

The Daily Iowan

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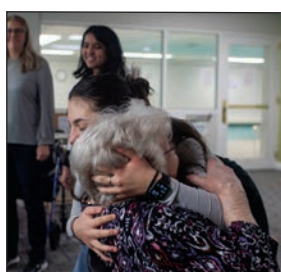
INSIDE



Junior High students learn service work through desk-building

The Home Depot Foundation held the event at Northwest Junior High last week in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

AMPLIFY | 5A



PHOTOS: Generations connect

See photos from *The Daily Iowan* of the new UI chapter of Glamour Gals, which seeks to connect older people with younger generations.

PHOTOS | 6A



Captain Kate Martin

The "glue" of the Iowa women's basketball team has nearly doubled her scoring output from last season.

SPORTS | 3B



An inside look at a playwright's process

Playwriting graduate student Alex Lead took the *DI* through the nearly year-long process, from start to finish, of having his script produced in Iowa City.

80 HOURS | 1C



A new magazine for fashion and trends at the UI

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80 HOURS | 4C

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Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark shoots the ball during a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89. Within the first three minutes of the game, Iowa guard Caitlin Clark broke the NCAA all-time scoring record for women's basketball, hitting 3,528 points recorded at Iowa.

Covering Clark's record

UI employees prepared for national attention on Clark's broken record.

Sabine Martin
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Iowa's Caitlin Clark swished the ball flawlessly into the net, making her the NCAA all-time women's basketball leading scorer on Feb. 15 in Carver-Hawkeye Arena. It was also a momentous day for Bailey Turner and his team.



Turner

Turner, University of Iowa assistant director of athletic communications, said the lead-up to Clark's record drew the largest media contingent in Iowa women's basketball history. He said there are usually 80-90 credentialed media at women's basketball games, but the 106-89 victory against Michigan amassed 150 total personnel.

"Trying to accommodate and make room for another 60 isn't easy," Turner said. "We had to put out extra rows for TV and video and photo to make sure everybody was covered ... they're obviously trying to send their best."

In the stands, Carver was a sold-out house. The UI announced in August that the 2023-



Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

Play-by-play announcer for Hawkeye Radio Network Rob Brooks looks over notes during a women's basketball game between No. 5 Iowa and Nebraska on Jan. 27. The Hawkeyes defeated the Cornhuskers 92-73.

BASKETBALL | 2A

Volunteering in style

The new UI Glamour Gals student organization spent time with Melrose Meadows Retirement residents.

Sanya Sami
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Nail polish bottles, lotion, bracelet beads, and string were spread across two pink tables as members of the University of Iowa chapter of Glamour Gals painted the nails of residents at the Melrose Meadows Retirement Community on Feb. 18.

UI second-year Paige Stessman launched the on-campus chapter at the beginning of the spring 2024 semester, part of the larger GlamourGals Foundation founded in 2001 by Rachel Doyle.

The national organization's purpose is to empower intergenerational connections by having younger volunteers work to lift the weight of social isolation experienced by senior residents currently in care.

The UI chapter's mission is to volunteer at retirement homes in the Iowa City area

and provide companionship for the residents of these homes. They accomplish this by having conversations with and providing makeovers and manicures to residents.

"I work in a retirement home back home and love my residents there," Stessman said. "I also have grandparents that don't live close, and I don't get to visit them that often."

She said she felt encouraged to help residents who might otherwise not get visitors. The Glamour Gals hosted their first event at the Melrose Meadows Retirement Community on Feb. 18 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Nearly 15 students painted nails, made bracelets, and chatted with several residents.

When the mass email for Glamour Gals was out to all UI students and gained popularity, Stessman said she could only have

GALS | 2A

JoCo starts free home energy audit program

Residents can save money by making their homes more sustainable.

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Johnson County residents who live in rural areas will now have access to free home energy audits to save money on their bills and encourage energy sustainability.

The program that started in January is operated through Green Iowa AmeriCorps, which has overseen the same program in Iowa City for the last seven years. According to the county's website, the program is open to county residents who own a home. Renters can also use the program after getting permission from their landlord.

Ashley Coffin, the assistant director for Green Iowa AmeriCorps, said once a homeowner or renter requests

ENERGY | 2A

GALS
from 1A

a limited number of volunteers help at each event.

Because of this, she plans to let people who did not volunteer at the February event join future meetings.

Glamour Gals volunteer and UI third-year Elizabeth Troy had a memorable time painting nails and making bracelets with Melrose resident Marge VeDepo.

Troy said a highlight of the event was the bracelet-making. Troy made Valentine's Day-themed bracelets for herself while helping VeDepo make bracelets that included the names of her grandchildren.

Troy also painted VeDepo's nails to match her blue outfit.

Fellow Melrose resident Carol Jones said she got her nails painted with purple nail polish and glitter to match her wedding ring.

"It was nice because everybody was friendly and really nice," Jones said. "I didn't remember that [Glamour Gals] was coming in. They had to come get me and I'm really glad I came."

Glamour Gals volunteer and UI third-year student Maya Barros said she enjoyed working with people and felt excited to join Glamour Gals for this reason.

"I really wanted to interact with another piece of the community that I hadn't seen yet," Barros



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan
A volunteer laughs with a resident during a Glamour Gals event at Melrose Meadows on Feb. 18. Glamour Gals aims to visit one retirement home per month and paint resident's nails and make crafts.

said. "I'm really glad I did because it's been quite the experience."

Barros said her experience was amazing because she met so many kind people at Melrose and got the chance to hear the residents' stories.

Katie Leichty, UI first-year student and another Glamour Gals volunteer, said she felt inspired by the organization's mission.

"I really wanted to at-

tend this event because I think it's a great opportunity to connect with an older generation and hear stories about their past and get to know them on a deeper level," Leichty said.

Leichty enjoyed her experience at Sunday's event and hopes to come back for future events.

"The lady I talked to, we talked about traveling and she talked about all these beautiful museums, which

is something I'm really interested in and hopefully we'll go to in the future," Leichty said.

The event wrapped up with many residents thanking the volunteers for their companionship, providing makeovers, and making bracelets with them.

"I'm happy with how it turned out, and that we were able to talk with the residents, paint their nails, and have a good

time."

As for Glamour Gals' long-term goals, Stessman said she hopes the organization continues even after she graduates.

"I hope to continue going to different retirement homes in the area, talk with the residents, and build a good community with the girls that are wanting to do it," Stessman said. "I also want to make people happy and have a good time."

ENERGY
from 1A

the free audit through the organization's website, members from Green Iowa AmeriCorps go to the property to assess its energy efficiency and safety.

This means the members will look for any air leaks around places like attics or windows and other places that can be more energy efficient, such as light bulbs, Coffin said. Members will also inspect water heaters and furnaces to ensure they work and no mold or asbestos is present, she said.

After identifying any minor repairs, the members will make those fixes for no cost, Coffin said. If the members identify any larger repairs or replacements, they will provide the homeowner or renter with resources in their area — such as local utility companies — that they can utilize to help get those improvements done, she said.

While this program has been running for

seven years in Iowa City, this is the first time it will be available for all residents of Johnson County, Coffin said.

This is because Iowa City's funding structure for this program limited it to only city residents.

There has been a lot of demand for this program from residents who don't live within the limits of Iowa City, so the city changed its funding structure to allow all residents within the county to access the program, Coffin said.

Other counties in Iowa also have similar programs that address energy efficiency and sustainability for residential properties.

The free home energy audit program is also available to Linn County residents, Linn County's resiliency coordinator Karen Kawala said. Coffin said the program also operates in Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines, in addition to Linn and Johnson counties.

Linn County also has other residential-related energy programs. The county has a "solar dashboard," a county-run website that con-

tains information for residents to learn more about how they can find funding and installation companies for solar panels on their homes, Kawala said.

Linn County is also working on a rental improvement program that will allow landlords in the county to apply for funding to make their properties more energy efficient, Kawala said. The program is still in its early planning stages.

Becky Soglin, Johnson County's sustainability coordinator, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that expansion of the program to include the entire county will help those who live in small, rural towns access the program.

The fact that the program is free also gets rid of a barrier to utilizing the program for residents with lower incomes, Coffin said.

"No matter where you live or how much money you make, your home is oftentimes the most sacred space that you have," Coffin said. "If we can make that more stable, more financially possible, we're excited to do that."

BASKETBALL
from 1A

24 season is the first time in school history that the program has filled Carver.

Turner said he barely squeaked by to eat lunch and dinner the day of the record because of the outpouring of phone calls and at least four tours he gave of Carver to national media starting at 9 a.m.

The week leading up to Clark's record was equally busy, Turner said.

"That week of basically just getting bombarded with phone calls and emails from every corner of the United States trying to figure out how they're going to cover this game," he said.

During the game, Rob Brooks, play-by-play announcer for Hawkeye Radio Network, sat next to Turner on press row, ready to announce Clark's record-breaking moment.

Clark made the eight points she needed to break the record less than three minutes into the first quarter.

"When she made that first layup and you could just kind of get that sense that she was kind of in the zone, you got a feeling that was going to happen quick," Brooks said.

"That week was basically just getting bombarded with phone calls and emails from every corner of the United States trying to figure out how they're going to cover this game."

Bailey Turner

UI assistant director of athletic communications

"My philosophy has always been I don't write anything down. I don't want anything scripted."

When Clark made her record-breaking logo shot, he had to act as both eyes and ears for his listeners on the radio.

"We've had a spike on our YouTube page," he said. "It's been crazy all year really as far as the number of listeners and the feedback we're getting from all over the country."

Kelsey Laverdiere, UI associate athletics director of marketing and multimedia, said her team was ready for Clark to possibly break the point record at the Feb. 11 game against Nebraska.

She said her team trac-

ked Clark's points since the beginning of the year.

"Because Caitlin has a partnership with Nike, Nike was great to work with and we set up some joint marketing efforts that really integrated their celebration of her as well," she said. "When it came down to the other logistics of the celebration, we wanted to do streamers, we wanted to make sure we had all the necessary video and graphics prepared."

Laverdiere said her team ensured fans could interact with Clark as much as possible, but not every attendee could get an autograph or receive a high five.

"We ended up taking all of her trophies and in the north concourse — we called it the Caitlin shrine," she said.

Following the Hawkeye win and an almost hour-long fan celebration in Carver,

journalists packed shoulder to shoulder into the press conference room waiting for Clark.

Finding a room to fit all of the media outlets was a challenge that Turner said he and Matt Weitzel, UI associate athletics director for strategic communications, thought of in advance.

"For something like this, it's a completely different deal. I was like, Yeah, I'm kind of worried about the fire code, honestly, just to get everybody in there," Turner told Weitzel the Monday before the game. "We had to hire a couple more sound

and audio people so TV could plug their cameras in so they pick up the best audio for television."

Laverdiere said since she started at the UI eight years ago, she didn't expect to work with so many generational talents on the court.

"We just keep having them — even Kathleen Doyle — there's been a lot of women's basketball and I'm so excited to be continuing to celebrate all their successes," Laverdiere said. "I really don't think they're done yet. I think Caitlin is lighting the fire even more."



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark signs autographs after a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89.

The Daily Iowan

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IOWA

OBITUARY



Herky The Hawk Umphreys

The day has come. On February 1st, 2024, Herky The Hawk Umphreys died. She was 17 and ½ years old. Herky was one of my best friends since she came into our lives as a present for Gracie's 8th birthday. She tolerated Ada and Makayla. Herky was loved by Gracie and Rod and she loved them.

Herky and I bonded night after night when I struggled to sleep. After hours of attempting to sleep, I would go outside of my room and just lay on the rugs with her. She would always keep me company. She never stopped doing this. It always seemed when I needed sleep, that she wanted to play. In her later life she would also stay up late with me on fall Saturdays to make sure that she also saw the ending to the late games in college football.

