

The Advance-Titan

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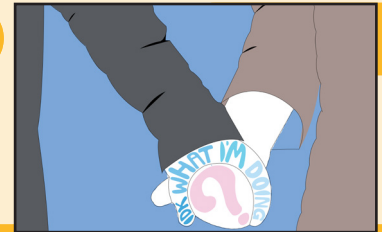
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Isaac Fischer / Advance-Titan

A UWO student checks out class materials at University Books & More inside the Reeve Memorial Union Dec. 3. If the university decides to outsource bookstore employees, about 40 student part-time workers and eight full-time staff may lose their jobs.

Bookstore may shelve employees

UWO to consider outsourcing University Books & More staff

By Jacob Link and
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Although UW Oshkosh is facing pushback from current and former University Books & More employees about a proposal to outsource bookstore employees, Chancellor Andrew Leavitt is determined to make changes to the business model of the store.

Leavitt said that while the university won't make the decision to outsource or not until March 2025, there needs to be adjustments made to pull the bookstore out of an estimated \$1 million deficit.

"Given our current financial state, it's difficult to have a unit here at the university that's just simply losing money like that in that case," Leavitt said. "So we have to do something."

Leavitt said that while there have been discussions about outsourcing the bookstore, nothing is a done deal.

"We have to find a situation that works now if, in fact, we can't find a third-party vendor who can do that for us, then we are committed to continuing to be a self run bookstore," Leavitt said. "We're going to have to do it radically different, because we

can't continue to lose money."

UWO released possible plans to outsource University Books & More employees to a third-party vendor at the beginning of the fall 2024 semester. The university published a report Aug. 9 that analyzed the business model of University Books & More and determined that the bookstore's \$1 million deficit is mostly due to post-pandemic recovery, inflation and a decrease in enrollment.

The report discussed ways to save costs related to the bookstore, which included moving to a third-party business model. The university determined that no changes at all to current bookstore operations are not financially viable.

According to the report, the university has a choice between two options. The first option would include keeping the bookstore independently owned, making their own "immediate and long-term changes" to save on costs and generate revenue. Some of these changes could include slashes in job opportunities and hours of operations as well as a spike in prices.

The second option would be to outsource to a third-party vendor to run the bookstore.

"... the trade-off here can like-

ly be summarized as one between accepting a bit longer time period before the bookstore is in the black (estimated to be the 2026 fiscal year) but retaining most of our bookstore's high service quality and commitment to mission, or receiving more immediate financial relief but accepting an inevitable decrease in service and less control over an uncertain future," the report by the Bookstore Business Model Task Group said.

An employee at the bookstore, who spoke with the A-T under a condition of anonymity, said that employees are scared to speak up about the situation because of fear of retribution from the university. They said that UWO hired a consultant to the bookstore, who is a former executive for the Follett Corporation.

According to the employee, the bookstore employs about 40 part-time student employees and seven full-time employees, all of which would likely lose their jobs.

The university's report on University Books & More found that the bookstore has lost money every year since 2020, except for 2023, when it saw a profit of over \$180,000 in COVID-19 federal relief funds. This year, the bookstore is expected to generate \$3,911,076 of revenue, but due to the fact it

costs the university over \$4 million to run University Books & More, the business is estimated to be \$160,000 in the red by the end of 2024.

Another University Books & More employee, who wished to be anonymous, said they were shocked when they found out the university was considering the outsourcing of employees.

"I'm not sure if I'm going to have a job in the future or not, and we still haven't heard what's going to happen to us student employees," they said. "If I become jobless, it's going to make it hard for me to afford things such as groceries."

The employee said that they would really like the university to reconsider outsourcing the bookstore.

"I want them to rethink the decision because it could affect a lot of people and would create a lot of unnecessary stress that can be avoided," they said.

A petition to prevent outsourcing of the bookstore posted on change.org garnered 664 signatures since it was posted on Nov. 19.

Leavitt said that he understands that it would be upsetting for bookstore employees to lose their jobs due to outsourcing.

Turn to **Bookstore** / Page 2

Chancellor search committee formed

By Isaac Fischer
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Universities of Wisconsin announced on Nov. 21 the members of a search committee who will help look for Chancellor Andrew Leavitt's replacement following his resignation announcement in October.

As reported by the Advance-Titan in October, Leavitt will step down from the university this summer.

Universities of Wisconsin regent Ashok Rai will chair the Search and Screen Committee, assisted by UWO Associate Radio/TV/Film Professor Andrew Smock, who will serve as vice chair. The committee will feature five other regents, including UWO student and nontraditional student Regent Desmond Adongo, as well as other university and City of Oshkosh representatives.

"The next leader of UW Oshkosh must be prepared to embrace the opportunities and challenges facing the university as it pursues financial sustainability and academic renewal – all while focusing on student success," Amy Bogost, Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents President said.

"We appreciate Presidents Bogost and [Universities of Wisconsin President Jay] Rothman sharing their decisions and helping launch a timely search process," UWO Chief of Staff Alex Hummel said in an email. "[We] also appreciate UWO shared governance leaders who advanced nominees for this crucial committee's service."

The committee, assisted by executive search firm Storbeck Search/DSG Global, will hold listening sessions on Dec. 9. These will be held at both 2:30 and 5:30 P.M. in the Reeve Theatre (307). The committee and firm will take the feedback from the listening session, and find and interview candidates. Candidates selected from the interviews will be forwarded to a special regent committee for further approval before being recommended to the full Board of Regents, who ultimately has the authority to hire the 12th chancellor. A dedicated webpage has been created on the UWO website which will serve as a hub for information during the process.

As reported, Chancellor Leavitt's final day will be June 30, 2025. UWO hopes to have a new chancellor in place by July 1.

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Access labs to remain open

By Isaac Pischer and Kelly Hueckman
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Amid concerns General Access Labs would be cut, UW Oshkosh officials confirmed the labs would not be closed.

“To date, IT has not submitted any proposals, nor have we received any feedback from the administration on closing the general access labs,” UWO Chief Information Officer Mark Clements said.

While there are no plans to completely remove any access labs, the university is looking to make them more cost-effective as the labs go largely underused as students complete much of their school work on personal computers.

“Most UWO students have their own laptops or desktop computers, and IT has seen a significant decline in the need for general access labs since they were first implemented,” Clements said. “Our initial review of current usage data shows that a significant percentage of general access lab equipment remains unused throughout the semesters.”

On the UWO campus, there are five different labs, not including those in residence halls. Usage of the labs does vary, with Swart Hall being the lowest, and Polk Library being the highest.

Though the use of labs have de-



Isaac Pischer / Advance-Titan

A student works in the Sage Hall room 1208 General Access Lab.

clined, UWO students expressed their need to have access to these spaces.

“A lot of these students utilize the labs for assignments they can’t submit on their own personal devices. If the chancellor takes that away from [students], then what does that mean for those students?” student Gianna Goodermuth said.

According to Clements, each lab computer costs the university about \$1,000 and is replaced every four years. Scaling down the number of lab computers would help save the university costs of buying, replacing and repairing them.

“From a campus perspective, reducing the number of computers we need to purchase and maintain would lead to cost savings, as well as a reduction in staff time spent supporting them throughout their lifecycle,” Clements said.

Provost Edwin Martini confirmed that the university has not made any recommendations to close any of the general access labs. However, he is looking at ways to save on costs while still providing students with necessary resources.

“As we are currently doing with a lot of things, we want to make sure that we are making the most

effective use of our resources, including the [computer labs] or printer space — all while making sure students have the space they need.” Martini explained.

Currently the vision is to have a blend of classrooms and lab space while also considering that most students will be bringing their own devices onto campus. One goal is to implement technology for printing from students’ devices.

“UWO is undergoing big changes, and it’s important that IT continues to align with the evolving needs of the campus and our students.” Clements said.

Bookstore: Picturing the future

From Page 1

“I understand certainly the attraction of working for UWO and the UW System and all of that,” Leavitt said. “But at the same time, I have an obligation to the institution to make sure that we continue to strengthen the financial picture of this institution. So there are eight employees that currently work at the bookstore, and those employees would be considered for employment with the third party vendor, which is a very standard step that is taken usually when these kinds of events occur.”

According to the report, if the university chooses to stick with an independently operated bookstore, UWO will need to make major changes to lift the business out of the red. These changes could include: increasing margins by 5-6%, reducing the hours of operation and student staff members, doubling the Instant Access digital course materials program and suspending the sponsorships of UWO athletics and the Titan Thunder marching band. Other changes that the Bookstore Business Model Task Group discussed were merging Copy This and Document Services into one unit in the bookstore, and remodeling University Books & More to add self-checkouts to reduce student labor.

The committee said in its report that the main reason for keeping the bookstore independently operated would be to maintain a place for students to work.

“It is clear from this group’s research that keeping our bookstore independently operated is the sole

way to preserve anything like its current level of service to the university community and mission, yet UWO simply cannot afford for the bookstore to continue operating at a loss,” the report said. “Based on extensive conversations with UW peer institutions that have outsourced their bookstores, outsourcing seems almost certain to result in a less responsive bookstore with inferior service. Connections between the bookstore and students and faculty would be weakened, and a third-party vendors’ priorities would align more with their own corporate interests than with UWO’s.”

On the other hand, if the university chooses to outsource employees, the report found that the only benefit would be increased revenue and less time to bring the bookstore out of debt. But, the amount of revenue that outsourcing would bring in is hard to estimate because the committee determined that the textbook industry is less profitable than it once was and will continue to decrease in profitability for third-party vendors. This is because universities across the country are seeing declining enrollment numbers, and more classes are turning to digital materials.

“The same market factors that are hurting University Books & More are hurting retail chain stores, and those chain stores’ responses will prioritize protecting their profits — which can easily mean sacrificing the well-being of their university partners, as was clear when, for example, Barnes & Noble unilaterally shut off all service to UW

Stevens Point during the height of COVID,” the report said.

There are only two college bookstore companies that the university can choose from to outsource to: Barnes & Nobles and Follett, both of which have been struggling to stay afloat. The report said that in the past, Follett has had issues making commission payments to UW schools.

“Follett indicated that their delinquency was due to industry-wide issues, including a lack of rebound from COVID, a decline in traditional course materials and the rise in Instant Access programs,” the committee said. “Follett shared with UW System partners that they are working to right-size their business and improve their liquidity, and assured UW of full payment of outstanding commission payments by the end of August. Follett will likely be renegotiating their contracts at UW System schools, with some contracts at risk for termination.”

Leavitt said that he had heard reports that of the nine system schools that currently outsource its bookstore employees, three of them are not satisfied with their relationship with the third-party vendor.

