

# The Advance-Titan

INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH CAMPUSES

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Chris and his cat, Rommel, whom he adopted after Mr. Pooh died. Chris credits Mr. Pooh for saving his life after the cat came up to him and rubbed against his leg, giving him a moment of clarity just before he was about to kill himself.

## State breaks more COVID records

By Sophia Voight  
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Wisconsin saw 34 new COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday, breaking the state's record for the largest number of deaths in a single day from its previous high of 27 on Sept. 30, according to the state's Department of Health.

The state also reached a new record on Tuesday for the greatest number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a single day with 3,279 reported cases, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, or WDHS.

Tuesday's increase in cases surpassed the state's previous single-day record of 3,132 confirmed cases on Oct. 8.

"There isn't a family, worker, business or community that hasn't been affected by the pandemic," Gov. Tony Evers said in a press conference Tuesday.

The state will also open an overflow facility for COVID-19 patients starting Oct. 14 at the State Fair Park in West Allis, Evers said.

"The alternate care facility will start accepting patients ... to help alleviate some of the strain on our health care system," he said.

Secretary designee Andrea Palm said in the press conference Tuesday that the facility is prepared to accept 50 patients its first day and can scale up from there.

"We hope we do not need this overflow [facility], but the reality of this virus, its transmissibility, its incubation time and its potential severity dictates that we get ready," Palm said.

Winnebago County is experiencing an "uncontrolled spread" of COVID-19 and saw 145 newly confirmed cases as of 3 p.m. Tuesday.

The New York Times ranked the Oshkosh-Neenah area as No. 2 in its Top 20 list of U.S.

## 'By the time I was 12, I was a full-blown alcoholic'

### Chris Kessler's path to recovery

By Neal Hogden  
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#### A tumultuous childhood

At 6 years old, most children are experiencing a lot of firsts, whether it's their first time losing a tooth, their first grade on an assignment or their first sleepover. For Chris Kessler, at 6 years old, he had his first experience with marijuana and alcohol.

"[My parents] were always partying so they'd say, 'Look, he wants to smoke pot!'" Chris said. "They just thought it was funny, I guess."

Chris is a recovering alcoholic and former drug user. He has been in recovery since Jan. 21, 2013 and has been a recovery coach for the PRISM team (Peer-based Response, Information, Support, and Maintenance) in Oshkosh since 2018.

The PRISM team trains recovery coaches and links them with people suffering from substance abuse disorders to help them get through the recovery process.

He currently resides in Oshkosh about a block away from Solutions Recovery Inc., which is his go-to spot to hang out with friends and spend

time with others in recovery.

Todd Vander Galien, a PRISM team coordinator, said Chris has been an effective and successful recovery coach.

"He's had a number of tele-support relationships where it has gone on for weeks or months, to the point where a person has been able to get in and develop their own support system," Vander Galien said.

Chris's own journey from a hazy, drug-filled childhood in California to a life working as a screen printer in Oshkosh is one filled with pain, addiction, inspiration and hope.

#### The path to darkness

Chris's upbringing was tumultuous, which forced him to mature long before he should have had to. He grew up in Venice, California, where cocaine was king in the early 70s.

As a child, Chris was essentially given the role of a doorman while his dad and his dad's girlfriend partied, making sure that unwanted people were kept out.

Chris's dad, Mickey, sold hard drugs, like cocaine, to some big-time people in Los Angeles, so it was essential that only certain people be let

in.

Chris also played the role of protector to his little sister, who was three years younger, as he tried to shield her from the drug use and bad characters constantly in the house.

"I was 10 at the time and I was raising [my dad's] girlfriend Nancy's two daughters, Tracy and Jessica, and then my younger sister," Chris said calmly. "I made sure that my little sister, Tracy, and Jessica got food and always got to eat, and that they did their homework and got to school."

Chris lived with both of his parents until he was 10 years old, when they got divorced. After the divorce, Chris and his sister went to live with his mother in a small apartment in Venice.

However, Chris's mother's boyfriend at the time was abusive and one day, while he was choking Chris' mom, Chris decided he had enough and stabbed the man's leg with a protractor.

Chris was forced to move back in with his father because of the violent act. But the flow of drugs at his father's house never stopped, and young Chris, once again, took on the role of caregiver.

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FIRST PEOPLES' DAY

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PUBLIC ART

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"WE'RE BACK"

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BAGS ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY



Election Day is  
November 3.

You can vote early.

You can vote  
by mail.

You can vote on  
Election Day.

Wisconsin has Election Day Registration. If you miss the voter registration deadline, you can still register and vote on Election Day. Make your plan to vote at [voteamerica.com/students](https://voteamerica.com/students)

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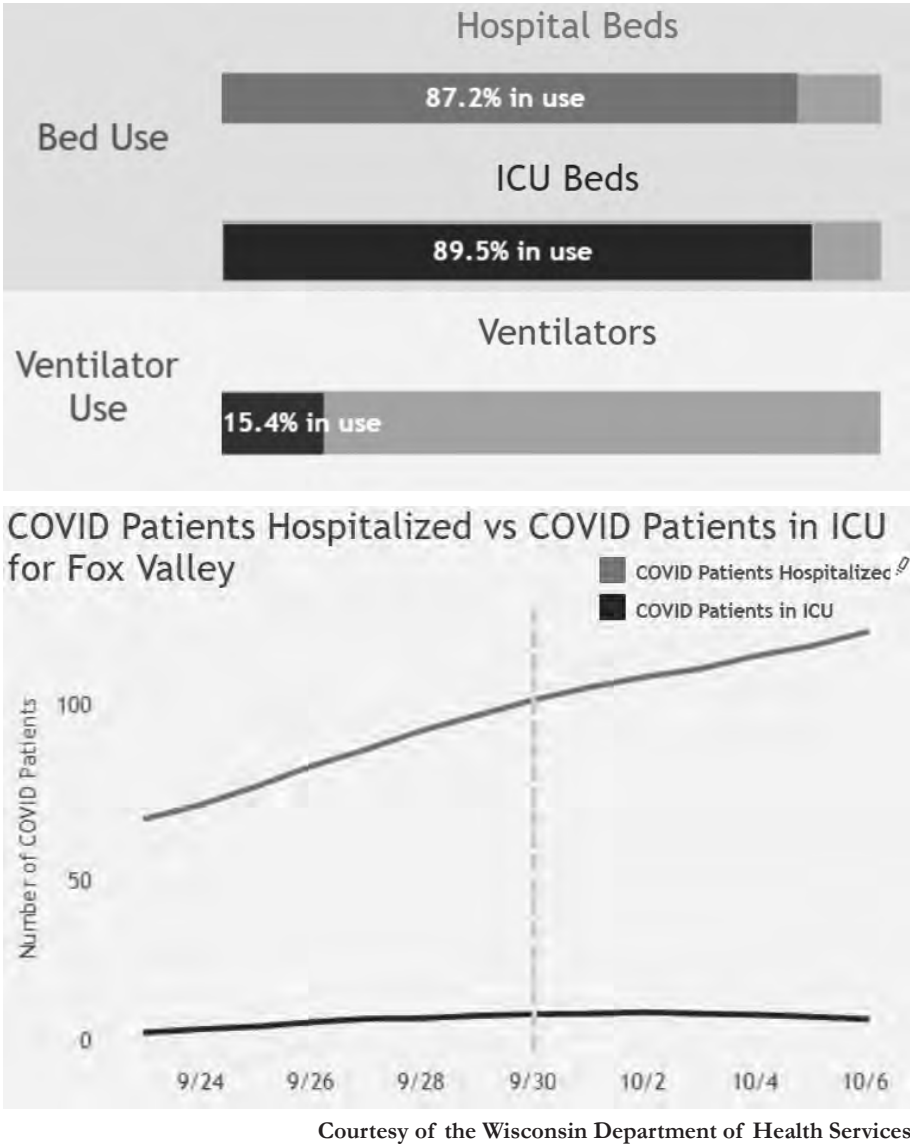
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# Fox Valley hospitals nearing capacity, as COVID continues to surge in Oshkosh



Courtesy of an Ascension press release  
Area hospitals are nearing capacity amid a spike in COVID-19 hospitalizations.

