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The Gonzaga Dance Team and GU Bomb Squad adjust to pandemic life by staying active.

BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

By VINNY SAGLIMBENI

Maneuvering through obstacles and adjusting on the fly have been two mantras people across the globe have taken as their own since the rude awakening of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even with the ambiguity that comes with the pandemic, there is evidence out in the world to show that people continue to fight on and do the things they love.

The Gonzaga Dance Team and GU Bomb Squad have embodied these two mantras in the best way possible. Typically, both teams would practice for events such as GU basketball games and other performances, but with both teams not having that same opportunity they once had prior to the pandemic, both teams have now found new ways to stay active and continue to perfect their craft.

Led by captains senior Meghan Horn, junior Alexis Villanueva and sophomore Maya Guttierrez, the GU Dance Team has been creating videos and filming respective dances and sharing them on social media. Whether it be in The Kennel or on Mulligan Field, the team would hire a videographer and practice the dance they had planned for the performance, and would post the video on their respective social media accounts.

"We have worked on our dances at our practices and have been able to film them and share them on social media and get them out to students and the Zag community that way," Horn said. "That's been our main source of sharing our

SEE DANCE PAGE 6

Gonzaga weathers budget storm

Many Jesuit institutions have fallen to COVID-19 but GU is still managing without making drastic cuts

By DAWSON NEELEY

The Anti-Austerity Petition at Jesuit Institutions, recently formed by students and faculty of several Jesuit colleges and universities, calls for those in power to understand and respect the negative implications of the increased budget tightening measures the COVID-19 pandemic has instigated in their institutions.

This petition calls out actions, such as faculty and staff cuts, eliminations of retirement benefits and the "consolidation or elimination of entire academic programs," most being centered in the humanities.

These specific wounds to collegiate education are difficult for several reasons, but especially in the light of Jesuit tradition. Ann Ostendorf, history professor, said that the study of what it means to be human has always been a part of the Jesuit education.

"The reason that the humanities are core in Jesuit education is that there's this idea that if you're exploring human diversity, you're exploring the manifestation of the divine in the world," Ostendorf said.

Not only the tradition in these institutions, but also the inherent value of these programs is being threatened by these cuts. The humanities draw in less funding than the hard or applied sciences, but that does not mean that their value is any less. Yet these proposed financial maneuvers are essentially placing labs over history, at least in the case of Marquette University.

While the actions being taken by these institutions are not specific to Jesuit schools, the organizers of the petitions highlight that a commitment to cura personalis underscores a respect and dedication to the protection of students and employees.

"These proposals, among many others, illustrate how far our administrators have fallen from the Ignatian mission," reads the petition. "They have lost their commitment to education in pursuit of an abstract notion of institutional prosperity. They increasingly see our schools not

as institutions of higher learning, but as holding companies with a tuition revenue stream. When a school retreats from its mission to educate, what remains?"

There are 45 organizations that have, to date, signed the Anti-Austerity Petition, but notably, none affiliated with GU have. This stems from the university's ability, so far, to weather the storm.

"An important feature to our plan that is perhaps a little bit different than what you might be seeing in the Anti-Austerity Petition [schools], is that the university did not seek any reductions in force. We did not do any furloughs or any involuntary terminations," said Chief Financial Officer Joe Smith.

GU's plan revolves around discretionary spending or the use of limitations on voluntary expenditures for all departments of the university. Without any firings or drastic cuts, fiscal solutions came in several forms, including aid from endowments, the Federal Government as well as \$6 million from financial reserves.

"This administration is very proud of the steps we've taken in response," Smith said. "We've been very intentional and thoughtful about it. We haven't made permanent decisions based on temporary situations."

GU has not considered any drastic actions in response to the financial issues the pandemic has placed higher education into. This said, there is not a perfect solution for many other institutions, especially among the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU).

A college or university's options rely heavily on circumstance, both in relation to their particular state's handling of COVID-19, as well as the business strategies employed by the institution before this global circumstance.

"Some schools haven't put themselves into [the same situation as GU] for whatever reason," Ostendorf said. "Bad luck, sometimes it's bad luck, bad management, it can be any number of things. They could've mismanaged their funds, or they could've done a great job and had really bad luck."

SEE BUDGET PAGE 2



PHOTO COURTESY OF BISHOP WHITE SEMINARY FACEBOOK PAGE

Seminary students start their day with morning meditation and prayer.

Seminary students who serve

By ALEX BHAYANI

Sophomore Evan Mackenzie joined Gonzaga's Bishop White Seminary (BWS) due to feeling a lack of fulfillment in life.

"I worked many jobs prior to coming to GU," said Mackenzie. "I worked at several restaurants, a gun range, an insurance office, in remodeling, landscaping and a few retail jobs. However, through all of those I never really felt fulfilled. I enjoyed them, but there was always a sense of restlessness for me."

Gonzaga's BWS is the sole collegiate seminary in Washington state, and one of only two on the West Coast, according to the Catholic Diocese of Spokane website.

"While all of that was going on I also felt a tug from God to, at least, come and check out the seminary," Mackenzie said. "My family and I are converts to the faith, and so I didn't grow up Catholic. However once we converted when I was 12, I started to feel a little tug in my heart that God might be asking me to do this for Him."

Three of the seminary's other pupils are Aidan Cameron-Smith, a senior; Coulter McIntyre, a sophomore; and Jonny Padrnos, a junior.

All seminarians are philosophy majors.

Cameron-Smith has two minors in Catholic studies and classical civilizations, whereas Mackenzie is debating a minor in either business or Spanish.

Each also had similar motivations for joining the seminary.

For McIntyre, it was simply an inspiration drawn from the example of priests he had known growing up.

"They were role models to me, and I knew from a young age that I wanted to be like them," said McIntyre.

A similar love for Christ was the deciding factor for Cameron-Smith and Padrnos.

With varying levels of experience, each of their lives at BWS has been marked by immense joy and personal growth.

"The biggest shift I would say I've had is the shift of my priorities," Mackenzie said. "I have realized that to be successful here, I need to reorder my whole life toward Christ. That requires a lot of stripping away of other things, mostly self-will and self-reliance, and it takes a massive trust in God and faith in His plan for me."

Cameron-Smith agreed that being a seminarian requires immense sacrifice,

SEE SEMINARY PAGE 2

Home court advantage

By COLE FORSMAN

Passing along family traditions has always been a staple. Along with biological characteristics, siblings can expect to share common interests and skills that have been instilled into them by their parents. Whether it's cooking a recipe or learning the ins and outs of the family business, there's a sense of pride that comes with maintaining these legacies.

For Hunter Egger and his siblings, they have a couple of different callings, and tennis just so happens to be one of them.

"My dad really liked the sport," Egger said. "He pushed us every day but we enjoyed it."

Egger shared this enjoyment with his brother and sister so much so that all three ended up playing the sport at the Division I level in college. Emmett, Hunter's older brother, was the first to take the family reins as he qualified to play

in the junior U.S. Open, Wimbledon, French Open and Australian Open when he was 18 years old. He would go on to play at the University of Washington while sparking an interest in tennis for his younger siblings.

"He was very successful and played in all of the junior grand slams," Hunter said of his brother. "That really got it going for my older sister and I."

SEE EGGER PAGE 7

INDEX

News.....1-3
Opinion.....4
Arts & Entertainment.....5-6
Sports.....7-8

OPINION

What is GU known for? Hint, it's more than basketball.

