

FAMOUS RANGERS

Five Ranger athletes will be inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame during the men's basketball game Feb. 5. Read about them here. PAGE 8



PLAY BALL

Anthony Jones is shown during the Jan. 27 men's basketball game. For complete coverage, see PAGE 10.

Photo by Devyn Lansden



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COVID-19

Area hospitals adapt to pandemic changes

Hospital staff shortages, rising patient numbers pose problems in region

By **BENJAMIN KLIEWER**
Senior Reporter

Northwest Oklahoma hospitals are adapting to the omicron variant of the coronavirus, and some are still filled with coronavirus patients.

The omicron variant accounts for 92% of all positive COVID-19 tests in Oklahoma, said Kurt DeVaney, chief hospital executive at Enid Integris Bass Baptist Hospital.

Coronavirus cases have risen across Oklahoma in recent weeks. The state had more than 100,000 active cases on Monday, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health. The state has had almost 980,000 cases since the pandemic began, and more than 13,000 Oklahomans have died from the virus.

The state health department reported Tuesday that 75 coronavirus patients in northwest Oklahoma were in a hospital, and 17 were in an intensive care unit. Some Oklahoma City hospitals have publicly said in recent weeks that they have no



File photo

Share Medical Center in Alva is shown in this March 2020 file photo. Area hospitals are adapting to an influx of coronavirus patients, changing medical guidance on treating the virus and staffing shortages amid a pandemic that has lasted nearly two years.

See **HOSPITALS**, Page 2

EDUCATION



Photo by Devyn Lansden

Northwestern nursing students Lauren Veach and Jacylin Longhofer let Zane Zimmerman listen to the sound of Veach's heartbeat by using a stethoscope during the Jan. 19 pediatric clinic, an annual skills lab.

With emphasis on rural healthcare, NWOSU nursing program ranks No. 1

By **KAYLEA BROWN**
Senior Reporter

Northwestern's Doctor of Nursing Practice program has been named as the best in the country by Intelligent.com.

Intelligent.com is a free, editorially independent website that ranks educational programs and universities across the country. The website measures the course strength, faculty qualifications, flexibility, reputation and cost of a program when assigning a rank.

Northwestern nursing leaders say they are proud of the distinction.

"I think the No. 1 rating validates the

hard work our faculty and staff do," said Dr. Shelly Wells, professor of nursing and chair of the division of nursing. "[It] validates that there was a need for this particular program, and we are stepping up to the plate to meet that need."

Northwestern has a hybrid program where students can transition into the doctor of nursing program after earning a bachelor of science in nursing. The program is comprised of online classes and in-person skills classes during the summer.

It is the only program in the state to have an emphasis on rural healthcare.

Ranking is based on program's rigor and reputation.

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NEWS

HOSPITALS: Caregivers not immune to effects of virus

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available beds for patients.

Integrus in Enid has used monoclonal antibody infusions to treat coronavirus patients who have additional health risks but are not sick enough to be admitted into the hospital, DeVaney said.

However, the infusions were more successful with other variants and are less effective against omicron. The FDA scaled back the use of those antibodies, so Integrus and other hospitals have started administering the drugs Remdesivir and Sotrovimab as outpatient infusions in the last two weeks.

“Historically, we have been administering that (Remdesivir) to the inpatients when they get admitted, but it is proving to be successful on an outpatient basis,” DeVaney said.

The Enid hospital typically does six to eight infusions a day, DeVaney said. Providers give the infusions Monday through Friday, and if enough people need them, hospital staff will provide infusions on Saturdays.

The hospital is also dispensing new oral medications for the coronavirus out of its retail pharmacy.

Patients must meet certain criteria for the drugs, and their medical providers must write them a prescription.

However, changes in drugs are not the only challenges hospitals are facing. Staffing shortages and influxes of patients mean hospitals have few, if any, available patient beds.

“Right now, and it has been this way for pretty much the last couple months, the hospital is full,” DeVaney said. “We do have discharges every day, but those are then getting replaced.”

On Monday, the hospital had 21 COVID-positive patients, about 50% of its total patients, DeVaney said.

Adding to the problem is that many medical professionals are testing positive.

“Historically, we have been administering that (Remdesivir) to the inpatients when they get admitted, but it is proving to be successful on an outpatient basis.”

— Kurt DeVaney

“With the omicron variant specifically, we have seen more caregivers test positive for COVID, and that obviously hurts our staffing when they can’t work because they come back as a positive test,” DeVaney said. “So, that strains us. The other thing is our bed counts are fluctuating depending on what our staffing is.”

DeVaney said the hospital can only open a certain number of its total beds. This is to keep the caregiver-to-patient ratio at a safe level. Patients are sometimes having to wait longer in the emergen-



File photo

The emergency room entrance sign at Share Medical Center in Alva is shown in this March 2020 file photo. Area hospitals are adapting to an influx of coronavirus patients, changing medical guidance on treating the virus and staffing shortages amid a pandemic that has lasted nearly two years.

cy room before being admitted to the hospital because of bed and staffing shortages.

“We try to the best of our ability to keep everybody we can treat at the hospital in Enid,” DeVaney said.

HOSPITAL STAFF PICKING UP SLACK

Dr. Robert Rader with Share Medical Center in Alva said the hospital has been able to keep some beds open because the hos-

“It has been impressive. The staff has been willing to chip in and cover to keep adequate staffing.”

— Dr. Robert Rader

pital has responded effectively to the pandemic.

In the first wave of the pandemic, the hospital’s administrators were aggressive in getting additional respiratory equipment for patients. The hospital had also offered outpatient treatments, including monoclonal antibody infusions, and immunizations.

Even amid staffing shortages, hospital workers are picking up the slack, Rader said.

“It has been impressive,” Rader said. “The staff has been willing to chip in and cover to keep adequate staffing.”

COVID ON CAMPUS

Students prioritize self-care amid pandemic

Physical, mental health are equally important, they say

By LIBERTY GOODNOW
Student Reporter

With coronavirus cases on the rise, Northwestern students have varied views on how to stay safe from the virus.

Students say they’re concerned not only about their own health, but also the health of their friends and loved ones.

Student Corbyn Austin said she has a friend who is caring for a one-month-old baby at home, and her friend gets worried about potentially spreading the virus to her fami-



Austin

ly. The same goes for her grandparents, whose health conditions could worsen if they contracted the virus, she said.

Austin said virtual learning was difficult for her because she had trouble keeping up with her notes and assignment due dates. But she said she gained wisdom from it.

“I learned how important it is to stay physically healthy, but also mentally healthy by taking time to practice self-care,” she said.

Student Jerika Coon also said she struggled with distance learning when Northwestern closed its campus in March 2020 because of the pandemic.

She said she is a hands-on learner, so when she can’t be in the classroom, it makes it more



Coon

difficult to succeed. However, the health of others is important to her, especially because everyone’s body reacts to the virus differently, she said.

Now that Northwestern has already done distance learning once, doing so again wouldn’t be as difficult, she said.

“If we went virtual again, we would have the resources to do so without it being chaotic,” she said.

She also said self-care procedures play an important role in safeguarding one’s health.

Student Anderson Ramirez said he is not worried about the omicron variant affecting him because he is confident in his health and his immune system.