She was always known as a grumpy kitty. She was much more than that, but that doesn't mean it wasn't true. She liked to be left alone a lot of the time, but when she wanted attention, she would seek it out. She always played rough and used her teeth and claws. It never bothered me and that's all that matters.

There are so many quirks and eccentricities that I wanted to mention but there is little time for that. However, I will mention one that I found to be one of her best. As her name suggests, she lived with Hawkeye fans. We are fans of the University and everything that goes with that. When we would watch Iowa Wrestling matches, I would often be jumping to my feet and yelling two! It wouldn't fail that every time I did that, no matter how tired she was, she would meow in a way that was different than every other time. She was a wrestling kitty and expressed it every time a Hawkeye got a takedown.

Herky also loved Katy and Katy loved Herky. They spent a lot of time together later in life because I was often gone. They bonded and became great friends. You often could find Herky curled up in a ball on her lap while she studied, or crawling all over her when she wanted attention. They only got to spend the last six years of Herky's life together, but they made every second count.

She was never my pet; she was my friend who just happened to be a cat. I always said that she could leave if she wanted, but she never did.

I wrote this in advance because I wanted her to be a part of it. As I type this, she is sleeping right next to me. Katy is in the bedroom doing schoolwork. I have another week of clinical rotations behind me. Our apartment is different once again. Almost nothing is the same as the past. Except Herky. She is our constant. She, as of this writing, is 17 years and 1 month old. I want and hope for much longer. I have always loved her. Her presence is immeasurable.

It was a pleasure and an honor to be your friend.

We love you.
Mason and Katy

IC city councilor calls for more immigrant outreach

Mazahir Salih said Iowa City government officials are overlooking financial resources for the county's large immigrant population.



Sahithi Shankaiahgari | The Daily Iowan
Mazahir Salih interacts with her supporters at her watch party at fix! Coffee on Nov. 7, 2023. Salih was reelected to her seat on the city council after receiving the highest number of votes.

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Iowa City Mayor Pro Tem and City Councilor Mazahir Salih expressed concerns over the city's relationship with its immigrant community and the grant funding opportunities they may be missing out on.

These concerns were raised at the city council's Feb. 6 meeting, where the council was discussing an amendment to a federal grant application that the city has been working on for nearly two years.

Salih is the Executive-founding Director of the Welcome Network of Johnson County and the former Executive Director of the Center for Worker Justice.

The grant program, known as HOME-ARP, is overseen by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. According to the department's website, the program aims to assist unhoused individuals with things like rental assistance, supportive services, and homeless shelters.

It's a brand new program, which has presented challenges for Iowa City city staff in terms of following the rules and stipulations of the program in their application, Erika Kubly, the city's neighborhood services coordinator, said.

One of these challenges has been having to amend the application a few different times, such as on Feb. 6.

At the Feb. 6 meeting, city staff notified the council the application had to be changed to exclude or amend some programs the city originally applied for so the application would comply with the rules, according to the agenda.

Kubly said the program is specific and stipulates that funding can only be used for supporting unhoused individuals or those who are fleeing from domestic violence situations, which has contributed to the need to make changes to the application. She said funding should be in place for projects to begin in the next two to three months.

One program that was completely cut was a rental assistance program because of more clar-

ification from the state on how the HOME-ARP program works, the agenda states. The city first anticipated that there would be a requirement for a local government to match the funds it's requesting for renter assistance, but that was clarified as not being a rule.

"As there is no longer a need to have funds set aside for that purpose, this [a]mendment removes the Rental Housing Development line item from the budget," the agenda states.

At the meeting, Salih objected to the rental assistance program no longer being funded through this grant program as this assistance would greatly benefit the immigrant community, which she is a part of.

Ultimately, all councilors except Salih voted to approve the amendment as this change was the last step in the process of getting this grant program going. While the councilors agreed with Salih's concerns, they said they did not want to postpone the process of helping other local organizations any longer.

At the meeting, Mayor Bruce Teague suggested using the remaining unallocated COVID-19 relief funds the city was awarded toward a rental assistance program. The city was given \$18.3 million in 2021. According to city staff, there is approximately \$2 million that

has not yet been designated for any projects. "Some of those challenges, absolutely we want to make sure that we are doing the best that we can with this one-time opportunity," Teague said. "But I also know that there are people who have been waiting for these funds since 2021."

Councilor Laura Bergus said she appreciates Salih's concerns but thinks it would be unwise to delay the allocation of funding any further.

"At this stage, if the money is about to go out the door, I think we can try and encourage those organizations to ensure that they're doing the outreach to get to those communi-



Bergus

ties that you're concerned aren't being reached right now," Bergus said.

In an interview with *The Daily Iowan*, Salih said she the immigrant community often does not get included in grant opportunities like this one.

Salih said she greatly respects the work organizations like Shelter House — which will receive nearly \$700,000 from this program — do for the homeless community, but there is a need for immigrant-led organizations to be funded to better connect with immigrants and refugees.

Aside from Shelter House, two other local organizations are also receiving grant funding to assist unhoused individuals or those who are at risk of becoming unhoused. Those organizations are Iowa Legal Aid, which will receive \$200,000, and the Domestic Violence Intervention Program, which will receive \$650,000.

There are often language, cultural, and religious barriers that prevent immigrants and refugees from going to organizations that are not led by immigrants, Salih said. These barriers may also contribute to a lack of outreach to the immigrant community, meaning organizations led by immigrants are not even aware of grant application opportunities in the first place, she said.

Tracy Hightshoe, the director for the city's neighborhood and development services department, said while the organizations being funded are not explicitly geared toward immigrants and refugees, they do not turn those communities away.

"From our perspective, no matter who we fund through a nonprofit provider, they don't exclude refugees or immigrants," Hightshoe said. "They're still serving those people that come to them, that may be immigrants or refugees. It's just that they don't have a preference, or are basically saying our services are limited to the refugee or immigrant community."

A potential way to increase engagement and outreach to the city's immigrant and refugee community is for immigrant-oriented organizations to join the Johnson County Local Homeless Coordinating Board, Hightshoe said. This board has monthly meetings, and it would be easier to spread information about new opportunities to the community if members of immigrant organizations attend, she said.

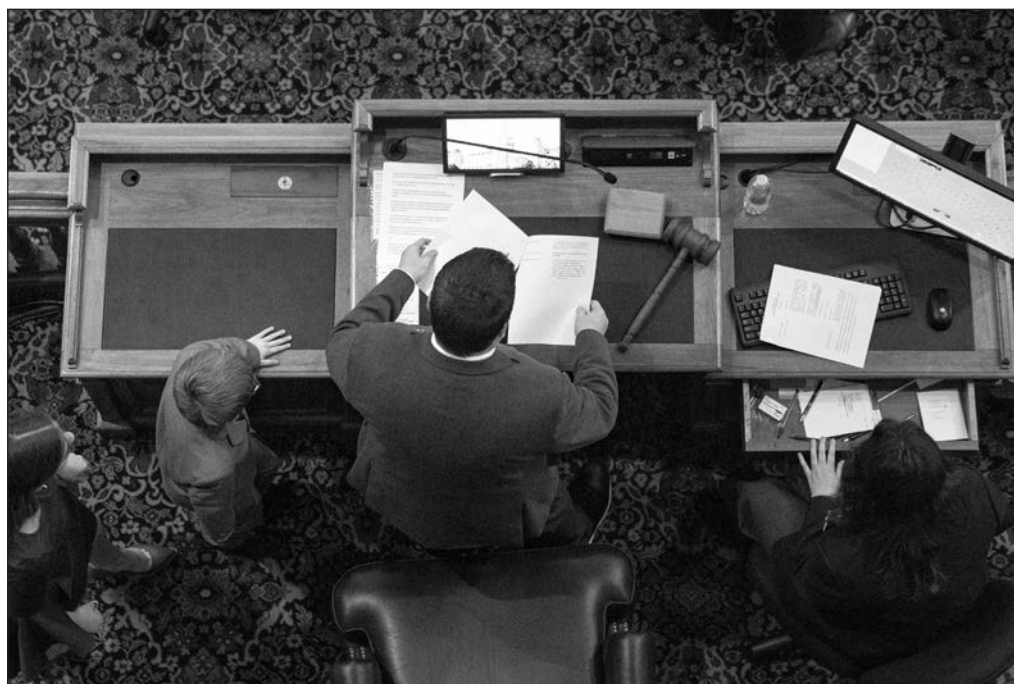
Some examples of local immigrant-centric organizations are the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, the Iowa City Catholic Worker House, Open Heartland, and the Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 14 percent of Iowa City's population was born outside of the U.S.

Salih said she will continue pushing for more diversity and inclusion not just in funding opportunities but also in the very makeup of Iowa City's local government. She said the more diverse government employees are, the less of a chance there is for the needs of marginalized communities to go unnoticed.

"I will keep reminding the city every single day and reminding my fellow council members about who is in this community," Salih said. "Those immigrants are very hard-working people. They bring a lot of good into this community, and I think they deserve to be treated the same as anyone else in this community."

Death penalty, library bills nixed by funnel

Dozens of proposed bills were killed by the legislative deadline late last week.



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Speaker of the House Pat Grassley, R-New Hartford, looks over documents during the first day of the 2024 Iowa legislative session at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines on Jan. 8. Grassley has been in the House since 2007.

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A bill to reinstate the death penalty for killing a peace officer and a bill to allow city councils to override public library boards were among over a dozen bills killed by legislative deadlines late last week.

The Feb. 16 legislative deadline helps level the playing field for legislators to meet other deadlines prescribed in the body's internal rules that aim to keep legislators focused on their priorities for the session and to meet budget deadlines for the state.

Republican-led bills aren't immune to the funnel. Senate Study Bill 3085, which would create

the death penalty for the murder of peace officers in the state, was one of dozens of Republican-led bills that were killed by the deadline.

Among the dozens of bills killed are most of the legislation introduced by Democrats, who hold a minority in both chambers. Among the Democratic led bills was a bill to allow cities to control rent increases, which received bipartisan support in the subcommittee.

Bills targeting public library operations killed

Iowa lawmakers killed a pair of bills that would have allowed cities to take over or override public

library boards.

House Study Bill 678 and Senate Study bill 3168 did not make it out of committee by Friday and thus are dead — barring special tactics reserved by leadership to revive the bills.

The decision to nix the proposal, for now, came after an outcry from librarians and library advocates from around the state who spoke at the subcommittee hearings on the bills.

Bills affecting education were killed

A bill requiring students and teachers to sing the national anthem in schools, requiring teaching about patriotic holidays, canceling student organizations that support Palestinian efforts in the Israel-Hamas war, and a bill requiring school administrators to also teach are among several Republican-supported education-related bills that didn't make it past the deadline.

House Study Bill 587 would have required students and teachers to sing the national anthem daily in school. The bill received skepticism from Democrats in the subcommittee for forcing students to demonstrate patriotism.

Another bill, House Study Bill 604, would require teaching about patriotic holidays.

House File 2077, would cancel student organizations at Iowa Board of Regent-controlled universities that support terrorism. Critics of the bill said it would cause student organizations that support Palestine in the Israel-Hamas war to face cancellation.

Democratic priorities nixed by funnel

Iowa House and Senate Democrats priorities like lowering the cost of college for Iowa's public universities, their plan to reduce costs for Iowans, their plan to protect reproductive rights and address problems in Iowa's nursing home were mostly killed by the funnel with a few proposals still up for consideration by the appropriations committees in the House and Senate.

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OPINIONS

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COLUMN

Iowa 'religious freedom' bill protects discriminatory actions

The bill will limit the government's involvement in discrimination cases.