PAGE 4

A&E

Instagram and food. These Zags are masters of both.

PAGE 6

SPORTS

Meet the new Women's soccer assistant coach, Katie Benz.

PAGE 7

Burglaries in Logan Neighborhood

Spokane Police Department officer gives advice for staying secure after numerous winter break incidents

By KAYLA FRIEDRICH

A number of Zags living off campus in the Logan Neighborhood brought in the new year with broken doors, windows and new security systems.

In a news release, the Spokane Police Department (SPD) provided information on multiple burglaries that happened during GU's winter break.

After four days on the case, a Police and Community Together (PACT) investigator was able to link the series of burglaries to three suspects who'd been giving the stolen items to transients and homeless people.

The news release said that as of Jan. 23 the investigator on the burglary cases was finally able to file the charges a month after the first incident had been reported.

Burglaries occurring in the Logan, or any neighborhood for that matter, isn't anything new, however it's a crime that isn't highly anticipated by any home resident.

GU Junior and Logan resident, Megan Rusby's home was burglarized over the winter vacation.

"It was the week of New Year's Eve when my landlord texted me to let me know that the back door was kicked in and our rooms were rummaged through," Rusby said.

Rusby never imagined she would be a victim to the burglary crimes that are

known to take place in the neighborhood she is now a part of.

One of her friends that lived in the Logan just a year ago had mentioned instances of perpetrators trying to break into their garage, but Rusby thought the busy street she lived on would deter potential threats to her home.

"It's a pretty gutsy move," Rusby said. "We're getting a Ring security camera on the back door now because it's the most vulnerable part of the house, but even then there's only so much that we can do."

SPD Officer Stephanie Kennedy worked some of the cases involving burglaries in the Logan that happened over the break and said the high opportunity presented in and around the area is what leads to a higher crime rate.

"A variety of crimes occurred in this scenario, and is a reoccurring example, which I see often," Kennedy said in an email. "I believe that the GU area presents more opportunity in a condensed area."

Being near the university can lead to more criminal activity taking place, especially during a period of time, such as the holiday season, where the criminal knows there are less residents in their homes.

"The students bring with them higher-end bicycles, vehicles, personal belongings etc., this is why I see the area is often a



BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

Unshoveled driveways and dark windows are common signs burglars look for when determining if a resident is home.

hotspot for thievery," Kennedy said.

There are many things student residents and any other homeowners can do to stop this kind of theft from being such a recurring incident.

"Walk around your house in the dark, see what the bad guys are seeing," Kennedy said. "Everyone should be aware of their surroundings, not only to protect their property, but themselves as well. When bad guys see an unoccupied house, unshoveled snowy walkway, etc., this is what they target."

For students living in the Logan who

want to lessen their chances of being the victims of a break-in, talk to the landlord about the time when you know your house is going to be empty and ask if they're willing to make it look active at some points throughout that time it's unoccupied, Kennedy said.

Kayla Friedrich is a staff writer. Follow her on Twitter: @kayla_friedrich.

BUDGET

Continued from Page 1

This is parallel to the stance of the wider administration at GU which states a sense of sadness for the situations of other institutions but can't speak out or judge because every school is going through different circumstances.

Because of GU's ability to hold the line financially, the humanities have been kept safe. On that solid ground Ostendorf said that, as a historian, it is easy to see how a small trend toward the scientific fields may have lasting impacts on the education of future students.

"Our goal is to give you an education so that you will enter the post-Gonzaga world and to take your experiences, whether that's philosophy, whether that's history, or understanding a culture or just believing in social justice," said Robert Donnelly, associate professor of history. "Then you take what you learned at GU or Marquette or another Jesuit institution, and deliver that to your community."

Ostendorf said that when you take away the humanities, the study of what it means to be human, we create students who are robots. Taking the human element out of science has been historically evil. Science is supposed to benefit humanity.

All of this is being threatened by the business aspect of running institutions of higher learning.

The petition that sparked this movement demands five things. They include four commitments: to preservation of jobs, shared governance, transparent budget analysis and a fair process for unionization. Also it demands faculty and staff discretion in their COVID-19 work environment.

"Measures that eliminate or undermine disciplines core to the liberal arts and that fire workers in the midst of a global pandemic imply a commitment to the bottom line, not to the people that make up our colleges and universities," the petition said.

With GU still being a member of the AJCU, though not targeted by the petition, some in the university have found ways to show support for the organizers and signees.

Both Donnelly and Ostendorf were contacted by colleagues in the graduate level circuits at Marquette University about the concerns over cutting graduate history programs, and in a show of support, have written letters to the administration there speaking to the importance of history to the humanities and to an education. They demonstrate holding those in charge accountable for the power they wield.

"You have to put pressure," Ostendorf said. "You have to put pressure on the institutions that you're affiliated with to make them be what you want them to be."

Dawson Neely is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter: @DawsonNeely.

SEMINARY

Continued from Page 1

but said simply that nothing worth attaining comes easily.

A typical weekday for each pupil begins with a shower around 6 a.m., as morning meditation and prayer takes place in the chapel from 6:30 a.m. until 7 a.m. This is followed by breakfast in the refectory, and then, each seminarian begins their day's classes and studies.

"Many of us have classes together, since we are all on the same track of studies as philosophy majors," McIntyre said. Some of the students take their classes at Spokane Community College.

There is time for exercise, homework and leisure both before and after lunch, which starts at noon daily. Sometimes, this also includes prayer and deep conversations.

Nightly activities may also include watching television, practicing or listening to music, playing games, or even skiing in the mountains, assuming their studies are completed.

At 4:45 P.M., the seminarians rejoin for Vespers, or evening prayer, with a subsequent Mass starting at 5:15 on Mondays through Thursdays.

On Fridays and Saturdays, Mass is instead held at 8 A.M.

The former days, around 3 P.M., "a group of us usually walk to the nearby Planned Parenthood and pray a rosary for an end to abortion and the protection of the life of the most innocent, the unborn," Cameron-Smith said.

Furthermore, each student must help every Saturday to clean an assigned section of the seminary building. Pupils are free on Sundays until Mass at 4 P.M., followed by dinner, Vespers at 6:45, and Eucharistic Adoration until 8.

Asked to identify their favorite part of it all, each said that the tight-knit community made the seminary experience most worth it.

"I would not trade the laughter and camaraderie I've found here for anything else," Padrnos said.

Cameron-Smith and Mackenzie describe their fellow seminarians as brothers, in a very literal sense.

"I know for a fact, as much as anyone can, that in twenty years, there will be guys who I go here with that I could call at any time and they would pick up," the latter said. "When the friendship is grounded in faith, there is so much more substance to it."

Each also emphatically agreed that those Catholic men who feel a particularly high calling to serve the Lord should consider joining the seminary.

"I would recommend that they talk to a priest they

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They [priests] were role models to me, and I knew from a young age that I wanted to be like them.

Coulter, McIntyre, sophomore seminary student

trust about applying," McIntyre said. "Your priest can direct you to the vocation director for your diocese, who can then help you in the seminary application process."

Cameron-Smith said this was as straightforward as recommending that aspiring pilots attend flight school, and that although taking the next step requires courage, there is no reason to be afraid as nothing brings more joy and peace.

