

STUDENT VOICE



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International students reflect on holiday traditions

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Christmas may not be celebrated internationally, but from Pakistan to Japan, different cultures have many ways to enjoy the holiday season and the spirit of giving. For this edition of *Student Voices*, international students offered a peek into the holidays they celebrate back home.

Xiangyang Jin, Xi Zhou and Yanya Chen are international students from China. In China, less attention is paid to Christmas. “[The] Chinese New Year is the biggest festival in China,” said Chen.

Chinese New Year, though the date is different every year, takes place February 5th. On the Chinese Zodiac calendar, 2019 will be the year of the pig. Those born in the year of the pig are considered to be trustworthy, generous and blessed with good fortune.

Christmas is not very important in China, though as Jin explained, “It’s getting more popular.”

The younger population has adopted the holiday, typically celebrating with friends and food. “Some stores will have decorations like Christmas trees,” Zhou said.

Lights are typically hung during the New Year. Zhou, Chen and Jin will be traveling around the U.S. this Christmas with other Chinese international students.

Amrutha Gondhipalli is a first-year graduate student from Bangalore, India. After studying in India for four years, she will be receiving her Masters in business administration at UW-River Falls.

In India, Christmas is typically only celebrated by practicing Christians but those with other beliefs do join in the festivities. “The thing is, you guys have Christmas and Thanksgiving as two festivals; in India we have lots of festivals and Christmas is one,” Gondhipalli said. “Christmas is celebrated by only a few people, in Catholic states like Goa and Mumbai. People traditionally celebrate by fasting for 24 days from the 1st of December to 24th of December.”

At midnight, according to Gondhipalli, Christians go to mass and eat a traditional meal. “The whole month, we have lightings everywhere and stars and all the malls will be filled with Christmas lights and Christmas trees. That is how they show Jesus the love they have,” Gondhipalli explained. “On Christmas, I would go to my friend’s house to eat cake,” she admitted.

Other holiday traditions vary greatly on



Xiangyang Jin, Xi Zhou, Yanya Chen speak about their experience with Chinese traditions. Photo by Brooke Shephard



Amrutha Gondhipalli discusses Indian festivals. Photo by Brooke Shephard



Photo by Brooke Shephard
Annum Zia elaborates on Pakistani holidays.

location, religion and even their caste system. “There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians – there’s a lot of religions. The biggest festivals are Diwali, Holi and Id (Eid-ul-fitr),” She said. However, none of these are actually celebrated during the

American ‘holiday season.’ In October, they celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, eleven days of celebration in honor of Lord Ganesh, an elephant-headed god. Gondhipalli also celebrates two New Years, one in January and the Ugadi in April, also known as the Telugu New Year. All of these festivals are individually celebrated, but when asked her favorite festival, she stated, “There’s multiple, but I love the lighting, stars and Santa Claus everywhere and the horse [-drawn carriages], and giving gifts. It’s beautiful.”

Gondhipalli will be celebrating this Christmas with her host family.

Annum Zia is a biotechnology major who has spent her fall semester at UW-River Falls. Zia said Christmas doesn’t have much popularity where she is from, in Kalis, Pakistan.

Zia compared Ramadan and Eid to Christmas. Ramadan is the sacred month in Islamic culture, taking place during the summer. Eid is the festival that follows. During Ramadan, people strictly fast during the day for the whole month. After the month is over, there is a celebration of the fasting, where they celebrate Eid.

“We get together and cook meals. The elders will give money to the younger kids,” Zia said. The decorations for Eid vary from family to family. “It’s not a generic thing. My family likes to have a barbecue, so we will put up fairy lights around the yard,” Zia said.

Eid lasts three days, with the special dinner on the first night. People typically dress fancy for Eid.

Zia will return home during J-Term, and will spend Christmas in Pakistan. Zia will be preparing for exams upon her return. “On the 25th, I might be studying,” Zia said.

Hamsa Chandra is a student that received her undergraduate in India. She will be graduating next year with a masters in Computer Science. Chandra is from Bangalore, India, but just because Hamsa Chandra and Amrutha Gondhipalli are from the same city doesn’t mean that they share the same traditions. “We don’t celebrate Christmas,” Chandra said of her community. “It’s a one day holiday. We get a day off and hang out at the malls where it’s decorated. Everybody goes and takes a picture near the [Christmas] tree.”

“It is now, after all the media and internet, the influence lead to us observing it. It’s not in every house but its in every mall and some big shops and the companies,” Chandra elaborated. “It’s really important to know each and every culture.”

Chandra does celebrate a few holidays similar to Christmas. Although the date



Hamsa Chandra is posing for a photo near the Office of International Education. Photo by Brooke Shephard



Ai Yoshizumi and Nanaka Yamashita explain Christmas traditions in Japan. Photo by Brooke Shephard

changes every year according to the Hindu calendar, Diwali, the Festival of Lights, usually falls between October and November. “In every house you will have lamps and candles, every house will be colorful, full of lights, all bright. We do burn crackers at that time - like fireworks here,” Chandra said.

Chandra received her undergraduate in India and is currently getting her masters in Computer Science. She will be graduating next year. This year on Dec. 25 she will be home in India.

Ai Yoshizumi and Nanaka Yamashita are international students from Munakata and Kagoshima, Japan. Both have degrees in English. Yoshizumi is now working on a stage and screen arts major, while Yamashita is undecided, but leaning towards international studies. Yoshizumi explained that almost all Japanese people participate in the celebration of Christmas, though they may not be Christian.

“I’m Christian and my family is too. We

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Chief of police discusses school shooting safety

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6 years ago on Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman shot his way into an elementary school and committed a massacre that is considered the fourth deadliest single-person mass shooting in American history. Twenty people, including staff, students and the shooter himself were killed. The youngest victims were only six years of age.

Although Sandy Hook is over 2,000 miles away from River Falls, their circumstances are not rare. Since the Sandy Hook shooting, there has been another 1,911 mass shootings in American history, according to *Vox News*' calculations. Over 40 of those have occurred on schools and campuses, much like UW – River Falls.

"Anytime that you have a situation where there's potential for mass casualties, the loss of life – whether it's one life or multiple lives – is a loss to the entire community," Chief of Police Karl Fleury stated. "It's a tragedy, and it's something that has unfortunately become more frequent. This sort of atrocity is something that not only impacts the individual victims and their families, but it impacts the whole community and society."

Maintaining the sanctuary of the community is a large part of Chief Fleury's job. Among other duties, he monitors and supervises law enforcement on campus, oversees parking violations and emergency management. "It's a whole list of duties and assignments, but overall it's the law enforcement perspective," Fleury summarized.

Currently, the University of Wisconsin –



Chief Fleury recommends students keep track of emergency exits near their classrooms. Photo by Kacey Joslin

River Falls has considerable safety measures established to prevent and prepare the school for an Active Armed Assailant. "Of course," Fleury added. "While it's certainly something we would love *not* to happen, there are a number of protocols in place."

UWRF has, among other safety measures, an emergency notification system. "It's a system that notifies all of our campus that there's an emergency situation taking place. We would put out that notification and it would go out to all the email accounts," Fleury said.

The notification would inform the campus if there was an active shooter or another threat, in which safety procedures would vary. If there was an Active Armed Assailant, the system would tell students to either seek

shelter or follow the *Run!-Hide!-Fight!* protocol while the police responded to the threat.

Terminology is important to touch on be-

fore elaborating. 'Active Armed Assailant' is the umbrella term law enforcement uses to reference an assailant armed with not only a firearm, but possibly other weapons such as a knife, a pipe or even a vehicle. "Anything that could do damage or inflict injury," Fleury explained. "It's a catch-all that gets people's attention."

Although the *Run!-Hide!-Fight!* protocol is rather self-explanatory, Fleury elaborated on how to determine which of course of action is appropriate. "*Run!-Hide!-Fight!* is simple terminology that people should keep in mind. If an attack is happening on one side of the campus and you're on the other, you can flee and escape. If it's happening in a building where you are, you may have to hide. Barricade the door, turn off the lights, find a safe place to conceal yourself that offers you some protection," Fleury explained. "If the individual, the assailant, is breaking in or coming in through the door, you have to make a determination at that point in time whether or not to fight. If it's a life and death situation, you have to decide."

He recommends looking around for potential items that can serve as protection, whether it be a stapler, a fire extinguisher, or breaking a leg off a chair.

"Fight," Fleury added. "Is the last resort."

Fleury trusts that most students have exposure to these methods through training programs taught throughout their education.

"We also provide information, handouts outlining some of the protocols and procedures, making our students more aware," Fleury stated. "I think all the

incoming freshman might've got one in their packet or on a table, but there's so much information that it gets overwhelming."

