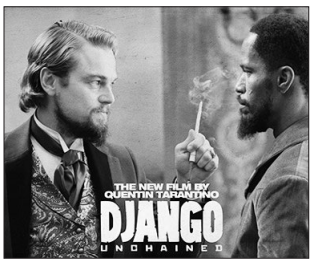




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Postseason approaches for six athletic teams

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After mass shooting, gun control debate stirs nation

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'Django Unchained' pleases audiences



STUDENT VOICE

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Faculty pay-plan could increase tuition at UWRF

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Student Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution lobbying the Wisconsin state legislature to enact a UW System state-wide plan that increases tuition to give UW System faculty a pay raise. In the resolution, Senate pushed for a 2 to 3 percent increase in tuition that would go towards faculty salaries.

The resolution, which passed by a vote of 19-2-2 during the Feb. 5 meeting, will now be forwarded to the UW System Board of Regents, State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and to Gov. Scott Walker. UW-Stevens Point is the only other UW System school to pass a similar resolution. If the pay-plan is put forth, it would be a system-wide initiative. Senate's resolution is simply urging the state legislature to



Student Senators Grady Nelson, Kayla Edstrom, Dominic Riel and Jessica Pett at a Senate meeting. Senate passed a motion in support of a new pay-plan for faculty.

enact a plan. Even though it passed this resolution, it does not mean tuition will go up unless the legislature acts.

Senate President Bobbi O'Brien authored the motion put before the UW-River Falls Senate. She argued that

Education reform part of new budget

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Governor Scott Walker proposed a new performance-based funding system for public schools. This proposal was highlighted at an education convention that Walker attended.

Sarah Link wrote an article in the Badger Herald titled, "Walker talks education reform for new budget," which outlines what Walker has in mind.

This budget, which is to be introduced this month, includes the performance based funding. The budget "would help ensure the preparedness of teachers as well as school and district accountability," Walker said in the article.

The system will be based off the report cards started by the Department of Public Instruction last year. These report cards show how students and teachers are performing. Schools are measured in such

categories as student achievement, class sizes, test scores, etc.

According to Link's article, Walker said in addition to this system, there will be funding for schools that are still falling behind in the form of categorical grants.

He also said that this system is being put in place in order to encourage progress and growth in schools.

Link also spoke with State Rep. Melissa Sargent of Madison about her concerns for Walker's budget. Sargent said that Walker may end up putting too much money into alternative education systems, which are not held to the same criteria as public schools.

Brad Caskey, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences said that he sees difficulties with this performance-based system because public schools have a different mis-

Student Support Services helps students with stresses of college

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Just over three years ago a young woman moved onto the UW-River Falls campus. She is a Apple Valley High School graduate who considered herself very prepared for college, and a new scholar in the Student Support Services (SSS) program at UWRF.

With 17 college credits under her belt, she enrolled into business classes because that was what she wanted to do and "no one could tell me different," said UWRF junior Ashlee Richmond-Wilks.

Over the course of three years, a lot changed for Richmond-Wilks, including her major, which she switched to marketing communications as a result of the support she found at SSS through her personal coach Linda Jordan.

After struggling with business classes, which resulted in her thinking about leaving UWRF, she met with Jordan who had seen her effort.

"You know, I just told my parents I'm fine, I'm fine, whatever, but Linda could see it. You're struggling," Richmond-Wilks said.

Richmond-Wilks met with Jordan every week to discuss how she was doing and those meetings encouraged her to get her grades up, Richmond-Wilks said.

This is just one of the roughly 200 stories of SSS scholars at UWRF. The program is designed

to help low income and first generation college students succeed by connecting students with tutors, helping students create positive relationships with their peers through the activities they host, teaching professional development and providing personal coaches, like Jordan, that scholars keep the entire time they are at UWRF, among other things.

The program holds a focus on, "assisting our students with not just academic stuff, but lots of social stuff, lots of financial things, any kind of confusions that they have," said Interim Assistant Director for Student Support Services Gina Sevvick.

"They're really into helping you become as successful as possible," Richmond-Wilks said.

There is also a social component to the program that connects peers through activities like trips to museums or activities like snow tubing, Richmond-Wilks said.

The only bad thing is that "Sometimes there's so many events that you cannot make them all," Richmond-Wilks said, who tries to fit as many in her schedule as she can.

There are many students on the UWRF campus who are eligible to be a part of this program that is currently recruiting, said Tutoring Ser-

vices Manager Linnea Ramberg, who connects the majority of SSS scholars with tutoring services.

Since the program is funded by a grant, the program is allowed to provide services to roughly 200 students each year, give or take a few depending on the number of interested applicants.

"We wish we could serve all the students on campus," Sevvick said, because she said that she thinks the program is valuable and a great resource to students.

For Richmond-Wilks, SSS provided her with academic support when she needed it, but has also started offering her assistance as she prepares for life after graduation.

Jordan has helped her prepare resumes and business cards for career opportunities and helped her write letters to businesses she is interested in.

Richmond-Wilks is currently working two jobs on campus, which she balances with a full course load. This is something she never expected to do, but with the support of SSS, she is.

"Just because you come from nothing or don't have a lot, doesn't mean you can't work toward a lot," said Richmond-Wilks.

"Just because you come from nothing or don't have a lot, doesn't mean you can't work toward a lot,"

Classes resume for spring semester

UW-River Falls students, Lindsay Pluger, Lindsay Willaby and Maryn Feyereisen study in the Fireplace Lounge in the University Center during the first week back after winter break.



Miranda Hammel/
Student Voice

Affordability No. 1 reason for choosing a university

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UW-River Falls has approximately 6,551 students on campus and, according to statistics, a deciding factor on what college a student decides to attend can be tuition cost.

In an article by USA Today, a survey showed 66.6 percent of students surveyed said that the economy significantly affected their choice of college. While cost may be a significant detail in regards to choosing a college, there are other important details to take into consideration such as the programs that are offered.

"The dairy science program at River Falls has more connections in the dairy industry than other schools," said sophomore Tawna Pogreba.

Pogreba said although she took tuition into some consideration, her main focus was to choose a school that would best suit her future plans. UWRF ended up being the school that fit her perfectly.

"This is a stepping stone for entering the job market. This is a small school so you get more one-on-one time with your professors," she said. "I have a guaranteed spot in vet school because I heard from the school about applying for it. I might not have heard about it if I was at a bigger school."

The UW System schools are close in tuition prices. According to the UW System website, for the 2012-2013 school year the standard UWRF tuition is \$3,850.23 a semester for a Wisconsin resident and \$4,028.07 for a Minnesota resident, because of reciprocity. This is compared to UW-Madison tuition, which is about \$5,189.29 a semester for a Wisconsin resident and \$6,582.60 for a Minnesota resident. UW-Eau Claire is listed as \$4,342.79 a semester for both Wisconsin residents and Minnesota residents for the standard tuition.

