

 The Pedestrian Mall: Past, Present, Future: Part II 

'Where the action is'

A look at what remains unchanged and what has arrived in the beloved downtown space.



The "Is This Heaven? No, It's the Ped Mall" mural is seen in the Pedestrian Mall in Iowa City on April 8.

Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan

Kate Perez
News Reporter

This is the second part of a project series on the Pedestrian Mall. The first part appeared in The Daily Iowan on March 21. In the daytime, the Iowa City Pedestrian Mall greets its guests with art.

To the left of the entrance located at the intersection of Clinton and College Streets is a bright blue mural from 2014, painted on the exterior wall of local frozen yogurt shop, Yotopia. The cow depicted near the end of the artwork smiles.

In the middle of the walkway is a bronze sculpture of three jazz musicians from 2001. The metal gleams in the moments just before the sun disappears behind the Old Capitol Mall.

Move deeper within, and the Weatherdance Fountain leads the way into the Ped Mall's heart. Children can be seen zig-zagging through the shooting streams of the fountain, which was added in 1999, on a warm summer day.

At the Dubuque Street entrance, a 2020 mural of animals around a campfire by Drew Etienne welcomes pedestrians entering the mall through the tunnel. A quick turn toward Washington Street from there, and one will encounter two sculptures of granite and cut glass from 2000. A look back toward Linn Street, and there's a sculpture of a man tying a child's shoe by Jane DeDecker from 2001.

The artistic nature of Iowa City will greet passersby no matter which direction they enter the Ped Mall. While physical art has a home there, the performing arts are represented

through the various festivals held in the space, like the Iowa City Arts Festival.

At night, the majority of the Ped Mall's visitors are bar crawlers. Admirers of art are replaced by people standing in a long, laughing line to enter Roxxy located on the southwest side. Music streams from the Field House bar located in the northeast area.

Music can be heard from every corner of the Ped Mall, provided by entertainers with guitars or saxophones seeking a tip. People pass by the mural on the walls of the Graduate Hotel near Dubuque Street. Art has been interwoven into the Ped Mall for decades.

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INSIDE



Heartlanders growing hockey in new market

The Iowa Heartlanders, a first-year franchise that plays its games at Xstream Arena in Coralville, is making efforts in the local Iowa City market to grow the popularity of hockey in an area dominated by Hawkeye Athletics.

ONLINE



Biden waives E15 summer sale restrictions

President Joe Biden visited Menlo, Iowa, on Tuesday, saying his decision to allow E15 summer sales will lower prices at the gas pump. Read online for a story and a fact check on his visit.

dailyiowan.com

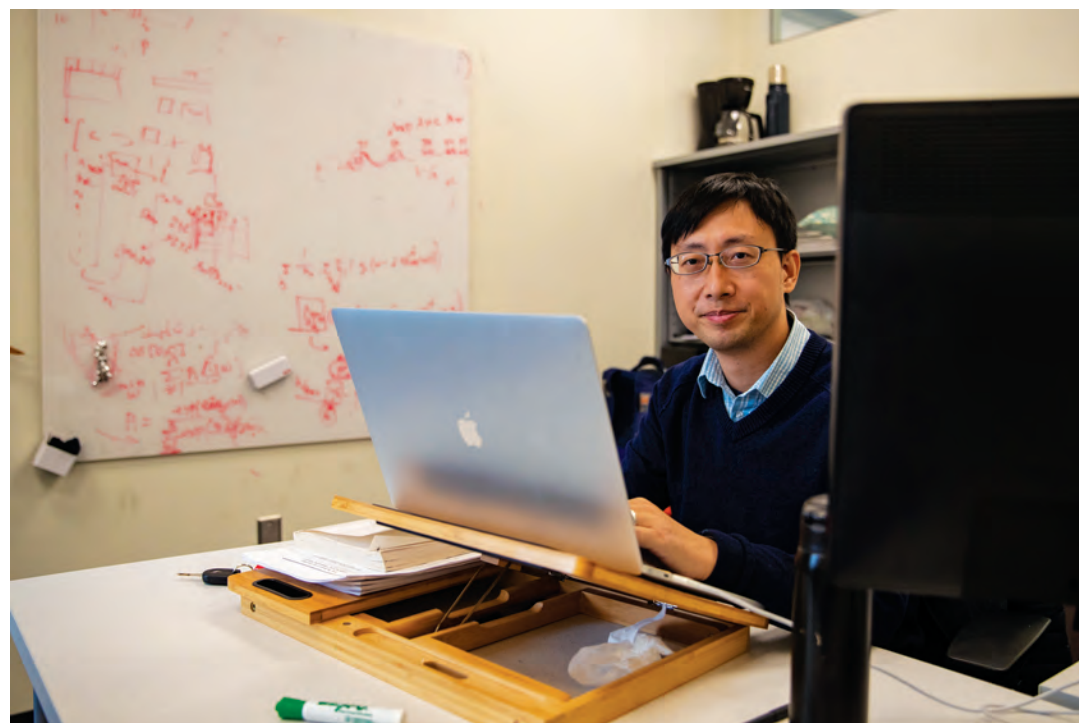
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Researchers receive grant to decrease discrimination in AI

A team of University of Iowa researchers received \$800,000 from Amazon and the National Science Foundation to limit discriminatory effects of machine learning algorithms.



University of Iowa researcher Tianbao Yang poses for a portrait at his desk on April 8.

Larry Phan/The Daily Iowan

Arabia Parkey
News Reporter

University of Iowa researchers are examining discriminative qualities of artificial intelligence and machine learning models, which are likely to be unfair against one's race, gender, or other characteristics based on patterns of data.

The UI research team received an \$800,000 grant, funded jointly by the National Science Foundation and Amazon, to decrease the possibility of discrimination through machine learning algorithms.

The three-year grant is split be-

tween the UI and Louisiana State University.

According to Microsoft, machine learning models are files trained to recognize specific types of patterns.

Qihang Lin, UI associate professor in the department of business analytics, and grant co-investigator, said his team will make machine learning models fairer without sacrificing an algorithm's accuracy.

"People nowadays in [the] academic field ladder, if you want to enforce fairness in your machine learning outcome, you have to sacrifice the accuracy," Lin said. "We [somewhat] agree with that,

but we want to come up with an approach that [does] trade-off more efficiently."

Lin said discrimination created by machine learning algorithms is seen disproportionately predicting rates of recidivism, a convicted criminal's tendency to re-offend, for different social groups.

"For instance, let's say we look at in U.S. courts, they use a software to predict what is the chance of recidivism of a convicted criminal and they realize that that software, that tool they use, is biased because they predicted a higher risk of recidivism

Extended student loan freeze means more time for UI graduates

President Joe Biden's decision to extend the freeze will temporarily alleviate loan repayment for students all over the country.

Kate Perez
News Reporter

President Joe Biden has extended the repayment pause for federal student loan borrowers through Aug. 31, giving graduates of state Board of Regent institutions more time to manage their money.

The repayment pause has been in effect since March 2020 but was scheduled to expire on May 1. In an April 6 statement, Biden said the extension to August will help student loan borrowers avoid economic hardship, delinquencies, and defaults.

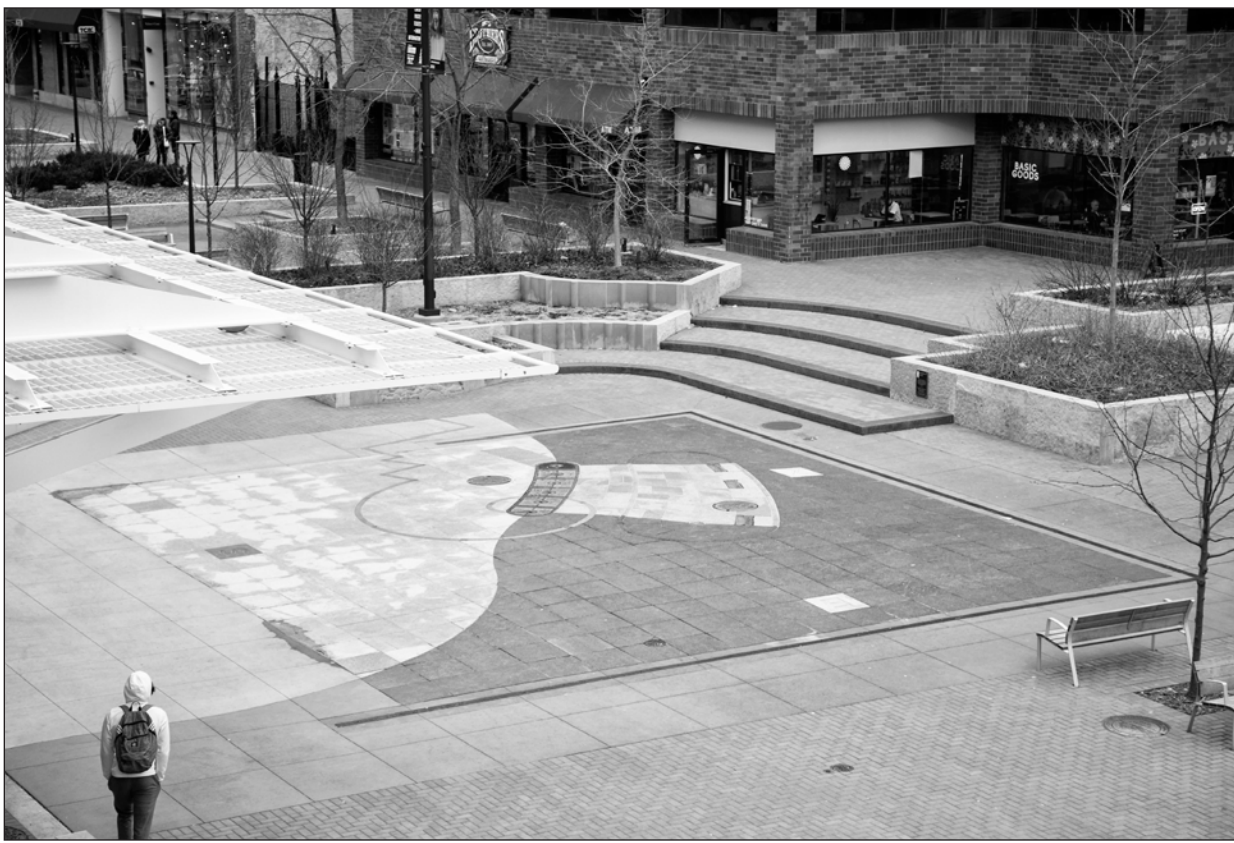
"That additional time will assist borrowers in achieving greater financial security and support the Department of Education's efforts to continue improving student loan programs," the statement reads. "As part of this transition, the Department of Education will offer additional flexibilities and support for all borrowers."