“That is something that you can usually address through a contractual situation,” Leavitt said. “If you’re not happy with the services being provided, you have recourse. You can work with them in order to improve the service or maybe eventually break the contract. That doesn’t mean that we should never consider moving to a third-party, because some other institution

somewhere else is having a difficult time with them when, in fact, on the whole, they’ve been pretty successful here in the UW System.”

The Bookstore Business Model Task Group said in its report that it expects the revenue and commissions obtained to be nowhere near the amount that other UW schools have made.

The committee determined that no matter what decision is made with the outsourcing, the corner convenience store will most likely need to close.

The report said that no third-party chain would agree to take over its operations in its current form.

“Our options would be only to close it entirely or to move a very small subset of its selection into the bookstore itself,” the Bookstore Business Model Task Group said. “The convenience store, despite its lack of value to corporate profits, is deeply valued by UWO students; the students this group spoke with cited it as the second of their two top priorities for us to consider in future bookstore operations. The convenience store offers vital access to food and personal care needs for a campus population with limited access to grocery stores.”

Leavitt said that the goal is to be transparent with everyone during the decision making process.

“There’s a possibility that we ended up [not outsourcing] the bookstore, but I think I owe it to this institution to go out to see if, in fact, we can find a third-party vendor who can make this more financially sustainable,” Leavitt said.



Courtesy of Avery Feather

Minageries of products including chips, detergent, toothpaste, paper towels and more arranged for photos that may be posted on sites like Facebook Marketplace to sell the products below market price. Avery Feather uses coupons to buy products for a discounted price and resells them for a profit.

Clipping coupons, creating community

How a Fox Valley savings sluth made couponing a lifestyle

By Kelly Hueckman
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One corner of Avery Feathers' office holds a typical array of work supplies. At her desk, she has a swivel chair perched in front of her computer, pens strewn around. It's a small, cozy room, but the other three corners hold stacked PVC shelves that resemble a mini-drug store. Each shelf, five layers high, held rows of various brands of laundry detergent, giant blocks of toilet paper and lines of Dove body wash bottles. One shelf is dedicated just to at least 10 types of soap, while tote bins of feminine products are stacked on top of one another.

Feathers' office is full, but she's not a hoarder. As a 24-year-old first grade teacher, Feathers has developed her couponing skills to resell items below retail price as a way to supplement her income.

She sits on her living room sofa with a warm, polite smile and a sophisticated blouse of different shades of gray. On her coffee table, a stack of elementary math assignments lay ungraded as she twists her wedding ring. Feathers has worked as a teacher since the summer of 2023, but her couponing journey stretches further back into 2020. At that time, she was attending Ferris State University in Michigan while living with her now husband.

"I like to pick up hobbies that I don't usually keep, and I think this was just kind of like another hobby to keep me busy and also save me money being a broke college student," Feathers said.

At first, she just started couponing for herself, getting deals for household products like toothpaste and paper toweling. While she lived in Michigan, she worked at Rite Aid, a drugstore chain similar to CVS or Walgreens, where she had the advantage of knowing deals before they were released. Feathers began watching creators on YouTube who made content exclusively about how to find the best weekly deals at different chains. Each week, she'd

watch hours of drugstore hauls, discount announcements and coupon offers while combing through various coupon apps to try and curate the most cost-efficient way to shop. These deal-hunting influencers are the people that inspired Feathers to begin selling the items she bought but wouldn't use. She developed a sort of addiction to saving.

"I would say it's like a high, like you feel just this immense feeling of happiness when a deal goes good," Feathers said. "It's just a weird feeling leaving the store with bags full of things that you paid nothing for ... it's just a really good feeling."

A couple years into her couponing journey in Feathers' former Green Bay home, she had lined the walls of her basement with products from her weekly shopping spree. She remembers having about eight shelving units completely filled with products.

"Once I started getting a big enough stock where I'm like 'I'm never going to use this,' I'm like, 'I want to start selling this,'" Feathers said.

At first, Feathers mainly sold her stock to her family in Upper Michigan when she visited. She'd take requests of what her family needed and sell it to them for a heavily discounted price before eventually expanding her business to others in the area.

"I would easily make \$700, \$800 in a weekend just bringing my stuff up there," Feathers said. "So, yeah, it was nice having that extra income and just knowing I'm helping people."

Amy Neuens, Feathers' aunt and a regular customer, said she saves about \$1,000 per year buying household essentials from Feathers' stockpile. Almost all of Neuens' soaps, air fresheners, deodorants and similar items are purchased exclusively through Feathers, who delivers them right to her aunt's door.

"I pretty much do all of my household products through Avery," Neuens said.

This system has fared well for

Neuens, who doesn't even have to leave her house to shop for these items or think about what kind of a product to get. Feathers curates a box of goods, which she brings to Neuens several times throughout the year.

"I tell her to just load it up and bring me a \$100 worth of stuff or more, and she knows pretty much what I use," Neuens said.

Neuens estimates that each box, which she pays \$100 for, retails for roughly \$300.

On top of selling to her family and friends, Feathers has posted her products on Facebook Marketplace, where other couponers sell bundles of household goods ranging anywhere from \$10-\$100 depending on the size. She's even gained a loyal customer who makes a three-hour drive to Feathers' home in Menasha, Wisconsin, just to shop around in Feathers' office.

However, Feathers said a large chunk of her couponing income has come from garage sales, where she displays her stock outside for sale. She had tested this selling strategy out for the first time this summer.

"I just, like, hoarded everything and then set it all for sale," Feathers said. "[I] made a couple thousand [dollars] during the summer just from that."

In 2024, Feathers made an initial investment of about \$100 into her stock, which is continuously recycled via cashback and rewards points. So far, Feathers estimates that she made between \$5,000 - \$6,000 from her couponing sales this year, although this number is lower than past years due to her entering her career.

"I'm a full-time teacher now, so it's gotten a lot harder to find time to coupon," Feathers said.

Creating a deal takes time.

By 5 a.m. Sunday morning, just hours after major couponing chains like CVS and Walgreens have released their discounts, influencers are already posting their drugstore savings hauls. Before even getting out of bed, Feathers watches these

online hauls as she plans which stores she will go to, what she will buy and how many. Feathers uses a combination of digital coupons along with print coupons, which some couponers will buy from one another as print becomes less popular.

Then, Feathers analyzes her notes app, where she logs product prices and quantities, to help her build the best possible deal. If she's not getting at least 80% of retail price knocked off of her purchase, she's not interested. Finally, Feathers weighs in extra discounts from third-party cash-back apps. She spends several hours each week just planning her shopping trip before she sets foot out the door.

By midday Sunday, Feathers has just a narrow window of time before she misses out on the week's best deals.

"The new deals start on Sundays," she said. "So, people will go Sundays because all the stock will be in still. If you go like Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, the stock lowers because the deal's been happening for so many days already."

Nikki Will, a Walgreens employee of nine years, said dealing with Sunday's influx of couponers on top of regular store duties and customers can be difficult, but they are generally agreeable.

"I do understand why [couponers] do this, and in all honesty, if a couponer is nice and doesn't get angry if there is a flaw in their system or ours, I have a much better experience. I'm sure they do too," Will said.

Couponers spend a lot of time building their deals. Will said couponers often spend so much time strategizing their savings that they claim to know more about Walgreen's check-out system than employees.

"Sometimes I do want to ask [couponers] to clock in," she said. "I could use the help."

As a couponer, Feathers said she tries her best to be polite while she's sleuthing for sales. She's gotten to know cashiers at her local CVS,

her favorite place to coupon, to help make her purchase run as smoothly as possible. In line, she's hyper-aware of people behind her and will loop around the register if she needs to make multiple transactions to maximize her savings.

"I'm sure I've gotten a few eye-rolls here and there, but I just kind of don't look at them because I'm scared sometimes that they're going to be mean to me, and then I'll probably start crying," Feathers said.

With so much demand, Walgreens had to try their best to keep up. Walgreens has implemented coupon policy changes and has seen a decrease in the amount of couponers.

"We used to have way more couponers [who] would take a lot of time, and our systems and registers would go down," Will said. "That was frustrating, but hasn't happened in a while."

New Walgreens policies, like not allowing register rewards for curbside pickup and fewer cash rewards, can deter couponers from creating and cashing in on deals. Feathers said that she's seen a decline in savings opportunities since she began.

"It's gotten harder to coupon just because deals aren't as good as they used to be," she said. "And then also, not having as many paper coupons, you can't get as good of deals."

While discounts may not be as impressive as they once were, Feathers said there is still a lot of opportunity to save, even at a more casual level. She abides by her mantra "any savings is good savings." With the advent of digital couponing, Feathers said it's easy to get deals right from her cell phone for day-to-day needs.

"Even if it's small things here or there, like getting free toothpaste or shampoo or body wash, it honestly adds up," she said.

Although she's started her full-time career and deals have decreased, Feathers said she doesn't see herself quitting couponing any time soon.

"I could never see myself not couponing," she said. "[...] I can't imagine ever paying for toothpaste."

Charity sends trees to troops

By Anya Kelley
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Ten days, 51 pick-up locations, 26 states and 16,252 Christmas trees. Over the past 20 years, the Christmas SPIRIT Foundations Trees for Troops (T4T) program has provided 94 military bases across the U.S. a little extra joy during the holiday season.

A group called the National Christmas Tree Association decided they wanted to create a new charitable group with a singular mission, to promote Christmas spirit, back in 2005 – that’s where the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation was born.

Rick Dungey, the now executive director of the Christmas SPIRIT foundation, laughed at the idea.

“That’s a pretty nebulous thing, right?” he said.

Dungey sports a grey T4T trucker hat and a red flannel. His outward appearance doesn’t quite match his warm, inviting personality. He looks like a stereotypical Midwestern grandpa, and it’s obvious he’s proud of the program he’s participated in all of these years.

Christmas tree growers near military bases were already providing the troops’ trees, but the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation wanted growers around the country to be able to participate.

“We had a contact at FedEx and [they] said ‘we like your mission, is there any way we can work together?’” Dungey said. “We had this crazy idea. If there were farms not near a base that wanted to also donate some trees, would [FedEx] be willing to go and pick them up and haul them to bases that were not near a farm?”

FedEx would allow them to take something so local to the national level.

“FedEx said ‘yeah, actually that’s something we can do,’” Dungey’s face broke out into a wide grin. “Everyone thought it was just a crazy idea.”

In the first year, T4T donated a

total of 4,300 trees to five bases across the U.S., and other growers around the country began to catch wind. Each year, T4T had more and more growers reach out and offer trees.