For other tips on how to be prepared, the school website has an Emergency Response Guide provided by Risk Management. The website also offers a profile of an assailant and possible behavioral indicators.

Fleury, however, says to take the list with a grain of salt. "We'll narrow it down. If someone's making threats to harm or do some type of incident as far as a shooting, or if they make a comment about mass shooting or something to that effect, those would be things of concern. There are many gambits of other things, a whole list of things – but certainly, if someone says something like that, you should key us in," he said.

Students should not be afraid to report suspicious behavior. "That's why we're here. We have officers on duty 24/7. There's a slogan that we use when I'm doing training; *If you see something, say something*. If we don't know about it, we can't do anything in regards to it," Fleury said. "If you have a concern, don't discount it. Sometimes we talk ourselves out of reporting, justify it or say 'oh, it's nothing'. Take that time, report it. If it turns out to be nothing, that's okay. At least it's guaranteed that it's going to get to us, and it's going to get to us in a timely manner that way," he said.

However, while it's his job to ensure the community's safety, Fleury also emphasized the need for students to take responsibility for themselves.

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Printmaking resonates with students

Destinie Vhaa

Falcon News Service

Printmaking is one of the art forms practiced by legends such as Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh and Andy Warhol. Although printmaking is not all that well known at UW-River Falls, the bachelor of fine arts emphasis has been around since the art program started at the university.

Lecturer Nikki Schneider teaches four different techniques in her printmaking classes: relief, intaglio, lithography and screen printing. Although it is a practice used by graphic designers and tattoo artists, printmaking as a whole is not very common with the public.

"So when you hear of 'print,' people go,

'Oh they just printed it out on the printer,'" Schneider said. "But (the artists) ink it all by hand, and then run it through the press... What's cool is that you have multiples."

As opposed to an artist drawing or painting a singular image, in printmaking work can then be transferred onto another medium from which an artist can make multiple copies.

This is only Schneider's second year at UWRF, but she has been teaching different kinds of art for 18 years, such as fundamentals of art, painting and drawing. Although she does enjoy these different art forms, she emphasizes her love of printmaking.

"I love printmaking," she said. "To see

the students explore their ideas and their images. My favorite part of teaching is when a student comes up to me, and those brainstorming are sitting around and hitting a light bulb... It keeps me young."

Many of Schneider's students were surprised at the love they also would encounter for printmaking after only taking one introductory course.

Mai See Xiong, a communication studies major, said that she got into printmaking after attempting to do work in graphic design. She said that "it's just something that I fell in love with."

Even though she is not majoring or minoring in printmaking, she said that the class has been a great outlet for her creative side.

Another student of Schneider's, senior Saraphina Grimaldi, is a drawing major who also works with printmaking. Grimaldi said that printmaking has not only helped with her drawing dexterity but her confidence in her work as well.

"I love how supportive everyone is," Grimaldi said. "In a lot of other universities, it can get really competitive and really kind of petty. But here... I see more often than not more people helping one another rather than, like, discouraging one another. It's a very supportive environment to be in, and it really has helped me as an artist."

Grimaldi's work, along with that of other graduating seniors in the art department, has been on display before commencement in Gallery 101 in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

Tobacco-Free policy and e-cigarette usage on campus

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UW-River Falls has actively been a tobacco free campus for the past five years. The tobacco-free policy was implemented in July of 2013 and since then there has been a steady decrease of tobacco use on campus. According to UWRF student health services surveys, the percentage of students who smoke on the UWRF campus has decreased approximately 72 percent and smoking rates on a national level have decreased approximately 58 percent. However, in recent years e-cigarettes have replaced traditional tobacco products which has affected the rates of smoking on campus. Although the overall percentage rates of smoking have gone down both on the national level and on the UWRF level, there is still prevalent use of “vapes” on campus.

The policy raises the question of “what’s the big deal of using e-cigarettes on campus?” Keven Syverson, Assistant Director of Health Promotion, discussed the issues with e-cigarette use on campus. Syverson, said, “The policy for a tobacco-free campus was produced in hopes of creating an environment that could promote healthy living. If we can assist in healthier decisions hopefully we can have healthier employees and students and they can have healthier lives.”

Syverson also added that, “the policy is not in place to tell people that they can’t smoke, they just can’t smoke on any UWRF property. The rationale of the policy is to help people quit and cut back on the use of tobacco.”

The policy making process took around five years and the policy was passed through multiple campus government organizations, including both faculty and student government bodies. Syverson said, “We wanted the policy to be all inclusive.”

So information was gathered from various sources. Syverson said, “Student health services created several surveys for staff and students regarding the policy and responses showed that a tobacco-free policy would be supported.”

The enforcement of the policy is completely voluntary. Syverson said, “It is a self-enforced policy and is based on people to comply and to encourage others to comply.”

This approach works for the UWRF campus and for several other campuses in the UW-system. The idea is that, if students or staff do encounter a situation where the policy is being broken, that they remind others that the campus is a tobacco-free environment and the use of tobacco is prohibited on the property. There are not necessarily consequences stated within the written policy.

The use of tobacco on campus has not been an issue in recent years until e-cigarettes started to become more popular. It still is not necessarily a huge issue, but it is prevalent on campus. According to a UWRF campus survey, about 10 percent of students use e-cigarettes regularly. This is an increase from prior years and because of the overall increase, the UWRF campus makes sure to market the policy to new and returning students at

the beginning of each year at orientations and during the first few days when students are back on campus.

E-cigarette products and the effects of these products are still being researched today. There are not many studies that ex-

Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 46 percent of e-cigarette users also smoke cigarettes on a regular basis.

The UWRF tobacco-free policy will remain in place and is up for review in the coming year. The policy may be revised



Anonymous 19 year old vapes in forest
Photo by Theo Tollefson

press the health effects of these products. In other words, there is no proof explicitly saying that vaping is either healthy or unhealthy. The products are marketed as a healthy alternative to traditional smoking, however the FDA does not support this.

There is no data from the FDA that proves that the use of e-cigarettes are less harmful than cigarettes or that the products help people to quit or cut back on using traditional cigarettes. However, there is evidence that dual use is more common. According to a survey fact sheet from the

to keep enforcing a healthy environment by continuing to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes as well as other tobacco use on campus. There are resources on campus that help students with quitting tobacco use. There are quit kits available through health services and the Vibrant health clinic in River Falls also can help with the quitting process. In addition to these resources, there are Wisconsin and Minnesota quit-lines that offer support throughout the course of quitting tobacco use.

Plastic straws, bags seeing less use on UWRF campus

Destinie Vhaa

Falcon News Service

UW-River Falls is among universities that have joined an effort to eliminate waste by limiting use of plastic straws and plastic bags.

The banning of plastic straws at many coffee shops and bars has become increasingly popular due to awareness of limiting waste. Starbucks, as one example, has cut out serving cold drinks with straws at many of its location around the world, and will be completely straw free by 2020, according to a company press release.

Many hotels, resorts, bars and schools have followed Starbucks’ lead, including many of the UW campuses. UWRF cut down on the use of plastic straws and plastic bags through its Dining Services at the beginning of the fall semester.

Although plastic bags are no longer being used on campus, straws are still available upon request. Compostable straws have been put in place of the plastic straws in most areas of Dining Services.

Franchised eateries in the University Center, like Einstein Bros Bagels and Erbert and Gerbert’s Bistro, have not made the transition away from plastic straws yet because they must follow their own franchise guidelines, which still use straws.

Einstein and Erbert and Gerbert’s are still very new in the process of switching over to being straw-less. Because they are much smaller than companies such as Starbucks, the transition may take longer, say their customer service representatives. Employees of both companies say the transition should happen in the next few years.

Sue Boettcher, the senior director of Dining Services at UWRF, said that the transition from the usage of plastic to paper has been surprisingly smooth with the students and staff.

“I think it’s been embraced really well,” she said. “A lot of people don’t request straws. We haven’t had a lot of concerns brought to us over the straws.”

Since the cost of paper is significantly more than the cost of plastic eating and drinking utensils, Boettcher said that it has been harder to find the most wallet-friendly option especially when ordering in large quantities.

“The straws, it’s an in-demand item now, the compostable ones, so we just have to source the best product we can. But given that we’ve also seen a lot less usage... helps balance it out.”

Students who use Dining Services say they have noticed the disappearance of straws on their lunch and dinner breaks, but it is nothing that makes a big difference in the quality of their food and service.

Dairy science sophomore Alyssa Seitz said that this is a good effort that the university is taking toward being more sustainable. There are some flaws in the switch that she said may need to be thought through more.

“I’ve noticed that the bags to carry things in at the C-Store have changed to paper, which is great, but the bags are fairly small so it makes it harder to fit things into them,” Seitz said. “Maybe getting bigger bags would be more beneficial and functional for students.”