By Joseph Schulz  
schulj78@uwosh.edu

In a video that has now gone viral, Mark Schultz, co-owner of Oblio’s Lounge in Oshkosh, lays in a hospital bed with oxygen tubes up his nose.

As Schultz describes his battle against COVID-19 and shares his inner thoughts with the community, he gets emotional because he has a family at home.

“All I want to do is survive this so I can take care of my family; I got a 10-year-old boy and I love that little boy to death, and I got a fiancée that is just the greatest lady in the world,” Schultz said, sobbing and wheezing from a hospital bed. “I’m going to fight this with every breath I’ve got.

“I’ve led a good life — this life owes me nothing — I’m just glad that I’m here by myself, so I can’t infect anyone else,” he added, struggling to find breath. “The people working at this hospital have just been tremendous. I love all my friends; you have truly been blessings in my life.”

Schultz is one of 138 people in Winnebago County hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Oct. 7, according to the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD). Of those 138 patients, 13 were in the intensive care unit or ICU.

Additionally, 87.2% of hospital beds in the Fox Valley region were in use, along with 89.5% of ICU beds as of Oct. 6, according to the state Department of Health Services.

Area hospitals are nearing capacity as COVID-19 hospitalizations are nine times higher than they were during the final week of August, when only 15 people were hospitalized county-wide, data from the WCHD shows.

Local officials warn that health care systems could be pushed to

the brink if the coronavirus continues moving through the community unabated and hospitalizations continue increasing at an alarming rate.

“The extraordinarily high rates of cases have caused school closings, business closings and are challenging available hospital capacity. We need everyone to stay home when ill, mask and physically distance,” the WCHD said in its Oct. 8 COVID-19 report. “The number of new cases continues to accelerate upwards and has exceeded the ability of testing and case investigation to control the spread of illness.”

Due to increased hospitalizations in the Fox Valley and COVID-19 surges throughout the state, Gov. Tony Evers announced Wednesday that an Alternate Care Facility at Wisconsin State Fair Park will begin accepting COVID-19 patients Oct. 14.

“We hoped this day wouldn’t come, but unfortunately, Wisconsin is in a much different, more dire place today and our health care systems are beginning to become overwhelmed by the surge of COVID-19 cases,” Evers said, adding that the facility aims to take some pressure off hospitals.

While health care systems are getting creative amid record COVID-19 hospitalizations, the current surge in cases can be traced back to Labor Day weekend, according to Tom Nichols, vice president of medical affairs at Ascension St. Elizabeth in Appleton.

Nichols is the COVID-19 surge chief for Ascension Wisconsin, meaning he’s responsible for allocating resources between all Ascension facilities around the state based on where virus outbreaks are happening.

When Ascension first noticed an uptick in COVID-19 patients

after Labor Day, Nichols said he reached out to neighboring facilities in the region, such as TheDaCare and Aurora, to see if they had witnessed a similar rise in patients.

“They hadn’t yet, but then over the next couple days we all started to see a dramatic change in the number of admissions we were seeing,” Nichols said. “We weren’t sure if it was just a coincidence that we had more, but over the next few days it became clear that it wasn’t a coincidence.”

Since then, Nichols says hospitalizations in the region have only “accelerated,” which he attributed to a variety of factors, including school and business reopenings, people staying inside more as the weather cools down and people neglecting to follow social distancing guidelines.

“It has really created a constellation of conditions that have allowed the virus to really flourish,” he said.

Because much of Wisconsin didn’t see a massive coronavirus surge until after many coastal and southern states, Nichols says much of our population remains very susceptible to infection.

“It’s more important now than it was in March — when there wasn’t much [coronavirus] in the area — to be really vigilant about avoiding crowds, avoiding being around people indoors without a mask on, washing your hands, staying home when you’re sick [and] to really be doing those things we’ve been talking about for so long now,” Nichols said. “Now is the time where it’s critically important for the Fox Valley to really make those efforts.”

One of the main challenges Ascension has seen during the recent surge in hospitalizations has been having adequate staffing.

Hospital staff are being quar-

antined after either contracting the virus or being exposed in the community, which is making it difficult for hospitals to meet all of patients’ non-COVID needs, Nichols said.

“When sites down South were surging, because we’re a national health care organization, we were able to pull from all over the country and send workers out to areas experiencing a crisis,” he said. “We are getting staff sent to Wisconsin from Ascension hospitals around the country to help us meet healthcare needs, but it’s getting harder to find places that have the ability to send extra help.”

Beyond facing staffing shortages, Nichols says local health care workers are getting emotionally burnt out from seeing COVID-19 at work, on social media, on the news and at home.

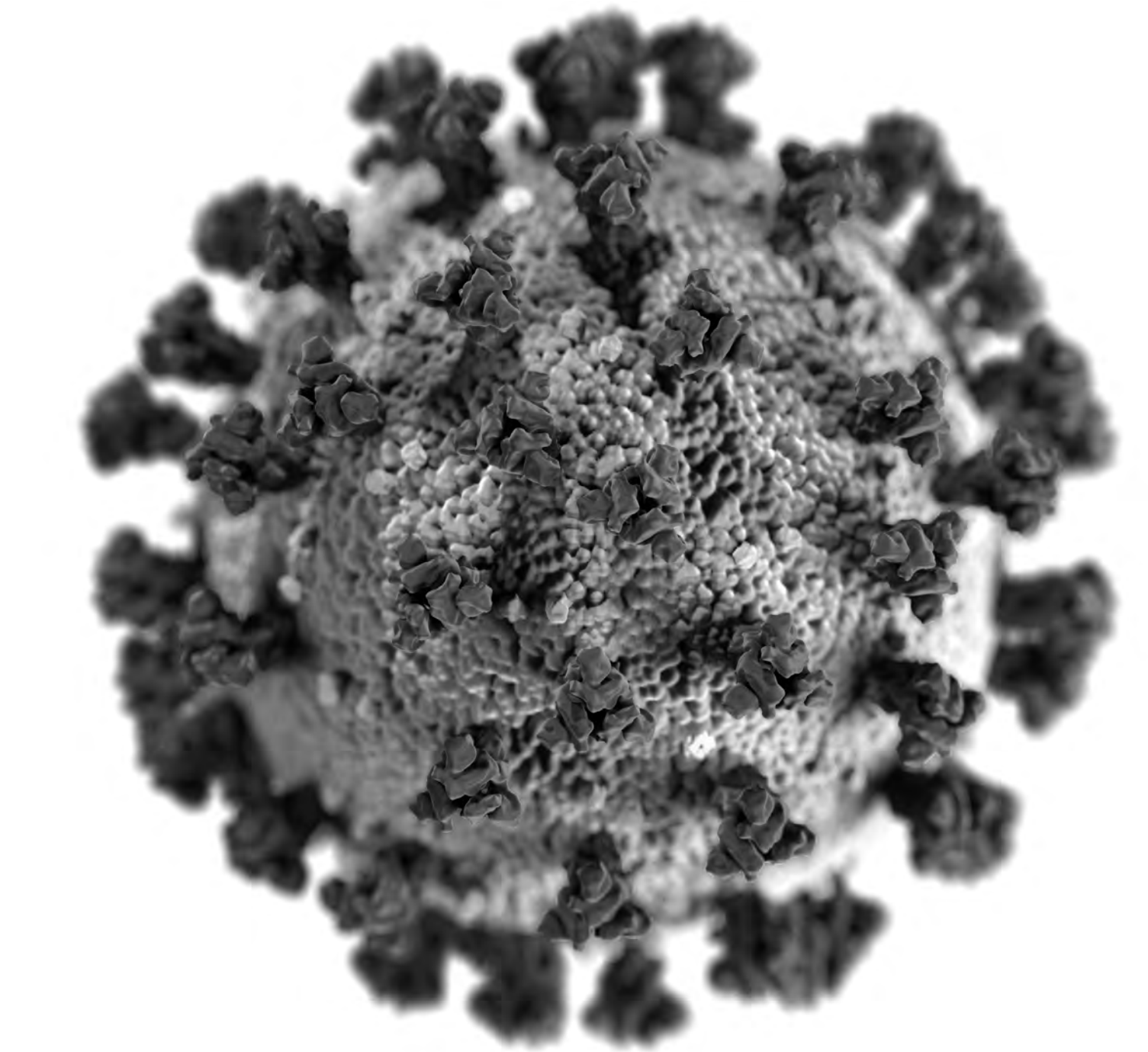
“They are seeing patients that are sick and experiencing scary times,” he said. “Our staff are really compassionate people and they really want to be there for our patients, so it definitely has an impact on our staff. The people working here are resilient and they’re giving it all they have.”

