

The Daily Iowan

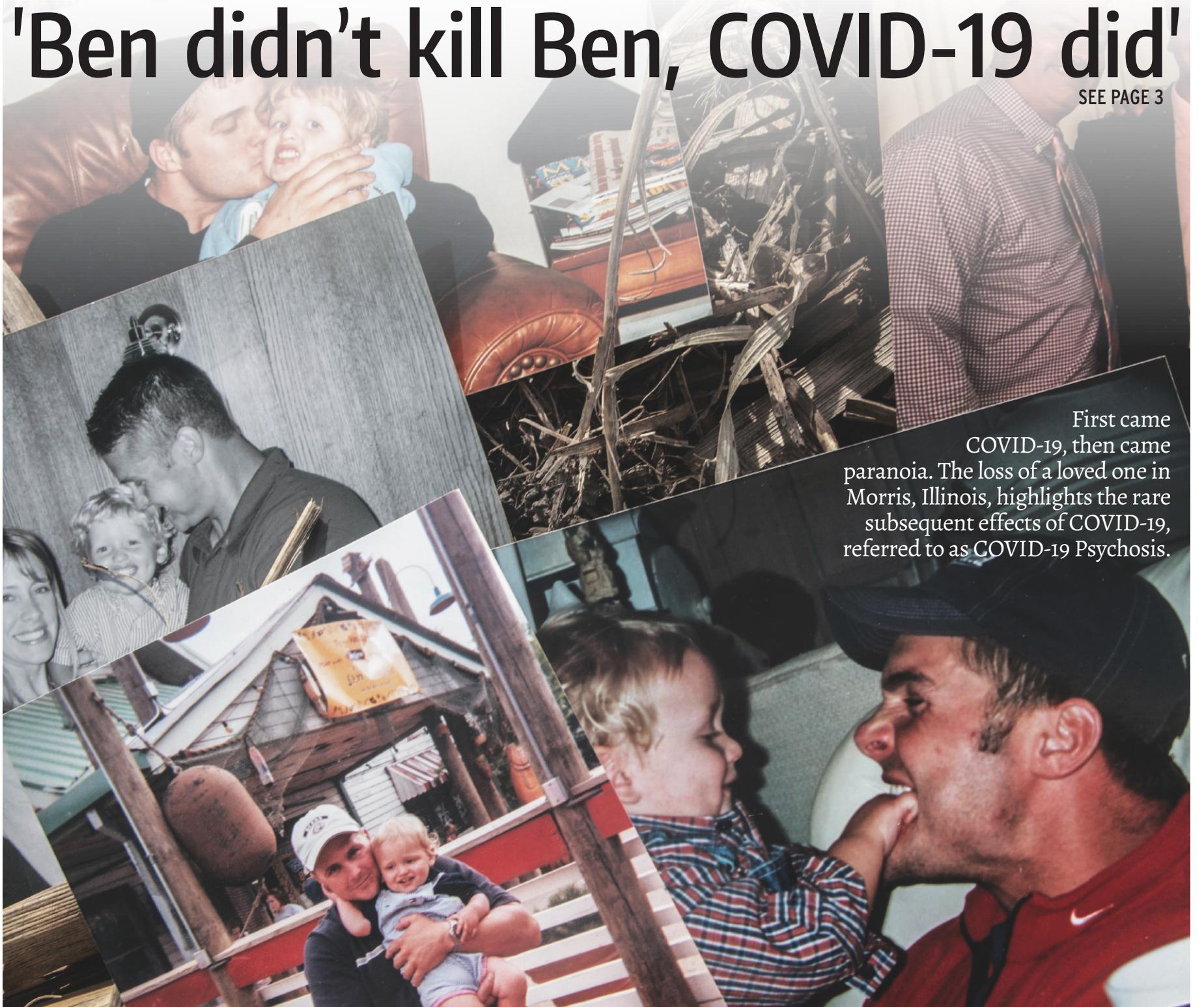
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'Ben didn't kill Ben, COVID-19 did'

SEE PAGE 3



First came COVID-19, then came paranoia. The loss of a loved one in Morris, Illinois, highlights the rare subsequent effects of COVID-19, referred to as COVID-19 Psychosis.

Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Photos throughout Max Bolander's life with Ben Price are seen. Ben Price took his life after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis due to paranoia post-COVID, a phenomenon known as COVID-19 Psychosis. Price is survived by his wife Jennifer and his children, Jett, 17, and Maya, 14.

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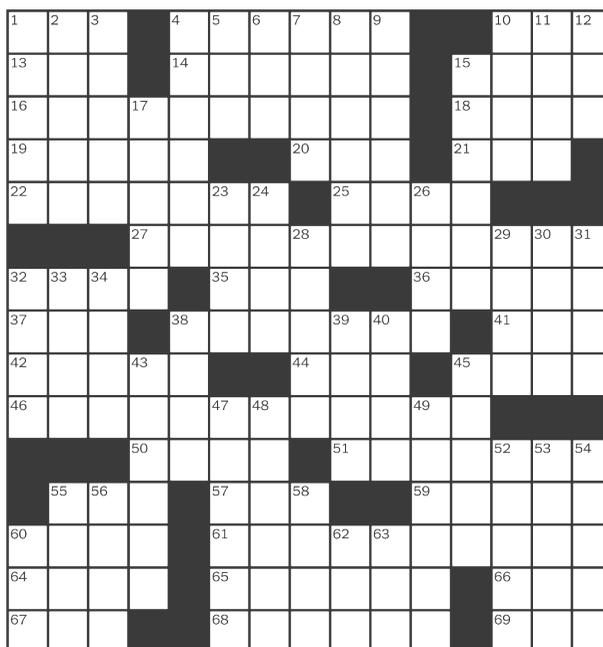
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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 11

