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The Beacon, 2020-2021

The Beacon student newspaper

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## **The Beacon, December 4, 2020**

The Beacon Staff

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# Recap: The crazy year of 2020

## UPS AND DOWNS OF THE YEAR

**BAILEY BANWART**  
SOCIAL WORK

Fill out this sentence: 2020 has been...

In a word, different.

Northwestern's campus was left empty in the middle of March and remained that way until late July. COVID-19 changed nearly everything on campus and all over the world. However, to say that the virus was the only difference this year is a gross understatement.

January 2020 seems like a distant memory, but that's when the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the presence of COVID-19 in China. The first non-travel-related cases in the United States were confirmed in February. Then there was the global recession caused by the pandemic in March. The long-lasting effects of which might not be known for years.

There are those we lost: Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna, Chadwick Boseman, Ruth Bader

Ginsburg, Eddie Van Halen and so many more, including over 273,000 people who lost their lives to COVID-19 in the U.S.

In May, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, died under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, sparking renewed momentum for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Deadly wildfires in California burned over four million acres this year, doubling the previous record set in 2018. And to top it all off, "murder" hornets were spotted in the U.S.

Then, there was an impeachment trial of President Donald J. Trump and a contentious presidential election that highlighted the country's division and polarization.

Social trends looked a bit different this year as well, as everyone rocked their store-bought or homemade face masks. With stores closing and shutdowns in place over the summer months, not many new fads were introduced besides all different kinds of face coverings.

Perhaps the biggest fashion trend of



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

2020 has been quite the year, one that many people will remember for years to come.

2020 is the new "business casual" with a nice shirt and casual, comfy pants, or in some cases, no pants at all. Zoom

calls gave us the freedom to roll out of bed right before classes to finish up our spring semester without worrying

about what we look like or what we're wearing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# Unsung Heroes: Mike Stokes

## AV DEPARTMENT RUNS VISUALS AND SOUND

**CAMBER HERRIG**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

You only notice that you need them when something goes wrong. No sound. Glitches. Share screen won't work. Mike Stokes and his team are on standby for moments like this and so much more.

"Everything you see and hear on campus is us. Without us, chapel would be silent, and professors' PowerPoints would be black," said Isaac Clausen '18, alum and audiovisual technician, who works with Stokes daily.

Stokes is the director of AV and has been at Northwestern for 20 years. Prior to NW, Stokes worked at Gateway, a computer company in Sioux City, as a program manager. At that time, the vice president of academic affairs called Stokes, asking him if he would be interested in working with the computing services department.

"As a student at Northwestern, I

worked in the AV department for four years supporting classrooms, campus events and chapel sound," Stokes said. "Because of my previous experience in the AV department and my computer support experience, this transition was a natural one for me."

The audiovisual department may be an overlooked facet on campus, but without Stokes and his team, campus would be a dark and silent place, especially now when faculty and students are heavily reliant on technology.

"We work in the background to make people presenting look and sound good," Stokes said.

On a daily basis, Stokes and his team support classrooms to ensure the projections and audio systems are working. They also set up and support events and edit video and audios for NW to use during chapel, Raider Days, Ngage, faculty meetings, student activities and NEDTalks.

For Stokes, someone who jumpstarted his expertise in technology and his spiritual



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Mike Stokes poses with his wife, Valerie Stokes, a social work professor at Northwestern College.

journey was Matt Floding, who served as the campus chaplain during Stokes' time as a student.

When Stokes attended NW, chapel happened four times a week, and Stokes often ran the sound,

allowing him to listen to the message multiple times.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## INSIDE

2 | Miley Cyrus' Album  
3 | Christmas Vespers

4 | Budgeting  
5 | Dogs

7 | Men's Basketball  
8 | Mask Mandate

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## Cyrus' seventh album lacks originality

TV SHOW REVIEW

COVERS SHINE THROUGH

MISAEEL BRUZZONE  
ECONOMICS

Miley Cyrus' seventh studio album is an 80s pop-punk and synth homage to rock and pop's greatest hits. It feels like a step toward truer self-expression and less music industry assembly line product to a degree.

"Plastic Hearts" at times comes across as an homage to her influences for this record. There are clear punk influences, to which Cyrus can more than match vocally.

She wears her influences on her sleeve as she features artists like Joan Jett of the Runaways and samples Stevie Nicks, both of whom she derives her finished product from.

The last two songs, covers of classics like Blondie's "Heart Of Glass" and the Cranberries' "Zombie," are also clear indicators of what inspired this latest effort.

In this record we get a taste of a more raw and raspy vocal presence that feels genuine and meaningful.

At other times however, the record feels like it is simply cashing in on the trend of 80s nostalgia that has been popular recently.

Groovy baselines and synthesizers are musically

appealing but seem severely out of place within the rest of the album. A few songs pay tribute to her country roots and influences and they more than deliver.

The biggest problem of the record is definitely a lack of direction. As mentioned before, the album appears split. At times, it attempts to be a pop-punk throwback. Other times, it is introspective and heartfelt country. As if that wasn't enough, it also plays to synth-pop heavy radio bait.

This is especially true when it comes to songs that seem freshly off a production line. A handful of songs appear lifeless and empty, meant for radio play and nothing more. This is especially true of the songs that feature other artists.

It really casts suspicion on whether having different people produce different songs, as opposed to one person producing the whole record, was a good idea.

Cyrus takes a step back from dumbed-down pop lyrics about having a good time and singing about love to tackle more mature themes. She addresses her recent controversies and public image.

She is introspective and her lyrics, when she is not too busy using explicit language to make herself seem more mature, really hit home. She delivers reflections on her past, her behavior and lifestyle that truly humanize her and gives

listeners a glimpse behind the curtain of her controversial career.