Ramirez also said he prefers

in-person learning. If he’s not in-class, he feels like he’s “just there watching a video of the professor trying to teach but not processing any of the content,” he said.

Washing his hands and eating

healthy foods are a couple ways he’s been staying safe since the pandemic started.

The pandemic has taught him a lesson, he said: To take time to take care of himself.



Ramirez

Thinking of Moving?? Think Hi-Lo Apartments, LLC

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NEWS

SHAKE IT OFF

NWOSU students rattled by Monday earthquake

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

Several Northwestern students said they felt a 4.5-magnitude earthquake that rocked parts of northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas on Monday.

The quake occurred at 11:10 a.m. and originated roughly four miles northwest of Medford in Grant County, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Medford is 52 miles east of Alva.

Northwestern students said they were caught off guard by the sudden shaking.

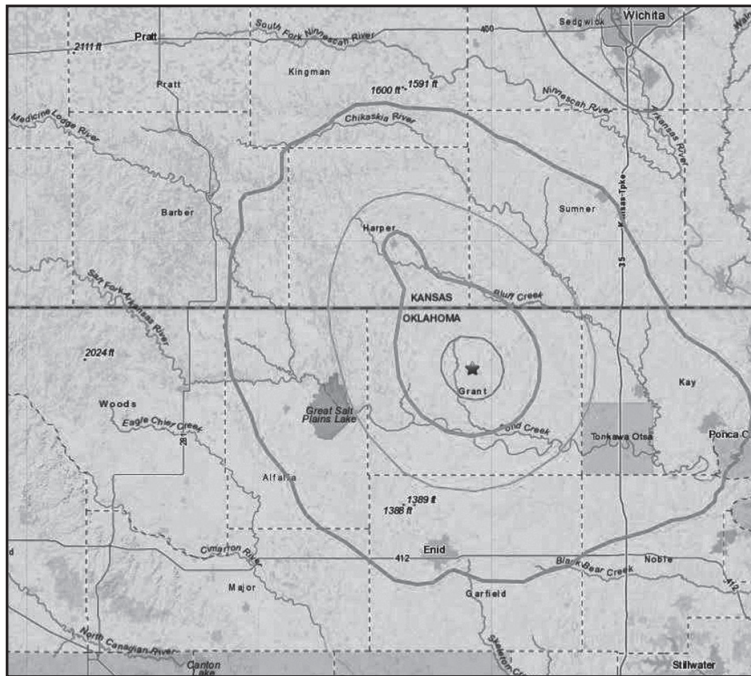
Music major Jeff Cher-Aime was in Ryerson Hall when the quake hit.

“The lockers started making a little noise from them rumbling,” Cher-Aime said. “I thought, maybe it’s somebody cleaning something. I went into Professor Weast’s office, and I asked her assistant. She’s like, ‘No, the building was shaking.’ I asked if it was a common occurrence, and she said, ‘Nope.’”

Agriculture major Evan Wahpekeche was on the third floor of Vinson Hall when the quake began.

“I was like ... [what] is shaking the building and looked outside to see no wind,” Wahpekeche said. “Then it started shaking harder, and then boom, it just stopped.”

Education major Autumn Arencibia was off campus when



Screengrab from U.S. Geological Survey website

This graph from the U.S. Geological Survey shows where an earthquake rattled parts of northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas on Monday. Several students at Northwestern said they felt the quake on campus.

the quake came.

“I was at home, and I was getting ready to watch a show,” Arencibia said. “I noticed a slight shaking under my feet. I’ve been in a few earthquakes, so I know what they feel like. And I only felt it if I stood still.”

Mass communication major Jara Reeder said she was working at a law office in downtown Alva that used to be a funeral home. She was slightly spooked by the quake.

“It sounded like someone was walking up through the office and

up the stairs at the same time,” she said. “I thought it was a ghost.”

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission is investigating the quake. Some Oklahoma quakes have been attributed to the use of wastewater disposal wells, which inject water used in oilfield work into the ground and are said to induce seismic activity. In February 2021, the commission shut down a well in Grant County after a 4.2-magnitude earthquake.

No damage stemming from the Monday quake was immediately reported by the survey office.

What’s up?

ALL MONTH

The Coronado Cafeteria and Ranger Market will have different events throughout the month of February in honor of National Kindness Day on Feb. 17.

Those events will lead up to the cafeteria’s “Delightful Event” on Feb. 17 during lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. The cafeteria will have a surprise lunch menu.

Here are the other events for the month:

— **Feb. 1:** Cafeteria workers will put a box at the cafeteria for people to donate goods such as coats, school supplies, non-perishable food items and other items to help those in need. Donations will be given to organization such as the Campus Cabinet.

— **Feb. 14:** Ranger Market employees will give away Valentine’s Day cookies from 7:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. outside the Ranger Market in the Student Center. Students can also choose to bag up a cookie and write a note with it so they may pass it

on to someone else.

— **Feb. 16:** The cafeteria will have a “surprise” set up during lunch.

“We at Coronado Cafeteria and Ranger Market are excited to be holding these events for our great students and faculty and hope that everyone will join us and help celebrate National Kindness Day together with our team,” said Joshua Hinton, spokesperson for the cafeteria and Ranger Market. “For up-to-date information, follow us on Instagram and Facebook at RangerDining.”

MARCH

The 19th annual university Art Society Art Show is set for March 6 through March 25 in the J.W. Martin Library. It will be open to the public during regular library hours.

All categories and descriptions may be found along with entry forms and other art show rules at www.nwosu.edu/art/nas-art-show.

All artwork must be turned in at the library on March 2 by 5 p.m.

Students are eligible for prize money along with ribbon awards.

NURSING: Instructors say they love ‘seeing our students be successful’

Continued from Page 1

Wells said there are three other nurse practitioner programs in the state, but they are in bigger cities. So, they attract students who want to work in those areas. Northwestern’s program is able to attract students who want to stay in smaller, rural areas like Alva.

The program was created to help rural communities gain access to a primary care provider, Wells said.

“We know that health care access in Oklahoma is pretty dire, so this program focuses on preparing nurse practitioners to work in rural Oklahoma,” Wells said.

The rural emphasis is not the only aspect that makes the program stand out from the rest.

Morgan Messenger, a 26-year-old student from Enid, said she appreciates the program’s small class sizes. She also likes the on-site learning opportunities and access to clinicals and preceptors, something bigger colleges don’t have.

Messenger said the instructors also set the program apart from others.

“The instructors are so invested in you and really care how things work out for you,” Messenger said. “I have had two babies [while] in the program. They’re really understanding, and they know me personally.”

The instructors are practicing nurse practitioners themselves.

“We want to push them to be the best because we know they are capable of that.”

— Courtney Ballina

Courtney Ballina, an assistant professor of nursing and director of the doctorate program, has been a nurse practitioner for 10 years and a nursing faculty member for five years. She said the program is organized in a way that prepares students to think as doctorally-prepared practitioners.

“We have found, over the last two classes who have graduated, that this format greatly improves their clinical experiences by teaching them to think in broader, more systemic terms, rather than simply addressing the single individual in front of them,” Ballina said.