International Friendship Program strives for multicultural experiences

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The International Friendship Program at UW-River Falls has been a project on campus for several years and helps many international students transition into their lives here in the community. UWRF students and members from the surrounding cities can sign up for the International Friendship Program, and are there to support international students throughout their time on campus. The program also promotes cultural understanding in the community by creating a way to build new relationships between different cultures.

The program pairs international students with another UWRF student or a local family, based on a survey of questions asked regarding interests and hobbies. The program is mainly a way for domestic students and community members to share American culture with the international students. Students or community members can bring their International Student to events on campus or in the community, like sporting events or inviting them to participate in holiday festivities.

This also serves as a way for students at UWRF to learn about international cultures and gain new global perspectives. The program gives domestic and international students a one-on-one opportunity to share each other's cultural experiences. Vanessa Luther, the program coordinator last year said, "The program is a great way for students to learn about other cultures."

The program promotes the idea of broadening a cross-cultural understanding. It is an alternative way to experience other cultures rather than studying abroad. Kelsey Mclean, the current program

coordinator said, "One of the campuses core values is global engagement, and this is a great way that students can gain that global engagement by staying on campus."

Kelsey Mclean also talked about how this program should be a positive experience for everyone that participates. She said, "The program goes both ways, our friendship domestic partners also get a lot of reciprocal benefits by getting the opportunity to learn about another culture as well."

Students or community members can be paired with international students at any time. The goal of the program is to build new friendships by having domestic students or community members invite their international student to do daily activities that they already do. Students can invite their international students home with them on the weekends or during holidays if they so desire. The main idea is to just share stories of their culture and gain a new friendship that is out of the ordinary.

Anyone on campus or within the surrounding communities can sign up to be a part of the International Friendship Program. There is no certain amount of commitment that is needed to participate, international students and domestic students can be as involved as little or as much as they want. By just attending campus sporting events to sharing family experiences, there is no limit. The main goal is to just create a friendly environment on campus by creating lasting friendships across cultures.

The form, as well as additional information, is available on the UWRF International Friendship Program webpage.



International Students and Friendship Partners, host families getting together.

Submitted photo.

Dancing with Diversity impacting campus

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Dancing with Diversity is a student organization at UW-River Falls, with a focus exploring international dances and building friendships. The club meets Monday nights from 6 to 8 p.m. and Thursday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. in the small studio at the Falcon Center.

President Chandra Vang, a sophomore majoring in animal science, explained that each week the group gets together and follows along to a dance. "I teach them a dance for two hours. We usually will record the dance at the end for our Instagram page," said Vang. "Each week we did a new genre of dance, like african dancing, k-pop, indian dances, and sometimes english dances."

added Latino, African, Hip-Hop, K-pop, and Indian [dances]. Two of the dances were solo that the members made up, and the other dances were learned from YouTube," Rivera explained.

The group discussed which dances were of interest to members. "In the beginning of the year I asked for suggestions on what kind of dances they wanted to learn," said Vang. "If I can learn it, then I know they can. If there's a really hard part in the dance I can just change it." Members don't need dance experience to join the group. Vang explained, "This dance club is for anyone. We could still break it down for you step by step."

Vang's background with dance comes from step dancing throughout high



Dancing with Diversity strikes a pose.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Rosa

The group promotes diversity on campus through a variety of dances. Dances typically take a single practice to learn, with longer dances will take two practices. Dancing with Diversity has performed at different cultural events around campus. Last year, they performed to the song Danger by BTS at the UWRF Culture Fest. "We did a k-pop girls dance," said Vice President Elizabeth Rivera, who is a sophomore majoring in social work with a Spanish minor.

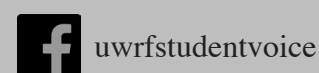
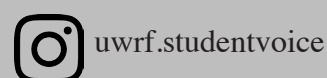
At culture fest this year, the group tried a variety of dances. "It took us about a month to learn the whole dance and formation. We had nine performers including Chandra and I," said Rivera. "We also

school.

Last year's president, Kaliopi Vanderhye, is a junior majoring in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Vanderhye is currently studying abroad in South Korea. Vang took over the group during her absence.

Vang, as the current president, discussed some of the main challenges this group has faced have been related to attendance. "Attendance is optional so if someone doesn't want to learn the dance, they can wait until the next practice," Vang said. The non mandatory attendance allows members to enjoy the club, without feeling stressed that they have to make it to

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Gender and Sexuality Alliance welcomes students

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The Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) is a student organization with a focus on the LGBTQ+ community and allies of the community. This organization meets every Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. They are located in the St. Croix room on the third floor of the University Center.

The organization began a little under a decade ago. Co-president Krystal Kleven said, "This club provides a safe place for people with a different sexual orientation, or different gender other than straight/male/female."

This organization helps students who may be confused about different aspects of their lives. It provides resources and support to members. "This club allows members to have fun and relax for an

hour every week," said President Brooklyn Jenness.

An event that the GSA hosts annually is the drag show. The drag show takes place in mid to end of October, as well as in April. "GSA is also involved with the sexual emergency response team here in River Falls, [and] the money made at the drag show is donated there," said Kleven.

GSA also is involved in things off of campus. "Things we do off campus include picnics with PFLAG, a group in town who is basically a GSA for the community for River Falls [. . .]. GSA also volunteers, and a table at the "Take Back the Night" event that happens in spring," said Kleven. Take Back the Night is an event for victims and survivors of sexual assault, focused on giving them a voice.

This group offers an opportunity to meet with unique individuals in a safe space. "GSA [. . .] offers endless support. We

don't judge, and we allow people to open up and be who they really are," said Jenness. GSA has strived to make an impact on campus.

In the future, the GSA plans to remain

a safe place for everyone. "We want the club to keep growing as well. We love seeing new members every semester. We would love to plan events, keep the drag show strong, and be welcoming to all those interested," said Jenness.



Graphic by Kacey Joslin

May Hall remodeling will accommodate for student living

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This summer UW-River Falls will begin preparing for the reconstruction of May Hall; come spring of 2020 construction will officially launch. Major modifications will be made to the building including updated heating systems, remodeling the basement, and remodeling the lobby.

Many students have been concerned if there will be sufficient housing available during the reconstruction. Occupancy across campus is typically lower come spring semester due to student teaching, studying abroad, exchange programs and graduating seniors. Karla Thoennes, the interim assistant chancellor for student affairs and director of Residence Life, said, "The University of Wisconsin-River Falls isn't worried about if they'll have enough dorms for students come spring."

In fall of 2019, May Hall will remain available to students who wish to live on campus. Residence Life is encouraging people to live in May Hall, especially those who plan to participate in student teaching, studying abroad, exchange programs or are graduating seniors. According to Thoennes, "The incentive is that they [students that choose to live in May Hall] get first pick on rooms, and our hope is to fill the building with upper class or returning students who already



Pictured is May Hall, the residence hall that will be under construction beginning spring of 2020. Photo courtesy of Anna Valeri.

"The University of Wisconsin-River Falls isn't worried about if they'll have enough dorms for students come spring."

know what's going to happen verses assigning first year students."

As far as the student organizations that are found in May Hall, they will be moving into new locations on campus. Honors Living-Learning Community will be living in Johnson Hall instead of May Hall next year, and the global living com-

munity will be suspended for next year so they can reevaluate and work more with the International Education Office on developing more of a collaborative program. Thoennes also said that exchange students will be most likely be placed in May Hall next year due to meeting the criterion of only being here for one semester.

The Nelson Center, which is physically connected to May Hall, will be torn down as an extension from the Falcon Center project. A new lobby area will replace some of the space that the Nelson Center was. It will have an elevator to make it handicap accessible and a fireplace for

comfort. The entrance that faces Maria-chi Loco will be removed and turned into an outdoor patio which will also possess a fireplace. Thoennes stated, "We know we need to work on the heating system so we will be redoing the heating system, and if the budget allows we will also put central air in as well."

Last but not least, a long overdue update to the basement will include egress windows in order to allow in natural light, as well as a new and updated kitchen space.

The construction is estimated to be completed by August 2020 with an estimated cost of \$7 million.

Fitness influencer Amelia Skye tells her story

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A day at the office for Amelia Skye consists of taking and posting pictures for her 348,000 Instagram followers. After recently moving to Los Angeles, Skye was able to support herself off her large Instagram following. Skye's passion for fitness, combined with skills learned at UW-River Falls have allowed her to build a career.

Amelia Skye, formerly known as Amelia Dunlap, graduated from UW-River Falls in May of 2018 with a marketing communications major. She moved soon after graduation, leaving her hometown of Hudson. Though she didn't intend on moving so soon, Skye said she has always been a risk taker.

Skye was involved on campus throughout college, and sang the national anthem at several athletic events throughout her four years at UWRF.