At the University of Iowa, the freeze affects mostly former students who have already graduated. Cindy Seyfer, UI assistant provost and director of student financial aid, said the extended freeze will help them manage the interest that goes along with the loans.

"Their interest isn't accumulating, and, for many students, that can be almost the

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LOAN FREEZE | Page 5A



Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan

The Weatherdance Fountain is seen at the Pedestrian Mall in Iowa City on April 8.

PED MALL
Continued from Front

While the area has undergone change, the memories made in the Ped Mall have not wavered. It's the promise of good times in a highly decorated space that keeps people coming back — but the area has adapted in many ways to retain its beauty.

The four sculptures were added to the Ped Mall between 2000 and 2001, after the area's 1999 renovations were completed. According to a 2013 article by *The Daily Iowan*, the Iowa City Public Arts Program funded the creation of the four sculptures, the Weatherdance fountain, and the Iowa Avenue Literary walk.

The first piece of art that resulted from the 2000s project that people often interact with is "Jazz" by Gary Alsum. Located near the East College and Clinton Streets entrance, Alsum told the *DI* the sculpture was inspired by the annual Iowa City Jazz Festival.

"I work with the National Sculptors Guild, and it was a project that was on their radar ... We talked about it and got a little bit of similar ideas of what happens in Iowa City," Alsum said. "One of the things that was mentioned was the Jazz Festival. I thought, 'Oh, that would be kind of fun to do jazz musicians.'"

The sculpture took Alsum about three months to complete, he said. The artwork originally only featured two jazz musicians, a trumpet and saxophone player, but he decided to add a third player on the drums to balance the piece.

The sculpture's dimensions are not accurately life-sized.

"It's about 10 percent larger than life," Alsum said. "It was pretty crazy sculpting, especially the saxophone. I had gotten to know that instrument pretty well and had to lay on my back to do some of it."

"Jazz" is one of just seven editions of the piece in existence, and Alsum said he is proud of his work that remains in the Ped Mall.

"It's just a real honor to think that something I've done is out there and that's one I'm still really happy with," he said.

On the opposite side of the Ped Mall, a bronze sculpture faces the playground outside the Iowa City Public Library. "The Ties That Bind" by DeDecker depicts a father crouching down to tie his son's shoe for him.

The final two pieces of

art placed in the Ped Mall following the 1999 renovations are "Solar Marker" and "Balance," both by Christoph Spah. According to the online art map by Iowa City's Public Art Advisory Committee, the sculptures were chosen through a public selection process.

The pieces formerly resided in Black Hawk Mini Park in the Ped Mall, but they were moved in 2019 during the area's most recent renovation to their current locations near Aspen Leaf Frozen Yogurt and DC's Sports Bar.

The renovations began in 2018 on Dubuque Street and ended with changes to College Street in October 2019.

Scott Sovers, Iowa City assistant city engineer, said the 2018-19 Ped Mall project intended to replace aging infrastructure and make the area more ADA compliant.

"There were quite a few areas where the slopes on the existing pavements were out of spec in regards to making it ADA compliant," Sovers said. "Of course, there's areas even today where there's some civic challenges, where we had to put some stairs in, but we did significantly improve the accessibility within the entire Ped Mall."

During the 2018-19 renovations, the city replaced all the brick in the Ped Mall and placed a concrete slab underneath. Sovers said the Ped Mall project originally called for spot repair work, but the city decided to replace all the brick when they realized some bricks did not match others in the area.

"It's like, OK, we could replace some of the bricks in the paving that are in bad shape, but it's not going to match everything else," Sovers said. "We decided at that time it made sense: 'Hey, let's just completely overhaul everything and get it done once, and then we don't have to touch it for a number of years.'"

According to Sovers, the same project included:

- The replacement of a majority of the underground existing public utilities
- Removal and reinstallation of limestone planters
- Removal of trees reaching the end of their life and planting new trees in their place
- New electrical lighting work and up-lighting of the trees
- Construction of a new performance stage in front of the

Graduate Hotel

- Renovation of the Weatherdance Fountain's working components, the addition of lights, and upgrading to a mini pool system that recycles the water by using an underground storage tank

While the project moved the sculptures out of Black Hawk Mini Park, Sovers said, the city put in footings in the open space where the art was for a future shade structure, under which people can relax out of the sun's reach.

"There was quite a bit of interest in providing a shade structure in Black Hawk Mini Park," Sovers said. "Unfortunately, because of budget, we weren't able to add that shade structure. The thought is, some point down the road when we get the budget for it, we could add it."

The city opted to create two brick story walls during the renovations. The first is the "A Mark was Made" panel at the southeast corner of Black Hawk Mini Park. The approximately 8-foot by 29-foot wall bears the names of people who have shaped and influenced Iowa City.

The second wall faces the Clinton Street entrance to the Ped Mall and has the poem "Writers in a Cafe" by Marvin Bell inscribed on it. According to the wall, Bell, who was the first Poet Laureate of Iowa and a professor at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, wrote the poem when Iowa City became a UNESCO City of Literature in 2008.

Despite the Ped Mall's renovations, much of its art has remained untouched, including the mural of the Yotopia Frozen Yogurt that faces the "Writers in a Cafe" piece.

The mural, which was painted in 2014 and is named "Is This Heaven? No, It's the Ped Mall," was commissioned by Yotopia owner Veronica Tessler.

Tessler said she wanted a mural to brighten up the then-blank wall and for the piece to be a visual welcome to the area.

"Over the years, [the wall] had been graffitied a couple of times... so I was like 'Maybe that's not the look we want for the entrance to our beloved Pedestrian Mall,'" Tessler said. "I just kind of got this idea stuck with me: I want to find an artist to do something big on here."

The idea to depict the farmland from which Yotopia sources its yogurt came to Tessler in Hawkeye, Iowa. Tessler said the mural helps

make the connection between the "beautiful, rural part of Iowa" to a brick-and-mortar store.

Tessler commissioned local artist and University of Iowa art educator Megan Dehner to paint the mural, which took three weeks to complete.

Dehner said the support that businesses provide local artists keeps art alive and well in Iowa City.

"Local businesses like Yotopia and owners like [Tessler], they really are the lifeblood of helping downtown thrive and supporting artists and the community," Dehner said. "Art helps amplify the vibrancy in the voices that are already here, so why don't we want lots of it?"

Dehner said she is glad her work is still available for the public to enjoy.

"It obviously is a form of ownership that I feel very honored to have, and it feels warm and fuzzy and really nice to be able to say that people are looking at something that hopefully brings them a smile as they walk a place that always gives me a reason to smile," Dehner said.

The newest addition to the Ped Mall's art scene is the "Campfire Stories" mural by Drew Etienne, a UI visiting professor in the School of Art and Art History. The mural painted on the new Dubuque Street entrance to the Ped Mall depicts various animals listening to stories.

Down the street from "Campfire Stories" is the newly opened Riverside Theatre location at 119 E. College St., the result of the long-standing theater's recent move from its old location on Gilbert Street. Formerly housing the Soap Opera, which closed in 2015, the 1890s era building is once again home to live theatre.

Riverside officially opened in the location in January after partnering with the Tailwind Group, which began development on the College, Crescent, and Dooley Block buildings in 2021.

Adam Knight, Riverside Theatre producing artistic director, said the partnership allowed the theater to dream big about what it wanted in the new location.

"It gave us, from a geographic perspective, a chance to be where the action is. to be in the center of

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Phone: (319) 335-6030
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daily-iowan-circ@uiowa.edu

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Send address changes to:

The Daily Iowan,
100 Adler Journalism Building,
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-2004

BUSINESS STAFF

Business Manager | 335-5786

Debra Plath

Advertising Director/Circulation | 335-5784

Juli Krause

Production Manager | 335-5789

Heidi Owen

what's already this burgeoning arts district in the heart of downtown and to be a player in that," Knight said.

While the Englert Theatre and FilmScene have been located in central Iowa City for years, Knight said the addition of a stage production theater is important.

"We now think of Iowa City as the 'Greatest Small City for the Arts,' and a great city for the arts needs the performing arts—needs a great theater," Knight said. "Placing a professional theater in the center of that district was an important statement to make."

Riverside's location allows the theater to tap into the "civic identity" the Ped Mall creates, Knight said.

"[The Ped Mall] connects

us to people that maybe come from different places or have different backgrounds than ourselves," Knight said. "It creates that kind of communal spirit, and that's what the arts do. They provide identity, they provide local stories and local opportunities for people to tell their stories. The arts are what make cities great."

The new Riverside Theatre location is about 25 percent larger than its old space on Gilbert Street and has seated sizable audiences, Knight said. He feels "really strong" about the organization's audience and the prospect of higher turnouts as spring arrives.

In the same block lies Roxxy. The bar, which opened in November 2021, resides at 125 E. College St.



