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‘Oz the Great and Powerful’ receives high rating



# STUDENT VOICE

University of Wisconsin River Falls

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## Student Senate elections seek new representation

Samantha Mayberry  
samantha.mayberry@my.uwrf.edu

The UW-River Falls Student Senate will be having elections for next year and the deadline for students to fill out petitions to be on the ballot is Friday, March 22.

“Student Senate works with the chancellor, he relies on them to inform him of what can be done to improve student experiences,” said Paul Shepherd, director of Student Life and advisor to Senate.

For this spring’s election there will be a new Senate president, vice president, a non-traditional representative, representatives for each of the four colleges and eight at-large senator positions. If running for president or vice president, one needs to obtain 100 signatures on the petition to be put on the ballot. All other positions require 50 signatures.

“It’s a very educational experience and I learned how to voice my opinion as well as work on my leadership abilities,” said Elections Commissioner Hannah Carlson. “I enjoy being on Student Senate and I can appreciate all the different opinions that come through on campus.”

Students received an email at the end of February regarding the election and the documents for the petition, the election rules and the general Senate Committee form. The documents can also be found at the Involvement Center information desk and on the Senate OrgSync page, as well, for those who may not have the email any longer and are interested in getting their name on the ballot. The deadline for the petition is 4 p.m. Friday, March 22.

Previous experience is not necessary for a student to run for a position on Senate, however there is a minimum 2.25 grade

point average (GPA) requirement. Students are also highly recommended to read and abide by the election rules.

“If they do break the rules, I do have the power to say ‘sorry, you can’t be on the ballot.’ I don’t want to have to do that,” Carlson said. “For example, they can’t start putting up posters and campaigning until after March 22.”

Shared Governance Director Jessica Pett has been on Senate for two years and will not be returning after her term is up this spring.

“I can’t run again because I will probably only be here for one more semester of classes and it isn’t fair to only complete half of my term,” Pett said. “If I were here for another year for sure, I would run again.”

Pett said that the Shared Governance director is a rewarding position and being able to see the people working in the committees for Senate and doing what they had been wanting to do for campus.

Shepherd, Carlson and Pett all encourage any student who is interested in being on Senate to complete a petition to be put on the ballot.

“We really need new people to run because it brings in new ideas and new viewpoints and that is important,” Shepherd said.

As an added bonus, those on the executive board for Senate are paid.

“It’s a relatively small stipend,” Shepherd said. “It’s a way to honor that when you are in these leadership positions, you have expectations.”

Pett advised those who want to be a part of Senate to be



Sarah Plank/Student Voice

**Bobbi O’Brien (left), Hannah Carlson (middle) and Derek Johnson (right) at the March 12 Student Senate meeting. O’Brien is the current Senate president and Carlson is the elections commissioner who oversees the entire Senate election process.**

organized and be prepared to work hard.

“It’s not for somebody who thinks that they can just skate by. It’s a position you have to be really involved in,” Pett said.

Some important dates to remember about the Senate elections are:

Petitions are due by 4 p.m. Friday, March 22, the presidential debate will be held on Monday, April 1, the presidential primary election will be held on April 8 and 9 and the general election will be held April 15 through the 16.

## Bundgaard wins Idol



Megan Rodriguez/Student Voice

**River Falls Idol winner Brent Bundgaard performs “Do the Cody Britow” in the Falcon’s Nest March 13. Second place went to Josie Olson. The event, sponsored by Phi Mu, featured 11 different contestants all vying for the top spot. There was also a silent auction and raffle drawing. The event raised money for the Children’s Miracle Network.**

## Online ID card system to get upgrade

Rebecca Rudolph  
rebecca.rudolph@my.uwrf.edu

The UW-River Falls carding office budget remains approved and supported by student government, despite Student Senate and the Facilities and Fees Board confusion regarding what the carding office will be using their segregated fee increase for.

Segregated fees are the fees students pay each semester or year to support things such as the carding office. The carding office was approved by Senate for a 15 cent increase that will be paid for by students.

One of the things the segregated fee will go to is the system they are transitioning to that will allow students to more easily monitor the use of their student identification (ID) cards online.

Another place this money is going will be to help pay for the cards the office prints.

The office switched from using ID cards that cost just over \$1, to cards that currently cost almost \$8 to print.

That cost has been absorbed into its budget and in other budgets around campus, like the Residence Life and dining service’s budget, but the carding office is now also playing a role in that payment.

Jason Winget is the infrastruc-

ture and security technologies manger for the UWRF Division of Technology Services (DoTS). He said that the 5 percent increase to students will only cover part of these costs, but that the increase was necessary and helpful to be able to afford the new system and to help pay for ID cards.

“It would have been much more difficult without this increase to have found those dollars [in the budget],” Winget said.

Originally, when the two groups met and voted to support the 5 percent increase to the budget, which students would pay through their segregated fees, they were under the impression that the money would go to improving the quality of student ID cards.

In actuality, that money is going to support a new online system for the cards and to go toward paying for part of card printing of the current cards.

“We’re not doing anything to the card and we’re not going to be doing anything to our main software we use to manage everything. The only piece of the puzzle that we’re replacing is our online carding office. Just that piece of software,” said Mike Hovestol, who is in charge of the carding office.

The online carding office is what students can look at online

to see the remaining balance of their Falcon Dollars and their meal plan. This is also where students and family members can deposit money onto their card accounts. This software will allow everything to be on one webpage, Hovestol said.

This is different from the current system, which has separate web pages for dining dollars, dining services and for Falcon Dollars.

The consolidation to one page is supposed to make it more user-friendly for students.

If students are unaware of the change in systems, Hovestol said that there will be links that take them to the page they need to be at.

The webpage will look different, but “we can brand it and change the colors and things. Were going to try to make it look as similar as possible,” he said.

The reason this new system, CBOARD, was chosen to be implemented was because the one currently in use was designed 10 years ago and was written with old computer software.

This software is also being used in other areas and would make the system more cohesive for campus as a whole, Hovestol said.

“It’s legacy code was written

See Carding page 3

## Ethics violations lead to referral for removal of two student senators

Ashley Goettl  
ashley.goettl@my.uwrf.edu

Two student senators, including a Senate presidential candidate, were referred for removal to the Senate ethics committee due to violations of the Senate’s administrative policies, according to Vice President Matthew Hobbs.

The final decision on the senators’ status will be determined at the March 19 Senate meeting. A two-thirds vote by the Senate will be needed to remove either of the two senators from office.

Hobbs submitted the referral letter regarding senators A.J. Hansen and Riley Haynes to Ethics Chair Sam Tauchen after noticing the senators had not logged the required office hours detailing their work for Senate.

Now the ethics committee will submit a recommendation to be formally voted on by the entire Senate in which the senators in question could be removed from office, sent a letter of reprimand or have nothing done.

Hansen is the athletics representative on Senate and Haynes is a presidential candidate and current legislative affairs director.

Both Hansen and Haynes said they have completed the work for Senate, but had failed to log the work in the designated binder.

“We all get busy. I just simply forgot to log them. I know I messed up, as do all of us,” Hansen said.

Hansen, like Haynes said that he respects the decision of the committee, but both senators said they feel that removal may be a bit harsh.

Haynes said that while he knows he failed to log the hours, it doesn’t take away from the work he did.

