

WHAT'S COOKIN'

A foreign exchange student from Ghana cooked one of his family's favorite meals Tuesday night in the Coronado Cafe. PAGE 2



NEW OUTLOOK

Northwestern basketball player Bubba Furlong talks about setting new personal goals for his game. PAGE 9



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“The beginning of unprecedented times...”

“The idea of online classes...”

“A multitude of emotions...”

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“It has become a reality...”

ONE YEAR WITH COVID-19

On March 1, 2020, COVID-19 didn't seem real.

In just a few weeks, that would change. Around the world, businesses would close forever, and lives would be lost to a silent and deadly killer.

At Northwestern Oklahoma State University, students wouldn't return to campus after spring break. Instead, students adapted to a new form of socially-distanced learning and found new ways to communicate with their friends and families.

As pandemic began, some reporters for the Northwestern News began to write about their journeys and experiences. Words such as “unprecedented” dot their anecdotes.

Now, one year since the pandemic first gripped the world, we're reflecting on what happened in 2020 — and hoping the world returns to normal soon.

HOW WE SAW COVID-19

INSIDE THIS EDITION:
PAGES 6, 7 and 8:
As Northwestern switched to virtual learning in 2020, students began writing about how their lives changed. Read their stories, which were written during the pandemic's first days.

Graphic provided by CDC/
Design by Jordan Green

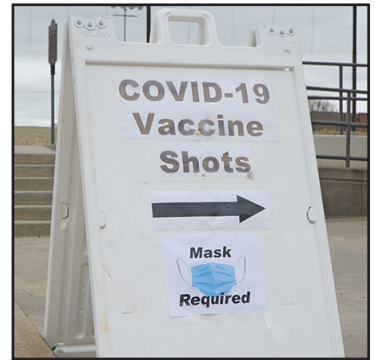
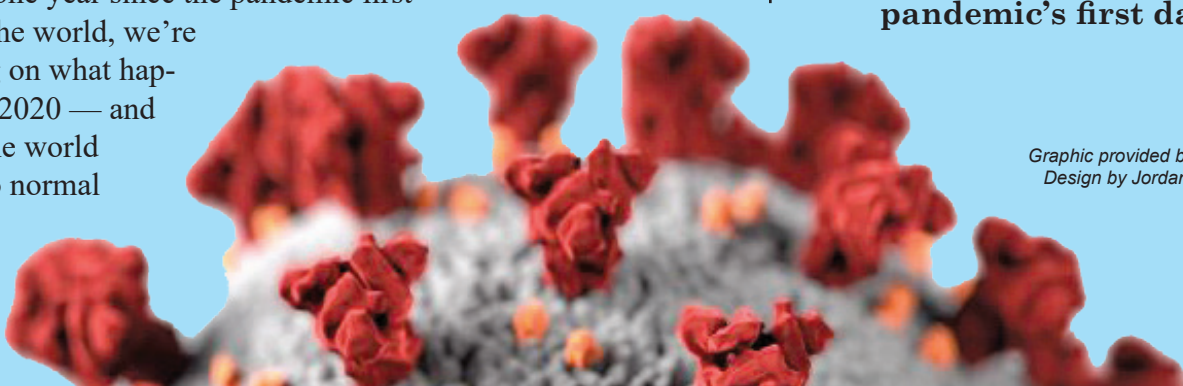


Photo by Jordan Green

A sign directing people into Percefull Fieldhouse to receive COVID-19 vaccinations is shown in this photo Wednesday morning.

Students, staff take vaccine in Wed. clinic

FROM STAFF REPORTS
Northwestern News

Up to 100 Northwestern students, faculty and staff were expected to be vaccinated during an immunization clinic Wednesday.

The university hosted the clinic in Percefull Fieldhouse in conjunction with the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

Those vaccinated received the Moderna COVID-19 shot, which will require them to get a second dose in a few weeks.

After signing in, those planning to be vaccinated sat down at tables staffed by Northwestern nursing students.

There, they rolled up their sleeves and came one dose closer toward being immunized against the coronavirus.

The vaccine clinic came two days after Northwestern students returned from spring break, marking one of the first steps in returning to normalcy at institutions of higher learning. After spring break in 2020, universities across the nation shuttered and switched to online learning formats to stop the pandemic's spread.

As of press time, more than 500,000 Oklahomans have been fully immunized.

For more coverage of the vaccine clinic, see Page 12 in this edition of the News and the April 1 edition.

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News



Photo by Jordan Green

Edwin Yemoh, a foreign exchange student from Ghana, serves food he made in the Coronado Cafe Tuesday.

A TASTE OF HOME

Foreign exchange student cooks food from Ghana for Tuesday night meal

By **JORDAN GREEN**
Editor-in-Chief

Edwin Yemoh said he remembers watching his mother make jollof rice, fried chicken and coleslaw in their family's home in Ghana when he was a child.

On Tuesday, it was his turn to cook.

"My mom has been cooking this ever since I was a kid," he said. "It's a unique thing."

Yemoh, a senior computer science major from Accra, Ghana,

cooked dishes popular in his home country for part of the Tuesday night dinner in the Coronado Café at Northwestern, where he is a student worker.

Rice, chicken and coleslaw are mainstays in his family's home, he said. To cook jollof rice, Yemoh made a tomato paste and added rice to it. His coleslaw includes cream and vegetables.

Yemoh said his mother, Regina, taught him how to cook. He said he followed her recipes.

"I cooked everything from scratch, so it took almost four hours," he said. "My mom would spend five hours, six hours in the kitchen just trying to cook dinner or lunch."

After he finished cooking the food, he helped serve it to stu-

dents passing through the food line in the cafeteria. He said he'd be sending photos of his work to his mother.

"She's going to be so joyous," he said. "She's going to be so happy."

Yemoh, who refers to himself as a "momma's boy," said he's grateful his mother passed her culinary talents on to him.

"My passion is my mom," he said. "Me and my brothers know how to cook. We all cook, and we're in a different country, but we'll never go hungry because we already have the skills at our fingertips. ... I look back at what she taught me, and I'm using those skills."

"I can use them anywhere I go in the world."

Students talk about their favorite caffeinated drinks

By **ALIYAH BIDWELL**
Student Reporter

Northwestern students say they like caffeine, but which drinks are their favorite?

March is National Caffeine Month, so the Northwestern News asked three students what kind of caffeinated beverages they like.

Laney Neal, a freshman nursing major, said she has been drinking coffee every day to celebrate National Caffeine Month.

"My favorite Starbucks drink is a caramel Frappuccino because I am that basic girl that loves caramel," she said. "I drink it every day so I can get through every day and all my classes. ... I don't worry about having too much caffeine because I eat other things that are more concerning."

Danielle Soliz, a sophomore nursing major, said she didn't know it was National Caffeine Month.

"My favorite Starbucks drink is a vanilla and hazelnut latte because it tastes good," she said. "I use my drink to get energy for the day. I have about one or two cups of coffee a day. I don't worry about becoming addicted to caffeine because I maintain the amount I intake. I think caffeine is bad for you, but no, I don't worry about it being bad for me."

Camille Soderstrom, a junior education major, said she also didn't know it was National Caffeine Month. But now that she does, she will drink her coffee with a little more enthusiasm, she said.

"My favorite Starbucks drink is a mocha cookie crumble Frappuccino," she said. "I don't worry about becoming addicted to caffeine because I only use it to make it through my assignments. I don't think I will ever consume enough caffeine to become addicted, so I don't see that ever being a problem unless it is finals week."

NEWS IN BRIEF

STUDENT GOVERNMENT OFFICER APPLICATIONS DUE FRIDAY

Students who want to run for a position on the university's Student Government Association must file candidacy paperwork Friday, officials said.