"One thing I think the readers should know is that although we live differently from the rest of the students, we are just normal guys," McIntyre said. "We like joking around and having fun just as much as anybody else. Sometimes I think we joke around more. Our college experience is certainly different than that of the average student, however; we also have the call to be witnesses of Christ to our peers, professors, and all those with whom we interact on a daily basis."

Alex Bhayani is a staff writer.

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Nursing clinicals canceled due to COVID-19 outbreak

By ALEXANDER PREVOST

Junior nursing students this semester face a new challenge as their typically scheduled clinical for this semester was canceled.

Earlier this year, the Sunshine Health and Rehab facility in Spokane experienced a coronavirus outbreak, leading to the cancellation of the geriatric clinicals for nine-semester nursing students in the spring.

"They were hit really hard by it, and they didn't want the potential to bring in other covid cases," said Gabby Graves, a junior nursing student. "They've been struggling to not have COVID in the facility."

Nursing students at Gonzaga University are split into two different cohorts. Students who don't have extra academics, such as double-majors or plans to study abroad, are placed in the eight-semester track. Those with additional studies are placed in the nine-semester track and graduate a semester later.

"First semester is geriatrics, but it's also pediatrics, so typically we'd also go into local Catholic schools and do health screenings there, like their hearing, test their vision, their blood pressure, all their vitals to make sure they're okay," Graves said. "For geriatrics, we'd go to the assisted-living facility. Also, you'd typically go to Catholic Charities, which is the homeless shelter here, and you'd also do health screenings at Catholic Charities."

The pediatric clinicals this semester are limited to one school, and plans to assist the school are currently up in the air.

At the geriatric clinicals, nursing students would get valuable hands-on experience. They'd typically shadow nurses and get experience learning how to administer medicine, change sheets, etc.

In response to the lack of the geriatric clinicals, the nursing department has scheduled a vaccine clinical at the Spokane Veteran's Affairs Hospital for junior nine-semester nurses.

"We're going to be administering COVID vaccines



BEN LATHWELL IG: benlathwell



BEN LATHWELL IG: benlathwell

Due to a COVID-19 outbreak at Sunshine Health and Rehab, geriatric clinicals for nursing students were canceled.

through the Spokane Veteran's Hospital, so that's just what came out so that's super exciting," junior Alison Gentzen said.

Even though the cancellation has set back current junior nine-semester nursing students, there will be opportunities down the road to catch up.

"Honestly, because it's only our first semester, we're going to catch up on these skills when we go into later semester clinical rotations," Gentzen said. "When we go to [Medical Surgical Units] for example, the things we'd

be practicing in the geriatric facilities like taking blood pressure, changing sheets and moving patients, we'd get that experience later. It's just going to be more of a shock because they're going to be teaching us more advanced stuff while we're still learning the basics."

Alexander Prevost is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter @alexanderprvst.

For the first time, Honors Program invites current freshmen to apply

By ALEXANDER PREVOST

Earlier this month, Gonzaga University's Honors Program announced a new application process that will let current freshmen join the class of 2024 cohort as sophomores.

Historically, the program only extended entry to incoming freshmen. Prospective students would have to apply by January of their graduation year, and their admission would be announced the following March.

"I'm really happy that they have opened it up for other first-years because, especially with the way the application was, it's very easy to miss it," said freshman Gabriela Marquis, an honors student. "Like before you are actually in GU for sure and you know you want to go there — and you maybe have second guesses about coming to GU — you might not have applied to the Honors Program."

For first-years who may not have known about the program or weren't sure about GU being their college prior to admittance, this new application offers a chance to enter the ranks of the distinguished program.

"Providing a path to join the Honors Program once someone has started their time at Gonzaga has been a priority for me since I joined the Honors leadership, but first we needed a set of requirements that were flexible enough that joining the program wouldn't mean starting your core all over again," Honors Director Linda Tredennick said in an email. "We rolled out our new curriculum this fall, so the

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I think the best benefit is that students will join a welcoming, inclusive community of students who care about ideas, social justice and supporting each other.

Linda Tredennick, Honors Program director

time is finally right to open this new path to joining the program."

The second-year entry application is currently open, and students interested in applying have until March 1 to submit their application.

"The honors program has been a very positive experience for me, especially with the people it's been introducing me to because I am frequently in classes with them or was in seminar with them," Marquis said. "They tend to be very like-minded people."

During their first year, Honors students will take a special first-year seminar tailored to the honors experience and a honors core-required class called "Multi-Modal Communications." Incoming sophomores will not need to take the latter if they've completed their first-year writing

and communications courses.

All new entries, sophomores included, must take the Honors first-year seminar.

"The honors-designated courses tend to be more student-focused and discussion-focused, rather than test-focused or lecture-focused, and that has been incredible as well," Marquis said. "I have loved my honors courses."

Honors students gain a number of benefits such as a scholarship and an additional academic advisor in the director of the program. They also have exclusive study abroad opportunities.

"I think the best benefit is that students will join a welcoming, inclusive community of students who care about ideas, social justice and supporting each other," Tredennick said. "One of my favorite things about being a part of

Honors at Gonzaga is getting to listen to the amazing conversations students have with each other. I've heard engineers debate ethics with business majors, poets and sociologists explore world building in video games, seen biologists and economists collaborate to respond to ecological challenges. It's exciting to see what can happen when smart people who care come together."

Sophomore applications must include a personal statement and a faculty endorsement. The personal statement can take a variety of forms, including essay, portfolio and video formats.

This is the first cohort-based program at GU to create a second-year entry application.

"It's an exciting time in Honors — we have a new curriculum that is centered on empowering students and giving them the intellectual tools to respond to the massive and complex problems facing the world," Tredennick said. "Climate change, wealth inequality, racial injustice — the issues can only be addressed by people with agile minds who know how to work together and think creatively. Learning those traits with a group of energetic, fun people who care as much as you do is pretty great."

Alexander Prevost is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter @alexanderprvst.

Editor's Note:

The Feb. 10 story "Gonzaga Reality Twitter criticizes GU students living in the Logan" by staff writer Kayla Friedrich has been updated to include the response from the @gonzagareality Twitter account.

To see the updated story, visit: www.gonzagabulletin.com.

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Zag athletics: One for all and all for one

Two years ago, when friends and family would ask about my college aspirations, there was a common response when I replied with my intentions of going to Gonzaga University: “Oh, they’re really good at basketball, aren’t they?” I would confirm their beliefs, and that would be the extent of the conversation.

Sure, maybe they weren’t aware of the outstanding academic departments, where the school was located, or even how to pronounce “Gonzaga” correctly, but at least they knew the men’s basketball team wasn’t half bad.

Essentially, this limited knowledge of GU can be applied to a majority of the general population outside of Spokane, even Jimmy Kimmel admitted his suspicion that GU wasn’t a real university.

Obviously we students (hopefully) have a more extensive understanding of the school we attend daily, but sticking with the athletic theme, there isn’t much of a diverse fan base outside of hoops.

Sports like baseball, soccer and tennis are often neglected despite fan opportunities to watch the games and matches, while others like rowing, golf and cross country experience even less viewership.

Students will spend hours lined outside of the McCarthy Athletic Center in extreme weather conditions to watch basketball, but have no desire to watch an indoor tennis match with no hassle involved.

So, why is that?