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

A person exits the State Law Library during the first day of the 2024 Iowa legislative session at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines on Jan. 8. The Republicans have 64 seats in the house and the Democrats have 36.



Natalie Nye
Opinions Columnist

People should not get a pass to discriminate in any and all cases under the guise of expressing religious beliefs.

Iowa Republicans in the Iowa Senate and House have decided to push for a religious freedom bill, Senate File 2095, which would further limit the cases where government could interfere in potential discrimination cases, requiring a "compelling government interest."

In other words, this would give religious groups more protections in anti-discrimination suits and religious freedom suits.

Religious freedom is a fundamental value in Iowa and the U.S., but we must ensure that there is a balance between religious freedom and the freedom to not experience discrimination. This bill could open the door for discriminatory actions such as landlords kicking out their tenants or a boss discriminating against their employees.

This bill will only make it easier to legally discriminate under the guise of freedom of religion. Damien Thompson, of Iowa Safe Schools, expressed the same concern about the bill's effects.

SF 2095 branched from the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA, which gives people a bigger loophole in the law to freely use their religion as a reason for discrimination. While Tom Chapman from the Iowa Catholic Conference argues that the SF 2095 bill gives religious people a fair hearing in legal cases, in reality, it dampens protections for already marginalized groups of people.

The RFRA was passed in 1993 and ensures people can

freely practice their religion without unnecessary interference from the government, unless there is a valid reason for such intervention. This act set the standard for how legal cases related to religious freedom should be handled but has been used as a reference to discriminate against others as well.

While the RFRA protects unlimited religious expression, it has been used to circumvent federal protections, such as permitting corporations from including contraception medications in their provided employee medical insurance plans, like in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*. An additional state law such as SF 2095 only furthers the RFRA's problematic legal applications.

Another example of a misuse of the RFRA happened in 2019, when the Trump Administration granted South Carolina's request for an exception of a federal law meant to prevent discrimination in government-funded child welfare programs. The grant allowed a federally funded welfare agency to refuse adoption for parents who don't share the same Christian beliefs as the agency, putting the children's best interest on the backburner.

Even if there are legal forms of discrimination, it does not mean it is morally correct. Religion is not an objective moral code, as established by the First Amendment. If Iowa allows more leverage for religious freedom without equal protections for potential victims of discrimination in legal cases, then this bill will only do more harm than good.

The potential increased risks of discrimination are too great to go unnoticed by Iowa lawmakers since the government has not passed the federal "Do No Harm" act, which would specify that the RFRA protects religious freedom but does not permit inflicting harm on others.

Freedom of religion is a necessary protection for everyone, especially minority religions, but Iowa lawmakers need to revise this loosely stitched bill to include protections for those who have been discriminated against under the name of religion. Without protections like "Do No Harm," both the RFRA and the new Iowa SF 2095 bill act in part as tools for prejudice and discrimination.

COLUMN

Ozempic is another toxic weight loss trend

These trends are ruining the standards of beauty for young girls.



Kennedy Lein
Opinions Contributor

American culture is rapidly transitioning away from the celebration of different body types to the promotion of instantaneously shedding pounds and sunken cheeks.

Ozempic, a drug originally created to help combat Type 2 Diabetes, is the newest trend dictating the notion of beauty and self-worth.

Although it is alarming that people voluntarily inject themselves with prescription drugs to look a little smaller, what is most problematic is the idea that we even think of these actions as acceptable or a common norm of society.

We must ask why our culture constantly changes standards for our bodies that are seen as acceptable. In what ways did American society go wrong that we feel like we need to create these beauty standards that are almost impossible to obtain without creating some sort of bodily disorder?

Ozempic is just one more in a long line of bad trends like Atkins, Mounjaro, the keto diet, OPTAVIA, Slim-Fast, and countless more. All of these options create a standard of beauty that is unrealistic and damaging.

As social media continues to be absurdly influential, we are faced with many different public figures showing off their fabricated bodies and lifestyles. Some simply ignore and deny the fact they use drugs to obtain their perfect, skinny figure, while others openly share their stories about taking on Ozempic or other weight loss drugs.

Younger generations are then taught to follow these unrealistic beauty standards. The hashtag #Ozempic has 1.3 billion views on TikTok. This craze ultimately gives praise to a toxic trend that is harmful in many ways.

Young girls are especially susceptible to the influence of this drug. The trend can create eating disorders or outrageous behavior to look like social media stars.

According to NewPort Academy, The Today Show and aol.com collaborated on the "Ideal to Real" body image survey. As a result, the survey found that 80 percent of teen girls compare themselves to images they see of celebrities. Moreover, among those girls, almost half said that celebrity images make them feel dissatisfied with the way they look.

These toxic trends can then be supplemental to eating disorders among young women. Research shows that young females who regularly engage with images on social media that portray unrealistic thinness are more likely to develop symptoms of eating disorders, according to NewPort Academy.

Additionally, according to *The Guardian*, because of the overwhelming popularity of the "miracle drug," there has been a supply shortage for those who actually need the injection. Not only can it ruin body image and self-esteem for young women, but it also takes away basic health needs for those with Type 2 Diabetes by making the drug harder to come by.

It is time to overcome this toxic skinny trend that has existed for far too long. We need to teach our young girls that who they naturally are is the true "picture perfect" look. Let's lift each other up, instead of striving for the nearly impossible body.

COLUMN

UI learning assistant program is groundbreaking

The university plans to expand its undergraduate assistant program from STEM to liberal arts courses.



Shelley Mishra
Opinions Columnist

When the first participation question popped up on the first day of a higher-level University of Iowa STEM class, I raised my hand, looked around, and waited for an undergraduate learning assistant so that I could discuss my answer to the question. But to my surprise, there were no assistants in that course.

The UI introduced the undergraduate learning assistant program into STEM classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning assistants are trained undergraduate students who engage with students in class and respond to questions posed in lectures. These assistants are different from teacher's assistants, or graduate students who facilitate learning in small discussion groups, labs, and office hours.

Learning assistants are extremely beneficial to learning, and the incorporation of them into more courses will be very helpful for students.

There are over 22,000 undergraduate and 6,000 graduate students at the UI as of fall 2023. In courses that have learning assistants, such as "Principles of Chemistry I," there are nearly 15 LAs per section of 200 students.

In response to an email from *The Daily Iowan*, Margaret Kaus of the Academic Support and Retention Office highlighted that specific chemistry, math, and human physiology courses have learning assistants. The decision to require learning assistants for a course is made after consultation with faculty. Therefore, some higher-level chemistry and calculus courses currently do not have learning assistants.

Kaus added that the program was first piloted in the "Principles of Chemistry I" course during the COVID-19 pandemic and eventually expanded to other courses. The goal is to continue the expansion of the program based on course sizes, difficulty, and progress toward degree.

According to research, implementation of the 'learning assistant' model improves student performance in concept tests and students demonstrate higher cognitive abilities. Learning assistants facilitate active learning, which, according to the definition by the Cornell Centre for Teaching Innovation involves thinking, discussing, investigating, and creating.

Learning assistants bridge the gap in classroom learning

and participation. It is a form of "peer learning" where students identify with their undergraduate assistants who are just like them. It is easier for them to ask for clarification and seek answers to questions that they are hesitant to ask from their instructors.

Undergraduate assistants are extremely beneficial to learning, and the incorporation of them into more courses will be helpful for students.

The difficulty of a course is subjective and varies from student to student. Certain components are always difficult in most of the courses, and some are inherently laborious because they introduce novel concepts to first-year students.

As the program expands, it is essential to highlight that the learning assistant model should not be limited to selected courses. The expansion and inclusion of other courses will ensure that other STEM and humanities classes, that are equally or even more difficult than the current integrated courses, can benefit too.

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Junior high students learn service work through desk-building project

Northwest Junior High students constructed 25 desks for donation in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. and his activism.

Grace Olson
News Reporter
grace-olson@uiowa.edu

The loud drone of drills and power tools rang through the hallways of Northwest Junior High in Coralville on Feb. 16.

The sounds of sawing and hammering were soon overpowered by giggles and chatter of students who sported safety glasses, supervised and assisted by Home Depot workers in bright orange shirts.

The students were tasked with building 25 desks to be donated to Iowa City students in need — a unique act of public service that the school dedicated to honor and celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. during Black History Month.

Northwest Associate Principal Kimberly Fitten said she loved that students were able to actualize MLK's life of service and activism through a non-traditional outlet, as opposed to the usual "sit and get" lessons students received in the past.

"It really goes outside of the box and allows kids to say, 'I can serve my community or be in service to others or people I've never met through this opportunity,'" Fitten said.

The Home Depot Foundation provided construction instructors at Northwest as a part of its mission to serve the local community.

Eighth-grader Kyren Battle sat at a workbench, meticulously sanding down one of four legs that would eventually become a completed desk, comparing his work and skills to that of Bob the Builder.

Battle encapsulated the mood of the room perfectly.

"Everybody's happy," he said. "Everybody's smiling while we're doing this, and it's a new experience for everybody."

Although any preteen is probably more than delighted to handle sharp objects and power tools, the desk-building event held a deeper meaning than the everyday wood shop class.

Due to inclement weather in mid-January, the MLK Day event on Jan. 29 was rescheduled for last week; however, the message remained the same. Home Depot store manager Jeremie Stroud — from the Cedar Rapids location — still stressed the importance of teaching students about MLK's life and the lasting mark he left.

"For me, it's a little bit of a drive to get here, but we do about four projects a year at each of our stores, and it was well worth the drive to come down and help out and to spend some time with the students," Stroud said.

The sentiment of giving back to kids in their school or the surrounding area resonated with eighth-grader Noah Overholt.

"It feels amazing," Overholt said. "I feel like a good person doing this."

Battle shared Overholt's joy in giving back to their community and helping those in need.



Jayce Bertrand | The Daily Iowan

A volunteer works on a desk at Northwest Junior High in Coralville on Feb. 16. The event was organized by the Home Depot Foundation to serve the local student community.



Jayce Bertrand | The Daily Iowan

A stack of desks are seen at Northwest Junior High in Coralville on Feb. 16. The middle schoolers successfully built 25 total desks for students in need.

"These are typically the students who don't participate, and they're engaged. I think it just gave them a whole other sense of what your skill set can look like in your community and how people benefit from that."

Kimberly Fitten

Northwest Associate Principal

"I like helping people because I'm a nice person," Battle said. "If I see someone fall, I'm going to help them up. Why not just help someone have a desk that's going to be used?"

The students' feelings were evident in their smiles and rowdiness when they added another desk to the pile of finished

projects stacked in the back of the classroom. Stroud said his favorite part of the day was watching students' faces light up with excitement when they saw what all their hard work went into.

"Just when we finish a desk, they have that little surprise moment because right until the end, they don't realize what they're building," Stroud said. "When they can see it finished, now they feel like they could go do a similar project, so they've got some experience there."

Fitten said students who were usually less interested in class were requesting more classes like this one and responding to the lesson.

"These are typically the students who

don't participate, and they're engaged," Fitten said. "I think it just gave them a whole other sense of what your skill set can look like in your community and how people benefit from that."

Northwest Industrial Tech teacher Jim Adams said the this event was so much bigger than just a shop class lesson.

"I think that it's important in life for students to grow up learning that you can get as much enjoyment by building something and giving it to somebody that needs it than to just do things for themselves," Adams said.

With the 2023-24 school year being Adams' first at Northwest, Fitten said the event was an exciting opportunity for

him as well as the students to showcase all the different learning opportunities and pathways students have access to.

More interest in skills trades jobs post-grad has recently been shown by Iowa high schoolers. The National Association of Home Builders announced in 2022 that more than 5,000 students from over 140 Iowa high schools attended a trades showcase with interest in joining the industry.