These tuition prices are comparable to other colleges across the country. In order to catch potential students' attention, college recruiters must focus on what their college has to offer compared to another.

"Some of our programs are pretty

unique such as animal science and equine, as well as dairy science. Not many schools have that focus," said Yunge Dutton, the visit coordinator for admissions.

Dutton explained that when speaking with those interested in attending UWRF, she focuses on what the campus has to offer that other campuses do not. She agreed that although tuition is a deciding factor for some future students, location also has a big impact on why a student would choose to go to a certain school.

The three main reasons that Dutton said sets River Falls apart from other campuses is its location, the programs and four colleges it has, as well as affordability.

Junior Alexander Toftness also added that choosing a school closer to your hometown as well as near the cities has its benefits.

"I'm most familiar with this school because I live in River Falls and the departments I was interested in had high ratings," Toftness said. "The cost also had something to do with it."

For sophomore Evan Bohman, UWRF is the second college he has attended and this is his first year here.

He transferred from a Minnesota college and said that it was double of a drive back home and it was not what he was looking for in a campus.

"The location was the biggest thing, and the atmosphere," Bohman said about deciding to transfer to UWRF. "This is a smaller town and it's quieter."

Dutton said that UWRF is also unique in the sense that the programs we offer are highly accredited and have a high success rate. She went on to explain that in the communicative disorders program going through an undergraduate to a graduate level has had 100 percent job placement success since 1974. Programs such as communicative disorders help make UWRF even more appealing.

"It's important to have a well-balanced and well-rounded school and UWRF offers that," said Dutton. "From academics, to student life, to location and to affordability."

"The search tool is really meant to help students to discover. It is really just the beginning," said McKnelly.

For more information, visit <http://www.uwrf.edu/bowlsforhope> or contact Mary Van Galen at mary.vangalen@uwrf.edu.



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Chancellor’s signature makes campus tobacco-free on July 1

Ashley Goettl
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UW-River Falls will become tobacco-free on July 1, 2013. Chancellor Dean Van Galen signed off on the motion after approval from Student and Faculty Senate, along with the support of the Chancellor’s Task Force on a Campus Tobacco Policy.

The policy defines tobacco to include any lighted cigarette (such as clove, bidis, kreteks), cigars, pipes and hookah products; any smoking products (such as e-cigarettes); and any smokeless, spit or spitless, dissolvable or inhaled tobacco products including, but not limited to, dip, chew, snuff or snus in any form (such as orbs, sticks, pellet, etc.).

“This policy represents a significant step forward in creating a more healthy learning and work environment at UW-River Falls. As stated in the policy, ‘the success of this policy will depend on the courtesy, respect, and cooperation of users and non-users of tobacco products.’ In this spirit, I look forward to working with the campus

community as we transition to a tobacco-free campus,” Chancellor Van Galen said.

The policy, which was signed by Van Galen on Dec. 18, 2012, states that “smoking or the use of other tobacco products is prohibited on all campus grounds (college owned, controlled, and/or leased); college owned or leased properties; and campus owned, leased or rented vehicles.”

This includes, but is not limited to, all University streets and sidewalks, parking lots, landscaped areas, outdoor athletic facilities and recreational areas; at lectures, conferences, meets and social and cultural events held on campus property or campus grounds. It is also prohibited in the interior of all buildings, including campus residence halls.

“It will definitely be a change for our conservative campus. It will be interesting to see how the students and public reacts,” said Student Senate President Bobbi O’Brien.

Student Senator Hannah Carlson voiced displeasure over the policy.

“Why do we always have to be concerned with what others are doing? I don’t smoke, but I don’t go around telling others to stop because it is my opinion,” Carlson said. “I’ve been to smoke-free campuses and there are cigarette butts all over the sidewalks.”

Carlson was also concerned about the enforcement of the new policy.

The policy states that “enforcement of this policy will depend upon the cooperation of all faculty, staff and students to not only comply with the policy, but also to encourage others to comply in order to promote a healthy and clean environment in which to work, learn, and live.”

“It’s not a realistic plan. Peers are not going to confront one another or their professors if they are smoking,” Carlson said.

Keven Syverson, a member of the Chancellor’s Task Force on a Campus Tobacco Policy expressed more optimism in the enforcement of the policy, especially since it is supported by members of the campus community he said.

“At this point, enforcement

will be voluntary. We know most campus members are law abiding citizens and want to follow the rules,” Syverson said. “We also know that 70 percent of students support a tobacco-free campus policy. However, we know some may not choose to comply with this policy. That is not to say that more formal methods won’t have to be used on those who choose to repeatedly disobey the policy.”

The 70 percent Syverson is referring to is the results of a survey conducted by Senate via email to all UWRF students where 695 students responded last fall. Out of the 695, 487 said they would support a tobacco-free campus whereas 30 percent or 208 people did not.

The policy also says that UWRF “acknowledges and supports the findings of the Surgeon General that tobacco use in any form, active and passive is a significant health hazard.”

“We know this is an important step for the health of this campus and we look forward to July 1, 2013, when this policy is implemented,” said Syverson.

Pay-plan: Gives UW System faculty raise

From page 1

they need to be paid accordingly. She cited an article from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Dec. 8, 2012, that backed UW System President Kevin Reilly who said faculty in the UW System get paid 18 percent below the national average.

“We need to uphold our reputation and provide the best staff to students,” O’Brien said. “The cost of living is going up so we need to adjust to provide for faculty and staff and we need to pay them more.”

Senator Hannah Carlson however, argued that a big reason why so many students come to UWRF is that tuition is affordable and that by increasing tuition UWRF would lose many of the students that they hoped to attract through quality professors.

“One of the main reasons I came to UWRF was because I knew that if I worked hard I could pay for tuition by myself,” Carlson said.

She also stated she believes faculty do get paid well enough, especially compared to the private sector. “Faculty at UWRF make between \$50,000-\$100,000. It is important that we don’t alienate those students who come here for the low costs,” Carlson said.

If the legislature passes a pay-plan with a 2 to 3 percent increase, each UWRF student could see their tuition go up \$68-\$102 per semester based on the \$3,392.04 in tuition that was due for spring semester 2013.

O’Brien argued that UWRF will lose qualified and the dedication of professors because of the 18 percent difference. “It is hard to replace those that are qualified,” O’Brien said.

Senator A.J. Hanson, though he voted yes on the motion, said this motion is not just for UWRF but for all of state so it doesn’t necessarily make UWRF more marketable or attractive for professors.

O’Brien also made it clear that faculty are mostly paid through tuition dollars and that without raising tuition there will not be an increase in pay.