Across

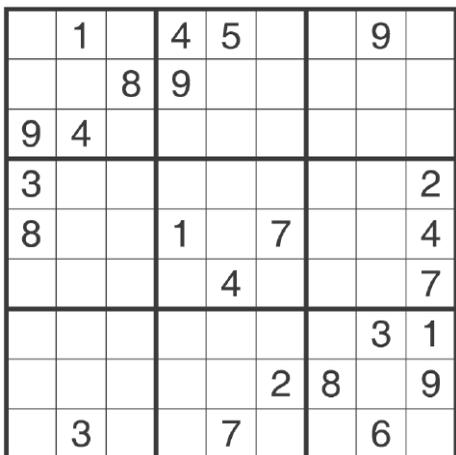
- 1 Bill-rejecting vote
- 4 Took a dip?
- 10 Parent's cure-all, briefly
- 13 Number on a foam finger
- 14 Cost of an online banner or pop-up
- 15 Piece of cake?
- 16 Kidney or heart
- 18 Give the go-ahead
- 19 Guadalajara gal pal
- 20 ___ mode
- 21 Joke
- 22 Seeds on hamburger buns
- 25 Lollygag
- 27 Georgia's official vegetable
- 32 Grenoble gal pal
- 35 "Little" car in a Ronny & the Daytonas hit
- 36 Stellar start?
- 37 Florist's vehicle, typically
- 38 Suddenly change course
- 41 Sound of a lightning bolt
- 42 "Fingers crossed!"
- 44 Grp. with the hits "Evil Woman" and "Do Ya"
- 45 Billy or tom
- 46 Inexpensive table wine
- 50 Provincial schoolteacher stereotype
- 51 Short-brimmed hat known as a bunnet in Scotland

- 55 Org. that launched WaterSense in 2006
- 57 Co-___ (condo alternatives)
- 59 Cold hard cash
- 60 ___ program
- 61 Specialized lab equipment for drying
- 64 Fairy tale foe
- 65 Go by
- 66 Triage sites, for short
- 67 Alberto ___ (hair care brand) ... and a hint to 16-, 27-, 38-, 46- and 61-Across
- 68 Home security component
- 69 Setting in "Charlotte's Web"

- 17 Plant source for tequila
- 23 Strategic starting piece in a jigsaw puzzle
- 24 Fill to excess
- 26 It's more than a pocketful of rye
- 28 "Two Women" actress Sophia
- 29 Chichén ___ (Mayan ruins city)
- 30 Like some interviews
- 31 "That's a negatory!"
- 32 Tel ___, Israel
- 33 Hawaiian for "strong," which, when doubled, means "very strong"

Down

- 1 Massive pop stars?
- 2 Genre featured at Tokyo's Comiket convention
- 3 Folkloric creatures at snowy altitudes
- 4 A slice of Italy?
- 5 Brouhaha
- 6 "I'm beyond frustrated!"
- 7 Lovesick
- 8 And others, in Latin
- 9 "You're welcome," in Spanish
- 10 ___ torch
- 11 Top-billed performer
- 12 Word with war or far
- 15 Arcade "money"
- 17 Privy to, as a secret
- 34 Fashion icon Wang
- 39 Singing animated snowman
- 40 Thwart
- 43 Greasy hairstyling product
- 45 "I totally agree!"
- 47 Hordes
- 48 Skewer
- 49 Powerful tool for compaction
- 52 Seafarers' sanctuaries
- 53 Well-caffeinated, perhaps
- 54 Colorful flower with a "face"
- 55 Therefore
- 56 The 18th at Pebble Beach, notably
- 58 Diagnostic image
- 60 www.fda. ___
- 62 Emotional highs
- 63 Grp. that supports American troops



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COVID-19 psychosis impacts Price family

First came COVID-19, then came paranoia. The loss of a loved one in Morris, Illinois, highlights the rare subsequent effects of COVID-19, referred to as COVID-19 Psychosis.



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Photos of Max Bolander and Ben Price are seen.

BY KATE HESTON
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The temperature was approaching 35 degrees as Ben Price drove out to his farm on the last day of February of this year. The farm was a happy place for the 48-year-old father and businessman. Just outside his hometown of Morris, Illinois, the wide-open spaces are occupied by a herd of beef cattle and a few donkeys. It was as he and his wife, Jennifer, had always planned.

It wasn't abnormal for Ben to go to his farm; in fact, it was practically a second home. On this day, however, Ben did not return from it. He took his own life, leaving family and friends grasping for answers.

Two weeks earlier, Ben had tested positive and was hospitalized for COVID-19. Upon his discharge, the normally happy, energetic man's

behavior changed. He became paranoid, scared, and anxious, pacing and on alert. His family attributes the suicide to a rare phenomenon now known as COVID-19 psychosis, a little studied but very serious reaction to the coronavirus.

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a global source of psychological distress. For those contracting the virus, however, the host immunologic responses may also directly affect the brain and human behavior. According to a case report on COVID-19 psychosis, the psychoneurotic effects in victims can produce symptoms including persecutory delusions, auditory hallucinations, suicidal thoughts and behavior, and sleep disturbances.

Psychosis caused by viral infection is not an isolated occurrence. Evidence suggests that as many as 4

percent of people who contract other novel infectious diseases, such as the H1N1 influenza, Ebola, and MERS may develop psychosis.

On Feb. 12, four days after Ben received his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, someone at his company, The Turf Team, tested positive for COVID-19. Ben went to get tested as well. That test returned a positive result, making him — according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — one of more than 31.5 million Americans with a positive COVID-19 test. More than half a million of those who caught the virus have lost their lives.

Like millions of Americans, Ben quarantined. Jennifer, already fully vaccinated, cared for him. But he wasn't getting better.

On Feb. 18, Ben went to the hospital for an antibody infusion used

on coronavirus patients to help their immune system. The next day, he felt worse. Jennifer checked him into the hospital's COVID-19 ward.

By Sunday, Ben's heart was in atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rate that causes poor blood flow, and his oxygen levels were alarmingly low. He was restless — an extroverted, outgoing man, completely isolated without his family in a unit that was overcrowded. Jennifer said his anxiety was high; he needed out. Ben was discharged on Feb. 23. According to Jennifer, he came home a completely different person.

"He started to be very paranoid and panicked; I would just lay there holding his hand, telling him to match my breathing," Jennifer said. "He was stressing about farming and the fields, but it was February, we couldn't even do that now. There was nothing we could do to get him to calm down."

Ben had no history of mental health issues. Like almost all American farmers, his seasons were stressful and sometimes projects

“ Ben taught me how to farm, how to run heavy equipment, how to drive, and so much more. He was like a second father to me. He wanted to teach me everything and take me everywhere.

got difficult. But Ben had always handled them with a sense of humor and a willingness to learn.

Ben had deep ties to his community. He started The Turf Team in 1995 as a landscaping business and built it into a complex, successful mashup of farming necessities — creating business connections inside and outside the city limits of

Morris.

The Turf Team is a commercial array of everything Ben loved. The company is located on top of a small hill in his hometown. The main building is surrounded by red tractors and power equipment to sell. Surrounding it are fields dotted with cows and their calves, donkeys, and the occasional kitten running among them.