One such song is "Golden G String," a more acoustic-based song where Cyrus reflects on her past and offers explanations for her actions. The song is a testament to the cursed nature of fame, the huge power media holds over artists and the influence of public opinion.

Another standout and perhaps the best original song, "Angels Like You," is 80s rock ballad perfection. Her open-throated vocals shine and convey every emotion intended. The instrumentals accompany her in her journey and add to the emotional power of the song.

"Midnight Sky," the first single released for this album, is groovy and synth-heavy. There are some rock influences in the song as well, as power chords ring out during the chorus, which adds layers to the song and elevates it beyond the other, more lacking, floaty-synth tracks.

The last two songs of the album are covers mentioned before. Sadly, these are most likely the songs that stick out the most. Cyrus delivers perfect covers of these songs while adding her own flavor and setting them apart enough to be called her own.

Yet in the end, the songs are successes because of the people who wrote them, and it detracts from the record



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEOPLE.COM

that the best parts are not original.

"Plastic Hearts" is a bold step away from her track record, and yet it is a welcomed one. Cyrus' vocals and demeanor carry this

album through and through. She really shines in more rock and punk based songs, more effectively delivering her message in the louder more chaotic medium.

This is clearly evidenced

in her amazing takes on rock songs covered toward the end of the record. However, the record has a substantial lack of identity, never quite being able to decide what it wanted to be.

★★★

## Christmas classics warm hearts years later

MUSIC REVIEW

NOSTALGIA AND FAMILY TIME

MORIAH WITTENBERG  
NURSING

Christmas is made a little sweeter every year with the addition of a classic Christmas movie, and luckily, a variety of Christmas films encapsulate many genres and story lines. Films such as "The Grinch," "Home Alone" and "It's a Wonderful Life" are well-known, family favorites for the holiday season.

In the animated film, "The Grinch," the green creature of the same name and his trusty dog, Max, live a lonely life at the top of Mount Crumpit. Due to the years of isolation that the Grinch has experienced, he is resentful of the community and joy that his fellow townspeople experience.

Because of this resentment, the Grinch and his dog are on a mission to steal Christmas from the citizens of Whoville. As he hatches his plan, his encounters with the locals begin to change his perspective on this holiday.

For many, the familiar rhymes of Dr. Seuss are near and dear to us, and these rhymes never fail to bring smiles to our faces and warmth to our hearts.

Further, while this animated film is centrally comedic, it also has a touching underlying message – it emphasizes the value of community. "The Grinch" is a touching film for all ages, as

the characters range from young children to seasoned parents.

"Home Alone" shows us the adventures of young Kevin McCallister as he is forgotten at home in his family's rush to leave for a Christmas vacation in Paris. Ironically, this fulfills Kevin's wish that his family would simply disappear, so for a few days, he thoroughly enjoys the large house to himself.

Due to a majority of the neighborhood being gone on vacation, two con men, Harry and Marv, plan to take advantage of these families' absences. Through his wit and creativity, Kevin must find ways to defend his home from a break-in.

In this film, the viewer is constantly kept guessing as to what clever defense Kevin has put into place for the idiotic duo. Again, at its core, this film is incredibly witty and humorous, leaving its audience bursting with laughter. However, the root idea communicated through the narrative is the importance of family.

Released in 1946, "It's a Wonderful Life" is a classic film to watch over the holidays. In this story, George Bailey sacrifices his dreams of travel to continue the family business in the small town of Bedford Falls.

While his life has many joys, it also has an abundance of struggles. On Christmas Eve in 1945, George considers taking his own life. However, instead of jumping

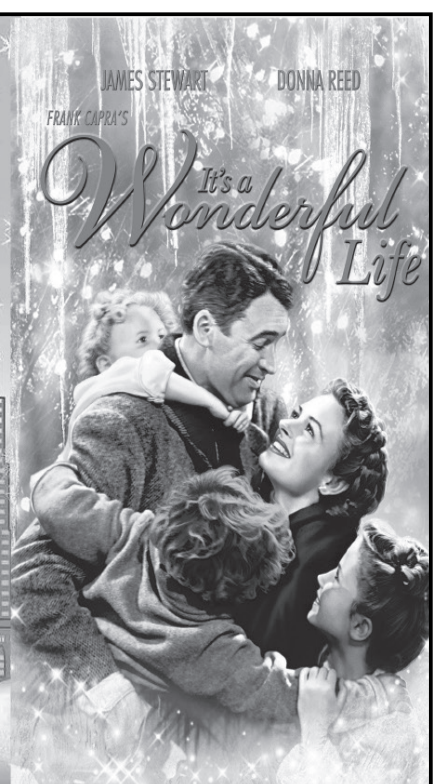
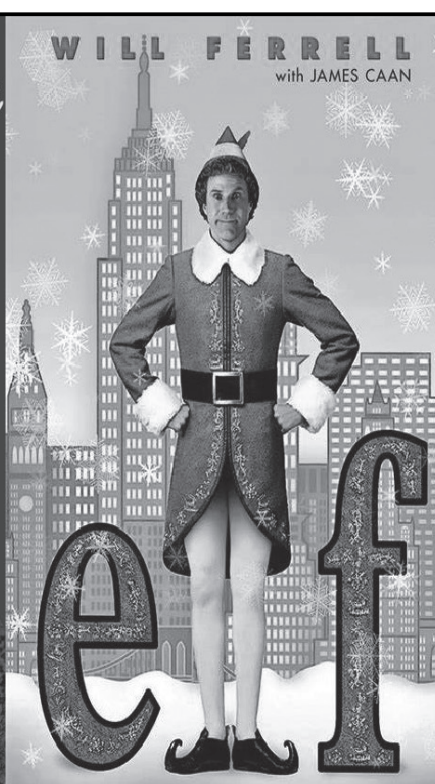
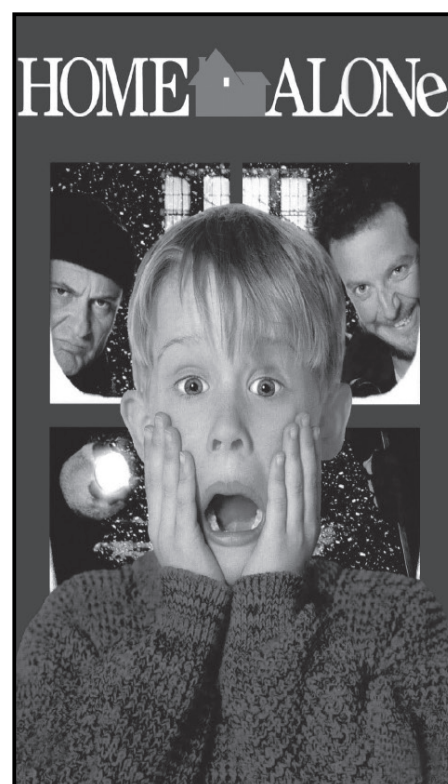