Senator Derek Johnson also voiced concern over the resolution. He chose to abstain from voting, but during the Senate meeting he said that while he agrees UWRF needs to attract quality professors, this resolution doesn’t make that happen. The motion only increases the pay, he said, and it does not mean that UWRF hires more professors or that there will be smaller class sizes.

With the passage of the motion by the Senate, President O’Brien will now take the resolution to the UW System Student Representatives meeting with a goal of getting more schools to pass similar measures.

It is unclear whether this will be on the state legislature’s agenda.

Budget: School performances considered

From page 1

sion than private schools. Public schools have to be accessible. An example he gave was if a public school has more special needs kids enrolled than in a private school, it is hard to decide who is going to get funding based on performance.

However, Caskey says that he sees this affecting K-12 schools rather than having a large impact on universi-

ties. He said that it is “hard to judge that a college is failing.” He emphasized this point by saying that colleges do not have standardized tests, where K-12 schools do.

When asked about how he felt UWRF was performing, as far as things such as graduation rates and grades go, Caskey said that retention rates at UWRF are lower than he would like them to be, especially when it comes to the freshman and sophomore retention rates. Though it all

comes back to accessibility.

If the University changed the admission strategy, i.e. making it more difficult for a student to get accepted, retention rates would just continue to go down.

Though again, Caskey does not see this new proposal affecting universities. He said it would change the world if this happened at the college level. Caskey also added that this sort of system cycles about every 10 years. “The problem is it’s almost

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EDITORIALS

Pay-plan to increase tuition harms students, UWRF enrollment

On Feb. 5 Student Senate passed a resolution proposing that the UW System raise tuition 2-3 percent to give faculty a pay raise. Their reasoning was that UW System faculty get paid 18 percent below the national average and that if UW-River Falls is to attract quality professors, we must pay them accordingly.

We here at the Student Voice agree completely that quality professors are a part of what makes UWRF a great place to be.

However, we also know that UWRF has one of the highest percentages of low-income students in the entire UW System. That being said, raising tuition is the wrong thing to do. Sure 2-3 percent doesn't seem like a lot, but it could be \$68-\$100 per semester, per student.

A USA Today article showed that 66.6 percent of college students said the economy has a big impact on their college choice.

We agree and believe that the low cost to attend UWRF is a key factor in what separates us from all the other schools and why many students come here.

If we continue to raise tuition, we will lose in enrollment what we had hoped to attract in bringing in better professors.

This motion also does not guarantee that we would hire more professors. It is simply a pay raise.

The motion Senate passed is now forwarded to the UW System Board of Regents and the Wisconsin State Legislature.

Tuition will not increase unless the legislature approves this plan or a similar one.

We are urging the state legislature to approve no such plan and to remember to keep tuition low.

It is a competitive world for colleges to attract students and if UWRF wants to maintain that competitive edge, we must keep tuition low.

Senate has good intentions with this motion and we do know that our faculty are hurting as the cost of living has increased dramatically. However, we do feel that faculty do get paid adequately for the job they are given and that increasing tuition is unfair to the students of UWRF.



David Recine/ Student Voice

Letter to the editor

Reading Corps, good opportunity for graduates
I graduated from UW-River Falls last spring and one of my biggest concerns was what I was going to do for work. I learned about Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps and decided to join this AmeriCorps program. Minnesota Math Corps tutors work with students in fourth - eighth grade to help achieve algebra proficiency. Over 1,000 Minnesota Reading Corps tutors work on literacy skills with children age three through grade three. As a Minnesota Reading Corps tutor, I can honestly say that I love what I do every day. Minnesota Reading Corps is not your typical job, but an 11-month commitment to service. Minnesota Reading Corps is a statewide initiative to help students to become successful readers by the end of third grade. Today, nearly one in five third graders in Minnesota are failing to achieve basic literacy skills. This year, Minnesota Reading Corps tutors will work with close to 30,000 students at over 600 different schools across the state. Minnesota Reading Corps is the nation's largest state AmeriCorps program. I was able to work with children through the extracurricular activities that I was involved in at UWRF - including Big Brothers Big Sisters, cross country, track, InterVarsity and Destination. These experiences contributed to my passion to continue to work with students. Now, I look forward to my mornings - greeting my students, my one-on-one interactions with them, my students' reactions when they reach their reading goals and the endless stories and hugs I receive every day. Full-time Reading Corps tutors, such as myself, receive a

living stipend, health insurance and are eligible for an education award at the end of their year of service. Tutors receive extensive training and support throughout their service. Tutors use research-based methods working one-on-one or in small groups using individualized learning strategies to lead struggling readers. Graphs are produced and I often show these graphs to my students so they can see their improvement. Their responses are one of the great things I love about my job. My fast-paced day never gets old. I look forward to seeing each one of my students for different reasons. I love the supportive school I serve at and the fun, dedicated, teachers I get to work with. I would not change it for anything. Not only is this a fun experience, but also a great experience in the working world that prepares tutors for their next professional step in any career. I graduated from UWRF with a journalism degree, and following graduation, a position like this was the last thing on my mind. Looking ahead at graduation, consider your options. Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps are only year-long commitments with many benefits. It is perfect timing for your next chapter in life to try something new and gain some valuable skills. You can be one of the 1,000+ tutors in Minnesota changing children's lives. Look into www.MinnesotaReadingCorps.org or www.MinnesotaMathCorps.org.

Jessie Behrman
UW-River Falls Alumna

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Sustainability about more than planet

Molly Breitmün
Columnist

Ethical citizenship does not have to mean living with doom and gloom and constantly making sacrifices. Lately, I've chosen to not be discouraged by the damages we have caused to the earth. Instead, I look for ways to be happier by being closer to nature. Throughout human history, we've evolved to heal faster, be more content, live longer and thrive in nature. I might be hypersensitive, but I'm wired to be headachy, dry-eyed and lethargic if I don't do one meaningful activity outside each day. And sometimes, in negative 10 degree weather, that simply means shoveling the driveway or making the short walk to the library. As an alternative to punishing myself for all the unsustainable things I do everyday, I choose to focus on what will make me happy as an individual within nature. For example, this weekend, I'm going on the Kinni Outdoor Adventures (KOA) cross-country ski trip (<http://www.uwrf.edu/RecreationAndSportFacilities/KinniOutdoorAdventures/>).

