

Looking to the future

New restaurants, bars, playgrounds, and art pieces will arrive at the Ped Mall space later this year.



Ayrton Breckenridge//The Daily Iowan

Signs and Designs installers Tanner Lamphier (left) and Clint Wrage (right) work on installing a sign for Tap Tap in the Ped Mall on April 26.

Kate Perez
News Reporter

This is the third and final part of a project series on the Pedestrian Mall. The first part appeared in The Daily Iowan on March 20 and the second part appeared on April 12.
A new tapas and martini restaurant, a bar that doubles as an arcade, and a multicolored playground are just a few of the planned additions coming to the Iowa City Pe-

destrian Mall in the coming months.
This fall, the playground that currently stands outside of the Iowa City Public Library will be replaced with a \$227,000 project by Woodruff Construction.
Juli Seydell Johnson, Iowa City director of Parks and Recreation, said playgrounds typically last about 20 years. The current playground was installed in 2001, so it's normal for it to be near its end, she said.
"The playground is very quickly nearing the end of its life," Johnson said. "We've been unable to actually get

several of its replacement parts. Many people haven't noticed but there are pieces of it that are missing right now, and we have concerns about structural integrity."
Johnson said she thinks the replacement playground will be popular with the public because it will be constructed in the same location, just south of the library and surrounded by multiple restaurants.
The plans for the playground have been in the works

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INSIDE



Grassley holds steady
After 42 years in the Senate, Iowa's senior senator has become a mainstay in state politics and says he is approaching this election the same way he always has.
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Opinion Project | Evaluating Iowa's racial disparities in infant mortality
The disparity in Iowa's infant mortality rate are clear, and Opinions columnist Yassie Buchanan writes that addressing it must happen at every level.
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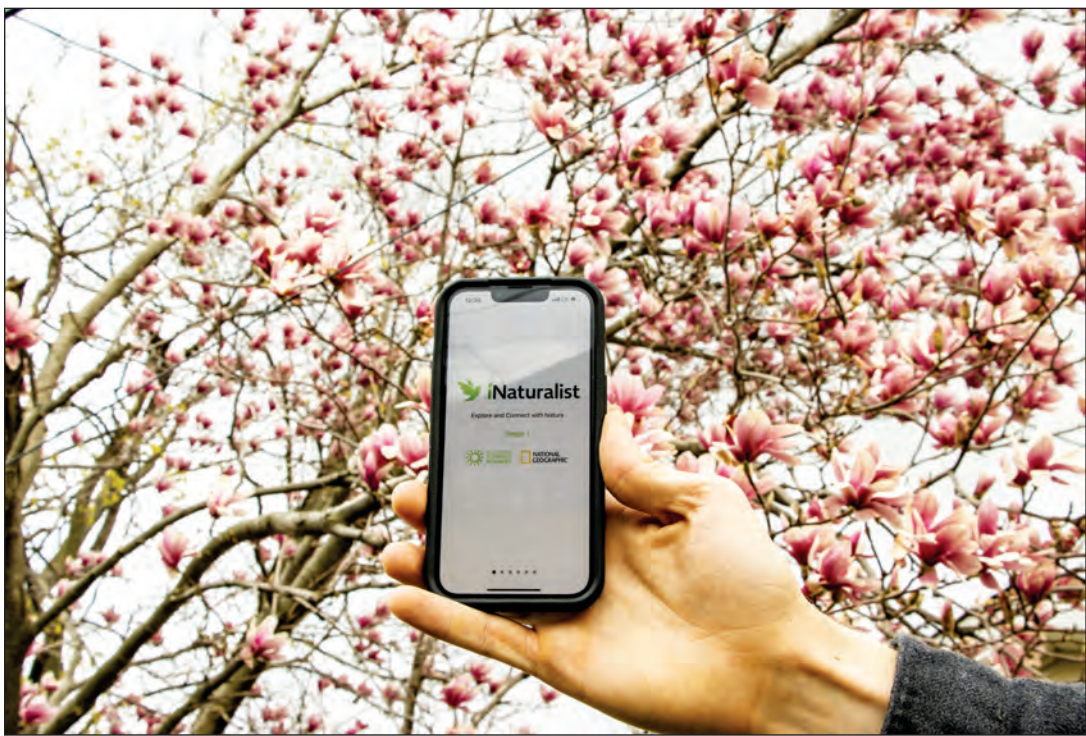
DITV

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UI, IC team up for nature challenge

The University of Iowa Office of Sustainability is partnering with Iowa City to promote the city's nature challenge.



Isabella Cervantes/The Daily Iowan

Photo illustration.

Samantha Bielema
News Reporter

The University of Iowa Office of Sustainability and the Environment has partnered with Iowa City to encourage residents to photograph nature.
The partnership is for the City Nature Challenge, an event that Beth MacKenzie, one of the Office of Sustainability Program managers, said she hopes encourages students and community members to be more sustainably minded.
"We're really working hard to embed sus-

tainability into academics and research and education on campus," she said.
To participate, community members must use the iNaturalist app to photograph any plant, animal, or insect. Scientists around the world can then use the photos to collect data for ecological research, according to the iNaturalist website.
The department has many opportunities for students to learn more about sustainability and what it means, said Blake Rupe, the Office of Sustainability program manager.

NATURE | Page 3A

Tornados increase in Iowa ahead of peak months

On average, the state is hit by about 50 tornadoes annually.

Sam Knupp
News Reporter

The recent La Niña in the Pacific Ocean is bringing tornadoes to Iowa.
There have been 35 tornadoes in Iowa as of April 20, about 25 more than the average number for this time of year, said Iowa State University meteorology professor William Gallus.
The typical peak tornado months of May and June have yet to arrive.
"Fifty-one would be the average for the year and normally by now, we would have only had nine or 10," Gallus said.
Gallus said the La Niña occurring in the Pacific Ocean has led to strong storm systems across the country and may continue into the summer.
A La Niña event occurs when Pacific trade winds push warm water to the west, bringing cold water to the ocean's surface. With this, the jet stream gets stronger and creates an environment for more storms to occur in certain parts of the U.S.
Gallus said during La Niña years, the jet stream typically points to the southeast, causing strong storms to occur in the region.
In April, however, the jet stream was aimed directly at Iowa, causing several strong storm systems that have also kept warm air out of

TORNADOES | Page 3A

A keepsake edition to be published on Wednesday, May 11, 2022

After a memorable year, it's time to recognize the graduates of 2022.

Celebrate your family member or friend's momentous achievement in *The Daily Iowan's Graduation Edition*. This special keepsake issue will feature graduate profiles and stories, along with congratulatory advertisements placed by parents, family members and friends of University of Iowa graduates.

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PED MALL
Continued from Front

for over a year. National companies GameTime Playground Equipment and Cunningham Recreation, and the public provided input on the playground's design, design, after the city sent out an online public survey for feedback on the structure. The city sifted through 550 responses and settled on a number of general themes for improvement, Johnson said.

"Not every individual request was incorporated, but some of the things that were heard loud and clear were people wanted more shade," Johnson said.

“It’s definitely a changing of the eras, people who remember the Union are going to be, I think, pleasantly surprised at how radically different it is. They won’t even recognize it at all.”

—Darin Beck, CEO and president of Paramount Barco

"The general consensus of original colors chosen wasn't very favorable, so we switched colors to the blue and green that is going to be there."

Johnson added that there were multiple requests for accessibility for parents to access the structure easily.

"There was a sense from parents that they wanted to be able to get to the top levels of the slide towers,

like, if we have a small child who climbs up there, you need to be able to get up quickly to rescue them if they need help," Johnson said. "It's definitely accessible in terms of people with disabilities, who use mobility devices."

The playground parts are scheduled to arrive in mid-July, and Johnson estimates that the playground will be fully constructed by late August or early September.

Entertaining the community

Double Tap, a bar arcade with over 50 games, is set to open on June 1 in the building Union Bar once occupied.

Double Tap's neigh-

"I've just been looking for places to do these types of arcades," Beck said. "We have multiple brands, but the three brands that we're bringing into Iowa City are the same three that happened to be kind of bundled together in Cedar Falls. It's worked out really well, so we went that route."

The Ped Mall is among the best places in the state to bring his three businesses, Beck said. He added that he was really excited by the redevelopment that occurred on College Block and in the locations he was interested in.

With food, drinks, and games from multiple decades, including skee ball and pinball, Beck hopes the barcade will have something for everyone.

"We'll certainly have great pizza there and a full bar, but Double Tap is also the kind of place you can go and if you're not hungry, that's fine," Beck said. "And if you don't feel like drinking you don't have to do that either, and you still have something to do."

Double Tap will be will be ages 21-plus, but will have family days on Sundays, during which parents and children can come and play arcade games.

Beck said the Stuffed Olive and Double Tap will be located in the same building, with Double Tap

in the basement and the Stuffed Olive on the first floor. There will be access to the bar via a stairwell in the Ped Mall leading down to the entrance.

"There's also an elevator that people can take by going in the Riverside Theatre entrance," Beck said. "There's an elevator and a new corridor there that accesses the basement, as well."

Stuffed Olive is set to make its Iowa City debut on May 19, sooner than its basement counterpart.

Beck said the bar is different from anything else in the Iowa City community.

"It's a martini bar, with over 100 martinis on the menu, and a very nice chef-driven tapas menu," Beck said. "Food-wise, there are probably similar things in Iowa City, but from the ambience and the martini menu, there's just nothing like it."

The Stuffed Olive will also serve pedestrians are ages 21 and older.

Both bars are located at 121 E. College St., which Union Bar occupied until its closing in 2020. Beck said he's excited for people to come to Stuffed Olive and Double Tap and see how the space has changed.

"It's definitely a changing of the eras," Beck said. "People who remember the Union are going to be, I think, pleasantly surprised at how radically different it is. They won't even recognize it at all."

Bringing consistency downtown

The Stuffed Olive and Double Tap will join another bar and restaurant opening in the Ped Mall in the coming year. ReUnion, a Coralville brewery, will open a location on the Ped Mall this fall.