Rows of Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir, White Pine and Canaan Fir trees stand like nutcracker soldiers across the Schroeder’s Forevergreens wholesale lots in Marquette and Waushara counties. It took between eight and 10 years to produce their first fully-grown Christmas tree. Now, there are 16 acres of trees ready for this holiday season.

Nineteen years ago, Schoeder’s Forevergreens became the Wisconsin host site for the T4T. Wisconsin growers have donated hundreds of trees to be loaded up and shipped out of the Schroeder lot.

Sue and Tom Schroeder have been in the Christmas tree business for nearly 50 years.

When the Schroeder’s first started selling Christmas trees, they bought from other farmers in

Wisconsin. Sue said the quality was so hit or miss that they decided to start growing their own.

When T4T began collecting consumer donations, the Schroeder’s got to work pre-selecting trees.

“They need to be within a certain height [and width]. It can’t be too big because usually military housing is quite compact,” Sue said matter-of-factly.

The trailer of a semi-truck sits in the lawn at Schroeder’s Forevergreens. Eventually, it’ll be filled with donated Christmas trees decked out in personalized tags on their way to a base somewhere across the country.

Inside of the little red retail building, there is a wall decked out in photos of smiling service members posing with their Schroeder trees. For \$25, customers receive the little tag to write a personal message on.

The Schroeder’s take great pride in their ability to support the U.S. military. Supplying Christmas



Courtesy of Trees for Troops

A soldier helps a young boy unload the donated trees from the FedEx semi-truck.

trees is their way of giving back and saying thank you for their service.

“We really value our military,” Sue said. “And we hope that we can bring a little bit of happiness to the folks that are receiving the trees.”

In the first few years of T4T, Schroeder’s Forevergreens gained a fair amount of media attention. Suddenly, people were constantly asking how they could get involved.

“We were thrilled when we got the opportunity to open it up to the consumer,” Sue said. At just \$25 per tree, the business sees no profit from this endeavor.

“We just feel that we need to support our military anywhere we can, and that’s one way we can do it,” Sue said.

Dungey said T4T has left a lasting impact on the communities they’ve been able to supply trees to. He will have service members tell him they remember their trees from the earliest years of the program and how much it meant to them. Some have even become parents of the next generation of military and ask him how they can donate to their child’s base.

“This year, out of the 93 bases that are getting trees, 20 are getting trees for the very first time,” Dungey said. “The most common way that we get new bases added is when somebody was stationed at a base that got trees before and now they’re stationed at a different location.”

He’ll often receive calls asking what it will take to get a tree for their new home.

“What that tells me is our program is achieving its mission so well that it really made an impact on people,” Dungey said. “It made a strong enough positive impact that people remember it even after years later.”

Katie Baneck and her husband Benjamin Baneck have received three trees from T4T while stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

“We both grew up with real trees,” Baneck said. “But since we have been married, even before the army, we never had enough money to spend on a real Christmas tree. It was really fun to be able to give our kids some of the traditions that we had growing up.”

Katie said having a real Christmas tree just makes the holiday

season more fun. While they won’t be participating this year, she hopes to receive a T4T Christmas tree again next Christmas.

Christmas only comes once a year, but the work for T4T is never over. Dungey said his favorite part about working for the program is getting asked what he does for the other 50 weeks out of the year.

“I get to explain the scale and the scope of what it takes to put this kind of thing together,” Dungey said. For some, the task might seem daunting, but not for him. He loves every minute of it. “It really takes all year long to plan it out and to implement.”

Families post TikTok’s dancing in front of their donated tree. The wife of a newly deployed husband told Dungey if it wasn’t for T4T, they wouldn’t have thought to decorate that year.

“You know, our mission is to improve Christmas spirit and that’s kind of nebulous and can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people,” Dungey said. “But when you get that kind of feedback, it’s not so nebulous to me anymore. It really just means you’re having a positive impact on people who really deserve it.”

Wisconsin tattoo artist spills ink, sips tea

By Aubrie Selsmeyer
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William “Taylor” Wirthlin sat criss-crossed on a traditional Japanese floor mat with a chilled glass bottle of Coca-Cola and a metal tray of vibrant orange and yellow ink beside him. All six-foot-something of him folded over, ink covering every available space on both arms, and chunky clear framed glasses resting on the bridge of his nose. He was wearing loose-fitting nylon pants that zipped off into shorts with a faded pair of leather loafers. He called the look “business casual.”

A VHS tape of Sofia Coppola’s “Lost in Translation” played off an ancient, boxy Toshiba television on the far end of the room. It smelled of incense and freshly steeped herbal tea, quite contradictory to the distinguishable scent of rubbing alcohol and la-

tex in a standard tattoo shop.

A young woman winced as he held the skin of her upper arm taut, threading a rod of curved needles into her skin at an angle as if he was shooting pool. The motion was fast and drew droplets of blood to the surface of her skin with each poke. On each removal of the rod, her skin made a faint popping sound.

Wirthlin explained this was an extremely important sound in the practice of Tebori, the technique of tattooing by hand using a bamboo or metal tool in Japan. Tebori directly translates to ‘to carve by hand’ in Japanese, resembling the practice of carving a wooden block for printmaking. Tebori tattoos are traditionally large and yield bright colors.

Wirthlin was tattooing a Japanese cherry blossom with bright orange petals and a yellow center on the young woman. Cherry blossoms, he explained, have

a short life and are celebrated in Japan when they bloom each spring. They symbolize the fleetingness of human life, historically signifying the brief yet colorful life of a Samurai. A reminder to live life and to live it well.

From a very young age, Wirthlin devoted his life to tattooing and recently opened his own private studio with one of his best friends in the Upper East Side of Milwaukee. He is one of only a few people who can do traditional Tebori tattooing in the city, as it is tedious and not many do it right. This is one of many things that sets Wirthlin apart from other tattoo artists.

Wirthlin grew up in West Greenville, South Carolina, raised by his grandparents in a town he described as rough around the edges. His grandfather had tattoos of his own and would draw tattoos on Wirthlin when he was younger.

One of his favorite tattoos now, as a 34 year old, is the dagger on his upper left arm that his grandfather tattooed himself at 90-years-old, replicating what he used to sketch on a younger, much more rebellious Wirthlin.

Wirthlin was a wild-child with a love for skateboarding, punk, hip-hop and graffiti – which he began doing at just 12 years old.

“There was a freight line that laid up in the back of the place that I was living and I had seen graffiti on the trains anytime I would go back there to sneak a cigarette and I was under the impression that it was an archeological find nobody had painted since the ‘80s,” Wirthlin said. “So, I would be back there painting the trains in middle school and anytime I would hangout with a friend I would check their garage and see if they had an old can of spray paint I could have.”

After a few years of graffiti,

Wirthlin was ready for something more permanent. The story of his very first tattoo is one he said he’ll never forget.

“This girl’s uncle had just gotten out of prison and was tattooing someone’s last name in old English out of a trailer off of paper plates and smoking a cigarette with no gloves, and to me it was awesome,” Wirthlin said. “It was probably the coolest tattoo I’ve ever seen go down still to this day.”

So, 15-year-old Wirthlin returned to the trailer the following week and got the word “Carolina” tattooed on him by the recent ex-convict, nicknamed Snake Eyes, who only had one needle he soaked in alcohol between each use.

Not long after his first tattoo, Wirthlin got his first tattoo kit from the pawn shop in which he worked at 16 years old.

Turn to **Tattoo** / Page 5

Tattoo: Tales from a tattoo artist

From Page 4

“The dude that ran the place knew that I had been into tattoos and bought a super lousy tattoo kit off of someone who definitely had used needles and ink left in the box, but it was my first kit,” Wirthlin said. “One of my cousins and I tattooed a bunch of potatoes the day that I got it and his looked way better than mine – I was actually super jealous and mad about it.”

He quickly transitioned from potatoes to local skateboarders who willingly trusted Wirthlin with his newly sparked passion. When he turned 21 years old he got his first tattooing gig at a shop in New York City where he learned to clean up his craft.

As a beginning tattoo artist in an unforgiving city, Wirthlin said the most important skill was to know how to talk his way out of mistakes that any rookie artist was bound to make.

“I feel like when you suck at tattooing when you first start, you have to kind of decide before you tattoo the person if you think you could whoop their ass if you fuck it up,” Wirthlin said. “If you make a mistake but are good at talking, you can usually pull it back from the fires.”

Wirthlin referred to New York as a “young man’s game.” The shop he started out at in the West Village kept their doors open until 4 a.m., supplying him with quite the portfolio of bizarre stories.

He told the story of a 40-year-old Puerto Rican man from the Bronx who wandered in near closing time with the vision of a dragon print covering his arm. It was Wirthlin’s turn in the rotation.

“I was tattooing this guy for about three hours and he’s got sunglasses on in the middle of the night,” Wirthlin said. “Midway through the tattoo he tells me that he’s a vampire and starts showing me pictures of weird vampire parties that he goes to. He had sharp fangs on while I’m tattooing him, and after he pays me he takes his sunglasses off and the whole time he’s had white contact lenses on

which made the whole situation so much weirder.”

“It was fucking weird, but it’s New York City ya know?” Wirthlin said. “I’ve got a zero tolerance policy with white contact lenses now.”

Nick Cogswell, now Wirthlin’s best friend and business partner, said their acquaintance began back in New Orleans when they were introduced through a mutual friend. When Wirthlin moved up to New York, Cogswell followed him, and vice versa when Milwaukee native Cogswell returned home.

“Almost 10 years ago, Taylor suggested that the coolest thing we could possibly do was to end up in the same place, doing something to make money – tattoos ideally – and just have all of our friends close by,” Cogswell said. “So this right here is a ten year plan come to fruition.”

Both Wirthlin and Cogswell recently welcomed daughters into their lives and plan to raise them together as they’d someday always hoped to do. Wirthlin joked that he missed being young in New York, but said nothing could compare to his life now in Milwaukee.

“New York was really fun and I’m happy that it happened, but I have a daughter now and that’s way cooler than that,” Wirthlin said.

Being raised in a tattoo-friendly household and now with a daughter of his own, Wirthlin said he’s curious if she will even want one.

“I feel like everybody thinks their parents are dorky and whatever their parents do is not cool,” Wirthlin said. “I’m curious to know if her rebellion will be to not get tattoos. She’s obviously my daughter, but is a different person than me, and I hope that in between here and there I can lead my life as a father and parent who can be proud of – and impressed by – all of her decisions without having to intrude on them.”

For the last 15 years, Wirthlin has been exclusively focused on Japanese traditional tattooing. In Japanese tattooing, the tattoo-

er will often have a pseudonym. Wirthlin’s pseudonym is Horishishi: hori meaning “carve” and shishi, short for “karajishi,” meaning Chinese lion – also one of the graffiti names he went by. He was given the name “Taylor Horishishi” by fellow Japanese tattoo artists.

