 7pm to Midnight: Nolan’s Cigar Bar in downtown Traverse City is offering a free cigar and drink for all veterans.

Nationwide
• McDonald’s is offering a free breakfast or extra value meal to all veterans.
• Olive Garden has a special menu for a free entree for active duty and veteran.
• Red Lobster is giving away a free appetizer or dessert on Veteran’s Day and the day before, Nov. 10.
• Applebees and Chili’s both offer a free meal to veterans and active duty.

NMC will host its annual Veterans Day ceremony. It starts at 8:30am with a free breakfast for veterans in the Dennos Museum. At 9am is the Walk of Honor, where the community and students are encouraged to line up beside the sidewalks between the Dennos and Tanis. The Traverse City Central High School drumline will lead the veterans on a walk to the flagpole. At 9:10am the local VFW will hold a flag raising ceremony, play Taps, and do a three-volley salute. From 10am to noon cake and coffee will be served in the Tanis atrium.

Let us remember what this day is for, regardless of political stance or beliefs. Memorial Day is to remember those who have fallen in past or current wars, and Veterans Day is to remember everyone who has served.
Local Youth Express Grief Through Art

Kennedy Krieger  On Nov. 13, Michael’s Place will showcase student art at the Dennos Museum Center during The Art of: Mourning event. This is the first year that Michael’s Place is hosting the event, which is held during National Children’s Grief Awareness Month. The event opens to the public at 6pm and runs from 6:30pm to 8pm.

The Art of: Mourning contains art pieces created by junior high and high school students who have expressed their grief through the form of art. Students submitted their pieces into a nationwide competition through Scholastic Art and Writing. This competition awards prize money for the best piece or art which includes a state prize of $500 and a national prize of $1000. The 2018 national award went to a student from Interlochen Arts Academy.

Along with a showcase, there will be a presentation and workshops to hold support groups for individuals who are in need. “The purpose of this event is to give voice through artistic expression through the bereavement,” says Melissa Fournier, program direction at Michael’s Place. The mission of Michael’s Place is to help children and teens learn how to deal with the grief of losing a loved one. One goal is to educate others on how to deal with the bereavement process. “A multi-tiered approach is used to help children and teens with bereavement. It’s not one size fits all,” says Fournier.

Along with the exhibit taking place at the Dennos Museum, students and community members can join in on other events that are put on through Michael’s Place. An annual event called “The Restoring Hope Breakfast” is held each fall. Connie Wintzinger, development director at Michael’s Place, puts together the event. Community members can host a table and gather for breakfast and information about Michael’s Place. Another fundraising event is a movie night where concessions, ticket sales, and donations go towards helping Michael’s Place.

The staff at Michael’s Place is grateful for the opportunity to spread knowledge among everyone that attends The Art of: Mourning event, and it extends its thanks to the community as a whole for helping Michael’s Place continue its business since the very beginning. “Michael’s Place wouldn’t be able to have this event without the support of our community and help of the staff at the Dennos Museum,” says Wintzinger.

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Here:Say Storytelling
Point/Counter-Point

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

Here:Say does it right. Here:Say is a live storytelling show staged monthly, October through May, at The Workshop Brewing Company in Traverse City, hosted and founded by Karen Stein. Here:Say is a space where people can reconnect through the hilarious, heartfelt, and sometimes horrifying stories that tell life's many truths.

Each month, the show follows a theme. Some past themes include “You Are Here;” the true stories about how the storytellers ended up in certain spaces and places, or “Beat the Clock,” where performers told true, first-person stories about the everlasting race against the clock.

“Point/Counter-Point” had some recognizable names to those familiar with the Traverse City artist community. The show opened with Steve and Rob Ford, who were followed by Johnny and Elon Cameron, and later after a brief intermission, Ben and Erin Whiting.

Father/son duo Rob and Steve Ford told the story of when, while Steve was growing up in Elk Rapids, Rob came home after losing his job and decided to open his own business. The family went from broke to not-quite-so-broke, and Steve's life took a turn because of it. Overall light-hearted and fun, the two shared a hug at the end of the story while a tear shone in Rob's eye.

After the Fords, we got a story from the Camerons. At the beginning of the story, Johnny had just moved from Texas to Chicago. He was looking for a place to fit into the queer community of the city. In came Elon with all of her flair, lesbian bars, and friends to share. Johnny and Elon both had a great time telling their story—with rolling eyes and belly laughs that filled the room. They make a good team, long-winded as they might be.

