THE JOURNAL

For one graphic designer, love of music and art mixes together

Lifestyle



Track athlete wins first in SLIAC Indoor Track **Championships**

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Commencement ceremony goes virtual, seniors left wondering why



CHARLOTTE RENNER / The Journal

This is what graduation will look like again this year at Webster University. The university decided that the commencement ceremony will be virtual this year, similar to 2020's ceremony. In a statement, the university said it's working on "enhanced features" for this year's graduates.

By Jenna Jones Editor-in-Chief

Part of the reason Abby Anderson chose to go to Webster four years ago was the graduation ceremony at the Muny.

So, when she opened Facebook on Feb. 25, she was disappointed to see Webster had posted an announcement: there would be no in-person ceremony at The Muny for the 2021 graduates.

"It feels horrible to see the news on Facebook first and to see so many other larger schools having ceremonies for their grads in safe ways," Anderson said.

The university's statement cited the restriction of large gatherings in St. Louis County as the reason for moving the ceremony online.

Anderson commented on the post, criticizing the university for posting the statement on Facebook instead of emailing graduates first. Anderson also pointed out the university was holding in-person classes and The Muny will be putting on shows during their summer season. Anderson's

comments were similar to that of student Catherine Boren, a senior secondary education social science

"I am very mad about their decision. I get last year was very different because we didn't know much about COVID," Boren said. "However, now I feel they're playing it too safe by saying no [in-person] graduation at all. Especially since high schools held graduations last year who had a bigger

graduating class than we did."
Boren started a petition citing these reasons and the fact that another tier for vaccinations will open in mid-March. Her petition calls for Webster to re-evaluate its decision closer to May or for the commencement ceremony to be pushed off until the summer after more vaccinations have happened.

"Us seniors have already been through enough, having to go our entire senior year through this pandemic, don't take our graduation from us as well," Boren wrote in the petition.

> See Graduation Page 2

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference has record-breaking year

By Cas Waigand Managing Editor

Webster hosted its sixth Annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference from Feb. 23 to Feb. 25. The conference focused on having constructive conversations about diversity and inclusion.

Keynote speakers included transgender activist Charlotte Clymer and Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors.

Panels and lectures touched on current topics such as Black Lives Matter. Cullors's panel was titled "When they Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Dialogue with Patrisse Cullors." Cullors spoke on Wednesday, Feb. 24. Clymer closed the first night of the conference on Feb. 23 talking about being trans in a post-Trump era.

Other panels touched on issues which have found less discussion in the mainstream media, such as Maryam Laura Moazedi's "The Urgent Need for a New Narrative on Ageing." During the lecture, Moazedi talked about how we see

Students can see the full discussion nere.

There were also panels and discussions with current Webster students. On Feb. 24, a panel titled, "Voices of Diversity: Global Student Leaders" brought seven students from campuses across the globe together to discuss diversity. On Feb. 25, Webster student Nae Lowery and her family.

On YouTube, Webster presented the Champion for All Awards to Mayor Ella Jones, mayor of Ferguson, Missouri, and Valerie E.

Vincent Flewellen, chief diversity officer at Webster University, said the conference received over 2,000 registrations. The event had 48 speakers. According to Flewellen, 15 were students at Webster, which is the highest number of student voices DEI has had.

Flewellen said he was excited to see the conference grow and is now looking to future events.

"We will be challenged to outdo ourselves, but I am looking forward to partnering with Chancellor Stroble and members of the 2022 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Planning Committee to begin work on our seventh annual conference," Flewellen said in a statement.

See Page 3 for more coverage on conference



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONFERENCE / Screenshot Patrisse Cullors speaks to Webster students Grace Gilliam and CJ Berry on Feb. 24. Cullors led a panel titled "When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Dialogue with Patrisse Cullors."

Student-athlete works to balance two sports as seasons overlap

By Kelly Bowen Staff Writer

Wake up, workout, shoot hoops, eat, shower, go to class, do homework, shoot hoops, soccer practice, basketball practice, eat again, ice muscles, lights out and go to bed.

This is a regular day in the life of Mark Moore, a freshman

on the Webster men's basketball and soccer team.

Due to COVID-19, the basketball season was pushed back and collided with the soccer season, forcing some two-sport athletes at Webster to prioritize one sport over the

Moore always wanted to play basketball in college until the men's soccer coach, Michael Siener, saw him play and told him he could play both sports at Webster.