Kriss Kass, chief operating officer of ReUnion, said part of the reason owner Jim Mondanaro decided to open a downtown Iowa City location was to distribute the ReUnion brand further.

"I think being downtown, especially when you have the football season and literally hun-

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STAFF

Publisher | 335-5788
Jason Brummond

Executive Editor | 335-6030
Caleb McCullough

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

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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



Daniel McGregor-Huyer/The Daily Iowan
An elevator between Riverside Theatre and the Stuffed Olive is seen in Downtown Iowa City on April 29.



Daniel McGregor-Huyer/The Daily Iowan
Construction workers look at a blueprint in Reunion Brewery in downtown Iowa City on April 29.



Daniel McGregor-Huyer/The Daily Iowan
The bar at the Stuffed Olive is seen on the Pedestrian Mall in downtown Iowa City on April 29.

ly changing what occupies a building.

"I think it's good to have something like ReUnion that has been around for a while and has longevity, so you don't kind of have a revolving door downtown," Kass said. "I think that's a healthy thing."

Living in the Ped Mall

Two weeks before ReUnion opens its doors for the first time, downtown Iowa City's newest apartment complex will place its first residents in the heart of the Ped Mall.

The Nest, a 182-bedroom, 11-story apartment complex, will start moving its first tenants in on Aug. 19, after more than a year of construction.

Kory Theil, regional manager of Tailwind Group, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that the idea of the Nest came about several years ago and has been a work in progress for some time.

"The process of acquiring each address on College Street to make the development a possibility took multiple years prior to the construction phase," he wrote. "We are excited for the new businesses and housing opportunities we are able to offer Iowa City through this project."

Theil wrote the appeal of the Nest is its prime location.

"Our future residents will have the opportunity to interact with the many new small businesses in the area," he wrote. "... Additionally, our top floor units will also have access to their private rooftop patios with the best views of Iowa City."

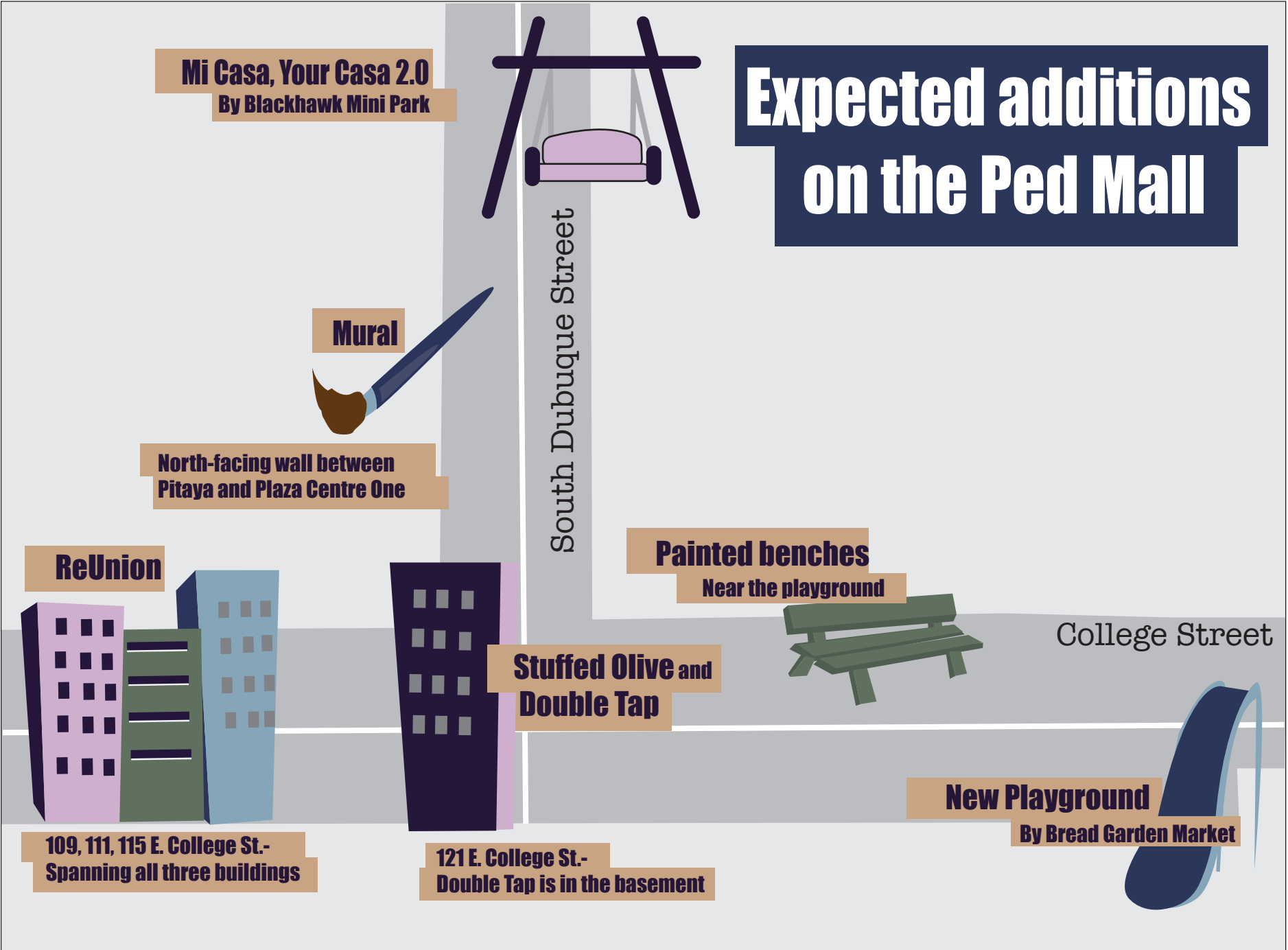
The Tailwind Group, which also developed the buildings that Roxxy, the Stuffed Olive, Double Tap, and ReUnion are in, chose the Ped Mall as the place for the Nest because it is an iconic and unique location that allows tenants access to both downtown Iowa City and the University of Iowa campus, Theil wrote.

Decorating downtown with art

The Ped Mall has always been a home for local art, and more is on the way.

The first new project to appear will be the painted benches around the playground outside of the Iowa City Public Library. The BenchMarks program allows artists to repaint the standing benches each year.

"We aim for a diversity of bold, eye-catching designs, that capture and contribute to the atmosphere and liveliness of the ped-mall, and designs



Infographic by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

that will hold interest for 365 days versus something of a one-liner,” the call for submission states. Betsy Potter, director of

creative services for the Iowa City Downtown District, said the benches will be ready the first week of June.

She added the Ped Mall will also feature an international public art piece for a month. In summer 2021, the

city brought a piece called the “Loop” from art producers Creos into the Pedestrian Mall near the Black Hawk Mini Park.

Potter said Creos will implement another, art piece for a month, in June, titled *Mi Casa, Your Casa 2.0*.

“That will be part of the Pedestrian Mall, our footprint for a good month this summer, just to bring activity and interaction to this space,” Potter said.

Pedestrians can keep an eye out for a new mural on the side of Plaza Centre One’s north-facing wall this summer as well.

Potter said the Iowa City Downtown District is currently asking artists to submit their qualifications to be considered for the mural. A shortlist of selected artists will be contacted to submit their designs.

According to the project’s request for qualifications, the wall is approximately 12 feet tall and 36 feet long, and can be treated as one composition or three related panels divided by the existing brickwork’s pattern.

The artwork will be installed by Sept. 31.

Potter said she is particularly excited about

the mural on Plaza Centre One, as it will be easy to spot from the Ped Mall.

“It’s viewable from the Pedestrian Mall, but it’s also in an alley space. It is right at eye level,” Potter said. “Some of our murals are up high, some of them are quite large, but this one is long and narrow, or long and short, a little bit, so it’s a really great opportunity.”

To Potter, it is important to have spaces for public art like Plaza Centre One, not just in the Ped Mall, but throughout Iowa City.

“Public art is incredibly important to the authenticity of the community. It brings a lot of color and personality to the spaces where it’s at. People really enjoy and like it when they find something like a mural along the alleyway there,” Potter said. “We understand that public art is very important to the community — not just specifically the Ped Mall, but overall to downtown.”

katharine-perez@uiowa.edu



Daniel McGregor-Huyer/The Daily Iowan

A park bench is seen in the Pedestrian Mall in downtown Iowa City on April 29.

NATURE

Continued from Front

Rupe said the department strives to provide opportunities that spread awareness throughout campus.

“There’s a core group of student organizations that we work with if a student really wants to get involved,” she said. “It could be for work, for research, or sustainability-minded projects.”

MacKenzie said she hopes the community

partnership means more people will get involved.

“We partnered with the community to get the word out there and get everyone we can to participate,” she said.

Grace Wachholz, an Office of Sustainability communications intern, said sustainability is more than just reposting on social media — it’s something everyone should have knowledge about.

“I think being mindful of your environment and

what you can do to protect it is always a good thing,” she said. “Getting people involved in nature is a really cool thing to see.”

Getting the community outside to see nature is the biggest part of this event, MacKenzie said, but using iNaturalist also allows researchers and scientists around the world to explore species of plants, animals, and insects that may have never been seen before.

This is the first year the department has put on an

event to promote the use of the app and hopes it takes off, MacKenzie said.

“It’s hard to tell how many people participated, but there are a lot of people interacting with our social media and advertising for it,” MacKenzie said. “Knowing that there are so many issues out there and that a lot of them are going to get worse. One thing we can do is increase people’s understanding.”

Participants will also receive a free succulent

“I think being mindful of your environment and what you can do to protect it is always a good thing. Getting people involved in nature is a really cool thing to see.”

—Grace Wachholz, Office of Sustainability communications intern

or houseplant.

Rupe said her hope for events like this is to get people in the community and on campus to appreciate nature even in more urban areas. There are numerous wild plants and animals that people

have never even thought to look for, she added.