Wirthlin, however, does not consider himself an artist, but rather a deliberate craftsman.

“While I think that I have artistic tendencies, I think that those are accidents,” Wirthlin said. “I’m trying to be a craftsman. I think it’s a lot like being an athlete – people have different starting abilities and you can always improve upon things.”

Wirthlin recites the Japanese saying, wabi-sabi: the acceptance of imperfection. He says his mistakes often lead to a more satisfying outcome than his intentions, allowing him to enjoy the creative process rather than rushing the final product.

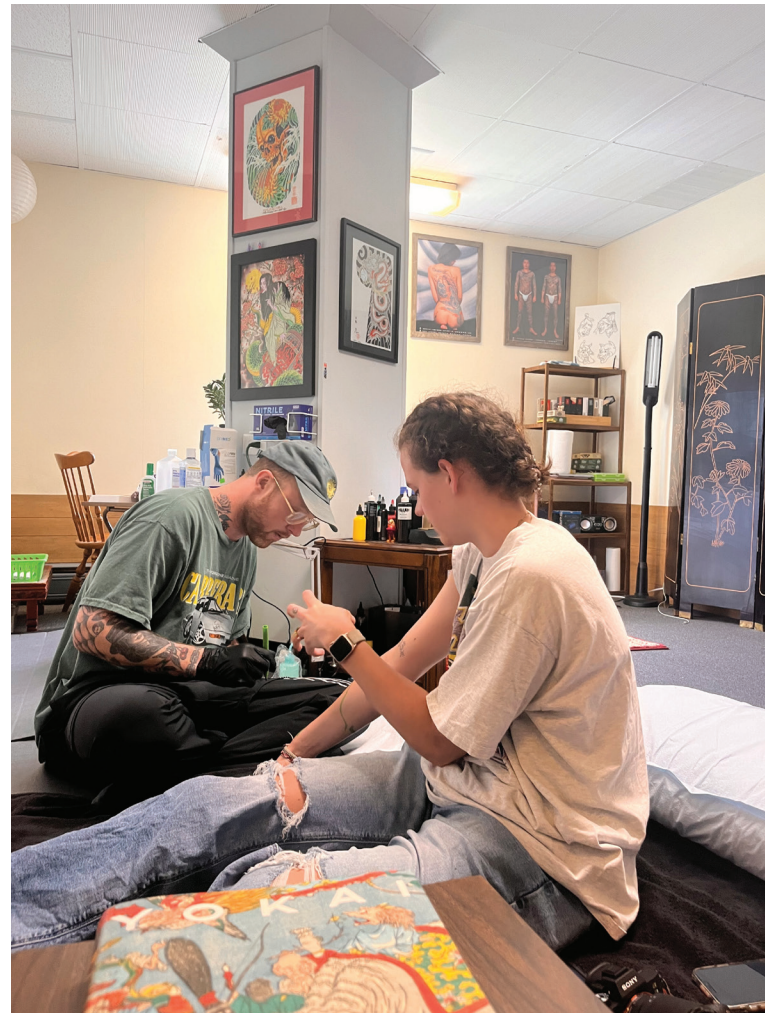
“I really, really enjoy being in the middle of the tattoo,” Wirthlin said. “I had a buddy, whose graffiti name was Fish Glue, and I remember he said something I’ve always thought about ... where he didn’t care what it looked like in the end and that he just liked to push the button. If I enjoy making it and I try as hard as I can, it’s gonna look awesome.”

Emma Sauriol, a first time customer of Wirthlin, said watching him bring her crazy thoughts to life was unlike any tattoo artist she’s ever had.

“I’d have to say my favorite part of the session with Taylor was working out our ideas for my tattoo,” Sauriol said. “I came in with a few pictures and he turned it into something I never could have imagined.”

Sauriol said she appreciated how Wirthlin cared more about her personal experience during the tattoo process rather than worrying about the next client coming through the doors.

“With Taylor it was very personal,” Sauriol said. “He wasn’t on a time crunch where he was worried about multiple appoint-



Aubrie Selsmeyer / Advance-Titan

Emma gets a vine tattoo hand-poked by Taylor at his studio.

ments, it was just me, and you could tell he cared. Taylor was very patient and willing to hear out my thoughts and millions of corrections and it felt very welcoming.”

The final credits of “Lost in Translation” rolled until TV static consumed the screen. Cogswell and Wirthlin filled the silence with inside jokes and stories back and forth, like two brothers on opposite ends of the dining room table.

“Last petal,” Wirthlin assured his client, loading up the needles with ink once more.

The young woman jammed the bend of her knuckle into her front teeth, focusing on Bill Murray singing karaoke on the television rather than the flicking sound of her own skin – occasionally glancing over to see the blossom gradually fill in with color. Wirthlin

moved the hand-carved bamboo rod meticulously with each angled insertion.

Cogswell worked feet away, a small teacup filled to the brim with green tea next to him. It was the exact manifestation of their ten year plan. Same city, same workplace, and ideally, they continued tattooing.

As he finished the cherry blossom, Wirthlin couldn’t conceal his pride in his work as he cleaned the leftover ink off of the needles. And the young woman couldn’t conceal her happiness as she stood in front of a large circular mirror reflecting a beautiful orange blossom on her right shoulder.

“With tattooing you’ve got one chance – do it right,” Wirthlin said. “I think it takes a lot of courage to display who you are on the inside and what you’re capable of.”

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Scoreboard

Thursday, Nov. 21

Men's Wrestling

UW-La Crosse - 57

UWO - 0

Women's Wrestling

UWO - 30

Carthage College - 16

Women's Volleyball

NCAA Tournament

UWO - 3

Marymount University (Va.) - 0

Friday, Nov. 22

Women's Basketball

UWO - 81

Central College (Iowa) - 49

Women's Volleyball

NCAA Tournament

UWO - 3

University of Chicago (Ill.) - 1

Saturday, Nov. 23

Men's Basketball

UWO - 87

North Park University (Ill.) - 71

Women's Wrestling

at UW- Eau Claire

Non Scoring

Women's cross country

NCAA DIII Finals

UWO- Individual scoring

Men's Swimming

Lake Forest College (Ill.) - 164

UWO - 71

Women's Swimming

Lake Forest College (Ill.) - 135

UWO - 101

Women's Basketball

UWO - 56

Wheaton College (Ill.) - 54

Women's Volleyball

NCAA Tournament

UWO - 3

Illinois Wesleyan University - 0

Tuesday, Nov. 26

Men's Basketball

UWO - 72

Edgewood College - 59

Tuesday, Dec. 3

Men's Basketball

UWO - 91

Ripon College - 83

Wednesday, Dec. 4

Women's Volleyball

NCAA Elite Eight

UWO -

Johns Hopkins University (Md.) -

(Past Publication time)

Upcoming Events

Thursday, Dec. 5

Women's Swimming

at Carthage College at 9 a.m.

Men's Swimming

at Carthage College at 9 a.m.

Men's Basketball

vs Calvin University (Mich.) at 7

p.m.

Women's Volleyball

NCAA Semifinal

TBD

Salem, Va.

Friday, Dec. 6

Women's Swimming

at Carthage College at 9 a.m.

Men's Swimming

at Carthage College at 9 a.m.

Track and Field

UWO Early Bird invitational
Oshkosh Wisc. 10:30 a.m./2:30 p.m.



Isaac Fischer / Advance Titan

Members of the UWO volleyball team walk down the hall at Kolf Sports Center during its send off to the NCAA Elite Eight round on Dec. 2

Volleyball advances to Elite Eight

By Nolan Andler
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The UW Oshkosh women's volleyball team earned its second straight Elite Eight appearance two weeks ago in the 2024 NCAA Division III tournament. After winning the Marietta Regional on Nov. 21-23. The Titans took down Marymount University (Virginia), University of Chicago (Illinois) and Illinois Wesleyan University to earn its trip to Salem, Virginia to compete in the Elite Eight.

Coach Jon Ellmann is excited about the fact that the team knows what to expect in the Elite Eight this time around. "Each season is unique, and we're excited that we've earned an opportunity to play in Salem this year," he said. "We have a better idea as to what to expect, we feel prepared and supported and we can't wait to get back on the court again."

UWO won nine of 10 sets in the regional rounds. UWO won their opening game against Atlantic East Conference champions Marymount 3-0. The Titans dominated the match against the Saints with set scores of 25-9, 25-17 and 25-10 to advance to the regional semi-final match.

In the regional semi-final round, UWO faced off against the Chicago Maroons the Titans swept on Nov. 2. This time, Chicago won the first set 25-18, but a rally that UWO had to end the first set propelled the Titans to win the next three sets. UWO topped the Maroons 3-1 in the rematch of the two teams to advance to the regional final.

The Titans faced Illinois Wesleyan in the Regional Final. IWU beat host school Marietta in their previous match but UWO swept IWU 3-0. IWU fought in all three sets as UWO won the sets with scores of

25-19, 25-19 and 25-20.

Ellmann credited the team's ability to bring their best in any situation as the root of their success in the regional rounds of the tournament. "This group has committed to the idea that in order to bring our best when it is demanded, that you need to be willing to face challenge after challenge," Ellmann said. "Focusing on things like our ability to stay calm, play with confidence and respond productively has really been the story line of this squad."

The Titans now have their mind focused on the Elite Eight where they will begin their run at a National Title on Wednesday, Dec. 4 as UWO will face off against Johns Hopkins University (Maryland) to start off its time in the final three rounds. The Titans will hope to avenge its loss in the Elite Eight round to Claremont Mudd-Scripps (California) last season.

Ellmann said that the only difference with preparation for the Elite Eight was family time for the holiday last week. "Besides some quality time at home with family and good meals, preparation hasn't looked any different this week than previously in the season," Ellmann said.

The message that Ellmann gave to the team for this week is to not get away from what they have done all year. "Do us. There is no need to do more than what we've already done this season," Ellmann said. "We just need to play loose and colorful, and do so while illuminating others or celebrating all of the amazing things those around us bring to the table."

The Titans took on Johns Hopkins University Dec. 4 at the Creeger Center in Salem, Virginia, at 2 p.m. Find the results at uwosh-koshtitans.com.

UWO wrestling drops match at UW-La Crosse

By Zach Bellin
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The UW Oshkosh men's wrestling team was swept 57-0 to UW-La Crosse, the No. 3 team in the nation, at Kolf Sports Center Nov. 21.

In the first match of the men's meet, Oshkosh sophomore JP Culver fell to Ino Garcia by fall in 53 seconds in the 125-lb match. That was followed up by the 133-lb match which was the longest of the night between UWO junior Andrew Schad and Teague Holzer, where Holzer won by technical fall 21-5 in 6:36.