“People who know me know that I am a very involved person and that I take my job with Senate very seriously,” Haynes said.

The Senate requires that each Senator fulfill office hours, or work done for Senate, ac-

cording to the Senate’s by-laws. For a regular senator five office hours are required every two weeks, whereas a director or officer is required to complete 10 office hours each week. When a senator completes office hours, they are required to log it in a designated book in the Senate office, according to Hobbs.

For each office hour not fulfilled, the senator will receive a demerit point from Hobbs.

**“People who know me know that I am a very involved person and that I take my job with Senate very seriously,” Senator Riley Haynes said.**

Student Senators who accumulate 10 demerit points in one semester will be referred for removal.

It is the duty of the vice president

to automatically refer any senator who accumulates 10 or more points to the ethics committee for removal, according to the Senate by-laws.

The senator will not serve on or return to the Senate unless an appeal is successful.

If the senators are removed, Senate Presi-

dent Bobbi O’Brien can either appoint replacements or call for a special election. O’Brien spoke at the hearing and said the ethics committee should decide “based on if the Senate was better off with these two (senators) on the Senate or not.”

The Senate moved into closed session to discuss the personal issues and ultimately their own decision.

Tauchen said he could not discuss the decision of the ethics committee and that the committee’s recommendation will be seen in the Senate’s upcoming agenda. The committee also voted in closed session.

However, according to Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws, Wis. Stat. 19.88 (2) and (3), “The meeting’s minutes must record how each member voted on roll calls, and each paper ballot must identify the member voting, as well as that member’s vote. If a voice vote is taken, only the results of the voice vote must be recorded.”

That vote record was nowhere to be found when the Student Voice inquired.



# UW-River Falls Western Show Team lends helping hand, demonstrates sportsmanship at competition

Ashley Goettl  
ashley.goettl@my.uwrf.edu

Angie Esselman and the UW-River Falls Western Show Team went to a regional competition in Crookston, Minn., hoping to compete and learn more about showing horses and showmanship.

What they demonstrated and came away with though, was a life lesson in what advisor Janie Huot called “a generous act of humanity for all the right reasons.”

Teammate Jade Baerg was in the dressing room when teammate Katie Nelson came in and said she needed some chaps (leg coverings for riding horses), because there were some girls that needed them to show.

Baerg said she was confused, but

grabbed her chaps and went out with Nelson.

As it turned out, a small group of girls from Bethany Lutheran College were standing there without the proper attire and dress to compete.

Huot said the group from River Falls went over to the Bethany girls and started offering them tips, and in Baerg and Nelson’s case, their own equipment, even though the Bethany girls were competing against UWRF in some areas.

“I didn’t even think about it hurting our chances,” Baerg said. “It was just helping, nothing special. I didn’t even think twice about them using it. I have been in the same position on more than one occasion, and I was glad to help them. It was awesome to see them smiling and

having fun with it.”

Baerg went out into the arena and helped the girls get on their horses and get ready to show.

Esselman said she could tell that the girls/riders and even the coach were so amazed at the show and how it was run, as well as the level of riders and outfits that they wore.

Esselman said she knew her team was up to something as she observed fellow teammate Allison Aanerud who initiated the contact with the Bethany girls.

“She is the type of person that will talk to anyone and she is always friendly. She introduced me to a few of the girls on the team and we talked about school and horses and everything college girls would discuss. After getting to know them a little better, I could tell that they were going to need a little help in the competition,” Esselman said.

At first, Esselman gave them pointers on the horses they were riding and tips about the show ring. Then Esselman did one of the girl’s hair and it just escalated from there.

But at the end of the day, Esselman knew the event was more than horses and ribbons.

“As I was helping them

I thought about the time in my life when I needed help like this. Today, I am seasoned to riding and the show pen, but I did not come from a family where horses were a second nature. I, too, started from the very bottom,” Aanerud said.

To people in the same situation as the Bethany girls, Aanerud’s advice is to try and do whatever activity you want to do.

“Those girls had a passion for horses and they wanted to learn how to ride so they put an intercollegiate riding team together at a non-agriculture school,” Aanerud said. “In a heartbeat I would do this again, even if I lost points. The girls loved it, they were so grateful and even though they did not win the class, they had the biggest smiles on afterwards and said that is was the most fun thing they had done,” Aanerud added.

Huot said she has never been so proud of her team.



Photo submitted by Janie Huot  
Members of the UWRF Western Show Team show sportsmanship by helping members of the Bethany team.



Photo submitted by Janie Huot  
The UWRF Western Show Team pose with awards they won at a regional competition in Crookston, Minn.

## News briefs

### UW-River Falls to host commissioned composer Fang Man

UW-River Falls will host Composer Fang Man for a three-day residency on March 19-21. The residency will conclude with a concert at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 21, in the Abbott Concert Hall of the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

The concert, which is free and open to the public, will feature many works by the composer, as well as the world premiere of the commissioned work, “Concerto for Piano, Percussion and Wind Instruments.”

Hailed as “inventive and breathtaking” by the New York Times, Man’s music has been performed worldwide by notable orchestras and ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra New Music Group, American Composers Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, National Orchestre de Lorraine (France), Minnesota Orchestra and others.

Man, a Chinese-born composer who lives in the United States, is the recipient of numerous commissions including a Guggenheim Fellowship, Koussevitzky Foundation Commission, Siemens Music Foudation/Ensemble Unitedberlin commission, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra Association commission. Her music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles, Espace de Projection of IRCAM-Centre Pompidou in Paris, Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, Beijing Concert Hall and other notable places.

Each year, student members of the Commissioned Composer Project select and commission a composer to write a piece of music for the student body, and arranges for that

composer to come to the campus in the spring to interact with the students and take part in the premier performance of that work.

The Commissioned Composer Project, which began in 1967 by professor Emeritus Conrad De Jong, is the longest standing program of its kind within the United States, putting a national spotlight on the UWRF Music Department.

### Donation tables to be open for charity organization

UW-River Falls students will be working donation tables from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. on April 8 in area 170 on the first floor of the University Center. Donations will be gathered by students and distributed by the Hope Lutheran ELCA church to the Robin’s Nest Christian Home for children ages 0-18 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Donation items requested will be hygiene supplies, children’s books, elementary level educational supplies and cash donations of any denomination. Cash donations will go toward the current needs of supporting the daily basics of food, education and water for the children and provide an income for staff at the home.

Robin’s Nest ministers to the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the children. Children find their way to Robin’s Nest through the Child Development Agency of Jamaica. The home provides a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for the children in need of their services. The UWRF students hosting the event are Jennifer Deiss, Maddie Halvorson, Chelsea Jannett, Lizzy Rodewald and Jeff Ruhl. Their goal is to run a successful persuasive campaign for a group project, as well as contribute to the Robin’s Nest foundation. More information about the Robin’s Nest foundation can be found at [www.robinsnest-childrenshome.org](http://www.robinsnest-childrenshome.org).

## Local program assists trauma survivors, supporters coping



Kris Miner

St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program (SCVRJP) has been providing Restorative Justice Services to the region since 2003. The programs address crime and conflict from the view of social and emotional aspects. The programming continues to expand and include resources for trauma survivors.