Every year when it was time to get the plows dirty and tend to the fields, Ben's family would be working with him, including his nephew, Max Bolander.

"Ben taught me how to farm, how to run heavy equipment, how to drive, and so much more," Bolander said. "He was like a second father to me. He wanted to teach me everything and take me everywhere."

Ben's ambitions were much different, however, after leaving the hospital. The day before his death, he spent the afternoon pacing throughout the house, checking the windows with each turn. At one point, he stepped out onto the

— Max Bolander, Ben Price's nephew

porch and stared into space — his family had to urge him back inside.

Jennifer planned a family night to calm his mind. She made steak for dinner — his favorite. But Ben didn't eat it. Before testing positive for the virus, Ben loved snuggling on the couch. Saturday night, the

SEE PRICE, 4



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Ben Price, pictured throughout, took his life after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis because of paranoia post-COVID, a phenomenon known as COVID-19 Psychosis.

PRICE

CONTINUED FROM 3

family barely got him to sit down. Eventually, he fell asleep on the couch next to Jennifer, their daughter Maya, 14, and son Jett, 17.

Sunday morning, Ben seemed fine. He enjoyed an egg sandwich, fresh coffee, and protein smoothie for breakfast. He swore he felt better, convincingly enough that Jennifer believed it to be the first positive turn in his recovery. No one expected what came next.

The family that dozed off next to him on the couch the night before was left to try to put together the pieces of a puzzle that wasn't designed to fit.

"Sitting down with people that I am close to and just being able to talk about Ben and his life continues to solidify the feelings that I have about him and the life that he lived — that he was a great man that was stolen from us," Bolander said.

Like Ben, there are other Americans who have lost their lives to neuropsychiatric symptoms following an infection.

Emily Troyer, a psychiatrist working with the University of California San Diego, released a paper in April 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic began, that reviewed previous literature on the evidence of COVID-19-related neuropsychi-

atric symptoms in relation to past viral pandemics.

"After a year since the paper was published, we are definitely seeing a lot of neurological and a lot of psychiatric symptoms in COVID-19 patients," Troyer said.

Her paper indicates that post-viral effects on the immune system could potentially lead to psychiatric symptoms, even if the illness did not directly reach the nervous system.

Despite limited research on COVID-19 psychosis and past pandemics, questions remain for Troyer as to what the exact mechanisms that cause psychosis might be.

"We are seeing syndromes caused by things that wouldn't have happened had it not been for the viral infection," Troyer said. "Just because the virus isn't in the nervous system, doesn't mean the virus didn't kick off another cascade of events."

A possible mechanism of psychosis in COVID-19 patients may be related to the deprivation of one's senses associated with hospital isolation. Cases of COVID-19 psychosis have also occurred when patients are not hospitalized, however, even in cases of asymptomatic infections.

In Maine, a 64-year-old grandmother, herself, and her daughter kept anonymous for the privacy of the family, developed COVID-19 on Feb. 29. She was asymptomatic,

healthy, and active in the lives of her three children and their families.

Over the course of her infection, she began obsessively praying over FaceTime with one of her grandchildren, claiming that the prayers were working and healing people. Rapidly, her concern became paranoia. She was constantly worried about spreading the disease and believed that the pandemic was her fault.

The grandmother texted her daughter the morning of March 17 to confirm the pick-up time for her grandchild, and then headed to the beach for her daily walk.

A few hours later, she drowned herself. A teacher for 27 years, she had been an accomplished writer, always putting words together with careful thought. In contrast, she left behind a note of jumbled thoughts, expressing guilt for spreading the virus to a nursing home that she had never visited and at which there had been no coronavirus outbreak. Before contracting COVID-19, just as in Ben's case, this active, positive, engaged grandmother had no history of any mental health issues.

"She was paranoid about a situation that wasn't even real, whatsoever," her daughter told *The Daily Iowan*. "The person who wrote that letter was not my mother."

When the Price's story aired on NBC Chicago, the family in Maine could attach a name to what claimed their matriarch. For the first time, they heard the term "COVID-19 psychosis."

"It's clear as day, that's my mom," the daughter said when learning of the symptoms.

As for Jennifer, she first learned of COVID-19 psychosis the day of her husband's death via a phone call from a close friend. Prompted by the phone call, she read three CDC articles on the topic. No one in Morris or in the community believed Ben would have taken his own life. As the pieces of the puzzle came together, Jennifer understood.

"Ben didn't kill Ben, COVID-19 did," Jennifer said.

Specifically, the CDC found that in patients with no history of psychiatric disorders, the probability of developing one's first psychiatric disorder 90 days after contracting COVID-19 was almost 6 percent higher than with other respiratory diseases. Serious neurological effects are rarer, but have been documented.

The evidence suggests, and his family believes, that Ben unknowingly fell into the grasp of psychosis induced by COVID-19. Had they known to watch for the onset of paranoia, they may have been able to intervene. While the risk is low, awareness that the risk existed at all could make a difference for families like the Price's and their kin-

Biden administration to appoint a neurology expert to investigate post-COVID-19 psychosis further.

"If it can give one person a chance to help another and keep that person in their life, then that is enough for me," Bolander, Ben's nephew said. "My loss will continue to leave a hole in me for the rest of my life but, if someone else can be saved, then a little piece of that hole might be filled."

In the meantime, memories of Ben have filled their lives in different ways.

A few days after Ben died, Bolander was at the farm, feeding cows. The field was muddy, as was often the case in Spring. At the farm, Bolander had never once fallen to the ground. But that day as he handled a bale of hay, he suddenly



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Jennifer Price touches the heart on the bench in honor of her husband, Ben Price.

dred spirits in Maine.

That is why, for Jennifer and the rest of Ben's family, spreading the word about COVID-19 psychosis is essential. As both a healing mechanism and a calling, raising awareness has become a primary driver for Ben's survivors.

Jennifer has organized a Change.org campaign, which has over 21,000 signatures, calling for the

found himself on his back in the mud. Bolander went to his dad to tell him what happened.

Suddenly, they both laughed, smiling at the sky, mourning the loss of a loved one and anticipating the moment they'd see him again.

"You didn't fall, Ben knocked you over," his father said.

For them both, for them all, Ben's spirit will never lose its fire.

“My loss will continue to leave a hole in me for the rest of my life but, if someone else can be saved, then a little piece of that hole might be filled.