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MOVIE DATABASE

off a bridge to end his life, he winds up saving the life of his guardian angel instead.

Through the subsequent journey, George realizes the value of his life and the impact he has had on the small town of Bedford Falls.

Taking on a more serious tone than the previous two films, "It's a Wonderful Life" is, again, unified around the idea of community

and family. These ideas are portrayed through an older style of acting, which is reminiscent for parents and grandparents and something that makes the younger generation smile at.

In addition to the phenomenal acting, this story effectively builds George's character, showing the viewer his life growing up, his dreams and his struggles.

All these elements help the audience thoroughly understand not only how George reaches this dark point in his life, but ultimately, the incredible impact he has had on his community and family over the years, making George's character very personable.

While all three of these movies – "The Grinch," "Home Alone" and "It's a

Wonderful Life" – span a variety of genres, all three communicate similar themes: family and community are priceless.

Whether it be through laughter, memorable rhymes or heartfelt scenes, each of these classics effectively draws in and warms the hearts of audience members of all ages.

## Vespers returns to spread holiday cheer

EMOTIONAL AND BREATHTAKING

RACHEL SMART  
THEATRE

'Tis the season. All across campus, students are getting in the Christmas spirit.

For the music department, this means the production of their annual Christmas Vespers concert where the A Capella choir, women's choir, trombone ensemble and orchestra will perform music to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Audiences will also be invited to sing along to many festive hymns and carols.

Friday morning chapel will showcase several of the key music pieces of this year's concert, and the full Vespers concert will be performed at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 and at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6. Seating is limited, and tickets are required.

For all that attend the concert annually, the music of Vespers is a huge source of joy and holiday spirit, and for many members of the choir, it is their favorite music concert of the year.

"The music is a beautiful celebration of the humble beginnings of our savior," junior Michael Hornback said.

Senior Kyle Johnson agreed. "Hymns smack and there's nothing better than declaring God is born with many voices," Johnson said.

This year, the music and joy of Vespers is needed more than ever, and to senior Schuyler Sterk, the theme of glorifying and praising God is incredibly timely for closing out 2020.

"Things might be a lot different and might feel really terrible at times, but God is still with us and worth praising," she said.

The music for this year's concert promises to be especially beautiful and gratifying with the A Capella choir performing a 22-minute choral piece by John Rutter titled "Gloria." It will be accompanied by eight brass players, two percussionists and the organ.

According to Dr. Thomas Holm, director of Vespers, this is only the third time this piece has been performed at Northwestern in his 21 years at the college.

"It has always been a favorite of the performers and audience," Holm said.

Selecting the music and planning for Vespers begins in the summer and is an intentional

process. The directors review hundreds of music selections including many new pieces.

From music selection, they begin to piece together a theme that will guide the entire concert and the pieces of each ensemble. Each detail and aspect of the performance is carefully considered.

"Designing a program that involves several ensembles, much movement, thematic flow and audience participation takes many, many hours," Holm said.

Eventually, after rehearsing throughout the fall, the week before Vespers, the ensembles take part in many joint rehearsals and movement rehearsals in order to get everything just right.

The effort and love put into this year's concert is particularly special, as many members of the A Capella choir will be graduating or student teaching next semester, making Vespers their last performance with the choir.

"Vespers is our last chance to really sing with each other and take in the beauty that comes with worshipping through the music we've spent months working on together," said senior Bree Hodnefeld.



PHOTO BY ANA DEKRUYTER  
The music department prepares for annual Christmas Vespers concert.

"Vespers will be an emotional yet breathtaking weekend, especially for this year's seniors."

In light of COVID-19, Vespers will be different this year than years past. Performers will be masked, and the processional and recessional movements of the choir have been changed

to maintain distance from the audience.

For audiences, masks will also be required, and because of social distancing, chapel capacity has been reduced.

Tickets are free to reserve but are on a first come first serve basis, and they may

be reserved for "family seating" (groups of three or less) or "single seating" (one individual).

To obtain a ticket for the event, contact the music department secretary Nora Verburg at 712-707-7062 or nverburg@nwciowa.edu.

## Art major senior spotlight: Jocelyn McCormick

FROM MASHED POTATOES TO POP ART

ALLISON WHEELER  
GRAPHIC DESIGN

She is a senior, a double major in graphic design and public relations. She is a co-editor-in-chief for the Beacon, Fern Smith Hall resident and a competitive mashed potato eater. She is Jocelyn McCormick.

The decision to become a double major in graphic design and public relations came about when McCormick found out she could not pursue a minor in graphic design. McCormick knew she wanted to be involved in art somehow, and after talking over her options with her advisor, professor Ann Minnick, McCormick decided to become a double major.