In March, SCVRJP will offer a six week Survivor Circle series. These circles offer survivors an opportunity to meet others impacted by sudden, preventable deaths. Often times related to suicide, homicide, traffic fatality or accidental drug overdose.

There is no charge to attend the six week circle series. Those participating attend each week and take turns listening and sharing their story. The Survivor Circles will begin on March 28, 2013, and run weekly until May 2. Another six week session is planned for the fall of 2013.

Pre-registration is required to plan for space and volunteers.

In February, SCVRJP hosted Paths to Healing. The event outlined the journey from victim to survivor and then thriver.

Executive Director Kris Miner has worked with a range of victims from simple to serious and complex crimes. She shared the initial responses and needs of trauma survivors.

Immediate needs include pacification, partition and perspective. She asked the audience to relate to the experience of a person fearful of drowning.

One would need to calm and soothe themselves enough to survive. The partition is to gain a perspective that you are not going to die. Once calm enough and separated from the risk (pacification and partition), survivors need perspective. Perspective means to understand the future holds hope.

Also speaking at Paths to Healing was Kim Anez. Anez related her healing journey from being struck by an impaired driver while refueling her car with gasoline. Anez shared the healing impacts that storytelling offers a survivor. The session was attended by suicide, homicide, impaired driving and traffic fatality survivors.

All SCVRJP sessions are open to those impacted and those that serve trauma.

The Survivor Circle series helps those coping with complex loss and trauma by providing a safe space, to relate the experience. SCVRJP volunteers are trained to be supportive and nonjudgmental. Volunteers with this programming are often trauma survivors and ready to share their story to help others. Session participants and new volunteers are encouraged to contact the Restorative Justice Center for more information. Please, contact Miner at SCVRJP, by calling 715-425-1100 or emailing [scvrjp@gmail.com](mailto:scvrjp@gmail.com).

## Students attend organic farming conference



Photo submitted by Molly Breitmün  
Student Alliance for Local and Sustainable Agriculture (S.A.L.S.A) and faculty attended the 24th annual Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, Wis. MOSES hosts the nation’s largest educational and networking event for the organic farming community. Pictured from left to right: Eric Bechel, Nathan Brandt (alumnus), Rachel Nestrud, Carolyn Kylo, Nathan Hanks, Jabez Meulemans, Juliet Tomkins, Veronica Justen, Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing, Karen Gjelhaug, Bethany Gapinski, Molly Breitmün, Owen Schmitz.

### River Falls Police/UWRF Police Department

- Feb. 27
- Jeffrey J. Shore was fined \$389.50 for possession of marijuna in Crabtree Hall.
- March 1
- Conner G.Trealoff was fined \$295 for retail theft in the University Center.
- March 9
- Martin G. Heikes was fined \$263.50 for underage consumption in Hathorn Hall.

Editor’s note: Information for this section is taken from River Falls Police and River Falls Police Department incident reports.

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online at  
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# UWRF students complete wildland firefighter training



Top left to right, from top to bottom: David Wilson, Jake Sinnwell, Zach Stewart, Tyler Busko, Bayli Maliszewski, Candace Anderson, Charmayne Anderson, Kristen Kemnetz, Dani Peterson, Elsa Litecky  
Not pictured: Greg Brown, Luke Bowe, Zach Austin, Sabrina Greene, Denver Martin, and Brad Schmidt

Submitted by Danielle Peterson

In 2012 there were over 67,000 wildland fires that burned over 9,000,000 acres nationwide. Wildland Firefighters are called to duty for every one of them. Each are properly trained for hours on every way to safely put the fire out. While the number of acres burned grows so will the number of firefighters. The first two weekends of March, 17 students, a part of the Resource Management Club (RMC), travelled to UW-Stevens Point to get their Basic Wildland Firefighter 2 certifications.

Each student went through 40 hours of training, four exams and two days of outdoor field training including actually digging fire lines, locating hot spots and fighting fires around vehicles.

Each student passed and now has one more certification for a career in the field of conservation. The Certified students now plan to start a Fire Crew within RMC to help the local DNR and other fire fighting agencies in their fight against wildland fire.

Information submitted by UWRF Resource Management Club President Danielle Peterson.

Right: Elsa Litecky wears the full wildland firefighter attire during the Basic Wildland Fire Fighter 2 certification training at UW-Stevens Point.



Submitted by Danielle Peterson

## Carding: Student fees to support new software

From page 1

in a language that they don't even program anymore," Hovestol said.

He said this could be an issue if something breaks in the system because then they have to find someone who can read and write the old code to fix it.

This new system will have code that people currently in the IT field, like the carding office and DoTS, are familiar with. Now if something were to go wrong in the system and change needed to be made, they would be able to fix it.

Fortunately, when the switch over occurs, Hovestol said he does not see it requiring too much work from their end of the situation. He said that the people at UWRF who will be doing the transfer will be mostly professional staff or a few student staff if necessary.

This new system will be costing \$3,750 and a portion of that money was granted to them through a segregated fee increase that the Facilities and Fees Board and Student Senate voted on. That recommendation was sent to the chancellor to approve.

Dominic Riel, Facilities

and Fees Board chair, said Chancellor Dean Van Galen "ultimately makes the decision on that fee" being put into action, but added that he "has always been very much in support of the student opinion."

Riel said he is confident the chancellor will support the recommendation.

For clarification, carding services will not be updating their card printer this coming year, which means that identification cards that students are currently using will be continued to be used next year.

There was talk about buy-

ing a printer that would create cards with a thicker laminate on them when the one they have currently does not function anymore, but Hovestol said he does not anticipate that being in this next year's budget unless it were to break unexpectedly.

Along with that, there were mentions of the printing system changing to one that required a card swipe, but that is not going to be put into effect for at least another year.

This next year, the only change the carding office will be making will be to change from the old online system to the new online system.

Applications to run for Student Senate now available.

Petition forms and applications can be picked up at the Involvement Center desk in the University Center.

Petitions and applications are due 4 p.m. Friday, March 22.

# Takeout can eat up your savings.



Pack your own lunch instead of going out. \$6 saved a day x 5 days a week x 10 years x 6% interest = \$19,592. That could be money in your pocket. Small changes today. Big bucks tomorrow. Go to [feedthepig.org](http://feedthepig.org) for savings tips.



## Two speakers share their knowledge with students



Brianna Samson/Student Voice

Jose Vargas, an illegal immigrant from the Philippines, spoke about his experiences growing up in the United States and the many stereotypes surrounding illegal immigrants. He spoke as a part of the Wyman Series on March 13.



Maggie Sanders/Student Voice

Amanda Tank, who studied veterinary science at UWRF, holds up a plaque commemorating her presentation as part of the Falcons Returning to the Nest program. The program invites Falcon alumni to talk about their careers and personal life. Her presentation took place in the Kinni Theater in the University Center March 12.

Have something to say? Want to voice your opinion?

LET US KNOW!

Submit a letter to the editor at:  
[editor@uwrvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrvoice.com)

Do you have a favorite professor?

Nominate him/her for a professor profile in which they will be featured in an issue of the Student Voice!

Send your nomination to [editor@uwrvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrvoice.com)



EDITORIALS

Two student senators unfairly punished, Senate should acquit

Two student senators are facing removal from office following an ethics complaint brought against them by Vice President Matthew Hobbs.