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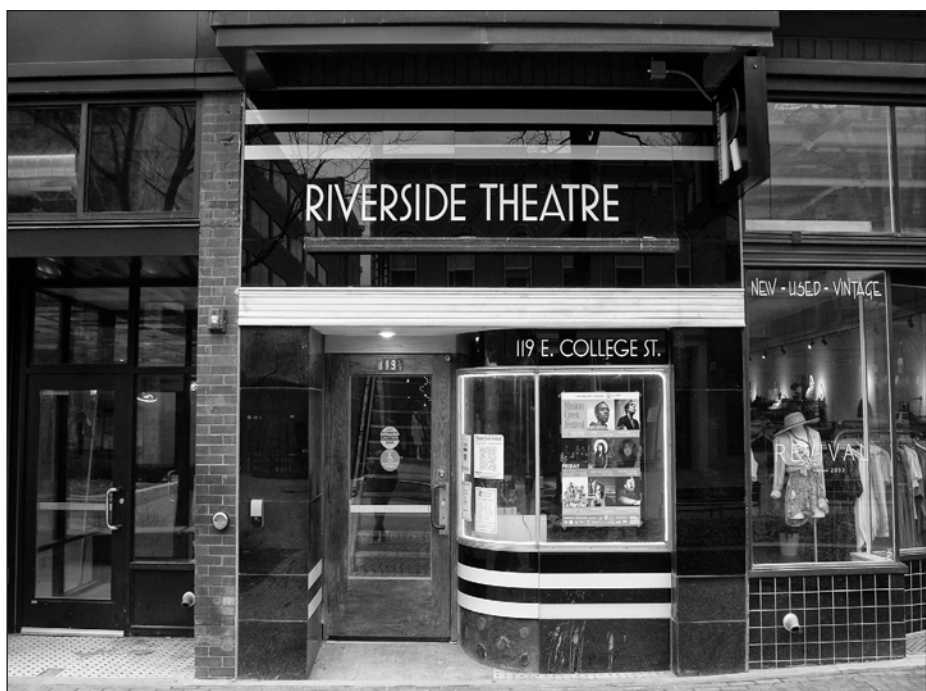
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The outside of the Riverside Theatre is seen in the Pedestrian Mall in Iowa City on April 8.

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Solar Marker
Near Aspen Leaf

"Art helps amplify the vibrancy in the voices that are already here,"
- Megan Dehner



Balance
Near the playground



Is This Heaven?
No, It's the Ped Mall
Outside Yotopia

"It was pretty crazy sculpting, especially the saxophone."
- Gary Alsum



The Ties That Bind
Outside Bread Garden

"I want to find an artist to do something big on here."
- Veronica Tessler



Jazz
Near the Clinton Street and College Street Ped Mall entrance



Campfire Stories
Near the Dubuque Street Ped Mall entrance

Illustration by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher; photos by Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan



Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan

The outside of The Field House is seen at the Pedestrian Mall in Iowa City on April 8.

in the College Block building, next to the space Union Bar once occupied.

Before Roxxy, Manager Tetyana Kedyk ran Martini's, which was at the same location.

"The spot was kind of always important to me, and I always watched it, kind of, flourish and then die down with COVID and everything," Kedyk said. "It's just been nice to see the space being brought back to life again and people use it again around town."

Being located in the Ped Mall brings in a lot of customers for Roxxy, Kedyk said.

"We have a prime location, in my opinion," she said. "We'll get a lot of foot traffic from football games and just student life in general. I think if we were anywhere else, that probably wouldn't be the same outcome."

Kedyk said the bar has garnered a lot of great feedback. People have enjoyed going into the bar and seeing its transformation from the old space to the new space, she said.

"It's nice being able to see the space get a fresh coat of paint and just put some life and love into it, making it something new again," Kedyk said.

While Roxxy may be new to Iowa City and the Ped

Mall, its neighbor down the block has a history in the Ped Mall. Field House has been located in the area since it opened in 1975.

According to an August 1975 article by the *DI*, the Field House was "Iowa City's newest bar." Originally located at 111 E. College St., the longtime Hawkeye favorite now inhabits 118 S. Dubuque St.

Field House General Manager Nick Miller wrote in an email to the *DI* that his company bought the business in 2003 when it was still located on College Street.

"We operated at that location for about 8 years before moving the business to Dubuque Street," he wrote. "The main reason for moving was we were unable to come to terms on a new lease."

At that point, the Field House opted to be located in the Ped Mall, where it originated.

"We knew we wanted to stay in the Ped Mall because it is close to campus and gets heavy foot traffic," Miller wrote. "Being in the Ped Mall has definitely helped our business over the years. When people think of hot spots to go at night, they think of the Ped Mall."

With the Field House's rich history, Miller wrote

he enjoys hearing how it has impacted generations of Hawkeyes.

"It is nice to hear stories from alumni that come back to Iowa City and talk about all the fun and crazy times they had at the Field House," he wrote. "I hope to keep hearing those stories for years to come."

Though the Field House remains majorly un-

changed, the Ped Mall will continue to see new developments. As previously reported in 2021, the Tailwind Group was awarded \$12.25 million in tax increment financing rebates for the development of spaces in the College, Crescent, and Dooley Block buildings.

The \$56 million project came after the group approached the city to buy the Union's old location and decided to form a bigger project, purchasing the 100 block of East College Street.

Wendy Ford, Iowa City economic development coordinator, said a reason the city was willing to offer financial assistance was the group's interest in keeping historic buildings the same.

"They came back and said, 'Okay, well, we really want to save these historic buildings because we know they are critical to the genuine character of downtown Iowa City,'" Ford said. "They've been there since 1895."

Ultimately, the Tailwind Group opted to destroy the back half of the larger buildings to make way for the apartment building it is currently constructing, called "The Nest," expect-

ed to house residents by this fall.

The group also opted to pay a fee in lieu of providing affordable housing within the complex, which totaled to a \$1.8 million sum it paid to Iowa City that then goes toward the Affordable Housing Fund.

Ford said the plans to destroy the backs of the buildings on College Block were also appealing to the city, as officials considered the buildings too big for businesses. In destroying the extra space, the Tailwind Group also planned to divide up the storefronts which could result in more leased spaces, she said.

"After the bars left, those spaces were 6,000 square feet, which is about five or six times more square feet than most retail businesses are interested in," Ford said. "So, they became kind of these really unwieldy spaces that nobody wanted to rent, much less rehab."

The city also liked that the group wanted to bring Riverside Theatre to the Ped Mall.

Though some of the spaces developed by the Tailwind Group are already inhabited by organizations

like Riverside Theatre and Roxxy, more are expected to come to Iowa City.

"The renovations of the historic buildings are probably three-quarters of the way done, is what I would guess," Ford said. "I think they're working on the tenant improvements for the businesses that will be leasing space in those buildings and each one has a different tenant, so the schedules will be different depending on that tenant. But I would say they're in the final stages for sure."

In Ford's opinion, building upon the current foundation of the Ped Mall and what it contains is important keep downtown Iowa City authentic.

"When you can see the old 1895 buildings next to newer buildings, and see that sort of fabric of the community that comes together, that's really important," Ford said. "You have to be able to celebrate the old and ensure that a lot of the old stays, if you're going to allow growth and significant change to come. There's this trade-off that has to be made."

katharine-perez@uiowa.edu



Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan

Dimia Burrell/The Daily Iowan

Opinions

COLUMN

Sustainability knowledge creates impactful citizens

The University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government backing the implementation of a sustainability gen-ed requirement is an important step in developing future-oriented students.



Kyle Tristan Ortega
Opinions Columnist

Globally, an estimated 97 million more people are living on less than \$1.90 a day because of COVID-19, and climate change continues to cause extreme record-breaking weather events in different parts of the world. It is no secret that we live in a world riddled with issues that negatively influence different aspects of society.

However, the University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government backing the implementation of a sustainability general-education requirement gives me hope that the students of today will become the much needed change makers of tomorrow. A sustainability course would be beneficial, as it will imbue in students the capacities necessary to engage with real-world problems.

Contrary to regular discussion-based classes, sustainability classes assume a project-based approach that direct-

ly involves students in the solution formulation process, teaching them skills and values that transcend the four corners of a classroom. This is relevant because news outlets in Iowa have recently reported on concerning issues regarding social and environmental affairs.

For instance, it was reported that expanded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have ended, greatly reducing the amount of food that can be distributed to families in need. Though SNAP will still supply provisions, the reduced budget will make shortages more prevalent for the 141,000 households in Iowa that rely on it.

In addition, scientists have reported that environmental circumstances are worsening, as the methane present in the atmosphere increased by a record amount. As a powerful greenhouse gas, methane's continued abundance will lead to rapid global heating, and thus, more severe climate change.

Based on these two issues alone, it is clear that we need citizens who are motivated and capable of conceptualizing sustain-

able projects that seek to improve society's current circumstance; it is our educational institution's job to create those citizens. How? Through sustainability courses.

First, a study on the effectiveness of environmental literacy classes showed that taking even one course before graduation increased a student's awareness of environmental problems and their willingness to participate in addressing them.

Additionally, the results of a study providing 88 university students with pre-tests and post-tests regarding environmentally responsible behavior concluded that students who have taken an environmental literacy course exhibit significantly more environmentally responsible capacities in comparison to students who did not, indicating the necessity of sustainability gen-eds in educational institutions.

In essence, sustainability education encourages social action to make a positive difference.

Second, in program-based courses, there are personal benefits in the form of skill development. Sustainability education improves one's



Braden Ernst/The Daily Iowan

Photo Illustration

ability to communicate and lead, providing students with the capacity to work collaboratively with others toward a common goal, such as ending hunger in a small area or improving literacy in a neighborhood.

Lastly, late adolescence is an important stage in identity and judgment development. Hence, colleges communicating the relevance of sustainability with their students and establishing the mind-

set of having to develop sustainable solutions to issues will play a pivotal role in their level of social responsibility in the future.

For these reasons, USG is correct in backing the implementation of a sustainability gen-ed requirement. There are just some things you cannot teach through discussions in a classroom.

Alongside other people, I had to design a sustainable solution to improv-

er waste management and unemployment in a certain community four years ago, as a requirement for seniors in high school. The experience of interacting with locals and determining the best way to help them through collaborative research made me feel like I was making a difference.

Every student should get to experience solving real-world problems.

kyletristan-ortega@uiowa.edu

COLUMN

Don't gloss over the value of internships

Turns out, some "entry-level" jobs actually want three-plus years of experience.