A competition gap could be a reason why fans clamor to the dominant men’s basketball team compared to other sports who struggle in the West Coast Conference. While women’s hoops are in the same boat as their male counterparts in terms of play, other GU sports don’t quite



By COLE FORSMAN

becomes understandable. The Volkar Center, the prized \$24 million facility built in 2018, is home to a weight room, nutrition center and of course a hardwood court for hoops. Despite the variety of amenities, it’s the exclusive home to the men’s basketball team.

Meanwhile, the rest of the teams on campus can workout in the small training room located in the Martin Center. The area, which is smaller than the Rudolf Fitness Center, has nowhere near the amount of space or features that the Volkar Center boasts.

It’s insane to even think Division I athletes are expected to condition themselves in such an environment, especially when there’s a state-of-the-art facility located in the same vicinity.

Now I know what you’re probably thinking, the basketball team is what brings in a large amount of the funds, so they should have it to themselves. Well, that’s

have that luxury. None of the aforementioned teams have consistent excellence that would attract fandom, and when there’s one team that outperforms their competition, students are going to expect the same from other sports as well.

But, when considering the quality of training the men’s basketball team receives compared to other GU athletics, the skill gap The Volkar Center, the exclusive home to the men’s basketball team, is home to a weight room, nutrition center and of course a hardwood court for hoops. Despite the variety of amenities, it’s the exclusive home to the men’s basketball team.

not how disbursement typically works when it comes to college athletics.

For example, for every round of the NCAA tournament the basketball team advances through, the WCC receives a portion of that revenue created and distributes it to other teams in the conference. Needless to say, the funds GU receives are also handled throughout the athletic department.

It’s time for the university to put more effort in not only advertising and promoting the other teams on campus, but they also deserve the proper training they require.

Recruiting in college athletics has been driven by having top-notch weight rooms and facilities, another reason why performance and quality of training go hand-in-hand. Not many high school athletes are drawn toward weight rooms that are smaller than the student fitness center.

The lack of representation and quality performance from non-basketball programs at GU is a reflection of the culture that exists on campus. From students to administration, the support that the men’s basketball team receives cannot be said for the remaining sports and their athletes.

It’s time to change that narrative and unite these athletic programs. If we truly are Zags, then we need to support other Zags as well.

All of them.

Cole Forsman is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter at @CGForsman.

Zags help Zags: Looking on the bright side

I want to share some of the reasons I’m grateful to be a Zag this year.

First, I would like to thank the Gonzaga administration team for its decision to remain open for both the fall and spring semesters. It would have been easy for them to close their campus to all students, forcing all of us to pursue instruction in a Zoom-only environment.

However, doing so would have come with the cost of cutting us off from each other since any social interactions would only last for the duration of the lecture.

Once the decision to come back to campus was made, GU made every effort to achieve a sense of normalcy. Students are still allowed to eat in public locations, such as the COG and Cataldo, albeit with modified seating areas to maximize safety. SpikeNites still occur most Fridays, giving students the perfect opportunity to take time off and hang out with friends.

While making us feel like we’re experiencing as normal a year as possible, GU has continued to do everything in its ability to keep us safe.

At the start of this semester, the



By RED KWENDA

university conducted regular random screening tests of 20% of its on-campus students to prevent virus spread. They have also implemented a helpful culture of mask-wearing based on the ideals of protecting one’s neighbors.

What I’m most delighted about are the relatively low infection rates we’ve seen as a result of these measures. As of Feb. 20, only 426 Zags, staff and students, have tested positive for COVID-19, according to GU’s COVID-19 Tracking Metrics website. This

number is equivalent to 5.84% of GU’s total enrollment count of 7,295 students.

I’m also glad that GU is doing better in terms of infection rates than other universities. For example, Washington State University is currently sitting at 1,945 positive cases out of 29,686 students, a 6.55% infection rate. Similarly, Santa Clara University an Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities institution like Gonzaga has accumulated 362 positive cases from its 9,015 enrolled students, totaling a 4.02% infection rate.

I want to acknowledge that my gratitude toward GU is based on experiences I’ve had while here. As I mentioned before, people have contracted COVID-19 and have had to go into quarantine for several days. Close contacts, roommates, friends, classmates, etc. have also been forced to isolate and quarantine.

I also acknowledge that my experience was shaped by the fact that I have been on-campus during the fall and spring semesters. I really feel for the students who could not come for either or both semesters, especially the first-year students who will

only really have the “college experience” this semester or their sophomore year.

I know that these privileges have significantly impacted how I have viewed my on-campus experiences this year. I also know from conversations I’ve had with other students that many strongly disagree with me because of our differing experiences.

What I want to call attention to is the effort of GU to accommodate all of us during this time. Every decision that is made takes all of us into account, aiming to ensure that we all have the best GU experience possible.

In the end, I’m grateful for the great year that I’ve had here, and I know that it will also get even better from here. For me, it really is a good thing to call myself a Zag.

Red Kwenda is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter at: @RedKwendaWriter.

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Contact Info:

Email: bulletin@zagmail.gonzaga.edu
Office phone: 509-313-6826
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Staying together while apart

Nothing about the last year has been “normal,” but even though I missed out on the last part of my freshman year and the start of my sophomore year was all online, I’ve still made lasting memories with friends (in virtual spaces, of course).

We might not be able to do usual activities like watching and performing in GUTS shows, going downtown for a movie or to browse through the shops or going to basketball games, but we’ve adapted and found new ways to connect.



By LILLIAN PIEL

Right before the pandemic hit, my friends and I had just started playing a game of Dungeons and Dragons (DnD), my first time playing as well. We would go to an open classroom in College Hall on the weekends and stay there late into the night playing the game, then go to late night COG for some snacks.

Of course, everything changed when we all got sent home after the pandemic hit, ending my freshman year at GU early. Even though my friends and I weren’t in the same physical space anymore, we still kept the game going, playing on the weekends over Zoom. Now almost a year later, we’re still playing the same game of DnD, and I always look forward to the rare nights when our schedules line up and we can get together on Zoom and get into character.

Another tradition that began last year and has evolved for today’s times is watching “The Legend of Korra” with my friend group. I had never seen “Avatar: The Last Airbender” or its sequel, “The Legend of Korra,”

but one of my close friends is a huge fan of both shows and insisted we all watch them both, so we started watching the shows last year when we could still gather in person.

This semester on Wednesday nights, a small group of my friends and I use the browser extension “Netflix Party” to watch a few episodes of “The Legend of Korra” each week (what we call “Korra night”). “Netflix Party” allows us to watch episodes at the same time, and it also has a chat feature so we can discuss our thoughts and share our reactions. Having something like Korra night on Wednesdays is a welcome break in the middle of the week where I get to spend time watching a good show in good company.

Online games are another fun way I’ve been spending quality time with friends, especially if the games are competitive and everyone gets invested in who’s winning. “Among Us” is always a popular choice — although be prepared to test your friendships once people start accusing each other of being the

imposter. “Jackbox” games are also competitive, but in a more lighthearted way, and they come in a pack of multiple games so there’s lots of options to fit any type of game the group wants to play.

A personal favorite online game of mine that always sends my friends and I into fits of laughter is called “Broken Picturephone.” Players alternate between writing sentences and drawing pictures based off of another player’s previous sentence or picture, until everyone has written or drawn something in each person’s “book.” By the end of the game, the stories and drawings that come out of it are both absurd and hilarious, and you can even save the PDF file of the book to look back on it later.