Nichols added that health care systems will continue trying to find ways to expand capacity, but it needs the community’s help to stop the spread so they don’t have to activate emergency procedures.

Each week becomes more critical than the week before as the virus continues to spread because there are more places individuals can become exposed and then transmit it to others, Nichols explained.

“The more quickly we can decrease its prevalence, the better we’ll be able to contain it,” he said. “If you continue to let it spread unabated, it becomes more and more difficult to control with each passing week.”





# COVID: WI breaks COVID records for cases, deaths

From page 1

metro areas where cases are rising the fastest as of Oct. 13, with Appleton and Green Bay at Nos. 3 and 4.

“There are thousands of people currently infected with COVID-19 in Winnebago County and thousands more that have been exposed and may develop the disease,” the WCHD weekly COVID report said.

The Fox Valley area is also experiencing the highest level of COVID-19 hospitalizations to date, according to WCHD.

As of Oct. 7, Fox Valley area hospitals had 138 COVID-19 patients hospitalized, according to WCHD.

UW Oshkosh reported a low, steady average positivity rate around 3% over the last week with a 3.5% positivity rate on Oct. 12, according to the university’s COVID-19 dashboard.

UWO currently has 100 active cases on campus as of Oct. 13, according to the dashboard.

The WCHD recommends people to stay home unless it’s to gather essential items, go to work or seek medical care.

They also recommend people wear a mask in public indoors, when near others outdoors and to have household members wear a mask if their activities outside the home put them at risk.

Sunnyview Expo Center in Oshkosh is also running a regional COVID-19 testing site available to any Wisconsin resident above the age of 5.

UWO students and employees who have been exposed to the virus or are experiencing symptoms can get tested at Albee Hall by appointment through the MyPrevea app. Appointments are available Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

There are thousands of people currently infected with COVID-19 in Winnebago County and thousands more that have been exposed and may develop the disease

— the WCHD weekly report

## Why Wisconsin became a COVID hotspot within the last month

School and business reopenings, combined with a lack of social distancing have created a crisis in the badger state

By Lexi Langendorf  
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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) confirmed that COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin have risen from around 1,000 cases per day in early September to a record 3,000 cases per day the first few days of October.

According to the CDC, Wisconsin now ranks among the top states in new cases per capita and is reporting more new cases than all but three large states: California, Texas and Florida.

Ajay Sethi, an epidemiology professor at UW-Madison, said that three of the four metro areas in the United States with the most cases per capita were in northeast Wisconsin.

“The surges are in Green Bay, in northeastern Wisconsin, and there’s a little evidence of an uptick in Milwaukee,” Sethi said.

The Oshkosh-Neenah area., with a population of 171,907, had 2,013 new cases in the last two weeks, accounting for 83.6 average daily cases per 100,000 people.

Wisconsin is currently in the midst of an outbreak, but many of the state’s residents are questioning why.

Health experts have attributed the spike to general fatigue over wearing masks and socially dis-

tancing in facilities such as nursing homes, prisons, meatpacking plants and reopening schools and university campuses; places that make up a large proportion of cases.

However, other individuals have different theories as to what caused the sudden surge in case numbers.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot specifically blamed Republican lawmakers and the Republican-dominated Wisconsin Supreme Court for blocking Gov. Tony Evers’ efforts to stop the spread of the virus.

“The Governor rightfully put in place a number of different measures that were designed to keep people safe. A highly politicized move by the Republican members of that State Assembly, took the case up to a Republican-stacked Supreme Court that struck down everything the governor was trying to do to keep that state safe,” Lightfoot said.

“And what have we seen? Chaos. Wisconsin is what happens when you politicize public

health.”

According to the Wisconsin DHS, 24% of cases confirmed as of Tuesday are those of 20-29 year-olds.

This particular statistic and the timely opening of college campuses has led many individuals to believe that students are the culprit.

At UW-Madison, within only a week of classes starting, over 1,000 students tested positive, which resulted in the university shutting down all in-person instruction.

Not only this, but many students have continued to attend parties, gatherings and bars, which remain open for business.

According to a study by the Wisconsin Medical Society, 65% of freshmen at UW-Madison represent themselves as drinkers, compared to 82% of sophomores and 84% of juniors.

With that, Wisconsin has the same number of bars as California despite a population that’s 85% smaller.

Dr. Thomas Tsai, a professor

“I’m honestly not sure that anything we do right now will make a difference.

— Lori Palmeri, Oshkosh Mayor





Courtesy of UWO Flickr

Indigenous Peoples’ Day is observed in 17 states and more than 130 cities as a celebration of the diverse Native American culture and acknowledgment of their history.

# Indigenous Peoples’ Day honors Native American history

By Amber Brockman  
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On Monday, Oct. 12, residents across the country observed Indigenous Peoples’ Day, a holiday that celebrates and honors Native American history and culture.

“Indigenous Peoples’ Day is the celebration of the resilience, perseverance and strength of Indigenous Peoples worldwide,” Heidi Nicholls, anthropology professor and advisor for the Inter-Tribal Student Council, or ITSC, said. “It is the celebration and honoring of the ancestors that fought to keep our traditions alive, that stood up to those who tried to dismantle Indigenous ways out of fear and ignorance and who reminded us of the beauty and power of our heritage.”

Currently in the U.S., 17 states

— Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin — the District of Columbia and more than 130 cities celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day in addition to or in place of Columbus Day.

“One way for all to heal is to face the facts about our histories head-on — to acknowledge it, to learn from it, to grow from it,” Nicholls said. “Indigenous Peoples’ Day is one step in this reckoning.”

ITSC co-president Elashia Rosado-Cartagena said that this day is beneficial to our country and its citizens because, without Indigenous People, there would be no United States.