Signe Nettum
Opinions Contributor

Graduation is less than a month away. While I cannot wait to throw my hat up into the air and officially check *Went to College* off my to-do list, there is one thing I absolutely dread.

Entering the workforce.

I believed that, with my shiny new degrees and the references on my CV, I would start working at the lower end of companies for which I spent four years preparing myself. Instead, I see this qualification under each and every job, with a few variations:

"3+ years of experience in related field."

According to WayUp, an entry-level job is a job that "requires minimal professional work experience and opens the door to larger, work-related opportunities."

Speaking from personal experience, I believed that my extracurriculars at the University of Iowa prepared me for the jobs I was applying for, but rejection letters keep showing up in my inbox. From the comments I have received about my application, they all ask for more experience in the field. I did not have an internship or a job history in the field.

I spent my time on campus, at least until COVID-19 forced me to be home for a year-and-a-half, participating in clubs and magazines. I completely forgot about internships.

Now, while I would like to believe I

could dismantle the idea of needing three years of experience for an entry-level job, I am one person. So, instead, I am here telling you to find internships as soon as possible in your field of interest.

Internships are not just for the school year. There are many internships that happen during the summer. There are also remote internships so you do not have to keep yourself geographically limited.

The Pomerantz Career Center has an entire webpage devoted to internships and how to get them. I did not utilize the idea of internships until it was almost too late. A lot of the application deadlines for summer internships ended in March, but many are still on a rolling basis.

I am not here to be gentle with you. Sometimes the internship work is grueling for no pay, but in the end, it is worth the payoff when trying to get a higher paying job in the workforce. There is no such thing as an entry-level job because many of them are still asking for years of experience, despite being on the low-end of the corporate food chain.

Yes, while they will still teach you the basics of their working environment, most companies want to have someone who already knows their way around and can throw themselves into the work without much of a fuss.

Unpaid internships are one of the most helpful things to set you apart from others. There are some that do pay, I've even seen some that pay \$15/hr — which is crazy in my eyes — that are considered a blessing, but at some point, the only thing available may be an unpaid internship.

In the end, that internship is going to save you in the long run. Take it from someone who did not do an internship and is now paying the price.

signe-nettum@uiowa.edu

COLUMN

IC ready to celebrate National Poetry Month

It is National Poetry Month, and the Iowa City community has a lot to offer for celebration.



Yassie Buchanan
Opinions Columnist

April is National Poetry Month, and whether you are interested in poetry or not, Iowa City will be filled with engaging opportunities to celebrate. National Poetry Month started in 1996 to recognize the contributions poets and poetry make to our culture.

Iowa City is a UNESCO City of Literature, the third one in the world, which is a designation few cities receive globally. Iowa City was chosen by the UNESCO as a rich literary and cultural center.

Much of the reason Iowa City is honored with being a UNESCO City of Literature is because of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where the first creative writing degree was established. However, numerous other criteria must be met.

Iowa City was also approved as a UNESCO City of Literature because of its robust and diverse range of literary opportunities. Iowa City contains everything from publishing opportunities to numerous nonprofits that have dedicated their efforts to uplifting art in the community.

I work with the nonprofit Iowa City Poetry, which will host several events this month. For example, there will be a poetry party at the Iowa City Poetry Lending Library, with a poetry swap, food, and opportunities to meet local artists. Later in the month, there will be workshops as well as outdoor literary readings through the Poetry Al Fresco event.

Prairie Lights will host the Iowa City Read-

ing Aloud Group for the presentation of "The World We Found" and "The World We Made." This event will highlight nature and the environment through poetry.

As an English and creative writing major, I have been able to share and hear stories from a multitude of people on campus. Consistently being able to read and share stories with my peers has been a highlight of my learning experience and creating community. Supporting National Poetry Month in Iowa City is a way for everyone to be involved in supporting Iowa City arts.

Apart from being fun and enriching on a personal level, events and opportunities like these contribute to creating more unified and healthy communities. Being able to share stories and create meaning as a community has been shown to provide public health benefits. For example, the distribution of vaccines was often successful when paired with art-related events.

Additionally, through sharing poetry and art in general, we can better educate and mobilize as a community for change. In many social justice movements, art has played an integral role in involving the community. We've seen this happen in Iowa City with the "Oracles of Iowa City" project murals, one of which says "Black Joy Needs No Permission."

It is a privilege to have so many free and accessible opportunities to engage with art and create a more unified community in Iowa City.

Some of my favorite memories on campus with my friends involve going to campus and community events. From experiencing events like Walk it Out, a multicultural fashion show, to attending literary readings across the city, I have never regretted engaging in the arts.

We are privy to some of the greatest writing opportunities in the world. If you are looking for something to do this month, consider how you can engage with National Poetry Month events.

yasmine-buchanan@uiowa.edu

STAFF

Caleb McCullough, Executive Editor

Hannah Pinski, Opinions Editor

Yassie Buchanan, Peyton Downing, Dylan Hood, Shahab Khan, Luke Krchak, Sophia Meador, Yasmira Sahir Columnists

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LOAN FREEZE
Continued from Front

bigger issue than their loan principal because the interest just keeps growing as they're making their payments," Seyfer said. "Ultimately, the total amount of their payments is considerably more than what they borrowed, so that's a real benefit."

She said the freeze is also helping students get out of default, or when a student fails to repay a loan according to the terms agreed to in the promissory note.

"If a student wanted to purchase a car and have another kind of loan ... they wouldn't be able to get loans if they were in default," Seyfer said. "But if they now are, their status is going to be able to be brought out of default. That opens things up for that individual."

The UI hasn't seen a shift in the number of students taking out loans, but it has seen a reduction in loan indebtedness, Seyfer said. Now is the best time to take a loan out, she said, because it is at the minimum amount due to the freeze.

Seyfer recommends that those who are repaying loans continue to prepare for when the freeze ends.

"I would encourage people to be taking that money that they would have normally had to be making payments on and putting it in a bank account, setting it aside so that, as soon as the freeze does end, they've got that money there that they can keep or start paying with that," Seyfer said.

At Iowa State University, fewer students are need-

ing to request deferment because payments are not required. Roberta Johnson, ISU director of financial aid, said the number of students in need of deferment may not be accurate when the pause unfreezes.

"The list that we're getting from the various services that are showing students statuses, right now, obviously the number of students that are showing as delinquent or in default has dropped dramatically, which is nice," Johnson said. "It's a great thing, but it's just not an accurate statistic."

ISU has not seen an increase in the number of students requesting loans, Johnson said.

"Students are coming in as they have for decades since the student loan program was implemented, and they are seeking student loans to help them to pay their cost of going to college," Johnson said. "That is really no different than it's ever been."

ISU doesn't hear feedback from students who have graduated regarding the freeze, Johnson said, but she thinks it helps students' lives overall.

"We don't hear from a lot of our loans that come back and say, 'Oh, I'm so thankful that I don't have to be making loan payments,'" Johnson said. "I'm sure it's simplified their life a little bit."

While the UI and ISU are not hearing from former students, the University of Northern Iowa has created a new position for a graduate assistant that helps with communications regarding the freeze and repayment, and is focused on default

prevention.

"With that, we are collecting information on our students that have graduated since the COVID forbearance went into effect," UNI Financial Aid Counselor Kaili Benham said.

Benham said that, since the forbearance went into effect, UNI has collected information on borrowers who struggled before the freeze. That way, they can touch base with them to assure that they understand what options they have to be successful with repayment.

The calling system has been used multiple times when borrowers have received UNI reminder repayment emails, Benham said, but the school would still like to see more people reach out.

"We actually have started to promote the fact that we have this grad assistant available to really help people understand what that process is going to look like," Benham said. "We promoted it through our Alumni Association newsletter as a way to try and connect with those students that are gone that may have questions."

UNI has also seen a drop in people going into default, but Benham is worried about numbers changing when the freeze ends.

"I think, if you were to look at the data, you would see that most of our cohort default rates went down this year, and we all suspect that it will be even further down next year," Benham said. "The concern is that it will start to rise once repayment does start to happen."

katharine-perez@uiowa.edu

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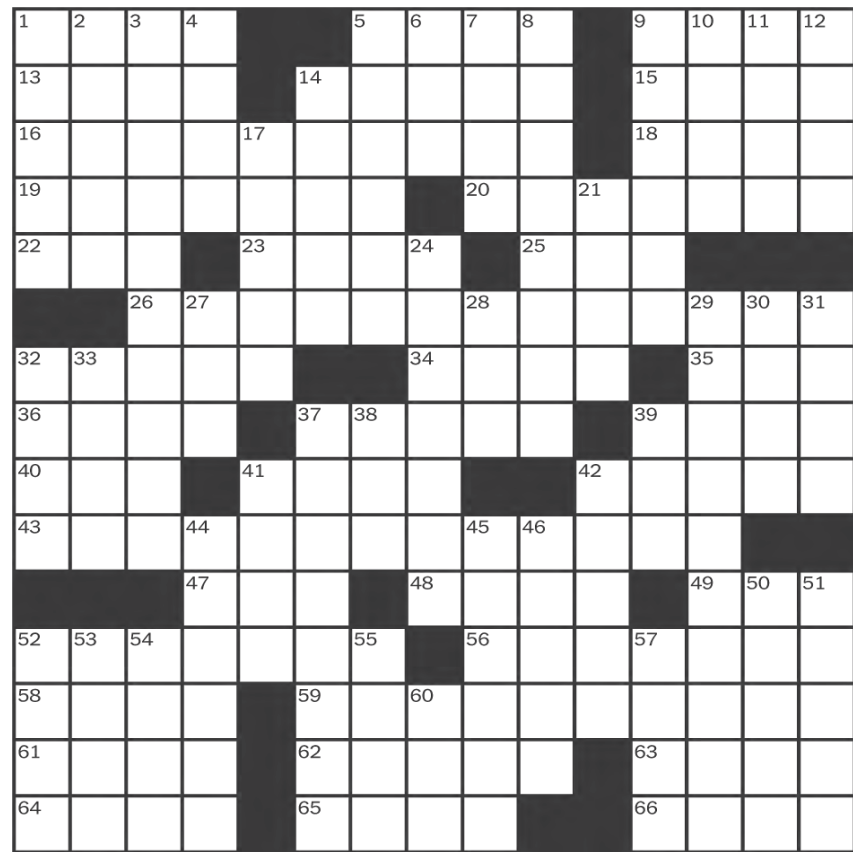
Ayrton Breckenridge/The Daily Iowan

Photo illustration.

