

The annoying insects: a tale of redemption



Houston McLaury
Opinion Columnist

With the 59th Nobel Conference happening this week, I thought it would be interesting to stay on topic and discuss one of the creatures our species has to live with: insects. They make up a great majority of the species on the planet. Without them, our world could not function the way it does to this day, thanks to many of them serving as pollinators and food for other animals, as well as the endless evolutionary potential they offer. But, I do not wish to focus on the insects we deem as popular. I wish to focus on the outcasts, the ones picked last during dodgeball. The rejects of the insect community, the ones we hope to kill, often joking about their extinction without realizing the ramifications this would have on not only our species but the world as a whole.

Starting with a common annoyance and great grievance in the summer, our least favorite blood-sucker must be mentioned: the mosquito. For those who have lived under a rock, or have never left the comfort of their rooms, a mosquito is a flying insect with a long needle-like nose that sucks the blood of its victims and uses the blood for nutrition and egg production. As if stealing our blood wasn't bad enough, they also leave a terribly annoying itch with every prick of their needle that can last for days on end and can be a deliverer of a variety of different diseases. So, what's the use of them? Why would I defend these blood-sucking parasites?

The same reason we defend lawyers: we need them.

These little fellas are great pollinators. Both male and female mosquitoes often transfer pollen between plants because



An insect takes a moment of respite on a plant.

Sophia White

they also need to feed on nectar, the same way butterflies do. Not only that, but these little insects provide a great amount of sustenance to a variety of different animals.

Bats (another great pollinator) often go out at night to eat a variety of insects: mosquitoes included in their robust diet. Along with this, many different birds will also set their eyes on this bountiful species to feed and feast on, allowing the birds to be sustained. Without mosquitoes, our pollinators would be considerably fewer and the food supply for many birds, bats, and

other creatures would shrink considerably. So, to keep these species of fauna and flora alive and well, the human world must continue to suffer the grievance of the mosquito.

Keeping with this theme of blood-sucking parasites, it is also important to mention the tick. They function in similar ways to the mosquito, using the blood from other species as nutrients, however, they attach to their host and can feed for a much longer time. They can also transmit a whole host of diseases to their host, one of the big concerns being Lyme Disease.

For ticks, it's harder to make a case for them, as they serve merely the fauna, not both the fauna and flora as the mosquitoes do. Along with this, I must admit I have a personal distaste for ticks. I enjoyed hiking with my family as a child and the disgust of finding a tick on your body is truly unmatched. Yet, still, I must concede that these parasites, no matter my distaste, are a source of nutrients for birds, bats, mice, squirrels, and opossums. They offer a vital source of nutrients to these creatures, and because of that, I cannot condemn them for their mere existence.

Moving on to another small insect, we come to the fly. These little guys may be annoying in restaurants and our houses, but they serve a vital function in a greater ecological sense. Not only are they a great source of food for many varied species, but they are also great scavengers. This means they find rotting things, like the bodies of animals, rotten fruits and vegetables, and attach to these items to break them down. They're able to locate carrion, find it, and use it not only to benefit their species through food and using the carrion as a place to store its eggs, but they add to the decomposition process. They help give the nutrients from the carrion back to the earth, helping to keep the food chain going.

Despite our distaste and our disdain for many of these insects, we must look past our prejudices.

"Despite our distaste and our disdain for many of these insects, we must look past our prejudices."

These insects offer an insurmountable service to not only the ecosystem but also to ourselves. Without these annoying insects, we would be left in a crumbling world.

How to navigate the feeling of displacement



Sophia White
Opinion Columnist

What is displacement? It can mean a lot of different things through the lens of science, psychology, and linguistics, but they all boil down to one big idea: being moved from a particular position where something else existed previously. At times, displacement can be intentional, at others, it occurs from natural change.

College, for example, is intentional and natural in a chaotic spiral. We put ourselves in these positions, yet there is always a natural displacement that comes with drastic changes in a person's life. One of the major aspects of college is this feeling of displacement. Your entire being is pulled from place to place with new social interactions and trying on different personas becomes part of a weekly habit.