“It is important for our country

to recognize the history and the knowledge that our people hold,” Rosado-Cartagena said. “And in a country that prides itself on being a ‘melting pot’ of different cultures and peoples, I believe that it is imperative that we are open to the celebration of cultural diversity and take a second to see what other people’s realities are.”

Activists have long argued that holidays, statues and other memorials to Christopher Columbus have sanitized his actions, including the enslavement of Native Americans, while giving him credit for “discovering” a place where people already lived.

“Every day that I exist is Indigenous Peoples’ Day, but this day is for those who do not identify as Indigenous,” ITSC co-president Trinaty Caldwell said. “It is important

for you to recognize the violent history of these colonial states and recognize that this struggle is ongoing, and to uplift Indigenous peoples’ voices.”

Nicholls said people can show their support by learning from elders, participating in workshops, engaging in meaningful conversations and attending the various events put on across the country for this day.

“People can support well beyond this day in particular by challenging the curriculum to include an abundance of Indigenous voices, teach the true history of the making of this country, learn what Indigenous people have contributed to agricultural knowledge, governance, STEM fields, meditation, arts and more,” Nicholls said. “Dismantle the ‘Hollywood Indian,’ get

rid of Indigenous mascots, do not wear Indigeneity as a Halloween costume, do not mock the songs, dances and prayers [and] destroy the microaggressions.”

Nicholls said that although Indigenous Peoples’ Day is only one day, support needs to happen all year long.

“Let not our fear, lack of understanding, steadfast belief in our own ways prevent us from learning in our differences, may we not blind ourselves with one way of knowing but rather see the beauty in our differences,” Nicholls said. “May we not shield ourselves with hate and divisive rhetoric rooted in fear, but rather be patient, gentle and kind as our hearts grow in our expanding sense and broadening definition of community.”

# Thrift store provides community support

By Kaitlyn Scoville  
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Located at 753 N. Main St. is a thrift store that may not be known to many. Run by just one manager and one full-time employee, this duo has brought happiness and deals to those in need.

“All of the items in our operation at this time are donated,” Doug Reitz, general manager of Second Chance Thrift Store, said. “We don’t buy anything; they’re given a second chance.”

“It’s a never-ending rummage sale with things from many homes,” John Hobbins, Oshkosh Area School District Multicultural Outreach Coordinator and pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, said.

The thrift store not only offers clothes, but household goods, furniture and even a year-round holi-

day section.

Loni Beyer, the only full-time employee, has done price shopping herself and said that the prices at Second Chance Thrift are better than St. Vincent De Paul’s.

Reitz has been the general manager of the thrift store for nine years, and has overlooked the store’s move from Sawyer Street to its current location on Main.

Beyer is a single mother of two, and Second Chance came around when she needed the money to survive. She was hired four years ago as their only full-time employee.

“He’s the best boss I’ve ever had,” Beyer said of Reitz.

The thrift store offers vouchers for people who need clothing. An example Reitz said was that ex-prisoners would need clothing for a job interview, or a family would be in need of support after

an emergency.

They also work with the Salvation Army, offering vouchers for their patrons to go to Second Chance after they closed their storefront.

Additionally, they have a number of volunteers from several sectors of the Oshkosh community, and they are in need of more.

The duo has seen volunteers who have been through the Winnebago County Drug Court, Workplace Development, disabled persons, seniors and even students come to help keep the store in good shape.

“Our job [at Second Chance] is to reach people with the love of Christ. Anything we can do that’s going to help the community, we look to do,” Ritchie Cole, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church and General Manager of Jericho Road Ministries, said.



Kaitlyn Scoville / Advance-Titan

Doug (Left) and Lonie (Right) in the Second Chance Thrift Store.

Reitz said that the store has a very laid-back atmosphere, and Beyer explained that the job she holds there is like none other.

“I like seeing people happy with the things they find in the store,” she said. “It feels like family here.

It’s my family away from my family.”

For those who are interested in volunteering opportunities at the Second Chance Thrift Store can call 420-230-3565.

# OSA creates safety precautions for student org events

By Carter Uslabar  
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**Student org recognition**

The deadline for student organizations at UWO to gain re-recognition from the Oshkosh Student Association (OSA) is today. Organizations must complete the necessary re-recognition training on Canvas, focused on five separate modules.

Organizations must complete training focused on creating inclusive virtual environments, organization budgets and risk management.

In addition to these modules, which are traditionally focused on in Recognized Student Organization Training (RSOT), student organizations must complete training

related to new event procedures taking COVID into consideration, and leadership and recruitment.

Inclusion-related trainings are focused on the difference between ‘fitting in’ and truly belonging. The training modules reference author and researcher Brené Brown, who said, “Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn’t require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are.”

These trainings encourage organizations to cultivate environments in which students are encouraged to be themselves and thrive.

Budgeting modules are focused on helping student organizations prepare and submit budget proposals to the Student Allocations

Committee (SAC). The SAC is responsible for handling and distributing over \$1 million in segregated fees each year.

Trainings related to event planning are especially pertinent to this year, as the pandemic has significantly changed the way events can be hosted on campus.

Some of the most notable changes include capping attendance at 50 people, a prohibition on most food, unless provided by Catering Services and some restrictions on activities that include physical contact or “hard/forced exhalation,” such as yelling, cheering or singing.

**The Cabinet**

UWO’s on-campus food pantry, which first opened last February to

combat food insecurity on campus, has extended its hours for the remainder of the semester.

The Cabinet is now open 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday

The Cabinet was created in response to research done by UWO alumna Joy Evans, who had the goal of mitigating the effects of food insecurity on the UWO campus.

In some cases, students who suffer from food insecurity may experience side effects that are massively detrimental to students’ academic performance and physical well-being, such as anxiety, depression, low amounts of physical activity and unhealthy weight.

Campus meal plans, which are required for students living on

campus, can be very costly. The most expensive meal plan is billed at \$1,850, and includes 200 meals and 300 Titan Dollars. The most affordable meal plan sits priced just over \$1,000, including 100 meals and 100 Titan Dollars, scarcely enough to eat one meal a day in a dining facility.

“Food insecurity is, in my opinion, such an underestimated issue, and it’s really a big deal,” Evans said last February. “It’s a big deal for this campus in particular.”

Due to the pandemic, The Cabinet was forced to modify and restrict in-person access, allowing only one student in at a time.

Students can also request a pantry order online through The Cabinet’s page on the OSA website.



# FIXED:Chris’ cat, Pooh, saved his life

From Page 1

“I’d have to take care of him because he’d be all f---ed up,” Chris said. “But he’d be all messed up and then he’d wake up and say, ‘Go to the store and get me some cookies.’ So I’d go get cookies and he’d start eating them and then pass out, so I’d have to pull the food out of his mouth so he didn’t aspirate it.”

Chris was forced to move back and forth between his parents’ houses, which caused some instability at school.

He spent a year with his father going to an alternative school in Santa Monica, and then went back to Wildwood Elementary, where his teachers and classmates questioned where he was for a year.

“I lied and said I went to Washington and went up there and saw raccoons,” Chris said. “So my parents went in for a teacher conference and they said, ‘No, he didn’t go to Washington.’ So I had to go in front of my whole class and tell them that I lied. That was embarrassing, and it was all to cover up my mom and dad’s drug use.”

Chris, who was already drinking at age 6, only saw his relationship with alcohol and drugs deepened as he went through school.

“By the time I was 12, I was a full-blown alcoholic,” Chris said. “When I was in junior high, I would drink a six-pack before school.”