“We’re trying, as an office, to expand everyone’s concept and thought process on what nature is,” Rupe said.

samantha-bielema@uiowa.edu

TORNADOES

Continued from Front

the area, Gallus said.

“Everything’s been moving along so fast that when we’ve managed to get some warm air, it’s usually been when we’ve had those tornadoes and the warm air comes in for part of a day,” he said. “Then it’s quickly swept

in late May and throughout June, though how many more depends on the La Niña.

If the jet stream continues to point north, there will likely be more tornadoes in Iowa during that period. If it pivots to the South, there will still be tornadoes in the state, just not as many, he said.

“Warmer air adds extra energy to the thunderstorms. That would help [to form] tornadoes, but because the warming is greatest near the North Pole and the South Pole, that actually tends to try to weaken the winds in the atmosphere.”

—William Gallus, Iowa State University meteorology professor

away, and the winds swing back around to the north.”

While tornadoes have been active, with over 95 occurring in Iowa since December 2021, Gallus said he expects early May to be a bit calmer because of lower temperatures than usual.

Despite this, he said, it’s likely Iowa will surpass its annual tornado average of 51 this year.

Gallus said more tornadoes will likely occur in Iowa

The 35 tornadoes that have hit Iowa in 2022 have come shortly after the tornado outbreak from December 2021, when 63 tornadoes hit the state.

Rich Kinney, National Weather Service warning coordination meteorologist in the Quad Cities, said while a single tornado outbreak can’t necessarily be attributed to climate change, climate researchers are finding that the potential for severe



Byron Houlgrave/The Des Moines Register

Cleanup efforts are underway in Winterset, Iowa, on Sunday, March 6, 2022, after a tornado tore through an area southwest of town on Saturday.

weather is expanding over more of the year.

Gallus said it’s difficult to say how much climate change has contributed to the formation of tornadoes, though climate change can increase the chances of severe weather.

“Warmer air adds extra energy to the thunder-

storms,” Gallus said. “That would help [to form] tornadoes, but because the warming is greatest near the North Pole and the South Pole, that actually tends to try to weaken the winds in the atmosphere. So that would make it harder to get a tornado.”

Chad Hahn, National

Weather Service warning coordination meteorologist in Des Moines, said the high number of tornadoes observed in recent years can be partially attributed to enhanced detection technology.

Now, he said, meteorologists can use satellite images to identify tornadoes,

even those that don’t cause any visible damage.

“Years ago, it would have to be, somebody reported damage that had to be visible from the ground survey,” he said. “And then we had to connect the dots that way.”

samuel-knupp@uiowa.edu

Opinions

ANALYSIS

Black infant mortality in Iowa must be addressed at every level

Iowa needs to do more to address the numerous systems contributing to the significantly higher health risks and worse health outcomes Black babies and mothers face in comparison to their white peers.



Yassie Buchanan
Opinions Columnist

Last year, when writing a column about the need for Iowa to invest in sexual and reproductive health, I stumbled upon alarming statistics about Iowa’s racial disparities in infant mortality. I wasn’t necessarily surprised — I’ve interned at a health equity nonprofit and have a background in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. I knew that, generally, Black people and communities of color face worse health outcomes. But my continued research and conversations with Black women working in health advocacy have brought to light some deeply rooted systemic issues hidden behind the statistics. Across the country, Black babies are significantly more likely to die than babies in other racial or ethnic groups — and Iowa is no exception.

Infant mortality in Iowa—the numbers

Infant mortality is a term used when a baby dies before reaching 1 year old. The infant mortality rate for Black Iowans from 2016-19 was 10.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, while it was 4.6 for white Iowans. This means Black babies were roughly twice as likely to die before reaching their first birthday than white babies. While the gap is steadily closing, the disparity remains alarming.

Data taken from 2016-20 showed that infant mortality for Black families was 5.13 deaths per 1,000 live births, and 4.19 per 1,000 for white families. For families who indicated a race other than Black or white, the rate was 6.11 per 1,000.

While these numbers went down between 2019-20, there is still a clear disparity and a need to address what is causing lower health outcomes. Even further, it is possible these numbers are not accurate and may under represent actual infant mortality rates.

Ebonie Bailey is the co-founder of the Black Doula Collective, a nonprofit that works to bring quality educational opportunities focused on Black communities to empower reproductive health. She explained the only way infant or maternal deaths are reviewed by the Iowa Maternal Mortality Review Committee board is if the pregnancy box is checked on the death certificate.

The Iowa Maternal Mortality Review Committee, which operates under the Iowa Department of Public Health, is meant to examine all pregnancy-related deaths within a year of the end of the pregnancy. They look at medical records and investigate the cause of death in hope of reducing mortality and morbidity.

Bailey referenced a Congolese mother in Des Moines who died in childbirth in

August 2021. Bailey said the mother’s death went unreported because the pregnant box was not checked on the death certificate. She said her death was only recognized as maternal mortality after her husband also tragically passed away in a car crash, leaving their children without both parents.

If there is no standard to review all deaths related to maternal mortality or infant mortality, then we are failing to address and evaluate what is really going on. This erasure not only downplays the real disparities but erases the opportunity to hold the health care system accountable for its possible role in the death, especially if the cause could have been deemed preventable.

Examining contributing systems

There are a number of systemic issues that cause chronic increased stress levels among Black women which can contribute to infant mortality.

Black people are more likely to deliver prematurely, said Mbi Ndakor, a neonatologist in Waterloo, Iowa. Premature births, which happen when a baby is delivered before the pregnancy hits 37 weeks, can cause long-term health issues in infants, like breathing and feeding difficulty, hearing loss, vision loss, as well as infant mortality.

A study showed that increased chronic stress levels in Black women, from minimal social support, racism, and poor nutrition can lead to preterm births. Generations of systemic oppression have literally weathered the health of Black women.

In order to address these health outcomes, we need to work on all levels to open up access and education for Black people.

Ndakor said the challenges Black people face when it comes to health care experiences can also contribute to infant mortality, including lack of access to transportation and insurance issues.

Recent data showed non-white Americans are uninsured at higher rates than their white counterparts. The uninsured rate for non-elderly Black Americans in 2019 was 11.4 percent, compared to 7.8 percent for white people. A lot of this continued disparity is attributed to the economic toll the pandemic has taken, specifically on Black families and families of color.

A lack of insurance is one economic toll Black families face that could lead to less prenatal care and education. Fewer educational opportunities, a lack of prenatal care, and added financial stress can then contribute to premature births, and therefore, in some cases, contributes to infant mortality.

Ndakor suggested that, for there to be equitable care, Black families could benefit from meeting more frequently with doctors or having health care professionals go to them to make up for transportation and insurance barriers.

A lack of Black health care professionals can also worsen outcomes. Ndakor said

that simply having more Black health care providers, spanning from midwives to physicians, could bring more trust and awareness in the health care system.

This sentiment has rung true in Ndakor’s experience as a Black neonatologist.

“As a Black physician, when I have patients who are African American, they are more honest with me,” Ndakor said. “I also don’t feel uncomfortable asking them certain things because we can identify in similar ways.”

The issue extends beyond infants. Black women are six times more likely to die during childbirth than white women. Black women are also more likely to struggle with breastfeeding and prenatal care in the first trimester. While maternal morbidity and infant mortality are not the same thing, they certainly cross over when it comes to disparities and worse health outcomes.

According to the CDC, high Black maternal mortality rates can be attributed to a number of things, including lack of access to quality health care, implicit bias, chronic conditions, and more.

The reason Black women are less likely to breastfeed is also due to a number of systemic problems, including not being able to breastfeed at work. Black women have the highest labor participation rate out of women in all other racial groups.

Erasure of infant mortality disparities in medical school curricula

Education is one major way to begin addressing any social justice issue. However, infant mortality disparities are not directly looked at in Carver College of Medicine’s curriculum.

Amy Dowden, director of the Medicine and Society Strand at the University of



Contributed photo of Mbi Ndakor, a neonatologist in Waterloo, Iowa.

pressive systems.

We have a long way to go in recognizing and acting on the systemic issues that contribute to health care disparities. There is no way to simplify the long history of mistreatment and oppressive barriers that affect communities of color. However, at every level of education, representation matters.

Doulas as a way to address poor infant and maternal health outcomes

Nafissa Cisse Egbuonye, director of the Black Hawk County Health Department, helped launch the Black Doula project — an initiative to address health disparities related to pregnancy. The project is funded by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

“The goal is to reduce disparities in maternal health outcomes for Black and African American birthing people in Iowa,” Egbuonye said.

One of the goals of the Iowa Title V Community-Based Doula Project for African American Families is to increase the number of Black families who go through prenatal care in their first trimester. Only 68 percent of Black pregnant families in Iowa go through this care in comparison to 87 percent of white families. The project found a similar disparity exists for Black families breastfeeding.

Only 69 percent of Black Iowa families leave the hospital breastfeeding, whereas 84 percent of white families in Iowa do. Breastfeeding is not the only way to feed a child, but Black families should have the same access to care and knowledge as white families.

While breastfeeding and prenatal care may not seem

directly related to infant mortality, the lack of general maternal care and access can contribute to complications in pregnancy.

Ebonie Bailey works with Black communities in Iowa to train doulas and work with families to provide the best pregnancy care possible.

A doula non-medically assists families throughout the pregnancy process physically and emotionally. They ensure families have the knowledge to make informed decisions about their birth and understand the process they’re going through. Doulas do prenatal care, comfort care, and offer support during pregnancy and postpartum, when they do a depression screening.

When Bailey was trained, she was the only Black doula in the state. Now, there are 25. She works to empower more Black people to do the same.

Bailey, a doula herself, said doulas advocate for patients by being available more than their health care providers. Doulas can interact with the entire family unit to facilitate the pregnancy process, rather than doctors working primarily with their single patient.

The Black Doula Collective has found that many Iowans need assistance meeting nutritional needs either due to access or cost, especially in more rural areas.