While I miss seeing friends in person like everyone else, the memories I’ve made over the past year and the connections with friends that have deepened even though we’ve been hanging out virtually for a while now are things that I will look back on as what got me through quarantine.

Lillian Piel is a staff writer. Follow her on Twitter at: @lillianpiel.

'WandaVision' is innovative, imaginative and well worth your time

Commentary by RILEY UTLEY

Let's start here: I am a humongous Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) fan. I've seen every movie since the first Avengers in theaters (COVID-19 permitting) and I love them all. However, I can admit that these movies can get a bit formulaic. Sometimes they become easy to figure out and it can get monotonous.

Well, "WandaVision" is absolutely, 100% not monotonous nor predictable. As of right now we are seven episodes into the Disney+ original and with each passing episode I leave with maybe one answer and about a million questions because I genuinely have no idea what is going on or what will happen next.

For some context the show follows Wanda Maximoff who is by far one of the most powerful superheroes. Somehow, she and her boyfriend Vision, who died for real in "Avengers: Infinity War" and is alive now, are stuck in a weird universe where they are living through decades of sitcoms with a wacky set of side characters.

SPOILER WARNING (GO WATCH THE SHOW BEFORE YOU CONTINUE)

Later, it becomes clear that Wanda has made this universe for herself to cope with everything that has happened to her. This causes the agency S.W.O.R.D. to come and investigate what's going on and they are just as confused about this whole experience as the viewer is.

What I've come to realize is the title of the show, "WandaVision," has two meanings.

The first one is obvious: Wanda and Vision are stuck in a television somehow and living life through sitcoms.

As the show progresses a new meaning comes to light: WandaVision means we are seeing Wanda's vision of a perfect life, she is making a world for herself that is perfect and only lets the viewers see what she wants us to see.

I think what makes this show so great is its attention to detail. It's meticulous and the payoff from all this detail is amazing.

The little Easter eggs placed throughout the show, like Jimmy's magic tricks and the reemergence of Wanda's accent when she leaves the Hex, service the longtime fans and pull new viewers into this complex and ever evolving universe in an incredibly creative way.



"WandaVision" is on Disney+ and new episodes are released every Friday.

Along the same lines the detail within each episode and the commitment to the decade they are portraying is striking and enthralling. Each episode takes you on a nostalgic trip back to some of the best sitcoms in television history like "I Love Lucy," "The Brady Bunch," "Malcolm in the Middle" and "Modern Family."

They also shift the screen size depending on the decade they are in as well as which reality they are in. For example, when we are in Wanda's 1950s sitcom the screen is a square and the image is black and white. When we enter the normal MCU reality the screen goes wide, like in a movie theater viewing, and the color saturation resembles other Marvel movies.

The quality of this show is directly related to the attention to detail and the performances from the actors. I can't wait to see what else we are able to pick out in the last two episodes.

This cast is made up of people who were side characters throughout the various MCU movies but have now been brought to the frontlines. Wanda (Elizabeth Olsen) and Vision (Paul Bettany) have never been the principal superheroes. Jimmy Woo (Randall Park), Darcy Lewis (Kat Dennings) and Monica Rambeau (Teyonah Parris) came from playing minor roles in Ant-Man, Thor and Captain Marvel, respectively. And every single one of them smash their performances out of the park and their characters get some long-awaited development.

The performance that stands out the most to me is Bettany as Vision. Up until now Vision has been a kind of one-dimensional very powerful robot. In this show Bettany brings the funny and Vision has so many laugh out loud moments along with some great dramatic acting as well.

Overall, "WandaVision" knocked my socks off. I can't even begin to explain how impressed I am by this show and how invested I am in what happens next. I'm also excited about the doors this show will open for the future MCU movies and TV shows.

I guess we'll just have to stand by for these last two episodes to see what shenanigans Wanda, Vision and company get up to because I'd bet money it will be just as wild and unpredictable as the first seven episodes.

"WandaVision" is on Disney+ and episodes come out every Friday.

Riley Utley is a copy editor. Follow her on Twitter @rileyutley.

Bulletin Cookbook week 3: Tater Tot Casserole

Commentary by ARIELLE CLAYBORN

Cooking may seem intimidating, but it can be a lot simpler than you think. It's one thing to be able to enjoy a meal but why not enjoy cooking it too?

When it comes to cooking, we college students seem to have the most trouble. We often find ourselves eating the same three meals because we're scared to branch out from what we're comfortable whipping up in the kitchen.

Our diet can become bland and boring. Don't keep allowing this to happen to you and give this budget-friendly, easy-to-cook and delicious Tater Tot Casserole a try.

Tater Tot Casserole
Ingredients (URM Cash & Carry and Safeway prices)
One bag of tater tots —\$2.69

Milk—\$0.69 (price relevant to personal bottles; feel free to use milk you already have)
Two cans cream of mushroom soup—\$1.29, URM pricing
Half an onion diced —\$0.69, URM pricing
One two-cup bag of cheddar cheese—\$2.29, URM pricing
One pound ground beef —\$7.49, Safeway pricing
Three cloves of chopped fresh garlic—\$0.50, Safeway pricing

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat the bottom of a large skillet with vegetable or olive oil and place on the stove over medium heat. Dice half of your onion and add it to the hot skillet.

Once the onions begin to caramelize (for about four to six minutes), add in the package of ground beef and three cloves of chopped garlic. Season with seasoning salt and pepper.

After the meat is fully cooked, remove from heat, do not drain and add to a deep-dish baking pan. Layer tater tots on top and set aside.

Next, pour soup into a medium-sized bowl. Fill one of the empty cans with milk, dump into soup and combine. Take the soup mixture and pour over tater tots and meat.

Place the baking dish in the oven and set your timer for an hour. After the hour, check the tater tots. If crispy on the top and heated/tender in the middle, add cheese to the top and bake until melted. If not, continue to bake in 10-minute intervals and then add cheese.

Once the cheese is melted, remove from oven and eat while it's hot. To spruce it up a bit, drizzle some ketchup on top or add a dollop of sour cream.

Arielle Clayborn is a contributor.

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg February 28, 2021

ACROSS

1 Natural Band-Aid?

5 Grim

10 Brevity is the soul of

13 Greiner on "Shark Tank"

14 Sleeve type

16 Wedding tool

17 Early Sacha Baron Cohen character

18 Change, like a Pokemon

19 Female sheep

20 Pair of 19-Across sounds

22 Fibrous cereal base

24 "That's for sure!"

27 Charge that might be hidden

28 Lip balm company that once sold honey

31 Muhammad's undefeated daughter

34 Stock debut, briefly

35 Word before "guess" or "West"

36 "To wrap up ..."