'profit' as well. 'People,' or social justice, is about achieving equity for folks of all walks of life. UW-River Falls' PEACE (Peer Empowerment and Community Engagement) program is a great example of working toward social sustainability. Last semester I attended an amazing workshop they hosted on campus called "Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence." We got the honor of working with Bernard Lafayette, a longtime civil rights activist, and worked as a group to problem solve how we might foster inclusivity and diversity on campus. 'Profit,' the other overlooked aspect of sustainability can directly relate to us as students. Are low-income students getting the funding they need to succeed and stay in school like their peers? Are we receiving a living wage (sustainably meeting our basic needs) by working the entry-level jobs we -as of yet- only qualify for? Will I make a living by pursuing my passion? In order for a social justice or environmental program to succeed, the profit to sustain the program and its people has to be there. I'm a conservation major, so one might argue that my passion for sustainable living comes from my studies. A bond with nature is accessible to everyone though. The

academics provide the scientific reasoning of "how?" but the real answer to "why?" is, perhaps, because you love to go hunting on land that is threatened by suburban sprawl, or because the lake that your family cabin is on is infested with zebra mussels, or like me, because you grew up in a city and glimpses of nature were rare and thus valuable. UWRF is not the first college I've attended. I started out as an art history major and then spent summers working and living on small-scale farms focused on social and environmental justice. My interest in sustainability came through my studies in art history as well as my time laboring in the fields. Where did your path in sustainability begin? What do you see that's lacking in regards to campus sustainability? What deserves applause? What are you doing or would like to do on campus that relates to people, planet and/or profit? I will feature your sustainability events (please give me two weeks notice), ideas, successes stories, gripes, etc. E-mail: molly.breitmun@my.uwrf.edu.

Molly is a non-traditional student majoring in conservation with a minor in GIS. Her interest in campus sustainability was fostered by becoming an undergraduate fellow for the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development (SCISCD) as well as by her peers in the Student Alliance for Local and Sustainable Agriculture (SALSA).

Gun control debate more than just guns

Morgan Stippel

Columnist

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut that claimed the lives of 20 children and six adults has sparked a debate concerning gun control. Although there are valid discussion points on the issue of gun control, this constant back-and-forth ultimately serves as a distraction from the real issue. If America is serious about putting an end to this unnecessary violence, we must begin to reconnect with one another on the most basic human level.

The facts of the investigation have caused policymakers to explore different options for gun regulation. Adam Lanza, the shooter, entered the school with hundreds of rounds of ammunition, and he had enough ammunition to kill almost every student in the elementary school, if he had been given enough time. The loss of life in this situation would have been significantly diminished had he not possessed an assault rifle.

An assault rifle is defined as “a rapid-fire, magazine-fed automatic rifle designed for infantry use” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Because these weapons are designed for military use, there is absolutely no practical reason for why a civilian should have one. If anything is going to be

resolved on the issue of gun control, it will be the implementation of an assault weapons ban. Citizens should have the right to keep and bear arms such as handguns, hunting rifles and other similar types of guns. However, they should not be allowed to keep and bear assault weapons or semi-automatic weapons that are capable of claiming hundreds of lives in a matter of seconds.

While it is obvious that an assault weapons ban would diminish the loss of life in these tragic situations, it would not prevent these incidents from occurring altogether. The guns themselves are not the main problem.

The main problem lies within the people who get their hands on the guns. It is clear that the citizens behind these heinous crimes typically have major psychological issues. More often than not, the people who surround these citizens on a daily basis are aware of these detrimental characteristics. However, instead of reaching out to these troubled people, we tend to alienate them from the rest of society. This alienation only serves to worsen the problem, thus making it more likely that the circumstance will have a negative outcome.

In Lanza’s case, it was very apparent that he came from a difficult family circumstance. His mother was a gun enthusiast and survivalist who rarely allowed outsiders to enter their home, and Lanza hardly left the home. In addition, it was found that his mother had attempted to commit him to a mental institution shortly before the shooting took place.

Despite knowing all of these things to be true, nobody in the neighborhood or community attempted to reach out to Lanza or his family because the American public has a stigma for those who are mentally ill. Instead, we chose to ignore these people because we often believe it is a professional’s job to deal with their psychological issues.

If even one person would have reached out to the Lanza family to let them know that somebody cared, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting may have been preventable.

Letting a person know that he or she is valued and accepted can make a monumental difference in the course of that person’s life. However, if we do not even make the attempt to connect with the people around us, we will never know what impact we may have had the opportunity to make.

Clearly reaching out to the troubled people around us will not stop every shooting in the United States, but it is a very good start. All too often people look at incidents such as the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and fail to see how their actions could have made a difference.


Instead, we choose to ignore our responsibility in the outcome by diverting our attention to peripheral issues, such as gun control. Until the American people begin to reach out to one another and reconnect with those who appear to be struggling, this perpetual cycle of violence will continue to plague our nation.

STUDENT

Voices


Why did you come to UW-River Falls?

“Really good accounting program.”




BOBBY KIEWER - SOPHOMORE

“It’s a public institution where the community feels like a private school.”




EMILY BLACK - FRESHMAN

“My sister was going to the University for physics and I decided to follow in her footsteps.”



SCOTT NEBY - SENIOR

“It is close: it’s an hour and half drive away.”



MORGAN KARMSCHUSTER - FRESHMAN

Compiled by Maggie Sanders

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Goals left to achieve for winter teams

Ashley Goettl
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While the spring semester is just beginning, for six Falcon athletic teams, their seasons are coming to a close. The women’s hockey team continues to be a national powerhouse, while the men’s hockey team, along with women’s basketball, will be upset minded during the first round of playoffs. The men’s and women’s swim and dive teams will be aiming for personal and school records as they compete in the WIAC Championships, and the men’s basketball team will be looking to build for next year after falling from WIAC tournament champions last year, to possibly not even making the WIAC tournament this year.



Trevor Semann/Student Voice
Bill Simon (No. 11) takes a shot on net during a game against the UW- Stout Blue Devils.

Women’s Hockey

The women’s hockey team is ranked No. 5 in the country according to the Feb. 4 U.S. College Hockey Online (US-CHO) poll. With a 14-4-2 overall record, the Falcons have garnered national attention by making an appearance in the NCAA tournament for the past four seasons. But for the past three seasons the Falcons have fallen in the NCAA quarter-finals to a familiar foe: Gustavus Adolphus. Gustavus has beaten the Falcons twice already this season, but both contests were decided by one goal.

However, 14th-year coach Joe Cranston said his team is playing their best hockey since the start after break.

“I think down the stretch you will see more consistency with every shift, every period and every game. We are moving better than any team that I have coached over the last 14 years, and that is very important,” Cranston said. “I think we are going to be a tough team to beat, the girls know it, and we are confident going in to the last part of the season and in to the playoffs.”

Cranston has every reason to be confident, as the Falcons are not only in first place in the NCHA conference, but are also first in goals scored and goals against, as well as first in the power play and penalty kill. During their past six games they have gone 6-0 while out-scoring their opponents 46-3.

UWRF has four games left at Hunt Arena, including a final regular season series with No. 7 Lake Forest on Feb. 16 and 17.