Here:Say wrapped up with the Whitings. The focus of Ben and Erin’s story was on how the two fell in love. Because of distance, because of theatre, because of each other. It was a beautiful tale, full of whimsy, awkward moments, tension, but most of all, fun. The two bounced off of each other as if they've been telling stories together for their entire lives.

To listen to these stories in their entirety, check out the full event in podcast form on PodBean or through the Heresay website at heresaystorytelling.com. Upcoming events can be found on Facebook at facebook.com/here:say.

If you’ve got a story to tell, Here:Say is the place to go. There’s always someone who wants to hear it.

The Boardman Review Holds Issue 9 Launch Party

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

 legacy executive director, Joe Beyer reads his Boardman Review contribution, “Me and Charles McGee.” A portion of The Boardman Review’s proceeds will be donated to the nonprofit arts organization.

 Legacy Art Park, whose executive director, Joe Beyer, happened to also be a contributor to this issue of the Review.

“There are only a handful of organizations that combine Art, Nature and History together into something new and vibrant,” said Beyer. “The Boardman Review is a great literary journal. Through their launch parties, films, and collaborations they’ve actually created a community of people who share these interests with each other. And that’s something really special.”

Beyer believes that the 30-acre forest of Michigan Legacy Art Park, which houses a permanent collection of nearly 50 works, brings community together as well—not unlike the Review. “We’re grateful that they chose us as this issue’s nonprofit partner,” added Beyer. “They are introducing our work to a whole new audience.”

Brothers Nick Loud and Chris Loud are the cofounders of The Boardman Review, a creative culture and outdoor lifestyle journal of Northern Michigan.
Probably avoiding the cold and reading articles and watching movies.

“I like to watch scary movies”

“I like to get in my car, go down random dirt roads in the middle of nowhere, and get lost for, like, five hours at a time.”

Walking around hanging posters in all the different buildings for student life.

My favorite fall activity is watching scary movies with my friends and drinking hot apple cider.

“I like to go on hikes. I like going to Maple Bay. I like enjoying the outdoors, walking around with my dogs, looking at the leaves.”

“Usually I go to Screams in the Dark. And definitely carving pumpkins. I love that.”

“I like to watch scary movies”
Homemade Bisquick Mix and French Apple Pie

Many years ago when my son was first born, I was barely scraping by. I learned quite a bit about cooking and baking at that time, and how to make everything from scratch. Bisquick baking mix (not sponsored) was used a lot because it is very versatile, but unfortunately it is not vegan. Do not fret, as it is easy to make at home! Two cups of flour, 1 tablespoon of baking powder, and 1/3 cup of vegetable oil, mixed together until it looks and feels like a crumbly mix, and voila! Done! This recipe can be increased as much as needed. I always make a double amount and keep it in the fridge for drop biscuits or pancakes, or even sometimes, pie.

A couple of weeks ago my family went apple picking because I needed some new Instagram photos. This led to a bushel of apples that needed to be cooked before they all went bad, because food waste leads to the apocalypse, kids.

This recipe for a crustless French apple pie was on a box of Bisquick mix years ago, and I played around with it for a long time until I figured out what I wanted. It is easy and requires most standard ingredients everyone should have in their household for cooking. Just need a pie tin which, like me, you can get from the dollar store.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat your pie tin in butter. Toss together apples, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and pour into greased up pie tin.
2. In the same bowl, mix together the rest of the filling ingredients. Pour over apples in the pie tin.
3. Mix together the topping ingredients and sprinkle over the rest of the stuff in the pie tin. Resist the urge to lick the sugary butter off your fingers. Or do it, don’t let me tell you how to live your life.
4. Bake for about 30-35 minutes. Check to see if the pie has matured enough by stabbing it with a knife. If the knife lacks pie stuff on it, it is done.

Vegan on a Budget

Why I Talk About My Depression

I feel kind of weird in the days leading up to the sunny Thursday morning on which I awake literally wishing I was dead. Oh, I think as I pull the covers up to my chin. I should have seen this coming.

Over the next couple days, I frequently text my best friend and her partner, expressing the deep sadness that pulls me into what I call my “depression pit.” Both have experienced the overwhelming despair I’m feeling and can offer heartfelt sympathy.

When my roommate and I cross paths in the kitchen and he asks how I’m doing, I tell him I’m really sad. He suffers with his own mental health issues, so he gets it.