Senators A.J. Hansen and Riley Haynes are accused of violating Student Senate’s administrative policies regarding office hours.

Office hours serve as a check to show the senators have been doing adequate work for the Senate and students. The complaint stated that the senators did not log their completed office hours.

Now, the decision to remove the senators rests in the hands of the entire Senate.

While we fully support the Senate’s office hours system and while both senators know and have admitted they have done wrong, we believe that removing the senators from office is unfair to the senators.

This comes with the full knowledge that those senators did complete the work, they simply did not record that they had done so.

We believe this because during the ethics committee hearing, there was discretion on what the Senate’s policies were and if the proper procedures were followed for removal.

The Senate was unclear about what their own office hours and policies were regarding removal due to recent changes in its by-laws.

Therefore, we feel that these two senators should not be punished due to technicalities.

We are not excusing the senators for their mistakes because we do hold our elected officials to the highest standard as representatives on the student body.

We hope this is a lesson well learned for all senators and that basic duties and procedures should be followed to ensure the Senate is representing and working for the student body, especially when it comes to something as simple as logging in a binder that you completed the work you are expected to do, as was the case in the ethics complaint.

Senate President Bobbi O’Brien stated at the ethics hearing that the committee, and now the Senate should make their decision based on whether or not the Senate would be better off with these two senators serving on Senate.

We believe the Senate needs these two representatives and we hope the Senate will not remove these senators from office for violating a petty rule.

Editorials represent the opinion of the Student Voice Editorial Board and are prepared by the editorial staff.

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The *Student Voice* is a student-written and managed newspaper for UW-River Falls, and is published Fridays during the regular school year.

All editorial content in the *Student Voice* is determined by the newspaper’s Editorial Board. The opinions expressed in editorials and columns do not represent those of the newspaper’s advisor, student population, administration, faculty or staff.

Letters to the editor must be 300 words or less, and include a first and last name and phone number. They can be submitted at 304 North Hall, River Falls, WI 54022 or to [editor@uwrfvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrfvoice.com).

The *Student Voice* reserves the right to edit any material for content, libel or space. It also reserves the right to withhold letters. All letters, news releases, briefs, display ads and classified ads must also be submitted no later than Wednesday at noon.

Because of high production costs, UW-River Falls community members are permitted to collect one copy of the *Student Voice* per issue. A single copy of the *Student Voice* is valued at \$1, and additional copies may be requested from the editorial staff by e-mail through [editor@uwrfvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrfvoice.com). Newspaper theft is a crime. Those who violate the single copy rule may be subject to civil and criminal prosecution.



David Recine/Student Voice

Letter to the editor

Cartoon sails in wrong direction

Regarding the comic published in the Student Voice depicting the ship and sailboat (March 8).

The portrayal is ludicrous.

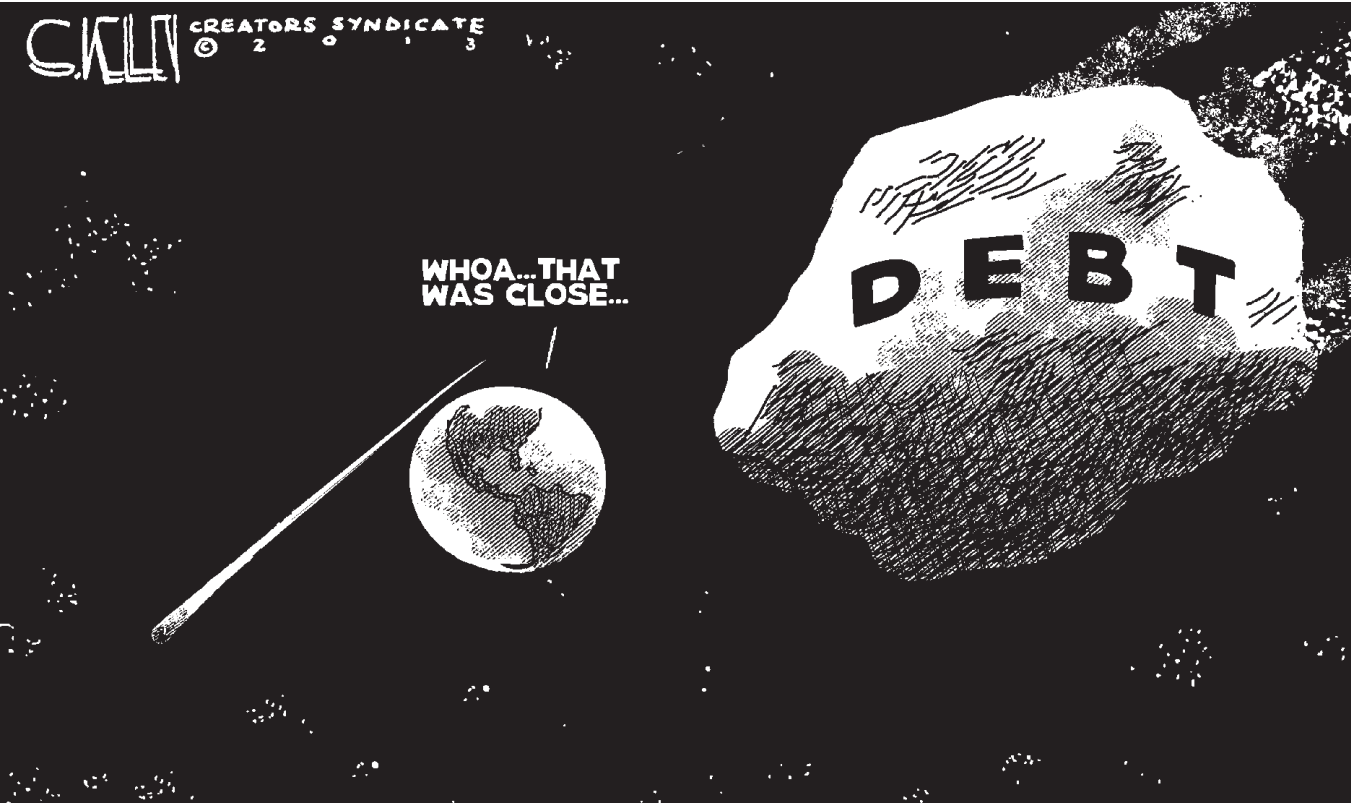
The use of a sailboat implies that the rich possess very little power in front of

the government.

The rich back the elections for the officials, fund lobbying campaigns and Super PACs, and benefit from massive subsidies that they then vocally oppose to be offered to other causes or social classes.

The illustrator, as well as the person who green-lighted the cartoon, are bonkers if they believe their political cartoon is truth.

Michael Shrake  
Student



USBICEF College Cartoons

Got something to say?

Write a letter to the editor!

All letters must be submitted by noon on Wednesday.

Email your letter to [editor@uwrfvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrfvoice.com)

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# America not living up to just, fair way of life

Morgan Stippel

Columnist

John Rawls is an American moral and political philosopher. In his journal “Justice as Fairness,” Rawls lays the groundwork for what constitutes a just society. After reading this piece for a political science class, we were to decide if modern American society is “Rawlsian” or not. Taking both Rawls’ argument and our class discussions into account, I came to the conclusion that as Americans, we would like to believe we are “Rawlsian.” However, in actuality, we are nothing but selfish pretenders.