The collective also navigates the cultural differences between the African community and African American community. As an example, Bailey mentioned babywearing — the practice of carrying a baby on the body by using cloth or device, often already exists in African communities.

Specifically in Iowa City, the Black Doula Collective has trained 14 Black women, including seven Congolese women, whose infant mortality rates are extremely high, Bailey said.

“We thought if we could train doulas in their own community, they can support each other,” Bailey said.

The Congolese health

partnership spoke to the collective about women and children in the community dying at alarming rates. The Black Doula Collective used a grant to train doulas from the community in hopes that having this resource can help families have safer pregnancies.

This group should not suffer in silence. We all need to be informed to push for systemic change.

Julia Ganda is one of the Congolese women in the process of becoming a certified doula who trained with the Black Doula Collective. She has a master’s degree in social work, which has informed her experience and desire to be a health advocate.

“I wanted to get involved, being that I am a Black woman myself. I have a Black mother, and Black sisters,” she said. “So, it was a no-brainer for me wanting to be that advocate and support.”

She added that many Congolese people face issues such as language barriers, lack of familial support, and mistrust of the health care system when coming to Iowa City. Having a Black doula bridges that gap and makes the environment more comfortable and informed.

“It could be something as simple as me telling her, ‘You got this,’ or sending something educational,” Ganda said. “Just having that bit of extra support you wouldn’t necessarily get at the hospital is really important. I think the best part of being a doula is reminding the client what they want their birthing experience to look like.”

We need to recognize and uplift the life changing work these Black women are doing for Black families in Iowa. From the health care field to addressing poverty, more should be done to dismantle these dangerous and oppressive systems at every level. Iowa’s Black babies and pregnancies deserve a better chance than they get.

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, Yasmina Sahir
Columnists

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Spring 2022

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The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is pleased to recognize the scholarship and achievement of our students graduating in May 2022 with distinction and honors.

We are proud of all of our new alumni and wish them success in their future endeavors.

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The Grassley advantage

After 47 years in Congress, Iowa’s senior senator has become a mainstay in state politics. He says he is approaching this election no differently than years past, but Democrats say this is the year he can be beat.



U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, speaks in a *Daily Iowan* interview at the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., on April 5.

Caleb McCullough
Executive Editor

In the Monroe County Courthouse on a snowy February day, Chuck Grassley stopped to speak with a small gathering of Iowans. Russia had just invaded Ukraine the previous night, and the people of Albia had questions. Grassley had answers.

Clad in a monochrome brown suit jacket and sweater, the seven-term U.S. senator from Iowa took questions from the approximately 20 people in the courtroom, ranging from Ukraine to inflation to the southern border. In his answers, Grassley, who at age 88 is the longest-serving Republican in the Senate, sometimes tied questions back to criticism of the Biden administration, and other times praised Democrats with whom he agrees.

The stop was just one on Grassley’s 99-county tour, a political pilgrimage he’s done every year since 1980. Dubbed “The Full Grassley,” the tradition he made has been embraced by other senators and governors in the state.

In the meetings, he visits courthouses, churches, high schools, and businesses, often holding public town halls, but other times hosting closed meetings with employees of businesses or interest groups.

Grassley’s critics are quick to note that this touted transparency project is not always what it’s cracked up to be — in Iowa’s largest and most Democratic counties, like Polk, Johnson, and Linn, Grassley often holds closed meetings, preventing access by passionate Democratic voters in those areas.

The tour is officially Senate business, not a campaign tour. But it’s a vital part of the retail politicking that’s kept Grassley in office for so long, those who know and

work with Grassley say.

During a meeting at County Materials Corporation in Iowa City in April, Grassley said he visits businesses and schools in order to hear from people who wouldn’t normally come to his town meetings.

“What’s necessary about these eyeball-to-eyeball meetings — this is the best way of making representative government work,” he said. “I can see you and you can see me.”

Grassley has lived an almost solely political life. He was first elected to the Iowa House of Representatives at 25 in 1958 and climbed the ranks to a 1980 Senate election. He has represented Iowa in some form for more than one-third of the state’s history, and he now hopes to add another six years to that record.

Grassley would be 95 at the end of his next senate term, should he win reelection, and he’d place third among the senators who have held office the longest, after Democrats Robert Byrd of West Virginia and Daniel Inouye of Hawaii.

Grassley faces a Republican primary challenge from state Sen. Jim Carlin, of Sioux City, who is running to his right and framing Grassley as an establishment moderate. If fundraising is any indication, Carlin doesn’t pose a significant challenge to Grassley, and the incumbent is expected to easily win the primary.

As the presumptive nominee in the general election, Grassley said he’s campaigning this year just like he has in every election since 1958.

“I want to emphasize how it isn’t different,” Grassley said in an April interview with *The Daily Iowan* of how he’s approaching the 2022 election. “Because I’ve approached reelection from this standpoint: Just continue doing the very best job

you can where you are and what you’re doing, and just continue to do it.”

Many Republicans are confident in his ability to retain the seat, including Eric Woolson, a Republican political consultant who wrote a 1995 biography of Grassley and worked as communications director for his campaign in 2010.

When Grassley ran against Democrat Roxanne Conlin in 2010, Woolson said the campaign strategy was about organizing and energizing voters at the grassroots level, and the 99-county tour was an essential part of that.

“Grassley’s advantage is, you visit all 99 counties every year, and you’ve done

“I’ve approached reelection from this standpoint: Just continue doing the very best job you can where you are and what you’re doing, and just continue to do it.

learned from him is you can never take any election for granted,” the younger Grassley said. “I know when he hears talk like that, it probably goes against the way he’s operating his campaign and the way he’s running.”

Chuck Grassley cuts a distinguished figure at 6-foot-2, often sporting a suit or sweater as he traipses the state in his tour. He speaks with a grandfatherly Midwestern drawl, cracking jokes and bringing up the names of people he met 50 years ago in towns across the state.

Part of Grassley’s appeal, Woolson said, is his perceived authenticity. When Grassley speaks at public meetings, he talks fairly

freely about his work in the Senate, noting when he’s for or opposed to something or when he needs more information.

“What you see is what you get, and I think Iowans really appreciate that,” Woolson said. “He says what he means and he means what he says.”

David Osterberg, an emeritus professor of public health at the University of Iowa, 12-year former state representative, and 1998 Democratic candidate who challenged Grassley for the Senate seat, conceded that Grassley has been effective at building trust with constituents.

“Going to every county in Iowa every year was very smart,” Osterberg said. “He also did a pretty good job on his constituency services ... So I think that part of stuff you can’t argue with.”

The Democratic challenge

Three Democrats have lined up in an attempt to topple Grassley, with former U.S. Rep. Abby Finkenauer of Cedar Rapids and Navy Admiral Mike Franken of Sioux City jockeying for frontrunner status. Glenn Hurst, a rural doctor and member of the Minden City Council, who is less dominant in fundraising and media presence, is framing himself as the progressive alternative to the more moderate Finkenauer and Franken.

A central question in the Democrats’ June 7 primary hinges on who will be best suited to take on Grassley, and each candidate is trying to make their case. Finkenauer, 33, one of the youngest women ever elected to Congress, often points out that she presents a stark contrast to Grassley.

Franken, a 64-year-old from rural Iowa, plays on his similarity to Grassley. A three-star Navy admiral, Franken says his resume will be hard for Republicans to attack.

“I’m a real tough target for the GOP,” he said at a forum with the other two candidates this month. “Born and raised in rural Sioux County, very rural. Think big, big family, small, small house. Real blue collar.”

Despite Grassley’s continued success, Democrats say he is uniquely vulnerable in this election cycle.

In the most recent *Des Moines Register*/Mediacom Iowa Poll, the gold standard of Iowa polling, Grassley’s approval rating was tied for the lowest in the poll’s history, at 45 percent, with 43 percent of respondents disapproving of his work in the Senate.

The poll surveyed 813 Iowa adults between Feb. 28 and March 2, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

That’s a sharp downturn from Grassley’s last time on the campaign trail. In 2016, Grassley had an approval rating of 57 percent, and it’s been sliding steadily from 76 percent, the approval rating Grassley enjoyed in January 2006.

The change is in part a reflection of the growing partisan gap among voters in general, but Democrats say it also reflects a reversal in the public perception of the senator.

Sue Dvorsky, former chair of the Iowa Democratic Party, said Grassley’s waning approval is in part due to a sharp partisan turn in the past decade.

Dvorsky said Democrats will attempt to tie Grassley to the policies of Iowa’s state leaders like Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds and the GOP-controlled Legislature.

Reynolds, who receives frequent praise from Grassley, is pushing the Legislature to pass a bill to provide public school-funded scholarships for students to attend private schools, a policy resisted by some rural Republicans and a majority of Iowans, according to the

same *Register* poll.

Republican legislators, by the same turn, have stirred controversy this year with attempts to tightly moderate school library and classroom materials, with one suggesting librarians should be jailed for providing what the Legislature defines as obscene materials.

“Chuck Grassley has his fingers all over this, and he can’t run from it,” Dvorsky said.

But Republicans aren’t holding their breath in fear. Woolson said that, even in years that have been good for Democrats, Grassley has out-performed expectations.

“More than once, the Democrats have said, ‘This is the year that he’s vulnerable. This is the year that we’re gonna beat Chuck Grassley,’” Woolson said. “And it hasn’t happened yet. So, I’m of the mood that I’ll believe it when I see it.”

A farmer with political ambitions

Grassley’s political ambitions started young. He was born in 1933 in New Hartford, Iowa, to Louis and Ruth Grassley. He boasts that he’s lived in the same town, with around 570 people as of 2020, for his entire life.

Grassley’s mother was an advocate for women’s suffrage, Woolson said. She was one of the first few women in Iowa to vote in a special election the day after the 19th Amendment was ratified.

Grassley once confided in a high school baseball coach that he wanted to run for the Iowa Legislature as soon as he turned 21. Politics were a frequent kitchen table conversation when he was growing up with his parents and three siblings.