A few days later, I’m walking through a store in the mall to get to my second job when an employee steps into my path.

“Hi!” she enthuses. “How are you?”

I glance up from my phone absent-mindedly. “Really fucking depressed, but thanks for asking.” I don’t have the energy to lie.

Her face shifts from pleasant employee smile to wide-eyed shock. I immediately feel guilty, but instead of shaming me, she places her hands on her chest and says softly, “I’m so sorry. My heart is with you.” We share a smile, and I continue on my way. Our interaction doesn’t magically heal me, but I feel a little bit less alone.

When I e-mail my editor to tell her that my article is going to be a few days late because I’m barely functioning, she thanks me for being open with her.

Despite the number of campaigns and organizations that seem to be cropping up in support of mental health, it still seems like a topic that makes for touchy conversation. Some might think that talking about my depression is attention-seeking behavior, that I just want people to feel sorry for me, but I consider it good communication. How else is I find that a simple sentence or two of explanation does wonders. No one is having to fill in the blanks themselves. When I admit that I’m struggling, typically others are willing to grant me a little grace. I feel understood.

Sadness is a universal emotion guess, to fill in the blanks themselves. When I admit that I’m struggling, typically others are willing to grant me a little grace. I feel understood. Sadness is a universal emotion and people are often eager to relate.

Talking about my depression doesn’t mean I expect others to fix it. They can’t. It’s something I just have to wait out. But when I’m honest about it, I’m advocating for myself at a time when I need it the most.

Need someone to talk to? NMC has counselors who are here for you! Call (231) 995-1118 to make an appointment.
Going to a pumpkin patch and picking one out to carve is my favorite thing to do around Halloween time. Deciding which face to carve, having to scrape the seeds out, and finally lighting a candle on the inside to see the masterpiece is just a staple for the season. Pumpkin is a desired food because it's low calorie and full of vitamin C, zinc, and fiber, which makes it a superfood. However, pumpkin is used for so many other things today. For example, there are creative people who make soups, drinks, and even bread out of this fruit. This recipe is a unique way to use the pumpkin flavor by making it into bread and adding a yummy filling through the center.

Cream Cheese Filled Pumpkin Bread

**Bread**
- 1 ⅔ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup pumpkin puree

**Cream Cheese Filling**
- 18 ounces of cream cheese
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

**Directions**
1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 9-by-5 inch loaf pan with nonstick spray.
2. For the cream cheese filling, mix the cream cheese, sugar, flour, egg, and vanilla in a medium bowl with an electric mixer. Beat until smooth and set aside.
3. For the bread, whisk the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg together in a medium bowl. Set aside.
4. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together the vegetable oil, sugar, eggs, and pumpkin puree until evenly combined.
5. Add the flour mixture to the pumpkin mixture a little at a time, stirring until evenly combined.
6. Pour 1 ½ cups of batter into prepared loaf pan. Spoon the cream cheese mixture over the top of this layer and spread evenly, then add remaining batter.
7. Bake for 65-75 minutes or until toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. For softer edges, cover with foil the last 15 minutes of baking.
8. Cool in pan for 15 minutes before removing. Place on a wire rack and cool completely before slicing.
Book Review

“The Widow of Rose House”

Ann Hosler  “The Widow of Rose House” is author Diana Biller’s debut novel set in New York City during the Gilded Age. This fast-paced read will give you everything you need for a perfect autumn book: engaging characters, a major ghost problem, and a spooky mystery that needs to be solved.

It’s 1875, and New York’s Gilded Age is in full swing. After fleeing her abusive husband, Alva Webster spent three years being pilloried in the newspapers of two continents. Now he’s dead, and she’s returned to New York to start over, restoring a dilapidated Hyde Park mansion for her new home decoration book and hopefully her reputation in the process. So when the eccentric and brilliant Professor Samuel Moore appears, threatening her fresh start with stories of a haunting at her house, she refuses to give him access. Alva doesn’t believe in ghosts.

A pioneer in electric lighting and a member of the nationally-adored Moore family of scientists, Sam’s latest obsession is ghosts. When he learns about a house with a surprising number of ghost stories, he’s desperate to convince its beautiful owner to let him study it. Can he find his way into her house...and her heart?