"Singing the national anthem helped give me exposure, and I was able to gain followers from the area I grew up in," said Skye. This also lead her to sing the national anthem for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Skye had tried entering several pageants during college.

"I ran for the title of Miss Wisconsin USA for two years in a row. I was told I was too built for the pageant so I never won the title, but after that I realized I loved

expressing myself on stage," Skye said. These pageants led her to enter bikini bodybuilding her senior year of college, and she also got into fitness modeling.

Her following has continued to grow since graduation, and Skye is now considered a social media influencer. Something many social media influencers have in common is that they have found a niche. For Skye, that niche is fitness. Through connections she made at Gold's Gym, a famous athletic facility in Venice, California, Skye was able to collaborate with other influencers.

"Teaming up with people allowed me to learned from them, as well as teach them. It's like one big family in this competitive market. Collaborating with people in the same niche helped me gain followers from my new area in Los Angeles," said Skye.

Skye attributes her success to her decision to follow her dreams, but also to the education she received in her time at UWRF. "My senior year, I took (former Visiting Professor) Amelia Reigstad's public relations class. I realized social media marketing is really taking over and that's when I figured, with my modeling and fitness background, I could market for brands through my creativity," Skye said.

Associate Professor David Bonko advised, taught and supervised internships for Skye throughout college.

"He really helped me with my schedule

and making things work as I built my brand. I was provided with a lot of great resources to get through all my classes," Skye said.

"For her internship she created a marketing plan based on herself as an influencer, since she was her own business and promoted herself. We found out her goals and objectives and went from there," said Bonko. Bonko mentioned the importance of authenticity for social media influencers today, and commented that, "She found her soul and was able to communicate that with her audience. If you're phoney, people can read through that. But it seems she has created a thing that is real and engaging."

Though Bonko and Reigstad are just a few people, Skye mentioned that all her professors were instrumental to her success.

Brands began contacting Skye when she reached about 20,000 followers. "Brands will email me and offer money to post for their company. I'm trying to get a sponsor, like a supplement company, but the right one hasn't come around yet. Once you sign with one, you have to stay loyal to them," Skye said.

Skye's instagram page offers fitness videos and positive messages. "A lot of people appreciate the messages. I try to offer motivation and inspiration to my followers," Skye said.

Though things have been positive, there are challenges with being an influencer.

Skye is currently seeking an agent, since hackers are always a concern to those who work through their Instagram accounts. Skye has also gotten several negative comments.

"It's a matter of knowing how to block out the hate. It's all part of the process," Skye said.



Amelia Skye is a social media influencer and graduate of UW-River Falls. Photo submitted by Amelia Skye.

Continued on page 12

Physics professor Korenic talks teaching and hobbies

Dawson Flaherty

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Eileen Korenic has been teaching students at UWRF for many years and hopefully many to come. During her time here, Korenic has helped students by developing courses that aren't just difficult to be difficult, but instead are described as engaging and entertaining. Many students end up in one or more of her classes while attending UWRF, spending multiple days a week with her. Even though students spend so much time with her in class, they don't always really get to know the woman behind the lecture.

Korenic spent her early life growing up on the southside of Milwaukee, near the Southridge Mall. Her parents both worked in the science field, her father, a mechanical engineer and her mother, a medical technologist. As Korenic was growing up and deciding what she wanted to do or be in the future, she was always watching and listening to her parents for advice.

"You can do anything you want honey,

anything, but you know science, that can be used everywhere," said Korenic. This advice from her parents sunk in and helped her decide to study science, however she still wasn't certain what kind of job was right for her.

Korenic began her college education at Mount Mary College, now Mount Mary University, in Milwaukee. She didn't really know what she wanted to do and just continued to take science courses. Eventually, during Korenic's third year, her professor in radiation biology insisted that everyone in the room pick what kind of job they wanted to get, and on impulse she said teacher. She graduated and achieved a bachelor's in science and had majors in chemistry, biology, and education.

After graduation Korenic went to teach at Waukesha South high school for about six years. After those six years she ultimately decided to return to school at the University of Milwaukee to get a physics major. She later taught for a while at the Milwaukee Area Technical College for a couple years. After finishing graduate

school, she worked at a 3M laboratory for about a year and a half, but found that she enjoyed teaching lab members how to do things more than doing them.

Nowadays Korenic can be found teaching multiple courses at UWRF. She also runs public astronomy talks, planetarium shows, and observatory viewings. Outside of work she enjoys acting from time to time when someone with her set of skills is needed. She is also active in church as a cantor on the weekends.

When Korenic has free time she enjoys reading books, solving different types of crossword and jigsaw puzzles, and needle point. Her favorite film is Chariots of Fire because it's challenging and makes her want to get up and run or do something she believes in. She loves English actors, and says her favorite is Sean Bean. Also, her favorite book is a very obscure one called Doctor Hudson's Secret Journal.

"Wherever you are you can do something good, and it doesn't have to be big, and it doesn't have to make the newspapers.

It means you're making the world a better place, even if you're the only one that knows it," said Korenic, on her view of the true meaning behind Doctor Hudson's Secret Journal.

"My favorite pictures to take are not pictures of the thing, I took pictures of the pyramid, but I mostly wanted to see that if you stand on the pyramid and take pictures what can you see," said Korenic

When it comes to traveling Korenic has been around the block, traveling across the world to many different places. The first place she visited was Europe, as part of a tour for college students. She has visited Egypt and China through study tours at UWRF. She also has visited India, the South Pacific, New Zealand, and she also toured the Amazon.

"Whether you agree with the current president or not I think it's really important to vote for whatever you truly believe in. I don't want to push my political views on anyone, but I think people need to really think about this," Said Korenic.

Her thoughts on politics are that young

Men's basketball makes history at U.S. Bank Stadium

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The UW-River Falls men's basketball moved to 4-2 on the season after an 85-70 loss to the University of St. Thomas on Friday, Nov. 30. The Falcons played a neutral site game for the first time this season at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. For this historic game, UW-River Falls was selected to participate in the U.S. Bank Stadium Basketball Classic, its first ever basketball tournament.

Coming into the game both the Falcons and the Tommies found themselves on three-game win streaks, and this game would be played on likely the largest stage that these two teams will ever play on. It was set to be an instant classic for both college basketball programs.

The Tommies came out of the gate looking to push the pace and get out to an early lead. Six minutes into the game the Tommies led 12-7, with points coming from five different St. Thomas players. They looked to spread the wealth early and get everybody involved.

However, the Falcons went on a 9-2 run of their own, led by their two leading scorers Matt Keller and Julian



caption

Jackson who quickly got the Falcon's back into the game and tied it up at 16-16 with 10 minutes to go in the first half. Juniors Jackson and Keller came into the game as

the top two in scoring for the Falcons with just over 15 points per game.

After trading baskets for the next several minutes, a quick six points swing went in favor of St. Thomas with four minutes to go in the first half. Following a made three pointer by St. Thomas junior Tommy Anderson, the Falcon's turned the ball over on the inbound pass which ended up in Anders Nelson's hands. He took one dribble, stepped back, and hit a three pointer that gave St. Thomas a 6-0 run in 15 seconds of in-game time.

St. Thomas would add a few more points to its lead before the first half ended. Going into halftime St. Thomas led 40-30. UW-River Falls would finish the first 20 minutes of play shooting under 30 percent from the field, their worst first half shooting performance of the season.

The Falcons came into the game averaging almost 43 percent from the three-point line, compared to the Tommie's who were averaging only 32 percent coming into the game. The three-point shot was the difference maker in the first half. The Falcons shot zero percent from deep, compared to the Tommies, who shot 53 percent.

Starting the second half, both teams played fast paced basketball and traded buckets keeping the lead around 10 points for the first eight minutes of play. With 10 minutes remaining in the second half the Falcon's found themselves down 11 points. They went on a 6-0 run by hitting back-to-back threes. The first of the two coming from Nathan Macho Jr. and then 16 seconds later, Clay Seifert would get in on the action with a three-pointer of his own. That sequence cut the Tommies lead over the Falcon's to five points.

St. Thomas would once again answer back, this time



Caption

dealing what would be the finishing blow to the Falcons. St. Thomas would go on a 10-0 run pushing the lead up to a game high 15 points. The Falcons would make some small runs late in the second half led by Jackson and Keller however St. Thomas would hold on to win 85-70.

The Falcons defeat can be explained by the field goal percentages for the night. St. Thomas finished the game shooting an even 50 percent from the field, including 40 percent from beyond the arc. The Falcon's finished the game shooting 31 percent from the floor and 16 percent from beyond the arc.

In a game on one of the largest stages that these two teams will ever play on, the Falcons couldn't find the bottom of the basket, putting up their worst field goal percentage of the entire season by nearly 8 percent.