“We always were talking about government and politics and history within our family as I was growing up,” he told a group of high schoolers in Ottumwa earlier this year. “So, when I was even younger than you are, I had very much an interest in it.”

Grassley’s first and only election loss came when he ran for the Iowa Legislature at 22 against incumbent Republican Wayne Ballhagen, also of New Hartford. Grassley lost the primary by 81 votes, but he ran again in 1958 and won the primary, securing his seat in the heavily Republican Butler County.

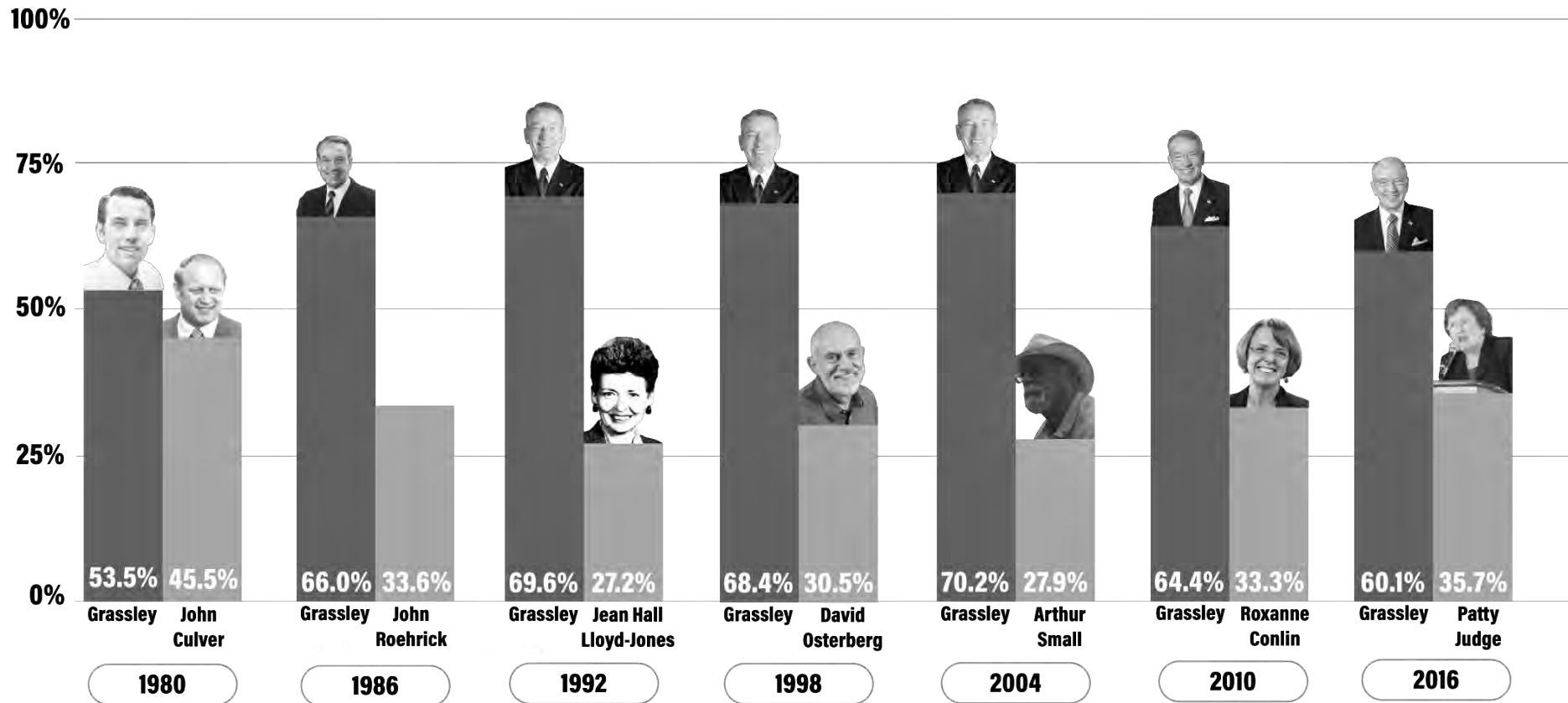
By his fourth Senate election in 1998, Democrats were already attempting to convince voters that Grassley had been serving too long. Osterberg, who lost to Grassley by a 38-percent margin in that election, said he drove around a 1958 pickup as part of his campaign to illustrate the age of Grassley’s political career.

Even at that time, Grassley was seen as an inevitability, and Osterberg said he had trouble fundraising during his election.

“You call somebody, maybe even somebody you know, and say, ‘Hey, Bruce, I’m running against Chuck

Grassley’s election history

Chuck Grassley has won with more than 60 percent of the vote in the past six senate elections.



Infographic by Caleb McCullough

Grassley, and we’ve known one another for a while, and I hope you can give me \$200,” Osterberg said. “And he’d say, ‘I’ll give you \$50, because you’re going to lose, because you can’t beat him.’

“You can’t get any money when you’re running against Chuck when you know that you can’t beat Chuck,” Osterberg added.

But, Osterberg noted, fundraising will likely be easier during this election, with more energy from Democrats focused on voting Grassley out of office. Finkenaue and Franken have already raised \$3.1 million and \$1.8 million, respectively, according to FEC data. Grassley has raised \$4.8 million during this cycle and ended the last quarter with a \$4.6 million war chest.

Pragmatic bipartisan or right-wing devotee?

Throughout his Senate career, Grassley has made a point to highlight his work across the aisle. Even in the hyper-partisan world of the modern Senate, he has his bipartisan bona fides. Grassley was a key author, with Sen. Dick Durban, D-Ill., on the First Step Act, a Trump-era criminal justice reform bill that reduced sentencing for some nonviolent crimes and aimed to reduce recidivism rates. He was also one of 19 Republican senators to vote for President Joe Biden’s

infrastructure bill, which brought \$5 billion to Iowa for roads, bridges, broadband, and water quality.

But Grassley, who sits among the most powerful Republicans in the Senate, is no stranger to wielding partisan power when the opportunity arises. As chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he blocked the committee from holding hearings on Merrick Garland, former President Barack Obama’s 2016 nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Beyond the Supreme Court, confirmation of Obama’s judicial nominees slowed dramatically under Grassley’s judiciary committee. The Senate confirmed just under 29 percent of Obama’s nominees to federal courts in 2015 and 2016. By contrast, the Senate confirmed 58 percent of former President George W. Bush’s nominees to the courts between 2007 and 2008, when Democrats controlled the Senate.

Democrats contend that Grassley lost his bipartisan streak during the Obama and Trump years. “Chuck Grassley has changed” is a constant refrain among his three Democratic challengers.

Finkenaue often says that she should set up a “former Grassley voter confessional” in campaign stops, because of the number of people she encounters who used to vote for Grassley and are now

looking to Democrats.

“I remember growing up in this state, we had Harkin, the Democrat, we had Grassley, the Republican, you kind of just thought, you don’t agree with them on everything all the time, but they just kind of have Iowa’s backs,” Finkenaue said at an event at Sanctuary Pub in Iowa City this year. “That’s kind of what we thought, and we know that’s not the case anymore.”

Taylor Foy, Grassley’s Senate spokesperson, wrote in an email to the *DI* that Grassley has consistently ranked among the top bipartisan senators in the Lugar Center’s measure of bipartisan lawmakers. In the most recent ranking of the 117th Congress, Grassley came in 12th among U.S. senators.

Foy also noted that as a senator, Biden also suggested withholding hearings on a Supreme Court nominee until after the presidential

“I faced the same question six years ago when I was 81 or 82, and I’m still alive.



U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley speaks with workers during a visit to the County Materials Corporation in Iowa City as part of Grassley’s Johnson County stop on his 99 County Tour. Grassley and County Materials Corporation workers spoke about employment, infrastructure, and inflation.

alone, legislation introduced by Grassley has attracted the support of 43 of his 50 Dem-

—U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley

ocrat colleagues.”

In a June 2021 *Des Moines Register*/Mediacom Iowa Poll — before he announced his reelection bid — close to two-thirds of respondents said it was time for someone else to hold the seat, and some respondents noted age

as a factor.

Grassley is the second-oldest senator in the U.S., trailing Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California by three months. Grassley hasn’t faced many of the questions about health and mental sharpness that Feinstein faces. He still gets up at 4 a.m. every day to run, he says, and he came out of a bout of COVID-19 last year with seemingly little trouble.

Pat Grassley said his grandfather’s seniority in the Senate is a plus, not a negative. Despite Iowa’s low population when compared with other states, the elder

Grassley’s power in the GOP means Iowa is often represented in policy discussion.

“You look at any major issue that’s really gone on in the Senate for years,” Pat Grassley said. “Chuck Grassley has had a seat at the table and a finger on the pulse of those issues.”

Chuck Grassley, for his part, doesn’t see his age as a limiting factor in his campaign to hold on to his seat.

“I faced the same question six years ago when I was 81 or 82, and I’m still alive,” he said.

caleb-mccullough@uiowa.edu



U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley looks at a map of the human genome with Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix in the department of anatomy at the Bowen Science building on Feb. 22, 2001.



U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley speaks during a “Make America Great Again” rally held for President Donald Trump at the Dubuque Regional Airport on Nov. 1, 2020.

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With more than 600 Afghan refugees in Iowa seeking resettlement, Iowa City sponsor circle Afghan Allies is seeking to aid an incoming Afghan family in need.

When the U.S. pulled military support from the Afghan government in August 2021, the Taliban, a fundamentalist extremist group, quickly gained control of the country, displacing over 500,000 refugees.

But refugees' struggles are far from over when they reach the states. Few affordable housing options are available and there is a lack of medical assistance for severe conditions, like tuberculosis. Proper access to food and

Iowa City organization Afghan Allies seeks to alleviate some of these struggles. The group of six core members, organized primarily on Facebook, is an official sponsor circle — part of a national program that serves as an alternative to resettlement agencies. Sponsor circles consist of certified communities of people who assist incoming Afghan refugees with finding housing, employment, and preliminary income support.