"How exciting is it for him to offer opportunities for us to think of other projects to do to continue to be in service, but also to generate interest from students?" Fitten asked. "Who knows what this has unlocked."

GUEST PROFILE

IC resident shares journey to his autism diagnosis

Joel Wesselink was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at 25 years old.

Nikash Pradhan
Guest Columnist
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The Living Memoirs Project aims to promote greater understanding and appreciation of diversity, religion, and culture in the Iowa City community. This article is part of a series of guest columns to showcase the project's work and is not affiliated with The Daily Iowan.

Despite the average age of diagnosis for autism spectrum disorder being just under four-and-a-half years old in the United States, Iowa City resident Joel Wesselink did not receive his diagnosis until he was 25 years old.



Wesselink

Wesselink said in the small rural town of Wapello, Iowa, there were not many resources to spread awareness about autism.

This led to his eventual misdiagnoses of ADHD, anxiety, and depression, while social workers, doctors, and teachers attempted to "correct" his stims — which individuals with autism and other neurodivergent people use as emotional regulation — such as tapping his foot, rocking back and forth.

Eventually, while studying journalism at the University of Iowa, he said he started seeing a counselor at UI Student Health, where he was informally diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in 2009. Six months later, he got fully tested but said he did not want to open the letter containing his results because he did not

want to believe that he could have autism.

Two to three years later, he confirmed this once he viewed his test results for the first time.

Although Wesselink's formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder shed light on the reason behind many of his past experiences, he said it did not come without its share of problems. His father was finally relieved that they had a diagnosis. Wesselink said his mother was saddened by the diagnosis and thought he was doomed and would be unable to find a significant other.

Others were surprised and told him he didn't look or act like someone with autism. Everyone's responses left him feeling even angrier, and he believed that people would not accept who he was, thereby causing him to burn bridges with

his friends.

Moving to Iowa City allowed him to turn his life around. By living in a more understanding environment where people are genuinely accepting and see him as a friend, he was able to find work with Access 2 Independence, an Iowa organization that empowers individuals who have disabilities.

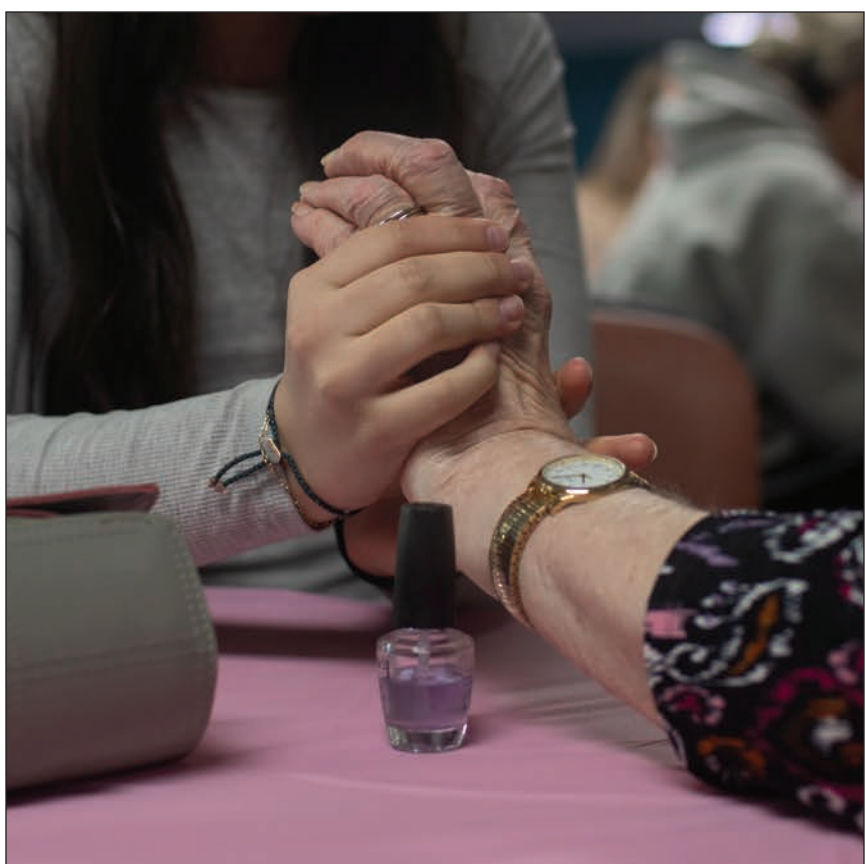
Despite his past trauma and diagnosis making it more challenging to form friendships and connections, read social cues, and carry out certain instrumental activities of daily living, he has learned to open up.

Wesselink ultimately hopes people will grow to see him and others with autism spectrum disorder with not only acceptance of their autism, but also acceptance of the people they are.



GENERATIONS CONNECT

UI students in the new Glamour Gals organization spent time with residents of the Meadows Retirement Community on Feb. 18.



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

(Top) University of Iowa third-year Maya Barros paints a Melrose Meadows Retirement Community resident's nails during a Glamour Gals event on Feb. 18. Glamour Gals aims to visit one retirement home each month to paint resident's nails and make beaded bracelets. "I just really wanted to interact with another piece of the community that I hadn't seen yet," Barros said. **(Middle top)** Resident Carol Jones makes a bracelet with UI second-year Sonia Pattisam during a Glamour Gals event on Feb. 18. "Everybody was friendly and very nice. I met Sonia, she's a pediatric nurse, that's cool," Jones said. **(Middle bottom)** Barros paints a Melrose Meadows Retirement Community residents' nails during a Glamour Gals event on Feb. 18. Barros spent the afternoon painting residents' nails and making bracelets while having conversations. **(Immediate above)** Iowa third-year Maya Barros massages a Melrose Meadows Retirement Community residents' hand after painting her nails during a Glamour Gals event on Feb. 18. **(Beside)** Barros hugs a resident as they leave the Glamour Gals event on Feb. 18. Glamour Gals works to bridge the gap between college students and older people in retirement homes by painting nails and making bracelets. "I've met so many kind souls and I've gotten the chance to hear so many great stories," Barros said.



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AND COUNTING



UPCOMING SCHEDULE

Women's basketball

Thursday, Feb. 22
At Indiana
7 p.m., Peacock and Hawkeye Radio Network

Sunday, Feb. 25
vs. Illinois
Noon, FS1 and Hawkeye Radio Network

Men's basketball

Saturday, Feb. 24
At Illinois
1:15 p.m., Big Ten Network and Hawkeye Radio Network

Tuesday, Feb. 27
vs. Penn State
8 p.m., Big Ten Network and Hawkeye Radio Network

Women's wrestling

Friday, Feb. 23
NCWWC Regionals
Simpson College
Indianola, Iowa

Baseball

Feb. 23-25
Jacksonville College
Baseball Classic

Softball

Feb. 23-25
UNF/Jacksonville
Tournament

OVERTIME THRILLER

The Iowa men's basketball team earned a thrilling 88-86 overtime victory over No. 20 Wisconsin on Feb. 17. Despite trailing by 11 points early in the first half, the Hawkeyes clawed their way back into the contest, and fourth-year Tony Perkins won the game with



Perkins

a scrambling layup with only seconds left in the extra period. The victory marks Iowa's first win over a ranked team this season. After the buzzer sounded, Perkins was mobbed by his teammates. He became visibly emotional as he was thinking about his late grandmother after scoring the game-winning field goal. "I know she's up top watching me, but it's a different feeling when she's right here watching me face-to-face," he said in a postgame interview with Big Ten Network. "I wish she was able to see it ... She probably would've been the loudest person in the gym." Owen Freeman led the team in scoring with 20 points and 12 rebounds - his fifth double-double this season - while Perkins chipped in 18 points and four boards.

SENIOR DAY

Iowa men's wrestling closed out its home slate against Wisconsin on Feb. 18 and won, 34-7. This was a much-needed win for the Hawkeyes, as they lost the last two dual meets against Michigan and Penn State. The Hawkeyes took down the Badgers 30 times during the meet, eclipsing 120 total match points. Iowa recognized its seniors on Sunday, including Real Woods, Brody Teske, Tony Cassioppi, and Abe Assad. "These seniors that we just honored, they're not done," head coach Tom Brands said. "They're still backing their teammates for the last run. They are wired the right way, and that's the biggest tribute, the biggest compliment I can give them." The fourth-ranked Hawkeyes will be back on the mat Feb. 25 against Oklahoma State.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I think she's going to go down in the history books arguably as the greatest player to grace our collegiate sports."

South Carolina women's basketball coach **Dawn Staley** on Caitlin Clark

STAT OF THE WEEK

5

Iowa men's basketball's Owen Freeman's five double-doubles this season are the most by a first-year Hawkeye since 1993-94.

BASEBALL

Unfazed from the outset

There are high expectations for this year's Iowa baseball team.



Averi Coffee | The Daily Iowan

Iowa pitcher Brody Brecht throws the ball during a baseball game between Iowa and Ohio State at Duane Banks Baseball Stadium on May 5, 2023. The Hawkeyes defeated the Buckeyes 16-9.

Jake Olson
Sports Reporter
jake-olson@uiowa.edu

Entering the 2024 season, the Iowa baseball team faces its biggest preseason expectations in program history.

Last season, the Hawkeyes made a name for themselves at the national level in college baseball. Head coach Rick Heller guided the team to a 44-win season, tying for the most in program history.

Iowa followed the historic regular season with its first trip to the NCAA Tournament in six years, falling to Indiana State in an opportunity to advance to the Super Regionals.

With the bulk of the team's core returning after making it to the Terre Haute Regional last spring, many people are predicting the Hawkeyes to return to the tournament yet again, potentially going even further this time around. For third-year starting pitcher Brody Brecht, the success last year hasn't fazed him, nor has it rattled the rest of the Hawkeye squad.

"It's just taking it one day at a time," Brecht said. "All that stuff is preseason and means nothing at the end of the year. It's just taking

it one day at a time. We just ask ourselves what we can do to get better and be ready to go."

It has been an unusual offseason for the hard-throwing righty. After deciding to quit the Iowa football team and completely focus on baseball, Brecht has had a full offseason to train and work under the watch of Iowa pitching coach Sean McGrath.

"[This offseason] was just really good for the body, being able to take some time off and regroup," Brecht said. "It was just really beneficial to go through the fall and learn to be a full-year baseball player."

Brecht also said this offseason was a good time to work on the mental aspect of the game. Being able to slow the game down when his "stuff isn't all there" has been a heavy focus since last season.

"I've just got to be in a good place mentally - visualizing, getting my breathing, and being able to reset," Brecht said. "Slow things down when I fall behind. Being able to rest was something I had to learn about. I'm not going to feel my best every time out there, so I just have to go up there and get it done and put the team in the best position to succeed."

Despite being named one of the captains on this year's squad, Brecht sees a lot of leadership in the entire roster, harping that this group wants to focus on being a player-led team.

"You have the label as captain, but I think the whole team has leadership throughout," Brecht said. "Coach-led teams are pretty good, but great teams come from within and being player-led. I am just trying to set an example and hold myself accountable."

Brecht heads into the season on the Golden Spikes Award Watch List from USA Baseball, an award that names the top player in the country in all of amateur baseball.

Brecht was also named a preseason first-team All-American by Perfect Game, D1 Baseball, and National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association.

In Brecht's first outing against Seton Hall, he threw for 11 strikeouts in four and one-third innings pitched, giving up one hit in the process.

The Hawkeyes traveled to Charleston, South Carolina, where they went 2-1 in the Shipyard Tournament. After beating Seton Hall and Ball State on Feb. 16-17, Iowa dropped to Lehigh on Feb. 18 to finish the three-game stretch.