— Jennifer Price, Ben Price's wife



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Top: A photo of Ben Price along his wife, Jennifer Price, sits in the family's living room in Morris, IL. **Middle:** The Price family sits for a portrait in their backyard in Morris, IL. **Bottom:** Max Bolander, nephew to Ben Price, touches Price's ring during dinner. Bolander inherited Price's 1993 conference championship ring from college. Price played football at Minnesota State, Mankato.



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June 2020

Professors criticize critical race theory law

UI professors believe the state's new law misrepresents the intentions of critical race theory.

BY SABINE MARTIN
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Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a bill into law June 8 that will prohibit teaching critical race theory and “divisive concepts” in K-12 and higher education, in school curricula, and in mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Venise Berry, the University of Iowa African American Studies department chair, said critical race theory is misunderstood. She said critical race theory highlights certain elements that are tied to race that are critical and important for Americans to pay attention to.

“Teaching critical race theory is not about telling white students they’re racist,” Berry said. “It’s about helping all students understand the environment that we live in and experience in this system. That it’s positive, in relation to race, but also it’s negative in relation to race.”

Josh Lehman, the state Board of Regents senior communications director, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that the regents and Iowa’s regent-governed universities will review processes to ensure compliance with the new law.

“The Board and our universities strongly believe in free expression, and have spoken out frequently in their support of free speech and the First Amendment,” Lehman wrote to the *DI*. “We will continue to fight for the rights of all students, faculty, and staff to have all voices and opinions heard. We must hear all viewpoints without stifling speech.”

The law (HF 802), effective July 1, covers nine “divisive concepts” in training and education.



Gov. Kim Reynolds listens to Senate President Jake Chapman speak during the State of the State address in the house chamber of the Iowa State Capitol on Jan. 12 in Des Moines. Gov. Reynolds highlighted in the address expansion of broadband internet, a push for in-person learning, and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ryan Adams/*The Daily Iowan*

- The idea that one race or sex is superior to another race or sex is prohibited.
- Teaching that the United States and Iowa are fundamentally or systemically racist or sexist is prohibited.
- The idea that an individual race or sex is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive is prohibited.
- Discrimination or adverse treatment of an individual because of their race or sex is prohibited.
- Members of one race should not attempt to treat others without respect based on race or sex.

- The idea that an individual’s morals are determined by race or sex is prohibited.
 - That idea that traits like “hard work ethic” are racist or sexist is prohibited.
 - Race or sex scapegoating is prohibited.
 - Race or sex stereotyping is prohibited.
- Leslie Schwalm, chair of the Department of Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies at the UI, said as someone who teaches about systemic racism and the history of institutionalized racism, the prohibited “divisive concepts” are irrelevant to her course curricula.

“No one teaches that members of a race or sex are inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive,” Schwalm said. “In fact, one of the things that critical race theory helps us understand is that racism isn’t about individual acts of discrimination, but rather about the system.”

While the new law prohibits “divisive concepts,” the term “critical race theory” is not stated in the bill.

In a statement from June 8 regarding the law, Reynolds said, “Critical race theory is about labels and stereotypes, not education.”

According to June 9 data from

Chalkbeat, Republican governors or legislators in 21 state governments have proposed or passed legislation across the country “to restrict education on racism, bias, the contributions of specific racial or ethnic groups to U.S. history, or related topics.”

Berry said the law and other censoring instances could lead UI faculty of color to leave.

“Laws like these are the kinds of things faculty of color look at when they interview and apply,” Berry said. “I just would like to see our state government focus more on the needs of the people than on these culture issues that they blow out of proportion.”

Cristhian Bahena Rivera: guilty of first-degree murder

After a 10-day trial, Bahena Rivera was found guilty of first-degree murder and will face sentencing on July 15.

BY RACHEL SCHILKE
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Cristhian Bahena Rivera was found guilty of first-degree murder in the abduction and fatal stabbing of University of Iowa student Mollie Tibbetts on May 28, nearly three years after Tibbetts' death.

Tibbetts, 20, went missing in July 2018. Bahena Rivera, 24, led authorities to her body, which was lying in a cornfield in Brooklyn, Iowa, in August 2018.

The trial lasted 10 days, two of which were for jury selection, followed by eight days of counsel statements and witness testimonies.

Sentencing for Bahena Rivera will occur in Montezuma, Iowa, on July 15, with the defense launching an appeal within 30 days of that date. There will be no bond pending sentencing, according to Judge Joel Yates.

Prosecutor Scott Brown and Poweshiek County Attorney Bart Klaver led the prosecution, while defense attorneys Chad and Jennifer Frese represented Bahena Rivera in court. Interpreters Steven Rhodes and Ana Pottebaum were sworn in on May 17, prior to the start of the first day of the trial.

After hearing from many witnesses from both counsels, Bahena Rivera testified, stating two men threatened his ex-girlfriend and daughter's lives unless he acted as their driver and transporter of Tibbetts' body.

Despite this, the jury entered deliberation on May 27 and found Bahena Rivera guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Review of prosecution's case

The prosecution called a total of 15 witnesses to take the stand during the trial. Among the witnesses were Tibbetts' boyfriend



Cristhian Bahena Rivera testifies from the witness stand on May 26, at the Scott County Courthouse in Davenport, Iowa. Bahena Rivera was on trial after being charged with first-degree murder in the death of Mollie Tibbetts in July 2018.

Dalton Jack, former Iowa City police officer Pamela Romero, and several agents within the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation.

Three pieces of evidence solidified the guilt of Bahena Rivera, according to Brown and Klaver: the presence of Tibbetts' blood in the trunk of his vehicle, the appearance of his vehicle in video surveillance, and his admission.

During the closing statement on May 27, Brown called Bahena Rivera's testimony a "figment of his imagination."

Klaver said if Bahena Rivera's story had been told to authorities sooner, the officers involved would have conducted more investigations to find the two men Bahena Rivera claimed abducted Tibbetts.

"But that's something that was omitted from his first version," Klaver said. "His first version, when he said he had seen Mollie,

and all the evidence that was presented at the trial, that was a complete and coherent story. That's what the investigators followed, and if it had been something different, if the facts had been different, they would have followed those facts."

Brown said after the verdict was read, they spoke to Tibbetts' family and they were relieved and pleased with the verdict.

He added that the case is not about himself or Klaver, but about Tibbetts and her family.