Iowa currently hosts five sponsor circles, according to Erin Howe, Sponsor Circles Program Director of nonprofit REACT DC. To establish a circle, a group must apply and go through a certification process. Then, a family can be moved in.

Iowa City Afghan Allies member Sally Hartman,



Contributed photo of the first Support Circle in Iowa City meeting at the house set for an Afghan family. From left to right: Carol Tyx, Tom McMurray, Mary McMurray, Eric Jones, and Sally Hartman. Andy Douglas is taking the photo.



Iowa City Afghan Allies has reached its goal of 60 percent of the total funding needed to adequately house a family of six for three months — \$2,275 per settler — and is now

a month ago and we're still waiting."

The group's application was submitted in February.

Two churches, the Unitarian Universalist

I think the advantage of having a circle, as opposed to an agency, is we get to spread refugees across our state rather than having an enormous concentration in one place.

— Carol Tyx, Afghan Allies member

be long — communities of five or more people must form a circle, then complete a background check, fundraise, and officially apply.

awaiting an interested family to choose them.

"That's the case with a lot of sponsor circles," Hartman said. "We were ready almost

Society and Faith United Church of Christ, have offered discounted rental housing within a parsonage for when the family arrives.

"We're not sure if we have a long wait in front of us, or if it'll happen tomorrow, we just don't know. But the families do choose based on the application," Hartman said.

Afghan Allies member Carol Tyx said when she was asked to be a part of the organization, she was eager to see what use she could be.

She said she enjoys the idea of sponsor circles because they are less concentrated. In the past, Afghan refugees have been moved into inadequate conditions. Most recently, a family of 14 lived in an extended-stay Urbandale hotel arranged by a resettlement agency, with little government support or access to food and necessities.

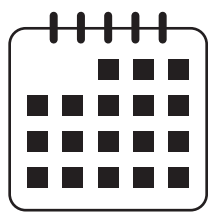
"I think the advantage of having a circle, as opposed to an agency, is we get to spread refugees across our state rather than having an enormous concentration in one place," Tyx said.

lucerza-qarza@uiowa.edu

Source: Axios | Graphic by Rose Foley

Calendar

Community Events on Campus



Friday, May 5, 12 p.m.: Squeaky Clean: Bar Soap Making with the Inclusion Agents(Seamans Center)

Monday, May 9, 12:30 p.m.: Discover Study Abroad (Virtual)

Thursday, May 12, 3 p.m. : International Student Graduation
(Old Capitol Museum, Senate Chamber)

Wednesday, May 11, 5 p.m. : CIAE Graduation: A Celebration of Inclusive Academic Excellence (Iowa Memorial Union)

Stay tuned for more Amplify sections and community chats.

HAWKEYE UPDATES

Hawkeye men's golf wraps up 2021-22 season at Big Ten Championships

The Iowa men's golf team finished in seventh place at the 2022 Big Ten Tournament last weekend at the Pete Dye Course in French Lick, Indiana.

The Hawkeyes' three-round, 31-over-par total of 895 was 10 shots shy of the conference-title-winning Illinois Fighting Illini.

Junior Ronan Kleu led the way for the Hawkeyes, finishing in 12th place on the individual leaderboard. His tournament total of 6-over-par included rounds of 79, 69, and 74.

His second-round score of 3-under-par 69 included seven birdies — four of which came on the front nine. The 13 birdies Kleu carded in three rounds of action were tied for a tournament high.

After playing the first 12 holes of his second round in 7-under-par, Kleu finished the final six holes in 4-over par.

"Ronan played a great round," head coach Tyler Stith said in a release after the second round. "His talents were on display today. He's been working hard and putting a lot of pressure on himself to perform. I'm happy for him to have a day like he did."

Iowa's second-round total of 293 was seven shots lower than the Hawkeyes' first-round 300. On a tougher day conditions-wise, Stith's bunch moved from 12th to ninth place on Saturday.

"Today was more challenging for sure," Stith said in a release. "The wind picked up quite a bit like it does out here. We played so much better today. The guys were ready to compete and fought hard."

During the third and final round, Iowa moved up two spots with the best team round of the day.

To close out his college career, senior Gonzalo Leal Montero tied for 14th as an individual. Leal Montero shot a 7-over-par 223 in 54 holes.

Junior Garrett Tighe finished the league tournament in a tie for 27th place. Tighe kicked off the first round for the Hawkeyes with a team-leading even-par 72. Tighe fired scores of 3-over-par 75 and 7-over-par 79 in the second and third rounds. Sophomore Callum Macfie also competed for the Hawkeyes, tying for 61st place.

Iowa track and field succeeds during split weekend at Drake Relays, Kip Janvrin Open

The Iowa men's track and field program won the Drake Relays Cup in Des Moines on Saturday for the first time since 2018. The Hawkeyes captured two relay titles on their way to a 36-point total.

James Carter Jr. was the Hawkeyes' biggest individual point scorer. He won his second career Drake Relays long jump title with a lifetime-best jump of 7.84 meters. He also won the triple jump with a mark of 15.79 meters.

Carter Jr. is the first men's collegiate athlete to sweep the Drake Relays jumping events in 16 years.

"When there's pressure on the line, I tend to pick up my energy a bit more," Carter said in a release. "... I take a lot of pride in being a combo horizontal jumper because it's hard to do both, and it's hard to do well at both. I'm proud that I'm able to keep improving in both events."

Iowa's first relay victory came in the 4x100-meter shuttle hurdle when the team of sophomore Grant Conway, senior Josh Braverman, freshman Kalil Johnson, and sophomore Gratt Reed earned gold with a school-record time of 56.74 seconds.

Next, the Iowa men won the sprint-medley relay. Sophomores Austin Kresley and Khullen Jefferson, along with juniors Julien Gillum and Alec Still, raced to a time of 3:18.06. It was the fifth-best mark in school history.

Several Iowa throwers competed at the Kip Janvrin Open hosted by Simpson College in Indianola on Saturday, as well.

Sophomore Ianna Roach won the women's shot put with a 14.49-meter toss, and Quinton Lyons placed third on the men's side with his 17.07-meter throw.

The Iowa track team will travel to Madison, Wisconsin, next weekend for the Wisconsin Twilight Invite on May 6. It will be Iowa's first time traveling to another meet hosted by a Big Ten institution this outdoor season.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"As a freshman, I really didn't know a whole lot."

- Iowa football senior tight end Sam LaPorta on his advancement through the program.

STAT OF THE DAY

5

- Consecutive losses for the Iowa softball team.

Praise for Parker

Terry Roberts called Iowa defensive coordinator Phil Parker 'the best in this country right now.'



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Iowa defensive back Terry Roberts jumps for an interception during a football game between Iowa and Maryland at Maryland Stadium on Oct. 1, 2021.

Chris Werner
Sports Reporter

Following the Iowa football team's final spring practice on April 23, senior defensive back Terry Roberts began his conversation with reporters with quite a soundbite.

"This defense can be the best in the nation," Roberts said.

This may not seem like such a strong statement, given the Hawkeyes' recent success on defense. Last season, Iowa led the country with 25 interceptions and ranked 17th nationally in total defense.

The Hawkeyes gave up an average of 17.3 points per game in the regular season. After two postseason games, the Hawkeyes

ranked fifth in the Big Ten with 19.2 points allowed per game.

All that success, however, came with defensive backs Jack Koerner and Matt Hankins, linebacker Dane Belton, and defensive lineman Zach VanValkenberg on the field for the majority of snaps.

Each of those players joined NFL teams last week.

Belton was drafted by the New York Giants in the fourth round, and Koerner, Hankins, and VanValkenberg were picked up as undrafted free agents by the New Orleans Saints, Atlanta Falcons, and Las Vegas Raiders, respectively.

But in the last few years, Iowa's defense has consistently developed NFL-level players — Amani Hooker,

Michah Hyde, Geno Stone, and Josey Jewel — and remains near the top of many defensive categories both in the Big Ten and in the country.

Roberts said a large part of the Iowa defense's sustained success can be attributed to its signal-caller: defensive coordinator Phil

PARKER | Page 9A

POINT/COUNTERPOINT

Should Ayala redshirt next year?

Two *Daily Iowan* staffers debate what the rising sophomore's role will be in 2022-23.



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Iowa's No. 13 Drake Ayala attempts to take down Colorado's No. 29 Joe Manchio during session two at the NCAA Wrestling Championships at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit, Mich., on March 17. Ayala defeated Manchio in a 125-pound match, 7-1.



Chris Werner
Sports Reporter

No

Drake Ayala shouldn't redshirt in 2022-23. Instead, during his sophomore season, Ayala should bump up from the 125-pound weight class to 133, to make room for three-time 125-pound NCAA champion Spencer Lee.

Ayala filled in nicely at 125 pounds in 2021-22, while Lee was out with knee injuries. With Lee back for the 2022-23 season, Ayala will either have to bump up a weight class or sit out a season.

I think, to give his team the best chance to win, Hawkeye head coach Tom Brands needs to put both Lee and Ayala on the mat next year.

Lee will wrestle at 125 pounds and likely collect a fourth and final national title, and Ayala will grapple at 133 pounds.

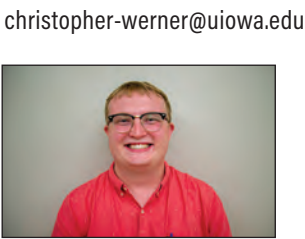
Iowa's other two real options at 133 pounds in 2022-

23 are rising sophomore Cullan Schriever and junior-to-be Jesse Ybarra. Both Schriever and Ybarra saw limited action in 2021-22. The pair went 0-5 in Big Ten Conference dual meets last year.

I would rather see Ayala, a proven 125-pounder who compiled a record of 17-8 and earned an NCAA championship bid last season, move to 133 than Ybarra or Schriever.

Putting Lee and Ayala in the same lineup gives Iowa its best chance to win regular season duals and contend for both Big Ten and national titles in March 2023.