Applications to run must be given to Olivia Yandel, the orga-

nization's adviser, by 5 p.m. Friday. Yandel's office is in the J.R. Holder Wellness Center.

Completed applications must include petitions for candidacy, an unofficial transcript, a resume and a letter of recommendation from a Northwestern employee, officials said. Candidates must also electronically submit a photo of themselves.

Students who want to run must meet some educational requirements and cannot spend more than \$75 campaigning. They may use social media to campaign.

Candidates can participate in a forum on April 1. The election is set for April 6 and 7. Students will vote via email.

For more information, visit <https://www.nwosu.edu/sga>.

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active as of March 19. This number includes cases at Northwestern's Alva, Enid and Woodward campuses.

EMPLOYEE CASES:

0

active as of March 19. This number includes cases at Northwestern's Alva, Enid and Woodward campuses.

IN ALVA:

12

active as of March 23. Alva has had a total of 995 cases.

IN OKLAHOMA:

12,038

active as of March 23. Oklahoma has had a total of 432,793 cases.

EDITOR'S NOTE: NWOSU reports new active student and employee cases weekly on Fridays at <https://www.nwosu.edu/coronavirus/active-covid-19-cases-nwosu>.

Entertainment



Photos provided by Netflix Media Center

'6 Years' is not your average love story

This movie shows the ups and downs of relationships

By **CARSON POLK**
Student Reporter

"6 Years" is a film different than others in which someone watching might not know until after. The film, which was directed by Hannah Fidell, is unscripted.

The director put the actors into the scenes and let them act how they felt they should.

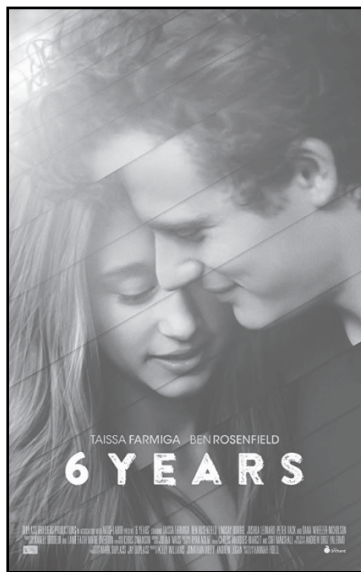
"6 Years" stars Taissa Farmiga and Ben Rosenfield. They act as Mel Clark and Dan Mercer.

Clark and Mercer are two people in a 6-year relationship that is going downhill. As someone who does not like movies or romance, this movie is different. The acting is one of the best parts, as it is obvious the actors can act through passionate scenes.

It is obvious something is different from "6 Years." As the scenes are being acted out, the characters often interrupt each other. I believe this gives the movie a more realistic feel.

When watching it, it feels like the audience might forget it is not a couple fighting while being watched through a camera.

My favorite parts about this film are the realistic scenarios. In the beginning, Clark pushes Mercer, and he has a head wound because of it. At the hospital, he lies to cover her violent act up.



A friend later points out that, if it was the other way around, it would be labeled domestic violence. Later on, the viewer can see how this scene impacts the rest with how Clark interacts with Mercer.

My least favorite parts of the film are the sexual acts. "6 Years" is not a movie for anyone underage, as it graphically shows porn and sex.

With all the drama and sex, it is just a film about a couple that has been together for 6 years. There is cheating, pornography, violence, miscommunication and friendships, all of which contribute to the ending of their relationship.

While I enjoyed it and would recommend it, the rating out of 5 stars is 3. I rated it this because the acting is good and the plot is too, but the only thing special about it is the unscripted aspect.

APP REVIEW

'Stop' and play this app with all of your friends

By **MICHELLE WILLSON**
Features Editor

My friends and I recently found an app called "Stop" that is basically the fast money round on "Family Feud," and we are obsessed.

My friend group and I have been sending games to each other non-stop these last few days. The app was released in 2014 but continues to get updated with new categories.

One of the top reviews for the game calls it "Scattergories on speed," and I cannot think of a better way to put it.

The only downside to the game is that there is no spell-check and no way to speak-to-text your answers, but the game is nice enough to give you half points if you spell an answer wrong. You also have the option to start games with random people.



The app is hours of fun that you might think would be repetitive, but it's really not. It's constantly throwing new categories or letters at you that cause you to mildly panic as you race against the clock to beat your opponent.

I honestly would give this game a 4 out of 5 stars. It could be tweaked to make it better, but it is great the way it is.

One thing I would like to see changed is the timing portion.

You normally have a minute, but if your opponent ended fast, you might only have 30 seconds. But you don't get any previous alert that you will have less time.

This is a little frustrating, especially when you are interrupted in the middle of a word.

My strategy is that it's better to have something down rather than nothing — and it has won me some games.

SPRING 2021 | JOURNALISM GOES TO THE MOVIES

Page One: Inside the New York Times

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Letters must be turned in by noon on Monday to the News office in JDA232. Letters via e-mail are acceptable as long as they follow the rules stated above and can be sent to nwnews@nwosu.edu. Please limit submissions to no more than 250 words. The editors reserve the right to condense or edit any letter for grammar, libel and space limitations. All letters submitted may not be used.

All letters represent the views of the author.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yearly subscriptions to the News are \$20.

Editorial



Photo by Jordan Green

Northwestern student Brenner Clark poses for a portrait at the U-Drop Inn in Shamrock, Texas, on March 17.

Drop in anytime, Friend

SHAMROCK, Texas — I dropped in at the U-Drop Inn with a friend, and I dropped out with a couple more.



JORDAN GREEN

I was driving back home from a spring break trip to Amarillo, Texas, with a buddy of mine on March 16 when I veered off Interstate 40 and stopped in this dusty, tiny Texas town.

I had seen the U-Drop Inn, a vintage yellow- and green-colored gas station on old Route 66, in pictures. And if you've ever seen a good movie, you have, too. This building was the inspiration for Ramone's shop in the 2006 hit Disney-Pixar film "Cars."

Once upon a time, this station was an oasis for people traveling from Chicago to Los Angeles on the Mother Road. The joint boasted a diner, restrooms and plenty of fuel to get travelers to their next destination.

Now it's a tourist attraction. The gas pumps haven't worked in years, and the dining booths are empty. (There's talk around town, though, that someone will be re-opening the diner soon.)

When my friend and I walked in the doors of the station that afternoon, the lights were off. Large, glass windows illuminated the room. No fluorescent fixtures could compare to the natural light

shining in.

Sitting in the store that day were two ladies named Patsy and Oleta. They work at the station, selling Route 66 T-shirts and Texas-sized refrigerator magnets to those of us traveling down life's highway (at a slower pace, that is).

We talked for the better part of an hour. Besides, it'd be impossible to talk for the worst part of an hour when in such good company.

Patsy and Oleta welcomed us to Shamrock as if we'd lived there our entire lives. We swapped jokes, traded compliments and talked about the history of the iconic roadway cutting through the heart of this rural retreat.

The old cliché about shooting the breeze fits. We shot the breeze, and we hit the target every time.

I can't remember details of what we talked about. What we said wasn't particularly powerful or even memorable. But it's the kind of interaction that makes one feel welcome — that makes one feel at home and at peace.

This encounter is a commentary on many topics. First of all, it's a testament to the friendliness of West Texans. They give warm welcomes to out-of-towners, even Okies. They themselves may not stray far beyond the Caprock, but they greet folks from all over.

Secondly, it represents the ambition of small business owners along Route 66. When the road was one of the primary avenues

connecting the eastern and western halves of the United States, business-owning families cared for weary travelers. This spirit is still alive today.