Q&A | JORDAN JOHNSON

Iowa thrower shares team memories



Jordan Johnson
Fourth-year
Thrower
Quincy, Illinois
Finance major

Mia Boulton
Sports Reporter
mia-m-boulton@uiowa.edu

The Daily Iowan: What's your favorite place to eat in Iowa City?
Jordan Johnson: Estella's. No hesitation.

What was your first job?
It was actually here. I was working at the [Hawkeye Tennis and Recreation Complex] at the front desk.

How did you get into that?
A couple of my teammates were working at recreation facilities and the Field House, so I tried to work there. They needed people at the HTRC, so I got sent there.

Do you have a favorite childhood memory?
I don't know - I think just those summer days with the whole family together doing whatever it might be. There's nothing I can pinpoint specifically.

Is how you define success different today than it was when you were younger?
I just define it as getting better every day. Whether it is just fixing something technically or you actually do throw farther, any small improvement is a way that you can get better. I guess that is different from me in high school where I thought success is if you win.

What's one thing that can instantly make your day better?
For me, it's usually coming to practice and hanging out with all of my friends here - either that or talking to my girlfriend in the morning.

Who on the team never fails to make you laugh?
I've got so many people from past years that were like that. This year, I would say Austin Busch. He's always got something to say.

Do you prefer music or podcasts?
I prefer music. I grew up with music. My mom was a music teacher, and my sister is in music education right now. I've been surrounded by it my whole life, so music all the way.

POINT | COUNTERPOINT

How many games will Iowa baseball win?



Jake Olson
Sports Reporter

40

The Iowa baseball team enters the 2024 season with some of the highest expectations in program history. Last season, the Hawkeyes eclipsed the 40-win mark and tied the program record for the most wins in a season with 44.

While I don't think the Hawkeyes will break that record this year, I still see Iowa comfortably eclipsing the 40-win mark under the guidance of head coach Rick Heller.

Coming back for the Hawkeyes are a slew of players who helped the team reach the NCAA Tournament for the first time in six years.

Flexing one of the best starting rotations in the Big Ten, Iowa returned two of their three-weekend starters from last year in third-years Brody Brecht and Marcus Morgan. Both players

posted a sub-3.80 ERA and combined for 182 strikeouts in 142 innings of production.

In the bullpen, third-year Jack Whitlock returns after having the best season out of any relief pitcher. Throwing for 36 innings, the Hutchinson Community College transfer posted a 2.52 ERA while striking out 36 batters.

Highlighting the offense is the third-year tandem of outfielder Sam Petersen and third baseman Raider Tello.

Petersen hit for a .319 batting average while posting the third-best OPS on the team with 1.003. Tello impressed in his first season with the Hawkeyes, hitting for a .306 batting average and driving in 48 runs for Iowa.

While the Hawkeyes have a difficult non-conference schedule against teams like Auburn, Virginia, and Ole Miss, they avoid some of the better teams in the Big Ten.

The Hawkeyes can avoid both Indiana and Maryland, two teams that are projected to be fighting for a spot in the NCAA Tournament. While series against Rutgers and Nebraska will be challenging, not playing the Hoosiers or Terrapins is big for this season's win column.



Brad Schultz
Sports Editor

45

In my short time following the Iowa baseball program, I have been blessed to witness the incredible rise of the program under Rick Heller. There's been plenty of talented squads under his tenure, but he looks to have his best team yet in 2024.

Iowa enters the season as the favorite to win the Big Ten, something the program hasn't accomplished since 1990. If that's not enough, many analysts are predicting a run to the College World Series for the first time since 1972.

On paper, this is one of the deepest rosters in school history, and I have no doubt that they'll back up the preseason hype.

The Hawkeyes are strong at every position, but the main focal

point of this squad must be its pitching staff, which posted a 4.19 ERA a season ago.

Third-year flamethrower Brody Brecht is the most notable of the bunch, but fellow third-year Marcus Morgan and second-year Cade Obermueller have a wealth of starting pitching experience that should pay dividends as the season goes on.

As for the offense, Iowa hit a .295 average as a team last season, with six players in the lineup hitting over .300. Not only that, but the Hawkeyes also clubbed 70 home runs and 452 RBIs.

Iowa lost standout Keaton Anthony to the MLB draft, but third-years Raider Tello, Sam Petersen, and fourth-year Kyle Huckstorf all return and should continue to provide production in the lineup. This lineup is legit, and every batter is more than capable of doing damage at the plate.

If you combine the sheer amount of talent on the roster with a weaker conference schedule, I'm confident this club can win a program-record 45 games this season.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Captain Kate

The "glue" of the Iowa women's basketball team has nearly doubled her scoring output from last season.

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In basketball, whenever a team has a star player dominating and leading it to victory night in and night out, said team also needs an "enforcer."



Martin

For the No. 4 Iowa women's basketball team, Caitlin Clark is undoubtedly the star, but guard Kate Martin is the enforcer who makes sure the team keeps track of its goals.



Clark

Martin's importance on this team goes beyond just a nickname bestowed by media. Coaches and teammates say the sixth-year senior is the lifeline of this 23-3 Iowa squad looking to make another deep run in March.

"She just cares so much [that] if Kate leaves practice for a minute or two to go to the bathroom, you can tell the mood changes," assistant coach Jan Jensen said. "It gets so much more quiet."



Bluder

make sure the team is prepared and to offer veteran advice.

"She's our captain. She's our leader. She's somebody we look to," Bluder said of Martin. Martin's unmatched passion showed during the Hawkeyes' most recent win against Michigan. During the second quarter, Wolverines guard Jordan Hobbs got a vicious block on Martin, sending the Iowa guard to the floor, only for Martin to quickly recover and get a chase-down block of her own on Michigan forward Alyssa Crockett.

Amid the cheering fans at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, Martin celebrated her play by flexing to the crowd and letting out a roar.

"[Plays like these] give me some emotion, and it's exciting, and it brings up the energy," Martin said. "My teammates get excited, the bench gets excited, and I think we need that."

Since joining the program in the summer of 2018, Martin has seen the popularity of the Iowa women's team — and the sport in general — explode, as she has played aside the likes of former Big Ten Players of the Year Megan Gustafson, Kathleen Doyle, and now Clark.



Gustafson



Doyle

Martin redshirted her very first year after tearing her ACL and meniscus a number of days before arriving at the UI and played just 202 minutes. Since then, the former Edwardsville, Illinois, resident has seen her numbers and role on the team explode and has been a starter for the Hawkeyes since the 2020-21 season.

Martin played a big role in Iowa's NCAA Tournament run last season, including scoring 16 points and grabbing six rebounds in a Sweet 16 win against No. 6 Col-



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guard Kate Martin prepares to shoot the ball during a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89.

orado, as well as recording 13 points and six assists in the National Championship against LSU, where the Hawkeyes fell, 102-85.

Martin was unsure heading into this season whether she was going to exercise her extra COVID-19 year of eligibility but decided to return partly to pursue her master's degree in sports and recreation management. Some meaningful convincing by Clark and some of her other teammates also played a role in this decision.

"I'm going to try to figure out a way to get her back for a seventh year because I don't want to have to come back if she's not here," Clark joked.

Entering the year knowing it would be her last suiting up for the Black and Gold, Martin said she has made an effort to appreciate every opportunity this season, whether it be playing in Kinnick Stadium in front of a record 55,646 fans or selling out arenas across the country wherever Iowa plays.

Living in the moment this season has proven successful for Martin. She has recorded her career-best in points and rebounds per game over 26 games with 13.2 and 6.4, respectively, while also shooting above 50 percent from the field.

This season, Martin also became the first

Iowa women's player ever to amass 900-plus points, 500-plus rebounds, 400-plus assists, 120-plus steals, and 60-plus blocks in a career, and passed 1,000 career points on Jan. 13 in a win against Indiana.

"It's just super cool," Martin said. "Not everybody gets to do that in their college career, and yeah, it took me five years, but I'm still going to run with it."

She said her experience starting in 126 games for Iowa over the past four seasons has allowed her to see the game differently this season.

Though Martin still aspires to play professionally once her collegiate career wraps up, she said she wants to get into coaching once her playing days are officially over — supported by Jensen, Martin's aunt, who is confident her coaching career will be long and successful.

"I want to build up strong female leaders just like coach Bluder has done to us," Martin said. "I want to be around the game for the rest of my life."

More online

Read more Iowa women's basketball coverage online at dailyiowan.com.

MEN'S WRESTLING

Rocky road for Real Woods

The 141-pounder has struggled as of late but bounced back on senior day.

Isaac Elzinga
Sports Reporter
isaac-elzinga@uiowa.edu



Woods

Iowa men's wrestler Real Woods was undefeated and in the NCAA title match just over a year ago, but it's a different story this season for the 141-pounder.

Woods, who started the season ranked No. 1, dropped back-to-back matches during the Hawkeyes' two losses against Michigan and Penn State. He struggled to score a takedown in those bouts, something the 2023 Big Ten Champion had no problem doing in his first year with the Hawkeyes.

Woods showcased an offensive and aggressive style last season that earned him 12 bonus point victories, including four tech falls and two pins.

"When you're the target, people are going to prepare and strategize against you," Woods said earlier this season. "People are going to be more stingy. Wrestlers are going to come in, and they're going to be ready to go."

The Stanford transfer has a 13-2 record this season with six bonus-point victories, one major decision, and five tech falls. Woods also placed first at the 2023 Sol-

dier Salute and beat North Carolina's No. 5 Lachlan McNeil, 8-4, in the finals.

Woods had a promising start to the Big Ten schedule, earning three straight ranked wins. The All-American beat No. 7 Brock Hardy 8-2 in Iowa's first Big Ten dual against Nebraska before beating Minnesota's No. 17 Vance VomBaur 5-2. He then earned his first bonus point win of the conference schedule against Purdue's No. 32 Greyson Clark 8-0.

Woods' two losses came against Michigan's No. 19 Sergio Lemley and Penn State's No. 1 Beau Bartlett. Lemley beat Woods 14-2 and nearly pinned him in the match's final seconds. Bartlett beat Woods 7-2 in front of a sold-out Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Before the losses, Woods was missing from Iowa's lineup against Illinois and Northwestern. Brody Teske wrestled in place of Woods and won both matches. It's unknown if Woods was left out due to injury or if head coach Tom Brands just wanted to give the redshirt senior a rest before the final duals of the year.

Brands took some responsibility for Woods' two losses.

"I think, you know, it's partly my fault," Brands said. "I try to maybe push him into certain things. Just go out and wrestle your match how you want to wrestle and score a lot of points. It doesn't matter how you get it done."

Woods said he's still developing as a wrestler, particularly in his decision-making. He's trying to figure out when to shoot takedowns and be aggressive or adopt a patient approach and opt for precision. He described it as an "interesting recipe," but added that figuring it out is challenging him and helping him grow.

"I take a lot of pride in staying calm," Woods said on his approach on the mat. "Growing up, it was something that was really instilled [in me] to try to be collected while in the match and not get rattled."

That calm approach helped Woods get back in the win column on Feb. 18 against

Wisconsin. It was Woods' chance to say goodbye to the Hawkeye faithful, and he did so by pinning his opponent Felix Lettini in the second period. Woods thanked the fans for their support by blowing kisses to the crowd and making a hand heart to the camera as he ran off the mat.

"Every win is elevating, and even losses are elevating," Woods said. "I think those losses were more elevating than this win particularly."

His dreams of becoming an NCAA Champion are still on the line as the Hawkeyes inch closer to March.

"I'm just ready to move forward," Woods said. "I'm ready for the postseason."