UWO junior Logan Harel took part in the 141-lb match against Talan Schutte, he lost by pinfall in 52 seconds, while in the 149-lb contest, UWO freshman Logan Andrews was pinned by Kaiden Schrandt.

The struggles continued

for the Titans as La Crosse's Cole Hansen defeated Oshkosh freshman Jacob Hibbard in the 157-lb contest by technical fall 20-3 in five minutes. Tyler Goebel kept momentum on the Eagles' side picking up a win in the 165-lb match against Oshkosh freshman Ryan Bergman pinning him in one minute and five seconds.

In the 174-lb match, Oshkosh sophomore Kyler Rasper lost in 2:31 by technical fall 21-6 to UWL's Eddie Simes.

The Titans went on to lose their final three matches of the meet by fall in less than three minutes. UWL dominated in every match, winning seven



Courtesy of Steve Frommell / UWO athletics

UWO's Kyle Rasper competes in an event during a past meet this season at Kolf Sports Center.

by fall and three by technical fall.

UWO will be back in action Friday, Dec. 6 when they travel to Shirley Egner Court at Berg

Gym in Stevens Point to face UW-Stevens Point in a Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference match at 7 p.m.



Courtesy of UWO Flickr

A UW Oshkosh rugby player attempts to get away from a group of Northwestern University players while in possession of the ball during the fall 2024 season.

Shaping the Game

Women's rugby coach continues her legacy at UWO

By Maddy Szewczuk
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As Amanda Anderson settled into her small but cozy home after a long day at work, the gentle rustle of her coaching gear broke the afternoon stillness. The golden light of the setting sun streamed through the windows, casting warm hues across the living room and illuminating the soft textures of mossy green throw blankets draped over the couch. The scent of her vanilla candle mingled with the earthy aroma of her dog's fur, creating a comforting atmosphere. Tito, her dog, slept peacefully on a cushioned bed near the sofa, his soft snoring filling the background.

Pictures from her rugby playing days adorned the walls, each frame capturing her passion and dedication to the sport. Their vibrant colors contrasted with the calming beige of the walls. A worn rugby ball rested on a nearby shelf a silent testament to her journey.

"It's just me and Tito, but I wouldn't have it any other way," Anderson said, her eyes sparkling with anticipation for the evening ahead.

The warmth of her home filled her with energy as she prepared to guide the next generation of players, embodying the spirit of a mentor who is committed to shaping the future of the sport she loves.

Later, at the outdoor turf field on the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh campus, Anderson stood on the sidelines with calm confidence, surveying her players as they moved with purpose. Her

stature still reflected her days as a rugby player, even though her body was transitioning with age and the shift to coaching. With her long blond hair cascading down her back and hints of dark roots showing, she exuded an approachable yet authoritative presence in a black UW Oshkosh sweatshirt and athletic pants.

The green of the artificial turf glistened under the golden hues of the late afternoon sun, which was setting minute by minute. The crisp scent of the nearby river combined with the sharp smell of turf, creating a refreshing blend that awakened the senses. The rhythmic calls for the ball and the satisfying thud as it hit players' hands echoed through the air, punctuated by laughter and the occasional shout of encouragement a soundtrack of the hard work ahead.

As the players engaged in drills, the energy of the field enveloped Anderson, filling her with a sense of belonging. A flock of birds glided against the cotton-candy sky, their silhouettes dancing through the soft pinks and blues, signaling the end of another successful day of practice.

The Start

Anderson's love for rugby began back in 2005, during her high school years in Madison, Wisconsin.

"After playing football with the boys for a few years and ultimately stepping away because I wasn't going to see playing time," Anderson said, "I'd been searching for a sport that gave me the same rush."

When she saw a flyer for a lo-

cal girls' rugby club, she decided to check it out with a friend, and that was the start of what would become a lifelong passion.

"After my first practice in 2005, I knew rugby was the sport I'd been looking for," Anderson said. "I loved the full-contact game without the constant stoppages of football, and all the contact skills I had learned transferred seamlessly."

The thrill of that first practice washed over her like a wave, invigorating her spirit.

Her rugby career began with Madison Militia and progressed rapidly. By 2006, she was playing for the Wisconsin U-19 Select Side, and her dedication and skill only grew from there. Rugby Anderson connected her with people who have become lifelong friends.

"This game has taken me to places I never could have imagined," Anderson said. "That first season led me to try out for the Wisconsin U-19 program, where I met Gray Zischke, who, at the time, was the head coach for UW-Stevens Point and the Wisconsin U-19s. He quickly became one of the most influential people in my life, a great mentor and long-time friend."

Over the years, Anderson has played for numerous teams, including the Wisconsin Women's Team, Milwaukee Scylla and the Midwest Thunderbirds Senior All-Stars. As a player, she earned a reputation for her tenacity and leadership on the field.

"One of my greatest life lessons has been learning that in rugby, it's not always the most talented person who makes the

biggest impact, but the one who works hardest to put their teammates in a position to succeed," Anderson said.

Transition to Coaching

After a successful playing career, Anderson's passion for rugby transitioned to coaching. Following the death of Zischke, Anderson found herself contemplating her future in the sport, the weight of loss heavy on her heart.

"That loss made me realize how important it was to carry forward the values he instilled in me," Anderson said.

A seemingly coincidental series of events led her to UWO, where she now serves as the head coach of the women's rugby team. The decision to coach here stemmed from her admiration for the athletes who were willing to self-coach for an entire 2023 season just to keep the team going.

"That's a level of commitment I could get behind," Anderson said. "Without really knowing the athletes, I could see a resilient and resourceful group of rugby players."

While some may have viewed the team, which had only seven players in 2023, as too far gone, Anderson was determined to accept the challenge.

"This is the kind of challenge I was meant for. This is the team I was meant to help: a local college women's team with a core of committed athletes who just needed a coach with a vision, clear expectations, some rugby charisma and a little bit of hope," Anderson said. "I'm uniquely qualified to help UWO with the specific challenges and dynamics

the team was facing, and I'm genuinely grateful for this opportunity every single day."

Additionally, since 2014, Anderson has served as the assistant coach for forwards for the Wisconsin Women's Rugby U-23 Selects, helping to develop young talent at a competitive level.

"Amanda's coaching style is all about getting athletes to answer their own questions," said Wisconsin Women's Rugby U-23 Selects head coach Xane Gerasimo. "She's very likely to respond to a question with another question. It might take athletes a little while to adjust, but in the end, they know why they're doing what they're doing."

This approach reflects Anderson's philosophy of coaching, one that prioritizes developing players' critical thinking and deeper understanding of the game. With genuine encouragement, she nurtures curiosity and growth in her athletes, much like how her former teammates and coaches have shaped her journey.

"I prioritize meeting my players where they are," Anderson said, "Each hour, each day, each week, and I flex my practice plans to help them leave every rugby day feeling better or more accomplished than when they arrived."

Anderson's commitment to individualized coaching has fostered a supportive environment where players feel valued and motivated. By actively listening to their concerns and aspirations, she cultivates strong relationships with her athletes, allowing them to voice their challenges and triumphs.

Turn to *Coach* / Page 8

Women's basketball remains undefeated

By Nolan Andler
andlerno63@uwosh.edu

The UW Oshkosh Women's basketball game survived a tough battle versus Wheaton College (Illinois) on Saturday, Nov. 23 at Kolf Sports Center. The Titans beat Wheaton with a score of 56-54.

Forward Paige Sekar and Guard Sammi Beyer led the Titans in the win as the leading point scorers. Sekar scored 12 points, eight of them from field goals and three from free throws. Beyer scored 10 points, with six of which were three pointers.

UWO started the game with the lead due to a layup from Kayce Vaile before the Thunder jumped out to an 8-2 lead to start the quarter behind two three-point shots by the Thunder. Wheaton carried the big lead to end the quarter with a 13-8 lead.

UWO got back in the game during the second quarter. The Titans were able to take the lead back at 16-15 due to back-to-back three-pointers from Kate Huml and Alex Rondorf. The Titans got a lead as big as 23-18, but the Thunder never let the Titans pull away as both teams went into half with UWO leading 23-20.

The third quarter started out

back and forth. UWO responded to a Wheaton layup to start the quarter with another three from Rondorf to go up 26-22. The Thunder did not allow UWO to go away, and Wheaton tied the game at 28-28. A couple more rounds of back-and-forth scoring found the teams once again tied at 33-33 during the 05:22 minute mark. A layup by Beyer with 3:08 left in the quarter gave the Titans a 35-33 lead, and UWO went on an eight-to-zero run to end the quarter up 41-33.

Although UWO did not relinquish the lead in the fourth, Wheaton made the Titans sweat to the end. A layup by Sarah Hardwick and a three by Beyer gave the Titans its biggest lead of the game at 46-37. The Thunder were able to slowly close the Titan lead as the quarter went on. Wheaton was able to shrink the Titan lead down to 54-52 with 01:51 remaining in the game. The Titans added on two more points behind a layup from Sekar but the Thunder got a layup of their own to make the score 56-54. A missed jumper by the Titans allowed Wheaton to attempt the game winning three-point-shot, fortunately for the Titans, the Thunder missed the shot and UWO was able to survive with a 56-54 win.



Delaney Ross/Advance Titan

UWO women's basketball coach Brad Fischer talks with his team during a timeout in the game against Central College (Iowa) on Nov. 22.

The Titans beat Central College (Iowa) the day before. The Titans beat the Dutch 81-49 in the game the day before.

Huml and Beyer led the team with 17 points each in the win.

Huml went 7-12 in field goals and went two for two at the free throw line.

Beyer went 8-12 in her shot attempts and scored a three pointer.

UWO will return to action on

Monday, Dec. 16 when the Titans will play against Benedictine University (Illinois). Tip off will take place at 6 p.m. at Kolf Sports Center.

Coach: Creating a lasting impact at UWO

From Page 7

"Amanda meets athletes where they're at. I think she manages to remember what it felt like to be new to the sport all those years ago." Gerasimo said, "She has an ability to empathize with the overwhelming feeling of not knowing the sport, and to break things down to a really manageable level for those folks."

This collaborative approach not only enhances their skills but also instills a sense of ownership and accountability within the team. Players often remark that they feel seen and heard, which encourages them to push their limits both on and off the field.

Nevaeh Quinn, one of Anderson's current players for UWO and the Wisconsin Women's Rugby U-23 Selects, reflects on her journey under Anderson's guidance.

"Being coached by Amanda has been extremely beneficial to my rugby career. Coming into college, I had no experience playing," Quinn said. "She helped me develop my skills, build my confidence and mentally prepare. She's created the positive team atmosphere UWO has been striving for."