No, I wasn't alive when the Mother Road was raising the country. But I've done my research. And I've visited Shamrock, Texas.

Finally, it's a reminder that, sometimes, taking the not-so-beaten path is the most rewarding way to travel.

If I'd stayed on I-40, I'd have never met these two ladies. If I'd kept on driving because I was running behind, I'd have never seen a unique historical site. And if I hadn't dropped in at the U-Drop Inn, I'd have two fewer friends than I do today.

Now let us consider the fact that, before the interstate highway system was created, people had to take Route 66 through towns like Shamrock scattered all over the American Southwest.

They stopped at the U-Drop Inn. They stopped at countless other places just like it. And at each dot on the map, they met folks — nice folks, sweet folks, funny folks and friendly folks — like Patsy and Oleta.

I don't even know their last names. I didn't need to ask. Friends know each other on a first-name basis. And thanks to Route 66, I've gained a couple more.

You never know where you'll make a new friend. All you've got to do is drop in.

Editor's rant of the week

By MICHELLE WILLSON
Features Editor

A year with COVID. A year of lockdowns, sickness and death.

A year ago, we were excited to finish the semester online. We were making whipped coffee and cloud bread while we stayed at home. We spent the first quarantine bingeing Netflix series.

We were scared of the unknown, but we were just maneuvering through our days like nothing had happened.

It is finally starting to hit me that things will never be the same. We won't go back to the "normal" we had. There will have to be a new "normal."

It really feels like we are living through a dystopian society novel.

I got my first vaccine on Saturday. I am trying to do my part to keep people safe.

To quote one of my favorite movies: "When one can see no future, all one can do is the next right thing."

Yes, that is a "Frozen 2" quote. But right now, it is so true. I know that a lot of us feel at a loss right now, and so we must take it just one step at a time.

I am graduating, but I have no idea what awaits me on the other side — and honestly, it is scary.

I have never been one to look too far in the future. I try to focus on the present, but the future is coming a little too fast for comfort right now.

I just wish that there would be a way to ensure a secure path, that I could be certain that where I am going is where I need to be. But I can't find that now.

So, for now, I will get vaccinated, apply for jobs and pray my grades stay high enough that I can graduate.

To any student struggling right now, stick with it. Graduation is fewer than two months away. If you need a break, be honest with your teachers.

I realize we just had spring break, but sometimes that can feel more like a chore than a vacation.

Find little things that give you some spare serotonin. Do some crafts, make some childish-looking art, dance around the room when you are alone, hammock, play in the rain or just hang out outside.

Take a deep breath. You've got this. I believe in you.

Editorial

Let's get back to work

By **DEVYN LANSDEN**
Editorial Editor

Well, we are back.

I hope everyone had a good and relaxing spring break. I definitely did, but it took me a lot of motivation to get back in the groove.

I did not do homework until Sunday, which is not like me. However, once I started, it was easy to finish, and it got me ready for the week.

This was the first spring break I had where I actually did something.

Over the break, I realized that I belong in a place that has so many coffee shops to choose from. If I am bored, I have options for places to go. Colorado is full of nice people who will say "Hi" to everyone who walks by.

I was in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for six days during the break, and it was much needed.

Growing up, my family and I never went longer than four days on vacation because of my parents' jobs. So, being away for that long was so fun.

The first two days, it snowed a lot. But my boyfriend and I did not let that stop us from having fun. We went to the mall and a gym, which made me realize that this is something fun for me.

Going to new gyms is fun. Who would have known? After that, we went to a trampoline park, and we all brought out our "inner child."

That was all in the first full day we were there, so it was productive.

Sunday was a little slower, but the snow was a little worse than the day before. But we ate at a Japanese restaurant and then called it a day.

Does anyone else not like fish, but think that sushi tastes good? I



Photo provided

Devyn poses in front of the view at Garden of the Gods in Colorado.

tried some sushi at the restaurant, and it tasted good, but I refuse to eat shrimp or anything from the ocean.

My boyfriend always reminds me that shrimp are the roaches of the sea.

Monday we went to a bowling place that had an arcade and laser-tag. Before that, we went to Garden of the Gods and hiked.

Going on walks is the only thing that I really wanted to do the whole trip. The first few days I was not able to because of the weather.

But by the end of the trip I

went on plenty of walks. If you ever go to Colorado Springs, you have to go to Garden of the Gods.

We walked to a coffee place that I discovered was my favorite place on earth.

It was exactly how a coffee shop is in a movie. There was a stage where people would actually perform, and the coffee shop actually closed at midnight.

At the bowling place, we played about four rounds of bowling, a game of laser tag and arcade games. The more games we played, the better I got, so it got more fun when I won.

Monday was the most fun because we did so much, and I was glad because it was only the third day.

Tuesday was more relaxed, but at this point in the trip, I was just happy it was not snowing. We went to the mall and ate, but I took a nap on Tuesday, so the day went by fast.

Wednesday was the last day, and I had a "fail" moment. I wanted to walk up stairs that are popular in Manitou Springs.

However, I messed up the reservation, so we did not get to do it. It turned out to be OK though because it was cold that day, so I was not too mad.

Other than that, my boyfriend and I went to a few more stores and a thrift store and found some good things. We ate at a Mexican restaurant to end the day.

There is nothing worse than packing your bags to leave vacation after a fun trip.

There were so many things we did, so getting ready to leave is always the worst. I also want to possibly live in Colorado, so being there just makes me want to stay even more.

The drive to Alva was not as bad as it was on the way there. The weather was nice, and we listened to good music.

We stopped in Garden City, Kansas, because I needed some coffee, of course. We went to a convenience store to get gas and grabbed some Cinnabon to go, so that was a nice surprise. We got six cinnamon rolls to go, too. They are now gone.

We killed some time in Garden City, but the rest of the way to Alva went by fast.

Even though I love Colorado, seeing the "Welcome to Oklahoma" sign always is a good feeling and feels like home.

As soon as I got to Alva, the time went by extremely fast. I

procrastinated homework and dreaded the upcoming week.

Once I got out of my own head and changed my mindset, I realized I have come so far already and worked so hard that I was not going to slow down now.

It did take me until Sunday night to realize that, but later is better than never. I finished the things I needed to get done and was ready for the week.

What I am going to do to help me keep me ahead of my work is make sure I get as much work done on the weekends as I can.

I will check my syllabus and write down all my assignments coming up and get them done as early as possible.

That way, it leaves room to revise my work. It helps me a lot in the sense that I am not as stressed if I waited until the last moment.

I only write down what is due that week, too. That way I do not over-work so far in advance.

Writing all of this down makes me miss spring break already. But we have to get back at it sometime.

I feel as though my process of getting homework done helps me juggle the seven classes I am in and makes me not feel overwhelmed.

I hope you enjoyed reading about my break as well as a few things I do to make my life easier.

I am so grateful we are back on campus and we get to finish the school year.

I hope you had a great spring break as well and stayed safe during it.

Remember, we are almost done with this semester. Do not give up, and keep working hard!

Let's get ready to take on the downhill slope of the semester.

We got this!

REPUBLICAN VIEWS

Politics is downstream from culture

By **BRAEDEN COOK**

"Politics is downstream from culture." This quote from Andrew Breitbart has been repeated time and again by many conservative leaders, even more so since Andrew's death in 2012.

What the heck does it mean? Well, in short, it is pointing out one of the major failings of conservatives in America today. While Republicans/conservatives have managed to stay competitive in the political realm, they have failed in preserving their conservative culture.

In the past couple of decades, conservatives, when faced with

a challenge in the culture, have backed down in favor of individual liberty. If put into words, it would sound like this:

"I don't care what someone else does. As long as they aren't hurting someone else, they should be free to do it."