The ranking by Intelligent.com reflected the high standards the program has set for its students and proves the program has produced successful nurse practitioners, Ballina said.

“Although we hold a high bar ... we love seeing our students be successful,” Ballina said. “We are not interested in just holding up hoops for our students to jump for. We want to push them to be the best because we know they are capable of that.”

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HOORAY Children

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This is a GOOD THING!

Say this dessert by name and get a DISCOUNT!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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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.

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Yearly subscriptions to the News are \$20.

OPINION



Photos by Jordan Green

ABOVE: As shown Tuesday, an exterior panel fell off part of Ament Hall, highlighting Northwestern's aging infrastructure. BELOW: A cracked and pitted sidewalk near the intramural football field on campus is shown Tuesday. The author believes more state funding would improve universities.

State legislators should increase funding to help state universities

By J.D. EDDY
Editorial Editor

Northwestern is a university that prides itself on being affordable for students. It maintains the freedom of giving a quality education and allowing students to meet new people and be exposed to a unique environment.

However, being affordable leads to some drawbacks in the money that we can spend. The average cost of tuition is around \$8,000, making it among the most cost-efficient universities in the country without financial aid.

As a result, some of our facilities on campus are underfunded.

We are at a small D2 in the Panhandle of Oklahoma, and we do not have as much money flowing in as other universities in the state, like Oklahoma Baptist, Southern Nazarene and even Northeastern.

All of these schools have some sort of "fallback" plan when it comes to money. Northeastern is in Tahlequah, which is home to the Illinois River. Many people go there to float the river during the summer, and they pump money into the local economy.

Some of those customers and businesses also donate to the university.

Oklahoma Baptist is in Shawnee, about 45 minutes from Oklahoma City. Being a religious university, it doesn't receive as much government funding as public



universities. It is supported primarily by endowment funds and students' tuition fees.

Southern Nazarene in Oklahoma City offers more for students to do than other universities in the state. As a result, it can have sponsorships from major businesses such as Chick-Fil-A.

One such sponsorship gave the college the freedom to build new dormitory halls that are like small apartments.

Northwestern doesn't have the money for such projects. The word of the day is "budgeting," and Northwestern is good at it.

According to the Oklahoma Policy Institute, the State of Oklahoma cut higher education funding by 35.3%, or more than \$3,000 per student, from 2008 to 2019.

If you have seen the decline of financial aid in from 2018 to 2022 as I have, this is the reason behind it. These funding cuts make it less attainable for students to attend a four-year university. The average tuition cost in the state of Oklahoma increased by 31%, an average of \$2,000 per student.

Little to no wage growth, tuition costs rising and the weaning of financial aid diminished enrollment numbers in four-year universities across Oklahoma by 9% during the same time period, according to the Policy Institute.

Many people see how expensive college is, and they go to the work force straight out of high school instead, allowing them to make money and start their adult life.

That being said, it is up to the

state legislators to change the status quo and find some sort of solution. Our state would not be ranked 42nd in education if our funding for higher education had not been cut.

This article isn't meant to bash Northwestern at all. The decisions our administrators make are based upon importance. If funding continues to get cut, what will be next? Getting rid of the only Wi-Fi that we have on campus and switching to a system that barely works? That's a joke. Don't take it too seriously.

It is not Northwestern's fault that our state does not value higher education. It sits upon our elected officials to figure out what they want the future of this state to be.

The Oklahoma State Board of Regents has asked for an \$85 million increase to the budget. This would help colleges around the state increase enrollment and allow colleges to create more teaching positions.

Northwestern, even though it is underfunded, is one of the better universities to go to, but not because of facilities.

It's the people who come here and make friendships that last a lifetime.

It is one of the reasons I enjoy being here. If not for that, I would have never come back.

But friendships only go so far. It's time for our state leaders to increase higher education funding.

OPINION



Photos by Jordan Green

ABOVE: A BNSF Railway freight train rolls through a railroad crossing near Quinlan in October 2021. BELOW: A blue sign containing emergency contact information is posted on

a railroad crossbuck post in Alva. Drivers who get stuck on railroad crossings should call the number on the blue sign, which connects them with railroad officials.

Who ya gonna call?

If you get stuck on railroad tracks, this is what you need to do

JORDAN GREEN SAYS



JORDAN GREEN

What should you do if you get stuck on the railroad tracks?

Don't call 9-1-1. There's a better answer to the problem.

Cars and trucks get stuck on railroad tracks somewhat often, even in 2022. Stranded drivers sometimes call 9-1-1, hoping that a dispatcher can contact railroad officials in time to stop fast-moving freight trains.

But unless you're experiencing a medical emergency, 9-1-1 is not the first number you should call in such a situation.

On railroad crossing gate posts are small blue signs with white letters. Called Emergency Notification System signage, these placards list a phone number drivers can call in the event of an emergency at that crossing. They also list information about the location of the crossing.

Those phone numbers belong to railroads, and when drivers call, a railroad official will answer. Then, drivers say what the situation is and read off the crossing number on the sign. Railroad dispatchers can then contact train crews and order them to stop their trains. (If there's enough time before the train reaches the crossing, of course.)

I was shocked to find out a few weeks ago that most people don't know these signs exist. I'm a railroad man, and I make a habit of looking for these signs at every grade crossing. I was talking with some friends about

cars getting hit by trains, and none of them knew about the blue signs. In fact, none of them really knew what to do if they got stuck.

Luckily, the answer is simple. We've just got to know what to look for.

So, why not call 9-1-1? Because the signs offer something calling 9-1-1 doesn't: nearly instant contact with someone who can actually make trains stop.

First of all, most people don't know which railroad tracks they're stuck on. Are they stuck on tracks belonging to BNSF, Union Pacific, CSX, Norfolk Southern or some small railroad they don't even know about? Second, most drivers don't know their location well enough to describe it to a dispatcher in a useful way. Telling a dispatcher you're stuck on railroad tracks, but you don't know what road you're on or which railroad to call, isn't going to be fruitful.

Third, some dispatchers don't know how to contact railroad call centers or properly relay the information they get from drivers – if that information is even accurate. And lastly, dialing 9-1-1 takes more time. Drivers have to tell dispatchers the situation, and then dispatchers have to contact railroads and repeat the same information. All of this takes up precious time. (To be clear, I don't mean to say anything bad about 9-1-1 dispatchers. They're incredible people. Some of



these problems could be fixed with better safety programs sponsored by railroads.)

The blue cards provide the crossing number, which is tied to a precise location that railroad employees can easily find. And the signs have the perfect number for drivers to call.

Being safe around railroad crossings is as important today as ever. Distracted driving is high because of drivers using cellphones, so it's important that we pay attention to our

surroundings. And in the event you ever get stuck on railroad tracks – I hope you never do – remember to look for the little blue sign, call the number and stay away from the tracks.

The Operation Livesaver railroad safety program puts it this way: "Find the blue and white to save your life."

You can save your life simply by getting out of your car and getting off the tracks. But if you want your car to get saved with you, the blue sign is the key.

Northwestern coach gives back through baseball

By Gavin Mendoza
Senior Reporter

Not many people can say they are as passionate about their hometown professional sports teams as Matthew Bickford. Born and raised in Braintree, Massachusetts, Bickford became a Boston sports fan at an early age. Specifically, he was a supporter of the New England Patriots, Boston Bruins and the Boston Red Sox.