"They are the ones that have to live through this. This is our job, we will be done with this case soon and we'll move to the next one. That's what we do," Brown said. "With the family, and other people that are that close to it, I think you just need to keep in mind that they live with it forever... we hope that in the end, when these cases are

over, we can bring a sense of justice to them."

Review of defense's case

The defense called a total of 11 witnesses to take the stand, including Bahena Rivera and recalling Jack.

The defense attempted throughout the trial to instill reasonable doubt in the jury by highlighting inconsistencies with Jack's statements, and agents' disregard of investigating other potential suspects, such as known sex offenders and men with histories of violence in the area.

“But we can tell you that getting to know Cristhian Bahena, we are very surprised that he would be the kind of person that would commit a crime like this.

Chad Frese said the decision to call Bahena Rivera to testify was not as difficult as people thought.

"From the very first day we met Mr. Bahena, the story he put forth on the stand was exactly the version of the events he told us going back to August 2018," he said. "He had never varied from that version of the events, not one detail."

He said the investigation got sloppy when Bahena Rivera was targeted, especially since the murder weapon, presumably a single-edge knife, was never found.

Bahena Rivera's claim over two men has been speculated by the prosecution, the media, and those following the case, which Jennifer Frese acknowledged during the press conference.

"I think there was speculation that we made some sort of, you know, 'Let's figure out a story.' I mean, if we were going to make up something, we would have come up with something better than that," she said.

Chad Frese added that the motion the defense filed against the prosecution's request to suppress polygraphs in court speaks to why they were intent on going after one man in particular: Dalton Jack.

"[Dalton Jack] certainly gave us reason to suspect," he said. "There's a lot of people in this case whose stories didn't check out well enough for us, and that was a problem for us. Can we tell you who did this? No. But we can tell you that getting to know Cristhian Bahena, we are very surprised that he would be the kind of person that would commit a crime like this."

— Defense attorney Chad Frese

Landlord-tenant disputes dominate agenda of UI Student Legal Services

University of Iowa Student Legal Services said 42 percent of its business deals with landlord-tenant disputes.

BY SABINE MARTIN

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In August 2020, Iowa City resident Emily Manders looked at her electricity bill and saw an abnormally high payment. Manders said Apartments at Iowa refused her a full reimbursement after being charged for her neighbor's electricity bill.

"It just sucks," Manders said. "If I had not been looking at my electricity bills, I would have never known that they were taking advantage of me and doing this."

From last August to March 2021, Manders said she was charged a total of about \$300 over her own utility bills.

"They've only agreed to pay back me like \$200, but it's still \$100 lost," Manders said.

Manders said she tried to work with the City of Iowa City, but city employees stopped answering her calls after a couple of days. She said she also has been in contact with the Iowa City Tenants Union and Iowa Legal Aid.

"[The city] said it was a civil issue and that I had to go sue them, but I can't afford a lawyer," Manders said. "I'm just kind of running out of options slowly."

Director of University of Iowa Student Legal Services Amanda Elkins, who is also an attorney, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that in fiscal year 2020, 42 percent of Student Legal Services' intake appointments were landlord-tenant related.

She wrote that the most common complaints are maintenance concerns and disputes over security deposit returns.



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Emily Manders poses for a portrait on May 16.

Manders said she's heard renters' issues in her social circles about prominent Iowa City rental companies.

"There are so many complaints," Manders said. "This is not an isolated issue now."

Steve Rackis, the Housing Administrator for Iowa City's Housing Authority program, said the UI has a large impact on the rental housing market in Iowa City because landlords can charge whatever price they deem neces-

sary to students.

"That drives rental housing prices up. If wages don't go up accordingly, then people's wages are not supporting the cost of housing," Rackis said. "So, you have an affordable housing issue."

Student Legal Services recommends that renters tour the actual unit they want to rent and read the entire lease before signing, Elkins wrote.

"We also recommend that stu-

dents meet with a lawyer of their choosing to review the lease before signing. Student Legal Services provides free lease reviews," Elkins wrote.

Manders said she graduated from the UI in May, so she had time to call the city and regularly speak with her rental agency.

"If I was a full-time student, I wouldn't have time to follow people around, so it's just frustrating how these companies take advantage of you and don't care about

you," she said.

Manders said her rental agency made a final decision regarding Manders paying her neighbor's electricity bill.

"I just want my money," Manders said. "I might also be paying for my neighbor's gas, so this might be like another long chapter of waiting for answers and it's so frustrating."

Apartments at Iowa declined to comment when reached out to by the *DI*.

Aiming for 'traditional' fall semester

The University of Iowa and regent-governed institutions will not require masks and will return to pre-pandemic capacity in campus spaces.

BY NATALIE DUNLAP
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Following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's update of the guidelines for vaccinated people, the state Board of Regents changed the COVID-19 mitigation policies for all three regent-governed universities.

According to guidelines released in May, vaccinated people can go without masks and do not need to physically distance, except when required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.

Seven days after the CDC's announcement, the University of Iowa's new COVID-19 policy went into effect, making masks optional for fully vaccinated people in UI buildings, or elsewhere on campus, with a few exceptions including on the Cambus and in health care settings.

At UI Hospitals and Clinics, fully vaccinated employees are still required to wear a mask when providing patient care and in settings where patients and visitors are present.

On the same day UI's policy went into effect, the regents lifted the state of emergency that regents President Mike Richards put in place in March 2020.

Richards said the change was a result of vaccinations becom-

guidelines from the CDC.

Institutions are required to offer in-person coursework to the same extent it was offered pre-pandemic, but institutions may explore hybrid or distance learning through the regents' office, Richards said.

"The institutions are expected to resume traditional student life activities and opportunities effective for the Fall 2021 semester," Richards said in a prepared statement released on May 20.

Starting July 1, regents faculty and staff are required to return to campus. Presidents and superintendents can approve remote working arrangements under some circumstances permitted by law or institutional policy.

Richards also made masks optional across the regent institutions and said campus spaces would return to regular capacity.

COVID-19 vaccination on UI campus

Vaccination for COVID-19 remains encouraged, but not required, for students, faculty, and staff across the regents' universities.

Institutions cannot impose COVID-19 vaccine requirements, with the exception of UI Health Care.

The only vaccinations required by the UI for most students are two shots of the Measles, Mumps, Ru-



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

Students walk in front of the Old Capital Mall with masks on Aug. 27, 2020. Upon opening, the first week of school during COVID looked very different than past years.

Human Papillomavirus, Meningitis, and several others.