Quinn's gratitude resonated across the field, amplifying the deep sense of community Anderson has tirelessly fostered.

Leadership Beyond the Field

Anderson's leadership extends beyond coaching. As the treasurer for the Great Waters Women's Rugby Conference and Vice President of the Milwaukee Scylla Rugby Club, she has implemented key initiatives that

have shaped the organizations. For instance, she spearheaded fundraising efforts to support underprivileged teams and organized workshops focused on player development.

"I've always believed that building a strong culture within a team is the foundation for success," Anderson said. "It's not just about winning games; it's about creating an environment where athletes feel supported, can grow and develop both on and off the field."

Anderson's dedication to fostering growth and unity is apparent in every aspect of her work. Her passion radiates through her words and actions, creating a sense of purpose that resonates deeply with her teams. This commitment extends beyond coaching. She's also a key figure in the larger rugby community, balancing budgets, organizing team events and ensuring that teams have the resources they need to thrive. Her strategic thinking and organizational skills have been crucial in managing the complexities of a successful rugby club.

Andi Heesaker, the Wisconsin Rugby Football Union secretary and team manager for the Wisconsin Selects Women's Team, reflects on Amanda's contributions.

"Amanda is always willing to jump in when help is needed," Heesaker said. "She works on our grants and awards committee, vetting applications and selecting recipients. Her dedication makes a significant impact on our team and community."

Her proactive approach en-

sures that deserving teams and players receive the support they need, further solidifying her reputation as a dedicated leader.

Anderson's commitment to the Wisconsin Rugby Football Union's mission to grow rugby in Wisconsin shines through her work with the U-23 Selects team. Entrusted with over 50 players, she strives to make participation as accessible as possible. Her diligent efforts to secure sponsorships help cover costs, allowing more young athletes to engage with the sport.

"She works hard to get sponsors and cover as much of the cost as she can," Heesaker said, "Her help lowered costs for everyone involved."

Creating a Lasting Impact

Anderson's commitment to developing young talent is remarkable, as she takes the time to ensure that every player feels supported, regardless of their experience level. During last year's training camp with the Wisconsin Women's Rugby U-23 Selects, she organized additional skill-building sessions for players who needed extra support, demonstrating her investment in their development. She even stayed late after practice to work with them one-on-one, reinforcing her dedication to nurturing their growth.

"A big impact on me was when she emphasized the importance of confidence in achieving goals," Quinn said, "She reminds us every day that confidence is key in everything you do and that confidence isn't just talent, it's what is built through



Courtesy of UWO Flickr

UWO attempts to drive the ball against the Wildcats on Oct. 26

action and perseverance."

Anderson also creates a sense of community within the team by promoting an atmosphere of inclusivity and collaboration. She actively engages her athletes through team-building activities and open discussions about their goals, ensuring that every player feels a sense of belonging.

"Amanda's dedication to bringing in new players is unmatched," Heesaker said. "It's not just about the current team for her; she's building a future for rugby in Wisconsin."

In addition to her coaching responsibilities, Anderson has taken the lead on initiatives to promote women's rugby in Wisconsin. She spearheaded the "Girls in Rugby" program, aimed at introducing young female athletes to the sport. By coordinating clinics and workshops and engaging schools and local clubs, Anderson has created valuable opportunities for girls to try rugby, significantly

increasing participation at the grassroots level.

"One of the biggest lessons Amanda taught me was the importance of mental toughness. She pushed me to stay focused and determined, even in challenging situations," Quinn said, "I've learned to handle pressure, bounce back from setbacks and maintain a positive attitude in tough games, which I will use in the rest of my rugby career and in life itself."

Through her work, Anderson is not only enhancing the current landscape of women's rugby, but also paving the way for a vibrant future. Her role as a coach, mentor and advocate is transformative, making her an invaluable asset to the rugby community.

"I believe that every girl who steps onto the field has the potential to change the game not just for themselves, but for those who will follow in their footsteps," Anderson said. "Together, we're not just building a team; we're building a legacy."

Senior Sendoffs

‘Wait, I have to write my own headline?’

By Kelly Hueckman
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Like every other piece I’ve published, I’ve put off writing this until the eleventh hour. However, this time my delay wasn’t a product of procrastination — it was a product of the bittersweet realization that this is the final issue of the Advance-Titan I will have helped create.

My 3.5-year-long journey with the A-T began when I was a timid freshman in 2021. I walked into my first story meeting late because I couldn’t find the sacred (or cursed?) office in the deep, dark depths of Reeve. I was a journalism major. This is where I was supposed to be, right?

UW Oshkosh tested me on that. For about the first year in the newsroom, I pretty much only spoke the words, “yes,” “no” and “holy shit, that’s a lot of edits.” At one point during this period, a single sentence I wrote in journalism professor Vince Filak’s class was put on blast via his blog. Yikes! I was beginning to wonder if this was really the right route for me after all.

However, as I spent more time with the A-T and learning to formulate coherent pieces in my journalism classes, I finally started to settle into my writing and role at the A-T. After working for about a year as a reporter, I took over as the Opinion Edi-

tor in 2022 before becoming the Managing Editor under former and current Editors-in-Chief Katie Pulvermacher and Anya Kelley.

I’ve been given so many opportunities as a journalist, including writing columns and editorials, interviewing some of the most colorful personalities I’ve ever met and traveling to cities I otherwise may not have been able to visit. I won state-wide and national awards I dreamt of when I was a measly little freshman.

Finally, the newsroom began to feel a bit less like work and a whole lot more like home. That would probably explain the countless naps I’ve taken on the office couch, but it would also explain the friendships and life-long memories I’ve made along the way. I wouldn’t have been able to get through school or even a single production night without the talent, knowledge and sheer greatness from the people I’ve met along the way.

First, I want to thank Anya for her devotion to the paper, her incredible brain and her kindness. You are a born leader, and you inspire everyone around you to challenge themselves and simply be better than they were. I can’t wait to see what you do with your time left with the A-T and the big things beyond.

Katie, your talent could never go unnoticed, but it was your

kindness and willingness to listen that showed your knack for being a great leader and an even better friend. Jacob, I’ve never seen anyone as committed to churning out stories like you do. Never stop writing! Josh, your journalistic abilities are admired by so many, but I urge you to never give up on your rapping and soundboard work.

Nolan Sr., thanks for always being a friend. I’ll miss our girl chats. Nolan Jr., keep bringing such joy and life to the newsroom — I can’t wait to see you blossom in your journalism journey.

Cassidy, keep on creating such a lively, beautiful opinion section each week. Also, make sure to lock your windows at night before I steal your entire wardrobe.

Of course, I can’t talk about my time with the A-T without giving flowers to the world’s best Copy Desk Chief, Kyiah. I’ll never fully understand the galaxy that is your mind, but I’m so grateful for the endless hours you spent stitching my stories into a publishable work.

I sincerely admire and thank anyone who ever contributed to our weekly paper that each week, I’m so proud of — even if I don’t know how we pulled it off. Your hard work has never gone unnoticed, and will help you immensely in the future.

My time at UWO and the A-T



Kelly Hueckman / Advance-Titan
Hueckman started at the A-T as a staff writer and then took over as the Opinion Editor before becoming Managing Editor.

was filled with highs and lows. I’ve laughed deliriously with my friends at 2 a.m. and I’ve shed tears in the offices of my professors. Somehow, with the help of my colleagues, friends, faculty and advisers and most impor-

tantly, the A-T, I’ve managed to get through the past 4.5 years.

For anyone considering joining the Advance-Titan, this is your sign to just do it. If your experience is anything like mine, you won’t regret it.

Former Sports Editor shotguns final beer

By Nolan Swenson
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When I came to Oshkosh, I joined the newspaper and for the next five semesters I had the privilege of writing among friends and peers. Last year, I changed my priorities and began to focus on my presidency in Pre-Law Society; this forced me away from the paper, but not the amazing friendships I had made along the way. The ultimate lesson Oshkosh has taught me is to seek responsibility.

It’s a little known fact that many people here are apt to go through the motions and just want a degree, but that speaks for so little of the opportunities available to students. When in a small school like Oshkosh, there are so many niches available for leadership that will benefit you.

I’ve been a writer and editor for the Advance-Titan, President of UWO Pre-Law Society, CA for residence life and a highly invested student. Beyond the responsibilities that benefit you both from a personal and professional perspective, others you find in those positions will continue to push you in perpetual motion.

Before I acknowledge my friends and peers, I would like to thank faculty and staff.

Barbara Benish welcomed me into the newspaper and showed me the craft which has allowed me to grow as a communicator. Her appreciation for the work of my peers and myself drove us to be one of the best student papers in the nation, which is far from exaggeration.

My major, political science, was taught by a cohort of some of my favorite educators I’ve come across. It’s a group that I wholeheartedly recommend to anyone who wishes to challenge themselves and their perspectives.

Jerry Thomas has encouraged me to make the most of my presidency in Pre-Law, giving me responsibility and discretion with how I conduct the organization. Tracy Slagter has no peers in her capacity to care and love, making sure every student is at home and taking decisive action if they are not. Their assistance in academics is unparalleled, adding countless hours to help myself and fellow law school applicants.

David Siemers’ absence throughout sabbatical soured my senior year, as I love political theory and his method of teaching it, driving me to learn and appreciate it in my own time.

All of these amazing teachers guided me towards responsibility.

Many say that it’s lonely at the top, but they’ve never attended UWO club meetings.

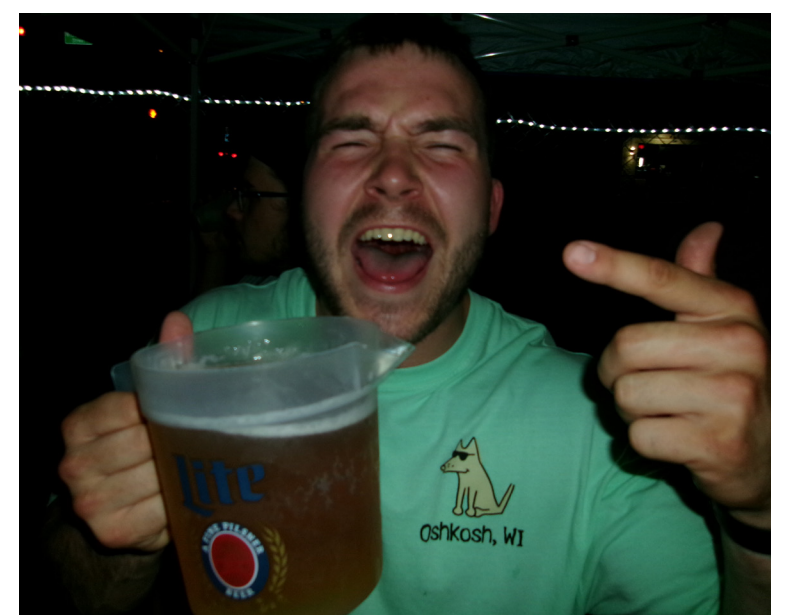
Jacob Link has been one of my best friends the last three years. We constantly push each other, for better or worse, towards greatness. We’ve watched each other become men and kept each other moving forward.