While this philosophy does not seem harmful, it has not helped the country, and it has definitely not helped maintain the institutions that have historically made this country strong.

With the lack of strong, conservative input on the issue of culture, the culture has turned radically to the left, which in turn has handicapped conservatives in the political battles they face.

The strongest example of this

is the break of the family within the United States. Conservatives have failed to defend the nuclear family, and it shows.

The divorce rates are high, and the marriage rates are in decline; is it surprising? No, it is not. The American culture (its music, its movies and its entertainment) promotes it. With its focus on self-gratification and sex being the highest good, it is no wonder that this is the case.

The song "WAP" by Cardi B is a prime example of the problem as it hit the top of the music charts last year.

It promotes the singer's desire for men to please them, with no reference at all to anything else good or wholesome that comes

with a relationship between a man and a woman.

Conservatives oppose this, but they have little way of really fighting against such messages because of the promotion of it by most major news outlets and the overwhelming majority of cultural celebrities.

"WAP" is touted as a great feminist work, but from the conservative view, it makes women out to be nothing but sexual objects in a primal sort of way.

It is all about pleasing the self, and it is a part of a culture that promotes selfish action instead of the selfless sacrifice it takes to create and maintain a family.

When conservative leaders speak out against such marks of a

broken culture, they are attacked as being sexist and bigoted, and the majority of the people seeing the backlash of the media and celebrities that promote this culture fall on the side of the perceived majority.

Democrat politicians and leaders then use it as political ammunition to fight their conservative opponents the Republican Party.

This is how culture is downstream from politics. And if Republicans/conservatives don't learn to fight on both the cultural level as well as the political level, the principles in which they believe will become, increasingly, the principles of the minority.

— Cook is the chairman of the College Republicans club.

IN THEIR WORDS: THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC

A day that changed everything

By Emma Sporleder

Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 11:14 a.m.
This date isn't important unless you attend Northwestern Oklahoma State University, like me.

Hi! My name is Emma Sporleder, and lately, my life has been pretty weird.

It all started at the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, China. I wasn't there, but apparently there was something to do with a bat that resulted in 3.17 million people contracting some virus that we don't have a vaccination for yet. But that's too complicated of a story, so we'll just focus on yours truly.

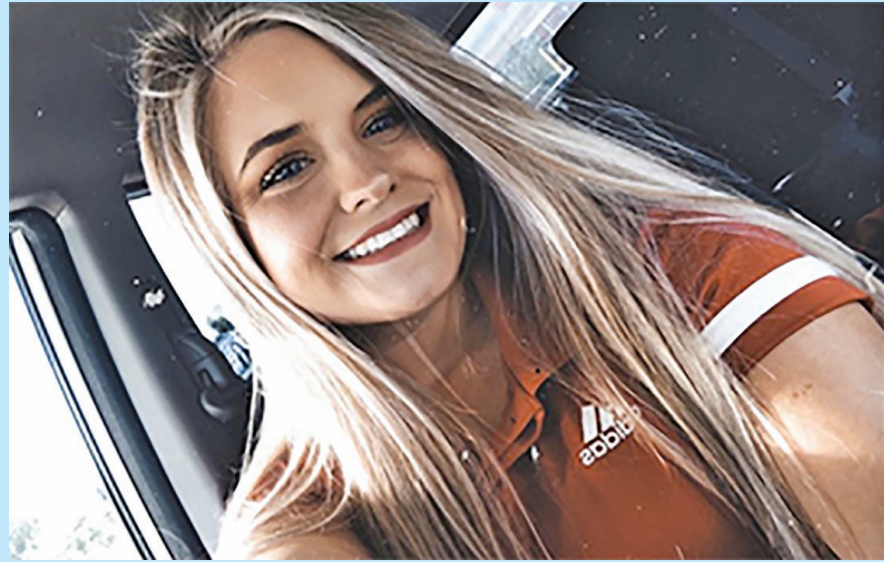
I woke up around 9 a.m. that Wednesday morning and decided to laze around. I made some coffee and sat with my dog, Boogie, on the front porch, watching people drive by as they went on their way to work. Unfortunately, in two short hours and some minutes later, my college education would be flipped on its head.

I jumped as the notification sound from my phone alerted me that I had received an email:

"Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

"In response to Governor Stitt's address yesterday, Northwestern will take further steps to ensure the safety of our campus community. Moving forward, all coursework will continue using alternative instructional delivery methods to complete the spring 2020 semester. I feel confident that we will continue to have a successful semester in spite of these circumstances."

I felt a multitude of emotions after finishing reading the email, but honestly Dr. Cunningham's email shook me to the core that day. I knew that people were sick, but at the time I didn't realize that this



virus was turning into an epidemic. I didn't realize that we were living through history. I didn't realize that Wednesday, March 25, was the beginning of unprecedented times.

I had heard about the virus, but I guess I never understood the magnitude of it all. And truthfully, maybe I still don't. Maybe I won't for years to come. I realize how it has affected the world population, but it hasn't affected me personally – yet. I think that's the scariest part about this epidemic. One day, you don't know anybody with the virus, and then three days later, one of your friends, coworkers or family members is dead because of it.

No, I haven't gotten sick, but that's not to say I don't have anything to worry about. I worry when I touch sanitized shopping cart handles. I worry when I itch my eyes. I worry that if I coughed to clear my throat I might be asked to vacate the premises.

But after all the worrying comes quarantine. Quarantine, quarantine, quarantine. Where do I begin?

At first you were a fun little experiment. I had never experienced a quarantine before, so I thought I would give you a chance. You're telling me that I don't have to attend class on campus anymore? I

don't have to come into the office for my job? This is great! And it was ... for the first week, at least.

Since then, the days have started to meld together. Months either stretch on and on or they're over with a snap of a finger. It's not as fun anymore. I want to get back to normal.

But what is normal anymore? This whole ordeal is historic, and we can't go back to whatever our normal was after this. We have to make a new normal, right? One where we take care of each other despite our differences. I used to hate receiving emails from the university. Usually, an email signified a grade I was nervous to look at or a professor announcing additional coursework. But once this whole coronavirus is over, I think just might appreciate them a little more.

Hopefully the next email I get will include an unimportant date. It will be just any other day for most people, but for me and the other students at Northwestern, it will be a day when we are able to see our friends again.

A day when we can actually be on campus and continue learning about our passions. That unimportant day will let us get back to normal, whatever that may be now.



By Logan Meriwether

The coronavirus has changed many things in the world. The way people live has completely changed.

I used to spend every week in Waynoka, making my usual drive to school every morning and then going to work for Stan Bixler to help feed cattle every afternoon. Once the weekend would arrive, I would pack my bags and drive two hours to work on my family farm and spend time with my girlfriend.

Now I find myself spending most of my time on my family farm working, checking cattle, working with show heifers and helping break the new colts to lead. When I'm not working, I take my grandpa driving in the evenings so we can enjoy the countryside.

I thought that, once the summer started and school was out, my life would start to get back to normal.

I usually work for an oilfield contracting company all summer, but now that the oil market has crashed, the contracting company I work for doesn't have enough work to take me on this summer. I've been working for this company for five summers in a row, and now I'm going to have to find a job somewhere else or work for my family all summer.

The coronavirus has also taken away a lot of the fun things I've had planned for this summer. It's kept me away from a lot of my friends and other family members. I also had two vacations

I thought we'd be back to normal...

planned this summer. I was going to Mexico with my girlfriend's family, but the trip was canceled. I'm hoping I can still go to Red River this summer to fish and enjoy the cool mountain air. My family has made a tradition of going to Red River every summer. This is something we all really look forward to so we can get away from work and just enjoy ourselves.