37 Multimedia artist Yoko

38 Redundant follower of "tail"

39 Vehicle associated with tricks

41 Directs (to)

43 Sweetheart

44 Great Basin natives

45 People you used to date

46 Trash TV character?

48 Vehicle associated with tracks

52 Say a swear word

55 They help fidget

58 Dish whose greens should be massaged

61 Company that buried thousands of unsold video game cartridges

62 Wedding vows

63 Repair

64 Sophia of "The Life Ahead"

65 Secret admirer's sign-off

66 Pop artist Warhol

67 Matching groups

DOWN

1 Large piece of fudge

2 Coca-

3 Opera solo

4 Heavy hitter, in baseball slang

5 Brits' boxes for loaves

6 Loo

7 Self-importance

8 Green-lights

9 Bitter

10 Polynesian beverage

11 Search query?

12 State north of Missouri

12 Malala Yousafzai was one when she won a Nobel Prize

15 Hulu competitor

21 Question, in "Jeopardy!"

23 Vegetarian Mexican foods that are rolled

25 Clung onto

26 Ref. with thousands of definitions

28 "Free your pores" brand

29 First in the queue

30 Person whose work goes over your head?

32 Cage or Skywalker

33 College town in 11-Down

39 Many four-year degs.

40 City home to the Kaaba

42 1962 Paul Anka song subtitled "That Kiss"

43 BTS or the Jonas Brothers

47 Hearing-related

49 Cruces, New Mexico

50 Peruvian pack animal

51 Comic DeGeneres

53 Small drum, informally

54 White-plumed wader

56 Vortex

57 Wrath and sloth

58 Puffed corn cereal

59 Brouhaha

60 Smoky topper for a bagel

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

SCAM	CADS	NOMAS
TATA	OWEN	EMOJI
OBAY	MAMA	LEVAR
PLAIN	PROMPELLER	
SET	OLE	DYES
SHY	BMI	TOGA
AUDIO	SOUTH	VOW
STEPPET	OTHER	REAR
PAT	ELATE	TARDY
SHOD	TRY	WET
NEMO	AIR	ARC
SAVANNA	GEORGIA	
CUTIN	ELAN	ARTS
AROSE	ROTE	FEET
BERET	DEER	TESS

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2/28

BB-8 by Matthew Stock

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13				14				15		16	
17				18						19	
20				21			22		23		
			24			25	26		27		
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58	59	60							61		
62				63					64		
65					66					67	

Solidarity Requires Accountability



from education to action

Leslie Mac will tackle what true accountability looks like, why this crucial part of anti-racism work is often overlooked, and examples of mechanisms for accountability to utilize.

Thursday February 25th 6:30 PM (PST)

RSVP on Zagtivities and join with the Zoom link

<https://gonzaga.zoom.us/j/92125090929>



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UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

Today's puzzle solution

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

Food from the heart

Seniors Taylor Sipila, Fese Elango and Paige Bruland are helping fellow Zags expand their cookbooks through Instagram

By MADISON BARNES-NELSON

We’ve all probably heard the phrase “camera eats first” and have likely been in the presence of someone photographing their meals for Instagram or even done so ourselves.

Simply sharing photos of food on social media has developed into something more for seniors Taylor Sipila, Fese Elango and Paige Bruland.

Sipila, who runs the Instagram account @taystreatsandsweets, has dedicated a second account to bakery items and entrees, from apple muffins and homemade pizookie to gnocchi and a social media favorite, charcuterie boards.

“I have been baking since I was a little kid,” Sipila said. “It’s always been a hobby, or a way I like to share love and joy with people.”

She created the account while spending the summer after sophomore year in Spokane along with her housemate, Elango.

“I was in a pretty low spot at the end of that school year and it honestly felt good to work toward caring for myself holistically through a medium like food because food is so important,” said Elango, whose account is @fess_food.

Bruland, @the.glutenfreegal, was diagnosed with celiac disease at the beginning of her junior year, which resulted in needing to cook her own gluten-free meals. On her account, she shares celiac-safe recipes for juices, salads, cookies and brunch-time meals.

“At first, I felt like I didn’t know where to look to or turn to, so I started following a lot

of food pages on Instagram,” Bruland said. “By [sharing] the recipes I had found and made I was holding myself accountable so that I was creating food I liked, was healthy and took time to prepare.”

There is also an important community building aspect to sharing recipes and tips, especially with friends who also have second Instagram accounts dedicated to their hobbies. As a fellow recipe-Instagrammer myself who began to bake and cook more during the pandemic, sharing something as personal and meaningful as a recipe among friends has made me feel a greater sense of connectedness, despite being physically apart.

“It was always really fun to try new dishes and interact with people through comments and getting to share different cost savings tips that I’ve learned,” Elango said.

Bruland’s main reason for continuing to post to page is to be helpful to her followers. Bruland said she has recieved numerous DM’s from followers thanking her for creating the page.

Sipila was surprised she’d grown a fan base and has maintained the page as an archive of her most-liked recipes.

“It’s fun to post things and if people are in Spokane, drop off what they want,” Sipila said. “I can note my best friends’ favorite things and keep an archive of what everyone likes.”

These senior women also speak to a desire to express their authentic identities on their food Instagram apart from their primary social media accounts, as a creative outlet and to share a different side of themselves for



COURTESY OF @THE.GLUTENFREEGAL INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

A tasty turkey tuna salad recipe posted to @the.glutenfreegal Instagram account. Senior Paige Bruland posts recipes to the account weekly.

a niche following.

“I think it’s different [from my main account] because I use it as a space to vent and share about things like anxiety and cooking as a calming force, whereas my personal Instagram is pictures of my life and friends,” Elango said.

Bruland shares a similar sentiment.

“I am more open on that account in a way, sharing things like celiac awareness, which I don’t do on my main page,” Bruland said. “It’s a smaller audience of people like food bloggers and people I know well. Ultimately,

these food Instagrams have become integral to establishing a routine for personal well-being.”

Although they’re simply sharing tasty recipes with their followers, food Instagram pages do it for themselves as well.

“It’s about taking care of myself and slowing down, like stress relief,” Sipila said. “There’s a sixth love language and I swear it’s baked goods.”

Madison Barnes-Nelson is a contributor.

Handcrafted has replaced Wolfgang, but which is the better spot for Zags to chow?

Commentary By KELLIE TRAN

WOLFGANG:

After almost two years at Gonzaga, Wolfgang Puck has been replaced by its ugly step-sister Handcrafted on Jan. 11.

The recent change came as a shock to loyal Wolfgang fans campus-wide. Despite GU’s attempt to cater more toward student needs, the duality of the former restaurant remains unmatched as Zags continue to mourn its loss.

Optimists upon first encounter claim that the new restaurant appears innocent enough, but true dining enthusiasts can see the new build-your-own and slightly more elevated cheese options for what it really is: a distraction.

The most egregious shortcoming of Handcrafted is that it was directly developed by Sodexo, an international catering company responsible for a history of food safety malpractices and ethical violations.

Students at GU have long protested the university’s involvement with Sodexo, citing the company’s former stake in the Corrections Corporation of America (a notorious prison operator that now controls nearly half of the United States’ private prisons), hand in Listeria and E.Coli outbreaks and participation in labor abuse as reasons to choose a different food supplier.

Wolfgang is at the very least marginally better as it’s only half corrupt. Unlike Handcrafted, it was an already established company and only partnered with Sodexo.

The death of Wolfgang at GU also means the death of not only the cult favorite BLTA (Bacon, Lettuce, Turkey and Avocado) sandwich, but even worse: avocado.

Not only does avocado cease to exist at Handcrafted, the new restaurant now charges 49 cents for a pickle spear and \$1.59 for assorted chips, both of which were included with all sandwich orders free of charge at Wolfgang.

Finally, GU’s decision to replace Wolfgang with Handcrafted unfortunately also removed pizza as an option, the only menu item that made it unique.