Rawls presents his argument from the original position. In the original position, we are behind the veil of ignorance. The veil of ignorance prevents us from knowing anything about the society we live in, our moral worth, or the moral worth of others. For example, in the original position, one cannot know if he or she will be a rich lawyer, or a poor person born with some type of disability. Additionally, one cannot know exactly what society values or requires of its citizens.

Rawls argues that from the original position there are two principles that all logical human beings would agree to. First, everyone would agree to the principle that each person in the society is to be free and equal. Agreeing to be free and equal people would prevent discrimination based on race, gender or any other factor from occurring.

Second, everyone would agree to the implementation of the difference principle. The difference principle states that resources should be distributed so that the most disadvantaged people in society are as well off as possible. Agreeing to the implementation of the difference principle ensures that if one is in the lowest possible class, he or she will have the necessities to live a good life.

When applying Rawls’ argument to modern American society, upon first glance, it appears as if we are “Rawlsian.” The United States government has established a variety of social programs to assist those in society who are more disadvantaged than others. Furthermore, there are a number of nonprofit programs that citizens can donate to. Many of these programs are created to help disadvantaged people in society.

Although America has the structure and capabilities to be “Rawlsian,” we are not even close to fulfilling the two principles described above.

Through the past 60 years, our country has made significant progress toward achieving the principle of free and equal people. There is a much higher tolerance for diverse groups of people in our nation than there has been in the past. However, it would be inaccurate to say that all groups of people are treated completely equal.

There are still issues with the job selection process, equal pay in the workplace, hate crimes and many other areas. These are just a few examples proving that discrimination is still prevalent in modern American society.

The second principle of implementing the difference principle is where America really falls off the “Rawlsian” wagon. It is all fine and dandy that we have social programs to help the most vulnerable members of society. However, the manner in which these programs are operated and regulated make citizens less than enthusiastic about paying taxes to fund them.

Additionally, the conservative belief that everyone in our country needs to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and earn their keep is unrealistic. The fact of the matter is, not

everyone is capable of pulling themselves out of poverty because they are disabled in some manner, are born in to circumstances where there is little to no hope for receiving a decent education or job, or are unable to work enough hours to support their families due to the poor economy.

The most ironic part is that the people who believe in this “Bootstrap Theory” could have just as easily been one of the people born into poverty or another similarly disadvantaged circumstance. I am sure they would change this mindset fairly quickly if they were at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder.

Finally, the distribution of wealth in our nation today is the most obvious indicator that our society is far from “Rawlsian.” The gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” in our country has only increased over the past 40 years, and there is no sign that this trend is going to change anytime soon. Until wealth begins to trickle down from the top 20 percent of our population all the way to the most vulnerable citizens in our nation, very little progress can be made towards becoming a truly “Rawlsian” society.


Rawls is not trying to level citizens to the point of communism, but rather, believes we must protect those who are most vulnerable in our society. This is one of the most basic responsibilities that human beings have to one another. The United States of America wants to be “Rawlsian,” but the truth is, unless we are willing to make major structural and attitudinal adjustments, this desire is completely unattainable.

*Morgan is a junior majoring in political science and minoring in professional writing. When she graduates from UW-River Falls, she wants to become a state prosecutor and specialize in domestic violence cases.*

STUDENT VOICES


Compiled by Miranda Hammel and Megan Rodriguez

What is your favorite part of your job?




**Kenzie Shira**  
Junior

What is it like to do your job on a daily basis?




**Jessica Mueller**  
Sophomore

Can we please have late night breakfast? Please?



**Cole Sandstrom**  
Junior

Are you a Vikings or Packers fan?



**Ashley Som**  
Senior

If you could ask the chancellor one thing, what would it be?

Vote in our online poll:

Should UW-River Falls allow co-ed dorm rooms?

Visit [uwrvoice.com](http://uwrvoice.com) to cast your vote!

Find Freddy’s Feather!

Be the first person to find the lost Freddy the Falcon Feather in this issue of the Voice and win two free movie passes to the Falls Theatre!

Congratulations to last week’s winner, Bobbi O’Brien.



Report the find to [editor@uwrvoice.com](mailto:editor@uwrvoice.com) AFTER 10 a.m. Friday.





# Men’s track and field competes against best

Ashley Goettl  
ashley.goettl@my.uwrf.edu

To say the men’s track and field team faces tough competition might be an understatement, according to Head Coach Aaron Decker. Especially when the first, second, third and fourth place teams in the nation come from the same conference as the Falcons.

The Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) had seven teams that placed in the top 20 in the indoor national championships held Feb. 22-23. Decker said the WIAC sends between one-third and one-fifth of the total participants to the national meet.

“It would be hard to find a sport in the WIAC that is tougher, that has won more national titles, and team places than track and field,” Decker said.

However, that hasn’t stopped the Falcons from being competitive because Decker said the Falcons have what many other teams do not: a well rounded, balanced team. Decker said that while some teams like UW-White-water specialize in areas such as jumps, the Falcons are competitive across the board.

“We don’t have a niche,” Decker said. “We’re just a complete, young team that gets better every week. This team has an edge. Being in such a competitive conference the kids

know they need to step up every weekend we compete. They know that every time there’s a WIAC team, or even a MIAC (Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference) and IIAC (Iowa) team, it is going to be competitive. Every weekend we’re going against the top in the nation. There’s not a week off,” Decker said.

One of the biggest challenges for the Falcons will be to replicate last year’s success, when the Falcons sent a school-record 10 men to outdoor nationals. Five of those men are back for this year’s season.

Decker said that this year he has a young squad and that it is hard to get freshman to nationals, but he said that with a good recruiting class, he sees a bright future ahead for the Falcons.

“Sending freshmen to nationals is tough, but we do have a handful that could make it,” Decker said. “We have what I like to call ‘staying power,’ in that we keep them excited about track and keep them coming back for more.”

While the future looks bright for the Falcons, the approaching outdoor season has Decker excited as well. He noted several personal and school records that were already broken in the indoor season, including a school record by sophomore Alex Jurgenson in the pole vault. Jurgenson vaulted to a height of 15-3 to break the school record, according to the UW-River Falls Athletic website.

Jurgenson said he is excited to see the strong start by his team, but as the outdoor season begins, he has his eyes on a bigger prize.

“I personally would like to hit 16’ in the pole vault, which would put me in a position to hopefully go to nationals,” Jurgenson said.

Senior Benjamin Tykwinski also broke a school record during the indoor season in the weight throw with a throw of 57-11.25 or 17.66 meters.

At the WIAC Indoor Championships, held at UW-Stevens Point, the 4x200 team of Tucker Malecha, Elijah Kelley, Anthony Sumnicht and Tom Thuente had the highest finish for the Falcons as they placed third overall. The relay finished in 1:32.28, only three seconds shy of the UW-Eau Claire team that took first, according to UWRF Sports Information.

Decker said that for the outdoor season, the team’s priority would be to do better in the conference meet and move up a spot or two. The Falcons placed eighth out of the nine teams, beating UW-Superior at the indoor championships.

One way to do that, Decker said, is to build off of school records, and to continue to establish the program in record-setting and personal bests.