I've been doing my best to keep up with friends through FaceTime and Snapchat. Usually during this time of year, my best friend, Draven Smith, and I are at the golf course, possibly skipping class to play 18 holes. Sometimes, we might even find ourselves in a little bit of trouble.

Since the virus started, I've only gotten to hang out with my friends in Alva once, which is weird because we are used to seeing each other almost every day.

There are some things I've gotten to enjoy since the coronavirus. I've gotten to spend a lot of time with my grandpa and other family members I don't get to see much. I also have gotten to spend a lot of time in my hometown of Binger.

My grandpa is 80 years old, so he has a hard time doing a lot of work by himself. Since I've been around, it's made things a lot easier on him. I've helped build and fix fence and fed most of his cows for him.

My grandpa doesn't like sitting at home, so he always comes with me to work. Usually, he tells me funny stories from back in his day or we talk about the different kind of grasses in the pasture.

I've always been close with my grandpa. He has taught me a lot of things in life and is still teaching me some things. The time we've gotten to spend together driving around the countryside, working on building fence or just watching movies at home – we have both really enjoyed it.

Binger has had more than 20 cases of Covid-19. When I have to go to town, I wear a mask and gloves and keep my distance from other people. I catch up with the old farmers at the feed store every now and then, seeing how they are doing since the recent drop in the cattle markets.

A lot of things have changed for me since the coronavirus, good things and bad. I am doing what I can to make the best out of this situation. I am trying to keep busy when I can. I also enjoy going out and having fun, taking a few road trips to different places I've never been.

I woke up at the crack of dawn with the rest of my family as we do for every road trip. Spring break 2020 had begun, and we were on the way to Orange Beach, Alabama. The road trip was a long, exhausting 12-hour ride, but I found some good music to listen to.

We made our traditional stop at Bucees, which is by far one of the largest gas stations. Clean bathrooms, tons of snacks and drinks, and the best fudge ever is why stopping at Bucees is such a highlight of every road trip.

The whole way to Orange Beach, I was anxiously thinking of how COVID-19 was going to affect my spring break trip. I thought everything was good because the beaches were still open.

I love the beach. I couldn't wait to feel the sun shining on my skin and to feel the waves crashing into me as I swim in the ocean.

What made this trip even better was that my teammate from college, Stephen McCluskey, was coming along. Everything was good and set in stone for a successful trip.

After driving for what felt like an eternity, we arrived at the condo Sunday afternoon. My dad checked us in, and then we immediately started to unpack everything.

I tried to carry as many bags as possible like an Olympic powerlifter because I wanted to get to the beach as fast as possible. I looked out at the beach from the balcony and smiled. We finally made it.

The first beach day arrived. I woke up, packed the beach bag, applied sunscreen and headed down to the beach with my family. We were all shocked to see how many people were on the beach, and how close everyone was sitting with the

coronavirus going around. People were swimming, lounging in their chairs, and enjoying the sounds of the waves crashing the shore. Life was normal as usual and no one was concerned about anything. College students filled the beach

Life's a beach... but not for long



By Nick Dill

in groups of way more than 10 people. I noticed how all the beach chairs and umbrellas were less than six feet apart as well.

Still, I was able to enjoy the beach and appreciate a break from the busy semester. Life was all good until Thursday afternoon.

That's when McCluskey and I were hanging out in the hot tub and saw a guy post a sign on the door.

I had a suspicion that it was a sign saying that the beach was closed because some of the beaches near us were shutting down.

"Nick, are you going to go look at that sign and see what it says?" McCluskey asked.

That's exactly what I did. I started to scan the sign and, sure enough, I was right. The beach was closing. We had to be checked out of the condo by the next day before noon.

My heart dropped, and I was devastated that we had to leave the beach a day early. It showed me how real this disease was becoming.

I went up to the condo to tell my parents, but they already knew because my dad received an email.

The scene was crazy in the lobby after the news was out that everyone had to leave tomorrow. Everyone was rushing to scavenge luggage carts. The parking lot was filled with people packing their cars up as if there was a hurricane coming.

The line at the front desk was stretching to the entrance of the lobby because guests were asking about refunds. My family and I decided to leave Thursday night to avoid traffic.

I stood on the balcony before we got on the road and observed how empty the beach was. I saw the two police trucks patrolling to make sure everyone was off the beach.

The beach was deserted, and not one footprint was seen on the sand. This was the COVID-19 reality.

We began the long 12-hour trip back home on Thursday night. All I could think about on the way home was how this virus is going to affect the rest of my sophomore year.

We drove all night through the dark and through some rain showers. Finally, we arrived home early Friday morning. The minute I got home, I wondered what was next.

This trip opened my eyes to the reality and seriousness of this pandemic. It is better to think of others, and not just about yourself in a time like this.

By Kolton Fishback



At the beginning of the semester, if you were to tell me that we would be forced to finish our classes online, I would have told you that's crazy. But because of the coronavirus that has spread across the United States and other parts of the world, it has become a reality and changed our way of life.

My name is Kolton Fishback. I am a student at Northwestern enduring the same struggle along with my fellow classmates trying to survive an-

other semester. My normal routine of attending classes in Carter Hall, eating dinner with friends and finishing the day with a workout in the Wellness Center turned into a distant memory.

I was so accustomed to opening my social media and immediately viewing the live highlights from each sport taking place. That is something I looked forward to every day.

I cherished every memory I made on campus. I cherished the moments I had watching my girlfriend play softball before her season ended because of the virus.

When I heard about Covid-19 back in March, I did not think it was anything serious. It was irrelevant to me because it happened in China. As each day went by, it started to become more serious than I had previously thought.

As I scrolled through Facebook and Instagram, my news feed was full of pictures and stories regarding the coronavirus. Millions of people have died since the outbreak occurred.

Shortly before spring break the virus became the discussion on campus. Students questioned what would happen to their spring break plans and how the rest of the semester would play out. When I heard that our only option would be to transition to online classes, I was upset and nervous.

I don't like the idea of online classes

Social, but distant

because I would rather have a teacher in front of me for any questions I might have. The personal connection is much stronger when the teacher is six feet from you, not when he or she is looking at you through a camera, waiting for you to unmute yourself.

I spent the first week of spring break in my dorm, passing the time by playing video games and watching movies on Netflix. It was quite boring. The hours turned into days, which

eventually turned into a week. It was only the first week, and I was waiting for something exciting to happen. But nothing did.

I am fortunate enough to have the cafe prepare meals for me and anyone else staying in the dorms. However, the process is different.

When I approach the front of the cafe to scan my meal card, the lady hands me my cup and plastic utensils, and I say "Thank you." I'm not allowed to touch anything, not even the snacks that lie on the counter for us to choose from.

I got my second dose of quarantine when I stayed in Yukon with my girlfriend Jayden and her family. I was thrilled to be out of Alva and have some company by my side. One evening, we made the necessary trip to the grocery store to get food and drinks.

As I entered the store while holding my girlfriend's hands, I experienced the sheer panic the coronavirus has caused.

I had only seen this situation in a movie. People kept their distance from each other while urgently rushing around the aisles.

Some people grabbed excessive amounts of produce and meat. The shelf that held the toilet paper was deserted. The customers took precautions, wearing latex gloves on their hands and surgical masks on their faces to protect themselves from the virus. The store felt cold and empty in a sense, but it was full of anxious customers, risking their health with every second they spent in the building.

After a week, Jayden and I made our way back to Alva. We passed the time lying in bed, watching movies all day. Quarantine with her is something I do not mind. She received a call from her mom, asking if she would come

back home. I was devastated but supportive of her decision to go back. The days went by, and I missed her more each day. One afternoon, she told me her mom would not let her come back because of the virus spreading.