His favorite Boston sports team moment was the Super Bowl 51 comeback by the Patriots when they were down 28-3.

"The emotional rollercoaster I went through that night was unbelievable," Bickford said.

Sports have always been a large part of Bickford's life, but baseball is his one true love. He was a player here at Northwestern, and after graduating, he stayed at Northwestern and became a graduate assistant. Now, he's an assistant coach.

"I like to be around the game of baseball," Bickford said. "I like to give back ... and do the same thing that my coaches did for me."

"[Bickford] is not someone that is going to beat around the bush when you ask him for help."

— Scott Creedon

Bickford said his passion for coaching and his desire to help players stems from a coach who influenced him in Massachusetts. Coach Jay Shnable, who was Bickford's pitching coach in high school, influenced him the most, Bickford said. He remembers how Shnable would pick him up at 5 and 6 a.m. to work out and work on his pitching skills.

"He would just do it because he wanted to help me and help others get better on a daily basis," he said.

Bickford takes this mentality into his coaching, he said. His players say this makes him a good coach.

Bickford's childhood friend, Scott Creedon, said Bickford is honest and straightforward with players. Creedon is a pitcher at Northwestern and plays under Bickford, but he also grew up with Bickford because their parents were close friends.

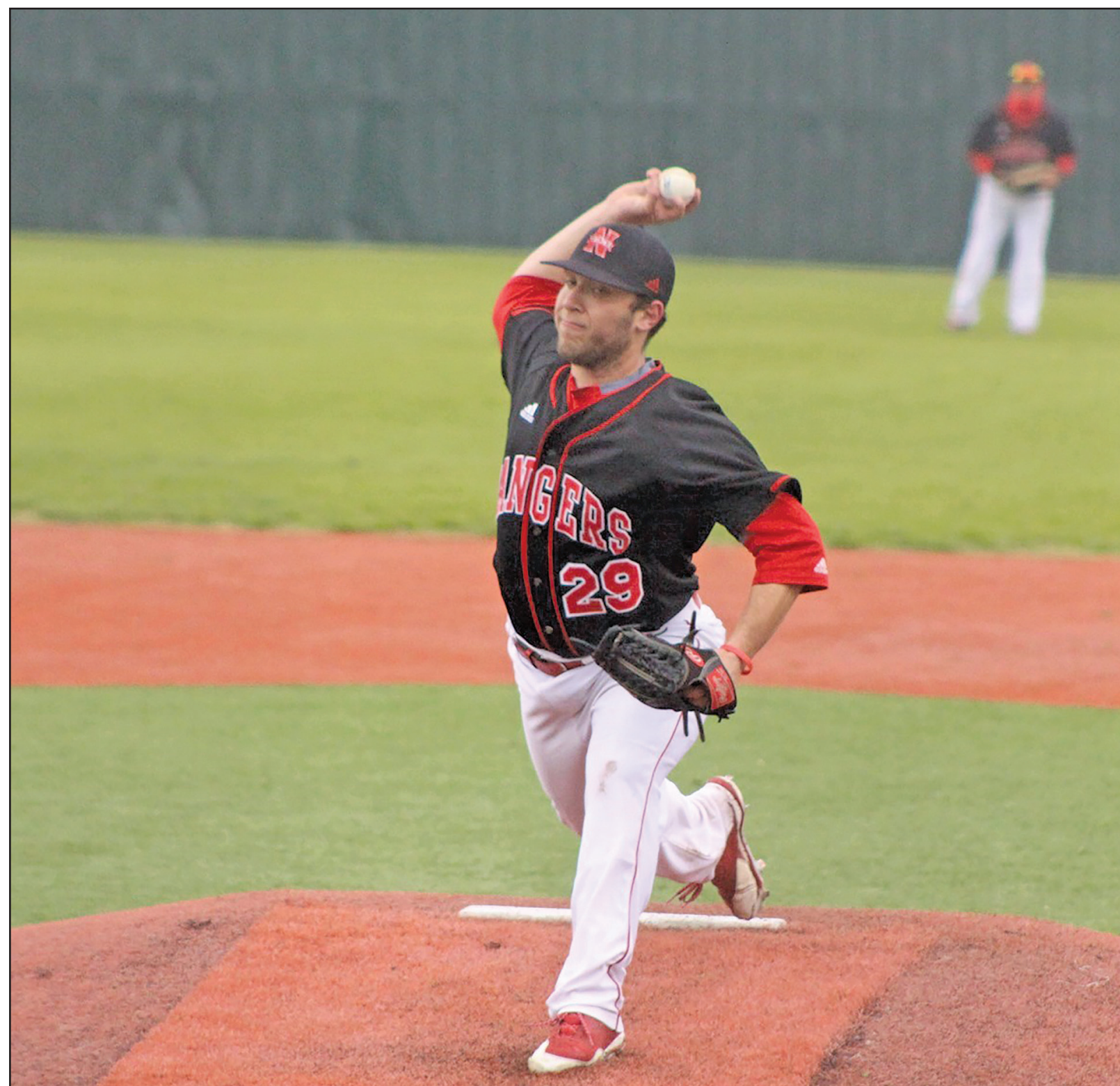
"He is not someone that is going to beat around the bush when you ask him for help, and you can see that when you are on the field," Creedon said. "He is not going to tell you what you want to hear, but always what he thinks will benefit you the most. Sometimes, people may not like that because people cannot handle the truth, so it can be a strength and a weakness."

ALVA VERSUS BOSTON

Bickford's friendliness and manner of speaking to others is the result of moving to Alva, Creedon said. At home, though, Bickford is less outgoing, he said.

This may be no surprise to people who are close to him, however, because Bickford himself said he prefers Alva over Massachusetts. His girlfriend, Nicole Donk, said Bickford has found a great home here in Alva and thinks it brings out the best in him.

"The people and the small-town community feel are something that is



lacking back home is Massachusetts," Bickford said.]

In Alva, everyone knows everyone, and it makes for a more pleasant and friendly way of living, he said.

"It took me a little bit to get used to it," Bickford said.

Bickford said he would not go back to live in Boston.

"There is too much going on, and it is just too expensive," he said. "The relationships with the people here are also a great reason to stay."

OFF THE FIELD

Bickford is an honest, genuine and caring person, Garrett Thompson said.

"In general, he is a fun guy to be around," Thompson said. "And [I'm] not saying it is a bad thing, but he kind of picks on people, but it is in a fun sort of way."

Thompson and Bickford lived together after Bickford graduated. Thompson was in his second year of being an athletic trainer at Northwestern.

Bickford and his friends love baseball and sports in general, Bickford said. He is able to make connections with people he's played with, coached or otherwise shared the field with. Other than baseball, he also loves animals.

Casey Guinty, the head pitching coach for Northwestern's baseball team, shared a story highlighting Bickford's kindness and care for animals. Bickford once took an injured cat he found to the veterinary clinic. He also has two rescue pets, Guinty said.

Guinty said this shows how much of a caring person Bickford is.

A HUMBLE LIFESTYLE

Bickford's peers say he is humble and will not tell you how good of a player he really was. He had a game-changing change-up, and he was proud to use it during his freshman year, when he started after a teammate died.