The Daily Break

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0309



- Across**
- Italian sauce with meat and tomatoes
 - Person seeking damages
 - Letter that's only 25% of the way through the Greek alphabet, surprisingly
 - Cheers for banderilleros
 - Martial artist/actor who played the emperor of China in 2020's "Mulan"
 - Good name for an ophthalmologist
 - "You and I should eat that"
 - Salmon, e.g.
 - Force out
 - Flowering plants associated with the Augusta National golf course
 - Utter
 - Actress Garr
 - Dating app description
 - Kid at a college bar who seems, to me as a bouncer, too young to allow in
 - Palestinian president starting in 2005
 - Place
 - Calendar box
 - Essential point
 - Bill worth billions
 - When most Gemini's are born
 - Spoil
 - Dog breed whose coat resembles dreadlocks
 - Drinks at soda shops
 - Easter item that the woman is going to decorate

- More, in Mexico
 - Short johns?
 - Nowhere to be found, informally
 - Risk territory bordering Siberia
 - Sponsored boys at baptisms
 - Desertlike
 - What the couple dressed in lupine costumes said
 - It's worth zero in baccarat
 - Gets wind of
 - Land whose prime minister is known as the Taoiseach
 - "For Pete's ___!"
 - Stops waffling
 - Licks, maybe
- Down**
- Hats, so to speak
 - Siri: Apple :: ___: Amazon
 - Seat of Pennsylvania's Adams County
 - Losing team in the "Miracle on Ice" hockey game
 - Harsh
 - Shoshonean language
 - Director Kazan
 - Little Nabisco crackers
 - Bag brand
 - Great Lakes port
 - Mother of Beyoncé and Solange Knowles
 - Requests

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Puzzle solutions on page 2A

Biden's biofuel boost



President Joe Biden speaks during a visit at the POET Bioprocessing ethanol plant in Menlo, Iowa, on Tuesday.

Grace Smith/The Daily Iowan

AI
Continued from Front

of African Americans compared to their actual risk of recidivism," Lin said. Tianbao Yang, UI associate professor of computer science and the grant's principal investigator, said the team proposed a collaboration with Netflix to encourage fairness in the process of recommending shows or films to users. "Here we also want to be fair in terms of, for example, users' gender, users' race — we want to be fair," Yang said. "We're also collaborating with them to use our developed solutions." Machine learning algorithm unfairness also occurs in the determination of which neighborhoods to allocate medical resources to, Lin said. In this process, Lin said the "health" of a neighborhood is determined by examining household spending on medical expenses. "Healthy" neighborhoods are allocated

more resources, creating a bias against lower-income neighborhoods that may spend less on medical resources, Lin said. "There's a bad cycle that kind of reinforces the knowledge the machines mistakenly have about the relationship between the income, medical expense in the house, and the health," Lin said. Yao Yao, a third-year doctoral candidate in the UI department of mathematics, is conducting various experiments for the research team. She said the importance of the group's focus is that it researches more than the reduction of errors in machine learning algorithm predictions. "Previously, people only focus on how to minimize the error, but most times we know that the machine learning, the AI will cause some discrimination," Yao said. "So, it's very important because we focus on fairness." arabia-parkey@uiowa.edu

'Forever chemicals' not found in IC water

While the Iowa Department of Natural Resources detected harmful forever chemicals in the water supply of 12 cities, Iowa City was not included in the report.

Sam Knupp
News Reporter

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as "forever chemicals," were found in the water supply of 12 Iowa cities — not including Iowa City — according to the latest details of a report from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Iowa water experts are now looking for ways to combat chemicals.

PFAS, which are found in the bodies of 99 percent of Americans, pose multiple health risks and are unregulated in Iowa.

The 12 cities in which PFAS were found have a combined population of more than 400,000 Iowans.

David Cwiertny, University of Iowa professor of civil and environmental engineering and director of the Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination, said the main way to combat PFAS lies in the filtration process.

Cwiertny said two main filtration methods include using activated carbon and a membrane filtration system called reverse osmosis — the process of removing salt from water. He said these processes

can lower the amount of PFAS to an undetectable level, but may not be perfect.

"Some of the newer versions of these chemicals and some of the smaller structures that these newer versions have are less susceptible to being removed using activated carbon," Cwiertny said.

PFAS are measured in parts per trillion. As of right now, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states PFAS should stay below 70 parts per trillion. The highest amount of PFAS found in an Iowa water supply was 12 parts per trillion in Camanche.

Iowa City Water Superintendent Jonathan Durst said the Iowa City water department conducts hundreds of tests daily, to ensure its product meets the federal guidelines of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"We strive for transparency in everything we do," Durst said. "In terms of what we do, we're vigilant. And we're committed to providing a high-quality product."

While the EPA has set a standard, Durst said Iowa City does not have official regulations on the amount of PFAS allowed in drink-

ing water. Cwiertny said it is a mistake how timidly Iowa lawmakers have tackled the issue of PFAS.

"We could be testing every water system instead of just a subset," he said. "We could have a targeted program for testing private wells. We aren't testing private wells in Iowa. Unless it's groups like my center that are doing it."

According to the EPA, PFAS can cause:

- Decreased blood pressure and low fertility in women
- Kidney, prostate, and testicular cancer
- Weakened immune systems and interference with the body's natural hormones
- Developmental effects in children
- Increased cholesterol and several other risks

Cwiertny said he's unsure if Iowa is better off than most states because people don't know enough about the chemicals.

"I just think it's too early to say what the story will be here in Iowa," he said.

Lyle Hammes, City of Ames water plant superintendent, said now that

PFAS were found in the city's water, the plant has tested its wells to get a better understanding of the situation.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources detected nine parts per trillion in the Ames water supply.

Hammes said the PFAS total is the worst in a well near a former firefighter training facility, sitting at 38 parts per trillion. Foams found in fire extinguishers

are a common source of PFAS, Hammes said.

"There was another well in that general location and actually some Iowa State wells that we don't use, even closer to it," he said. "We're actually sampling those also, so we're not just sampling city wells, we're sampling a couple of Iowa State wells."

If the Ames water supply turns out to be worse than expected, Hammes

said he's confident the city would provide the funding needed to make changes.

"Water is one potential source of [PFAS]," he said. "But there are a lot of other sources that I'm reading about that can be much larger contributors to the issue than even water. However, we're going to do our part to make sure it's not an issue."

samuel-knupp@uiowa.edu



Ayrton Breckenridge/The Daily Iowan

Water softeners in the Iowa City water treatment facility remove turbidity and calcium hardness from the water on Tuesday, April 12 2022. As clean water comes to the top it is sent to filters and the turbidity and calcium hardness are sent to waste lagoons.

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Sports

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022

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Growing in a new market



The Iowa Heartlanders, in their inaugural season, play their home games at Xstream Arena in Coralville and are gaining popularity in Johnson County.

Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Iowa forward Ryan Kuffner enters the arena during a hockey match between Iowa and Wheeling at Xstream Arena in Coralville on April 6. The Nailers defeated the Heartlanders, 6-4.

Isaac Goffin
Sports Reporter

The first puck drop of the Iowa Heartlanders' inaugural season was observed by thousands of spectators — 4,017 to be precise, not counting the players, the staff, or the folks who keep the Xstream Arena in Coralville up and running.

The date was October 22, 2021. The clock tilted past 7:10 p.m. The Iowa Heartlanders were ready to play against their first opponent: the Kansas City Mavericks.

What happened next was described by Heartlanders broadcaster David Fine as “a beginning you couldn't dream of.”

Twenty-five seconds into the game, Iowa forward Ryan Kuffner battled

his way down the ice and knocked a puck into the left side of the net. Kuffner had just scored the first goal in franchise history.

The venue reverberated like Carver-Hawkeye Arena when 15,000 people show up to cheer on the Hawkeyes. Heartlanders fans jumped up from their seats, arms in the air. Those closer to the ice pounded on the glass, and the Heartlanders on the ice celebrated by huddling up.

David Gugliano, a Family Dental Center dentist whose clinic provides dental care the club's players, said he became hooked to the Heartlanders at that moment. Then-Coralville Mayor John Lundell, who participated in the ceremonial puck drop before

the contest, distinguished the night as one of the highlights of his eight years as the city's leader.

Those who witnessed their first hockey game saw all aspects of the fastest sport on ice, from prolific goals to amazing saves to egregious infractions. After the final horn boomed, marking a 7-4 Heartlanders victory, those in attendance stayed in the bowl as the skaters saluted their fans.

In an area dominated by several high-profiled University of Iowa athletic programs, the Heartlanders are trying to emerge as an organization that is growing the popularity of hockey in Johnson County.

Coralville lands a professional hockey club

The Iowa River Landing in the 1980s was the last place a family wished to stroll through. Located on the southeast corner of the First Avenue exit on Interstate 80, an adult strip joint, a mountain of tires, and abandoned buildings marked the area.

The city hosted focus groups in the 1980s on how to grow the Coralville area. Lundell said the first issue that always came up was about the “unattractive gateway,” because residents wanted a better first impression of the city for those departing off I-80.

“So, with the support of the community, the city council worked with consultants to develop a master plan and design what could possibly go down

there,” Lundell said.

And 30 years later, he said, it's come to fruition.

Now, a mixture of locally owned restaurants and bars, hotels, residential structures, retail and office space — along with a UI Health Care facility — call the Iowa River Landing home.

An arena was always in the Iowa River Landing design. Lundell said city administrators wanted a facility that could host indoor sports like basketball, volleyball, and wrestling, but also had the capacity to anchor a concert.