Junior Donovan Nelson set a personal best in the St. Olaf Invite on Jan. 26 in the 60-meter hurdles with a time of 9.08 seconds. Nelson said he is excited to improve on that mark and to see what that team can accomplish.

“We have a lot of young, talented athletes that have a lot of potential for the upcoming seasons, in addition to some veteran athletes who hope to keep doing great things for Falcon track and field,” Nelson said.

The Falcons’ next meet is a home meet on April 12 and 13.



Trevor Semann/Student Voice  
**Sophomore Alex Jurgenson practices pole vaulting at a practice in the Knowles Center.**

## Coaching opportunity turns into personal growth, memories

Morgan Stippel  
Columnist

I coached my last basketball tournament of the season, the state tournament.

My coaching commitment lasted from late October until the beginning of March, a total of five months. Three practices a week and tournaments every other weekend added up to numerous hours spent with a group of nine eighth grade girls.

The experience was a roller coaster ride, with the highs being extremely high and the lows being extremely low. Nonetheless, throughout this journey, I learned not only valuable life lessons, but also things about myself that I would not have discovered any other way.

When I accepted this coaching position, I was told my responsibility would be to further develop the skills of the most talented age group. The eighth grade girls were the bread and butter of the Stillwater Traveling Basketball Program, and I did not want that group to lose its reputation as a result of poor coaching. The pressure was on. When the tryout process was complete and my team had been determined, we began the season.

I went to the first practice with high expectations, ready to be blown away by the girls’ skill set. However, I was unprepared for what was coming. Upon the completion of the first practice, I did not know where to begin. It had taken the team 30 minutes to complete a basic shooting drill, we could not throw a pass without turning the ball over and defensive stance was a concept that appeared to be completely foreign to us. I did the only thing I knew how to do: I coached based on the same way I had learned when I was a player.

It did not take me long to realize that this method was ineffective. At our first tournament in November, we lost every game, including the friendship game (which never turns out to be very friendly considering no team wants to come

in last). I knew after this performance that I would have to adopt a different coaching method if the team was to have any success this season.

Before this point in my life, I had always been under the impression that I was a relatively patient person. It did not take me long to realize I was not quite so virtuous. I would come home from practice, frustrated that my girls did not seem to understand what I was trying to teach them. After too many of these occasions, I realized I needed to ask my father for help. He has 32 years of coaching experience, and I was hoping a little bit of his expertise would rub off on me.

My dad provided me with a variety of drills that would teach the team the skills in a different way than previously attempted. With his assistance, the girls began to improve slowly, but surely. The team began scoring 35-40 points a game, and they learned to keep the ball in front of them on defense. I would coach the games and run the practices, and my dad would always be there watching, pointing out areas for improvement.

By the time the state tournament rolled around, I had a feeling that our team was ready to go. We were scoring upwards of 40 points a game and managing to hold the other team to around 30. Our passing had become more precise, and we had learned to handle the basketball.

I checked the bracket and, to my dismay, realized our first opponent had crushed us just a few weekends before by roughly 20 points. I was not feeling overly confident, but I put my best five girls on the floor and hoped for the best. Little did I know, our team had come to compete. We won a tight one, coming from behind as usual.

I will be the first to admit, I was shocked. The girls had shown me a fire that I had never seen before, and it energized me.

That same day, we crushed our second opponent by nearly 40 points. The coach of the opposing team even said we had “a good shooting team.” I shook his hand and said a “thank you,” politely accepting the compliment. If anyone had told

me at after the first practice that another coach would compliment my team on its shooting ability, I would have laughed out loud.

It was not until this moment that it hit me: we could actually do this. We could win the state tournament; an amazing feat. All we had to do was win two games the following day, and we would be the champions.

However, these events did not line up. We lost our first game by a fair margin, and we lost the second by only two points. Our team ended up tying for fifth place out of 16 total teams.

When our team sat down after the games for our final meeting of the year, I was expecting to feel a certain level of disappointment. The strangest thing was that I did not feel disappointment at all, but rather, the exact opposite. I was proud of my team, and I was experiencing a joy I could not quite comprehend. Not the joy that comes from achievement, but the kind of joy very few people have the opportunity to experience; the kind of joy that comes only from hard work and immense growth.

I have coached other teams before, but this season was different. I learned, among other lessons, to remain patient under frustrating circumstances, to ask others for help when you need it, and to be willing to admit you do not know everything. This year was the first time I was challenged beyond my limits and forced to grow and change, and I am thankful I had this wonderful opportunity. Being pushed to my limits allowed me to experience a different kind of joy that was far more satisfying than simply winning games and tournament titles.

I encourage students to take advantage of opportunities either on or off campus that will push their boundaries and limits. These unique experiences facilitate personal growth and development that has the potential to be life changing.

*Morgan is a junior majoring in political science and minoring in professional writing. When she graduates from UW-River Falls, she wants to become a state prosecutor and specialize in domestic violence cases.*

### Falcon Sports at a glance

**Gregorich named to D3hoops.com All-Central Region third team**

Brittany Gregorich, a senior on the women’s basketball team, was named to the D3hoops.com All-Central Region third team.

Gregorich had a strong season for UW-River Falls, averaging 12.9 points per game and 10.3 rebounds per game. She has also been named to the WIAC Scholastic Honor Roll three times.

**UW-River Falls student-athletes, coaches participate in polar plunge**

Forty-two UW-River Falls Falcon athletes were part of the 675 total participants at the sixth annual Eden Prairie Plunge in Eden Prairie, Minn. The event helped raise \$110,000 for the Special Olympics. The Falcon athletes helped raise a total of \$4,000 for the cause.

### Rasmussen, Nordland both finish with NCAA All-American honors at Indoor Track and Field Championships



Rebecca Rudolph/Student Voice  
**Brittany Nordland (left )and Alyssa Rasmussen (right) both competed at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Naperville Ill., earning All-American honors. Rasmussen finished third in the 400 meter final and Nordland finished seventh in the 800 meter final.**



Rebecca Rudolph/Student Voice  
**Brittany Nordland runs at the Knowles Center. She is a junior mid distance runner for the Falcons. Nordland and teammate Alyssa Rasmussen represented the Falcons at the Division III Indoor National Championships held March 8 and 9.**



# Oz comes alive in whole new story



Ryan Funes

Reviewer

The merry old land of Oz returns to theaters with a new adventure for all of its viewers to follow, showing the origin of the eponymous “Wizard of Oz” and showing audiences a good time to boot.

Oscar Diggs (James Franco) is a con man, an ambitious dreamer, and a man destined for greatness, but wowing the crowd with smoke and mirrors as a magician for a menial paycheck seems to be as great as he can get.

One stormy Kansas day will hurtle him across the sky, and across time, to the land of Oz. Mistaken for a great wizard by a young witch (Mila Kunis), Oscar is now thrown into the conflicts and toils that persist in the land of Oz, with everyone looking to him for guidance and answers, but this simple magician may not have all of them.

With witches conspiring to take over the land and people losing hope, Oscar will need to find the greatness within and establish himself as “Oz: The Great and Powerful.”

Before this movie came out, I was pretty fascinated by what it was going to turn out as. There was the part of me

that said this was going to be a great movie for expanding on the Oz universe and using it to its creative advantage.