Josh Lehman, the regents' senior communications director, and Hayley Bruce, Media Relations Manager, confirmed with *The Daily Iowan* that their position stands, following an announcement from Indiana University that they will be mandating the COVID-19 vaccine for fall 2021.

"Knowing that the vast majority of the IU community is vaccinated is the only way the university can confidently return to in-person classes, more in-person events and a more typical university experience," a statement from Indiana University said.

International travel

The UI also announced international travel would resume following pre-pandemic guidelines for faculty and staff beginning June 1,

and would no longer be required to obtain special approval and routing.

International travel is still restricted for students, though they may submit a high-risk travel proposal to International Programs for consideration. Undergraduate study abroad program enrollments will not be approved for departures through August 1.

According to Iowa's coronavirus case count, as of June 10, the seven-day positive test average in the state is 1.9 percent, and in Johnson County the seven-day positive test average is 1 percent, with 13 positive cases.

Between June 2 and June 10, there was one new case of COVID-19 among students, and no new cases among employees.

“The institutions are expected to resume traditional student life activities and opportunities effective for the Fall 2021 semester.

— Board of Regents President Mike Richards

ing widely available and declining COVID-19 positivity and hospitalization rates, as well as the new

bella vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine is highly encouraged, along with vaccinations for Influenza,

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Opinions

COLUMN



SHAHAB KHAN
shahab-khan@uiowa.edu

The hyper-inflation hawks have returned.

Iowa Republicans, chief amongst them Sen. Joni Ernst, have begun to bang the gavel about how a looming inflation crisis will harm American families because they won't be able to afford goods and services.

What are Republicans blaming as the main culprit for this impending calamity? The recent passage of the American Rescue Plan.

Fortunately for the U.S. economy, the rise of prices that Repub-

Understanding the economics of inflation

Republicans have resurrected the same lazy arguments about inflation.

licans are warning about is not around the corner. In fact, most economic indicators are pointing that the rise in prices we are seeing is only transitory.

Since the economy has largely reopened, cash-awash Americans and businesses have started to spend the extra money they received during lockdown. As a result, prices for commodities have increased by 5 percent in the last 12 months.

This may seem that persistently high inflation is near. But when taking a closer look at the numbers, it becomes clear the inflation hawks' arguments are based on hearsay.

When making their judgements about inflation, the hawks often point to the appreciation of commodities such as food and gas.

However, those goods are not accurate measurements of coming inflation because of their flexibility.

In other words, the prices for these goods vary from day to day as they are responsive to the forces of supply and demand.

In Iowa, one of the commodities that hawks point to is the price of gas. It has increased from \$1.97 to \$2.87 in the past year because people have started to fill up their gas tanks more frequently. Also, the production of natural gas has not been able to keep up with demand thanks to certain supply shocks

Instead of using these flexible goods to predict whether coming inflation will be manageable, economists at the Federal Reserve look to goods such as labor or capital —

non-human resources used in furthering production.

The price of these goods is sticky, meaning that they do not change often. When the price of these goods increases abruptly, we can tell levels of inflation are reaching dangerous levels.

According to indices that only take into account sticky prices, inflation is right around the same as pre-pandemic levels meaning our economy does not need to worry about inflation.

But in the coming months the prices of sticky goods could dramatically increase to levels that indicate inflation is harming the economy. If that were to happen, then the Federal Reserve would be able to fend off an inflationary crisis using

the tools of monetary policy.

How this would work would be primarily targeting and reducing the supply of money in the collective market by raising interest rates.

As the supply of money is reduced, consumers — including firms — would be less likely to save money thus leading to a reduction and ultimate stabilization of prices.

Inflation is one of the most widely misunderstood economic concepts.

In fact, a moderate amount of inflation can be a sign that the economy is functioning at a healthy level.

So, the next time somebody tries to tell you that government spending causes inflation, kindly let them know it is a lot more complicated than that.

COLUMN

Let local government and schools have control



HANNAH PINSKI
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Local government and Iowa schools are in trouble as Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Republican Party have chipped away at their fundamental powers.

From attempts to control the police budgets to mask mandates, they have stripped local leaders and schools of their power and have put it in the hands of the state.

Take for example the bill in this year's legislative session that cut state

Reynolds and the Republican Party's attempts to chip away at local government and school control must stop.

funding to local governments if they decided to reduce the law enforcement budget at a higher percentage than their overall budget. While the bill wasn't signed into law, it almost forced local governments to appropriate their budget to the state's wishes, instead of what's best for the community.

So, depriving discretion that local governments have always had is not just an attempt to take away their power. It was also a threat for local governments to accommodate and further the Republican Party's agenda at the expense of community interests.

Additionally, they have also expropriated the powers of Iowa K-12

schools, particularly when it comes to COVID-19 policy.

While school districts were designing learning formats that they thought were safest.

Districts such as the Iowa City Community School District were thrown back to square one since they planned for the school year to start online.

They became constrained and had to worry about meeting unnecessary state guidelines instead of focusing on the curriculum. But Reynolds didn't care that the consequences of taking away control from schools meant sacrificing the value of students' education.

As the year continued, many

thought that her decision to require a fully in-person option for

schools that left teachers feeling like a pawn in politics would be the hardest challenge. However, the biggest curveball came just after midnight on May 20, when she signed a law forbidding schools, counties, and cities to require face coverings.

Her signature sent families and teachers into a spiral of chaos the following morning inside Iowa's schools. Horror stories from parents flooded Twitter of their children being bullied to the point where masks were ripped off and were sent home frightened and confused.

In the broader picture, schools and local leaders always had the right to create and enforce precautions for the health and safety of the commu-

nity. Mask requirements are no exception.

This law not only furthers Reynolds' own beliefs, but also sets a dangerous precedent that educators and local leaders no longer have the ability to keep their communities safe.

For a governor who supposedly hallmarks freedom, it's awfully ironic that the same person is also depriving local governments and schools of their power to keep communities safe and put it in her own hands. So why should Iowans allow her to continue attaching strings at the local level that has clearly harmed communities?

With Iowa's gubernatorial election coming up in 2022, Iowans need to keep in mind who deprived local governments and school districts of their power so she could push her personal agenda.

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Arts & Culture



Kate Heston/The Daily Iowan

The University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art is seen during construction on June 14.

UI Stanley Museum of Art relaunches docent program

As the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art looks ahead to its reopening at a new location in fall 2022, the museum seeks new volunteers for its docent program.

BY HUNTER KOONTZ
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In preparation for the new Stanley Museum of Art opening this fall, museum staff are looking to take on new members in its relaunched docent program.