I have done my best to stay on track with homework while maintaining my personal relationships. A good family FaceTime call always helps when I'm having a bad day.

The whole world is uncertain when this pandemic will end, so our new reality is surviving each day in quarantine and not taking anything for granted.

IN THEIR WORDS: THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC

A crabby start to it all

By Jacob Comp

The coronavirus pandemic has left people around the country with nothing to do. This was no different for me. With nothing to do around the house anymore but think about the state of the world, I decided it is time for a fishing trip.

However, you can't go fishing without a license. As I pulled into the parking lot of the local Walmart, I was reminded that these are not normal times. Barriers blocked the main entrances to the store as if they were blocking a closed road. Yellow tape one would see at a crime scene hung from the barriers.

Upon entering the store, a 6-foot-long blue sign on the floor greets shoppers. An arrow points either direction. In the middle of the arrows reads "Please keep 6 feet apart."

Everyone in the store is wearing masks. At the checkout line, two strings suspend a clear barrier to keep the cashiers safe from the virus.

With my fishing license in one hand and car keys in the other, I made my way home.

The drive to Matagorda Bay is full of backroads and small towns. I sat in the

back of the snow white Dodge truck, surrounded by sleeping bags, snacks and fishing gear. My dad and grandfather are in the front seats. The drive is smooth until the pavement disappears.

The pavement turns to crushed concrete, and the smooth ride is no longer. The truck bounces and jumps with every rock, bump and hole we hit. The two-lane road is flooded and tight with no room on either side. Ten miles and 25 minutes later, what looks like an abandoned fishing village appears on the highway.

The houses vary. Some are more beat up than others, but one thing is similar through all of them: stilts. All the way at the end of the road is a yellow house that sits 10 feet off the ground with a white truck parked underneath. That is home for the night. We pull in and are met by my uncle and two younger cousins.

"The crab lines are already in the water. We've already caught a couple," the younger of the two siblings says with a smile on his face.

For the next couple hours, we sit outside, waiting for the lines to lose slack, letting us know something is on it. I jump out of the chair and go to the line and carefully pull it up. When I see the crab, I grab the net, and with one clean swoop, I catch it. Hours pass, and the

lines continue to go straight. We rotate through checking the lines. With seven pieces of string and seven chicken wings, we catch 30 crabs.

The sun goes down and the spotlights turn on. The fishing has begun. Baitfish and shrimp swarm the light, and shortly after the red drum follow. We can hear the cheers and laughter from a quarter mile away as other fisherman catch fish after fish.

"Our time must be coming soon," I think to myself.

Our time never came. The fish feasted 10 yards past the max cast any of us could make. On a normal day with no wind, our limit would have been reached quickly. However, with a 20 mph wind, the fish seemed to taunt us, just out of reach. After a long night of little sleep and countless casts, we caught no fish.

The next morning, we head out with coolers filled with crab. After 45 minutes of driving we stop at Buc-ee's, a well-kept gas station, and I quickly return to life during a pandemic. We are greeted by a sign that says, "Please wash your hands prior to shopping: Help us protect Buc-ee's and our customers from the Coronavirus."

It was selfish, but for those 22 hours tucked away 10 miles off the main road, I forgot what was going on in the world.



I forgot that people were dying. I forgot that people are stuck at home in mandatory quarantine. I forgot that life is not as it once was. I was quickly reminded of all these things upon seeing the familiar sight of warning signs and barriers at cash registers.

Hope quickly follows. Hope that the death toll each day will get smaller and smaller. Hope that a vaccine will be released soon. Hope that life will go back to normal.

I choose to embrace the people and things around me that have kept me going during these tough times. That night the blue crabs turn to red as they are cooked. We sit around the table and make a memory as a family.

Family gets rough and even annoying at times, but they have consistently put a smile on my face one memory at a time during this pandemic.

Riding through the pandemic in style



By George Smith

Go outside? In this economy? I don't think so. I finally saved up enough money to make the biggest purchase of my life: a new, to me, car. I had my eyes set on buying a low-mileage Jeep Wrangler from a local dealer. However, I was able to talk myself down from the ledge.

Since the corona pandemic, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has plummeted to its lowest points since the 2008 housing market crash, also known as the Great Recession, along with the fastest drop of the New York Stock Exchange since Black Tuesday in 1929.

Personally, I lost \$20 over the span of one week before withdrawing my funds and rein-

vesting into other stocks. But, in large portfolios, such as a Roth Individual Retirement Account and other retirement plans like the 401(k), withdrawing is practically impossible until the account reaches maturity, much like a certificate of deposit at a bank.

This means everyone with individual retirement plans and everyone with jobs that plan for retirement by making investments in the stock market such as my uncle lost thousands, or in my uncle's case, tens of thousands of invested dollars.

Add this on top of the fact that Alva is a rural community in Oklahoma where our greatest employer is agriculture, yet the livestock market is doing flips like the Olympians would be in Tokyo this summer if The Olympics hadn't been postponed, and we have the recipe for a detri-

mental economic climate in our community.

Not only are retirement funds running low, so are the checkbooks of our community members, specifically farmers and ranchers. Small businesses around The Square that rely on in-store purchases are being affected. Places of gathering, such as the Rialto Cinema theater and The Bull Smokehouse and Saloon, have made accommodations, but aren't getting their full return of revenue that they should. The community is suffering, and I want to take advantage of it.

I know, I know, I'm a terrible person, but it's not what it seems exactly.

I have the ability to make a good down payment on a used low-mileage vehicle, and the prices are about to drop.

If I can wait a couple more months or even a year until after I graduate, I can have a bigger down payment and get better financing on a better vehicle, likely for less money than what it would cost right now.

And buying locally will still help out the community.

Truly, the only cylinder not firing and the only counter-argument for holding out to buy is that I don't want the opportunity at hand to go to waste.

I found a Jeep that I thought only existed in my dreams or on paper. This thing is a true work

of beauty.

Six-speed manual transmission and just as many cylinders.

White as the snow its tires are made to plow through and the sound system every small-town boy spends all of his summer money on to put behind the seats of his daddy's hand-me-down.

This is where my emotions talk me into going through with the purchase. Thinking things through and weighing all of my options has gotten me further than most thought I would make it in life, but the biggest influences I have for holding out to buy is talking to people with more experience about making such hefty purchases.

Mentors and advisers are a young upstart's greatest ally in pursuing certain endeavors, and mending those relationships has been key to my financial benefit in life thus far.

Holding out on buying a Jeep until the economy is back on the rise and people get their jobs back will be the manufacturer's incentive to produce high-quality, low-cost vehicles. And with more competition in the market, consequently, other vehicles' prices also will be forced to drop, if they are intended to be sold off the lot to clear more space for newer, lower-cost vehicles.

Which is where I hope to stake my claim and take the opportunity to buy the Jeep, after the price drops. I don't feel bad for taking

advantage of a slumped economy to buy a vehicle. I do feel bad for those suffering because of the slumped economy. It seems that the number of people severely affected by the lapse of economic support will be higher than the number that will be severely affected by the virus.

The coronavirus pandemic is having a worse effect on the U.S. economy than it has on U.S. citizens. Some 30 million Americans have filed for unemployment since President Trump declared a State of Emergency the week of March 14. As of April 29 in the U.S., just over 1 million cases have been reported, and about 60,000 people have died because of it.

It was estimated that 500,000 cancer deaths were caused by the Great Recession in 2008 because of a lack of proper healthcare, and more than 10,000 suicides can be tied to the economic crises in the U.S. between 2008 and 2010.

Economic downturns, recessions and depressions are far worse for the citizens of America than a viral pandemic.