Chris walked into a place that he and his friends had dubbed the “Korea Mart,” grabbed a six pack and went to the counter. The cashier asked to see his ID because he obviously looked under age. Chris responded, “You don’t need to see my ID,” and he walked out. From then on, he was able to walk into the store and buy alcohol whenever he wanted.

Chris’s biggest addiction was alcohol, but he also struggled with cocaine and experienced mental illness. Despite all the hardships Chris went through in school,



Chris Kessler

he still managed to hold a high GPA throughout high school and even graduated culinary school at Johnson and Wales in Providence, Rhode Island.

After graduating from Johnson and Wales, Chris was at a crossroads. His addiction had become so powerful that he enlisted in the U.S. Army to try to set himself straight. He was deployed to Panama in 1989. He served as a medic, pulling wounded soldiers off the front lines.

“We were the Alpha-holics,” Chris said. “It was one of our first door-to-door combat situations, so I drank heavily.”

Chris returned home to Los Angeles, his alcoholism exacerbated by his experiences in Panama.

### The breaking point

After moving to Colorado, Chris found himself, once again, relying on alcohol to get him through his daily routine.

Chris was drinking a bottle of vodka a day to feed his addiction. His addiction even cost him a relationship and a marriage, albeit a brief one.

“I had been sober for over a year, and then I went to Ukraine,” Chris said. “I met a woman online and I went to Ukraine and married her. But then I started drinking



FIXED photos Michael Cooney or provided by FIXED participants

Chris and his cat, Rommel, whom he adopted after Mr. Pooh died. Chris credits Mr. Pooh for saving his life after the cat came up to him and rubbed against his leg, giving him a moment of clarity just before he was about to kill himself.

when I was over there, and that was my folly.”

Chris’s marriage to the woman only lasted for six months, but the debacle only heightened Chris’s issues when he got back to the United States. After living in Colorado for 15 years, he moved to Oshkosh in 2011, where a friend lived, in hopes of getting clean.

While in Oshkosh, he learned that Wisconsin has a large bar population, making it a difficult place for alcoholics to enter the recovery process. His alcoholism got so bad that he had to go to extreme lengths to feed his addiction.

“I drank all the time,” Chris said. “I’d wake up in the middle of the night and drink. Toward the end, I couldn’t not drink. It wasn’t even enjoyable, it was just to not [detox]. So I would drink until I passed out. It was just an awful existence.”

In 2011, Chris finally had enough and was willing to end his life to be done with the pain and frustration of maintenance drinking. Chris sat on his bed and loaded a .50-caliber black powder rifle.

“I had a gun to my mouth and

I was going to kill myself,” Chris said. “My cat came up to me and rubbed on my leg right when I was about to pull the trigger. That was Mr. Pooh. Pooh rubbed up against me and I had a moment of clarity for a second. I spoil my cats, 100%. I said, ‘The shitty thing is, nobody’s going to be able to take care of you guys like I do.’ So I put the gun down. The cats knew that something was wrong because they wouldn’t leave me alone.”

Chris called a friend and begged him to come and pick up his gun and bring him to the hospital so they could keep him from drinking and, more importantly, from killing himself.

While at the hospital, doctors tried to take Chris’s blood, but his veins kept collapsing due to extreme dehydration. After going through the rigorous detox process, Chris was able to break free from his addiction and has been sober since January 2013.

### The road to recovery

Since that day he sat on his bed with a gun in his mouth, Chris hasn’t had a drop of alcohol. His work friends wouldn’t invite him

out to work functions because they knew about his past and didn’t want to jeopardize his sobriety.

He responded, “Do you guys f---ing hate me or what’s your problem? They said, ‘No, it’s just that you’re an alcoholic and we were going to drink.’ I said, ‘Yes, it’s true. The second I open that door and I see somebody with a beer, I’m going to turn into the Hulk and run and grab it out of their hands and then turn into Dr. Jekyll.’”

Today, Chris lives with his five cats — Arugula, Cremini, Fenway, Frankie and Rommel — and regularly attends meetings at Solutions Recovery, Inc. He also serves as a recovery coach to those who are going through the same process he did nearly eight years ago.

Chris has limited contact with his family, but enjoys conversations with friends and heading to Solutions Recovery Inc. for coffee on mornings he doesn’t work.

Recently, Chris was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He is in good spirits and is not undergoing treatment as he tries to enjoy the limited time he has left with friends and family.

Chris says a key to recovery is to ask for help if you are struggling with addiction.

“No matter what your situation and where you are at in your life, there’s always hope,” Chris said. “I was there, I know, and here I am. What can I do to help you to get where you need to go, because I’m right here, here’s my hand.”

Chris smiles as he opens his arms. “That’s what you’ve got to do. Some people just need a hug.”

**Editor’s note:** Mr. Pooh, who Chris credits with saving his life, died in 2014 after being hit by a car. All interviews took place in fall 2019.



Christ Kessler at 5 years old, one year before he was introduced to drugs and alcohol.



From left, Chris, his dad Mickey and sister Nicole in 1989.





Brenda Merrifield

*‘Wisconsin was what we needed to get clean’*

Brenda shares recovery story

By Joseph Schulz  
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“What led me to drugs was losing my kids — the pain of it. I was like, ‘Well, I tried pot and I didn’t get addicted. I tried acid and I didn’t get addicted. Why would I get addicted to heroin if I just did it once?’ While I was using, if I needed money, I shop-lifted,” Brenda Merrifield said of her previous life.

“When I got arrested, I had a hypodermic needle in my purse. After the arrest, I went to visit with my kids, but the social worker was there and told me that she knew about the arrest and me using. She said, ‘I think it’s time that we start looking at a solution that would be better for the kids in case you go back to jail.’

“I surrendered my parental rights out of fear. Surrendering my parental rights kept me in addiction because I felt like I was such a wretched person. I never in a million years dreamed that I would lose my kids. I decided to go to rehab in 2005, because I realized that I couldn’t do it on my own and it wasn’t getting better. I wanted to be there when the kids turned 18, because what purpose did it serve for me to lose them if I’m just still a junkie when they turn 18? In June of 2008, my husband and I moved to Oshkosh because we were still dabbling with drugs here and there, and we were still seeing some of the same people. After we moved to Oshkosh, I was fortunate enough to meet the right people. We knew the move to Wisconsin was what we needed to get clean and stay clean.”

*Brenda Merrifield has been sober since 2011. She’s rekindled her relationship with her children since moving to Oshkosh in 2008. She enjoys being a grandmother and building a relationship with her grandchildren.*

**Editor’s note:** All interviews took place in fall 2019.



FIXED photos Michael Cooney or provided by FIXED participants  
After moving to Oshkosh in 2010, Nick Merrifield got a job at Subway. That job would help turn his life around as he is now sober and has been the manager since 2016.

*Responsibility at the heart of Nick’s recovery*

By Gabrielle Fischer  
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**Pain and addiction**

“My mother was a heroin addict. When I was 7, she dropped me off at a place called the Friendship House in Pennsylvania,” Nick Merrifield said of his past life.

“It was supposed to be for the weekend, but she didn’t come back until I was 10. By then, I had ADHD and was getting in trouble every week. I was getting arrested every week for stupid crimes.

“Eventually, I got locked up in a juvenile institution for 18 months. I got out when I was 15, and that’s when I got introduced to meth.

“I started shooting up meth, running the streets and doing burglaries to support my addiction. I ended up going to prison again when I was 17. They gave me four to 10 years for not cooperating with authorities because I refused to snitch.