"I took a lot of pride in being the guy that went out there and pitched the day after he passed," Bickford said. "Pitching in his memory, that is probably my greatest moment as a player."

Away from the game of baseball, Bickford is a proud uncle and godfather. He said he takes pride in receiving his degree.

He remembers how challenging it was for him to adapt to the small town "feel" of Alva after moving from Boston. Now, he looks back and is happy with his decision, he said.

"I did not know what to expect when I first moved down here, but ... the guys on the team made it a lot easier to become accustomed to it," Bickford said.

Making friends outside of baseball also helped him.

A HELPFUL SENSE OF HUMOR

Bickford has a mild form of Tourette's, and he has only one kidney, he said. He's had to deal with these issues throughout his life. But as he's grown older, he has learned to joke about them.

"I was sitting in the van one time watching TikTok," Bickford said. "After that, my nickname became 'TikTok,' partly because of my Tourette's and partly because I was watching TikTok, but I thought it was hilarious."

Bickford is glad he can joke around and be light-hearted, he said. His sense of humor helps make him a better coach, and it helps him work with and relate to others.

He said he hopes to keep building up his coaching career and helping as many players as he can.

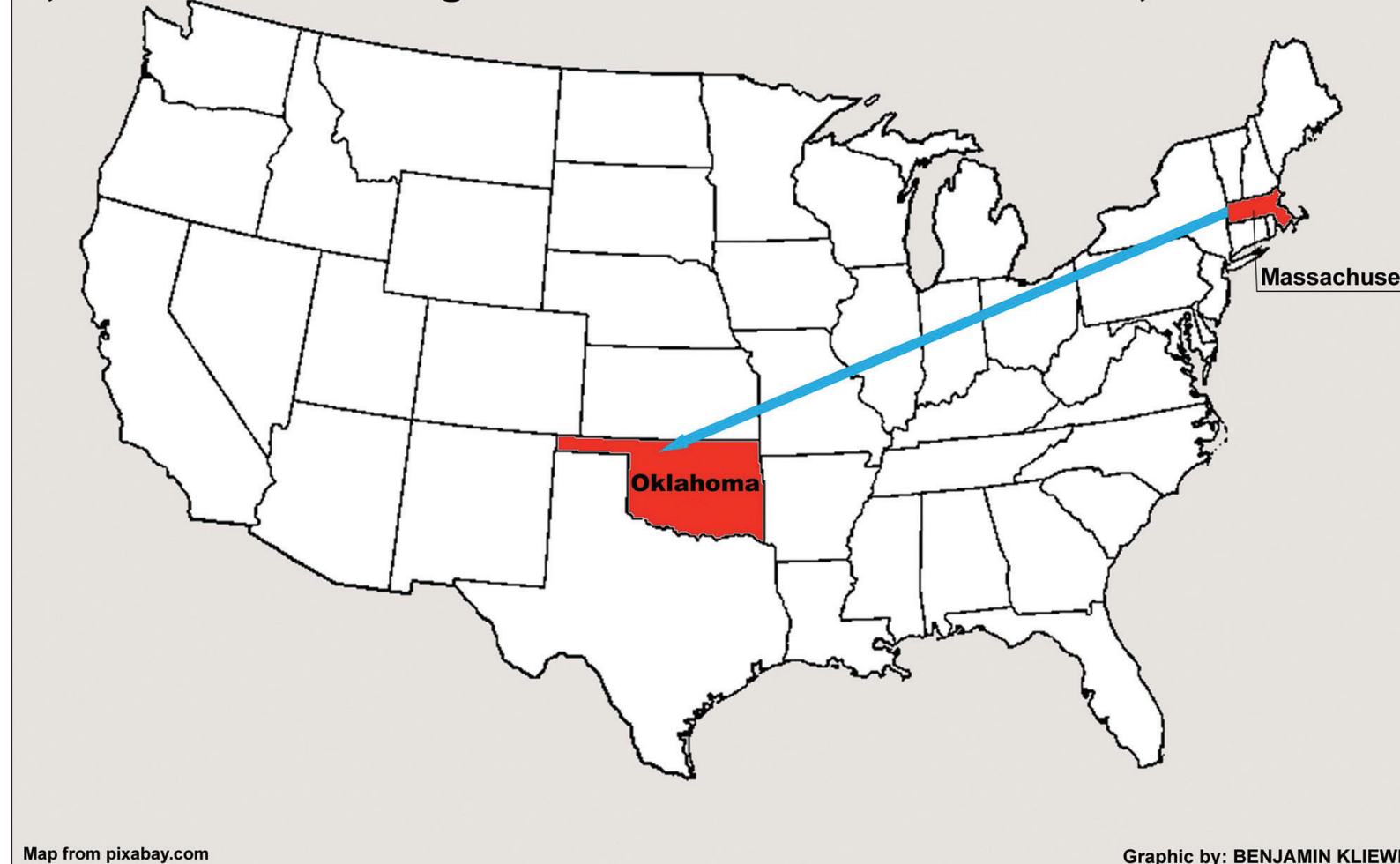
"One day, I hope to be a pitching coach and then possibly a head coach," Bickford said.

Building athletes into better competitors, while also preparing them for the real world after their athletics careers, is important to him, he said.

As long as he has baseball, family and friends, Bickford said he'll be happy.

"I've been playing baseball since I was 5," he said. "I haven't pictured myself doing anything else outside of the game."

1,728 miles of driving on the interstate from Braintree, MA. to Alva



ABOVE: This graphic shows the driving distance from Matthew Bickford's hometown of Braintree, Massachusetts, to Alva.



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP AND BOTTOM: Matthew Bickford is mid-throw while pitching for the Northwestern Rangers baseball team.

ABOVE: Matthew Bickford is shown pitching at the age of 6.

RIGHT: Matthew Bickford in his Rangers baseball uniform.

"I've been playing baseball since I was 5. I haven't pictured myself doing anything else."
— Matthew Bickford



FEATURE

5 to be inducted into Sports Hall of Fame

Brandon Christenson, Football

Known for his power and aggressiveness on the football field and for being one of the best teammates, Brandon "BC" Christenson played for the Rangers for five seasons from 1995 to 2001. Christenson was a member of the 1999 National Championship team, playing tight end and punter.

Christenson earned NAIA Second Team All-American as a part of the 1999 National Championship, where he caught Northwestern's first touchdown of the game.

He led the team in receiving yards and was a captain for the Rangers that season.

Holding a top 10 place in many school records, Christenson played all 44 games in his five seasons as a Ranger.

He was ranked tenth in reception yards, fourth in receiving touchdowns and fifth in yards per catch in his position as a tight end.

As a punter he was fourth in total punt yards and ninth for average yards per punt.

After graduating in December 2001, Christenson played tight end in the NFL for three different teams, including the Jacksonville Jaguars, Baltimore Ravens and the Oakland Raiders. He saw time in the AFC Championship game with the Oakland Raiders against the Tennessee Titans in the 2002-03 season.

Following his NFL career,



Brandon Christenson

Photos provided

Christenson entered the business world and currently works for Champion Medical-LLC, a medical device sales company. Christenson also started his own foundation call RAMS-Riley Anderson Memorial Scholarship foundation. Its mission is to pro-

vide equipment and scholarships to youth athletic programs. It has helped more than 100 youth since its inception.