"[Moore] is extremely focused and organized. With his background of playing multiple sports in the past and juggling work along with everything he does, I knew it would be a challenge to do both schedules,"

Siener said, "but he is probably in the minority of student athletes that can pull it off and not be very overwhelmed."

As of right now, Moore is prioritizing basketball over soccer. He is putting in a lot more work for basketball and will miss the first two soccer games to play basketball.

get playing time in soccer games because if someone plays well at practice and I'm not there, I really can't show what I can do," Moore said. "It's something I just have to live with because of what I choose and something I knew would happen going into

Moore was a versatile athlete "It might be difficult for me to in high school. For soccer, he was First Team All-State, Conference Player of the Year, Regional Offense Player of the Year, among many other things. For basketball, he was a twotime All-District Nominee and First Team All-Conference his senior year.

See Overlap



band together and also recorded a song together for Duke's new EP, "love letter."

Musician Keshon Duke plays piano while vocalist Grace Robertson sings behind him. Duke and Robertson play in a

JENNA JONES / The Journal

From voice memos to EPs, student Keshon Duke has grown as an artist

By Robby Floyd Sports Editor

In one of the band member's basement, next to the washing machine and cat litter, Keshon Duke met for the first time with three friends to jam as a band. The group called themselves Hazel Avenue, after the street that West Hall dormitory sits on.

Duke was living there when he met Grace Robertson and Ben Shafer. It was fellow audio production major Aden Biggs' basement where they all met to record as a band the first

Hazel Avenue was the culmination of a lot of hard work for Duke, who had taught himself how to play instruments since sixth grade.

He learned to play bass in

the middle school orchestra before picking up drums later. When he got to high school, Duke realized he wanted to learn the piano.

"I always wanted to add [piano] to my arsenal," Duke said. "I started going to the practice rooms and basically started self teaching. I taught myself bass, drums and keys up until this semester."

Duke had never taken a music lesson prior to this

semester. He would watch some YouTube videos to master techniques or pick up small details, but he mostly just listened to other music.

After listening to hundreds of hours of music, Duke got a feel for each genre and what elements he wanted to put in his music style.

Learning piano was a transformative time for Duke. Not only did he pick up a new instrument, but learning piano also made him better at other instruments.

"One of the maestros at my church told me when you learn organ and piano, it helps you learn everything else," Duke said. "I started to understand every note. Like when I'm playing bass, if I don't know what the route note is, I just look at what the piano player is doing and I can find what note I'm supposed to be on."

Robertson shares Duke's love for music and agrees with the importance of piano.

Visit our website for more.



No more days off: Will remote learning kill the snow day?

Severe winter weather leaves students stranded at home

By KATE McCracken Staff Writer

This past week, St. Louis received a snowstorm the likes of which many Webster students have never seen. The National Weather Service issued a "Winter Weather Advisory" on Monday, warning of dangerous road conditions and deadly temperatures, and recommending limiting outdoor exposure to less than 30 minutes to avoid frostbite.

Frigid conditions of 5 degrees, paired with accumulations of snow more than 2 inches, have not happened in the St. Louis area since 1912, according to a tweet from the National Weather Service.

With Webster's sixth week starting among inclement weather not before seen in our lifetimes, the university chose to move classes online for Feb. 15 and Feb. 16.

Does this virtually signal the end of the "snow day?" With Zoom being a familiar platform for off-campus learning, students no longer need to physically come to campus for class. Some instructors of in-person classes chose to cancel class altogether.

Senior Nickol Wahby, a biology major, said while her lectures moved to Zoom, her labs were

"Since people couldn't get in and you can't really do [labs] virtually, they all got canceled. I guess a lot of the practical part of my classes was canceled because labs are the only hands-on thing we have now," Wahby said.

As of Wednesday, Feb. 17, Webster was back to normal operations. However, not all roads across St. Louis had safe driving conditions.

"It would take me over an hour to get out of Fenton, not even counting trying to get to Webster on top of that. We have a lot of hills, and they don't get plowed a lot. A lot of the time, it's community members buying salt and salting their own roads and helping people get up hills when they get stuck," Wahby said. "For me, it's just not worth risking getting into a car accident."

Commuter students are not the only ones affected by the icy roads; students who live on cam-



CAS WAIGAND / The Journal

Webster Gorlok statue was surrounded by piles of snow on Feb. 18. Webster called off in-person classes on Feb. 15 and Feb. 16 due to the winter weather.

pus and go home over the weekend had similar issues.

Freshman Brady Stiff, who lives in West Hall, was staying at his house the weekend the snowstorm hit and travel from home to campus was impossible.