"I love art," she said. "I love all types of art, not just graphic design so I didn't want just an emphasis."

McCormick's love for art started in middle school when she took art classes and continued to explore different mediums of art throughout high school.

"My grandma and aunt were into art, so I guess it's kind of been in my family," she said.

Drawing was McCormick's main focus in her middle school and high school art classes, and she is currently taking a drawing class this semester. Her favorite art class that she has taken at Northwestern was printmaking. She had done some minimal printmaking work in high school, but she was able to

learn more about it and explore it more here at college.

Through her various classes and art pieces, McCormick has developed her own artistic style that is clean, colorful and stylized. She pulls inspiration from the pop art movement and more specifically by Andy Warhol's work during that time period.

"I just love pop art," she said. "The consumer commercial part mixed with art; that's like my job."

When it comes to job searching after college, McCormick hopes to stay in the Midwest and ideally be able to use both of her degrees. However, McCormick is open-minded when it comes to what exactly her future career will look like.

"I don't have a dream job because if I did, I'd be disappointed if I didn't get it," McCormick said.

Pursuing two degrees makes McCormick versatile with a wide range of skills.

"Having the public relations and graphic design majors combined helps me do both communications and creative, artistic tasks in my work," McCormick said.

Not only has McCormick been ambitious with taking on two majors, but she has also been involved in other ways on campus. She has held a work-study position at the Compass Center for Career and Calling since freshman year, worked on the Beacon's staff since sophomore year and participated in RUSH as a dancer the past three years.



PHOTO BY ABIGAIL MOODY  
Art major senior Jocelyn McCormick has learned much during her time at Northwestern.

McCormick has also been a resident of Fern all four years of college where she was able to take part in Fern's Potato Classic freshman year. She took fourth place in the mashed potato eating contest and considers that to be one of her favorite memories while here at NW.

"That is my proudest moment because my friends doubted me and thought I would get last place," McCormick said.

When the third north wing in

Fern reopened this year after being closed for two years, McCormick was excited. That wing is where she lived freshman year and she was happy to move back into her original wing for senior year. As McCormick puts it, "Full circle, baby!"

As McCormick looks toward graduation in the spring, she is unsure what her senior art show will look like. The art department hasn't given the senior art majors much information on how art

shows will look this year, but McCormick said she is prepared with some ideas that lean toward a darker and edgier tone.

"I'm sure I could come up with a theme," McCormick said.

When it comes to creating art and finding an artistic style, McCormick's advice to other art students here at NW is: "Don't feel pressured to make something perfect. Your own art style will develop over time."

## Budgeting during the Christmas season

GIVING MORE  
WHILE PAYING LESS

VANESSA STOKES  
WRITING AND RHETORIC

Between tinsel and trees, white elephants and wrapping paper, candy canes and Christmas gifts, the holidays can become quite spendy for the average person. It's even harder when that person is a college student on a budget.

According to USA Today, the average American spends around \$1,050 on holiday gifts, goodies and travel combined.

Broken down, \$230 of that is for decor—because who doesn't love a real Christmas tree? Food takes up \$160 of the total between cookies for Santa and a ham for the family. Lastly, on average, Americans spend upwards of \$660 on Christmas gifts per year.

That may seem like an outrageous number when stated outright, and it is. However, it is not so large in comparison to how many people a person may feel obligated to get presents for.

Krystal D'Costa, in the *Scientific American*, put it this way: "Though gifts are supposed to be given freely and willingly, they come with the obligation to give and an obligation to receive. Our social collective imposes the

obligation to give."

Thus, that number ticks higher than many actually want to spend.

College students feel this obligation heavily as they not only have a family but their wingmates or apartment mates, teammates, resident assistants, resident directors, beloved professors, coaches and so many others they have the opportunity to interact with on a daily basis in their home space.

Yet, students have a smaller budget than the average American. They need to find ways to balance their budget and their giving spirit in a way that won't break the bank.

"I personally develop a certain amount that I would like to spend on each person and mark that as a goal to stay under when shopping," senior Joey Lohse said. "Then, if I go under on some people, I can spend more on others."

Junior Destinee Montenegro takes a slightly different approach to holiday shopping.

"The process begins with looking at how much I have in my account, then either deciding not to spend anything or taking a portion from each paycheck and setting it aside for Christmas shopping," she said.

Knowing how much to spend on each person is very useful when



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM

College students are finding new ways to budget in order to get their family and friends gifts.

budgeting for Christmas gifts. Realistically, a person cannot get gifts for everyone they know and love. College students especially cannot.

As a way to still give yet be friendly on the pocketbook, here are some alternative gift options.

A lot of people appreciate a homemade or handmade gift. Homemade gifts could include face scrubs in a jar or baked goods. Handmade gifts could include ornaments, letters or a family recipe book.

For a significant other, the modern version of a Spotify playlist mixtape could be in the wraps.

Whatever the person is in relation to the giver, there are always alternative, cheaper options that will mean just as much to the receiver.

Another way to save money this Christmas is to shop sales or check out outlet or discount stores. Some popular options include TJ Maxx, Marshalls, Nordstrom Rack or GroupOn. They have many options at a price right for each person.

However, none of this savvy spending is possible without first having a reliable budget and budgeting system. One way

to start is to follow the 50 / 30 / 20 format.

This says that 50% of a person's income should be their needs, which includes groceries, housing, car payments or anything else you absolutely cannot go without.

Next in the system is wants, which can include up to 30% of a person's income. Budgeting does not mean you cannot have or save for what you want. It allows for more ability to spend healthily and to make less impulsive buys. Wants are items like manicures, movies and eating out.