Men’s Hockey

While the women’s team has been consistently at the top of the standings all season, the men’s hockey team has been dubbed “wildly inconsistent” by head coach Steve Freeman. The potential to skate with the best in the nation is there, said Freeman, but it is just a matter of which Falcon hockey team shows up on any given night.

This comes to no surprise to Freeman, the winningest coach in UWRF’s storied program’s history, as the NCHA has two teams ranked nationally and two more, including the Falcons, who received votes but were just shy of making the top 15. Freeman won his 300th career game with the team’s 3-1 vic-

tory over St. John’s on Jan. 5.

The Falcons have an 11-9-3 record heading into the final weekend of the regular season as they travel to take on St. Scholastica and UW-Superior Feb. 8 and 9. Adam Cardwell leads the Falcons with 13 goals this season.

The Falcons are coming off a season where they were upset by UW-Eau Claire in the first round of the NCHA playoffs after tying for second in the regular season and winning the WIAC title a year ago. But now, Eau Claire has clinched the NCHA and WIAC titles and the Falcons will be looking for revenge should they meet in the postseason.

“We can beat anyone on any given night,” Freeman said. “The playoffs make for a great atmosphere because it is where mistakes are heightened and great performances are remembered.”

Women’s Basketball

The women’s basketball team is coming off an appearance in the NCAA tournament a season ago. But after losing four starters from last season, the Falcons carry a young roster. This has led to a roller-coaster season, according to the WIAC standings, but the Falcons believe that as the postseason nears the team has seen improvements.

“The season has gone well so far,” said Brittany Gregorich. “Our record may not show it, but we have been in every game. We are pretty young, so every practice and game has been important in order to become a better team. Everyone is very eager to learn and get better which will help the program in the long run.”

If the playoffs started today, the Falcons would be the No. 5 seed in the six-team tournament with a 7-6 WIAC record and 13-9 overall record.

Coach Cindy Holbrook said the Falcons will play to their strengths, which includes rebounding in the close games.

“Obviously we’d like to win every game and will fight like crazy to do that,” Holbrook added. “We have to take care of the things we can control and the results will fall where they fall. We’ve been a great rebounding team all year and we have to really commit to that right now. Our seniors have done a great job leading our team. Brittany Gregorich is the best rebounder in the WIAC just by working her tail off, and she’s had an unbelievable season,” Holbrook said.

Gregorich leads the entire WIAC in rebounds, averaging 10.3 per game. The next highest was 7.6 from an Eau Claire player, a team which the Falcons just beat on Feb. 2.

The Falcons will close out the regular season with a trip to first place UW-Whitewater on Feb. 16.

Men’s Basketball

Last season UWRF men’s basketball made history by winning their first-ever WIAC Tournament Championship by defeating the eventual nation-champions, UW-Whitewater.

But after losing four starters like the women’s team and having their only returning starter Ollie White having to declare a medical red shirt to end his season, the Falcons have struggled to win games in a tough conference.

The Falcons are 8-14 overall and 3-10 in the WIAC. A win over Eau Claire on Feb. 2 pulled the Falcons out of last place in the conference. With only three WIAC games remaining, UWRF will have to fight to even make the WIAC tournament as only the top six teams out of the nine advance.

“Obviously, the season has not gone as planned,” said head coach Jeff Berkof. “But, with two weeks to go, we continue to try and get better each day and look forward to getting a few more wins like we did this past Saturday versus Eau Claire. We have been playing better of late and it’s nice to see the improvement. Finishing the season strong can only help the program for next year.”

One of the bright spots for the Falcons has been the im-

proved play of sophomore guard Arik Smith. Smith leads the team by averaging 14 points per game. He had career-high 28 points against UW-Platteville on Jan. 26. Smith said that despite the disappointments, he sees the team making strides.

“The season isn’t going as planned, but as a young team we have taken many positive steps forward and are steadily improving with every practice,” Smith said.

Men’s Swim and Dive

The men’s swim and dive team takes a 5-2 record into the WIAC Championships held in Brown Deer, Wis., Feb. 14-16.

While last year’s squad placed sixth at the WIAC Championships, this year’s record-breaking team is looking forward to improving their standing among the league’s elite.

Victor Lara, a freshman swimmer from Sao Paulo, Brazil, has been one of the team’s top competitors. In last week’s duel meet at Hamline, Lara placed first in four different events, in the 200-medley relay, 50 and 100 freestyle, and 200 IM. He believes his team will reach the podium come the conference championships.

“The swim team is probably the strongest and largest group of recent years. This season, the swimmers are really focused on achieving their personal bests times and are also helping each other in the relay’s events,” said Lara. “Furthermore, our team had an improvement every swim meet, dropping a lot of seconds on each of their events.”

David Zaske has also made great strides for the Falcons. Against Hamline he made school history in the 100 and 200 breaststroke. His time of 1:03.93 in the 100 was the 10th best time in school history and his time of 2:19.42 in the 200 was the eighth best.

The Falcons’ toughest competitors may be UW-Stevens Point who has won the WIAC for 13 consecutive seasons, according to the WIAC website.

Women’s Swim and Dive

The women’s swim and dive team is fresh off a 154-117 victory over Hamline and is looking to carry that momentum into the WIAC Championships Feb. 14-16 in Brown Deer, Wis., where they, too, will be looking to improve on last year’s sixth place performance.

Although their record stands at an even 4-4, senior Hannah Wiseman said the secret to the team’s success has been the chemistry of the team.

“The team this year is once again a very close-knit group of people that support one another in triumphs and hard times. We have all worked very hard this season in our practices, weight lifting and meets and it is really exciting to see all of that hard work pay off,” Wiseman said.

That hard work has paid off for Wiseman as she has led the Falcons in every meet this season, including their most recent meet against Hamline.

Wiseman placed first in the 500 free with a time of 5:34.93, nine seconds ahead of her next opponent, and in the 1650 free, with a time of 19:08.89, to earn nine points each race for the Falcons. Her time in the 500 was the ninth best time in school history and her time in the 1650 was the seventh.

In the WIAC Championship, the Falcons will be looking to dethrone the defending WIAC Champions: UW-La Crosse.



Megan Rodriguez/Student Voice
Kelsey Kuehnhold (freshman) swims in a meet.

No matter where the Falcons are ranked or placed in the standings, any sports fan knows that once the playoffs come, anything can happen. With these six Falcon athletic teams preparing for the biggest stage of their collegiate careers, the Falcons will be matched against the best Division III has to offer and like coach Freeman said, the playoffs are where “mistakes are heightened and great performances are remembered.”

Falcon Feature - Gregorich leads women’s basketball

Brittany Gregorich- Senior on the women’s basketball team

Brittany Gregorich has played four seasons at the forward position for the UW-River Falls women’s basketball team. This season she is the captain of the team and is first in scoring on the team with 12.6 points per game. She also leads not only the team but the whole WIAC in rebounding, averaging 10.3 rebounds per game. On the court Gregorich has been a true leader for the team and off the court she thinks of herself as funny, random and outgoing.