I have always thought that who I am revolves around the people who know and love me. I gravitate towards and latch onto people to define who I am. If you are my friend, then who does that make me? People are my motivation. However, the difficulty with this is that people are constantly in motion. They are constantly moved from place to place by natural and intentional motions, which makes it hard to track what makes me who I am. The forever-changing world is the force of my identity crisis and causes me to feel disconnected from myself. Being in a relationship with others forces you to take action. I am constantly moved by other people. Friends move me to take action and I move them just the same. Displacement is the natural occurrence of cause and effect in daily life. The distinction comes from whether that displacement is good or bad.

One thing I've noticed since coming to college is that even at large events filled with people I know, I still feel lonelier in a crowd of people than I do by myself in my dorm room. There's something about feeling that everyone must know each other and no one will want to get to know you that triggers a light or flight response in your bones.

Loneliness sets in because

everyone has their own friend group but you.

At the beginning of my college experience, I thought that there was an immense importance in finding people that mesh with who you are or finding your own group of people right away. My brain has created such associations between people and what groups they belong to, but in reality, it isn't like that. The reality is that each person is an individual that can come to be part of a community and those individuals will continuously be switched from community to community. It is the natural migration of life. You will move from one group to the next and try to find familiarity in those groups, but when does this active motion stop? Does it ever stop?

"You will move from one group to the next and try to find familiarity in those groups, but when does this active motion stop? Does it ever stop?"

The truth is it doesn't stop, but it does eventually slow down. With the pace of life, through places like college, it will be easier to keep in pace with others. To create these

lifelong bonds with the people who will be with you through major life events like your first internship, getting married, or your first child.

Things will continue to change and people will change too, but it will become more subtle. Through creating a community around yourself, you can find a place where things stay with you; more aptly put, your memories of people and places. Memories and nostalgia carry people through life and aid them in accepting the world's constant change and re-positioning. Slowly, over this past month, I have become okay with the fact that I don't need a strong, defined group to be happy. I am fine with being an individual without a group who ebbs and flows with other individuals. I am learning to be comfortable with myself and being alone with myself as much as anything.

I am still moving from place to place and it's not within my control, but I accept that. Being alone with myself makes me realize that I do have company in my own person, if not with others. And I am capable of getting to know people and creating lifelong friendships. I am currently displaced, but I am not alone.

We are all displaced, but not alone. We have ourselves. We have acceptance. We find com-

fort in knowing ourselves and finding new ways to develop a thriving love for ourselves. Displacement is a truly complex feeling, but it is something that everyone feels in one way or another. With change comes good and bad.

I've always been told that college would be something good for me. Some of the best years of my life would be during college. This was a message given to me by the college students whom I knew through my father's job. Yet, I saw them go through these complex emotions. They weren't always convinced that it was something good for them, but they found comfort in each other and themselves.

It's not simple to accept change, that is a fact of human nature. We do not tend to like it when things change around us. Due to this change of moving to college, we find ourselves displaced among a sea of peers. You may see people becoming large groups, but they are just as displaced. You do not need a group to feel better about this change going on. You need time with yourself. Then -and only then- can you build what you need: a community. And that takes time, but some of us already have one, are working on one, or have plenty of time to start. I believe that as social beings, we are capable of accepting our uncertainty and creating memories that will keep our hearts open for more changes to come.



Stock photo of a forlorn woman.

Submitted

Girl dinner! Girl dinner! Girl dinner! Girl dinner! Girl dinner!



Raquel Vaughn
Opinion Columnist

As the infamous TikTok sound goes, “This is my meal. I call this girl dinner.” And then we all sing “Girl dinner! Girl dinner!” as if it’s a praise to every woman who’s ever had a meal before us. “Girl dinner” is a phenomenon most famous on the social media app TikTok, and glorifies the simple fact that a girl has eaten. This type of dinner is known for its odd combination of foods that make up a meal and doesn’t actually have to be eaten during the typical dinner time. Girl dinner could be a left-over chicken leg, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and the rest of the two-liter Sprite. Or it could be a combo of ramen noodles, grapes, that cookie you saved from your Subway meal, and a whole cucumber. Or, maybe girl dinner is just a single bagel with cream cheese.