The Falcons will look to bounce back on Dec. 8 against Viterbo University at Don Page Arena. Tip-off is set for 5 p.m.

Men's basketball treasures playing at U.S. Bank Stadium

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The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Men's basketball team played in the first ever basketball game at U.S. Bank Stadium in an 85-70 loss to St. Thomas on Friday, November 30th. Despite traveling to Minneapolis and suffering a defeat, the Falcons and UWRF still look at the experience as favorable behind all of the work it took to put together this U.S. Bank Stadium Classic event.

UWRF Director of Athletics Crystal Lanning said, "I think for us it was a chance for us to be exposed on a grand scale, we don't often get those opportunities and we wanted to take full advantage. It was a great opportunity to showcase our men's basketball program."

Lanning believes that the reason why UWRF was chosen to be a part of the U.S. Bank Stadium Classic was chiefly due to scheduling. "We had an existing game on the schedule with St. Thomas and we play them most years," Lanning said. "Luck played a lot of it." She also contends that the rivalry between the two schools may also have been another reason why UWRF was one of six teams selected to this event, and the only school from the State of Wisconsin.

Lanning spent the previous six months prior to the event putting together the planning for the Men's basketball team to play at the venue. "We were first notified late spring into the early summer that the event was going to be taking place and the communication really started with St.

Thomas executing the contract with U.S. Bank Stadium," Lanning said. "It was kind of an under the table type thing until the contract was finalized."

In late July and into early August, the first round of publicity for the U.S. Bank Stadium Classic began with press releases. Lanning looked to boost ticket sales for UWRF, with the event being strongly attended by Falcon alumni. The UWRF Cheerleading Team and members of the Falcons Women's basketball team, including senior Madelyn O'Brien, were also in attendance. Outside of a couple additional buses to take personnel and fans to the game, there were no additional expenses on behalf of the UW-River Falls.

Discussing the game itself, Lanning said,

"I think the score didn't reflect the back and forth of the game, there was 51 fouls called during the game and a lot of hand checking under the basket that we are not used to that style of play."

Minneapolis-native Julian Jackson scored 17 points to go with eight rebounds as senior Austin Heidecker scored 15 points and tallied 17 rebounds. The Falcons leading scorer Matt Keller, starter Clay Siefert, and sophomore Jalen Greenlee went a combined 3-of-28 from the field as the team shot a collective 31.3 percent on the night.

UWRF Head Men's Basketball Coach Jeff Berkhof spoke highly of the Tommies, saying, "Coach Tauer has done a great job at St. Thomas. He really gets his teams to play unselfishly on offense

FERPA's role with student information

Student Voice Staff
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There are many students on campus that are unaware of how their personal information can become public once they register to become a student here at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Student privacy is protected under the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). According to the university website, FERPA laws govern "The release of student education records maintained by the university, and access to these records."

Students have the right to review their records, and they may request to make changes to them. Also, students can dictate to a degree the level of disclosure of the information held in these education records.

Parents or guardians do not have access to the records of students.

According to the document "Basic FERPA rules for UWRF school

officials," UW-River Falls officials are considered to have a "legal, legitimate educational interest" and are allowed access to student education records. However, school officials may only use these records for performing their jobs "professionally and responsibly."

UWRF school officials have to secure the privacy of education records and "not disclose personally identifiable information about a student or permit inspection of the student's records without his or her written consent."

Providing consent entails writing which record is to be released, who it is to be released to, and giving a reason for the release. This information must be provided by the student who wishes to release their information.

Unless a restriction has been put in place, there is some information that does not require any student consent to release to a non-UWRF party, and that is directory information. According to the FERPA rules document, directory

information includes the students name, address, email address, telephone number, dates of attendance, year in school, degree programs, previous institutions attended, awards and more.

There are some students who feel that this is an invasion of their privacy as their name, addresses, e-mail's, cell phone numbers, and student ID numbers are available for the public to find in the student directory online. Students do have the right to withhold this information as they can fill out a request to disclose directory information to the public. This can be done by going to <https://www.uwrf.edu/Registrar/CurrentStudents/StudentDirectoryInformation.cfm> on the university's website and printing out the form to disclose their personal information to public access. Once completed, it can be dropped off at the Registrar's Office at 105 North Hall. The form must be submitted to the office two weeks after the first day of every academic semester.

If students would like, they can place a "No Release" for the information on their records. This would mean that all directory information under a student's name would not be accessible to anyone except the student themselves. However, the university does recommend on their website that students should not always do this in the case prospective employers or honors society would like to contact a student for hire or joining the society.

Students do have a right to know if their private information is being put on public record by the university and they should know how to request what the university can or cannot put on the student directory. The transparency with the communication on what private information of theirs is placed on public record is somewhat lacking, but students can protect their private info by researching FERPA and making a request to the Registrar's office to disclose certain info.

Dear future journalism students

Chris Gregg
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Dear future journalism students.

As graduation approaches, it is a time of both excitement but also some waking fears on what is next. However, this time allows individuals to take a step back and reflect on their time, and I can say that I have been doing that a lot lately.

I wanted to share three pieces of advice to help you on your journey to become a journalist, communicator or whatever career you have chosen.

Find your passion and follow it. When I was trying to decide on a career path early in my college experience, someone asked me what I loved doing when I was five years old. I found it an odd question at first, but my mentor explained that generally what excites us as children, is often-

times where our passions lie. My answer was simple: planes and flying. Because of that, I attended EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wis. and got connected with a corporate communications specialist at Airbus which opened my eyes to the idea of public relations and communications. My question for you is, what were you passionate about at age five?

Take every opportunity you are given. During your time in college you will have opportunities to try new things, take every opportunity. If I had not started doing a radio show on WRFW in September 2016, I probably would not have gotten interested in news media and change my major to journalism. Likewise, when offered a communications internship at the UWRF Communications and Marketing office, I would not have discovered my enjoyment of photography and video production, skills that have led to numer-

ous jobs and internships. Even if the opportunity seems way out in left field, take it. Maybe it is an internship in a market you never considered before or maybe it is a leadership position at a student media organization. You might fail, but you will always learn something and that experience is valuable.

Find a balanced mentor. Over my last four years, I have gotten to know a lot of professionals in the journalism, corporate communications and public relations fields. Many of them have become friends and mentors who have helped me find professional development opportunities. They have encouraged me when I needed an uplift, and they have been brutally honest with me at times in areas that I needed to improve in. You need that balance in a mentor, someone who will encourage you but also be critical when you need that.

My parting piece of advice is simple. Take the path less traveled. Understand that you may be seeking a degree in a specific area like journalism, but there are a thousand and one routes you could take with that degree. Take the skills you learned in your classes and internships and apply them to your chosen career field. For me, that meant I had to understand that I did not want to be a journalist at news media, but instead I found my fit in corporate communications and public relations. You never know until you try. Good luck to my fellow journalism students, I can't wait to see what each and every one of you do once you graduate from UWRF!

Sincerely,
Chris Gregg

Men's basketball treasures playing at U.S. Bank Stadium

Continued from page 8

and are always a challenge to defend. We both coach at our alma mater's and about the same age so we have become friends of the years with are teams playing each other every year."

Coach Berkhof attempted to get his team adjusted from playing at Don Page Arena

to U.S. Bank Stadium by focusing his team to issues solely on the court. The team practice at the stadium the day before and acclimated to the surroundings.

Coach Berkhof believes the team can take away lessons from the U.S. Bank Stadium Classic, saying, "With every

game we play, we look at what we can learn about our team and what areas we need to improve in. St. Thomas did a good job defensively against us, so we need to continue to get better with our half-court offense and get our shooters more open looks. Defensively we need to communicate better and limit our op-

ponents transition baskets."

When asked about what accounted for the discrepancy between the field goal percentages for the Falcons and the Tommies, Coach Berkhoff declined to comment.

Faculty discuss their free time

Kacey Joslin

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The *Student Voice* is excited to revive a staff hobby column, where we showcase UW-River Falls staff and faculty members with interesting hobbies or pastimes. It's an attempt to make staff more approachable to students, as well as a place for staff to show off their accomplishments.

If you're interested in having your interesting hobbies showcased, contact reporter Kacey Joslin at Kassaundra.Joslin@my.uwrf.edu.

This month's noteworthy staff members include Robin Murray and Desireé Wiesen-Martin.

Robin Murray is a professor of Theater Arts and the department chair of Stage and Screen Arts. She is also the director and technical director of theater, with an avid interest with the stage.

"I wear a lot of different hats," Murray admits. "When I have free time, I actually end up going to professional theater and see shows. When I can, I sneak off and go to New York and try to get there every other year to see shows there."