Josh Lehner took the leap and joined a group of us going to a cabin for a weekend when we had hardly talked to him before. While this does not reflect on his ability to survive a horror movie, it shows how willing he is to seize the moment.

Alvaro Rivera is consistently pulling for all of us to hang out, which is difficult when we are busy but so appreciated in retrospect. When he joined our circle, we became more complete and he has seen to it that we stay bound together.

Katie Pulvermacher was the first of our friend group to graduate, but I’m overjoyed that Jacob has kept her tied down to us. She is a delightful presence in our friend group who will always be sure that we do not forget to have sides with our meal.

Anya Kelley and Kelly Hueckman have taken over editing of the paper and I’m extremely proud



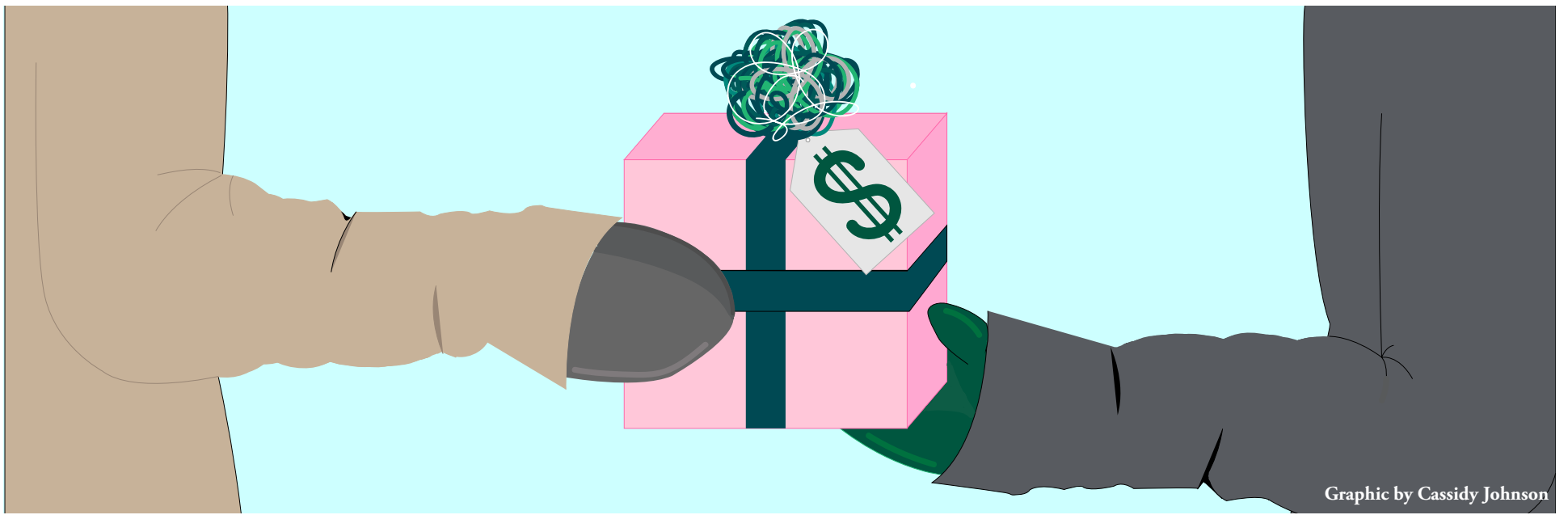
Kelly Hueckman / Advance-Titan
Swenson acted as Co-sports Editor for two years before contrib-

of them for doing so. As much as I’ve enjoyed my time in Pre-Law Society, I wish I had more time to work alongside such competent and strong women.

Finally, all of my fellow board members of Pre-Law Society. As sad as I am to set down the reins, I am confident that your strong and wise hands will pick them back up. All of you stun me with your gumption and capacity for leadership.

I am overfilled with a mixture of pride and humbleness. I have found myself surrounded by friends, peers and educators with no substitute; however, this is not fortune, this is the result of seeking responsibility.

Seek responsibility and you will find yourself striding among such amazing people as these, probably not as amazing though.



Graphic by Cassidy Johnson

How to give on a budget

By Cassidy Adams
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As college students, just when we've paid our tuition, got through midterms, paid our rent and finally see the end of the semester in sight, the holiday season comes around. And the holiday season typically leads to a lot of expenses.

During the Christmas season, we want the people we love to feel loved and cared for. However, when we're scraping pennies together just to enjoy a coffee or treat once in a while, how are we supposed to afford giving gifts to our loved ones?

There's plenty of ways to get involved in the spirit of Christmas by gift giving for a low cost. Here's your guide to still experiencing the magic of gift giving while on a tight budget:

1. Homemade Gifts

Homemade gifts are one of the best ways to have a low cost but still are personal and meaningful. People seem to cherish the time and effort put into homemade gifts more than any tangible gift they could receive.

There are many ways you can create something homemade. Perhaps creating a jewelry or trinket dish out of air dry clay, or grabbing a picture frame to design with paint or markers. Decorate a cheap coffee mug for your favorite coffee drinker or create fun bookmarks for your bookworm family or friend.

Homemade gifts are not just appreciated by the receiver, but you will have a fun time while making these types of gifts as well.

2. Explore the Dollar Store or Dollar Sections

There are many low cost stores that carry great gift ideas. For in-

stance, exploring Dollar Tree and the dollar sections at Walmart and Target can be really beneficial.

At Dollar Tree, you can find items such as candles, makeup tools, snacks, glassware, and books. There are gift ideas for all types of people at Dollar Tree that will only cost you \$1.25 each!

At Walmart and Target, there are many great items for gift giving. For example, Walmart has a variety of Christmas-themed kitchen utensils that are already paired together for an adorable gift. This includes mini bread pans, stackable sets of mugs, mixing bowls and many more kitchen utensils.

Walmart and Target both have dollar sections filled with pillows, blankets, and many other ideas for a great deal.

3. Goodies as Gifts

Food and treats are also a low-cost option to give gifts during the

holidays. Baking some holiday cookies, your favorite sourdough recipe or delicious pastries will satisfy both your loved ones' hearts and their stomachs.

You can also try making something savory such as your favorite salsa recipe, soups or sauces, or instead preparing the ingredients in a jar of your go-to recipes.

If baking and cooking isn't your strong suit, a snack box filled with your loved ones' favorite snacks, treats, and drinks would be equally cherished.

4. The Thrill of An Experience

Oftentimes, people just want to spend time with you outside of the holidays and regular activities. Gifting experiences where you can spend time with your loved ones is a gift that everybody would adore.

Taking your person of choice to the movies or taking them to a dinner is just as valued as handing

them a tangible item. Other ideas could be having a game night at home, taking the day to do something outside such as hiking or kayaking, having a do-it-yourself spa day, or organizing your own picnic.

The possibilities of giving experiences as a gift is endless and will create memories for all who are involved.

Gift giving doesn't always have to be complicated or expensive. The act of giving, in any form, is a kind gesture, not a requirement. Your loved ones will be happy to spend time with you regardless of your financial status. Most of the time, they will understand exactly the position that you're in as a college student.

The best gifts come from the heart, not the wallet. Gift giving is not about the price tag, but rather are the memories and moments that we all share together during the holiday season.

Letter to the Editor:

Loving life & honoring Roe as a Christian

By Robert Koehler
koehlercw@gmail.com

As Christian nationalism, the political right and Trump-mania seem to tighten their grip on the country, maybe now is the time for me to take a deep dig into the complex preciousness of . . . life itself.

Hey, guess what? I'm "pro-life" — by which I mean, you know, pro-life in a deep, soul-gripping, planet-loving, war-hating way. By which I mean: Let us reclaim Roe v. Wade from the smug, bureaucratic moral certainty — "your body, my choice" — of the anti-choicers, who apparently could care less about the impact Roe's overturning has had on medical care and the safety, both physical and spiritual, of women.

But I want to put my words into the paradoxical context of life itself. As a man, I am writing, of course, from the perimeter of the process. I am a dad. I'm also a journal-keeper. The other day I happened to dig back nearly 40 years into an old notebook and re-read, for the first time in decades, the journal entry I wrote the day after my daughter was born. Mom and newborn were still in the hospital. That evening, when I came

home, I had to let my words flow.

A new being was present on Planet Earth! I was immersed in wonder and awe and virtually undone by the experience my wife, Barbara, had just endured. I was also deeply grateful that we had done Lamaze training — that the medical community now acknowledged there was a role for a male in the agonizing birth process . . . that Mom wasn't alone and Dad could be fully present through it all.

"I was the guy," so I explained to my journal, "who presses the three fingers of his right hand as hard as he can against his wife's back during her contractions. That was the sum total of my life for six hours — perhaps the longest six hours of my life. My role is to apply pressure — that and be gently encouraging and to get Barbara to focus and to do her 'ah-hee' breathing. And usually I'd breathe with her, pressing my finger hard against her back as she reached each peak.

"How many contractions did Barbara have? They were coming every other minute for a while. She probably had 150, mostly lying on her side in the bed, but sometimes lying on pillows on the floor and

sometimes while she was sitting on the toilet in the bathroom. I'd have to come tearing across the room when she called me and she'd look at me with her beautiful, intense eyes — her face darkened with pain and desperation — and I'd reach behind her back and she'd use my eyes as her focal point.

"Then," I wrote, "came the most intense part of the process, the pushing. She was at this for nearly two and a half hours, from 8:30 until the birth at 10:50. In this phase, I added a new duty to my man's role. I was the guy who counted to 10 during each push. . .

"And the top of this little baby's head would slide to the opening, then sloosh back up the birth canal. Oh, so frustrating! Time and time and time again. Oh, I felt so bad for Barbara. She was trying so hard, valiantly hard, but half her pushes were ineffective. She had to figure out exactly which pushing movement worked, and finally she did, and at last could put all that intense effort to good use.

"I knew she was giving it all she had and I just hoped to God it would be enough. At about 10:30, the doctor warned us that she

would have to use forceps if the baby didn't come out in half an hour. That was when Barbara really threw herself into it — straight into the center of her intense pain. And the head kept emerging, more and more, centimeter by centimeter. Then the doc did an episiotomy — zip! — and on the next push the head came out. And within a few seconds the rest of the body followed, schloop! Slippery, purple body. And the look on Barbara's face was tearful, disbelieving joy, the wildest joy imaginable. Bring on the champagne, please!"