There has been much speculation across the communities of TikTok and in some corners of Instagram about what girl dinner really is. Girl dinner is not five individual popped popcorn kernels. It’s also not a small bag of trail mix. It’s an eccentric assembly of foods that have no business being consumed in the same sitting.

I have a friend who once ate a dinner that consisted of a bag of Takis, reheated mashed potatoes, a Snickers ice cream bar, and two cans of Dr. Pepper. So it was not the most healthy meal. It definitely was not balanced, but it was food nonetheless. Girl dinner does not glorify how little one person has eaten, or whether or not the meal has the accurate measurement of each food category. It does, however, highlight the fact that a person has eaten. Girl dinner is not perfect and has never claimed to be. It’s not beautiful, logical,

or even (sometimes) healthy.

Living on a campus with limited options for food is the perfect environment for obtaining girl dinner. Scrounging for food is actually one of the biggest elements of the girl dining experience. The rest of the pizza rolls in the freezer, your least favorite flavored sparkling water from the fridge (but you’ll drink it because it’s the only thing that’s there), an apple from the fruit bowl, canned tuna from the cupboard, and the stale Doritos kept in the top drawer of your nightstand is what makes girl dinner a feast fit for a warrior. With many factors such as the STEAMery now closing at 2:00 p.m. and the fact that I have yet to see General’s Chicken in the Caf, a girl’s gotta do what a girl’s gotta do. And that is to eat the most deranged meal and excuse it as girl dinner.

If you’re like me and you find yourself walking into the Caf at 7:30 p.m. with no clue of what to eat because the Wok is closed and the pasta is shriv-

eled and dried-up, then I’ve got you covered. If the grill smells like Worst Cooks in America was being filmed in an American’s backyard on the Fourth of July, then here is some girl dinner inspiration to get you through those hard times.

My go-to girl dinner is an everything bagel that is toasted for exactly four minutes. But don’t stop there because while that’s in the toaster, you grab a plate and head straight for the salad bar. There I recommend getting cucumbers, celery, and your choice of fruit. If your only choices are between pineapple and honeydew, you always choose pineapple. If it’s honeydew and cantaloupe, then you always choose cantaloupe. But if you ever find yourself choosing between grapes, watermelon, or strawberries, then just give up and put all three on your plate. Once you get your vegetables and fruit, get your cream cheese and then your choice of drink (for me, Pibb Xtra because Gustavus doesn’t have Dr. Pepper or, if I’m tight

on money, just water). By this time, if you’ve acted like you have all the time in the world roaming the Marketplace, your bagel should be done toasting. Put your bagel on your plate, grab a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos on the way to the register, and then enjoy your girl dinner. It’s quick and cheap!

I’ve asked other students on campus what their favorite girl dinner is and I received some interesting answers.

Junior Morgan Kelly’s favorite girl dinner is a combination of crackers and cheese with a choice of grapes and apples. It’s small and something that could pass as a snack. But girl dinner is not a snack, it’s something that you devour. A few crackers with cheese is an afternoon lunch you eat while gossiping with your friends on the patio. An entire tray of crackers with cheese prepared entirely for one’s own self is a valid girl dinner. Especially if you are munching on it in front of a showing of your favorite YouTuber.

Girl dinner isn’t just about the food, but also about how much it is. One singular bagel is only girl dinner if it’s quite literally the only thing you can find to eat. But more realistically, at least two to three bagels would be considered a meal fit for a girl. When I asked another student about what their favorite selection is, she perfectly captured the essence of what girl dinner is all about. She said two dozen cold mozzarella sticks and four hard-boiled eggs. It’s not beautiful or logical, but it’s food so therefore it is girl dinner. Another go-to meal comes from Sophomore Lupe Olague: Chicken with short noodle pasta and a salad with tomatoes, cheese, and Caesar salad dressing. Olague’s girl dinner is filling, quick, and easy.

Girl dinner is for the girls. It’s exclusively nutritious, even when it’s not, and only plays by the rules that the girlies have established. It’s not beautiful, even though it tries to be, and it doesn’t make sense. But



A photo of possible girl dinner options at the caf.