Christenson and his wife, Kayla, reside in Edmond with their three children: Caden, Cale and Brody.

Bob Battisti, Basketball

Former Ranger head basketball coach Bob Battisti is one of the most decorated individuals inducted into the Northwestern Oklahoma State University Sports Hall of Fame.

Battisti took over the men's basketball program in 1986, starting his 21-year coaching tenure with the Rangers.

His teams were known for their aggressiveness, hard work and tenacious defense.

Battisti accumulated a 374-265 Ranger record and has accumulated 469 collegiate wins in his basketball career.

From 1988 to 1996, the Rangers won four Oklahoma Intercollegiate Conference titles and five runner-up finishes for Battisti and his teams.

The Rangers earned many honors under Battisti's leadership, including being ranked in the NAIA Top 25 seven times and earning six different conference titles.



Bob Battisti

Battisti's best season at Northwestern was 1992-93, when the Rangers entered the national tournament with a 29-2 record and a No. 2 national rank.

He collected five conference Coach of the Year awards before being named national magazine Basketball Times' NAIA Na-

tional Coach of the Year in 1994.

Battisti stepped down as Northwestern's head coach in 2007. The next four years, he remained with the Ranger family as the university's athletic director.

As athletic director, Battisti began Northwestern's efforts to seek membership into NCAA Division II. He was also the founder of the "Vision of Victory" fundraising campaign, raising \$2.4 million to help with facility improvements.

Following his time at Northwestern, Battisti continued to coach basketball at Oklahoma Christian University, as the head coach at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Mid-America Christian University and at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Battisti resides in Oklahoma City. He and his wife, Shelly, have two sons, Cooper and Levi, and a daughter, Tisha.

Brittany (McBride) Johnson, Women's Basketball

A women's basketball alum, Brittany (McBride) Johnson graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in health and physical education. She continued her scholastic career and earned a master's degree in education from Northwestern in 2010.

Johnson played for the Lady Rangers from 2005 to 2007 and set numerous school records.

Her career scoring average was 17.7 points per game, which tied for the second most in Northwestern history.

Johnson made 266 career free throws, placing her in the Northwestern Top 10 for free throws. Finishing with 1,007 points, Johnson is one of 13 Lady Rangers to become a member of the 1,000-point club.

Johnson was named NAIA Honorable Mention All-American in 2005-2006, along with Second Team All-Conference in the Sooner Athletic Conference.

She also earned the 2005-2006 Newcomer of the Year Award.

Johnson's major career highlights include scoring 38 points



Brittany (McBride) Johnson

in one game against Wayland Baptist University and scoring 37 points against Langston University.

After graduating from Northwestern, Johnson was the girls' assistant basketball coach in Elgin from 2011 to 2013.

Johnson and her husband, Van, reside in Balko, where she is the head girls basketball coach, head girls and boys cross country coach, and head track coach for Balko Public Schools

Dean Farrow, Baseball

Dean "Deano" Farrow graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in 1981 after four seasons of Ranger baseball.

Farrow played second base and also pitched for the Rangers. He played 183 games with 584 at-bats.

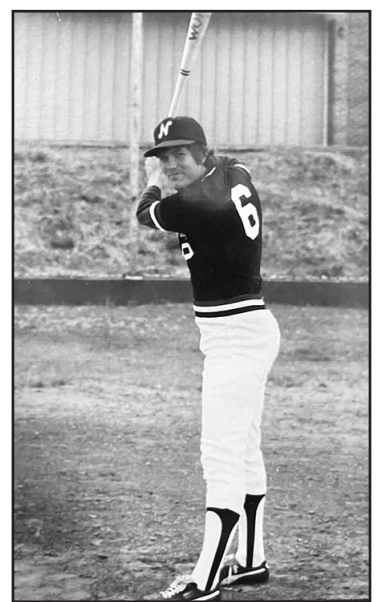
Farrow finished his career batting .344 and scoring 56 runs, 37 doubles, 12 triples and 19 home runs.

Farrow sits in the Top 10 of multiple Ranger records, including total at-bats, games played, hits, RBIs and doubles.

He holds the record for the most triples hit in a career at 12. He continues to hold the record for most triples hit in a season, with seven.

Farrow was named All-Conference Honorable Mention from 1977 to 81.

After graduating from Northwestern, Farrow's career spanned several opportunities and years in western Oklahoma.



Dean Farrow

Today, Farrow and his wife, Cari, own and operate Gloria's Kitchen, a restaurant located in Hinton.

The couple has three children: Daylin, Brianna and Marlee.

Editor's Note:

The stories on this page were written by Features Editor Caitlin Hofen. The Sports Hall of Fame induction will take place during the men's basketball game Saturday. For the final biography on the inductees, see Page 12.

ENTERTAINMENT

MOVIE REVIEW

‘Home Team’ delivers football talk, funny jokes

By **AUSTIN MORTON**
Senior Reporter

What happens when you mix an Adam Sandler production with the true story of former New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton?

You get “Home Team.” Kevin James plays Sean Payton in this Netflix retelling of the events during the “Bountygate” controversy.

Bountygate began during the Saints Superbowl win in 2009 and continued until 2011.

The controversy involved Saints players being paid bonuses for injuring opposing team players. Once the NFL commissioner was aware of the situation, he suspended Payton from coaching for a year.

During that year, Payton would begin coaching his son’s sixth grade football team in Argye, Texas.

“Home Team” focuses more

on this father-son relationship, rather than getting involved with the controversy itself, to mixed results of success.

Payton wants to use this year to get closer to his son, Connor. Being a head coach in the NFL, he has not been able to spend much time watching him grow up.

Payton decides that the best way to get closer to him is by coaching Connor’s underperforming football team.

“Home Team” plays similar to most underdog sports films.

The team initially is not very good, getting beat by 40 points in every game.

When this happens, the school shuts off the power to the scoreboard to save money. Once Payton begins to bring his NFL coaching to the team, however, the players get their first win.

What follows is a mix of montages and Adam Sandler-style jokes, including the team winning an important game by vomiting



Kevin James plays Sean Payton in the Netflix retelling of the New Orleans Saints “Bountygate” scandal. Photo provided by Netflix Media Center

on the opposing team to get the final score.

Somewhere in the middle is a fairly well-told story of a son being forced to live in his father’s football shadow and how he tries his best to be recognized by his

father, even if the love is not reciprocated.

However, it gets lost in all of the jokes and football talk. If you enjoy Adam Sandler movies, the baggage they bring and are interested in football history, then

“Home Field” could be for you.

But if even one of those sounds like a turn-off, I would recommend something else. You might get more enjoyment watching the Superbowl commercials in a few weeks.

Streaming services becoming more popular

By **REBECCA WAGNER**
Student Reporter

Based on statistics in recent years, people have switched to using streaming content more than they have in the past.

In the past, few people would use streaming websites to access their movies or music more than they use cable, but in recent years, it has become the standard way for many people to consume such content.

When asked, it’s not uncommon for people to have more than one streaming site.