This is the Hawkeyes' last season with Lee, so why not pull out all the stops?



Austin Hanson
Sports Editor

Yes

I know I've said sophomore-to-be Drake Ayala will

suit up for the Iowa men's wrestling team in 2022-23. In a lineup preview, I listed Ayala as my choice to wrestle at 133 pounds for the Hawkeyes' next season.

That is what I think Ayala will do. What Ayala should do and will do are two different things, however.

I believe it'd be best for Ayala to redshirt in 2022-23. First and foremost, Ayala needs to make sure his left shoulder is healthy. He missed three of the Hawkeyes' duals last year, with what some reports suggested was a torn shoulder labrum.

If Ayala wrestled through a torn shoulder labrum at the end of last year, he should prioritize his rehabilitation process and make sure he's back to full strength before he gets back on the mat next year. I don't know the nature of Ayala's injury beyond what's been reported or what his timetable for recovery looks like. Regardless, Ayala needs to make sure his shoulder is ready to go if he wrestles next year.

He also needs to consider if he wants to bump up to 133 pounds. The only way Ayala is a fixture in Iowa's lineup next

SENIOR COLUMN

We're done here

Sometimes I still can't comprehend everything I have experienced as a student-journalist.



Robert Read
Pregame Editor

Staring at a blank document on my laptop screen for most of the night without much of an idea of what to write for this column was when I realized not even four years' worth of stories for *The Daily Iowan* could fully prepare me for writing my farewell.

But that's a good thing.

I suppose needing time to put everything into words means there are a lot of good memories to sort through. There certainly are plenty of them in this case. Cramming so many moments and thank-you's into about 1,000 words didn't seem feasible for a writer who, admittedly, isn't good about staying under word count (sorry again to all those who had to edit my *DI*-record 6,000-word story on Tyler Goodson). I did my best, though.

I'm not sure freshman me would believe much of what I will say in this piece. Sometimes I still can't comprehend everything I have experienced as a student-journalist.

I remember feeling intimidated and scared after I submitted my application to the *DI* from my dorm room in Slater Hall. I thought it had been a mistake to even apply. People have often described me as "quiet." "Shy" is another. I still get that pre-interview anxiety, and I'm sure some colleagues can relate. And I still get nervous at the thought of other people reading my work. I wasn't sure how spending each day interviewing people and covering events was going to go. Pair that with having basically no writing experience before joining the *DI*, and I had practically no idea what I was getting myself into.

I figured I wouldn't be any good at this.

My worst fears seemed to have been realized when, as a sophomore, a former Iowa fullback told me he wasn't going to answer my questions and abruptly walked away from our interview. Now, that's just

80 Hours

This weekend in Arts and Entertainment

Conquering comics, novels, movies, and more

With roots as a journalist, writer Ben Percy has expanded his career to include novels, comic books, and script writing. In an interview with *The Daily Iowan*, he shared what he has learned along the way.

*Wednesday,
May 4, 2022*



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Weekend Events

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5

THURSDAY

LITERATURE

• IOWA LITERARY LEGENDS: T.C. BOYLE

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

MISC

• UNIMPAIRED DRY BAR RIBBON CUTTING

4 P.M., 125 E BURLINGTON ST.

MUSIC

• JAMES TUTSON AND THE ROLL-BACK

7 P.M., ELRAY’S LIVE & DIVE, 211 IOWA AVE.

THEATER

• NATASHA, PIERRE, & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812

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

• IOWA NEW PLAY FESTIVAL: STARS AND STONES

5:30 P.M., UI THEATRE BUILDING, 200 NORTH RIVERSIDE DRIVE

6

FRIDAY

ART

• ART & WRITE NIGHT

6 P.M., MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, MACBRIDE HALL

MUSIC

• CHUCK MEAD

7 P.M., ELRAY’S LIVE & DIVE

• CIRCUIT DES YEUX WITH HADIZA

6:30 P.M., THE ENGLERT THEATRE

• TAYLOR SWIFT NIGHT

9 P.M., GABE’S, 330 E WASHINGTON ST.

THEATER

• LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL

7:30 P.M., CORALVILLE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 1301 5TH ST.

• NATASHA, PIERRE, & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812

7:30 P.M., RIVERSIDE THEATRE

7

SATURDAY

ART

• BODY PARTS

10 A.M., THE ARTIFACTORY, 120 N DUBUQUE ST.

MUSIC

• LAS CAFETERAS

7:30 P.M., HANCHER AUDITORIUM, 141 E PARK RD.

• TROPHY DADS

6 P.M., ELRAY’S LIVE & DIVE

THEATER

• LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL

7:30 P.M., CORALVILLE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

• NATASHA, PIERRE, & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812

7:30 P.M., RIVERSIDE THEATRE

• ROMEO AND JULIET

7:30 P.M., IOWA CITY COMMUNITY THE-ATRE, 4261 OAK CREST HILL ROAD

8

SUNDAY

LITERATURE

• NONFICTION FELLOW READING: ALANA BEAN

7:30 P.M., THE ENGLERT THEATRE

MUSIC

• DOGS ON SKIS

1 P.M., BIG GROVE BREWERY & TAP-ROOM, 1225 S GILBERT ST.

THEATER

• LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL

2 P.M., CORALVILLE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

• NATASHA, PIERRE, & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812

2 P.M., RIVERSIDE THEATRE

• ROMEO AND JULIET

2 P.M., IOWA CITY COMMUNITY THEATRE

ASK THE AUTHOR:

Eric Gapstur

Jami Martin-Trainor

Arts Reporter

Eric Gapstur is a comic book artist living in Eastern Iowa. Gapstur released his debut graphic novel, titled *Sort of Super*, at the end of March, which follows a middle-school boy who discovers he has superpowers. Combining the traditional superhero story with other social and familial struggles, *Sort of Super* explores an array of themes through the lens of an 11-year-old boy. In the past, Gapstur has worked with DC Comics, deriving some inspiration for his work from his time involved with the infamous publishing company. On April 2, Gapstur hosted a book signing to celebrate the release of his book at the Barnes & Noble in Coralville where Gapstur himself used to be a bookseller. Gapstur answered The Daily Iowan’s questions over email.

The Daily Iowan: How did you combine the traditional superhero story with other social and familial struggles to create your latest book *Sort of Super*?

Gapstur: I wanted to combine a lot of the traditional superhero drama and adventure with the humor and whimsy of my favorite comic strips, which seemed like the perfect mix for exploring the problems a superpowered middle schooler would face.

DI: What does the writing process look like for a comic book, as opposed to other forms of writing that you’ve encountered?

Gapstur: My graphic novel scripts are light on a lot of detail for the visuals of the page that are in my head. I try to impart only what’s necessary for my collaborators, for the sake of time, and also to give myself more time to flesh some of the more stubborn storytelling problems out. This is opposed to prose, which needs the entirety of what you’re trying to impart on the written page.

DI: Has your previous work with DC Comics influenced your art or storytelling style with *Sort of Super*?

Gapstur: Yes, I wanted to employ the same dynamic composition and storytelling in *Sort of Super* that I learned from comic book artists like Phil Hester and Ed McGuinness, while shifting aesthetically to my more cartoony influences like Bill Watterson and Richard Thompson.

DI: Does living in Iowa or any other part of your personal life have an influence on your work as an author?

Gapstur: One aspect of my personal life that has affected my work for the better is having kids and being a stay-at-home dad. I think a lot of my self-worth was wrapped up in accomplishing my cartooning goals before I had children, and they helped shift my focus and priority in life away from that, which was freeing creatively without that self-imposed pressure.

jami-martin-trainor@uiowa.edu

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Streaming Highlight: *Our Father*

Parker Jones

Arts Editor

A decades-long crime is explored in an all-new documentary chronicling a single man who secretly fathered dozens of children.

On May 11, *Our Father* will debut on Netflix. The dramatic story unravels the tale of Donald Cline, a popular fertility doctor in the Indianapolis area in the 1970s and 80s. Countless women and couples hired him for artificial insemination using anonymous sperm donors. On several occasions, however, Cline used his own sperm instead. The immoral practice was only exposed decades later, when various people used at-home DNA test kits and found they had several half-siblings.

The film is directed by Lucie Jourdan, who also directed the 2019 TLC documentary *Taken at Birth*. It will star many of the real-life children and relatives of those Cline fathered, as well as archival footage of him alongside an actor, Keith Boyle, to play him for dramatized scenes of real events.

The exact number of people that Cline fathered is unknown. He retired from practice in 2009 and was not investigated until 2014. Despite the immorality of his actions, there is no written law in Indiana designating that Cline committed any crime. Instead, he was charged and pled guilty to two felony counts of obstruction of justice in 2018 after initially lying to state investigators when denying the accusations that he used his own sperm.

Cline’s controversial sentence, which included a year in jail, as well as the perspectives from those that Cline harmed, will be included in the documentary. Although it has been questioned whether Cline has been brought to justice for his actions, *Our Father* will surely be an exciting watch.

Illustration by Molly Milder

parker-jones@uiowa.edu

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Playlist

Instrumentals for Finals Week

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Where Is My Mind?

Javi Lobe

Coconut Mall

Mario Kart Wii

Flight of the Bumblebee

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Winter

Antonio Vivaldi

Danse Macabre

Camille Saint-Saëns

Duel of the Fates

John Williams

For the damaged coda

Blonde Redhead

Patience

The Lumineers

Happier Than Ever

Sarah Lauren

Let it Be - Piano Version

Mark Benson

Peaches Etude

FINNEAS

Across Long Lakes

Sarah Spring

irreplacable - solo piano

Chad Lawson

Sonata del Giardino

Domani Fendi

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Benjamin Percy: A man of many mediums

Percy has worked on comics such as *Wolverine* and *Green Arrow*, but has recently expanded his writing journey to include full-length novels and screenwriting.