But there was also another part that said this movie was going to blow, since I had been noticing many movies lately taking fairy tales and making them gritty without adding much else in other departments (such as “Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters” and “Jack the Giant Killer”). I’m glad to know my inner optimist was right this time as “Oz: The Great and Powerful” manages to pull through as a pretty entertaining movie.

The big thing this movie does right is in the visuals and world. Oz is beautifully created and inspires wonder and awe from the sprawling flowery fields and the Emerald City. The movie revels in the environments, settings and equally so in the costume department, pulling no punches in making each costume as whimsical and silly as they were in the original “Wizard of Oz.” The amount of detail is something all on its own.

The music is done equally well, with music movie veteran Danny Elfman (“Beetlejuice,” “Frankenweenie,” “Nightmare Before Christmas”) delivering a great soundtrack that follows every bounce, romp and charge through the land of Oz with gallant fanfares and orchestral swells.

The aesthetics of the movie are top notch, and in other areas the movie does equally as well. The actors all play their parts well, with Franco adding a bit of

fun to the role of the greedy yet well-meaning Oz, with all the actors giving fair performances that get across the sorrow, joy and humor that Oz has been known for.

Likewise the movie is also well directed with “Spider-Man” director Sam Raimi taking the reins, even though some moments can feel really cheesy with the way special effects are applied and cameras are used. However, he makes great use of all the elements of the movie to make it very entertaining for everyone to see.


Plot wise, the movie is a bit clichéd, it sort of follows the old plot of a liar acting out as who people claim him to be and getting found out by some, but it helps with getting Oz to his eventual great and powerful self-image. It can also feel at times like it is pandering to fans of the original movie with adding certain shout outs like a cowardly lion or scarecrows, so that can be a bit off-putting to some.

But by the end, this trip to Oz is definitely a welcome one for all to enjoy, from the yellow brick road to the Emerald City. The imagination manages to come through in the way the movie is rendered and directed and in no way feels like it is trying to disrespect the source material. So come one, come all, witness “Oz: The Great and Powerful.”

*Ryan 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.*



# Experiencing different cultures broadens viewpoints



Adam Tilson

Columnist

There are very few opportunities in life where you get to truly experience different cultures. I was restricted while growing up in a small white community in central Wisconsin.

However, going to college really broadened my horizons.

I explored my options and decided to attend a multicultural conference this past weekend.

I attended the 29th annual American Multicultural Student Leadership Conference here at UW-River Falls. It was unlike anything I have ever experienced in my life. Meeting all kinds of people from different races and ethnicities was overwhelming.

The greatest part about the event was the diversity present. Over 400 people from schools across the state showed up. It was truly amazing seeing all kinds of people. Whether it was African Americans or Native Americans, nearly every race was present.

Some of the best experiences was just listening to students throughout the conference. They made their presence felt by presenting exhibits on different studies they had conducted. I

saw one where a group of students from UW-La Crosse were developing an antibacterial drug. I also saw two students presenting on Kingian Nonviolence, a strategy for solving personal and community problems.

Ironically, one of the best parts about the conference had to do with learning meditation. Interim Assistant Director for Student Support Services Gina Sevic gave a presentation on how meditation can improve focus, relieve stress and increase productivity.

All of us have busy lives and get distracted easily. Sometimes we just need to stop and relax, and meditation will do that. Through a practice session it felt like I was sitting down for 20 minutes, but came to find out I was only sitting down for five minutes. It can feel like you’re there forever, but afterward I felt refreshed and ready.

Growing up in a small farming community in central Wisconsin, I was never able to be around people of different color. I grew up around middle class folks: farmers, carpenters, teachers, etc. All were white. It was a shame to never be around people of different color growing up. All that started when I got to college.

For example, I took a part in an exercise where I got to sit down around people of different color and hear their viewpoints. It was an exercise where students were split up to either seek viewpoints from their own race, or go somewhere else. I decided to attend the African American assembly and see how they are viewed by people and the media. It was interesting to get a perspective as a white man and hear how they are viewed.

What I took away from this conference is that everyone is the same. I didn’t judge a person based on skin color, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

We all should be united as one, but in a country like this it doesn’t come that easy. People are divided on many things and race is still a problem.

Attending this conference really made me appreciate people from all levels of life. Listening to all the speakers really moved me. For once, it was nice to see that me, a white college student in his early 20s, felt like an outsider. Embracing all kinds of culture is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

*Adam is originally from Neillsville, Wis. This is his second semester at UW-River Falls and he is a part of Student Support Services. He loves to play video games, watch movies, especially classics, fishing in the summer and trying new activities.*

# Saint Patrick’s Day evolves from Irish holiday to worldwide festival



Cristin Dempsey

Columnist

Spring is just around the corner, we hope so anyway, which also means a long list of spring holidays are coming up fast.

One that is happening this weekend is one that we can all enjoy: Saint Patrick’s Day. Even if there is still a foot of snow on the ground and temperatures barely above freezing, the arrival and celebration of St. Patrick’s Day is a day to have fun and anxiously await the warmer months ahead. Not only is the holiday a day for fun, but it also has a rich historical background that is often overlooked. The history of the holiday is what helped it evolve into what it is today.

St. Patrick’s Day is also referred to as the Feast of St. Patrick, a day which has both cultural and religious roots from Irish customs. St. Patrick is one of the most famous patron saints in Irish history. Large celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day began in the 17th Century as a holy obligation for Roman Catholics and then celebrated with a large feast, though some Irish already celebrated the holiday since the ninth and 10th Centuries. The earliest celebrations helped St. Patrick become one of the most famous patrons in Ireland. The

celebration was made more popular in the 17th Century as a way of celebrating the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and commemorating St. Patrick. Several different Christian denominations, including the Lutheran church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, took part in the celebration.

Because of the slew of religious holidays around this time of year, St. Patrick’s Day religious celebrations have often been moved to another date. Most often, this decision was in order to avoid Holy Week, which is where Palm Sunday falls. Fortunately, this change in dates will not occur again until 2160. Today, secular celebrations are most common among countries, and those celebrations are kept on March 17, despite an interference with Holy Week. St. Patrick’s Day did not become an official public holiday in Ireland until 1903.

The Bank Holiday Act 1903 was put into effect by the United Kingdom Parliament after Irish member James O’Mara introduced the act. Ironically enough, it was passed to close pubs and bars on March 17, as the drinking often got out of control with secular celebrations already taking place.

The act was repealed in the 1970s as a way to enforce the law and to keep people out of trouble. In 1931, the first celebration of the holiday was held with Ireland as a free state from

Great Britain.

The Irish government finally recognized the secular celebration of the national holiday. They set up a campaign in order to bring the world in to observe the country and its rich culture. A St. Patrick’s Day Festival was created in order to draw attention from other countries and create excitement about the holiday. The first festival was held in 1996 in Dublin and has grown into a several day event over the years.

Thousands of people attend each year to attend concerts, theater performances and fireworks. The festival also features Gaelic speakers as a part of Irish Language Week. The festival, as well as several other festivals and parades in the country, intend to focus on the general Irish way of living rather than on old religious customs. Religious leaders, however, that argued that secular celebrations, including drinking, raise concern. Religious leaders strive to have a church festival, which would bring the religion and the fun celebrations together into one.