We did our part to slow the spread of the virus, but now that it's here, we might as well deal with it, go back to work and ramp our economy back up to the superiority it holds in the global marketplace.

Americans need jobs, and I want to buy a Jeep.

Sports

'It was all for my Pops'



Photo by Emma Sporleder

Bubba Furlong, a senior center, walks through the starting lineup tunnel during the announcement of the starters for the game against Southwestern Oklahoma State University Jan. 25.

Furlong inspired by father to set new goals for spring

By **OVELL PATTERSON**
Student Reporter

Bubba Furlong, a senior center for the Northwestern basketball team, transferred to Alva after a stint at another university and tragic family news.

In the 2020 – 2021 season, Furlong was in the top three in the nation and led the Great American Conference in blocks with 2.07 blocks per game. Not only that, but he was also in the top three in the conference in many other statistics.

Furlong is from Midway High School in Waco, Texas. Before coming to Northwestern, Furlong played for the Bearkats of Sam Houston State University.

Sam Houston State is a member of the Southland Conference within the Division I level of the NCAA.

Furlong became a conference champion with the Bearkats after winning 16 of the 18 regular season conference games they played during the 2018 – 2019 season. Over three years, Furlong scored 168 points and grabbed 130 rebounds for Sam Houston State.

Before coming to Northwestern, Furlong connected with a childhood friend. Brian Holiday, a defensive lineman for North-



Photo by Emma Sporleder

Bubba Furlong celebrates during a game inside Percell Fieldhouse against the Aggies of Oklahoma Panhandle State University on Jan. 1.

western's football team, grew up with Furlong.

When it came to visiting Alva, Furlong said he and his father liked the environment. He said Northwestern was going to be the place he would finish out his athletic and academic careers.

In the July before his first semester at Northwestern, Furlong's father passed away because of cancer.

"My Pops was my best friend and my hero," Furlong said. "I lost him on July 27, 2020, to cancer. My mom and dad came to

every game for as long as I can remember. After I lost my dad, my whole mindset on life and basketball changed."

Holiday said Furlong's father was motivational to him.

"His Pops told me before he lost his fight to cancer, to make sure that Bubba and myself graduate college," Holiday said.

Furlong's transfer meant he got to move in and live with his childhood friend, Holiday. The transfer also meant he got to play for the Rangers under Coach Vinay Patel's guidance.

Although the Rangers came up short on the season, Furlong was a statistical leader in not only the Great American Conference, but also was in the top three in blocked shots per game of all athletes in the Division II level of the NCAA, as of press time.

Furlong said he found the motivation to work hard on and off the court because he knew his father was watching him.

"I was not aware of the season that I had," Furlong said. "My family and friends brought it to my attention and were the first to point out the things I was achieving on the court. It was all for my Pops and from the new mindset I brought to the court this year."

Furlong said he expects to be better next year after playing a year in Division II under Patel.

"Coach V has given me the opportunity I was not given at Sam Houston State University, which I am very thankful and blessed

for," Furlong said. "I plan to return to Northwestern for my final season and will be looking to win a ring and take Northwestern to the tournament."

Furlong also averaged 8.7 points per game and 9.4 rebounds per game. He said his goal is to get more rebounds next year and have an average that doubles his average this year.

Holiday said he believes Furlong's next season with the Rangers will be Furlong's strongest year.

"He has played against it all," Holiday said. "Players who went off to the NBA, overseas teams, and G-leagues. He has the drive to be the best at everything, so I know this offseason, he will work to have the best season he has ever had for his final year of college basketball."

"Bubba had a good season all around, but I know he will be even ten times more dominate next year," Patel said. "He brings so much drive and passion to the court. He is also very aggressive on the court and will get the job done one way or another."

"He had some awful news hit him right before this school year started, so I honestly was not sure how well his season to come. He showed how tough he was and only worked harder to make his dad proud."

"He goes hard every day in practice and puts in the extra time, which is why he led the nation in blocks."

Sports

SPRING IS IN FULL SWING



Photo by Emma Sporleder

Morgan La Neve, junior third baseman, celebrates towards the bench of the Lady Rangers softball team after hitting a home run against the University of Arkansas-Monticello on Feb. 26.

Softball continues after playing half of the team's season



Photo by Athletic Communications

Hannah Howell, sophomore pitcher, runs toward first after hitting the ball against Southwestern Oklahoma State University on March 9.

By JACOB COMP
Student Reporter

Northwestern's softball team is in full swing after playing its first games in late Feb.

Head coach Jill DeVries goes into her fifth season coaching the Lady Ranger softball team.

The NWOSU softball team began its season with a win and loss against Friends University. The team's second series of the year was against Sterling College. The Lady Rangers left Sterling, Kansas with a sweep over the Knights of Sterling College.

The Lady Rangers then hosted the team's first home series against the University of Arkansas at Monticello. The team won two games out of three against the Cotton Blossoms.

The team then traveled to Wichita, Kansas to play Newman University. The Lady Rangers swept Newman University by scoring nine runs in both wins. After playing those teams, they started the season with a record of 7-2.

Since their sweep in a double header against Newman University, the Lady Rangers have not put another "W" in the win column and are currently on an 11-game losing streak.

Morgan La Neve, a junior third baseman for the Lady Rangers, said the team needs to bring

back the attitude they had in the beginning of the season.

Sophomore pitcher Hannah Howell leads the team with a batting average of .431 on 58 at bats. She has 10 RBIs, 25 hits and seven doubles.

Howell was named to the Great American Conference Pitcher of the Week accolade on March 2. Howell's record on the year is 5-5 as the starting pitcher on the mound. She currently has a 3.02 ERA for the season.

"Being named GAC pitcher of the week at the beginning of the year was an awesome accomplishment," Howell said. "I felt like all my hard work was paying

off."

Lindsey McElroy, Allison Zanca, Kalie Johnson, Jayden Solberg and Regan Burleson join Howell and La Neve on having a .250 batting average with at least 15 at-bats.

"I believe we are going to come out swinging the next series and pull out a couple of W's to give us our mojo back and hopefully we can gain that confidence back as well," Howell said.

The softball team has 19 conference games left in the season before the Great American Conference tournament in Bentonville, Arkansas beginning May 6.

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Sports

Baseball players confident in season, they say

By **JACOB COMP**
Student Reporter

The Northwestern baseball team started its season in the late half of Feb. after inclement weather postponed the team's season opener.

The Northwestern baseball has played 15 games on the year. The Rangers have 25 games left this season.

The team hosted its home opener in a series of three games against Rogers State University that begun on Feb. 21. The Rangers won the first match-up, but lost the next two.

The Rangers' next games were against the Boll Weevils of the University of Arkansas at Monticello that begun on Feb. 26. They won two out of the three games played on Glass Family Field in Alva.

The team's first away games were on March 6 and 7 against the Tigers of East Central University. The Rangers won one and lost two in Ada.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University came to play against the Rangers on March 14 and 15. The Rangers walked away from that series with two more wins on the year.

Henderson State University came to play the Rangers over

spring break on March 19 and 20. The Rangers scored 19 runs during the series, helping them win two out of the three games played.

The team's record currently sits at 7 – 8 overall, with six of those wins being conference wins and six of those losses being conference losses.

Head coach Ryan Bowen and the Rangers aim to be the first NWOSU baseball team to make it to the Great American Conference tournament.

Four out of the last seven series match-ups for the Rangers will be played on Glass Family Field at Myers Stadium in Alva.

"The Ranger fans and Alva community are great supporters," Daschal Johnson, a senior outfielder, said. "They are always supporting us and backing us. They can expect big things to come from this program as all aspects of our team are finally getting in sync with each other."