Her favorite shows are *Hamilton*, *The Great Comet of 1817* and *War Horse*. "I like going and seeing shows that I didn't have anything to do with and reaping all of the emotional information and being inspired."

Her affection for theater arts isn't unfounded. Murray is a costume designer. "That's been my specialty all along when I started school as a theater major, I just liked doing costumes."

She designed for UWRF for 17 years before she was assigned the department chair. Her most recent costumes were showcased at *A Year With Frog and Toad*. "I miss it, but it's a lot of work without much support. It was fun to do it again. I like the process, I like working with other people and collaborating to get this product."

For current or future students studying theater arts, Murray has a bit of advice: "Go to see lots of shows, read plays. Be in them, but don't be in so many you don't have time to see shows as well, because you need to learn and see what's all out there."

Desireé Wiesen-Martin is an assistant professor in the Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology Department. She also teaches a "First Year Adventure" course in the College of Arts and Science.

Wiesen-Martin thinks her pastimes are "pretty common."

"A lot of what I do revolves around my



Robin Murray, professor and department chair of Stage and Screen Arts elaborates on her pastimes.

Photo by Kacey Joslin



Desireé Wiesen-Martin, assistant professor of Sociology, Criminology and Anthropology, discusses her passion for family and community.

Photo courtesy of Desireé Wiesen-Martin

work and my relationship with my husband and my child. School takes up a lot of my time and I love it. The work that I do is the work that I want to be doing."

Her passions largely revolve around her career, her family and her community. Wiesen-Martin is heavily involved with her daughter's charter school. "I'm now a chair of their site council, a board that helps to guide and oversee the school to make sure they're meeting the goals of their charter," Wiesen-Martin said.

She's also an active member of the parent-teacher organization. "I like going in and making sure that not just my daughter, but her school and her community are getting what they need. I like being a force to help with that."

On campus, professors are required to be civically engaged. Wiesen-Martin is on the board of directors for St. Croix Valley SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) and connects that experience with her teachings. Wiesen-Martin teaches a CAS First-Year Adventure course titled #MeToo: Understanding Sexual Assault from a Scholarly Perspective. Along with Doctor Melanie Ayres from the Psychology department, Wiesen-Martin is researching sexual assault, knowledge of sexual assault reporting and perception of sexual assault services here on campus. "This is my community and I enjoy being here. I want to make sure the research that I'm doing will mean something and potentially be able to help in some way," she said.

When asked about balancing community involvement and work with her personal life, Wiesen-Martin recalled, with humor, a conversation with her daughter about this very issue. "I told her, 'The things that I do hopefully make your world a better place, and you need to recognize that even if you're seven.' This is what I do — there are times where you are always going to feel like you're neglecting something. It's taken me a while to recognize that."

Wiesen-Martin organizes her priorities as follows: "Family first, job second, other responsibilities, then me — that is how I've done it. But while I also see that all of those other areas benefit me as well, I came to the conclusion that I needed to have some time for myself," Wiesen-Martin said.

She has joined a book club and loves to read. "A lot of what I read is fantasy genre because the work I do is very realistic and it's harsh. Sometimes I don't want to read about real life, or I read concepts that are applicable to real life but are happening to werewolves and zombies. My husband accuses me of having 'old people hobbies'. I also cross-stitch," she added.

Twilight: Is it really as bad as we remember?

Kacey Joslin

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I'll watch cringy movies so you don't have to! Email me with any recommendations at kacey.joslin@my.uwrf.edu.

I am reluctant to admit that in the years 2008-2011, following the release of the first *Twilight* movie, I was a die-hard Twilight fan. (Twiligher? Fanpire? Twi-hard?)

Back then, I would watch the movies on an old box television, which only played cable news networks and VHS tapes. My dad had to attach a DVD player in order for me to watch the movies. Whenever a new *Twilight* movie came out in theaters, I would wear a plastic, too-large replica of Bella Swan's engagement ring, a cheap bracelet with a werewolf charm (representing Jacob Black, of course) and a pendant of the Cullen family crest that I made with play-doh and a ribbon. In my defense, I was eight years old . . . and totally on Team Edward. I've since defected and would agree that Jacob was the healthier choice.

I wasn't alone in my *Twilight* hysteria. Even my mom sort of liked the films.

In the years since the final movie's release, *Twilight* has become the pariah of young adult novels and films. It had a great three-year run, generating movies back-to-back, with Stephenie Meyer publishing novellas, graphic novels, and companion pieces. This included, astonishingly, a gender-swapped retelling of *Twilight*, starring Edythe Cullen and Beau Swan. Interesting idea. Personally, I think we should leave gender-swapping to fanfiction.

In honor of the *Twilight* movie's ten year anniversary, as it was released in the United States on November 21st, 2008, I've made the brave decision to rewatch the first movie and answer the age-old question: is *Twilight* really as bad as we remember?

Under the assumption that most of our generation has been exposed to the Saga – if not dedicating a good portion of their tweenhood to loving or hating it – I'll be quick with my summary.

Out of respect for her mother and step-father's desire to travel, Bella Swan moves to Forks, Washington, to live with her father. He's an awkward but loving chief of police with good intentions and an impressive mustache. Bella's an average high school student, just trying to survive gym class, avoid being asked to the Prom, and properly identify the stages of cell growth. It's on her first day that she catches the attention of a coven of friendly, neighborhood vegetarian vampires. Or, at least, the attention of one emotionally constipated member of the clan.

When noticing that her lab partner teeters on the edge of manic-depression, refuses to eat and is clearly on some sort of steroid, her first response isn't to look up *WebMD Symptom Checker* for some communicable disease – no. Plot 'A' is filled with Bella and Edward exchanging heated words and heated glances before lazing together in a field of lavender, 'unconditionally and irrevocably in love.'

The subplot is introduced through a series of



mysterious murders that Chief Swan investigates, but it's not until the famous baseball scene during a thunderstorm that the Cullens meet their antagonists. For reasons unfathomable to me, a clan of three enemy vampires take a special interest in Bella and stalk her across state lines until a showdown at a ballet studio. The ending felt rushed and confusing, but at the risk of spoiling the movie, I'll conclude with this; true love prevails above the sloppy subplot.

With references to innocent does being chased through woods, an apple being offered to the innocent 'Eve' and the immense prevalence of Native American myths, the movie bashes symbolism over your head like it's afraid you'll miss how 'deep' it is.

Kristen Stewart's performance is somehow both clumsy and rigid; I've heard other reviewers call Stewart's performance abhorrent, but I think Stewart expressed her character's emotions in other ways. Bella states quite clearly that she is the type to 'suffer in silence,' and suffer she does for five movies.

The supporting cast could also improve, but I'm inclined to be forgiving. They are given such little personality to work with. I couldn't even tell you the names of Bella's 'human' friends.

The Cullen clan is another matter entirely. Edward Cullen, despite being the second eldest of the clan, is the least well-adjusted and least interesting. The others are charming in their own ways, and their performances were very well done. Special props to Peter Facinelli as the sensitive, kind patriarch Carlisle Cullen and Nikki Reed as the hilariously dramatic, Bella-bashing Rosalie Hale.

Robert Pattinson is a fan favorite, but on

closer inspection, his performance disappoints me. His expressions are forced and painful to watch, his lines are hissed under his breath, and his incredibly pink lips are almost as distracting as his drawn-in eyebrows. Robert Pattinson has shown his immense dislike for the *Twilight* franchise and has given insight to his performance. He knows it wasn't good. Knowing the cast hated it as much as we do, I can at least laugh at Edward's awful character arc rather than cringe at it.

Although Taylor Lautner was vastly underused in this first movie, he was charming and likely the most professional actor amongst the younger cast. He's previously starred as a child actor in acclaimed movies *Cheaper by the Dozen* and *Sharkboy and Lavagirl*. However, Jacob's luscious, long-haired wig left much to be desired. Thankfully, they ditch it by the second movie.

Hair, makeup (as mentioned previously with Edward's bubble-gum pink lips and Jacob's unfortunate hair) and screenplay were the movie's greatest missteps. The movie is based heavily off the book, which was saturated with flowery language and awkward dialogue. Meyer's prose didn't adapt well on-screen.

The special effects were impressive for 2008, with color-shifting eyes and Edward's super speed. It was clear they spent most of their money on the effects and the set design. I wonder, however, if they had spent less money on animating Edward's 'spider

monkey' scene or building the Cullen's glittering mansion and spent more on the script, would the movie have the stigma of awkwardness that it does?

With character performances varying greatly in efficacy and a 37 million budget gone to waste, I have to ask – how did this pale, lifeless story generate the craze that it did?

In one word, it's . . . relatable. Somewhat.

Stephenie Meyer took inspiration from a bandwagon of fantasy novels that J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* paved the way for, by imbuing a world of vampire covens and werewolf tribes into real life's ups and downs. Meyers gave an all-powerful, immortal creature a wealth of insecurities, family drama, and homework – the Cullens had to repeat high-school for centuries, the poor creatures.