Finally, 20% of your total income should be saved away for a rainy day or for debt repayment. College students will most likely be heavier in their 20% on the debt repayment side for the first few years after college. Whether the 20% goes to savings or debt is dependent on the person's current situation.

When shopping for others this holiday season, it's important to budget wisely and remember, as Lohse said, "Don't stress too much, the season is about giving, not receiving."

## Unsung heroes: Mike Stokes

FROM PAGE 1

"I guess you can say seeds were planted in my life," Stokes said. "I worked with Chaplain Floding so often I was able to develop a strong relationship with him, and he officiated Valerie and my wedding."

As one can expect, COVID-19 has made the need for the AV department increase exponentially. It was a busy summer for the AV department, as rooms that were not originally intended to be used as classrooms, such as the Vogel Room, dance studio and Theora England Willcox Proscenium Theatre, were turned into classroom spaces. It became a necessity

that every classroom be equipped to serve students both in person and remotely.

Chapel this year also impacted AV, as it started in the Rowenhorst Student Center before transitioning back to Christ Chapel.

"With the transition back to chapel, we had to add additional spaces on campus to allow for additional seating to support the distancing requirement," Stokes said.

While Stokes thinks AV goes unnoticed, there are many students on campus, especially those who work closest with Stokes, that know the difference.

For Clausen, Stokes is a role model.

"My time as a student in the AV department with Mike made it clear that I wanted to do something related to AV," Clausen said. "He is always willing to give my wacky ideas a try and encourages me when we succeed."

Samantha Blum, a senior biology health professions major, serves as the team leader for the AV department, and this is her fourth year on the team. She makes schedules, answers emails, clocks hours and fills out charges. Stokes has been her boss for each year.

"Stokes is a hard worker who is dedicated to making technology easier for others to use. He is a caring and kind



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Mike Stokes, pictured with his family, has helped NW in their AV department for 20 years.

boss who always asks how we are doing," Blum said. "He embodies what it means to treat everyone with respect and care, while still doing his job with excellence."

This is senior Ben Henker's third year on the team, and Stokes'

"unnoticed" work on the AV department has taught Henker a lot.

"[Stokes] has showed me that you can make a big impact by doing the small things in life. AV is a job that nobody notices until you mess up, then everyone

looks back and tries to figure out if you're sleeping or trying to make things go wrong," Henker said. "Without the AV department and the things that Mike does for this campus, there wouldn't be a functioning college."

## A dog is a person's best friend

THEIR INFLUENTIAL JOY

**BEN HENKER**  
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

When you're having a rough time, dogs can sense that, lick your wounds and show love without saying a word. This is one reason why Odin is part of the Colenbrander Hall family.

According to Cody Hughes, the resident director of Coly, his dog Odin has been the unofficial therapy dog for the residence hall. Odin is a Siberian Husky that came from the Humane Society of Northwest Iowa.

Since he was floated around to different homes and shelters until being adopted by Hughes and his wife Brooke, they don't know Odin's exact age. Still, they believe that he is nine years old, if not older.

"Odin has a calming presence about him, which is really great," Hughes said.

Since human beings have been able to domesticate dogs, they have been considered man's best friend.

More than half of American households have a pet, according to market research firm Packaged Facts. The two most popular pets:

cats and dogs.

Cats live in 24% of households, and dogs live in 39%.

Not only do dogs have the energetic and fun qualities that bring joy to life, but they are known to improve the quality of life by lowering blood pressure, encouraging exercise and decreasing stress.

This is evident on campus every "dead" week, the week before finals, as the college brings a number of little puppies to encourage students during a busy time and bring them joy in the midst of their studying. The energetic, happy puppies help students relieve stress at the opportune time.

Other than relieving stress, dogs can also help out their owners in many other ways. Dogs are used for moral support in nursing homes or hospitals. There are guide dogs that are used for the blind and dogs that help the police force keep the community safe.

Some dogs are lazy, and some dogs are fat. Other dogs are energetic or tiny. No matter what type of dog it is, it seems like they are always happy to interact with people. This happiness makes it hard to not smile.



PHOTO BY ALYSSA GLANZ  
Dogs have become a light in many people's hearts.

Dogs are meant to love, to protect and to be a friend to their owners. They can be the shoulder to cry on or the happiest thing you'll see when you come home from a long day, which makes them the perfect best friend.

Because Odin is older and has a hard time getting up the stairs, many Coly guys purposefully come down and love on him so they get a glimpse of Odin's happiness.

"Odin doesn't care about the

coronavirus," Hughes said. "With a lot of uncertainty this year, it has been great having a constant figure like Odin around."

The love that Odin brings to Coly is just an example of the love that any dog or animal, can bring to someone's life.

## Crazy year of 2020

FROM PAGE 1

2020 has been a positive year for our furry friends, with more family around and more time spent at home. With stay-at-home orders and people working remotely, pet adoption rates soared and are still quite high in the midst of this pandemic. In fact, an animal shelter in Florida had an entire kennel emptied for the first time in their organization's history.

Senior Calli Shaw said her family joined the adoption trend and brought home

Tucker, a boxer mixed breed. While there has undoubtedly been turmoil, students and faculty alike have found things to be grateful for and beautiful moments along the way.

This year has been a whirlwind of emotions and events, and while it's easy to see the negatives, it is equally as important to find moments of beauty and joy.

Reconnecting with friends this August was a highlight for many students. 2020 has been difficult, but it has also taught us to be grateful for the

people in our lives and the daily experiences we have taken for granted.

After getting sick with COVID-19 just a few weeks ago, Dr. Valerie Stokes, associate professor of social work, was reminded of how much she truly loves her students and getting to teach.

"I received flowers, cards and a gift package. I have the best students in the world," she said. "I am forever grateful for my relationship with each of them. So even though it's been a difficult and tiresome semester, I still feel blessed by teaching."