Encounters of The Spooky Kind

Will Sorg
Movies Guy

In movies, cheating on one's partner is often shown as the final straw that ends a relationship. This is justifiably so; cheating is a horrible betrayal of trust and can be the cause of lifelong trauma or anxiety. However, it is rare that cheating in films sets off a series of events that lead to the other person having to fight hopping undead creatures psychically controlled by a priest who was hired by your boss to kill you so it would not be found out that your boss was sleeping with your wife. This is, however, the general scenario of Encounters of The Spooky Kind.

Encounters of The Spooky Kind is a 1980 martial arts horror masterpiece by Sammo Hung. Hung is a Hong Kong director, actor, producer, fight choreographer, and a highly respected martial artist. Hung is known in some circles as "Dai Goh Dai" (Biggest Brother) for his contribution to martial arts film and the way he has continually supported the genre and tradition and helped it grow. One of the stranger contributions to film by Hung is the popularization of Hong Kong Jiangshi films. Jiangshi are undead creatures from Chinese mythology that are controlled by Taoist priests and are usually equated to the Western folklore of vampires. After this film, which features the famed hopping vampires, there was a surge of martial arts horror comedies about Jiangshi. So what made Encounters of The Spooky Kind so appealing to Hong Kong audiences?

To start, Hung is a remarkably talented martial artist, although he may not fit the typical archetype of the lithe, calm and collected combatant he brings a level of talent and pure energy that is hard to find in nearly any actor or stuntman beyond the best of the best. The stunt work and fight choreography in this film is unbelievably entertaining with a lot of the fight scenes being some of the best action I've seen in a movie. This coming from a low-budget comedy film about hopping vampires makes the film not only visually and technically appealing, but also hilarious.

Hung stars as the lead character, an oafish man named Cheung who is the victim of the previously mentioned attempted murders via hopping, psychically controlled vampires. The whole film is oddly convoluted for its simple set up and there isn't a good acting performance in the whole thing, but that does not matter. This is spectacle and comedy before anything else and it nails both of those wonderfully. There are so many scenes that have awe-inspiring martial arts that are also side-splittingly funny and to me, that is a mark that this movie knows exactly what it's doing and succeeds wonderfully. Very few genres can pull off a fight scene involving monkey/god possession without making it devoid of anything but shock humor and yet martial arts films and their inherent goofiness make it so that it never feels out of place when Sammo Hung has to hold onto a rafter by his legs and comically twist his body around to keep a hopping vampire from seeing him.

This is a great film to watch if you need an hour and forty minutes of easy entertainment, and October is the perfect time to see it. The Jiangshi are genuinely cool-looking monsters and while there are plenty of comical moments with them they also always keep a level of seriousness in their portrayal. I know this has hooked me on Hong Kong Jiangshi films, there's a kind of fun that's hard to find in non-martial arts action films and while I don't love it all the time, it's hard to not love watching a rigor mortis beset vampire battle Sammo Hung with the seriousness of a Scooby-Doo episode.

Horoscopes

Aries: Do not think about the government for a whole day. See how you feel afterwards.

Taurus: Invite some friends over to your dorm and play a game!

Gemini: Get your favorite treat from the Caf.

Cancer: Care for other people but remember to take care of yourself first.

Leo: Go to the Bookmark and see if there's something fun you might want.

Virgo: Be wary of dubious horoscopes, sometimes they're completely fake!

Libra: Enjoy a comfort food this week.

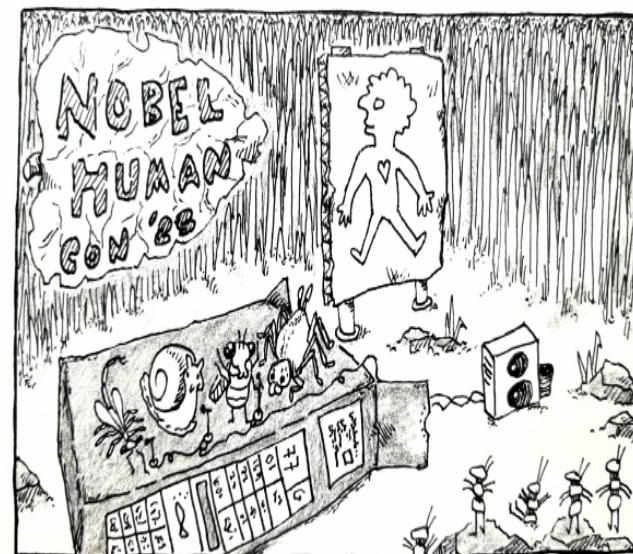
Scorpio: Drink at least three bottles of water a day this week. It just might help you a ton.