What really got me hooked into this story was not just the mysterious ghost issue at the mansion, but also the fact that both characters are extremely capable, and this makes them beautiful compliments to each other. Alva Webster is a woman who can get things done, and she doesn’t let anyone stand in her way. Her personality shines like an inspiring beacon of hope in an era that still treated women as weak. She has goals and she will do what it takes to achieve them. Professor Samuel Moore is adorably eccentric, honest, and at times pushy. Though he’s famed for his many inventions, his intelligence is best seen in how Sam helps Alva emerge from the hardened shell that she had erected. He’s patient when she needs it and pushes at the fringes when she doesn’t.

There were a couple of things that detracted a bit from the story. Most books have some sort of subplot, but in “The Widow of Rose House,” the story would have stood up fine without the additional drama. And despite my praise for Sam’s character, he seemed a bit too perfect at times (though being that messy would be a deal-breaker for me). I really enjoyed the pacing of the book—it was hard to put it down for sleep, and harder still to wait until after work to finish it. This story will grab you in and keep you engrossed from start to finish. Sam’s family and his friend Henry are strong side characters that help to both complicate and further the story. Even the mansion itself has its own personality. The dialogue is brief, but it gave a satisfying look into Alva and Sam’s happily-ever-after—something I find myself longing for.

I received an advanced reading copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Music that is Sometimes Good but also Sometimes Not Good

Liam Strong  Often, we create the soundtrack of what we think a certain place would be like to listen to. Intersections of culture, geography, and people collide, and we’re granted the ability to hear what a city sounds like. Typically, we hear what it is like to be within a place, but not without, not in the departure from said place. Whenever I leave big cities, I scroll for music that is bittersweet, melancholy in tone, but uplifting in conjunction with the movement of leaving. On drives home back north from Grand Rapids, I see the city fade like it was its own sunset, collapsing. This week’s record, a split EP between shoegaze bands Blush Response and Warm, features four songs that remind me of being in a heated car trudging through the cold seasons. Shoegaze usually gets underpinned with emo and grunge, and rightly so. However, considering the genre’s knack for atmosphere, bands like Blush Response and Warm are forgotten for their ability to create soothing and meditative soundscapes. They might fit perfectly with Autechre as music to write essays to.

When I think of music that makes me want to open a car window or sunroof, I recall the closing scene of “The Perks of Being a Wallflower.” David Bowie’s “Heroes” is blasting, and the characters are enveloped in some resemblance of perfection, illuminated by the city. Shoegaze does this for me, especially with a song like “Sweet Respite,” the second track from Blush Response and Warm’s “Split EP.” I want to feel the wind brushing my hair, evening air in my mouth, city lights in my eyes. I may be one of the few people who love the way smog reflects light over a city. A Chicago winter can make an orange tapestry of the sky, as if twilight never really goes away. The light, though unnatural, seems like a wall that encapsulates the city. For a time, the city is smaller than it actually is, and we might feel enormous.

I wonder, then, what sounds comprise the place I am from, or where anyone is from. Sometimes it’s better if I turn off all music, open my window, and listen.

Old Town Playhouse Young Company Presents “The Outsiders”

Micah Mabey  The Old Town Playhouse has been home to hundreds, if not thousands, of actors. Locals, people passing through town for just a few months, new kids in town, and every other type of person you can think of. If they’re theatre people, they’ve acted on that stage.

One of the programs that the OTP hosts is the Young Company. The OTP Young Company is the educational arm of OTP and offers a wide variety of classes, workshops, and productions for young people of all ages. Class sessions are held in the fall, winter, and late spring, offering a uniquely authentic theatre learning experience.

This fall, the Young Company’s big production is “The Outsiders,” adapted by Christopher Sergel from the book of the same name by S.E. Hinton.

The cast has about 20 students between the ages of 10 and 17, all from around Northern Michigan. Directed by Joel Hoard (with myself as assistant director), it’s not the happiest show. Death, running from the cops, stealing candy bars, and full on brawls are only some of the things that go on between the actors.

The actors have rehearsed “The Outsiders” since the second week of September. It’s been incredible to watch them grow. The older students take the youngsters under their wing—something that would make any educator’s heart melt. All of them work together as if the age difference doesn’t matter at all. It’s wonderful.

The show opens on Nov. 1 and only runs for one weekend. Evening performances are at 7pm on Friday (Nov. 1) and Saturday (Nov. 2), with a 2pm matinee on that Sunday (Nov. 3). Tickets range from $8-$15.

Support your local arts, especially when it’s kids just finding their creative voices.
Touring NMC in the Fall