High school- **Altoona High School**

Favorite sport other then basketball- **Volleyball**

Favorite movie- **“Love & Basketball”**

Favorite meal- **Pasta or shrimp**

Favorite athlete- **Aaron Rodgers because he is nice to look at.**

Favorite thing about River Falls - **My friends**

Who is the funniest person on the team- **Everyone knows I would say myself, but besides myself probably Hailey Siegle.**

Favorite basketball memory/ favorite River Falls memory- **Going to state my junior year of high school and making the NCAA tournament last year.**



Trevor Semann/Student Voice
Brittany Gregorich (No. 20) directs the defense in a win against UW- Eau Claire.

‘Django’ lives up to major hype

Ryan Funes

Reviewer

Quentin Tarantino is back with a new film, and he’s taking on the American West in his new enticing, bloody, revenge story, spaghetti western, ‘Django Unchained.’

Django is a black slave who has been through a lot: he’s been beaten by slave owners, was taken from his wife and is being taken on a slave train to be auctioned off. But when German bounty hunter Dr. King Schultz takes him away from a life of labor and chains to find Django’s criminal, ex-slave owners, he is given a chance to get back his life and get even.

With a gun in hand and a heart full of resolve, Django sets off across the American West with Dr. Schultz to bring Django’s ex-slave owners to an end, find his wife and rescue her from a delightfully vile plantation owner. Along the way, he will need to use his wits and gun slinging prowess to bring down those who have wronged him and get his beloved wife back.

Of the movies that were to premiere at the beginning of this New Year, I was extremely hyped for ‘Django Unchained.’ Quentin Tarantino is a fine movie maker that can tell exciting and

challenging stories in them and direct them to such a degree to call him a master of the art. With ‘Django Unchained,’ his love of movie making still strives to this day as Django is a sure-fire hit to add to his directing repertoire.

‘Django Unchained’ is, at its heart, a revenge story told and enacted wonderfully. The movie really makes you care about Django and his quest for vengeance so much that you will be cheering every time he evades fire or puts a bullet into a head. The actors also do a superb job portraying their characters, with Jamie Foxx showing Django’s angry and hurt side and with Christopher Waltz bringing out the wit and charm of Dr. Schultz.

The real charm of the characters, though, really comes out in Leonardo DiCaprio’s performance as the brutal plantation owner Calvin D. Candie, who melds into his role and the setting so well that I almost forgot it was him on screen. All the other actors do fine jobs as well, helping to bring out the 19th Century American West setting, with particular props to Samuel L. Jackson, whose role I won’t spoil, but will say came as a surprise, and made me roll in my theater chair with lauding laughter.

Aesthetic-wise, ‘Django Unchained’ is a beautiful movie in all aspects. The shots of the American Frontier are gorgeous, the direction is clean-cut, and the

music is a mix of original content and various artists, including movie music legend Ennio Morricone (‘The Good the Bad and the Ugly’), which all make this movie much more of a homage to the classic spaghetti western films it models itself after.

Along with the other things this movie offers in the direction department, the action is some of the most satisfying I’ve seen in a movie for a while. The violence can range from plain brutal and hard to watch to the satisfyingly heroic. And thanks to Django’s character, no matter how much blood he sheds or bodies he drops, you still find yourself rooting for him to the very explosive end.

The blood and gore also helps make this movie very R-rated. Adding to that, viewers are also advised to expect heavy use of the N-word, which may either make you uncomfortable or offend.

But despite that, ‘Django Unchained’ makes its mark as one of the best movies I have seen in a long time, and one of the best of the year. It’s a wonderfully made and gloriously violent movie that will make you sing “Django!” even after you leave the theater.

Ryan Funes is a lover of all things movie, TV, video games and stories and wants to become a television writer someday. In his spare time he enjoys hanging with friends, tapping into his imagination, and watching cartoons of all kinds.



New semester brings new challenges

Adam Tilson

Columnist

After a month off to relax with friends and family, it’s back to school. I am ready for another semester of stress, hanging with friends and more stress. I will be looking forward to new classes, more books, professors, making new friends and experiencing new things in life. It’s time to put the game console away and focus on the important things that go with college.

The first week of classes was like any ordinary week of the school year, but it’s always this time of the semester that I look forward to the most. Just coming back to school is exciting because I get to start a new semester fresh, looking forward to the opportunities ahead and, hopefully, making new friends along the way.

In all of my classes, I had a basic introduction to the courses, just like any other student. I am a full-time student, but

the best part is that three days of the week I have only one class. However, on Wednesdays, I have back-to-back classes for five hours. At least this doesn’t happen on Monday, or I would be going crazy.

My week started off with Introduction to Biology. This class might actually be one of the more interesting classes I will be taking. The field of science is not one of my strongest subjects, but I am intrigued by what I am learning. There has not been much discussed in class, but I did look at cat fleas through a microscope, which was interesting.

Philosophy is something I struggle with as well. It is one of those subjects that has you think differently about something. I am taking Philosophy of Art because I have a fascination with art in general. Learning about how people look at art from different viewpoints should be interesting. Hopefully after taking this class I will have a new perspective on art as a whole.

I will also be taking two journalism courses related to my

I am taking Philosophy of Art because I have a fascination with art in general.

major. First is Race, Class and News. I will be learning how the news media treats the news coverage of different people. Second is the most important: Print News Writing. In this class I will learn the styles of news writing and refine my writing skills in journalism. It will be the most challenging class of all, but I look forward to the challenge of learning the ways to write in print style.

One of the greatest experiences in college is being a part of an on campus organization. You can meet so many wonderful people and make new friends. Last semester I joined Student Support Services (SSS), an organization that helps students become better academically, socially and prepare students for the future beyond college.

This semester I have already met with my SSS coach Gina Sevick, who has helped me in so many ways. Before joining SSS, I wasn’t involved in any organizations on campus, and didn’t have the motivation to push myself. She has helped me become not only a better student, but a better person.

Who knows where this semester is going to take me? I just have to look forward to the opportunities and challenges that are given to me on campus. I can only say that I hope more positive things will come as a result of my classes and I learn more along the way.

Valentine’s Day has various world traditions

Cristin Dempsey

Columnist

Valentine’s Day comes to us every year on Feb. 14. While it is one of the most if not the most commercial holiday of the year, it is also amongst the most hated holidays of the year by many singles across the nation as well as around the entire world.

While Valentine’s Day is known for giving flowers, cards and chocolates to friends and that significant other, it is also important to remember that it has a very vivid historical background. The “lovely” holiday would not exist had it not been for various religious figures and events. Along with the history, several countries around the world have their own way of celebrating this heart-filled day on the 12 month calendar.