PHOTO COURTESY OF PINTEREST  
2020 has been filled with plenty of ups and downs.



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Valid at Orange City location only. Some restrictions may apply. Additional charge for extra cheese and \$2.00 charge for specialty crust. Prices subject to change without notice. Not valid with any other offer, gluten free crust or third-party delivery. Delivery where available and charges may apply.

EXPIRES 05/31/21 **Pizza Ranch** CODE: 53416

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## WOULD YOU RATHER?

(As voted on by you, the students)

Would you rather watch...

**Elf**

54%

OR

**Home Alone**

46%

Would you rather study...

**Inside**

74%

OR

**Outside**

26%

Would you rather...

**Live with your current roommate forever**

61%

OR

**Live alone and only see your friends in passing**

39%

The opinions expressed in these polls represent student preference and is no way intended to indicate superior qualities of one choice over another or endorse certain stereotypes

## Ending the Christmas music debate



**Kaleb Schrock**  
Spanish

It's that time of the year again. Christmas decorations are hung across campus, and Christmas music blares through the campus speakers. But there's an ongoing debate among Northwestern students that happens every time the Christmas season approaches: When should we start listening to Christmas music?

Throughout the halls on campus, the echoes of such a fiery debate spring up with each November building into December. Well, I am here to bring an end to this divisive conundrum.

A naïve observer would say that Christmas music should just be played in the month of December because, "that's when Christmas is." Such an argument is clearly not made by a true Christmas music expert. Likewise, those who say that you can listen to Christmas music all year round is also just as mad as the aforementioned observer.

Now you're probably asking yourself, *who*

*does this guy think he is to be an expert on Christmas music?* Well, first I'd like you to know I wholeheartedly want to hear you refute my intricate scientific inquiry. But if you must know my credentials, I have been studying Christmas and Christmas music for 21 years now, giving me plenty of room to speak on the subject.

Let's start with December. It goes without saying that Christmas music can be listened to at this time. This we can all agree on. However, we need to examine the two months around December.

How about January? The start of the new year and a month that does not have much for music. Can anyone really name any song that is specifically for New Year's Day and is commonly known, aside from "Auld Lang Syne"? No, so it only makes sense people would still be listening to Christmas music at this time.

Nonetheless, this is not for the whole month. I would argue that only the first two weeks of January are permissible times to listen to Christmas music.

Typically, it's around this time people begin taking down their Christmas decorations, and Christmas music, which gets you in the Christmas spirit, is not something you want to be in while taking down your decorations. It must be said that those who leave their decorations up year-round do not get an excuse to play Christmas music all year.

Now that January is addressed, we have the fiercely contested month of November. This is the month of Thanksgiving, which is the most overshadowed holiday since Flag Day.

I mean, what do people typically do when they have time off for Thanksgiving aside from eating turkey? They set up their Christmas decorations, sometimes even earlier than that! Not to mention that Thanksgiving songs don't exist, and no, I will not accept Puritan music from the 1600s as a solid response to that.

So, most people are left with Christmas music, but most people don't set up their Christmas decorations until at the earliest, two weeks before December. For those reasons it makes sense that they are allowed to listen to Christmas music at this time.

Now you are probably saying that we have finally solved the Christmas music debate once and for all and you would be right, but I dare to go one step further.

I propose what I call the Santa Clause, which is a loophole for those who wish to listen to Christmas music outside the designated time. If there is an incredibly snowy day or you are somewhere where you get a sense of Christmas nostalgia, you are allowed to listen to Christmas music. Finally, the question of when to play Christmas music has been answered, and NW can rest easy.

## The problem with the Black V



**Brian Vandenberg**  
Business Administration

Northwestern has many great groups that allow students to be involved on campus. These groups make the college experience fun and exciting, and they also help individuals grow to be a better version of themselves.

They include different clubs, music groups and theatre groups. They all add value in different ways. However, I do have a problem with one group: the Black V.

The non-sanctioned improv comedy group puts signs up all across campus. Normally, I do not have a problem with putting up signs. It's a matter of where they put them.

Doors, door handles, walls and on outdoor signs. You could almost see a sign for this group from anywhere on campus when they have a performance coming up.

This may be good advertising, but I think it has a negative effect. It makes

campus look cluttered. The grounds crew takes great care of our campus and having standard paper signs all over campus takes away from the work the grounds crew has done. It would be best that the Black V put signs where every other group puts them.

There is also an abundance of these signs, and I am wondering where this money is coming from.

I understand that paper does not cost that much, but the men's tennis team could use some of that money to increase their budget so they can go on a spring break trip like the baseball team does. The tennis team is even better at basketball than the baseball team, so the tennis team probably deserves to go on a trip more. Instead, we fight for every penny while the Black V freely spends on these exuberantly placed signs.

Instead of advertising by printing paper and ending our environment, they could send out an email or advertise by more of a digital way. It is 2020 after all.

I know we get a ton of emails, but it would be much more cost effective and would, of course, save the trees.

I have not even been to one show of this group. I'm sure they are a very talented group. It is just their advertising that causes me a great deal of stress.

A name of one of their shows was the "Vajama Show." I know most of NW students are pure and clean-minded but

not everyone is.

This is just a poorly phrased title and has resulted in various inappropriate jokes and comments dealing with the production.

Another concerned student, Nick VanRijs, said, "From somebody that is not qualified at all about naming improv shows, they should pick better names than the 'Vajama Show.'" People like VanRijs and I are concerned about the well-being of campus. I am not critiquing this group because I do not like them but because I care about them and the campus as a whole.

The last problem I have with this group is that their shirts do not always match what their name is. The letter is a different color than what the name of the group is. VanRijs raised this valid question, "Why do they wear the black shirts with a white V more than the white shirts with a black V?" This seems like false advertising, and they could be at risk of spending some time in jail.