Illustration by Molly Milder

Ariana Lessard
Arts Reporter

Benjamin Percy, a guest professor at the University of Iowa in 2011, has written comics, articles, novellas, movies, novels, and even a writer's craft book. He is most famous for his work with the Marvel comic book series, Wolverine, through which he transformed the character into a household name. Summering, a drama film about a group of girls and their final summer before middle school — which Percy wrote with the intent of providing a

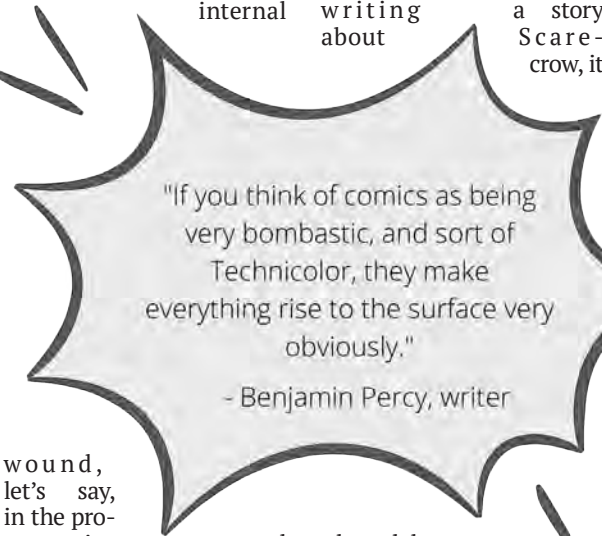
deep into this novel. I'm going to take the dog for a walk and eat some lunch, and from 12:30 until 4 p.m., when the kids get home from school, I'm going to be working on this comic script." It doesn't always work like that — it could be that I'll spend four days just finding the flow of a novel, and then one day working on a movie script, to another day working on an article. But usually having everything calendared in my mind allows me to prep for the work I need to do and plan accordingly, and sort of getting into the

DI: How do you think writing comics has influenced your style of novel writing?

Percy: Well, [it's] certainly made me more efficient as a novelist. I mentioned before how comics are 20 pages with five to seven scenes. And you always know as a novelist that you're supposed to be doing more than one thing at a time, you should be contributing to characterization and to plot and to theme, ideally, at the same time, but you've got 300 pages or you got 400 pages and sometimes you can be a little indulgent as a result of that, but comics don't allow that — you have to get things done, and get them [done] swiftly. So that's why, for instance, if there's a fight scene,

forms of writing. An example of this is, well, villains. If you look at the way villains operate in comics, they are always an externalization, have an internal

Face, it should be about the question, "Is Bruce Wayne the man and Batman the mask, or is Batman Batman, and Bruce Wayne the mask?" If you're writing a story about Scarecrow, it



wound, let's say, in the protagonist and the hero. So, let's talk about this through the prism of the best rogues gallery there is, which is Batman's. Batman's core wound is when he was little, he went to the theater with his parents, and they took a shortcut home through the alley, and they were set upon by a robber, and the pearl necklace of Martha Wayne was torn from her neck. Thomas Wayne tried to intervene, gunshots fired, they died. Little Bruce Wayne is left sobbing in this rain-patterned alley, and in that moment, giving rise to the Batman, and Batman is trying to bring law and order to the chaos of Gotham City. The chaos is epitomized in that moment in the alleyway. So, there's the Joker, right, who captures that chaos better than anyone, but if you look at other characters that Batman might encounter, look at the way that they're exploring other things going on inside of the same characters' other faults. For instance, if you have a story about Dr. Freeze, it should be about Bruce Wayne's emotional coldness. If you have a story about Two-

way that these characters, Batman and Scarecrow, are exercising that Batman is taking in the fear of his childhood, and he's weaponizing it against others for the good of the city. Scarecrow also suffered as a child, his father was a mad scientist who experimented on him with fear serums, but Scarecrow as an adult is again weaponizing fear — but he's doing it with ill intent as a kind of dark mirror of Bruce Wayne.

DI: I've heard before that to make it in the creative-writing field, you have to be entrepreneurial. Would you say that's true?

Percy: I'm constantly thinking about where I'm going to invest my time. In order to tell the most artistically sound stories, of course, but also to keep my career on an upward track. So, what I tend to do is have a combination of low-risk and high-risk projects going on. The same way, and I know that sounds a little bit crass, but sort of in the same way that you would consider an investment portfolio. So, I will have comics, for instance, which are very reliable for me. I know I have this many issues, and I'm contracted for a year and then they bring in a steady but rather small amount of money compared to higher risk projects, like a TV pitch, or a movie script that I'm actually writing. The chances are much smaller that movie pitch or that TV pitch will work out, but if they do, the money that I would make from that dwarfs the money that I would make for comics, and sort of, again, to compare it to an investment portfolio —

Goonies-like film for his daughter — came out earlier this year.

This transcript has been edited for clarity and concision.

DI: How do you manage your busy schedule considering that you're working on all these different projects? What is your secret to success?

Benjamin Percy: I am very good at compartmentalizing my days. I will plan in advance and my plan oftentimes has to do with what deadlines are chasing me. I'll plan in advance to work out what I'm going to do tomorrow and tonight. I'll say, "OK, from 7:30 until noon, I'm going to be

mindset hours or days before I'm actually going to hit the keyboard. It helps to prevent writer's block, as well, and that if I ever get jammed up on something, which always happens if I'm stuck on the character, or working my way through a tough plot point. I can always walk away from that project and go work on one of the other projects that's waiting on my desk, and then I can come back to the other thing later with a fresh perspective and renewed enthusiasm.

the heroes and the villains are also talking the whole time, because we're moving the plot forward, but we might also be contributing to the theme and characterization via the narration, or via the dialogue happening at that moment. So, they've made me more efficient. They've also clarified things for me. If you think about comics as being very bombastic, and sort of Technicolor, they make everything rise to the surface very obviously. And then you can take some of those elements and apply them more suddenly to other



Contributed photo of author Benjamin Percy.

PERCY | Page 4B

SPI Board STUDENT VACANCY

The Board of Trustees of Student Publications Inc., which oversees *The Daily Iowan*, has two vacancies for

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

This is a one-year term covering the period from September 2022 through May 2023 with an option to serve a second term.

Nominees must be current undergraduate or graduate students of the University of Iowa and must be committed to working on the board until the term expires.

Duties include monthly meetings, committee work, selecting an editor and budget approval. You may nominate yourself or someone else.

The deadline for petitions is
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2022 at NOON

Request a petition via email from
Publisher Jason Brummond
at jason-brummond@uiowa.edu

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

Iowa New Play Festival

May 2–7, 2022
UI Theatre Building

4 Full Productions
+ Daily Staged Readings

→ THEATRE.UIOWA.EDU → ARTS.UIOWA.EDU

Productions: \$5 general admission; free for UI students (with ID).
Reading Series: Free, but you must obtain a ticket.
For info on tickets and all new plays, visit theatre.uiowa.edu.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the Hancher Box Office in advance at 319-335-1158.

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IOWA

PERCY

Continued from 3B

— you have your investments that are more conservative, and they’re just going to steadily grow.

Then, you have, you know, the “stock market” which is much more volatile than mutual funds. You can have major gains there, or you can have major losses. I’m always trying to balance the two, sort of in a safe, risky way. And a lot of things haven’t worked out, but several things have, and I’ve continued to steadily build a creative life for myself, that has also been, thankfully, lucrative.

DI: So, just comparing collaborative projects versus independent projects, what would you say the difference in both responsibilities and also how you approach them is?

Percy: Comics is a collaborative medium. I’m the writer, but there’s also an artist and there’s also a colorist and there’s also a letterer, and that letterer is taking the script and putting the sound effects in, and putting the words into the narrative captions and the dialogue balloons. So, it’s a team effort, and — especially with the artist — I can develop a really tight relationship. We are sometimes texting or talking on the phone every day. We’re both strenuously trying to tell the best story possible, and that’s really exciting. It’s really energizing, but I’m glad that I also have the novel part of my life, which is much slower and more marathonic and hermetic, solitary pursuit, but I like that I have both in my life because they require me to use different parts of my brain, and they balance one another out. Too much time alone and in the dark isn’t good for anybody. So, when I’m working in comics, or when I’m working in TV or film, that exercise and collaboration can really open up a lot of doors in your mind that wouldn’t be available to you if you were going at it alone.

ariana-lessard@uiowa.edu



Illustration by Molly Milder



Illustration by Molly Milder

The Daily Break



Puzzle solutions on page 2

The New York Times
Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0330

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Across

- 1 They may be switched while cycling
6 Shorthand pro
11 Crossword solver's cry
14 Deity with 99 names
15 Raphael, Gabriel or Michael
17 Cradlin' a Salinger protagonist?
19 Preserve, as ashes
20 Vodka brand, informally
21 "Footloose" star cookin' a fresh batch of brownies?
26 "Need an ark? I Noah guy," and others
27 Blond at the bar, say
28 Letters on a luxury handbag
29 Chips brand
31 Sentence ... or something found in a sentence
33 Did so-so at school
34 The Great Emancipator sharin' URLs on his blog?
40 Cover for illicit activity
41 "Right on!"
43 "I don't want to hear the gory details"
46 __-C.I.O.
49 Strands in a cell
50 Four-time Grammy winner India.__
51 Bein' in debt to a "Wedding Crashers" co-star?

- 54 Some burrowing mouselike rodents
56 One-point Scrabble draw
57 Massachusetts senator wagin' conflict?
63 Houseplant that some think brings luck and prosperity
64 One in 1,000?
65 Beat it!
66 Bee teem?
67 Internet admin
Down
1 Cry of frustration
2 Chess rating system
3 __ fours
4 Minute hands, essentially
5 Climb (up), as a pole
6 Related to religious rites
7 Sedative in a blowgun dart, informally
8 Old French coin
9 Org. for Ducks and Penguins
10 Bunglers
11 Get too old to qualify
12 "Over my dead body!"
13 Hugo-winning "Hothouse" author Brian
16 Particularly particular
18 Pencil remnants
21 Actress Dennings
22 Philosopher Zeno's birthplace

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