The community expressed interest in hockey — wanting a rink besides the one inside Coralville's Coral Ridge Mall. So, a North American-sized rink was inserted into the arena plan, which includ-

ed the GreenState Family Fieldhouse. The *Iowa City Press-Citizen* reported in 2018 that the project cost \$70 million. Construction started on the facility in May 2018 and was finished by September 2020.

Coralville's website states ArenaCo, a non-profit communication development corporation, was formed in 2017 to operate the facility. The corporation is separate from the city, which allows it to apply for grants and tax credits.

According to *The Des Moines Register*, in Nov. 2020, Coralville's bond rating was damaged because of the \$76 million the city spent financing Xstream Arena, GreenState Family Fieldhouse, and



Heartlanders players say goodbye to fans after a hockey match between Iowa and Wheeling at Xtream Arena in Coralville on April 6. The Nailers defeated the Heartlanders, 6-4.

HEARTLANDERS

Continued from Page 1B
Heartlanders President and CEO Brian McKenna was born in Prince Edward Island, Canada. He said moving to Iowa is like returning to his roots. "So, corn versus potatoes, but still that same sort of environment," McKenna said. "I like small towns, and I like friendly environments, so it's been comfortable for me here."

con Sports and Entertainment administrators, who McKenna had introduced there to, and the league. From that point on, the city administrators decided an ECHL franchise would be the best fit, and an expansion team for Coralville was approved in January 2021, with Deacon Sports and Entertainment as its owner. McKenna, who retired as ECHL commissioner in 2018, was named the head of the new organization's front office two months later. In June 2021, the NHL's Minnesota Wild and AHL's Iowa Wild announced their affiliation with the Heartlanders.

Isaac Helgens, a Tiffin resident, said he became a hockey fan by accident. As a child, he saw actor Alan Ruck as the character Cameron Frye in the 1986 movie Ferris Bueller's Day Off, wearing Canadian pro hockey player Gordie Howe's jersey.

tickets. And he wasn't the only Johnson County citizen who was ecstatic that a professional hockey club had come to Coralville. Trisha Bartz lives in Coralville but grew up in a hockey family in Waterloo. Stephen Freeman, another Coralville resident,

ing the franchise sustainable. But the franchise needs new hockey fans to thrive, because Coralville — unlike St. Paul, Minnesota, or Detroit — isn't Hockeytown, USA. Despite its single-game attendance record on opening night, the franchise struggles to push past the 2,000 mark per game. Of 27 ECHL teams around North America, the Heartlanders' average of 1,961 people per game is the second-lowest attendance in the league. Wednesday games usually seat less than 1,500 spectators, but the Heartlanders have drawn more than 2,200 on Friday and Saturday nights since the end of January into an arena that holds 5,100. For comparison, the Iowa men's wrestling program averaged 14,905 fans during the 2021-22 season as it sold out all its duals. The ECHL average attendance for the season is about 3,898 spectators as of Monday night. The organization is executing a plan to make the Heartlanders more known throughout the area. "Because we're a first-year team, the progress is so tangible," Heartlanders community relations coordinator Jordan Cue said. "You truly started with nothing. So, everything that we've built, the fan base that we've built, is all because of the hard work of the staff and the players." The Heartlanders are involved in several initiatives to make a name for themselves in the community, though COVID-19 restrictions put a damper on events earlier in their inaugural season. Whether it's a meet-and-greet with skaters at a local Pizza Ranch, Fine interviewing players at Brick & Iron restaurant in the Iowa River Landing on Monday nights, the pen pal program at Coralville Central Elementary School, or the Learn to Play hockey initiative for children at the Coral Ridge Mall sponsored by Scheels, the Heartlanders are finding ways to get new people into Xtream Arena. It helps the franchise that the players who come to these events are happy to represent the team. Fan favorites like forwards Yuki Miura and Kris Bennett and defensemen



Charlie Kent greets Dash, the Heartlanders' mascot, during a tailgate before a hockey match between the Iowa Heartlanders and Indy Fuel at Xtream Arena in Coralville on April 9. The tailgate celebrated the final home game of the Heartlander's inaugural season.

the Iowa River Landing. About 24 percent of Coralville's tax base is reserved for tax-increment financing projects. The city's website notes that "all debts will have associated, secured payment sources" and the city will issue general obligation bonds that will be repaid with the cash flow from the payment sources. Under Lundell's leadership, Coralville set out to

"I don't think everyone thought we were crazy," Lundell said of putting a professional sports team in an area dominated by Hawkeye Athletics. "They admired our dedication and perseverance to make it happen. It is a relatively small market, but it's not just Coralville. You got to practically include all of Johnson County, certainly Iowa City and North Liberty as well. "We knew, with a good professional team, we would draw a much larger distance geographically."

When McKenna was commissioner of the ECHL in 2018, he visited the site of Xtream Arena soon after it had broken

between Carlson and Mavericks forward Mikael Robidoux during a game on Dec. 27, Helgens designed a t-shirt using Carlson's likeness with the phrase "Kung Fu Carlson," which he then sold to other fans. Carlson said during a postgame interview he got

for the franchise's existence. After witnessing the opening night theatrics from two rows behind one of the nets with his wife, they decided to purchase half-season tickets. Next season, they'll own full-season tickets. Gugliano, the dentist

Instagram is hockey-related. "There's either hockey in the background, or a hockey puck in the background, or we're at the arena, or whatever it is," Gugliano said. As someone who earned his bachelor's degree and

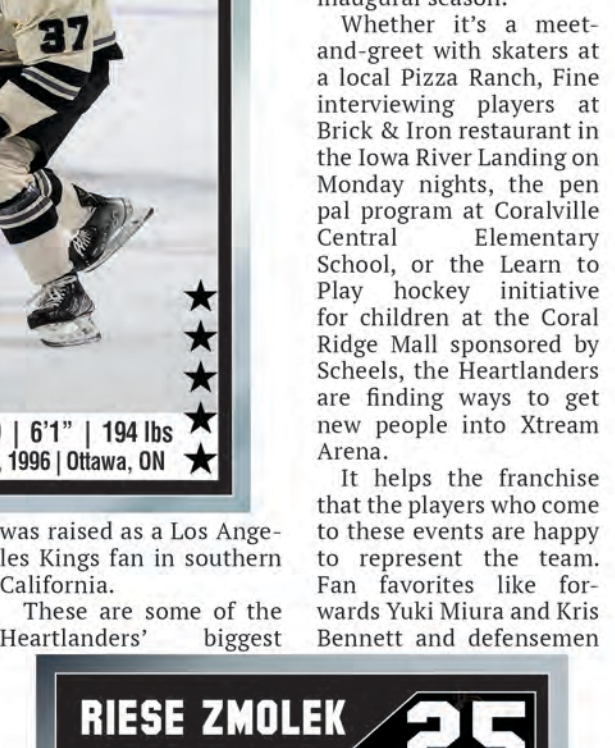
a high concentration of families and college students, the Heartlanders market toward those in their 20s through 40s, while other ECHL franchises are known for an older fanbase because of their local demographics. About 60 percent of the

as riding the Zambonis during intermissions. At the last home game, children — and a soon-to-be married woman — took a trip around the rink. The Heartlanders have also hosted specialty jersey nights, such as Pride Night or DC Comics Night, and those who attend can bid on players' jerseys after the game. If they secure the highest bid, they receive the jersey and meet the player postgame.

COVID-19 hurt the franchise's group sales. It saw more individual sales in its inaugural season, but he expects that to change next year when there's consistently large groups. The organization now has a better understanding of where it needs to go for marketing in the community, and now more Heartlanders gear has been spotted around the area. The Heartlanders, though seeing their fan-

base grow, do not aim to become like the Fort Wayne Komets or the Toledo Walleye, their division rivals. Those clubs are the biggest winter sport attraction in the metropolitan area and possess an average attendance of around 7,000. Heartlanders organizers recognize that Hawkeye Athletics — particularly football, basketball, and wrestling — will always be the talk of Johnson County. Instead, the Heartlanders are there to complement the UI teams as another entertainment option for locals. They are a missing puzzle piece to the only major North American sport not represented by a Hawkeye varsity program. McKenna said the organization sees December through the end of the regular season in April as its niche. "The response we're getting from the crowds has been positive," McKenna said. "And that's good. There's a community spirit here that isn't in all markets, and that's encouraging."

There's a community spirit here that isn't in all markets and that's encouraging. — Heartlanders President and CEO Brian McKenna



find a hockey team that would call Xtream Arena home. The city first thought about adding a United States Hockey League (USHL) organization, which is an amateur junior hockey circuit

ground. Lundell recalls McKenna's positive impression of the Iowa River Landing and the commitment of Coralville, which led to McKenna suggesting the city needed to vie for an ECHL team.

"I was like, 'I have no idea what sport that is, but that's the coolest jersey ever,'" Helgens told The Daily Iowan in the Xtream Arena concourse during an intermission. These are some of the Heartlanders' biggest



David Fine speaks with Iowa forward Kris Bennett during a radio show for the Iowa Heartlanders at Brick and Iron in Coralville on Monday. Fine, Heartlanders broadcaster and director of communications, hosted "Heartlanders Hockey Hour" for a final time this season.

"It is a relatively small market, but it's not just Coralville, you got to practically include all of Johnson County, certainly Iowa City and North Liberty as well.