It is clear Handcrafted is just a lazy attempt by Sodexo to charge students for sandwiches barely different than those offered at Daily Bread.

GU’s decision to replace Wolfgang indicates its willingness to compromise first its quality by forgoing avocado and pizza, and second its character by choosing a food supplier that puts profits first and the well-being of students last.

Wolfgang may be gone, but it is not forgotten. Rest in peace avocado and pizza.

Kellie Tran is a staff writer.

Commentary By ALLIE NOLAND

HANDCRAFTED:

Handcrafted saved us all from the long lines, the soggy pizzas and expensive prices of Wolfgang Puck. It’s obviously gone for a reason. Handcrafted, the new sandwich shop located next to Starbucks in Hemmingson, offers Gonzaga students mess-free, affordable and customizable sandwich options.

Let’s admit it: sandwiches are easier to eat and carry around than pizza. At Handcrafted, you can walk up, order your meal and throw it in your bag. There’s no way I am fitting a pizza box in my bag or carrying it all around campus with me.

Hemmingson is a student center meant for busy, on-the-go GU community members. Whenever I am on my way to my next class and need a quick lunch, Handcrafted is the way to go. Never would I ever go to Wolfgang for a ‘quick lunch.’

And that leads me to my next reason for being an enthusiastic sandwich lover. They are so fast to make. Making a sandwich takes significantly less time than making a wood-fired pizza from start to finish. At Wolfgang Puck, I felt like I was waiting forever to take a bite

of the wet, drippy, burnt-bottom pizza.

Not only is Handcrafted speedy and convenient, their sandwiches are fresh and delicious. The ‘Build Your Own’ ingredient list has items like arugula, baguettes, horseradish mayo, genoa salami, roasted vegetables and even ciabatta rolls. Let’s just say this isn’t Subway.

And to all of those sandwich haters out there for thinking that sandwiches are boring, they aren’t. I mean come on... Handcrafted has a prosciutto, brie cheese and pear baguette sandwich. That’s pretty gourmet. The possibilities are endless between two slices of bread.

And finally, the biggest plus side: the price. These sandwiches are only \$6.49. Come on. How can you beat that? An entire sandwich for less than \$7 is ridiculous, and you can load it up. Providing comparison, a full sandwich at Caruso’s is \$14.50. And looking back to Wolfgang’s prices, all of the pizzas were over \$10.

Handcrafted is superior. Stop by Hemmingson to try it out if you haven’t yet.

Allie Noland is a staff writer. Follow her on Twitter: @allie_noland.

DANCE

Continued from Page 1

performances this year.”

For the GU Bomb Squad, the team has been doing similar things. The team continues to practice at its normal practice times, learning a new dance at each practice. The team also has opportunities where a member of the team signs up to choreograph and teach the team a new dance at each practice.

Senior GU Bomb Squad dancer Ryan Meza said having someone teach a new dance each week has allowed for the team to keep the creative juices flowing.

“It’s a way for us to be prepared, dance together, learn from each other and increase our skills,” Meza said. “That’s the main focus. [We want] to maintain our dance abilities and be ready for next year if we are able to go to games next year.”

For both teams, maintaining a sense of camaraderie and team bonding has been something they both wanted to emphasize greatly throughout the year. Both teams have done that in their own ways. The GU Dance Team has done holiday-themed practices, such as a Halloween-themed practice, a Christmas-themed practice and most recently a Valentine’s Day-themed practice, as well as using practice time to play games, listen to music and hang out with the

“

It’s a way for us to be prepared, dance together, learn from each other and increase our skills

Ryan Meza, GU Bomb Squad member

team.

A new thing Gutierrez said the team did this season is pairing up the freshman on the team with an older girl on the team to create mini families for the freshman to go to whenever they need anything.

“We encourage the sisters to reach out to each other and check in and maybe grab lunch at the COG or something every few weeks to keep those bonds going and to make sure that the team is still growing closer,” Gutierrez said.


The Bomb Squad has also been doing social events to keep the team bonding strong. From retreats that presented moments of vulnerability to creating a “Bomb Week” highlighting the seniors on the team preparing for graduation along with other internal events, the team has been able to keep ties strong with each other during these tough times.

Both teams said they are extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to be together and continue dancing. Some of the other clubs at GU have not been able to meet and function the way they normally would like to, and both teams said they’ve taken advantage of the opportunities that have been given to them and have gratitude to keep doing what they love.


“It’s so cool seeing Dance Team’s dynamic and Bomb Squad’s dynamic, being two big dance clubs on campus,” Meza said. “We don’t get to perform when they’re performing.... I am super appreciative that our captains were able to find a space for us to at least practice and be together as a team.”

The two GU dance teams on campus have big events planned going forward, and with the camaraderie present in both teams, they are on their way to bop to the top under unprecedented circumstances.

Vinny Saglimbeni is a sports editor. Follow him on Twitter: @vinnysaglimbeni.



Zags Basketball is back! Come get some Hawaiian food at Aloha before cheering on the Men's and Women's Basketball teams!



Somewhere down the line you're going to wish you had a special memento from your college years to remember all the good times.



Marianne

The yearbook is important because it is a printed book that highlights the year through words, pictures, and design.

Reserve your 2021 Spires yearbook today at

commerce.cashnet.com/spub



Devan

The designs are pretty edgy!



Natalie

Questions?

Email spires@gonzaga.edu

Building the bond

Katie Benz has worked up the coaching ranks to be named an assistant for GU women's soccer, and her value goes beyond teaching on the pitch

By NOAH WONG

The Gonzaga women's soccer team recently embraced a new addition to the coaching staff. Born in Nova Scotia and raised in Sonoma, California, Assistant Coach Katie Benz brings expertise and knowledge in developing collegiate players.

Benz, like most players, started playing for a local recreational team in California, eventually moving onto the club level. Her involvement in soccer was encouraged by her family as both her older sister and brother played.

She attended the University of California, Berkeley playing for their women's team as a forward, filling the shoes of United States women's national team veteran Alex Morgan.

After a career-ending tibia injury, her first foray into the professional world was as a paralegal at a law firm, having majored in legal studies. After realizing that law school was not the right fit for her, she traveled to India to volunteer at a leprosy hospital for two weeks.

After returning to the United States, she moved to La Grange, Texas, with an acquaintance to write and record an album and tour through the Midwest. Once restaurants and venues begin to open up, Benz hopes to perform music again.

Having coached on the side since graduating from college, she coached for youth soccer program Colorado Rush. She then joined the women's soccer team at the University of Montana in 2017, her most recent job before coming to GU.

Benz chose to make the transition to Spokane because she has family in Washington and Oregon, to work with Head Coach Chris Watkins and to join the West Coast Conference, a move she cites as the next step in her career.

"If it intrigues me, I'll definitely go for it," Benz said. "I'm not someone who sets long-term timelines. I'm not someone who has carved out a path in my life, or else I wouldn't be where I am today. I've done a lot of trial and error in my life. And I think that has been a positive way to go about things for me. This job wasn't on my radar, and then it was."

Having only moved in January, Benz has been too busy to take in a transition, and believes drastic change is the best way to learn.

"As long as I continue to draw on my experience and try and remember to put myself in their shoes, I think that's really beneficial for our student-athletes," Benz said. "Especially in a female sport, it is really important, because they know you've been there, done that and they trust you, and trust is really important for getting girls to play at the top level."