Northwestern sits at eighth place in the Great American Conference standings. The team is only two wins behind tying for third with Southern Arkansas University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Jake White, a senior catcher from Frisco, Texas, said he has a lot of confidence in this Ranger baseball team.

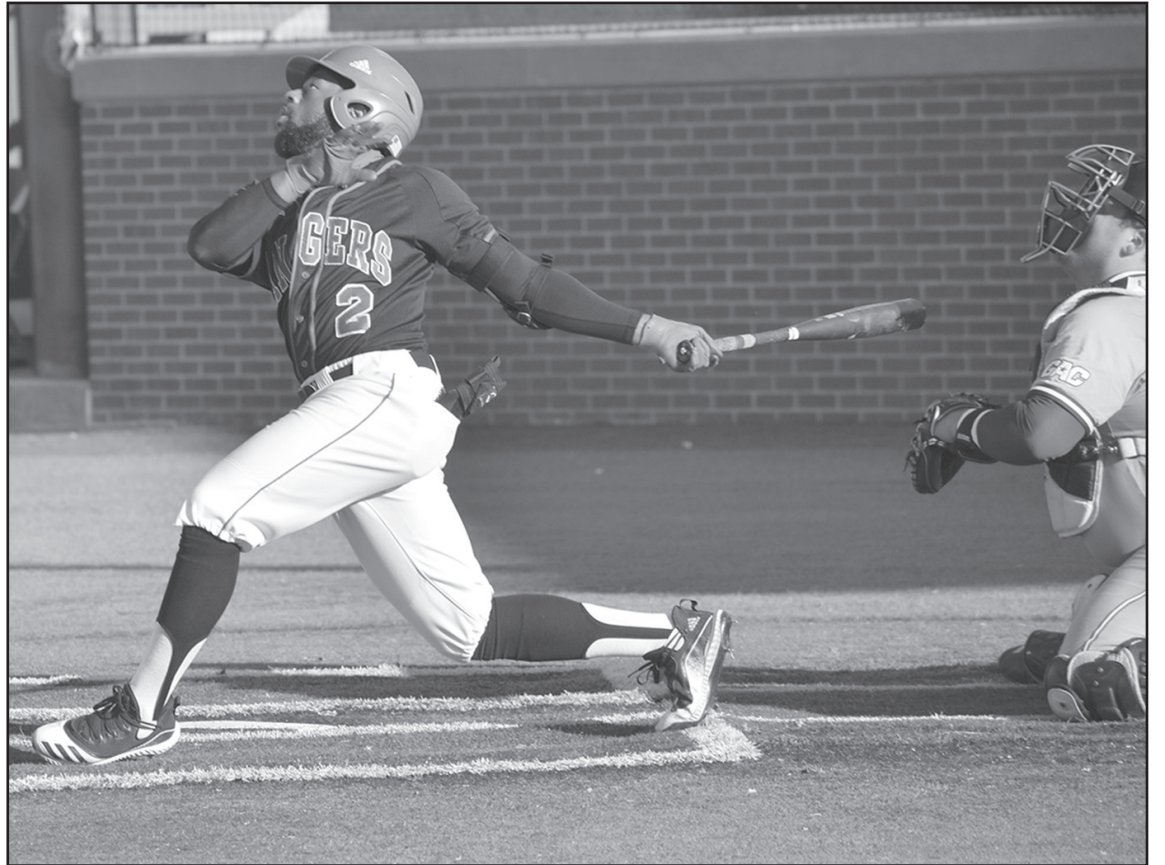


Photo by Emma Sporleder

Senior outfielder Daschal Johnson and the Henderson State University catcher look up at fly ball hit by Johnson in a game played on Glass Family Field against the Reddies of Henderson State University on March 20.

"Whether we are the one seed or the eight seed, we have all the tools and personnel to be the best in the league," White said. "We can do big things for Northwestern that hasn't ever been done before."

On the season, the Rangers have swung for a .295 team bat-

ting average. They have brought in 96 runs on the year.

Northwestern has five players with a batting average over .300 with at least 10 at bats. On the pitching side, Northwestern currently has a team ERA, earned run average, of 5.88.

Preston Lonadier leads the

team with a batting average of .385 with 39 at bats. He has nine runs this season with eight RBIs.

Yugo Hamakawa and Johnson both have batting averages over .350 on the year.

The Ranger baseball team will begin their next series at Ouachita Baptist University on March 26.

University soccer teams starts season with losing streak



Photo by Emma Sporleder

Payton Taylor, a sophomore defender, kicks the ball down the field in an exhibition against Newman University on Feb. 24 in Wichita, Kansas.

By **CAITLIN HOFEN**
Student Reporter

After a late start to their season, the Northwestern's women soccer team is competing in a shortened spring season. Like many other sports, the Lady Ranger's season has been impacted by COVID-19.

"COVID impacted our season by cancelling our traditional 18 game fall season," said head coach Alex Piekarski. "We are fortunate that we are able to compete in an abbreviated eight game schedule, this spring."

However, the first two games for the spring soccer season were canceled or postponed because of inclement weather.

The Lady Rangers competed in their season opener against Southwestern Oklahoma State University on Feb. 28 in Weath-erford.

Alissa Carlson, Payton Taylor, Carlie Massingale and Riley Marks all shot an attempt towards the Southwestern goalie. The team could not score any of their four shots on the game resulting in a final score of 2 – 0.

The Northwestern Lady Rangers traveled to Shawnee to take on Oklahoma Baptist University March 13.

Goalie Reyna Gonzalez saved the ball from entering the goal 10

times but allowed two to slip in past her. After a 90 minute game, the Lady Rangers lost, 2 – 0.

The Lady Rangers competed against Ouachita Baptist University on March 20 in Arkadelphia, Ark.

Clare Merrigan and Rachel Bailey both scored for the Lady Rangers in the first half. Ouachita Baptist then scored twice in the second half taking the game into overtime. After two overtime periods, the Lady Rangers lost with a final score of 3 – 2.

The Lady Rangers traveled to Enid to play against Harding University on March 23 at D. Bruce Selby Stadium.

After 90 minutes and two overtime periods, neither team scored a goal. The final score of the game was 0 – 0.

On the year, The Lady Rangers have taken 25 shots as a team. According to the Great American Conference's website, Gonzalez ranks second in the conference for the amount of saves per game. She also ranks fifth overall in the Great American Conference in the save percentage statistic and the overall number of saves she has had this year.

The Lady Rangers are focused on growth and improvement going forward, Piekarski said.

"I am proud of our team's effort and the growth we have seen

the past few weeks," Piekarski said. "We are seeking to continue to improve as a team with a positive culture and continue to develop our style of playing on the field.

"So far we have had some very strong defensive performances. We want to continue to improve our attack while not sacrificing our defensive unit."

Lily Anderson, a freshman midfielder, said she and the team are going to work as a family to improve.

"It has been at least a year for all of us since we had competed, so it means a lot to be able to play the sport we love," Anderson said. "Therefore, we leave everything on the field and the most out of every game, practice and morning lift. The team really is like a family, and we are always there for each other's highs and lows. Our goal is to get better as a team every time we step on the field."

The Rangers have two games left in their season before the Great American Conference tournament that begins on April 10.

The Lady Rangers will play their first home game of the year against Southern Nazarene University on March 27. The team's final home game of the year will be against East Central University on March 30.

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GOING SHOT-FOR-SHOT



Above: After receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations, students waited in Percefull Fieldhouse for 15 minutes as they were observed by health workers. Right: Northwestern student Lily Crickmar receives her COVID-19 vaccination from a Northwestern nursing student.

Photos by Jordan Green