"I think, for the years to come, it's going to be a great spot, and the fans are only going to keep on coming, and there's going to be more numbers of them too.

fans, who followed hockey well before the Heartlanders' existence, and they are the foundation of the niche fanbase that's mak-

a chuckle out of the shirt. "From what I'm hearing, every player that our fans have met that I've read through social media, they've been nothing but kind, generous, [and] accepting of the fact that, you know, we've got a team in Coralville," said Heartlanders fan Rik Zortman. Zortman is one Heartlanders supporter who wasn't a hockey fan be-

who works in Coralville, was always interested in hockey, but he never had a team to root for after spending most of his life in Johnson County and struggling to find live games on TV. Now, hockey is a family affair with his wife and four children, and he can't stop attending games or talking about it. He estimates that 80 percent of what his family posts on

Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the UI, Gugliano still roots for the Hawkeyes. But he hasn't followed them like he did for the past 20 years because of his newfound support for the Heartlanders, which he said came from getting to know the players when he did mouthguard fittings and saw how polite they were. With the area's young population that includes

Heartlanders' fan base comes from the local market, Heartlanders Vice President of Ticketing Sales and Marketing Mike Pence said. "We want Xtream Arena, we want the Iowa Heartlanders, to be the place to be," Pence said. "When, you know, on Wednesday there's going to be a game,

Heartlanders VP of Ticketing Sales and Marketing Mike Pence

Heartlanders VP of Ticketing Sales and Marketing Mike Pence



Iowa Heartlanders Hockey Attendance
Average attendance for 36 games: 1,961
Average attendance by day: Wednesday: 1,346, Friday: 2,308, Saturday: 2,402, Sunday: 1,710, Monday: 1,713
Average attendance by month: October 2021: 2,215, November 2021: 1,686, December 2021: 1,707, January 2022: 1,914, February 2022: 1,888, March 2022: 2,093, April 2022: 2,917

80 Hours

This weekend in Arts and Entertainment

Exploring
identity,
intimacy, and
passion in
'BLKS'

The University of Iowa
Theatre Department
will present its final
mainstage show *BLKS*
starting on Friday.

Wednesday,
April 13,
2022



Weekend Events

14

THURSDAY

COMEDY

• **JOKE-E-OKE**
8 P.M., JOYSTICK COMEDY ARCADE, 13 S LINN ST.

DANCE

• **DANCE THESIS CONCERT: KATIE PHELAN, DARRIUS GRAY II, AND SEAN THOMAS BOYT**
8 P.M., UI SPACE PLACE THEATER, 20 DAVENPORT ST.

FILM

• **SPECIAL EVENT: MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA**
7 P.M., FILMSCENE AT THE CHAUNCEY, 404 E COLLEGE ST.

• **THE PICTURE SHOW FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERIES: CHICK-EN RUN**
3:30 P.M., FILMSCENE AT THE CHAUNCEY

15

FRIDAY

DANCE

• **DANCE THESIS CONCERT: KATIE PHELAN, DARRIUS GRAY II, AND SEAN THOMAS BOYT**
8 P.M., UI SPACE PLACE THEATER

FILM

• **OPEN SCREEN SPRING**
7 P.M., FILMSCENE AT THE CHAUNCEY

LITERATURE

• **IWP INTERNATIONAL AUTHORS SPRING PANEL**
NOON, IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 123 S LINN ST.

MUSIC

• **THE MAGNETIC FIELDS WITH JAKE XERXES FUSSELL**
7:30 P.M., THE ENGLERT THEATRE, 221 E WASHINGTON ST.

16

SATURDAY

ART

• **STACIA RAIN STONEROOK EXHIBIT**
1 P.M., THE ARTIFACTORY, 120 N DUBUQUE ST.

FILM

• **SAPIENT-2.021 SCREENING**
1:30 P.M., FILMSCENE AT THE CHAUNCEY

MUSIC

• **SHADE OF BLUE**
5:30 P.M., THE ENGLERT THEATRE

THEATER

• **BLKS**
8 P.M., UI THEATRE BUILDING, 200 N RIVERSIDE DR.

• **CHOWDOWN: AN IMPROV FEAST**
7:30 P.M., WILLOW CREEK THEATRE COMPANY, 327 S GILBERT ST.

17

SUNDAY

EXHIBIT

• **WE ARE HAWKEYES: CELEBRATING 175 YEARS OF STUDENT LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**
1 P.M., UI MAIN LIBRARY, 125 W WASHINGTON ST.

MUSIC

• **SMOKIN' JOE WITH IT'S REALLY NICE AND FISHBAIT**
7 P.M., GABE'S, 332 E WASHINGTON ST.

THEATER

• **BLKS**
8 P.M., UI THEATRE BUILDING



ASK THE AUTHOR:

John A. List



Sydney Hurley
Arts Reporter

John A. List is the Kenneth C. Griffin Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. He is also the chief economist for Walmart. List works with state and federal governments to help them make better decisions. Though List is used to academic writing, he recently came out with a book called *The Voltage Effect*, released in February, and has another book titled *The Why Axis*, released in 2013. He spoke about his work and his writing at the University of Iowa's Iowa Memorial Union on March 24, as part of his ongoing book tour.

(This interview has been edited for length and clarity. Read the full interview at dailyiowan.com.)

The Daily Iowan: How was the writing process, considering that you are focused on economics as opposed to being a writer?

List: I have focused on economics, but as an economist, you have to write a lot for academic journals. Now that's one kind of writing. I've also written textbooks — a "Principles of Economics" textbook, I wrote with two co-authors and that's another kind of writing, but this kind of writing in *The Voltage Effect* is altogether different than those. Yes, this kind of writing is more about how to tell a narrative or tell a story that is at once understandable and at once helps to teach people, and that's hard because I typically don't write like that when you write an academic paper. There's a bunch of economics in there. There's a bunch of jargon, there's a bunch of math equations. There's a bunch of Greek notation, and you have to take all of that out and tell stories in a popular book, because that's what will resonate with people. So that's the art. I think of writing a popular book and that's the hard part. It takes a lot of revisions and a lot of outside counsel, people telling you what they think about the book. At the end of the day, I'm trying to write this book for people like my brother and dad who are truck drivers. I want the truck drivers to be able to read it and understand it and actually learn from it. And that is a very different kind of writing. It's a bit of art, to be honest.

DI: What would you say is the most difficult part of your writing process?

List: A title is the most difficult for me. Just to find a title that's descriptive and attractive for people, that people will like. I also think connecting everything in a way — so you know, you have nine chapters in the book, but you also want a thread, a connection that links all of the chapters in a way that you want the reader to not only read chapters one, two, three, and maybe nine, you want them to read all the chapters, and understand that after they read all of them.

The sum is much greater than the parts. I think that part of writing is more difficult, because I'm used to just writing a one-off academic paper. So it's an academic paper that's 25 or 30 pages long, and you tell the story, and that's it — but here you're writing nine separate academic papers, but you're trying to link them all up in a narrative that you want the reader to come along with the story. So I think that's the second hardest part after finding a title.

DI: What encouraged you to write your current and previous book?

List: I read a lot of academic papers, and the bad part of writing an academic paper is a lot of people don't read them because the lay audience never goes into an academic journal and reads the academic papers, it just never happens. So occasionally, you get on a topic where you write a number of academic papers, like I have in scaling. So I've written a number of academic papers on the economics of scaling, how to scale ideas. And then I stopped and said, 'Do you want to continue to write academic papers in this area? That's great if you do, or do you want to take stock and write a popular book that non-academics can read, and understand what's going on in this academic literature.' In essence, you're trying to unlock the knowledge that you've created in the academic world. You want to unlock that so everyone can learn from it, not just the academics, and this has happened twice in my career. It happened with *The Why Axis*. I said, 'Look, I've created enough to where I want to unlock it now, and I want the world to know about the secrets that were locked in these academic journals.' And after doing the work in scaling I felt the same way, I felt it's time to unlock it, and hopefully teach the world about what you've learned and what you've written about. It's such an important issue that I decided to pause my academic research and do this.

sydney-hurley@uiowa.edu

Streaming Highlight: *Russian Doll* Season 2



Illustration by Molly Milder

Parker Jones
Arts Editor

Emmy-nominated actress Natasha Lyonne will return as writer, showrunner, and star for the second season of the critically acclaimed Netflix original, *Russian Doll*. The comedy-drama series will return to the streaming site on April 20. The first eight-episode season navigated the life and death of game developer Nadia Vulvokov, who found herself repeatedly living the same night of her 36th birthday, ending with her death each night.

Eventually, Nadia finds someone else stuck in the time loop with her, a man named Alan Zaveri, and the pair must help each other solve their eerie predicament.

The second season, which will have seven episodes, will take on a similar time-warping plotline. It is set four years after the end of the first season, with Nadia now thrust back into several different past time periods.

Alongside Lyonne and SNL alum Amy Poehler, filmmaker and playwright Leslye Headland also had a hand in *Russian Doll*'s creation in 2019. The mystery series is also produced by nine-time Emmy-nominated producer Dave Becky, who previously worked on Netflix's *Master of None* and HBO's *Insecure*.

Lyonne, best known for her role as Nicky Nichols in Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*, stars as main character Nadia. Alan is played by actor Charlie Barnett, who previously starred in *Chicago Fire*. Other recurring cast members include Greta Lee as Maxine, Nadia's friend who throws her 36th birthday party, Yul Vazquez as John Reyes, Nadia's ex-boyfriend, and Elizabeth Ashley as Ruth Brenner, a therapist and close family friend of Nadia's.

Russian Doll's second season promises to continue the show's themes of existentialism and the inevitabilities of mortality, examining those deeper subjects through its dramatic but humorous lens.

parker-jones@uiowa.edu

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Playlist

Mission Creek Recap

⋮

▶

↺

Sports Beach Bunny	Lost It To Trying + Son Lux
Lucy Soccer Mommy	Mohabbat + Arooj Aftab
No Face Haley Heynderickx	Body Rock + Alyx Rush
Nice Guys Beach Bunny	Let Me Follow + Son Lux
Last Girl Soccer Mommy	Mehram + Arooj Aftab
Promises Beach Bunny	Headlights + Squirrel Flower
Easy Son Lux	Drinking Song Haley Heynderickx

▶ ⏭

'BLKS' to close UI Theatre mainstage season

The University of Iowa Theatre Department's final show in its mainstage season will be the play *BLKS*. The story follows three friends as they spend a night out in New York City.

Jami Martin-Trainor
Arts Reporter

The University of Iowa Theatre Department's mainstage season for 2021-22 was full of diverse stories. From whimsical, musical tales based on classical mythology to historical pieces that reveal lesser-known truths about the world, the stage has seen many different narratives over the course of the year.

For its final performance, the UI Theatre Department is putting on the show *BLKS*. Written by poet Aziza Barnes and guest directed by Lisa Strum, *BLKS* will premiere on April 15 at the E.C. Mabie Theatre, and will run April 16-17 and April 20-23.