Meyer humanized monsters and provided us a distraction from our own struggles. 'See!' it's as though she's saying 'Even this hot vampire doesn't know how to deal with a crush!'

Meyer's mimicked the intense passion and brooding love interest from most romantic novels we find in our mom's closets and made it PG-13. Edward is the epitome of a knight in shining armor (or, rather, a shining Volvo), utterly obsessed with Bella to the point he watches her while she sleeps. Everyone loves a bad boy, right?

(Quick PSA, sneaking into someone's bedroom and looming over their beds in the middle of the night is not and will never be an indication of a healthy relationship.)

Twilight fulfills the teenage dream of having two equally attractive boys fight over you. Bella has a werewolf and a vampire at her beck and call, and if that isn't relatable, I don't know what is. (Sarcasm).

The Team Edward vs Team Jacob feud begins in *Twilight* and escalates in *New Moon* and *Eclipse* as a silly little subplot to create some semblance of debate amongst her readers; it was effective. I could go into further detail about the Team Jacob and Team Edward discourse, but I've exhausted myself praising a character that is, quite literally, the definition of a pervert. Edward was made into a vampire in 1901 and is attending high school with seventeen-year-olds, one of which he marries – a little creepy, wouldn't you think?

I digress.

As for Bella Swan – in my opinion, she was purposefully made to be utterly average. She's a 'blank-slate,' with simplistic character traits and ambiguous physical attributes. The novel, which was written in first-person perspective, allows the audience to live vicariously through Bella's life. This appeals to Meyer's teenage audience that may feel awkward in their own bodies or feel like the 'new kid' entering middle and high school; wondering desperately, *if anyone will ever love them*.

The answer Meyer tries to give is 'Yes! Even if you're a clumsy, anti-social, only quasi-attractive teen, you have a long life ahead of you. Eventually, you'll find someone just as awkward as you!'

Despite all my critiques, the first of the Saga, with its comparatively lower production budget and young, wet-behind-the-ears cast . . . had potential.

It was a quirky, innocent attempt at appeasing the hoards of teenagers and moms that dreamed of a sparkling, totally obsessed, forever-young soulmate to come sweep them away from their boring day-to-day lives. It was a young adult wet dream, which, admittedly, would have been best left as a stand-alone.

Breaking Dawn Part One and *Part Two*, for example, felt like Meyer closed her eyes and clicked on a random, Rated M *Twilight* fanfiction and just . . . went with it. Teenage pregnancies, sudden magical powers, a child that ages three times fast so Meyer can justify a grown man 'imprinting' on a newborn; all reasons that *Twilight* should've stayed a one-hit-wonder. But that's just my opinion.

In summary, it was . . . bad. Yet, it could've been a lot worse.

At the very least, *Twilight* provided teenagers an idea of what *not* to pursue in a romantic relationship. To all of you out there, here's a bit of advice; if someone sneaks into your bedroom at night to watch you sleep, call the police. Don't start a relationship that lasts five, excruciatingly long movies with a two-part finale.

International students reflect on holiday traditions

Continued from page 2

go to church on Christmas every year,” said Yoshizumi.

Yoshizumi said her family will exchange gifts and have a dinner. Some years they decorate a Christmas tree. A typical Christmas meal in Japan includes a dish similar to a meatloaf or ‘hamburger steak.’

Yamashita is not Christian, and instead of celebrating the traditional way, “I ate KFC with my family on Christmas. It’s common in Japan,” said Yamashita.

This Christmas, Yoshizumi plans to attend church with a friend. As for Yamashita, she said, “I will party with my friends and eat something.” Both students will attend the university for the next three years.



Chief of police discusses school shooting safety

Continued from page 3

“You’ll see, fortunately here at the university, we have a great staff, great people here, great students here. We *are* a community. Unfortunately, our officers can’t be in every place at all times, so students have to take some of that ownership of that. Say to yourself; *‘this is our university, my university, I’m a student of this university, I’m a citizen of this community.’* Take pride in that, and if you see something, say something. We encourage that, and we *need* your help to keep this campus safe and our community safe. It falls upon all of us to work together.”

It’s in times like these, where tragedies like Sandy Hook and Columbine have become more and more frequent, that campuses like UWRF need to take the initiative to secure the safety of its students. In the unfortunate instance that a shooting does occur, the university does have procedures in place to jump-start recovery.

“We are cognizant and aware that that potential is there for a shooting. Would resources be made available for our students? Absolutely,” Fleury said firmly. “Would we bring in counselors, provide whatever services necessary for our students? Yes. It would be a recovery period for our institution, for our university, to deal with the aftermath of such a tragedy.”

In honor of past victims of needless violence and to prevent the need for recovery, Fleury encourages students to take charge of their safety. Whether it be reporting suspicious behavior, researching the *Run!-Hide!-Fight!* techniques on the University website or simply taking note of the possible emergency exits near the classrooms, students can help to ensure that the community remains free from tragedy.

Physics professor Korenic talks teaching and hobbies

Continued from page 7

people should think about it then think again. She also said she’s passionate about women’s rights and equal pay for equal work.

Korenic is a big fan of puns, even though she knows some refer to puns as the lowest form of comedy, she can’t stop herself from laughing when they come up in conversation. As a physics professor she also really enjoys science jokes, she feeds her science joke hunger by watch-

ing shows like The Big Bang Theory.

Korenic is very glad to be at UWRF and have the opportunities she does to interact with the students. Even though she has some quite big classes, with her astronomy course being around 150 students a semester, she is happy to be able to meet the ones she does. Watching her students walk across campus from year to year makes her feel like UWRF has a community like no other.

Dancing with Diversity impacting campus

Continued from page 5

every meeting.

In an effort to keep the group active, Vang consults members on which dances interest them. “I try to do dances that everybody would like,” Vang explained. “I try to keep it so everybody feels included. Every Monday I send out an email and tell them what kind of dance I am going to teach.”

Members are then able to decide to attend or not. There are about 15 members, though attendance fluctuates weekly. The group has members from all different backgrounds, including some international students. “It’s just a place where you can dance out your stress, and also if the dance is something that you want to learn, you can feel excited about it,” Vang explained.

The goal of this group is to spread different dances to those who wish to learn, and enjoy music. “As long as they enjoy the dance, I’m doing my job,” Vang commented.

Dancing with Diversity is a club where students can connect with other cultures through the dances. “The new friendships that are formed and the positive environment are probably the best parts of the club,” Rivera said.

Next semester, Dancing with Diversity has plans to be part of African Night and the International Bazaar, as well as several other campus events. Vang said they plan to continue spreading passion for cultural dances to members, and offering a inclusive environment for all.

Fitness influencer Amelia Skye tells her story

Continued from page 7

Skye said that any driven student could become a social media influencer.

“When you have a dream, go after your dream. I had people who told me I’d never make it on Instagram, but I knew I didn’t want to work for anybody, I wanted to work for myself,” Skye said. “It’s tough but you make it work.”

In the future, Skye will continue to build her following along with her personal

training business, and hopes to one day own a fitness clothing line. Skye also has plans to go pro in bikini bodybuilding.

For students who wish to reach out to Skye, she is active in responding to direct messages. “It keeps me close to home knowing that I have a fanbase from where I’m from,” Skye said. Her Instagram can be found at @ameliaskyefitness. She is also available through email at info@ameliaskye.com.

**Do you have something to say?
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Fall & J-Term 2018-19 Graduation	Denwiddie, Eric Ross	Kelley, Ryan Daniel	Nelson, Amy Margaret	Skog, Hailey Elizabeth
List of Candidates for Bachelors	Dettmann, Jared James	Kelly, Meaghan Christine	Nelson, Tristan James	Smith, Cory E.L
and Masters Degrees	Dickinson, Adam Richard	Kelly-Schaefer, Katie Robyn	Nicolai, John Albert	Sockness, Joshua P
As of Dec. 10, 2018	Dinse, Mitchell Ryan	Kenny, Steven Nicholas	Noble, Sara Marie	Solberg, Jillisa Marie
Adolphson, Shelbee Hollyn	Dohrmann, Marisa Marie	Kessler, Olivia Elizabeth	Noll, Rachel	Som, Yeng Nathan
Agee-Aguayo, Joseph Robert	Domagala, Thomas Jordan	Kim, EunSun	Nordby, Taylor Renee	Soma, Matthew Branolund
Agoye, Jenna	Donahue, Megahn P	Kindschuh, Katherine Ann	Oberding, Kayla Elizabeth	Song, Jennifer
Akore, Kwaku Darko	Donnelly, Martha Lynn	Kinyanjui, Ann Nduta	Odegard, Sara Lynn	Soppeland, Rebecka Anne
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Albu, Ingrid	Doyle, Siri Lillian	Klemmensen, Christian David	Olson, Mathea Li	Spear, Cora Lynne
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Anderson, Emmalyn Grace	EKenstedt, Dana Marie	Kneeland, Melissa Anne	Ostrom, Daniel Robert	Stark, Allison Jean
Anderson, Jesse Allan	Eastling, Willow Rae	Knoke, Racheal Lynne	Otto, Alec Patrick	Stenroos, Katelin Christine
Anibas, Bryce Micheal	Eastman, Alex Charles	Knutson, Kirstin Michelle	Otunga, Henry Banda	Stewart, Kathleen Rose
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Auran, Amy Nicole	Einertson, Kelsey Marie	Kolve, Alyssa Ann	Pachan, Alexa Anne	Strain, Halley Ann
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It's a Wonderful Life, a timeless classic for all generations

Theodore Tollefson

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There's a classic saying that people like saying this time of year, "Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings."