Sagittarius: Always consider an offer of free stuff. The only thing you can lose is your time.

Capricorn: Prepare yourself mentally. Christmas music playing in stores 24/7 is just around the corner.

Aquarius: This week you will find a greater understanding of your place in the world.

Pisces: Make a new playlist this week, explore new music!



Will Graves

Gustavus volleyball dominates Macalester

Gusties dominate the Scots 3-0



Sophomore Maren Sundberg bumps the ball.

Submitted.

Parker Burman
Sports Editor

This past week, ranking at No.16 in the AVCA Volleyball's national ranking, the Gustavus Volleyball team faced off against fellow MIAC school Macalester at Gustavus for a single match. Gustavus, who has been dominant all year, dominated Macalester on the way to a 3-0 sweep for their fourth victory in a row.

In the first set, the Gusties fell behind early to the Scots who jumped out to an early 4-2. Gustavus battled back and forth, fighting back with eight ties. Macalester rallied each time to prevent Gustavus from going on a run to take the lead from them.

However, Gustavus's high-powered offense could only be contained for so long, as they broke out for a 7-1 run to put them up 23-20. Macalester fought back to tie Gustavus 23-23 and 24-24 before a pair of kills from Sophomore Leah Berg and Senior Madi Kes to win the set 26-24.

"Getting a kill in a big situation is exciting and I couldn't do it without our amazing defense and amazing sets from Kasie," Senior Marlee Turn said.

"Big blocks are always the best feeling to get during a game, especially when the score is tight. It is something that always fires our team up and gives us energy on and off the court, so it motivates us to keep working hard to dominate the opposing team," Kes

said.

Set two was much more one-sided than set one. The Gusties took an immediate 5-0 lead and never trailed once during the set. In addition to this, Gustavus went on an 11-point scoring streak without giving up a single point to Macalester to take a 20-5 advantage, before winning the set 25-8.

"I was happy with the way I played against Macalester. Defensively, I feel like I did well with blocking and slowing down their attackers. Offensively, I think I did my job by pulling the block and opening up the court for our outside and right side attackers, while also being aggressive with my own attacking," Kes said.

"I was happy with the way I played against Macalester. Defensively, I feel like I did well with blocking and slowing down their attackers."

"My veteran teammates have helped me as a younger player because they let me lean on them and embrace my mistakes to help me learn from them. I know that they are there for me, and they give me a lot of feedback as well," First-year Sophia Deyak said.

Set three was much more competitive than set two with both Gustavus and Macalester going back and forth for the early portion of the set. Each team traded points resulting in

eight ties to start the set. Gustavus would go on to rattle off five straight points to start and grow a lead that they would not relinquish the rest of the way. Gustavus would go on to win the third set by a score of 25-17 and complete the sweep.

"Our team knew that we could play better than what we did in set one, so we used that as motivation to come out strong in the next two sets and take control of the game in the best ways that we knew how," Kes said.

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"I think I performed well, it helped that I was coming into a game that already had lots of energy. The team supported me a lot and wanted me to do good," Deyak said.

Senior Lauren Klaith led the team with 16 kills on the night, many of which came in impressive fashion in high-leverage situations, finishing with a .469 attack percentage. Turn finished just one kill short of matching Klaith for the team lead as she picked on 15 on the night for a .344 attack percentage. In addition to all of the

kills she had on the night, Turn collected 13 digs on the back line for her ninth double-double of the season so far. Not to be outdone, Senior Kasie Tweet finished the match with 32 assists, while Kes led the team in blocks with three on the night.

"The younger girls have been doing awesome! I love that so many have stepped up and really helped us be successful," Turn said.

"Of course, our goal is always to win every match that we play and I fully believe that our team is capable of beating any team that we come across. However, we like to focus on just playing our game and doing what we do best and the score of the game will follow," Kes said.