Valentine’s Day, also known as St. Valentine’s Day, began as an early liturgical celebration revolving around a number of Christian saints or martyrs called “Valentinus.” One of the most popular tales about St. Valentine was when he had been imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry, and for ministering to Christians who were persecuted under the Roman Empire. He had wanted to help these Christians escape from persecution. It was during his imprisonment that it was believed he healed the daughter of his jailer, Asterius, prior to his execution. He wrote a note saying, “From your Valentine” as a farewell to her.

The day’s association with romantic love circulated as early as the High Middle Ages, within the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer. This is where courtly loves started to flourish among individuals. The commercial aspect of the holiday

began in the 15th Century. This was when lovers started to present their love for each other using flowers and greeting cards, dubbed then as “valentines.” This led to the growing popularity of handwritten cards and, since the 19th Century, mass produced greeting cards.

Today, the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran Church recognize St. Valentine’s Day as a day to feast. The Eastern Orthodox church also celebrates the holiday, though they celebrate it on July 6, in honor of the Roman presbyter Saint Valentine, and July 30, in honor of Hieromartyr Valentine, the Bishop of Interamna. The Roman Catholic Church no longer celebrates the day with a feast, because these saints, though ancient and holy, were not particularly well known.

What is known is where these saints have been buried. Well-known and secular symbols of the holiday include the heart shaped outline, a dove, and the figure of the winged cupid. Most people today recognize Valentine’s Day as a secular holiday and a day for love and affection.

In the United Kingdom, many of the same traditions are observed as in the United States. However, in Norfolk, a character named Jack Valentine knocks on the rear door of homes and leaves sweets as presents. Despite this, most children, are known to be afraid of him. In Wales, people celebrate Saint Dwynwen’s Day on Jan. 25 instead of Valentine’s Day.

Valentine’s Day in France is celebrated just like other countries, despite the country’s Catholic roots. San Valentín in Spain is celebrated just like the United Kingdom, with the exception of Catalonia. In Catalonia, rose or book giving is a large part of the holiday, coinciding with Saint Jorge’s Day.

In love or not, Valentine’s Day can be celebrated by everybody. Buy some chocolate.

Portugal has similar celebrations to other countries, though the holiday is referred to as Dia dos Namorados, or “Lover’s” Day.

Valentinsdag in Denmark and Norway is not largely observed, though people will set a small amount of time for a romantic dinner with their partner or an exchanging of cards. The flower industry in these countries is still trying to promote the holiday more.

All Hearts Day is not an official holiday in Sweden but is observed thanks to the flower industry, a day where more flowers are sold than on Mother’s Day.

Many other countries around the world have their own traditions on Valentine’s Day, though nothing vastly different from traditions here in the United States. The holiday is mostly celebrated in the west, though countries in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East use the day to observe love, friendship and Earth. The holiday is celebrated on other days of the year in various places instead of Feb. 14.

However, many countries in the Middle East look down on this particular holiday, as it is known to be against Muslims and Islamic culture. Saudi Arabia, for example, has banned the holiday altogether since it is a Christian holiday. They forbid shops to sell red items or items pertaining to the holiday, though items are sold on a black market.

In love or not, Valentine’s Day can be celebrated by everybody. Buy some chocolate.

Cristin is an English major and music minor from Eagan, Minn. She enjoys writing, playing the flute and swimming. After college, she would like to persue a career as an editor.

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First adventures in New York



This semester I am on the adventure of my life. I moved to New York City with an exchange program called National Student Exchange. On Jan. 25, I boarded a plane with two bags and took off for the city of my dreams. I have

wanted to live in New York City since “Home Alone 2: Lost in New York” and the Disney version of “Annie,” so this whole process is very surreal.

I am attending classes at Queens College, located in Flushing, N.Y. in the borough of Queens, which is a 30-minute train and bus ride from midtown Manhattan. However, I have only successfully traveled to Manhattan within the 30-minute time period once; all other times I have either taken the wrong bus, or gotten off on the wrong stop or took the really slow train.

As silly and cliché as it sounds, Manhattan is magical. It’s bright and big; everything seems larger than life and I really feel like I’m walking down a movie set because everything is as glamorous as it appears on screen. The first time I saw Central Park was from my window seat on the plane and I cried from the sheer enormity of it. The first time I saw Times Square was at night and I was so overwhelmed my roommate and I just ran down the sidewalk, laughing breathlessly.

The first time I emerged from the subway in Manhattan was on a Saturday night. I was meeting my roommate, her sister and a friend at their midtown hotel bar for drinks, and then it was onward to dinner. I crept up the stairs to the side-walk from the smelly platform, unsure of where I was, as I

was following the directions given to me by an iPhone app. To my left was the Broadway version of “Cinderella” and to my right was the “Late Show with David Letterman.” The light from Times Square, which was about two streets over from my location, was spilling down the street from around the skyscrapers. I was so exhilarated even though I had just spent two hours stumbling my way through public transportation with frozen toes and a dying phone. The next few hours were a rush. We flitted from the hotel bar to a pub for dinner, stopping for roasted nuts from a street vendor and a photo op by some marquees advertising the Broadway musicals I had admired from afar. From the pub, we took a taxi to a cabaret show, only to be turned away because it was sold out. No matter; we hit the next location on our list: the Duplex.

Now, the Duplex holds a special place in my heart. It is on Christopher Street in the heart of Greenwich Village, and is one of the numerous gay bars surrounding the iconic Stonewall Inn. However, I did not know this was a gay bar. I thought it was simply a piano bar with a really fantastic staff that could sing any song from the American Songbook or top 40 pop charts. Also, it was the Duplex where I lost my iPhone. Actually, I technically lost my iPhone in the taxi that drove us to the Duplex.

I was horrified. My first night “out” in New York City and I lost my most prized possession in a taxi. Which I was sure I would never see again. So I decided to embrace the night and commiserate with some guys standing behind the bar.

Now, anyone who really knows me knows how badly I want a gay best friend. I want someone who likes shopping, Broadway musicals and alcohol that isn’t beer. Well, I found him. Maybe he’s a decade (or two) older than

I thought he would be, but I know it was fate. Our meeting was meant to be.

I lamented about my lost iPhone and he convinced me I would find it (which I did and is entirely another story). I discovered he played the piano and was a singer/songwriter and he knows every Broadway musical I could think of. I think we talked for hours, but without an iPhone one is never sure.

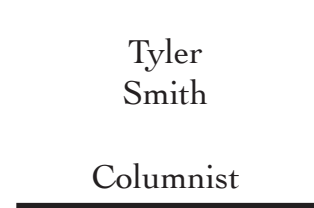
At one point I pulled out my notebook to scribble down some things he was telling me about show business and he casually remarked that he carried around a notebook too for ideas and thoughts, and that if he didn’t have the notebook he went crazy. I thanked him for not calling it a journal, because it most definitely is not a journal, but a notebook, and he asked me if I was a Libra.