The questions to ask are: “Is streaming cheaper than having cable?” and “Is that why many people have started to lean more towards streaming?”

Depending on the package and how many channels are picked up on the cable package, it can cost \$45 to \$130. That price is lower compared to a person owning three different streaming sites. The person can spend up to \$366.87 a year in fees.

Streaming sites have different advantages because they have access to movies and shows that do not appear on a normal cable package.

Many people use more than one streaming service, and they do not just stick to one for long.

They will use it for a while and then get bored, so they will move on to the next and see what is offered. Other times, there are shows on offered on certain sites, so people will purchase and start to use those sites to watch that

specific show.

Streaming companies have increased their ratings and revenue in the past couple years. From 2017 to 2020, revenue has gone up for video steaming sites by \$13 billion.

Much of the younger generations are the ones that stream and purchase subscriptions.

People between the ages of 18 and 45 stream video content 28% more when compared to people ages 45 and up.

Radio streaming reaches a different age group in higher numbers than video. It reaches the age range 12-35 more than the other age group of 35 and up.

Video streaming is the new way of watching television, and many people are leaving cable behind.

Dad Joke of the Week:

Two cowboys are lost in the desert. One cowboy sees a tree that’s draped in bacon.

“A bacon tree,” he said. “We’re saved!”

He runs to the tree and is shot up with bullets.

It wasn’t a bacon tree. It was a ham bush.

GOT NEWS?

Let us know! Reach out to the Northwestern News via email at nwnews@nwosu.edu.

A Decade of Music: Top Songs from 10 Years Ago Today

Date: Feb. 3, 2012

1. “Set Fire to the Rain”
by Adele

2. “We Found Love”
by Rihanna Featuring Calvin Harris

3. “Good Feeling”
by Flo Rida

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SPORTS

MEN'S BASKETBALL



Photo by Devyn Lansden

Bubba Furlong attempts a layup during Northwestern's game against Arkansas-Monticello on Jan. 27 at Percefull Fieldhouse. The Rangers defeated the Boll Weevils by a score of 74-61. Furlong led the Rangers in scoring with 32 points, which is a career high for him. His previous career high was 22 points. The Rangers are currently on a five-game winning streak.

Rangers improve winning streak to five



Photo provided

Larry White dribbles down the court during Northwestern's game against Southern Arkansas on Jan. 29 at Percefull Fieldhouse. The Rangers defeated the Muleriders, 71-66, as part of a five-game winning streak.

By CONNOR GRAY
Assistant Editor

The Northwestern men's basketball team is on another hot streak, winning five games in a row.

The Rangers were looking to continue their streak as they came off two solid road wins against Harding and Arkansas Tech.

Their first challenge back at home was Arkansas-Monticello, which had an 8-8 record and gave the Rangers a game for most of it.

The first half was a back-and-forth affair, as both teams traded baskets. Northwestern relied on Bubba Furlong to help with scoring as the others struggled to get to the basket.

The second half was different, as Furlong continued to put points on the board. The team shot a little better and distanced itself from Monticello.

Furlong ended the game with 32 points and eight rebounds, shooting 13-16 from the field, 4-5 from the line and eight rebounds.

"Thursday night was crazy, probably my best game in college," Furlong said. "When I hit the floor that night ... it felt like old days when my dad was in the stands, when he was watching me play."

The Rangers were looking for payback against Southern Arkan-

sas as they lost to the Muleriders, 69-49, back in December.

The Rangers struggled with foul trouble early on, which hurt them.

Furlong, Larry White and Anthony Jones got into foul trouble quickly, so the team played most of the first half without its starters.

Despite the foul trouble, the Rangers battled with Southern Arkansas and went into the half down 30-28.

The second half was a different story. The Rangers outplayed the Muleriders and opened up opportunities to score, making plays offensively and defensively.

Five players for the Rangers had 10 or more points, with Furlong and Brian Free leading the Rangers with 14 points each.

Head coach Vinay Patel was positive about the team's victories.

"It's been great to win at home," Patel said. "We haven't been good at home in league play. We didn't get a good start, but we have done a good job making up for it on the road."

The Rangers completed the sweep against Monticello Jan. 24, as it was a make-up game from earlier in the year.

Free and Malik Parsons led the Rangers in scoring, with 22 and 19 points, respectively, helping the Rangers win, 71-55.

SPORTS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Lady Rangers win one, drop one

By **CONNOR GRAY**
Assistant Editor

The Northwestern Lady Rangers went 1-1 last week by defeating Arkansas-Monticello, but losing to Southern Arkansas.

The Lady Rangers had lost three straight games before the Arkansas-Monticello game, and they looked to their upcoming home games to bounce back.

Their first game back home was against Arkansas-Monticello, a team that has yet to win a game all year.

After the game started, Arkansas-Monticello went up 5-0, but two minutes later the Rangers retook the lead and never trailed again as they dominated the Cotton Blossoms in every aspect of the game.

The Lady Rangers surpassed their season high of points in a conference game with 97. The previous high was 84 against Henderson State earlier this year.

Bailey Brown had another big performance by leading the team in points, with 28 and 8 rebounds. Scout Frame also had a good day, with 18 points and six rebounds.

Carly Craig led the team with eight assists as the team finished with 26 assists. Andi Pierce also led the team with four steals.

The Lady Rangers' next opponent would not be as easy, as they played Southern Arkansas, which the Lady Rangers beat on the road earlier in the season.

The Muleriders had a 9-9 record going into the game, and the

Rangers needed this game to improve their chances of making the postseason.

But the Lady Rangers were unable to get anything going as the team shot poorly throughout the game. The team missed easy baskets and open shots.

The Muleriders played well defensively and got open shots, exposing the Rangers' defense. The Muleriders won, 72-47.

The team shot 27% from the field, as players could not capitalize on shots in the paint and were unable to answer anything Southern Arkansas threw at them.

Head coach Tasha Diesselhorst talked about the two games and how they affect the team going forward.

"The Monticello win was a good win for us," Diesselhorst said. "We kind of gave up on one that we'll look back on the Southern Arkansas game."

Diesselhorst said Southern Arkansas was a game the Rangers needed, as it would help with the standing for the conference tournament.

Diesselhorst did comment on the team's shooting, especially in the paint.

"Bailey and Scout were getting great shots," she said. "I think they were just sped up and not taking time and were out of position and they need to finish better."

The Lady Rangers' next game is Thursday against Southwestern in Weatherford, with the next game at Percefull Fieldhouse on Saturday against East Central.