FAST USER NADA KNACKS SANKA PEP ISITART BAILE BULLET SAHARANS LOAF ANTI BEEB SPLIT UTERTI MAGIC ASKA ITHELP NERO TEASER GRASS KEPTFIT EDITH ORCA LARIAT STRIP ARANS YEAHNO IGIVE CONK NOTAT ODIE STOLIT HOLD AMIE LIMA AKFTER SODA FIT ATE SEER

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The Daily Iowan Students consider caucuses. Iowa City Airport evicts unhoused individuals. Taylor, Thomas see last meeting as IC city councilors.

JOB OPPORTUNITY Executive Editor for the 2024-25 year. The board of Student Publications, Inc., which oversees The Daily Iowan, is seeking applicants for the 2024-25 Executive Editor position.

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6 POINTS AWAY

Cody Blissett | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark goes up for a shot to score the first points of the night during a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89.



3 POINTS AWAY

Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark shoots the ball during a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89.

THE RECORD-BREAKING SHOT



Cody Blissett | The Daily Iowan

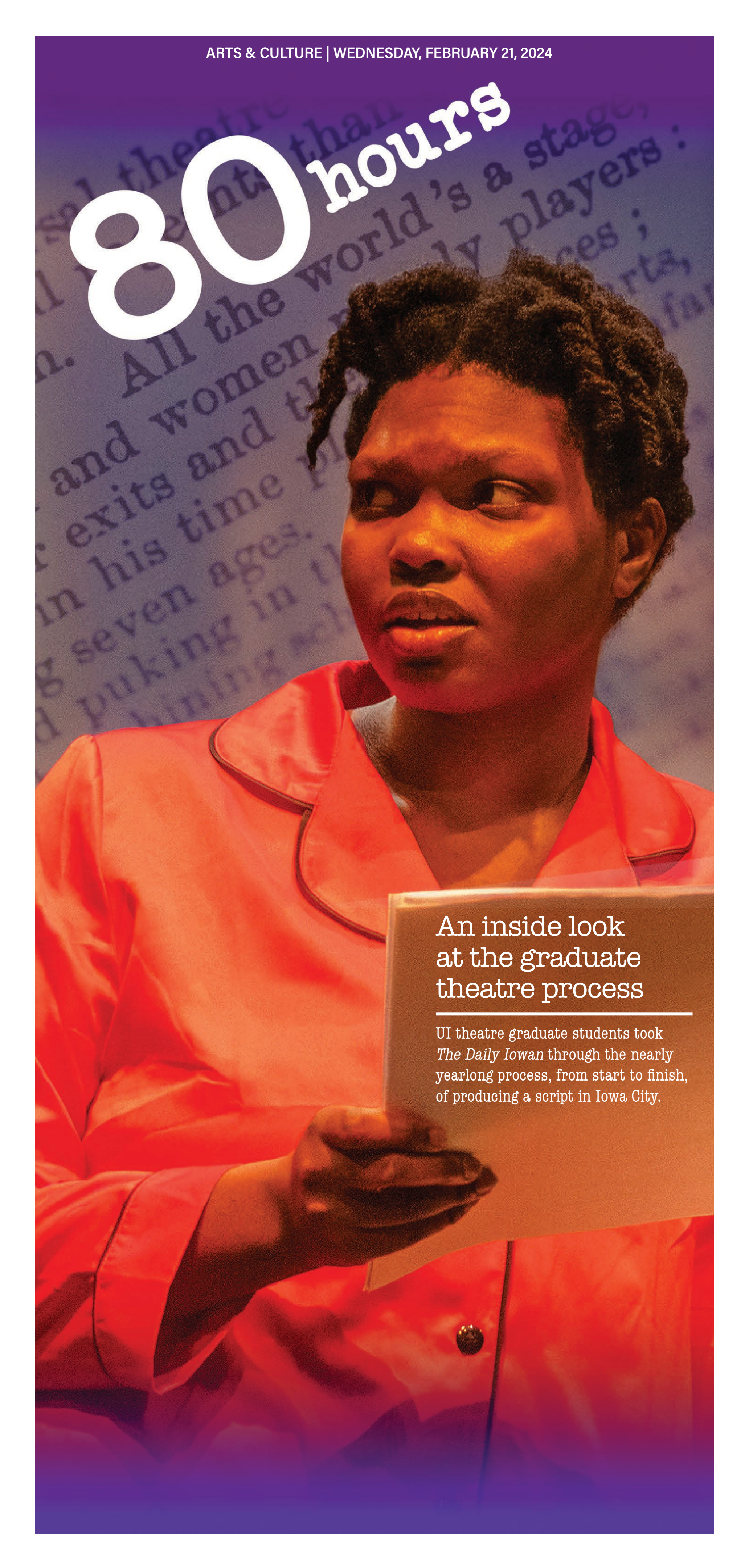
Iowa guard Caitlin Clark goes up for the record-breaking shot during a women's basketball game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 106-89. Clark previously surpassed Iowa's all-time scoring leader, Megan Gustafson, who held the record with 2,805 points and became the all-time leading scorer in Big Ten history on Jan. 31 in a game against Northwestern. Clark also became Big Ten's all-time assist leader, passing Ohio State's Samantha Prahalis who held the spot with 901 assists. On Feb. 11, in a game against Nebraska, Clark became the sixth NCAA women's basketball player to record her 1,000th career assist.



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

The crowd cheers as Caitlin Clark scores a three-point basket, making her the new NCAA all-time women's basketball leading scorer in a game between No. 4 Iowa and Michigan at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 15. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wolverines, 89-106.

80 hours

A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a bright red jacket, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is holding a white script or document. The background is a dark purple gradient with faint, overlapping text in a light blue color, including phrases like "All the world's a stage", "and women", "exits and the", "in his time", "seven ages", and "puking in".

An inside look at the graduate theatre process

UI theatre graduate students took *The Daily Iowan* through the nearly yearlong process, from start to finish, of producing a script in Iowa City.

Playwriting grad student Alex Lead opens up about the UI's production process

His gallery production, "West Illinois Glass House," opened on Feb. 16 at the University of Iowa. The *DI* followed the production process from start to finish.

Grant Darnell
Arts Reporter
grant-darnell@uiowa.edu

Alex Lead sits in Alan McVey Theatre and hears his written words spoken aloud for the dozenth time, following along with the script on his phone.

His play, "West Illinois Glass House," premiered at the University of Iowa's Theatre Building on Feb. 16, fulfilling the final step of an almost year-long process.

Lead, a second-year graduate student at the UI, has developed the play's script since March 2023. The script was constantly revised in and out of rehearsals as the production progressed.

Before his time at the UI, Lead was primarily a writer but also worked on and performed in various sketch shows and stand-up comedies. For his master's of fine arts thesis next year, he plans to perform a one-man show in which he will play the late comedian Richard Pryor.

"West Illinois Glass House" follows a Black family whose matriarch is on trial during the 2008 recession. After experiencing the recession himself, Lead felt inspired to write it from his now grown-up perspective.

"I was thinking about a lot of different things, that's usually how I get my ideas, for scripts for plays or screenplays or whatever else," he said. He emphasized how his process usually involves a multitude of ideas that converge into one.

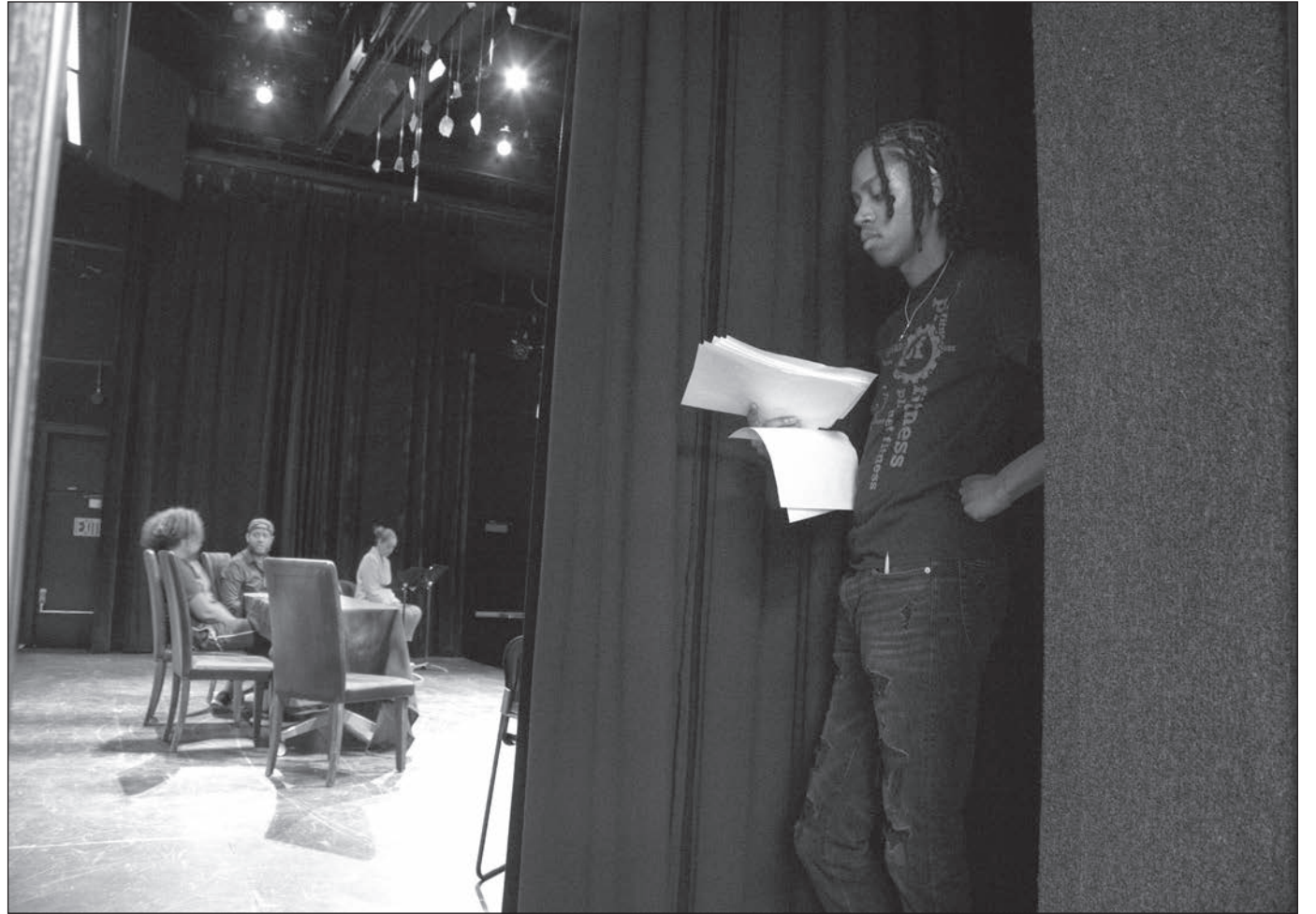
Second-year playwriting graduate students at the UI are given the opportunity to produce a "gallery" show: a small-scale performance with a limited budget designed to give them production experience.

Once the somewhat final version of the script was completed and submitted on April 1 of last year, faculty paired Lead with director and first-year graduate student Josh Turner.

Lead said Turner has brought a lot to the play with his perspective.

"His understanding of not just social justice, but social work, like the actual, nitty-gritty details of this thing that we just call 'the system,'" he said.

Turner was drawn to the script because of the relationship between three brothers, who are a central component of the play. He cited the resilience of the brothers and how much they want to be there for each other, even if sometimes they can't, was what resonated with him the most.



Kylen Phillips reads his lines backstage during a performance of "West Illinois Glass House" in the Theatre Building on Feb. 15.

Ava Neumaier | The Daily Iowan

"What would these people say to each other if they weren't scared?" he said. "What they wish they could say to each other is the main point that runs through it."