Of course, I would never want this to happen, so I am bringing it up so they can fix it and stay out of trouble.

If the Black V can change the way they advertise, I foresee a greater approval rating for them among the student body. They are a great group, and I wish them nothing but success in the future.

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Respectfully,  
the Beacon staff

## NW men's basketball continue road to victory

### STARTING THE SEASON STRONG

**SCHUYLER STERK**  
ENGLISH TEACHING

The Raider men's basketball team came out victorious in a 97-79 win against the Midland University Warriors on Nov. 21. Midland, sitting at 1-3 in the GPAC and 1-4 record overall, didn't stand a chance against the Raider men.

In the first half of the conference matchup, Northwestern shot field goals with 50% accuracy, netting 18 in total. Complimented by five solid three-point shots, the team put up a strong offense against Midland. Though the game started off with

a basket from Midland, by the end of the first half, the Raiders had secured a modest lead, with a score of 42-34 at halftime.

The Warriors began the second half with the basket, but the Raiders came back even stronger, with 22 field goals and nine free throws. NW boosted their accuracy across the board and led them to finish the game with a near 20-point lead.

Over the course of the game, the Raiders scored 21 points off of turnovers from Midland, who only had seven turnover points. The Raiders brought in double the points in the paint than Midland had, scoring 32 over the course of the game, compared to Midland's 16.

Senior forward Craig

Sterk also shot a career high, bringing in 28 points total for the Raiders. Other leaders on the court included senior guard Jay Small who added 14 points to the Raiders score, and freshman forward Alex Van Kalsbeek who netted 20 points total and had five rebounds and three assists.

Coach Kris Korver was impressed with the game the men played, and he attributed the win to their selflessness and teamwork on the court.

"Guys recognized good match-ups, guys shared the ball, guys played for each other," he said. "They are a joy to coach."

This win makes the Raiders 2-1 in the GPAC



PHOTO COURTESY OF RED RAIDER ATHLETICS  
The Raider men's basketball team is currently 4-1 in GPAC.

and 4-1 overall, as they seek to continue their two-win streak. The men's basketball season is just the Hastings College in getting started, and their the Bultman Center on Saturday, Dec. 5th.

## NW wrestling wins dual against William Penn

### BIG DUAL WIN FOR NW WRESTLERS

**REID SEELHAMMER**  
BUSINESS ADMIN

The Red Raider wrestlers hosted a dual meet versus the William-Penn Statesmen on Nov. 24.

The Raiders won their second match by the dual off of a throw by freshman heavyweight Chris Van Der Brink in his first match of the year, helping elevate the Raiders to a 30-27 victory over the Statesmen.

"The freshmen were especially impressive. They look for the pin every time they step on the mat and they are tenacious," graduate assistant Dylan Costello said. "Did you see what Van Der Brink did to that kid? The future is bright for the Raiders, and the present

is hopeful."

Other stand-out freshman performers included Trey Schuck at 141 pounds and Jakob Francksen-Small at 165 pounds who both won by fall and advanced their season to a 5-1 record.

"Our young team rallied and found a way to win despite being down two guys," Costello said.

"That shows the potential this team has. We have a team that will upset a lot of established opponents at the conference and national tournaments."

Redshirt junior Matthew Dahl also won with a big throw in the third period, improving to 4-1 on the season. The Raiders also were given a forfeit at 184 to sophomore Luke Jenness.

This was the Raiders first win of the

season pushing the dual record to 1-2.

"This was a big win for the Raiders. Our young guys pulled through for us," head coach Rik Dahl said. "We had four pins, three by freshmen. Schuck, Francksen-Small and Van Der Brink carried us tonight. William Penn came out looking for the big move all night long which made some of our older wrestlers uncomfortable. When we controlled the ties and tempo, we did well. When we gave up position, we found ourselves trying to catch up and we broke down physically. It was great to get the win...now we heal up and work to improve over the coming weeks."

The Raiders were able to enjoy a long break before returning to practice to continue the season for their next competition on Jan. 9.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RED RAIDER ATHLETICS  
NW wins first home dual meet with high hopes for the rest of the season.

## Raider football closes season with Jimmies' defeat

### BIG WIN BEFORE LONG ROAD TO PLAYOFFS

**CAROLINE VAN BERKUM**  
MATHEMATICS

Last week Red Raider football took the field for the final time this fall for their regular season schedule. The game was originally supposed to be played the Saturday following Thanksgiving but was rescheduled. This switch allowed for our football team to head into Thanksgiving break with a win.

The game against the Jamestown Jimmies started off well for NW. On the first drive, NW returned the ball after 12 plays that ended in a touchdown from senior, Tyson Kooima to fifth-year senior, Shane Solberg. This pair had another connection in the second quarter to boost the score to 14-0 and another shortly following to make the scoreboard read 21-0 for the halftime.

The momentum the Raiders had in the first half carried into the second, as a connection between Kooima and senior Kobe Lutjens was made early in the second half.

After forcing a punt on the Jimmies first possession of the half, junior Garret Packer broke through the Jimmies defense to block the punt, which was recovered and run to the Raiders endzone for another Raider touchdown.

At this point, the score was 35-0, and it was only the third quarter. The other two touchdowns came from freshman Logan Meyer in the third quarter and junior Blake Fryar in the fourth. The final score for this game was 49-0, a total shutout.

Solberg would come out of this game breaking his own record from last year for the most touchdown receptions in a season. He is currently at 15 for this year alone. Freshman kicker Eli Stader had a perfect game, making all extra points for NW.

Overall, Monday was a great day for the Red Raider football team, leaving the players excited about what the spring will bring for the national tournament.