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Gustavus will next match up for a pair of road games this weekend against rivals St. Scholastica today, Friday, Oct. 6, in Duluth at 7:00 p.m., and then they play again against Hamline in St. Paul at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday. With the season

beginning to start winding down, each game becomes bigger and bigger, so go support your Gustavus Volleyball team!



**Email Editor-in-Chief Mel Pardock at
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Open Positions: sports writer, variety



Rugby on a roll!

Women's rugby on a 2-0 winning streak



A women's rugby team photo.

Submitted

Teddy Kaste Staff Writer

The women's rugby team is a club sport here at Gustavus. Rugby is a very popular sport globally, however, it is not as popular in the United States. To provide a little background on the game itself, Rugby is played between two teams, where the objective is to get more points than the other team. Points can be scored in a few different ways. A try is the primary way of scoring points, and is scored by grounding the ball in the goal line area (similar to a touchdown in football). A try is worth five points. Following a try, a team gets a chance at a conversion kick, (similar to an extra point), which is worth two points. A successful penalty, or "drop goal" kick (like a field goal) is worth three points.

Senior and rugby player Korri Wojack added some background information about the sport, "The ball can only be thrown back-

wards, so in order to gain meters you have to run it forward and muscle through their defensive line or evade their defenders entirely. While there is offense and defense, we don't have particular players that come in or go off for it. When possession changes, we have to just quickly adapt. Another thing about rugby is there are no rolling substitutions, so unless it is for blood rule or an injury... once you're out, you're out. It's a pretty chaotic and intense game, full of strategy as well as brute strength."

For the rugby team, previous experience with rugby is not necessarily required to join the team. "No, I never had any previous experience before joining the team here at Gustavus. I had seen games on TV occasionally and always thought it looked really fun, but it wasn't available in my area and I was already involved in so many other sports," Wojack stated. In fact she likely wouldn't have ever joined the team if it wasn't for her Collegiate Fellow here at Gustavus.

"My CF that year, Pflugs, was a senior on the team and I recognized that she was on the team from the posters around campus. She was the one who first talked to me about the sport, and then she literally shoved a pen in my hand at the involvement fair and told me to sign up. I'm really glad she did," Wojack said. Joining the rugby team really transformed Wojack's experience here at Gustavus. "The rugby team is everything to me. When I came to college, because it was Covid, I just felt like I had no community here at Gustavus. Admittedly, I was actually thinking about dropping out spring of my freshman year for many reasons, but was convinced to give it one more semester. I did, and it was one of the best choices I ever made. I joined the team and immediately felt community and support like I never had before, and I have met my best friends through this team. My physical health is better, my mental health is better -let's be real, something about tackling people is pretty ca-

thartic- and I could talk for hours about this team and everything it has given me. But, most of all, I am just incredibly thankful for this community that I know is a lifelong bond."

The Women's rugby team has played two matches so far, winning both. "Our first match was on homecoming weekend against the College of Saint Scholastica, which was a lot of our rookies first game. We had a lot of support from friends and family who came out to watch, and everyone played incredibly hard, ending with a Gustavus win," Wojack said on the first match. For match two, they traveled to Macalester to take on the Scots. Wojack said of the second match, "last weekend, September 30th, we traveled up to Macalester College. It was a pretty grueling eighty-minute fight, and Mac[alaster] was a challenge to push us as players and as a team. In the end, we took home another Gustavus win."

The Gusties have only two more games left in their regular season:

Moorhead on Oct. 14 in an away game, and NDSU on Oct. 21 for their final match of the season. When rugby picks back up in the spring they will be playing "sev-ens" (7 on 7), whereas in the fall they played "fifteens" (15 on 15) so the game will look drastically different.

The Women's Rugby team, as demonstrated by Wojack's comments, is a very tight knit group, that all work together to achieve victory out on the field. Something Wojack said that encapsulates the spirit of the team was, "A Maori proverb that one of our captains, Squirrely, sent to us before a game, which encompasses the energy of the team especially during a game: 'He waka eke noa.'" Which translates to "The canoe which we are all in with no exception".