“While I was in prison, I started using heroin. That’s also where I got addicted to it. When I got out after five years, I started selling cocaine, acid and weed.

“I started doing burglaries again because I needed money for my habits. I ended up violating parole and went back to prison again for three years.

“I got out and got right back into the drug game. I was moving about 16 ounces of coke every week. I was also smoking and shooting it.

“One day my brother asked me for a ride, and we ended up getting pulled over. The police searched my car and found four ounces of coke, heroin, a gun, knives and all kinds of drug paraphernalia. So they arrested us, and we went to jail.

“I told the police it was all mine to get my brother re-



Nick Merrifield

leased. Two weeks later, I made bail, and a few weeks later, they arrested me again for selling drugs.

“I was there for a few months, and then they surrendered me to New York. That’s when I got another five to 10 years. I continued using drugs in prison, and I had no plans on ever getting sober.”

**Life in recovery**

“When I was in treatment, they said that I stuffed everything really deep. Even in treatment, I couldn’t blame my mother for anything.

“I said, ‘She’s an addict,’ and they said, ‘How do you take care of yourself when you’re 7 years old?’ You don’t think your mom’s an addict when you’re 7 and she abandons you over and over.

“It’s times like this where it comes up. I cry a lot during movies — I just can’t help myself. My wife says I’m sympathetic toward other people, but when it comes to me, I’m not. That’s just from years of having to cope with all that stuff.

“My wife helped me stay clean because I didn’t want to



Nick Merrifield started working at Subway in 2010 and was promoted to the manager position six years later. The job at Subway helped propell Nick forward on the path to recovery.

be away from her anymore, and I didn’t want to live this life anymore.

“We were struggling after I finished rehab until I got a job at Subway. A year into it, they gave me insurance and I was able to continue my treatment. I got on a drug called Suboxone.

“I take it every morning, so I don’t crave opiates. I have now been a manager at Subway for four years, and life is good.”

**Editor’s note:**

Nick Merrifield moved to Oshkosh in June 2008. He started working at Subway in 2010 and was promoted to the manager position in 2016. All interviews took place in fall 2019.





# Public art isn’t canceled

- 1 Becket’s parking lot, 2 Jackson Street:  
Joye Moon “*Festival*”
- 2 Caramel Crisp & Cafe, 200 City Center D:  
Leif Larson “*Alley Birds*”
- 3 Copper Hall, 203 Otter Ave.:  
Vicky Redlin “*Driftwood on Superior’s Shore*”
- 4 Carl M. Hennig, Inc., 206 North Main St.:  
Reagan Mulvey “*Dappled View*”
- 5 Jerry’s Barbershop, 5 Waugoo Ave.:  
Laura Ruddy “*Fox and Firefly*”
- 6 Marissa’s Fit Boutique, 13 Waugoo Ave.:  
Amie Brownfield “*Hint of Blu*”
- 7 AtomicKatz, 17 Waugoo Avenue:  
Brian Lemke “*Tabitha Burch*”
- 8 Brown Street Apartments, 132 High Ave:  
Jamie and Craig Rogers “*Air Birds and Beards (Air BnB)*”
- 9 Brown Street Apartments, 132 High Ave.:  
Alley-side: Cristian Andersson “*Saariaho: Il faut que j’entre*”
- 10 Escape Oshkosh, 146 Algoma Blvd.:  
Matt Binder “*Any Port in the Storm*”
- 11 Ruby Owl Tap Room, 421 North Main St.:  
Jessica Lomena “*Oshkosh Octopus*”
- 12 Algoma Building, 110 Algoma Blvd.:  
Tatum Spevacek “*The Interruption*”
- 13 House of Heroes, 407 North Main St.:  
Michael Gelhar “*Friends*”
- 14 Adventure Games & Hobby, 408 North Main St.:  
Alyssa Love “*Plaid Mountains*”
- 15 Art Haus, 426 North Main St.:  
Kevin McGannon “*The Break*”
- 16 Wagner Building, 502 N Main St.:  
Tyler Shea “*Hendrix*”
- 17 Roxy Supper Club, 571 N Main St.:  
Nicole Pamperin “*Blue*”
- 18 920 Tattoo Company, 578 North Main St.:  
Amanda Wirch “*Melon-choly*”
- 19 Verner Parkway Corner West, 586 North Main St.:  
Booras “*Cat Party*”
- 20 Verner Parkway Corner East, 586 North Main St.:  
Carli Ihde “*Farmer’s Market*”



**ABOVE:** 20 pieces of public art have been installed on buildings throughout historic downtown Oshkosh, featuring various local art.  
**BELOW LEFT:** “Air Birds and Beards (Air BnB)” by Jamie and Craig Rogers. **BELOW RIGHT:** UWO alumna Tatum Spevacek with her piece.





Sports



Courtesy of the UW Oshkosh women's volleyball Twitter

The UW Oshkosh women's volleyball team's 21-11 record was the third-best record in the WIAC, a conference in which all eight teams had winning records. UWO's 4-3 conference record put them in the fourth spot of the WIAC conference rankings behind UW-Whitewater (6-1), UW-Stevens Point (5-2) and UW-Eau Claire (5-2).

By Cory Sparks  
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"We're back."

Those were the two words that UW Oshkosh women's volleyball coach Jonathan Ellmann said regarding the team's future practice plans.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced cancellations or postponements in nearly every sport, has made its way well into the fall sports season. The Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) statement that was made on July 27 regarding the cancellation of fall sports conferences, seasons and championships included the UWO women's volleyball team, but that doesn't mean that the team cannot get better together.

"Our season was canceled, so we will be 0-0 in [the 2020-21 season], but we may be able to scrimmage or play exhibition [matches] in the spring," Ellmann said.

The team held its very first practice of the semester on Wednesday, Oct. 7, from 5-7 p.m. This was one of the first times that the team was physically together for volleyball since the pandemic struck, and the experience was a positive one for the players.

"My initial reaction when I heard that volleyball practice would resume was excitement and jitters," UWO junior and middle hitter Taylor Allen said. "I wanted to leave my last mark on the volleyball program here at UWO, and I was more than excited to put my gear on after many long months outside of the gym."

Even with isolated team practices, changes had to be implemented into practice procedures in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For the moment, the entire team cannot collect into the same area for the same practice drill. Nonetheless, the team's clearance to be able to practice was met with a lot of gratitude.

"It's amazing. [It] almost doesn't seem real," Ellmann said. "We've adapted to an online curriculum since last spring, and things aren't back to normal, but it's really rewarding to be back in the same space working toward a common goal with the amazing women that make up our program."

Coach Ellmann had to inform his players about new procedures as everyone went into the team's first practice session in months.

"We are in phase one with 10 or less [players] on a court, wearing masks, distancing when possible and limiting equipment to each group/pod of 10," Ellmann

said. "We are using the first two weeks of phase one to review/learn our fundamental principles and keys as well as competing in small group formats."

Each player had their own ways of adjusting to the situation accordingly while still improving their volleyball skillset. This means that there are different challenges for each player in terms of the adjustments they had to make during the first team practice of the year.

"I've been playing sand volleyball all summer, so I knew the adjustment from sand to hardcourt would be tough, but I'm a competitor and I love the feeling of competing again," Allen, who has 328 kills in her two years on the team, said. "Knowing there will be practices to compete in is awesome."

The team had a successful season last year, finishing with a 21-10 record while going 4-3 in conference. The team had records of 9-4 in home games, 4-4 in away games and went 8-4 on neutral grounds where neither team had the home court.