Not only does Benz believe in developing soccer skills, being an advisor of sorts and helping players find their path in life and to take advantage of their platform is what she values as a coach. A relationship as a coach that differs from those of professors or counselors having spent time with the team in hotels and on flights.

Benz said she especially believes in the change that female athletes are capable of,



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATIE BENZ

A UC Berkeley graduate and a former assistant at the University of Montana, Katie Benz was hired by GU as an assistant coach on Jan. 12.

and how they can best promote change and encourage other young women to do the same.

"She has a great reputation," Watkins said. "Players everywhere she's been with really love working with her. And her kind of tutelage as she develops players is well-known. And something that immediately drew us to her. Frankly, she was our target from the beginning."

Through her nearly three months at GU, Benz has already felt a sense of community and looks forward to increasingly social environments once COVID-19 is less of an issue.

"I think the biggest thing that I've felt from the athletic department as a whole is everyone is just friendly and cares," Benz said. "They pay attention, they know what's going on in each person's program. And so, the moment we landed and we're walking down the hallway, everyone said congratulations, great job, welcome back."

Some challenges the team faces because of COVID-19 are trivial, like having to plan the timing of meals because of eating restrictions on buses, while other more consequential issues include increased difficulty in establishing relationships

between teammates, especially freshmen.

Benz's love for soccer stems from a connection with teammates that includes silly inside jokes, facing hardships and being surrounded by people who know you best. With winning and losing bringing out the best and worst out of everyone, the solidarity within the range of emotions is what bonds teammates together.

Benz and Assistant Coach Lexi Brown are still capable players who are able to keep up with the student-athletes during practices and scrimmages.

"I just feel really lucky. Really grateful to have found and be able to bring in such a great person," Watkins said. "She really enjoys being with people and you think that's an automatic in coaching, and hopefully it's common, but she really enjoys the relationship of being a coach and that really matters within our program."

Noah Wong is a staff writer.

GU SPORTS CALENDAR

Thursday, Feb. 25

- **Men's basketball vs Santa Clara, 4 p.m.**
- Baseball at Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, TX, 4:30 p.m.
- **Men's basketball vs. Saint Mary's, 6 p.m.**

Friday, Feb. 26

- Women's tennis at the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 9 a.m.
- Baseball at Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, TX, 4:30 p.m.
- **Men's Tennis vs. Portland State University, 5 p.m.**

Saturday, Feb. 27

- Women's tennis at the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 9 a.m.
- Baseball at Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, TX, noon.
- **Women's basketball vs Loyola Marymount University, 1 p.m.**
- **Women's soccer vs. Pacific, 1 p.m.**
- **Men's Basketball vs Loyola Marymount University, 7 p.m.**

Sunday, Feb. 28

- Baseball at Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, TX, 11 a.m.
- **Men's tennis vs. University of Idaho, 1 p.m.**
- **Men's soccer vs. University of San Francisco, 1 p.m.**

Wednesday, March 3

- **Women's tennis vs Eastern Washington University, 5 p.m.**

All home games in bold

EGGER

Continued from Page 1

Grace Egger experienced similar success to her older brother, as she was ranked as the top player in Washington state her senior year of high school before continuing her career at George Washington University.

With a knack for the game in the bloodline, it was seemingly Egger's destiny to carry on the family pastime, especially considering his upbringing. An active child, Egger first picked up the racquet at 3 years old along with his other hobbies of wakeboarding and snow skiing. With his dad as his instructor, he would go on to play throughout his childhood and into high school.

And, like his father before him, Egger began giving tennis lessons to children in his community during the summer and in between tournaments when he had the time. While Phil Egger was primarily a basketball coach in his day, it's safe to say that his son Hunter learned a thing or two about mentorship along the way as he created a fun environment for young players interested in the sport he grew up playing. A much different experience he had while learning tennis to say the least.

"I obviously come from a really intense coaching environment," Egger said. "You get to have a lot of fun with the kids, play more games, and you don't have to be this mean grumpy guy while doing it."

By the time he reached high school, it didn't take long for Egger to realize his true potential as an elite tennis player. In 2015, he won the state championships in doubles as one of the top recruits in the nation. After two years on the school's varsity team, he knew he was ready to prove himself against some of the best in the nation. The Bellevue native excelled in select tournaments in the Seattle area while rising as the third best tennis prospect for his age.

That is, until a massive growth spurt created back issues for Egger. Growing

over a foot in one year, he missed out multiple tournaments due to injury while he was at the top of his game. The extended absence drew concerns from college scouts as he began to fall in the rankings prior to his commitment.

"By the time I was getting ready to look at colleges, I had gone from being top 10 in the nation to roughly 100th in the nation," Egger said. "Which is still pretty good but not as great as I wanted it to be."

Nevertheless, Egger still received prestigious offers from Gonzaga University, the University of Oregon, UCLA, and even his brother's alma mater, UW, to play collegiately.

But GU had an edge on those other programs given Egger's familiarity with the Inland Northwest. Not only had he played in numerous tournaments in the area, but he also had family connections dating back to when his father grew up in Colville, Washington, a mere hour and a half drive away from Spokane. Phil even attended GU for a year after he graduated from Gonzaga Preparatory High School.

The family-like atmosphere of GU was also a major draw for Hunter.

"The biggest difference for me was Gonzaga's small athlete-orientated family environment," he said. "The dedication they put into their student athletes, focusing on academics a lot, it's a great school here."

Also arriving at GU as a freshman was teammate Matthew Perkins, and while they hadn't been formally introduced before, Egger and Perkins were familiar with one another. Growing up in the Northwest, both had matched up against one another in summer tournaments, the first time coming when both were 14 years old. Unfortunately for Perkins, he was no match for his future teammate.

"I got destroyed by him," Perkins recalled. "Growing up, he was one of the top players in the country."

The two formally met when their freshman class took a summer trip to Seattle as a bonding experience, and a friendship was formed. Egger has brought a sense of humor and lightheartedness to the team while also showing his capabilities as a leader



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Against Utah State earlier this season, Egger contributed to helping GU secure the doubles point and won his singles match on court six.

to underclassmen, a responsibility he'll have to take on with Perkins this year as seniors.

And he likes to show off his powerful serve every now and then.

"If he's known for anything throughout the team, he's probably making us laugh the most and also has the biggest serve," Perkins said. "He's dropping serves that are probably 125 [miles per hour] on the daily."

Even more impressive than the Eggers' ability to play tennis may be the family's knack for political influence and academic work ethic. After finishing their respective tennis careers, both Emmett and Grace began pursuing careers in law and criminal justice. Following his time at UW, Emmett graduated from the University of Miami School of Law on his way to becoming an attorney. Shortly after, Grace began a similar path as she is currently enrolled in the UW School of Law.

With an interest in politics, Hunter has

plans to follow in his older siblings footsteps. The possibility of enrolling in law school entices the political science major, a field of study that only seems fitting given the normal discussions him and his family would have at home.

"We would come home at dinner and there was always something on the news," Egger said. "We like to discuss those things and I think it's something I do well and enjoy doing."

No matter where his future in tennis takes him, Egger has his education at the top of his priorities, much like his siblings before him. As the old saying goes, it's all in the genes.

Cole Forsman is a staff writer. Follow him on Twitter: @CGForsman.

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