From there, Lead and Turner staffed designers, lighting specialists, and a cast of performers.

Actress and first-year graduate student Cianon Jones, who played the lead character referred to only as The Defendant, was also drawn to the play in its early stages.

"Alex brought it [to class] last semester and I was one of the people who read for the workshop," Jones said. "It's a really beautiful story with a heavy family focus of this Black family in the landscape of 2008 and everything that comes with that."

Before rehearsals began, Lead observed his words read aloud by the play's cast for the first time, ready to make revisions if necessary.

The play's rehearsals began on Jan. 29, comprising 21 days of prep in total before the performance dates of Feb. 16-18.

At this stage, Turner and Lead asked the actors to dig deep into how these characters operate within the script.

"We're just taking inventory of all our discoveries to then give that information to the playwright to say 'Oh, this is how it feels as an actor to perform your words,' and then through that kind of discovery we're finding the performance," Turner said.

Lead and Turner became akin to audi-

ence members as they watched attentively, only occasionally breaking the silence to speak to each other when they had notes on certain moments or scenes. The script was flexible, and changes would be made if the director, writer, or actors deemed it necessary.

"It's up to each individual team whether or not they want to implement those changes or whether they more so want to stick with the version that's set before rehearsal," Lead said.

Lead was also involved as a producer, a role that entailed coordinating designers and technical roles while ensuring everything in the production was on track.

For Turner, the experience of having the playwright in the room during rehearsals was invaluable.

"I think it's a unique experience to be able to have the playwright in the room and lend questions to them and have the actors give questions to them," Turner said, adding that Lead's presence at rehearsals provided a wellspring of information.

Jones echoed this sentiment, emphasizing how these changes helped the play to find its voice, but also her own voice as an actor.

As Lead and Turner watched the actors hit their marks, laughs could be heard from the house when certain comedic moments resonated.

But aside from the humor evident in the play, Lead considers his work a drama first and foremost.

After rehearsals were complete, the play debuted to a public audience for the first time. On the evening of Feb. 16, the small-scale production was finally finished.

Lead hoped that audiences could find something in the play that resonated with them.

"I want people to see something in it, maybe a person, maybe an event, maybe an attitude that they recognize from their own life, from themselves," he said. "If that puts somebody into a state of contemplation or thought, I feel like that's what success as a writer is for me."

Lead also feels representation is vitally important for a story like this.

"At the end, it's a portrait of a healthy Black American family who has each other's backs," he said. "I think that images like that are important for everybody to see, inside or outside the demographic."

He also emphasized how much he enjoys when people come to him with thoughts and feelings regarding his work that he didn't intend. Turner, as the play's director, shared this sentiment.

"I hope that people can attach to parts of the play and get the unique experience of seeing a play in this stage of development," Turner said, further emphasizing the quality of Lead's script. "I hope for Alex that seeing the end product of this process gives him more encouragement to keep writing."

"What would these people say to each other if they weren't scared?"

Alex Lead

UI Graduate Playwriting Student

Lead said the relationship between the brothers and the family is a critical element of the play, noting a significant question he explores in the play.

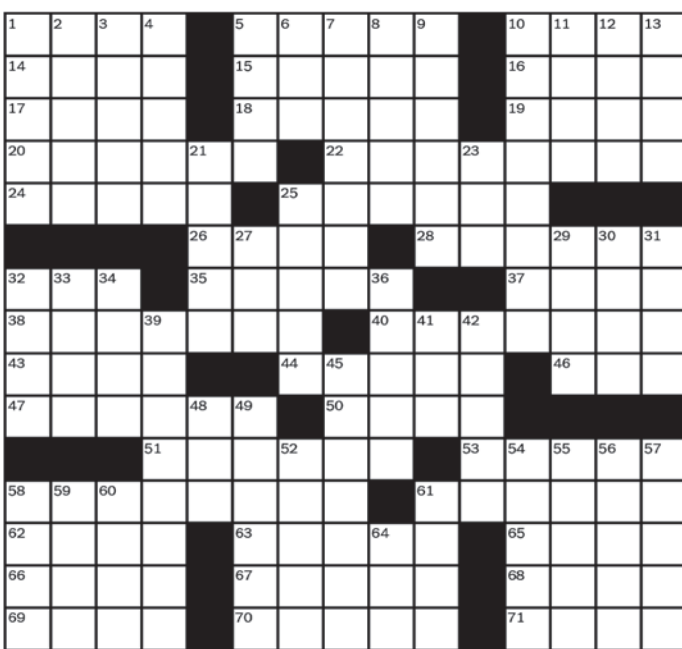
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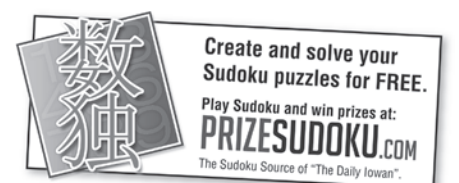


- "But ..."
- 40 Stayed in shape
 - 43 Big bundle
 - 44 Novelist Wharton
 - 46 Eroded, with "away"
 - 47 Ultra-rapid transit options
 - 50 Orcinus ____ (marine species)
 - 51 Bit of cowhand's gear
 - 53 Game that everyone but one person barely loses?
 - 58 Many North Africans
 - 61 "Interesting idea, but ... huh-uh"
 - 62 Kick back
 - 63 "OK, that's it for me!"
 - 65 Crash, with "out"
 - 66 Prefix with thesis
 - 67 Silently acknowledge
 - 68 Toon with yellow fur
 - 69 U.K. network moniker, with "the"
 - 70 Smirnoff competitor, familiarly
 - 71 One with an eye on the future?
- 9 -
- 10 1:30 or 2:30, e.g.
 - 11 Drop
 - 12 Shade of green
 - 13 -
 - 21 Mother in the Hundred Acre Wood
 - 23 Sierra Nevada, e.g.
 - 25 Really ticked off
 - 27 What you might do on the side of caution
 - 29 Two-seater, perhaps
 - 30 Toolbar heading
 - 31 -
 - 32 ____ Xtra (soft drink)
 - 33 Biblical twin
 - 34 -
 - 36 -
 - 39 Bend the truth, say
 - 41 When doubled, "You get the idea"
 - 42 Adolescence, for one
 - 45 "Copy me"
 - 48 You might play something by this
 - 49 -
 - 52 Expensive bar
 - 54 Section of Chipotle's menu
 - 55 ____ Island
 - 56 Bellybutton type, informally
 - 57 -
 - 58 Big slice
 - 59 Top-notch
 - 60 "I am free of all prejudices. I ____ everyone equally": W. C. Fields
 - 61 Subject of a hairy hoax
 - 64 Kilmer of Batman fame

- Across**
- 1 Accelerated path of advancement
 - 5 Ballot with votes for multiple parties
 - 10 Cherish
 - 14 ____ manual
 - 15 Pre-nursing homes?
 - 16 Female friend, in French
 - 17 Nothin'
 - 18 Potter's area of expertise
 - 19 Kind of bean in succotash
 - 20 Special talents
 - 22 Inquire about the health of
 - 24 Product once advertised
- with the slogan "Everything you love about coffee without everything you don't"
- Down**
- 1 Low states
 - 2 Downward dog in yoga, e.g.
 - 3 Hatchback alternative
 - 4 -
 - 5 Totals
 - 6 Org. that may be involved in field trip planning
 - 7 Musical passages with smooth, connected notes
 - 8 Kind of terrier

Easy

8		5	3	2	
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4	8		7	2	9
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6	2	1		5	3
3			1		
	6	2		9	
	5	9	8		1



Medium

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3		6	8			7
6						5
9			1	7		3
4	1	3				5
		5	2			4
					2	

CALENDAR WEEKLY EVENTS

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 22

• PHIL DOROTHY DRAWING STUDIO

Bring your own drawing materials to this drawing group, which celebrates the memory of Phil Dorothy.

6:30 P.M. | ARTIFACTORY
120 N. DUBUQUE ST.

• FACULTY CHAMBER RECITAL

UI faculty members Doreen Lee, Katie Wolfe, and Tony Arnone will bring a free and open-to-the-public performance to the Voxman Music Building.

7:30 P.M. | VOXMAN MUSIC BUILDING
93 E. BURLINGTON ST.

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 23

• BOOK DISCUSSION AT PRAIRIE LIGHTS

Writers' Workshop alum Christina Cooke will read from her new novel and discuss the work with fellow Workshop alum Sarah Thankam Mathews.

7 P.M. | PRAIRIE LIGHTS BOOKSTORE
15 S. DUBUQUE ST.

• BEN BAILEY

Emmy-winning comedian Ben Bailey performs at the Englert with John Bush.

7:30 P.M. | ENGLERT THEATRE
221 E. WASHINGTON ST.

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 24

• THE MOUNTAINTOP

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall's thrilling portrayal of the night before Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination opens Riverside Theatre.

7:30 P.M. | RIVERSIDE THEATRE
119 E. COLLEGE ST.

• BODY PARTS

Study the drawing of unique subjects with Artifactory's Saturday morning art class led by Beppie Weiss.

10 A.M. | ARTIFACTORY
120 N. DUBUQUE ST.

• BOOK FAIR AT ONE BOOK TWO BOOK

Iowa City's youth book festival hosts a book fair in The Chauncey building to engage the community's youth readers.

10 A.M. | FILMSCENE AT THE CHAUNCEY
404 E. COLLEGE ST.

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 25

• FALSE PROVIDENCE WITH EMPTY GRAVES, SPEWING, & MUTT IA

Doors open at 5 p.m. for a night of hard rock and metal music.

6 P.M. | GABE'S IOWA CITY
330 E. WASHINGTON ST.

• SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX

Classic pop jams come to the Englert as Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox aims to explore the most popular genres of modern music performed by a group of musicians who are sure to move the audience.

7:30 P.M. | ENGLERT THEATRE
221 E. WASHINGTON ST.

MONDAY

FEBRUARY 26

• TOP CHEF: DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY

The 14th annual Top Chef: Downtown competition comes to Graduate Iowa City. Foodies can vote on People's Choice winners in several culinary categories.

5 P.M. | GRADUATE IOWA CITY
210 S. DUBUQUE ST.

LITERATURE

IC youth writers flaunt talent

The One Book Two Book festival seeks to honor student writers.

Riley Dunn
Arts Reporter
riley-dunn@uiowa.edu

Since she was five years old, Cora Beland has been a writer. Granted, that was only seven years ago.

The Iowa City Community School District Northwest Junior High seventh-grader's stories have touched the hearts of many people, as evidenced by her recognition in the annual Iowa City One Book Two Book children's literature festival.

Cora's story was inspired by her own experiences with her family.

"This year I wrote a story — partly based on true events — about going on a boat ride," Cora said, "But the drama part at the end was fictional."

Cora's story won recognition in the "The Write Stuff" category, which judges one-page original pieces based on language, clarity, structure, and emotional impact. First through eighth grade students had the opportunity to win recognition in this category, as well as in the "From the Heart" category and the honorable mentions category.

"From the Heart" judges students' writing based on creativity, passion, and expressiveness, while an honorable mention includes all other qualifying students. Winning students were selected from Iowa City schools and evaluated by a team at ACT in Iowa City.

The celebration, which will honor the creative talents of 26 young students, occurs from Feb. 24-25.

"This year, I wrote a poem about the Terracotta Warriors because I've actually



Photo contributed by John Kenyon

done research on it," Oceana Zhang, a sixth grader at Wickham Elementary, shared. "I visited China last summer with my family and I got to see it in person, which is pretty cool."

Oceana, Cora, and the other Iowa City student winners will be honored on Feb. 25 in the festival's annual "Write Out Loud" event.