Going into this year, there is a lot of confidence coming from UWO's volleyball team. The success and bond established among one another last year has led to a lot of positive morale from the team as it begins a season of uncharted waters.

From the veterans all the way down to the women who just had their first volleyball practice as Titans, the consensus is that this team is bound to experience feats of improvement and success.

"Last year was a great year for us, and we grew a lot as a team," Allen said. "I think the addition of the new freshman class will boost that even more. This is a great opportunity for us to grow as a team and make huge strides in our gameplay."

The coach is just as much, if not more optimistic in his expectations for the team's performance going into the year. He has confidence in the women's team to consistently make decisions out of the best interest for everyone on the court.

"We have an extremely high character group that cares about doing the right things for the right reasons on a day-to-day basis," Ellmann said. "It would be an understatement to say that we are anything less than extremely motivated to take advantage of every opportunity that we have to move the needle forward."

With a team that is ready to embrace any challenge that may come their way in this season full of unprecedented procedures, two things can be said about this team.

They're back, and they're ready.



Courtesy of UWO women's volleyball twitter

Ever since students had to leave the UWO campus in March due to the spread of COVID-19, the team's coaches have held weekly meetings with the players to discuss each step leading up to the new practice procedures that were implemented for this fall.



Courtesy of Flickr

In 2019, UWO lead the WIAC in blocks with 2.33 blocks per set in conference competition, but was last in the conference in service aces with only 0.88 aces per set. Junior Emma Kiekhofler led the team in assists per set (5.81) and service aces per set (0.38).



# Opinion

## Suggestions for Gruenhagen quarantine

By Sami Christiansen  
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The COVID-19 outbreak forced UW Oshkosh to make tough choices, and given the decline of testing numbers reported in the previous weeks, the university appears to be making good choices. Spread and contact has been limited thanks to testing and quarantine measures put in place. Despite the progress being made, there are still a few people testing positive every day. I was recently informed that I came into contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 and was moved to the quarantine housing at Gruenhagen Conference Center.

Though the precautionary measures have been successful, quarantine accommodations were clearly a decision made with haste. It almost leaves those in contact with the virus to feel as though they are being punished, even if they took precautions and followed the rules.

Though this is clearly not the intention, there are certain alterations that should be made to improve the prison-like conditions of Gruenhagen quarantine housing.

Firstly, the quarantine food service seems to be somewhat of a myth on campus. Everyone wonders if it really is as bad as they have heard and what really makes it so.

When you are moved into quarantine at Gruenhagen, they tell you that their catering staff prepares food daily, which sets expectations much too high for the reality of the situation.

Each day you receive a bag of snacks (a very welcome accommodation to those of us who tend to boredom eat) and get access to a table full of ramen, cereal and



Courtesy of UW O Flickr

Students who have come within “close contact” of a person with COVID-19 are provided with the option of doing their mandatory 14-day quarantine in Gruenhagen Conference Center.

You also have access to a freezer that is restocked each day with fully cooked meals that have been frozen. In theory this is a great idea, although the foods they choose do not really make any sense for the format at all.

Each day there is a sandwich option, which makes no sense because it requires the bun and all to be heated, leaving you with a soggy plate of gruel if you follow the provided microwave instructions.

Anyone who has ever dined in a restaurant and brought home a carryout box full of leftovers has likely made the discovery that cooked french fries should never be microwaved. It seems that the

catering staff has not yet had this experience and often provides meals with a potato option, usually containing french fries or tater tots.

Though this seems like a minor fix, a better selection of meal components would be a major upgrade to the quarantine food options.

Additionally, this fall has seen some of the nicest weather all year, and being cooped up in quarantine means you are only able to observe this through a window that is at least eight stories above the ground.

Given the fact that everyone is stuck in a room for fourteen days, forced to stare out your window

as people outside enjoy the outdoors, it is no wonder quarantine quickly takes a toll on mental health. An obvious solution to this might be just allowing people the option to go outside.

Even most prisoners get to step outside for an hour or so a day to protect them from going mad in confinement. It is ridiculous to think that students who have committed no serious or knowing offense are receiving worse accommodations than convicts.

Even requiring students to wear a sign around their neck when outside, letting people know that they should keep their distance, would be an improvement to present conditions. I know I would

have gladly worn a scarlet letter if it meant I could get a few breaths of fresh air every day.

Even devoting a small space and time for students to enjoy the outdoors right outside of Gruenhagen is a good way to protect the safety of other students and allow the students in isolation the small break they need from their confinement.

The university is making great strides in preventing the spread of COVID-19, but more attention needs to be paid to details when placing students in isolation. These details could make a world of difference in improving the mental and physical well-being of students.

## Life as a remote student during a pandemic

By Sarah Fleming  
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Every day starts just like the day before: my alarm wakes me up at 8 a.m. It’s time for me to get ready for a day of college classes, but something is very different. The room I’m waking up in is not a dorm room — it is my bedroom in Appleton. The classes I’m getting ready for are not on campus, they are all contained within my laptop.

The majority of my classes are asynchronous, which means I can decide when I work on them. This is not how I imagined my sophomore year going, but my family and I agreed it was safer for me to stay at home and limit my risk of exposure to COVID-19.

I begin every day by checking the whiteboard on my wall that organizes my work for the week into specific days. Then, I sit at my desk and I work. Sometimes I have music on, but most of the time I like to open my window and listen to the birds chirping outside.

Then, at around noon, I give myself an hour for lunch. I realized quickly that in order for me

to not get burnt out during the day, I needed at least one long brain break.

Then, it’s back to homework. At 5 p.m., even if I’m not done with all my work, I quit for the day and begin to relax. It’s important to me to have a set time to stop working, so that I have enough time to unwind at the end of the day. I eat dinner, I exercise in my room and then I’m asleep by 10:30 p.m. I repeat this pattern every day.

At the beginning of the semester, I struggled with delegating my tasks to different days. It was quite overwhelming at first, because instead of having specific due dates, most of my class work was just due at the end of the week.

I struggled with balancing my days — I didn’t want to overload myself for any one day. It felt easy to get overwhelmed just with trying to fit all my work into just five or so days. The first couple weeks of school, I had to work on homework all weekend because I wasn’t able to find the right balance.

I haven’t felt that feeling of being ready to learn since we got

sent home in March; that feeling you get while sitting in a classroom, waiting for your professor to start the lecture.

Instead of just having to plan my day around homework, I now have to account for prerecorded lectures. It doesn’t feel the same when I’m listening to a lecture on my bed.

When I’m sitting in a classroom, my brain feels prepared to learn, but when I’m sitting in my room, I just feel apathetic. I relax in my room, I laugh in my room. My room is the place I unwind in — it is not the place where I learn.

I spend 13 hours a day in my room; the times I leave it are to eat meals. I work in my room, I exercise in my room, I relax in my room and I sleep in my room. It gets boring quite fast, looking at the same four walls every day. It makes me feel stir-crazy. I’m used to doing much more than sitting in the same chair every day.

Being stuck in your room all day to do school can help you garner an appreciation for things you would have otherwise taken for granted in the past.

Even something as mundane as a meeting on campus can feel like a big event when you have been stuck doing classes in your room for weeks. A casual meeting is something that, in normal circumstances, would’ve been nothing more than something on my calendar.

Now that I’ve been isolated from campus life and my friends, a meeting like this is like getting to go on a field trip in elementary school. You wake up excited, put on your best outfit, and spend the whole day waiting excitedly until the bus arrives to take you to your destination.