Though the holiday began to celebrate Christianity and the Irish people, it has reached several parts of the globe and various different groups of people. There are many ways to enjoy the holiday without having to drink or party. The day can be celebrated by simply looking forward to spring and putting the long winter behind them. While it is a great day to have fun, it is also important to remember the day’s roots and how it evolved into the celebration known today.

*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 pursue a career as an editor.*

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# Midwest girl slowly becoming New York woman



Amanda White  
Columnist

I can feel it in my bones. A change in how I feel about New York. I think my tourist phase is almost over.

I think I am becoming a New Yorker. Maybe. A true New Yorker would probably scoff at me before pushing past to successfully swipe his or her MetroCard correctly the first time.

Last weekend I really noticed a familiarity with the city that I have not previously felt. Maybe these little things I have noticed are trivial and silly, but when I compare myself to who I was seven weeks ago to who I am right now, I can not help but feel amazed.

For example: public transportation. I am from a suburb of St. Paul, so I never had a reason to take any form of public transportation. I never even took a bus to school after kindergarten. Whenever my family traveled, we rented a car, so my experience with taxis was limited as well.

The very first day I arrived in New York, I took a taxi and thought I was going to be sick. The driver drove way too fast, weaving in and out of traffic, demanding I tell him where he needed to go. All I had was an address.

He asked me why I was going to Queens College and I told him it was both my first time traveling by myself, and being in New York. He mellowed out after that and made sure I got my bags inside my apartment building before taking off.

The day after that, I used the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for the first time, alone. I got on several wrong buses and watched every street and stop to make sure I would not mess up. I was constantly connected to my HopStop app, a GPS for public transportation.

Now, I hop on and off buses and trains without a single glance. I no longer use HopStop and I do not watch the stops go by. I remember watching other passengers seemingly just know when their stops arrived and I was incredulous. I was convinced I would never become comfortable with public transportation, but now I dread coming back to the Midwest and needing to drive everywhere, although buying groceries will be infinitely more convenient and less exhausting.

I also feel more comfortable with walking in Manhattan. If you do not know, there are five boroughs in New York City: Staten Island, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan. I live in Queens (as in “King of Queens” and “The Nanny”) and Manhattan is the borough most people think of when they think New York City.

Every borough is split into neighborhoods, which are like little towns in their own rights. For example, I live in Flushing in Queens, the characters of “Gossip Girl” lived in the Upper East Side in Manhattan and the characters of “Friends” lived in Greenwich Village in Manhattan. Each neighborhood is characteristically different and offers a dif-

**There is one habit I’ve picked up here that truly shows assimilation, and I’m ashamed of it. I say soda instead of pop. The horror I know**

ferent flavor or experience. Confused yet?

It has taken me this long to understand where each neighborhood is located, at least in Queens and Manhattan. Brooklyn is an animal I have yet to properly familiarize myself with and I have not even been to the Bronx or Staten Island.

Last weekend I went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Chinatown, and I was completely able to navigate myself around, almost completely without maps. I know what trains run where and I can remember the street names of where I need to go. That is another thing I never learned in the Midwest. When navigating in Minnesota and Wisconsin, I feel like I always just used landmarks to tell people where to go, or I used my GPS to guide me. That’s not good enough in New York City.

I am not cynical about New York City. I was afraid I would get bored or too comfortable here, but I still act like a tourist whenever I see the Empire State Building lit up at night (which is every night because I can see it from my apartment building) or whenever we accidentally stumble into Times Square (which is probably the biggest tourist trap in America). I take pictures of buildings and taxis and designer clothes, and I cry at museums when I see a particularly important piece of art.

I hope I stay that way. However, I am learning to love New York City as someone who lives here. I gripe about the crowded trains after work hours and I get impatient with slow-moving pedestrians. There is one habit I’ve picked up here that truly shows assimilation, and I’m ashamed of it.

I say soda instead of pop. The horror, I know.

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

# Writers block leads to unfiltered confessions in love

Miranda Hammel  
Columnist

Staring at a blank page, using all gumption to once again force down the polished keys that deny my desire to create sentence after sentence. My hesitant fingers seem to be glued in place, but refuse to cooperate in making the simple motion.

Why is it so hard for me to sit here and come up with a topic to ramble about? I love to write, at least I’m pretty positive I do. I have only kept a journal and wrote songs since I was in fourth grade.

Shifting around in my seat trying to get comfortable, I think of all the reasons I love to write, or why I want to write. The simple joy of putting words on paper, to tell the truth, to tell any story in such a way that the reader just can’t put down the paper or click away from their screen.

I guess you could say I’m having an off day, more like week, maybe even month. I know I’m not the only one either because I hear everyone around me talking about how their lives have become absolutely insane the last couple weeks.

Homework, family and friend drama are just the works of problems. Why does this happen, every year around the same time, too? It’s like a go-kart spinning around and never

ending, waiting for us all to unexpectedly get on and take our turn of suffering.

I’m beginning to realize something as I get older, the more people you love, the weaker you become, subconsciously of course. If something bad happens to them you are equally upset or sad about the situation.

You are allowing yourself to get hurt, and trusting your friends and family not to hurt you. That has to be one of the craziest things we human beings do to ourselves.

The people who make us happy are never the people we expect either. I can attest to that, for a special someone I hold dear to my heart, whom I never would have thought to, has changed my life around completely for the better.

The way he holds my hand some days, the way his arms hug me tight. A simple kiss on the forehead, so soft and sweet. Starting out each day with, “Good morning beautiful or sweetheart. Make today great.” He is so positive; it has rubbed off on me after being around him for so long.

It’s like the way I used to be in the summer, so carefree and free. Unstoppable and confident in everything I did. I wonder why my mood changes when the school year begins, it’s like I have a whole new personality of me. It’s confusing, and I wonder if other people experience something similar and it’s not just me being crazy.

This guy in my life has only been here for 529 days (I’ve

been counting you could say). Can I tell you a secret? Promise not to tell? From the moment that I have actually just started to talk with him and given him a hug for the first time, I have felt so calm and comfortable around him.

It’s like nothing I’ve ever experienced before, it’s new and exciting and I love it.

These little things he does for me, with me, to me, really get under my skin. Don’t worry it’s in a good way, I feel like a princess and it is so weird.

Some days I like it and cannot get enough. Other days I just want to make sure he knows that I am my own hero in my own story, that I don’t need saving and I can take care of myself. Even though I am pretty sure he knows, it’s just who he is.

Well there, I guess I did it. I was able to ramble on this week. It sets me on fire.

If you have people in life you love, or you are afraid to love, tell them today; let them know in your own special way because I can guarantee you it will make their day so much better. If my special friend is reading this, my feelings will never falter no matter where life takes me or you. As far as my writer’s block goes, I hope this is the end of it. Even if mama did say there would be days like this.

*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.*

# Singing talent comes out for the night at UW-River Falls



Meg Rodriguez/Student Voice  
**Niki Hovatter sings “If I Ain’t Got You” by Alicia Keys at River Falls Idol in the Falcon’s Nest sponsored by sorority Phi Mu.**



Meg Rodriguez/Student Voice  
**Judges Steven Meads (left), Paul Shepherd (middle) and Travis Tubre (right) watch a performance at River Falls Idol. The judges selected Brent Bundgaard as the winner of the competition.**

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