Not too many students on a college campus would be hearing this though, unless they're spending a lot of time around people in their 70's. Anyway, this line was made famous by a film that came out on January 7, 1947, that many consider to a classic. It's a Wonderful Life, directed by Frank Capra and starring the dashing star of his time, James Stewart, is a story about George Bailey (Stewart). Over the decades, It's a Wonderful Life has had countless adaptations into plays and remakes both in television and film (which have not been as successful as the original). The story has been a large influence in American Pop culture with numerous references and recreations of famous scenes from the film.

George Bailey is a man who has spent his whole life in the town of Bedford Falls and devoting it to helping the people in his community. One Christmas Eve, his business faces a serious financial crisis and it drives Bailey to the point where he wants to end his life.

The film opens to a montage of people praying for George Bailey to be alright after he has ran off into the cold winter night in frustration. The voices of people praying for George Bailey plays over long shots of the homes they sit in on that Christmas Eve. The people include his business colleagues, his friends, his wife and children. The camera cuts to a typical 1940's depiction of space with the moon floating across the screen as the audience is introduced to two new characters, floating, talking galaxies meant to represent angels in heaven.

The angels debate about who's turn it is to be sent down to Earth to help George Bailey. This brings in Clarence, George's guardian angel. Clarence is an angel in heaven who still hasn't received his wings, and hopes if he helps save George Bailey's life, he can finally earn them. From here, both Clarence and the audience become acquainted with George as "God" shows the person George has been from his childhood, his teenage years, all the way up to the moment of George's fateful night.

This is where the film drives away from the plot and gets the audience engaged in the story of George Bailey. The plot of the film is to save George Bailey from ending his life, the story is the life of George Bailey's lifetime of service of putting others before himself. The film spends over half it's runtime telling the audience who George Bailey is, to get people watching the film to not only attach and relate to George, but his lifetime sweetheart of Mary Hatch (played by Donna Reed), and his younger brother Harry Bailey (played by Todd Karns). Taking all the time to show the audience who these characters are and why they should care for them is one of the best things about It's a Wonderful Life.

One theme that the film conveys to its audience is cherish those who always put themselves before others, and if anyone who is that type of person, to really reflect on all the good they have done in their lifetimes for others. George Bailey is the embodiment of putting one's self before others, and sometimes these people forget to take care of themselves. That's what happens to George Bailey on his Christmas Eve, and it drives him to the break of self-disgrace. George had planned his whole life out as a kid to see the entire world and build skyscrapers, but when family woes hit, he took on the role of helping his family first instead of himself. These experiences make George relatable to audience members as people sometimes have to sacrifice their dreams to help those they love and care about.

It's a Wonderful Life is not without its flaws. Being a film from 1947, it's over the top in it's corniness and the child actors aren't very good. This does not take away from its fluidity in story and audience to character relations. One thing that has changed in it's flaws from original release is audience reception. When It's a Wonderful Life came out in 1947, not too many people liked the film. There were mixed reviews from notable publications as well, with the Hollywood Reporter critic favoring the film while the New Yorker critic trashed the film.

Frank Capra as both a writer and film director created many motion pictures convey messages of what it means to be a good person to his audiences. It's a Wonderful Life has become the most famous in American culture due to the film taking place during the Christmas season. The writing and directing Capra conducts in this film brings that meaning of every person having significance to the story. No matter how big or small a role they play, like George Bailey.

The story is what keeps this film alive with audiences over the decades. Every holiday season, NBC airs the film to honor the message it sends to the audiences. And overall, it's the theme of It's a Wonderful Life is what makes it a timeless holiday classic for the month of December. In a time of year where holiday cheer and spirits help to remind us the good that we as people are capable of. It's a Wonderful Life is a friendly tale for all people to remind us we can all good people at heart, and even through all of its tough endeavours, life is a wonderful thing to live out everyday!



Clarence and George Bailey
Photo courtesy of IMDB

STUDENT VOICE

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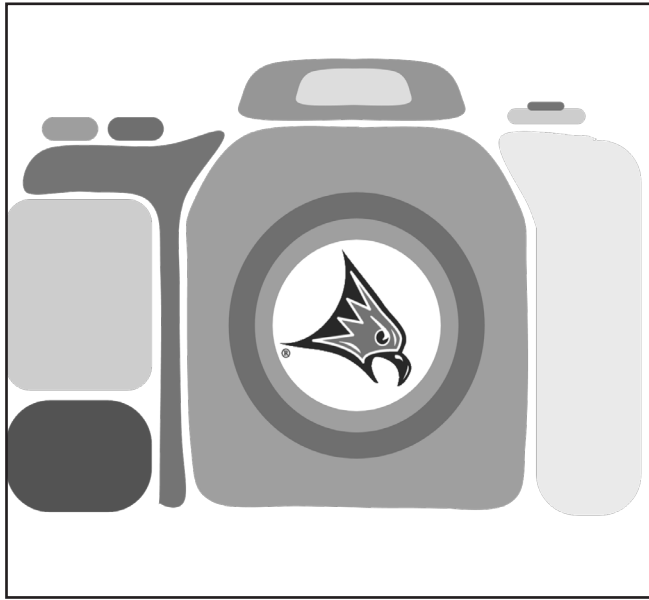
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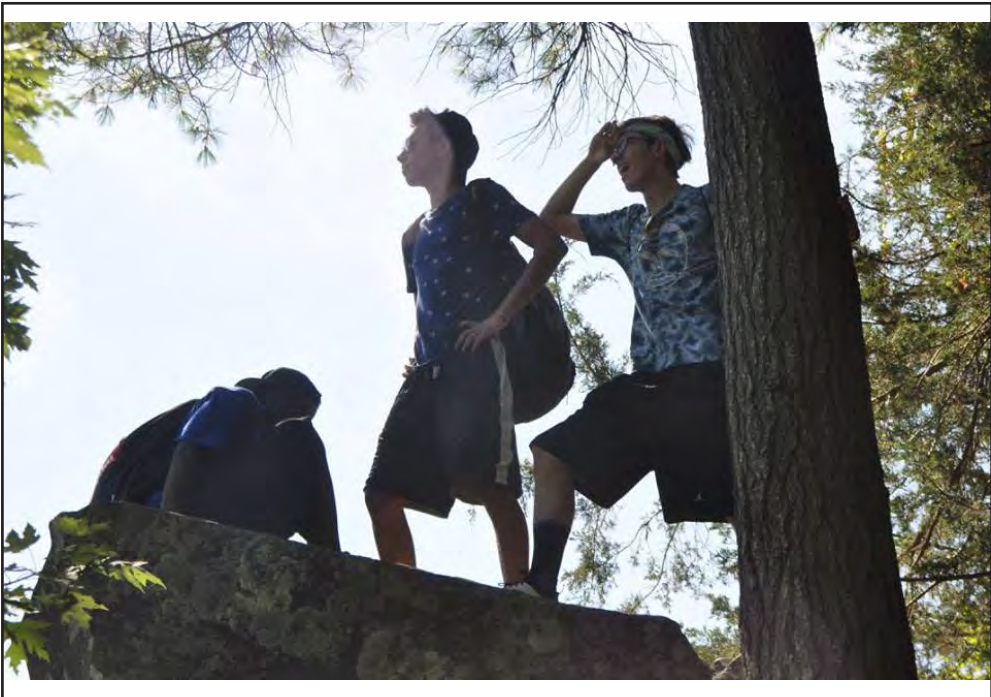
Sunset at Hoffman Park in River Falls
Photo by Melissa Thorud



A day hike on the upper trail in Hoffman Park
Photo by Melissa Thorud



Swamp at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve in Savage MN
Photo by Theodore Tollefson



Young men exploring the wilderness
Photo by Theodore Tollefson