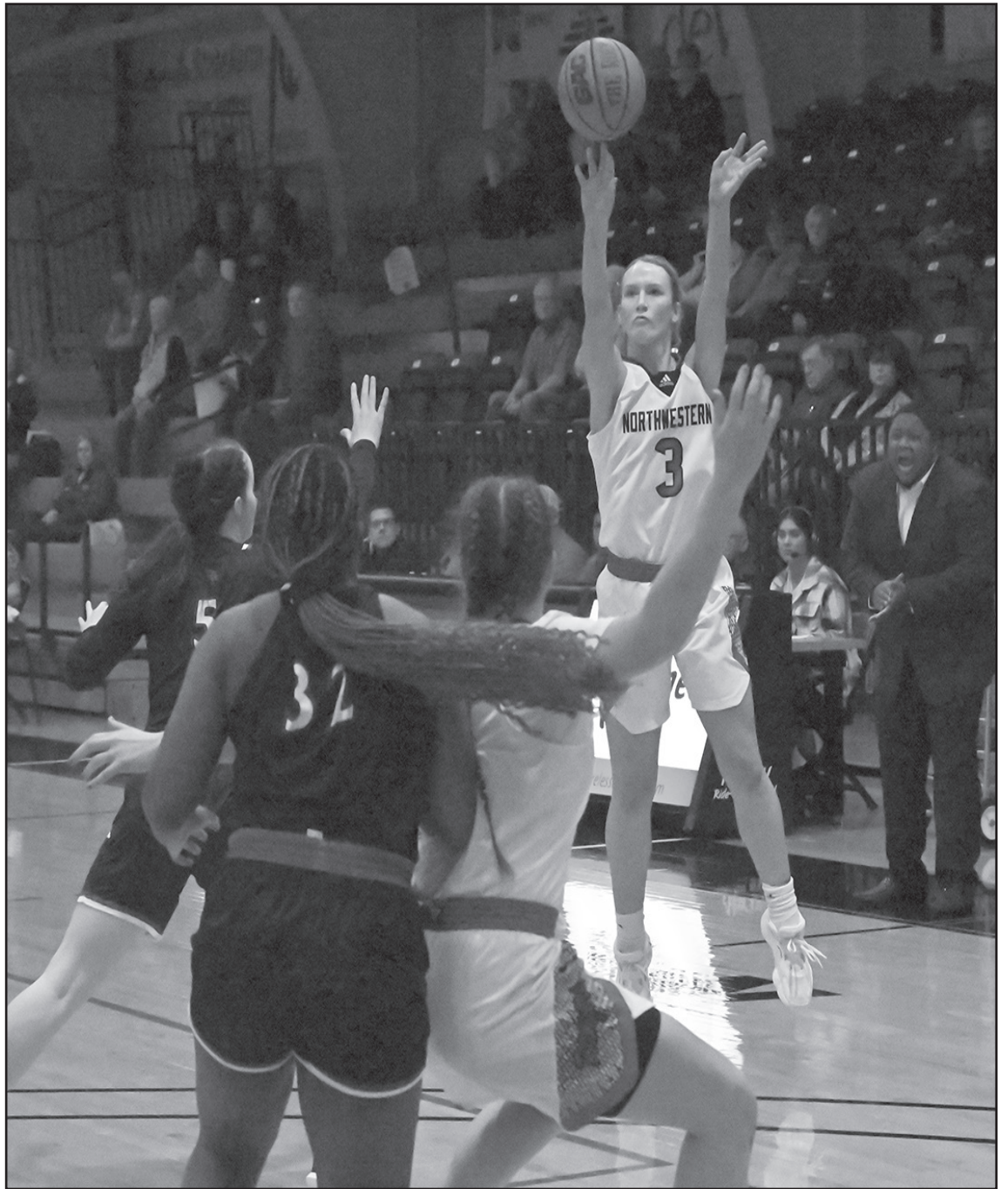


Photo by Devyn Lansden

Kinsey Neiderer, No. 3, shoots the ball during Northwestern's game against Arkansas-Monticello on Jan. 27 at Percefull Fieldhouse. The Lady Rangers defeated the Cotton Blossoms by a score of 97-49.

BASEBALL

Baseball team ready for season to begin

By **COLLIN ZINK**
Student Reporter

After a 26-15 season last year, the Northwestern baseball team is looking to improve on its success.

The Rangers hope to go deeper into the playoffs this year and bring home the title of national champion.

"The goal is to be at the top of the conference and win the conference, then go deep in the playoffs and win it all," junior outfielder Chase Orrock said.

Senior infielder Yugo Hamakawa said the main goal for the team, along with a personal goal for him is to rank high.

"The team goal is to get first place in the GAC," Hamakawa said. "Personally, being an All-American is the goal for me."

Head coach Ryan Bowen said he hopes to improve from last season.

"The goal is to build off the success from last year and compete for a conference championship," Bowen said.

Bowen said he believes the team has several strengths.

"We have a lot of versatility on offense," Bowen said. "We can score home runs, but also steal bases. We also have a high-level defense."

Hamakawa also said he believes the team has strengths, but specifically in the hitting category.

"Our team strength is hitting, for sure," Hamakawa said.

He said the wind in Alva can be a factor for them when the opposing teams hit, but the team does not get worried because he knows how well they can hit.

Orrock also said he thinks the team is good at hitting.

The Rangers added some new players to the team, and Bowen, Orrock and Hamakawa said they

believe that those players will perform well.

"We added some really good transfer and freshman players," Bowen said. "I expect them to fit in well with what we are doing."

"There are quite a few good transfers and some freshman that will help the program," Orrock said.

"We've got guys that can hit with power ... and good pitching."
— Ryan Bowen

"Shaughn Kelly, who plays third base, and he can really hit and run," Hamakawa said. "Fred Buckson, who is a second baseman, and he is a powerful hitter. We also have new great pitchers

and hitters."

Fans of the Rangers can expect an entertaining offense and many runs scored.

"They can expect an exciting offense," Bowen said. "We've got guys that can hit with power, have speed and good pitching."

"They can expect a talented team that is going to play for each

other," Hamakawa said.

"A lot of offense, lots of runs scored, and exciting baseball," Orrock said.

The Rangers start the season with a three-game series against the University of Minnesota Crookston on Feb. 5 at 3 p.m. at Glass Family Field at Myers Stadium.

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FEATURE

Hall of Fame, con't

Bill Julson, Baseball

Playing for the Rangers from 1999-2001, Bill Julson left his mark on the Northwestern baseball program.

A Wisconsin native, Julson transferred to Northwestern Oklahoma State University from Hill College in Hillsboro, Texas. Julson played pitcher and catcher for the Rangers.

Julson earned First Team All-Conference in both his junior and senior seasons. He was also named NAIA First Team All-American as a senior for the Rangers.

As a catcher, Julson led the nation in throwing out runners trying to steal a base with a 72 percent success rate, an unprecedented stat. Julson also pitched for Northwestern, where in the 2000 season he had the tenth most saves for a single season with three.

Julson sits in the top 10 of many Ranger records. He ranks number one in RBIs and first in total doubles in a season with 22.

Julson finished the 2001 season sitting ninth in the hitting category with 75 hits, he also



Bill Julson

ranks sixth in home runs in a season with 17.

In his career, Julson had a batting average of .389, ranking fifth in Northwestern history.

Following his time at Northwestern, Julson entered the world of business and currently works for PepsiCo.

Julson currently resides in Somerset, Wis. with his wife, Angela, and their four children, Calvin, Chloe, Cashton and Kya.



Photo by Jordan Green

SNOW, RANGERS, SNOW!

The Northwestern Ranger statue had a thin layer of snow Wednesday as a winter storm rolled over Alva. Northwestern canceled classes Wednesday as the storm dumped snow across the Midwest. The National Weather Service in Norman forecast that snow would continue to fall Wednesday and Thursday. The area is expected to receive between 4 and 6 inches of snow, causing travel conditions to deteriorate.