Docentship entails volunteer work at the museum as well as trips to local schools, where docents will educate students

about the museum's collection and potentially showcase various pieces.

Stanley's Associate Curator of Education Joshua Siefken said

“They are community ambassadors... they are telling the community what the university has to offer, what the museum has to offer.

— Joshua Siefken, Stanley Associate Curator of Education

docents will primarily take on the role of tour guide, with different tours and lessons in mind for both children and an older general public.

“They are community ambassadors...they are telling the community what the university has to offer, what the museum has to offer,” Siefken said.

Siefken said anyone, including undergraduates, with formal or informal experience teaching K-12 can apply. The museum will be accepting new docent applications until July 1.

Museum Director Lauren Lessing said ideal applicants should be passionate about the arts. One of the perks of the posi-

SEE STANLEY, 13



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Construction on the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art is shown on June 14.

STANLEY CONTINUED FROM 12

tion, she said, is the field trips, which include going to locations like the Des Moines Arts Center and other art institutions throughout Iowa.

Through their training and volunteer work, docents will learn about various pieces of art in the Stanley Museum's collection and be educated on contemporary art history pedagogy.

Training will require a commitment of two hours per month over a year-long period, after which newly certified docents will be able to contribute the same amount of time each month volunteering at the museum and in the local community.

Stanley Museum staff are currently conducting training sessions over Zoom, where they're covering everything from emer-

gency procedures and training management, to their various art collections and art history.

Siefken said being a docent won't look exactly the same as it did in 2008.

"Educational theory, ways of teaching, ways of engaging audiences, have changed a lot. In addition to that, we find out more about artworks... every year," he said. "It's not going to be the same things they talked about 12, 13 years ago."

Lessing said educators are encouraged to ask children about what they're seeing and how it connects to what they're learning in class.

"In the last 15 years, museum education has really moved to an inquiry-based model," she said. "Instead of talking, talking, talking at kids, we are asking questions."

Seifken said the program will serve as an introduction to art for K-12 students. He said he hopes exposing the students to

“ There are a lot of studies that show if you get kids out of the classroom and have them in a novel environment where they're immersed, they learn more. I'm sure you remember field trips you took as a kid. Those are special experiences.

— Laura Lessing, Museum Director

new art will allow them a chance to expand their worldview and build critical thinking skills.

Lessing talked about a future university student docent group and the importance of having a physical building for children to visit.

"There are a lot of studies that show that if you can get kids out of the classroom and have them in a novel environment where they're immersed, they learn more," Lessing said. "I'm sure you remember field trips you took as a kid. Those are special experiences."

Lessing said that she wants the new museum to support

not just UI art history courses but classes across the curriculum, as the museum's collection can serve as a vital resource for study and interaction with primary sources and objects for students in many fields.

Elizabeth Wallace, Stanley's manager of communications, marketing, and membership, called the reopening a "milestone for the campus."

With the docent program relaunch, the department hopes to have museum staff and volunteers poised to educate and bring in new members of the community in 2022.



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

The sign for the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art is shown on June 14.

Hawkeye baseball coaches discuss foreign substances

With Major League Baseball's recent push to crack down on pitchers using foreign substances, Iowa's coaching staff discusses the use of substances in the college game.

BY WILL FINEMAN

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A recent jump in Major League Baseball pitchers' spin rates and batters' strikeout frequency has caused the league to reevaluate its rules regarding the use of foreign substances on the mound.

Historically, professional pitchers using substances like sunscreen and pine tar to get a better grip on the baseball has been a case of, "Don't ask, don't tell." Pitchers benefit from having more control, and batters benefit from receiving more strikes and getting hit by fewer pitches.

"I think 10 years ago, every hitter in the major leagues would tell you, 'Let them use it because we don't want to get hit,'" University of Iowa head baseball coach Rick Heller said. "That's why it's been the dirty little hidden secret."

In response to safety concerns with the old standard bat and in an attempt to limit home runs, collegiate baseball switched to Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) standard bats in 2011.

With the new change, college baseball saw a drop in offense across the board.

"They changed the bat, and with the high-seamed baseball that colleges used, the offense just plummeted to the point where it was hurting the game," Heller said.

Instead of changing the bats again, the NCAA switched from the high-seamed baseball to the

flat-seamed baseball — MLB's standard. The flat seams create less drag on the ball and allows it to travel farther than a high-seamed baseball.

Heller said he believes foreign substances are much less prevalent in the college game than at the major league level, but college pitchers who are using substances like pine tar and sunscreen are likely doing so because the flat-seamed baseballs are harder to grip.

The additional tack foreign substances like pine tar or sunscreen provide can also help pitchers increase the spin rate of their throws.

Spin rate is measured in revolutions per minute (rpm), indicating how many rotations a ball makes after it is released. The spin rate of a pitch will have an influence on its trajectory.

If two fastballs are thrown at 96 mph but one of them has a very high spin rate, that pitch is more effective because

it will repel gravity for longer and have a rising effect on the hitter. A curveball with a higher spin rate will have more movement, as well.

"It does kind of make a big difference for a pitcher," Hawkeye hitting coach Jimmy Frankos said. "In the old days, you would say, 'Man, that guy throws a heavy ball.' Well, now a heavy ball is a guy with a high spin rate."

Foreign substances like Spider Tack and Pelican Grip have been found to help pitchers improve their spin rates by as much as 400 rpm — which Frankos said could give hurlers in baseball leagues across the country unfair advantages over hitters.

"What I think needs to happen is that something has to become legal that is universal, that everyone can use, and that is not going

to drastically give a pitcher an advantage," Frankos said. "It's going to give them enough so that we're still throwing strikes and being able to control the baseball.

"When you are in these northern and midwestern states, you are playing a lot of games in 40 degrees. You are going to need a little help hanging onto the baseball when you're throwing it 90 plus."



Iowa head coach Rick Heller walks back to the coaching box after disputing a call with the home plate umpire during a baseball game between Iowa and Maryland on April 24 at Duane Banks Field. Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

WOODY

CONTINUED FROM 16

coach and producing a lot of people that are not necessarily a stud in high school or even in junior college, to be one of the best in the country.”

Britt competed in his first-ever NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships June 9-12 in the 110-meter hurdles and the 400-meter hurdles. In the 110-meter finals, he matched his personal best time of 13.45 seconds to finish fourth in the national championships.

Iowa sent a complete team to the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in the 2020-21 season, with 17 athletes making the trip to Eugene, Oregon.