This is a mini-description of the agonizing complexity of birth — of life! — and of course the complexity of having a newborn continues well afterward. But I leave it here for the moment in order to acknowledge not simply the uniqueness but the cooperative effort involved in every birth, and the danger of something going wrong. (We learned, for instance that one of our Lamaze-class members' tailbone cracked just as she was giving birth, after, good Lord, a four-day labor process.)

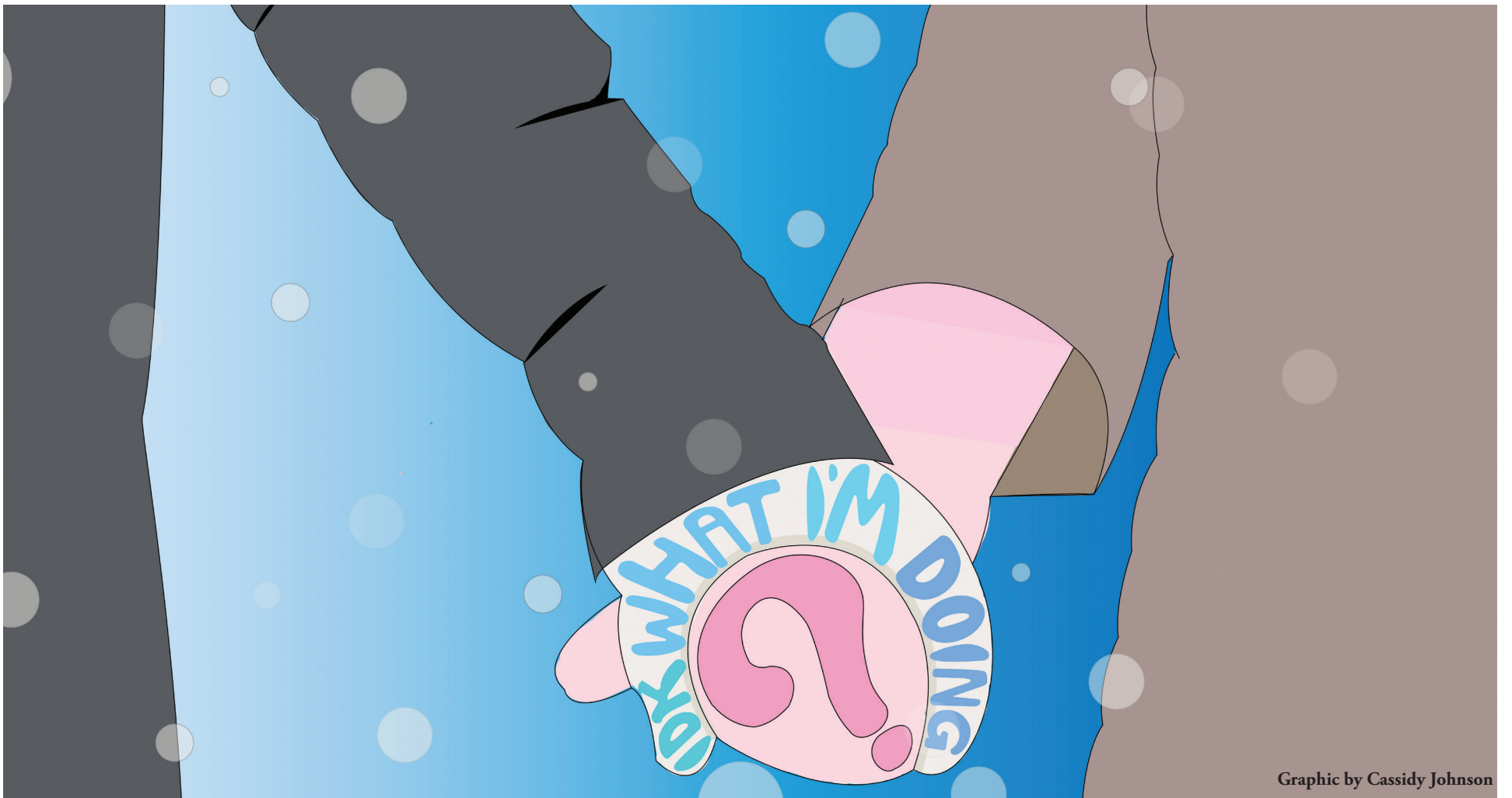
So much is unknown. And the spread of anti-abortion laws across the country since Roe was overturned have put doctors in fear of

helping women in serious danger. Sometimes even if the fetus has died in utero, the pregnant woman will simply be sent home and told to wait it out, i.e., give birth to a corpse, rather than have the fetus surgically removed.

A New Yorker story about the Lone Star state notes: "After Roe was overturned, the laws in Texas tightened further, so that abortion was banned at any phase of pregnancy, unless the woman was threatened with death or 'substantial impairment of a major bodily function.'"

But proving this to be the case might be difficult, if the doctor is charged with performing an abortion. "Violations could send practitioners to prison for life." So the endangered woman receives no medical intervention. Some women die.

This is virtually beyond comprehension, at least to me (and millions of others). Giving birth is a serious, deeply spiritual and often dangerous choice. Simplistic laws have no place in the process, especially when they interrupt proper medical care and crucial intervention. Life is too precious to be left in the hands of bureaucrats.



Graphic by Cassidy Johnson

It's finally cuffing season: *And none of us have any clue what we're doing*

By Cassidy Johnson
johnsonca51@uwosh.edu

Maybe it's the holidays, the desire to have a plus-one to your family gatherings, the seasonal depression, or just longing to have somebody keep you warm from the bitter Wisconsin winter. Whatever the cause is, we have officially entered what is known as "cuffing season."

Likely a biological adaptation from times when finding a partner was sometimes required for one's survival during the colder months, the phrase is used to describe the time period between October and March in which people gravitate towards something more permanent than the short-term flings of the summer and spring.

Although it is unknown exactly when and by whom this phrase originated, the earliest use was found in 2011, published in a college newspaper. It's cool to know somebody's documenting the conglomeration of trends our generation creates!

While our generation may be able to figure out how to churn out

trends like Elon Musk and his Tesla trucks, we cannot seem to figure out love. We can make trends and coin phrases about it, but that's about it.

We can't seem to agree on whether dating comes before or after being exclusive, and if being "a thing" comes before or after dating. Matter of fact, we don't even know what being "a thing" means.

Is a "thing" the same as dating, or is it different? Is "talking" the same thing as having a "thing", or are those two different things as well? I'm just as confused as you are.

There's absolutely no order of operations, and definitely no method to this madness. We have men and women who are working a girlfriend/boyfriend shift on a sneaky link salary, and we have the other party staying to take advantage of them.

Hell, we have situationships that last longer than some engagements nowadays.

How did we get here? Men used to write sonnets about women, ask for their family's blessing, hold their hand, carve wooden spoons

for them – now, men write objectifying rap songs about women instead of sonnets and grab their asses instead of their hands.

Did you know that, according to Refinery29, men in 17th-century Wales used to carve wooden spoons with their family name and designs of their love to show that they were ready to move past flirting. Now, you'd be lucky to receive that as a birthday or anniversary gift in a committed relationship.

Now, to be fair, men in England and Belgium also used to put an apple under their armpit, sweat on it, and then give it to their crush to show their love. So, maybe traditional courting isn't the solution.

In order to find a solution, however, we must identify how this all happened.

A lot has changed since the 17th century, one major change being feminism. The feminist movement has provided women with more romantic, financial and sexual agency. While amazing, this has definitely changed dating standards.

As a result, men are either confused by what their role is, threatened by an independent women

or just apprehensive to initiate the relationship, nevertheless the first meet-cute out of fear of doing something wrong.

The Andrew Tate-ification of this generation's male population has also lent to this issue. Lots of vulnerable men — men that often feel threatened by independent women — are being brainwashed into believing that they need to be an Alpha-male archetype and perpetuating stereotypes that they are obligated to sex.

At the end of the day, no one person is to blame for this change. Some men are too controlling while others are too submissive for fear of rejection, and women can indeed be rude or dismissive towards pursuers for fear of their life and don't always take this feminist agency in their dating life.

Instead of blaming each other, we need to get on the same page.

We don't need to bring back the whole courtship process or the old, puritanical ideology surrounding women, marriage and sex. Instead, we should simplify, streamline and modernize the dating process into something we can all agree on.

Moreover, we must bring back some of the respect on both sides. That includes more honesty.

Basically, we need to cut the bullshit. We must start communicating our intentions and stop playing games and using people as commodities or back-up plans.

Not only is it immature, but incredibly dehumanizing. I'm sure you've been in situations where you were on the other end of this treatment, so put yourself in their shoes. Nobody deserves to be used, especially not romantically.

At the end of the day, don't worry too much if neither you nor your crush know what you're doing. If it's meant to be, it'll happen — no matter how complicated.

Moreover, remember that the steps are just a guideline. You don't need to follow the books, just do whatever feels right. After all, the "books" aren't very reliable anyways.

However, if you're looking to get straight to the magic with that special someone in this holiday season, being honest and forthcoming is a great place to start in order to have a successful cuffing season.

“Whatcha Think?”

What holiday traditions are you looking forward to this winter break?

Alex Thao

“My favorite holiday traditions are doing white elephant for Christmas or playing games like picking up money with a spatula while blindfolded.”

Jodie Burns

“Getting together all of us women in the family and designating who makes which cookie. Together, we make around 20 different kinds of Christmas cookies together. We had the ones filled with jam, the rolo cookies — so many different kinds.”

Jaylen Hill

“I would say watching ‘A Christmas Story’ Christmas Eve with my mom and dog Allis would be my favorite holiday tradition.”

Erica Krommer

“My favorite Christmas tradition is that every year my Grandma Wysocki always gets me and all my cousins matching pajamas to take a picture together. My other favorite tradition is my Grandpa's Christmas omelette. It's controversial because there's spam, but I swear on everything I love it's the best omelette in my life.”



Top Writers

- 1. **Jacob Link**140 stories
- 2. **Nolan Andler** 35
- 3. **Cassidy Johnson** 29
- 4. **Kelly Hueckman** 24
- 5. **Anya Kelley** 21

Website Visits

130,661

Stories Written

451

Biggest Stories

- 1. **Leave it to Leavitt to leave us**
- 2. **UWO announces academic restructuring plan**
- 3. **UWO Fox Cities to close its doors in 2025**
- 4. **UWO sees biggest drop in enrollment**
- 5. **Gymnastics win third-straight NCGA championship**