On a regular day, I would simply wear sweatpants and a T-shirt. What’s the point of wearing something nice if I’m going to be sitting in the same room all day? But today, I do get to wear something nice — an actual outfit. Something I took for granted a year ago before the pandemic changed all of our lives forever.

I spend about 10 minutes choosing what I want to wear; there is so much I can choose from, but I only get one opportunity. I have to make sure what I wear is perfect since I never

know when the next time I can venture onto campus is.

This small action — choosing what to wear — makes me excited. I always loved wearing different outfits to classes, and it almost feels like the world is normal.

After waiting all day until it was finally time to leave and my heart started racing with excitement as I sat down in my car. As I turned the key to start the car, I realized it had been awhile since I’d last driven a car. I jokingly wondered to myself if I still knew how.

When I meet with my friend before the meeting starts, we eat at Reeve Memorial Union. We both get pizza and sit outside while eating, six feet away from each other, of course. Eating the pizza reminds me of when I would eat pizza every Friday after I was done with my last class. I miss that feeling.

I miss the feeling of my days not blending together, I miss hanging out with my friends, I miss going to parties, I miss living in the dorms.

But most of all, I miss the sense of normalcy I took for granted.



# Blackhawk helps UWO students secure da bag

By Owen Peterson  
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Last week, students getting their food at Blackhawk Commons were met with a welcome surprise: An employee handing out new reusable bags for students to carry their food containers in.

Not only are the bags useful for students transporting their meals, but they also help address the sustainability issues that Blackhawk has faced during the semester.

During a traditional semester, Blackhawk does a good job keeping things sustainable by utilizing actual plates, silverware and cups, but the shift to completely serving food to-go meant that none of these were available to use.

This semester, plates were replaced with reusable containers, silverware was replaced with plasticware and the reusable cups were replaced with single-use cups. While the reusable containers serve as a good replacement for the plates, the same cannot be said for the other substitutions.

In addition to the less-than-ideal substitutes, lids for the single-use cups were given to every student upon entry and plastic bags were available for students to place all their items in.

But now, one month into the semester, Blackhawk has made two welcome improvements: the distribution of reusable bags to students and not handing out lids with every container.

The introduction of these two

changes marks a big improvement in trying to make Blackhawk more sustainable this semester while dealing with the restraints of COVID-19.

The improvement made by not handing out the single-use cup lids is self-explanatory: Not forcing kids to take the lids will result in less of them being wasted.

On the other hand, the addition of the reusable bags is the more important change of the two, as it addresses the issue of plastic bags — one of the biggest inconveniences to recycling efforts. Plastic bags have become a big issue in large part due to all of the misconceptions surrounding them.

While, yes, plastic bags can be recyclable, they are just not recyclable in your usual curbside bins. Plastic bags need to be recycled in a separate way then other common materials such as paper, glass, cans and hard plastics, because they require different processing equipment to be properly reused.

Putting plastic bags in regular recycling bins can be harmful because plastic bags and films tend to get stuck in the machinery of processing plants.

If you do happen to have plastic bags, you can recycle them in bins found at the entrance to most grocery stores and supermarkets instead. On campus, you will find these bins in Polk Library, Reeve Memorial Union, the dorm buildings and many of the academic buildings around campus.

Another problem is the fact

that most people don't even make an attempt to recycle their plastic bags. According to Waste Management, only 1% of plastic bags are ever returned for recycling, meaning that the average family only recycles 15 out of the 1,500 plastic bags that they use annually.

This creates a whole host of problems, as plastic is a toxin that can stay in the environment for the 10 to 1,000 years that they can take to decompose. In that time, they clog sewer systems, harm wildlife and pollute the environment — especially oceans.

All the adverse effects that I have mentioned barely even scratch the surface of the issues, so I encourage you to read more on your own.

All that being said, I believe that, if students actually embrace and utilize these new bags, it could help reduce how much students have been relying on plastic bags to transport their food this semester.

Not only are the bags good for the university's sustainability efforts though, they are also beneficial for the students.

One of the biggest inconveniences, and one of the main reasons that students need bags in the first place, is that a lot of the food items offered do not fit in the provided containers. Fruit cups, dessert cups, milk cartons, prepackaged sandwiches and bananas all do not fit in the containers, especially when you already have other food in there.

The benefit that the new bag provides here is deceptively



Carter Uslabar/Advance-Titan

simple: more space. The size of the new bag allows students to take even more food (but probably still not enough to justify what they are paying for meal plans).

The other big benefit of these bags is the fact that they are insulated. The feeling of getting back to your dorm only to find out that your food feels like it's been in the fridge for an hour is a heartbreaking feeling, and an issue that will only become more prevalent in the coming winter months.

The insulation of the bag will prove itself handy in the future when you are inevitably forced to carry your food from Blackhawk to your dorm in intense Wisconsin snowfall.

While plastic bags unfortunately still remain available for students to use at Blackhawk, important steps have been made. That being said, it is still up to the students to use the resources that they have been given and make smart choices.



## Where to dispose of plastic bags

1. Sage Hall (First floor inside the parking lot entrance and third floor by the faculty offices.)
2. Clow Social Science Center (First floor, in front of the nursing faculty offices.)
3. Halsey Science Center (First floor by the biology office.)
4. Dempsey Hall (Second floor in front of administrative services.)
5. Polk Library (Inside the main entrance.)
6. Reeve Memorial Union (In front of the bookstore)

Plastic bag bins are also located in the lobbies of most dorm buildings on campus.

# Pros and cons of a semester with COVID

By Owen Peterson  
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On Sept. 9, classes started up for what was sure to be an unorthodox fall semester. It has now been over a month since then, giving us a lot to reflect on.

Here is a not-so-serious look at some of the pros and cons of the way things have changed for this semester.

**Pro:** You can now actually differentiate the lines for each restaurant in Reeve Marketplace.

**Con:** You have to complete a literal maze to find any of them.

**Pro:** You don't have to wait around for 15 minutes before your chicken sandwich from Clash Burger is ready.

**Con:** You have to wait 15 minutes before you can even come wait for your chicken sandwich from Clash Burger.

**Pro:** The quality of food at Blackhawk Commons is just about the same.

**Con:** You have to eat it out of an ugly, green, glorified tupperware container.

**Pro:** You can now put your professor on 2x speed during lecture.

**Con:** No amount of speeding

up in the world will make your Biological Anthropology lectures interesting.

**Pro:** You don't even have to leave your bed to attend an 8 a.m. class.

**Con:** You still have to wake up for an 8 a.m.

**Pro:** A lot of open-note exams and quizzes.

**Con:** The professor gave you 10 minutes to complete 75 multiple choice questions and two essay questions.

**Pro:** Collaborate Ultra classes mean that you can do other stuff

during class without the professor noticing.

**Con:** You forgot to turn off your camera and mic and now everyone feels awkward.

**Pro:** Blackhawk gave students reusable bags to use.

**Con:** The combination of bags and masks make students look like they are about to knock on your door and ask for candy.

**Pro:** COVID restrictions give you an excuse to not partake in any social interaction.

**Con:** Your parents are getting sick of your phone calls.

**Pro:** COVID testing is easy to schedule and a quick process.

**Con:** A cotton swab made you cry in front of a grown man.

**Pro:** You can attend lectures in the comfort of your own dorm.

**Con:** You can also hear all of your neighbors' lectures at the same time, because apparently they have not yet discovered headphones.

**Pro:** More people staying inside means less sidewalk traffic.

**Con:** It looks and feels like a plague wiped out half of the campus.

Oh wait.



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