While track is primarily made up of individual events, senior thrower Laulauga Tausaga cherishes the team atmosphere that Woody creates.

“When you can say you have guys to back you up, or women to back you up, it’s an amazing thing,” Tausaga said. “You can cheer for them, because they’re fighting just as hard as you are

and we’re fighting for each other to make this program a lot better than when we came in. It’s a very special kind of atmosphere that coach Woody has really brought to Iowa, and it’s one of the reasons why I chose Iowa.”

Under Woody’s tenure as director of track and field, the Hawkeyes gained their first NCAA Champion in 16 years in Tausaga. The now fifth-year senior won the NCAA women’s discus throw in 2019 with a throw of 63.26 meters, and will be heading to the Olympic Trials on June 19.

“Coach Woody interacts with all of his athletes and coaches, he’s a very special guy,” Tausaga said. “... He’s been building this team, and the men have won three Big Ten titles and the women are getting there. Brick by brick, he’s laying the foundation for

an amazing team, and I know that even when I’m gone it’s going to flourish under him. I appreciate the opportunity to be a

part of this team and a part of the history that’s going to make Iowa track and field that much more amazing.”

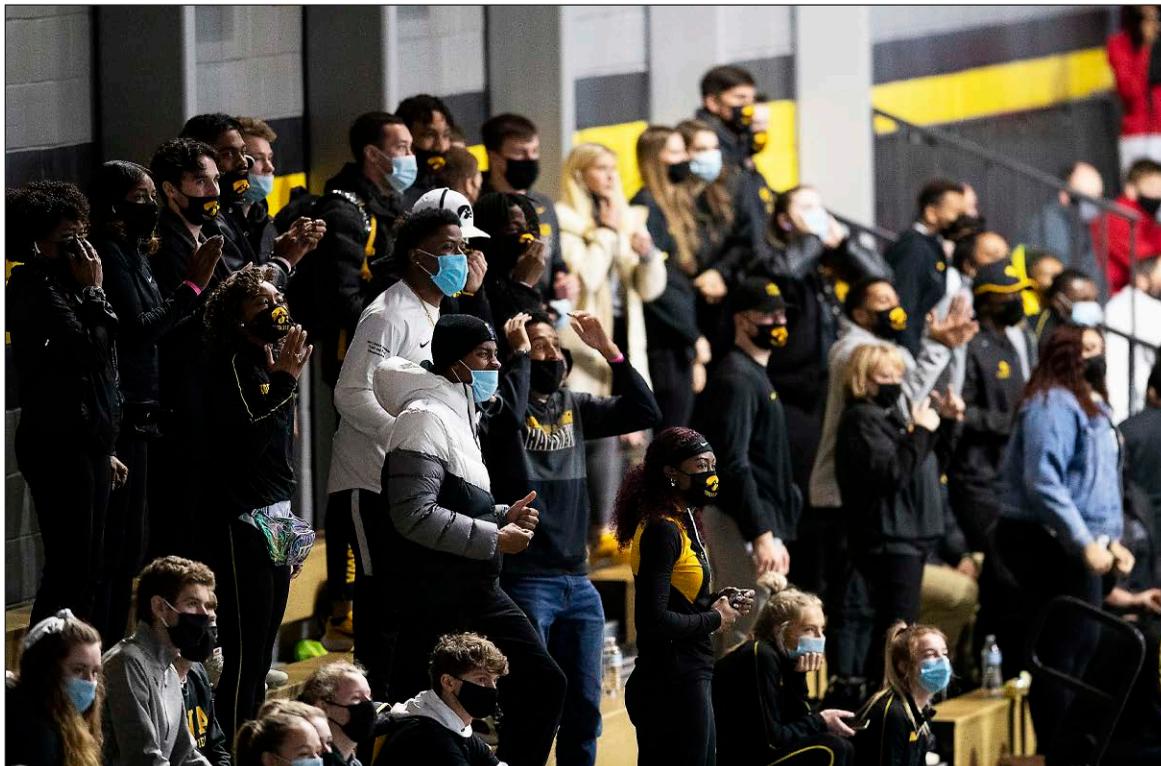
Woody swept the Big Ten men’s coaching awards this season, claiming the 2021 Big Ten Indoor Men’s Coach of the Year and the Big Ten Outdoor Men’s Coach of the Year honor.

But Woody’s secret to becoming an award-winning coach is simple.

“Hire good staff, recruit good athletes, and coach them up,” Woody said. “It’s pretty simple, honestly. But we’ve got a tremendous staff. I tell my staff every time those things happen those are staff awards — I wish that they would make it be staff awards more than just the head coach award, but we definitely have one of the best staffs in the country.”

“We’ve got a tremendous staff... I wish that they would make it be staff awards more than just the head coach award, but we definitely have one of the best staffs in the country.

— Iowa Director of Track and Field Joey Woody



Jenna Galligan/The Daily Iowan

Iowa track and field athletes cheer from the stands during the second day of the Larry Wiecezorek Invitational on Jan. 23 at the University of Iowa Recreation Building. Because of coronavirus restrictions, the Hawkeyes could only host Big Ten teams. Iowa men took first, scoring 189, and women finished third with 104 among Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Illinois.

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Jenna Galligan/The Daily Iowan

Iowa Director of Track and Field Joey Woody coaches from the infield during the 4x400m relay during the Larry Wiecek Invitational at the University of Iowa Recreation Building on Jan. 18, 2020.

Woody puts Iowa track on the map

Led by director of track and field Joey Woody, the Iowa men's team's 2020-21 season was the program's best in 50 years.

BY CHLOE PETERSON
chloe-peterson@uiowa.edu

As Joey Woody ends his seventh season at the helm of the Iowa track and field program, the Iowa City native is keeping his program on the rise.

In the 2020-21 campaign, Iowa men's track and field swept the 2021 Big Ten Indoor and Outdoor Championships for the first time since 1963. The Hawkeye men finished 12th at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships held in Eugene, Oregon on June 9-12 — its best finish in over 50 years.

“Coach Woody is a great coach... that was the main reason I came here.

— Hawkeye junior hurdler Jamal Britt

“Coach Woody is a great coach,” Hawkeye junior hurdler Jamal Britt said. “You know, that was the main reason I came

here. The group of guys that were here, and me coming in as one of the slowest — if not the slowest person — coming in from recruitment and getting to where I am today, it shows a lot. Woody is a great

SEE WOODY, 15