What? That was the most random thing he could have asked, but I went with it. Yes, I told him, Sept. 25. But sometimes I feel more like a Virgo. He gasped and said that he was Sept. 25, too. I didn’t believe him, thinking he was just trying to be nice, so I demanded to see his license. We switched IDs, and sure enough, we had matching birthdays (although his was ‘70s vintage). Kismet, we declared. Fate, we crowed.

Soon enough it was time to go home, back to my apartment with almost no possessions and no food. I was also missing a really expensive phone. I felt like I had come home. I spent the better part of the night conversing with a human who understood me, who understood my need to be here, my need to maybe struggle for a while before I start succeeding. All of my problems seemed far away. In the morning they would come back to me, but at that moment, I was just a fabulous Libra in the most fabulous city in the world.

Amanda is a junior, majoring in journalism. She is currently studying in New York City. She enjoys entertainment, fashion and public transportation.

Trip to Ireland results in stolen wallet, kiss



I made it my resolution to eat healthier foods, drink less of the drink and spend more time out of trouble. So naturally, like any hopeful New Years resolution-ist, I went to Ireland for a second time.

The journey began well enough; three ladies from the trip followed me to O’Neill’s Pub to order a scrumptious bowl of seafood chowder. In all truth, I followed them because asking for directions is not a strong suit of mine (being a man and all).

Jet-lag started to kick in, and I moseyed back to the hotel room for a nap. After dinner I went to go buy a phone card to call back home to the family.

However, after buying it, I became destitute, not because the Euro exchange is so much, but because a slippery ghost with hideous facial features and crooked teeth stole my wallet (or at least I hope the thief looked this ugly).

In Dublin, without money, what’s a guy supposed to do? Trying to keep calm, I pictured my grandmother and what she’d say in this circumstance:

“The best things in life are free, my grandson,” she said in a nasally voice.

Repeating the nasally phrase over and over again, I just couldn’t make myself believe it; obviously my grandmother had never tasted the purity and god-like-ness of Guinness. Naive woman! The best things in life cost four and a half Euros!

The realization hit me that I might have to go the entire trip in Ireland without another sip of the black. A sad fate indeed.

However, a thing, a glorious thing, saved the day, it’s name: Western Union.

Once the transaction at Western Union took place, I was pub bound.

Going up to the barman, I ordered a tall-

dark-and-handsome, a Guinness black as the depths of a starry night. When two of the blacks were coursing through my veins, my courage was at an all-time high.

As I looked across the bar, a trio of lovely ladies were seated next to the window, but even with the courage in me, I was still worried about approaching them.

Inevitably, whenever attempting to talk to women in a pub, one of two things always happens: I wink at them from across the bar, then I get slapped, or I wheel over to them, smiling

dumbly, and accidentally run over their feet, and then I get slapped.

Not wanting to get slapped, I wheeled over to them and two of them immediately dispersed. The one that remained glared intensely at the door on the other side of the room.

Being the absolute charmer that I am, I immediately asked for a kiss. Swing and a miss; both the attempt and her open palm to my face.

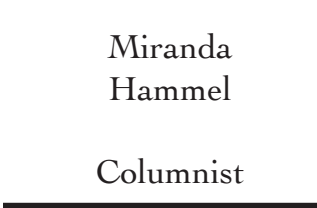
Eventually, I convinced her to give me a consolation kiss on the cheek (I told her about the wallet), but with perfect timing, I managed to swing my head around to steal an actual kiss. To be candid, I am not proud of stealing that kiss, but it was a good kiss, at least for me.

After a few more Guinness beers, I swerved left and right in my wheelchair down cobblestone streets, trying to get back to the hotel. If a wheelchair could be considered a vehicle, I’m convinced I would have been charged with a driving while inebriated.

Somehow, I ended up two miles north of the hotel, so I asked the locals for directions. After their kind assistance, I ended up three miles north of the hotel, near the Road to God.

Ireland is like that, you’ll get directions not to where you want to go, but to places that are great to fall asleep underneath for an hour or two.

College stress takes hold early in semester



With the brisk winter winds and snow that’s been softly falling this past week; we can officially say we made it through the first week of classes.

Walking to and fro all bundled up looking like the Michelin Man, I think I can speak for more than just myself when I say, “I’m ready for warmer weather.”

I received a few text messages and a call from my mother during the week. Like always, she was checking in to, quite literally, make sure I’m still alive. My parents always ask me

how school went when I was growing up, and they still do. Like most parents do, I think; but it’s like saying how was that drive-by-shooting? You don’t care how it was.

While I was passing other students on the slim sidewalk cutting through campus, I heard chatter about how much homework they already have, and how behind they already feel.

I can relate, rolling my eyes and letting out a sigh as I walk on.

With what seems like everyone coughing and sniff-

ling as you walk through a held open door, you begin to cringe at the thought of even getting sick, let alone breathing the same air as someone who in your opinion should be quarantined.

I am starting to feel my body grow achy and tired, already missing my bed and those extra “Zs.”

I was getting much like everyone else while on vacation; staying up late comes at a price for those 8 a.m. lectures.

Then again mama did say there would be days like this, it just seems too early in the semester to feel so run down.

Thursday, Jan. 31, had to be the worst day for anyone to have classes. That freezing wind whipping past my face and messing my neatly

combed hair up, I immediately regretted not wearing a hat of some sort. It probably appeared as if I was crying, because of the sting in my eyes.

I can still hear my mother in the background telling me to “bundle up.”

There is something strange, yet, about this new semester, it hasn’t all sunk in yet that it is different.

Different classes, a different schedule, a different personality about myself and my surroundings.

There is a determination I have deep down within, like I am sure most UW-River Falls students and faculty have.

Whether it’s the determination to perform better in the classroom, with your roommates or your job, that spark is there because it’s like setting a New Year’s resolution for yourself.

The idea of starting on a blank slate is so appealing to people, that fresh start to get back on track with how you actually want to live and go about your day.

As the weeks come and go, spring semester will be over before we know it and another portion of our busy life will take over with the summer weather. For now we can hope for temperatures above freezing in this Wisconsin weather and a semester that will go our way as far as the grade book goes.

Whether today is a good day or a bad day, remember what your mother told you.

Miranda is a junior majoring in journalism. She enjoys reading, writing, listening to music, and being active outdoors. You can find Miranda working in Hagestad Hall for the Division of Technology Services or Knowles Athletic Building as an athletic trainer. On the weekends, Miranda can be found hanging around coffee shops in Hudson, or with her friends in the River Falls area.

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