"There's a lot of time between now and then, and the long road for preparation to be the best we can for nationals," junior Cade Moser said.

NW football team will not know if they made the tournament or who they play until April



PHOTO COURTESY OF RED RAIDER ATHLETICS  
NW football concludes season with a great win.

11, 2021. However, there are going to be some exhibition games before the first playoff game, which will help the team prepare.

"We are very focused and determined

to overcome adversity," sophomore Noah Kullmann said. "The team that is going to win the championship is going to be the team that can adjust and adapt to this change the best."



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# Governor's mask mandate nears an end

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES TO RESUME SOON

**CAMBER HERRIG**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

After months of Governor Reynolds refusing to declare a mask mandate in the state amidst record-breaking COVID-19 numbers, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed a new proclamation, continuing the state's public emergency declaration. The declaration, made on Nov. 16, remains in effect until Thursday, Dec. 10.

The proclamation gives new guidelines concerning masks, businesses, sports and capacity limits. These guidelines, though, come with numerous exceptions.

The state of Iowa now requires masks be worn in indoor public spaces if people are unable to social distance and will be in the building for 15 minutes or more.

For sophomore history major Will Minnick, the new guidelines create more unity across the state.

"It's a way to care about our neighbors during the pandemic," he said. "It also removes any awkward feelings of whether I should wear my mask or not."

Capacities for indoor social, business and leisure gatherings are restricted to 15 people, and outdoor gatherings are limited to 30, including weddings and funerals.

However, according to the proclamation, it does not restrict gatherings that occur in the workplace as part of normal daily business or government operations.

Sporting events were also affected due to these new guidelines. All organized youth and adult sports are suspended. High school, collegiate and professional sports went unaffected besides a new limit to two spectators per high school athlete at each event.

For sophomore social work major Meridith Hochstetler, she thinks of her 12-year-old sister Sarah back home.

"The mask mandate is a good thing," she said. "Hopefully it will allow for us to slow the spread of the virus so that my sister can participate in her youth events again, and we can all go back to a normal life."



PHOTO BY ABIGAIL MOODY

Governor Kim Reynolds placed restrictions on businesses and sporting events in hopes of slowing the spread of COVID.

For Northwestern College, this includes suspended intramurals and new guidelines at the Rowenhorst Student Center. Only one individual or household is allowed per basketball hoop or court, and there is a limit of 20 people on both the walking track and fitness area. Group fitness activities have been suspended as well.

Sophomore accounting major Micah VanKalsbeek had just joined her first intramural sport upon learning the season was suspended.

"Nothing compares to the disappointment of just learning how to underhand serve only to find out that volleyball was cancelled," VanKalsbeek said.

Restaurants and bars also took a hard hit with this new proclamation. Restaurants must also require patrons to wear a mask at all times unless eating or drinking, and groups are limited to eight people unless they are part of the same household. Facilities must close at 10 p.m. and bar seating is closed. These rules also apply to bowling alleys, pool and bingo halls,

arcades and children play centers.

These mitigation efforts come into play at the same time the pandemic has been striking America the hardest, with Iowa reporting over 2,000 new cases on Tuesday, Dec. 1. European countries such as Germany, France, Greece, Italy and Spain have also been seeing a rise in cases.

These spikes are occurring just after Thanksgiving, after extended families have gathered together despite pleas from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to do otherwise.

In a news conference on Tuesday, Dec. 1, Governor Reynolds pleaded with Congress to pass a COVID-19 relief package. She acknowledged that while restaurants and businesses are not closed, the mitigations are taking a toll with limited hours and restricted operations.

Iowa's restrictions are set to expire next week but could possibly be extended.

# Christmas cheer continues despite restrictions

CAMPUS HOSTS CHRISTMAS EVENTS

**AARON ECKMANN**  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

There are usually numerous events going on around campus during the Christmas season; however, COVID-19 has put a halt on many.

This year there was no candlelight service when lighting President Greg Christy's Christmas tree and many dorm events were canceled, such as Coly Christmas and caroling around the dorms.

The school and students have done a good job of trying to make up for this. On Thursday, Dec. 3, the Student Activities Association hosted a campus Christmas. Dozens of students attended the event and partook in

making ornaments, putting puzzles together, playing card games, drinking Mexican hot chocolate and taking pictures in PGC's convertible sleigh. Throughout the night, friends were able to mingle and enjoy one of the few recent events on campus.

Elizabeth Korver, a sophomore social work major, said, "I'm glad that the college is still doing events to get people more involved on campus despite the difficulty of planning around the COVID-19 guidelines."

However, some students think they haven't done enough.

Noah Smith, sophomore biblical and theological studies major, said, "I'm sad we couldn't have Coly Christmas this year. I was convinced to participate in it last year and had a lot of fun," said sophomore biblical

and theological studies major Noah Smith. "Why couldn't we have it even if we were all masked up? I feel it would have been no different than if someone gives a prospect student a tour of the building."

Looking around campus, it's easy to see everyone getting into the festive spirit. Lights are wrapping around buildings, wreaths have been hung on buildings, President Christy's Christmas tree has been lit and Christmas music has not stopped playing out of Zwemer Tower.

The decorations aren't just on the outside of buildings. Sophomore sport management major Becca Nevin said, "My roommate and I decked out our room with Christmas lights and decorated our door and window to put us in the holiday spirit."

Walking through the dorms, you can see Christmas lights strung, trees decorated and the buzzing of air pumps filling inflatable Santas and snowmen.

The rest of the town hasn't skipped out either. With a walk downtown, one will find lights hanging above the streets and stores being decorated. Even

though events look different this year, students can still find joy through friends and Christmas decorating.



COURTESY OF NWMARCOMM  
COVID-19 didn't stop campus and students from celebrating.