BLKS is all about humanity. Following the story of Octavia and her best friends June and Imani, the audience is taken on a whirlwind adventure filled with the ups and downs of friendship, passion, and relationships, all told from the perspective of a queer, Black woman living in 2015 New York City.

The play takes place on a vast number of sets that must switch quickly for the story to work. To achieve those goals, the stage itself has a rotating piece that transports the audience throughout New York City as the show progresses.

Strum said working with the revolving stage has been exciting for her and the cast. Strum said the set designer for *BLKS*, Bethany Kasperek, has been incredible in working out the details with the setting of the show.

"It's been a wonderful way to tell this story in such a creative way because the play takes place in so many different locations," Strum said. "We knew that we had to have the ability to change locations easily and creatively, and I think the revolving set really helps that."

The relationship between the three characters is explored with realism in mind. Dazhané Meadows-Sanderlin, a UI student pursuing an MFA in acting, plays the role of June, who Meadows-Sanderlin described as smart,



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Performers act out a scene in an apartment during a dress rehearsal for *BLKS* at the University of Iowa's Theatre Building on Tuesday. The performance showcases the experiences of queer Black women in 2015 New York.

place of love. When conflict is written into the show, she said she remembers that this is a realistic piece observing friendship and the struggles it involves.

"We fight and, we'll make up and you know, looking out for your friends even if they're being selfish or only worried about themselves — you're still being that friend and being there for them," Meadows-Sanderlin said. "You love them, even if they have their little moments and their flaws."

The student actors in this piece said they found pieces of their own identity to implement into the show. Olivia Foster, a UI student working toward her MFA in acting along with Meadows-Sanderlin, plays the show's protagonist, Octavia.

Octavia's storyline initially drives the main plot. After discovering a mole on her clitoris, Octavia and her friends go out following the health scare. Foster said her character is an artist struggling with her

with my identity. I'm a mixed-race woman and my character, she's also mixed race, which was a cool thing for me to experience," Foster said. "[I'm] just kind of, like, finding where my place is in the world, and how I can bring my art to life."

DeZhané Antionette is also an MFA acting student at the UI who plays Imani. Antionette said there are certain elements of Imani's story that they have latched onto.

Imani's character, much like the entire cast, is very complex. In the show, Imani has a loved one who recently passed away — and she decides to pursue a career in comedy to stay connected with them.

While there are certain nuances in Imani's story that Antionette cannot relate to, they said that they were able to connect with their grandfather through comedy, as well. They said they knew a lot of the comedians referenced in the play, which made forging that connection with the character

something with someone and then also being a queer identity," Antionette said. "I can understand how hard it can be."

Each character is well-developed, but Foster said the writing shines in the way the three friends interact with each other.

Foster, Meadows-Sanderlin, and Antionette are all friends outside of the show, making their on-stage interactions easier. *BLKS* explores the theme of friendship, Foster said, which the dialogue reflects.

"That's sort of the

doing," Foster said. "I can be silly, I can do all these things and still get my point across, and still have these serious moments. Life is filled with that."

Foster said keeping up with the constant back and forth can be difficult, among other struggles, but the actors took on any difficulties that they faced with an open mind.

Foster said there is a scene in the show that features a relatively explicit portrayal of oral sex. A certain fear comes with being physically vulnerable on the stage, she said.

Antionette said. "I feel like, sometimes, challenges kind of help you get to the next place. Challenges really help you find a little more depth to yourself and your abilities."

Outside of the technical difficulties with the piece, *BLKS* tackles challenging themes. When it was first released in New York City, Strum said it caused a stir in the community. That intrigue is part of what drew Strum to want to work with the piece.

Above all, Strum said she looks forward to having a full audi-

"I really pull from that experience of knowing what it feels like to bond over something with someone and then also being a queer identity.

— DeZhané Antionette, UI MFA in acting student

"It's been an experience. It was a little challenging at first because there's so much language and there's so much back and forth — the dialogue just never stops.

— Olivia Foster, UI MFA in acting student

strong, and loving — if not a bit cold at times. Meadows-Sanderlin said June's coldness always comes from a

work coming to fruition, which she has related to.

"I also am a lover of art and struggle

easier. "I really pull from that experience of knowing what it feels like to bond over

fun, kind of, like, exploring our friendship through this text as well," Foster said. "It's been an experience. It was a little challenging at first because there's so much language and there's so much back and forth — the dialogue just never stops."

While the dialogue may be a lot, the writing makes conversations flow with authenticity. Once the actors got past those original struggles, Foster said the work felt more natural.

"It's also a very rewarding experience once you get in the groove and you're like, 'Okay, this what we're

Through the process of practicing with a professional team, however, Foster said the opportunity expanded her skills in the performing world.

Antionette also faced challenges finding their character. For Antionette, this will be their first performance on stage since the pandemic shut down theaters across the world in early 2020. Portraying complex individuals can be difficult, Antionette said, but the challenge is making them push their boundaries as a performer.

"It has been quite challenging, but in the best way possible,"

ence see the performance. The cast put a great deal of work into the show, Strum said, and to see it come to fruition is exciting as a director.

"I jumped at the chance to be able to direct this piece," Strum said. "It's so incredibly unapologetic in how it explores female identity and sexuality, and language and culture. It's all of those things that are so beautifully wrapped and written that you will laugh, you will cry, and you will scream. I think a lot of people will see themselves on the stage."

jami-martin-trainor@uiowa.edu

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

BLKS

by Aziza Barnes

STEPPING INTO THE LIGHT
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IOWA School of Music

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

The costume pro behind 'String'

Abigail Mansfield Coleman's career began at a small community theater in North Carolina and has brought her to the University of Iowa Theatre Department, where she explores creativity through costuming and puppet design.

Ariana Lessard
Arts Reporter

The star of the show stands center stage, all eyes locked on them. Weeks of preparation have led up to this moment, with the cast and crew stretching themselves to account for every detail — every button on the lead's bodice has been sewn with care and consideration.

Without a costume designer, characters would lack the visual rhetoric viewers have learned to expect and be left standing in ordinary frocks and boring colors.

MFA student Abigail Mansfield Coleman was the costume designer for the University of Iowa's recent production of *String*, and several other theatre productions. Coleman has designed costumes for shows in a wide variety of genres over the course of her career, once even designing puppets for a show.

When designing costumes, Coleman first considers a show's story. She reads over the script in order to understand the plot. Then, she reads it over again, and considers each character's voice, as well as time period and setting.

"After I do that the first time, I make a list of like, 'OK, this is what I thought and felt when I was reading these things,' like, 'this character definitely feels like a more maternal character. So, how do I show that in their costume?'" Coleman said.

She then discusses her thoughts and feelings with the production's director, who gets the final say on any creative choices. For example, Coleman said, a director may be doing a Shakespearean play,

but if they want it set in space, then Coleman must account for that.

Of course, she's never been one to stray from a challenge.

"I'm a big texture person, and I love to mix patterns and textures on stage, which is harder in a really large proscenium space," Coleman said. "But I like the challenge of that and trying to make sure that the back row can, like, see as much of this detail and texture as I do when I'm working on the costume."

She utilized her love of texture and patterns for the musical *String*, bedazzling a blazer and draping a paper clip tank top over a patchwork shirt.

Coleman became involved in theatre by chance — her younger sister wanted to go to a theatre camp, and their mom didn't want to send her youngest daughter alone. Coleman accompanied her, and by happenstance, found a love for theatre and the arts.

When Coleman turned 16, she became involved with her local community theater, Liberty Mountain Company, in Kings Mountain, North Carolina — once again, entirely by chance.

"I went there one day to borrow something or to speak to somebody," Coleman said. "And there was another high school, a local high school student there who was asking about an internship and the possibility of working with them as a community service project. I was like, 'Oh, could I do that too?' And they were like, 'Yeah, sure.'"

Her community theater had a very large costume shop, considering the size of the venue, where Cole-



Graduate student and costume designer Abigail Coleman poses for a portrait at the costume storage room in the Old Museum of Art on April 10.
 Braden Ernst/The Daily Iowan

man said it was efficiently run by five women who taught her the trade, beginning with skills such as sewing and working with a low budget.

Coleman worked eight to 10 hours a week and continued the job throughout high school. As an undergraduate student at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia, she decided to major in musical theatre. She received work-study positions and assisted at design shows.

It wasn't until her senior year, however, that she truly committed to costume design as a career.

"I was like, 'You know what? I actually like [costume design] a whole lot better than acting or,

like, singing or dancing,'" Coleman said. "I decided that I wanted to pursue that, and I've been doing that ever since."

Since then, Coleman's career has flourished, and she can proudly say she loves her job. She said *String* was a particularly enjoyable project.

"I really like the freedom of having the most fantastical shows," she said. "To sort of set [the characters] apart, I just rhinestoned them, and had them in really bright colors and like vibrant colors that were different from the other ensemble members that were on stage."

The freedom provided to her by more imaginative shows is her favorite,

as was the case with *String*. She's also challenged herself to grow as an artist, as is the case with her puppeteering career, which is a recent development in her life.

"I helped build *Children of Eden*, which is a musical about the biblical creation story, and then in Act 1 and Act 2 it's about the story of Noah's Ark," Coleman said. "There were giraffes that were made out of these really tall, like, umbrella stands that were sort of pieced together with hot glue, twine, and zip ties."

Generation Candyland: A Fable is another UI theatre project that required Coleman to stretch her abilities. She faced the challenge of creating a

wendigo, or a large fictional creature said to be an omen of death.

"The wendigo was a headpiece that had like a long drapery body that this actor carried on a big old pole way, way taller than her," she said. "I think we measured him at, like, at least 8 feet and a couple of inches and she could kind of hold him higher than that if she wanted to, as well."

Although it mainly takes place behind the scenes, costume designers' work is ever-present on stage. Coleman is a prime example, as a costume designer and puppeteer who puts passion behind every stitch.

ariana-lessard@uiowa.edu



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