"Iowa City does a great job of recognizing kids who do band or sports, but writing can be a solitary pursuit," said John Kenyon, the executive director of Iowa City

UNESCO City of Literature. "This festival gives kids an outlet to write and honors those who are best at it. We try to make this a special day."

More online

Read a longer version of this article at dailyiowan.com.



PLAYLIST

MUSICALS ON THE BIG SCREEN

WHO AM I? | Hugh Jackman, "Les Misérables"

WORLD BURN | Renéé Rapp, Cast of "Mean Girls"

WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW | Ben Platt, Cast of "Dear Evan Hansen"

HONEY, HONEY | Cast of "Mamma Mia"

MISTER CELLOPHANE | John C. Reilly

REVIEW

'Hairspray' costars tame flyaways, not dreams



From the audience to backstage to the spotlight, UI alum Amy Rodriguez and Iowan Sarah Hayes will perform in their first national tour at Hancher.

Avi Lapchick
Arts Editor
olivia-lapchick@uiowa.edu

Both Sarah Hayes and Amy Rodriguez were present at a national Broadway tour stop of "Rent" at Hancher Auditorium in 2019 — Hayes as an audience member and Rodriguez as a student stagehand.

After nearly five years, the two will return to Hancher this weekend. This time, however, they will both be center-stage, costarring in the Tony Award-winning national tour of "Hairspray."

While a theatre arts major at the University of Iowa, Rodriguez spent three years working the touring productions at Hancher. Often, she would envision herself in the spotlight rather than operating it.

"I'd get up on the stage, just look out and be like, 'Oh my gosh. This house is huge,'" Rodriguez recalled.

While still in school, Rodriguez auditioned for the lead role of Tracy Turnblad in the Royal Caribbean cruise's year-long production of "Hairspray." In 2022, less than a year after she graduated, she booked it.

When her tour docked in March of 2023, Rodriguez made the big move from her hometown of Schaumburg, Illinois — a northwest suburb of Chicago — to New York City. But her time as the loveable Broadway protagonist was far from over.

After only a few weeks of living in Manhattan, Rodriguez got a call back for a role she'd been dreaming of since 2019: the lead in the national

Broadway tour of "Hairspray," which was scheduled to stop at Hancher.

When Hayes sent in her self-tape for the same production, she did it solely on a friend's recommendation. For Hayes, she felt it was a shot in the dark.

"I didn't think I would be competitive on that level, but I thought, 'Well, why not?'" Hayes said.

Hayes, who grew up in Clinton, Iowa, had only been professionally acting for a few years when she got her callback for the role of the play's main antagonist, Velma Von Tussle.

Up against actresses with decades of experience at the callback auditions in New York City, Hayes was overcome with emotion when she learned she had booked the role. Even now, Hayes' eyes still well when thinking back to the moment she learned she would return to Hancher and face the seat she once sat in from centerstage.

"I remember vividly how I felt walking into [Hancher] for the first time and sitting in my seat. I was right on the aisle," Hayes recalled, fighting back happy tears during an interview with *The Daily Iowan*. "I didn't dream at that point that I would ever get to be on that stage, but that performance kept the love of theater alive for me."

More online

Read a longer version of this article at dailyiowan.com.

REVIEW

'The Sweet East' depicts bizarre US journey

Aside from a few minor redundancies, "The Sweet East" captures lesser-known eastern U.S. culture.

Caden Gantenbein
Arts Reporter
caden-gantenbein@uiowa.edu

I had very little expectations going into director Sean Price Williams' "The Sweet East." What was initially portrayed as a charming indie film with its soft, quaint opening, quickly devolved into a psychological mess that completely threw me for a loop.

The aesthetics of the film instantly lured me into this uncanny nostalgia that never felt quite right. The use of extremely close-up shots and a prevalent handheld filming style — with film grain so thick you could almost feel it — made much of the film feel like a home movie from the early 2000s.

Very quickly, however, this style was flipped on its head. Lillian, the protagonist, played by Talia Ryder, falls further and further into a rabbit hole of eerie individuals, the jarring moments of which were enhanced by Williams' filmmaking techniques.

In her role, Ryder acted as the lens through which the audience sees the film while she embarks on her own odyssey and flawlessly fulfills the role of the not-so-innocent young nomad.

Both she and her character were well-supported by the spectacular cast — Simon Rex, Jacob Elordi,

and recent Golden Globe and Emmy-winner Ayo Edebiri, to name a few — which is crucial for a film in which so many different settings and environments are seen.

Rex plays a hyper-intelligent neo-Nazi — a combination of terrifying traits — and Edebiri plays a quirky, self-indulgent director who was unwillingly wrapped up in the story. Elordi similarly had a minimal, yet unique, role in the project for someone who has seen such success lately. It was pleasant to see him in a setting where the audience isn't meant to focus solely on him, unlike some of his more recent works.

The overall narrative of this film seems to be somewhat divisive among its viewers. While there are many moments in the film that one could argue are trite or overdone, each scene or story arc feels like its own polished work of art.

Aside from some new-age cinema tropes, like the unnecessary need to bookend each section of the story with a title card or to have a protagonist who inconsequentially escapes the most intense moments of the film, "The Sweet East" managed to keep my attention with its captivating side characters and visuals but didn't overstay its welcome with the just-above-90-minute runtime.

CARTOON

Cartoon by Avi Lapchick | The Daily Iowan



A new magazine for fashion, trends

Zealous Magazine differentiates itself from other literary magazines on campus.

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A new student-run, fashion-focused magazine is joining the University of Iowa's literary scene.

Editor-in-chief and founder, UI student Abby Wedemeyer, cited an absence of editorial fashion magazines on campus as the driving force behind Zealous, the newest student magazine at the UI. The first issue will be published by the end of this spring semester.

Unlike other UI campus magazines, which are primarily literature-focused, Zealous focuses on fashion, beauty, entertainment, and culture, including topics like inclusivity, equality, underrepresented stories and perspectives, and political and social issues relevant to the UI's student body.

"I really wanted to do something that is more editorial and allows journalists and nonfiction writers to be more creative in their work and get more hands-on experience in the magazine industry," Wedemeyer said.

With the magazine still in its infancy, Wedemeyer emphasized the potential that a clean slate can provide a concept like Zealous.

"It's definitely it's overwhelming, but it's also really exciting," she said. "There's so much [Zealous] can do."

Like any burgeoning publication, its beginnings saw trials and errors. Establishing the logistics of the magazine's funding was one of their main hurdles.

Wedemeyer said connecting with other writers and creatives was a major source of comfort throughout the process of starting the magazine.

"Giving myself the time to get to know the people that are giving their time to us is super helpful. It makes me more comfortable around a large group of people," Wedemeyer said. "I think having that communication is key."

Wedemeyer said adjusting to her new leadership role was a struggle. She remembers feeling nervous after creating the magazine and preparing to lead a large group of people.

"I think of myself as pretty introverted, so having to create a group like this was kind of nerve-wracking," she said. "But we have a really good group of people and



A poster for the Zealous Magazine is seen in the Adler Journalism Building on Feb. 19. The magazine's first issue will be published by the end of the spring semester.

a lot of creative minds."

Wedemeyer shared her idea with a friend, fellow UI student Isabella Cervantes, during a class they had together. In her pitch, Wedemeyer asked Cervantes if she would be the magazine's creative director.

Cervantes happily agreed to oversee the magazine's creative direction because she felt Zealous would make a name for itself among the other magazines on campus.

"It's not a literary magazine; it's not just words and it's not news," Cervantes said. "It's just not photojournalism — it's more creative."

Tahirah Den Beste, a UI third-year and the magazine's secretary, also worked with

Wedemeyer to create Zealous. She said one of their goals was to make the final product one that people would read.

"I know some other magazines can be kind of more like this dark mood or the poetry can be kind of just dark, [but] we wanted it to just feel like a relatable magazine and bring in inclusivity as well," Den Beste said.

While the editors had an idea of what they wanted their magazine to look like before they started crowdsourcing for more staff creatives, Den Beste said the team had no solid plans until their first all-staff meetings.

Writers for Zealous can explore topics they care about and enjoy, including music, fashion, beauty, and social issues.

Cervantes also wants the magazine to have long-form stories and cover different people and groups as opposed to typically news-worthy events. Wedemeyer said she initially pushed the magazine to dive into topics such as fashion and pop culture and sees the benefit of exploring deeper topics in Zealous as well.

"[We] definitely want to focus on inclusivity and equality and telling stories that need to be told, and not kind of doing the same thing that we sometimes hear other magazines doing," she said. "I want students to be able to resonate with it, particularly students who like these topics [which] are very important to Gen-Z and this younger generation."

REVIEW

'Madame Web' is an affront to filmmaking

The unbelievably bad Spider-Man spinoff is for absolutely nobody.



Bill Poehler | USA TODAY NETWORK

The poster for the movie "Madame Web," which was released Feb. 14, hangs outside Willamette Town Center in Salem, Oregon. The "Madame Web" character is from Salem in the Marvel comic books.

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There is no way to properly encapsulate the fever dream that is watching "Madame Web." It is a once-in-a-lifetime disaster of a film.

Released in theaters on Feb. 14, "Madame Web" follows Cassandra Webb, played by Dakota Johnson, as she navigates her paramedic job with newfound psychic powers. At least, I think they're psychic; the movie decided to keep that info as vague as possible.

Soon after Cassandra is empowered, the villainous Ezekiel Sims, played by Tahar Rahim, storms the streets of New York City to hunt three teenage girls whose futures as Spider-Women would foil his evil plans. Cassandra then takes it upon herself to kidnap the girls and protect them from Ezekiel.

Much of the "Madame Web" plot revolves around Cassandra and Ezekiel being able to see the future. However, the film never cares to explain the parameters of the characters' abilities, making the stakes of the film unclear.

The Spider-Women-to-be were played by Sydney Sweeney, Isabella Merced, and Celeste O'Connor to a lackluster fault. There was not a single moment in the film where I found myself caring about any of the three characters at all.

An especially cringe-worthy scene involving the three teens takes place in a diner when Cassandra has left the trio to their own devices. Julia, Sweeney's character, notices a table of teenage boys in the diner so the three girls decide to stand on top of the boys' table and start awkwardly dancing — as teenagers so often naturally do in real life.

If someone told me "Madame Web" was produced by aliens, I'd believe them. It is

not often that a high-budget film comes along with as many technical issues as this one. Early in the film, a boom mic somehow snuck past editors and made it into the final cut.

Scenes are sequenced in such a baffling order during the more intense moments of the film, so much so that it was often hard to tell what I was looking at. Director S. J. Clarkson has directed episodes of wildly successful series such as "Game of Thrones" and "Succession," but "Madame Web" feels like it could have been made by artificial intelligence.

As a fan of Spider-Man comics and movies, I was hoping a movie as terrible as this would keep as far away as possible from the beloved character. Spider-Man's cherished Uncle Ben, however, was unfortunately an integral character in the film.

My favorite moment of the film comes with a butchered redux of the famous Spider-Man proverb: "With great power comes great responsibility."

Instead, however, Cassandra's mentor tells her, "Where there is great responsibility, great power will come," which was a nonsense phrase delivered with such reverence that I couldn't help but laugh.

There is an argument to be made that the film is so bad it ends up being an entertaining watch. I enjoyed laughing at the absurdity of what I was watching, but I could very easily see other viewers simply getting bored.

It's hard to blame anyone involved in the making of the film for its disastrous outcome, these are artists simply trying to make a living after all. Instead, it's fascinating that a professional movie studio like Sony Pictures would invest hundreds of millions of dollars in stupid superhero slop.

"Madame Web" is, unfortunately, now playing in theaters.

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