"The snow came in on Sunday night ... so I wasn't on campus the entire week because I was snowed in," Stiff said.

Similarly, junior Alexis Williams was at her home in Fenton over the weekend and was unable to return to her dorm in East Hall on Monday.

"With the roads being icy and then if it's steady snowing, I can't get anywhere," Williams said.

Since many roads were still not cleared, some instructors of on-campus classes gave students the option of attending on Zoom. Others held on-campus classes with the opportunity to make up what was missed if a student could not attend due to weather.

Julie Smith, an instructor in the School of Communications, teaches one on-campus class. Smith said she heard from several students this week who could not make it to class because of transportation troubles and road conditions

"I typically do not do half-Zoom, half in-person classes. I either do 100% Zoom or 100% in-person," Smith said. "Everything is on Canvas, and I encour-

age them to look over the material that we went over in class and ask me if they have any questions, and I will follow up with them in the next class."

Many students who had the option, or were required, to tunein via Zoom have become accustomed to attending class in situations where meeting in the traditional, in-person setting is

It would take me over an hour to get out of Fenton, not even counting trying to get to Webster. It's just not worth risking...

Nickol Wahby
Webster student

impossible (for example, during lockdowns in March last year). Several majors are offering only hybrid classes.

Advertising and Marketing Communications major Ben Sullivan said his classes were not impacted by the weather, as they are all hybrid. However, Sullivan expressed the shortcomings of moving all classes to strictly Zoom.

"If anything, it was just not

that optimal to sit for 8 to 10 hours on Zoom some days," Sullivan said.

Williams said her classes were not affected. Since she is a Business Administration major, most of her classes are either hybrid or online.

For students in majors with all-hybrid courses, it is not class changes they are impacted by; it is work. While class attendance was not a problem for Williams this week, she could not make it to campus on Wednesday for her job as a building assistant.

"I haven't been able to get to campus since I live 45 minutes away, so the snow has really been affecting my job," Williams said.

Campus buildings were closed on Feb. 15 and 16, so there were no building assistants on campus.

Stiff, who also works as a building assistant, shared similar concerns with Williams.

"I couldn't get here. I couldn't go to work," Stiff said. "Wednesday [Feb. 17], I couldn't drive up and had to get someone to cov-

Weather forecasts by the National Weather Service predict a warmer-than-average Spring season, with temperatures in March skyrocketing after a chilly

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of learning when snow hits

Schools shift to alternative method

By Cas Waigand Managing Editor

Around the St. Louis area on Feb. 15, students woke to a blanket of snow covering the ground. A list of school closures scrolled across the bottom of TV news stations. This year, announcements for remote learning made an appearance on the bottom of the screen as well.

School districts across the country have adapted to online learning in the face of COVID-19. But with this year's snowy weather, these districts are faced with a question: will remote learning put an end to the traditional snow day?

Emily Gentemann is a graduate student at Webster University and a fourth-grade teacher at Dewey International Studies – part of the St. Louis Public School district. She felt schools will shift to virtual days during inclement weather moving forward.

"I think once we started virtual teaching and virtual learning, we are stuck there," Gentemann said. "I think the day of snow days is kind of lost and in the past, especially because students now have all that access to technology and the resources are there. So why wouldn't we utilize it?"

Basiyr Rodney, an associate professor of educational technology at Webster, said he also believes snow days are changing. He said the pandemic helped school districts realize students can learn outside of a school building. COVID-19 has shown students can learn and complete work from home.

Missouri requires students receive at least 174 days of education during the school year. Gentemann and Rodney agree turning snow days into virtual days will keep schools from losing educational time. Gentemann said this remote option will keep schools from needing to make up days later.

Despite the flexibility remote days offer, Rodney

said he also sees the appeal of snow days. He said snow days give children the opportunity to get outside and play.

"I mean we were all under snow, so it doesn't have to be, 'let's learn math.' We're distracted by what's happening outside. So go outside, enjoy outside and then come back in," Rodney said, "after a cup of hot chocolate or something, and then we can talk about the subject matter and maybe how this connects to the subject matter."

Gentemann said getting extra personal time to relax during snow days provided a mental health day for teachers and students alike. However, she thought the benefits of keeping students engaged and finishing the school year made losing a surprise off day acceptable.

"As a teacher right now, we are very tired and exhausted and drained, but we are here to do what's best for kids," Gentemann said. "What is best for kids is to keep them engaged and keeping them learning. Virtually right now, though, that is the biggest hurdle that we are all working on."

For Gentemann, her biggest challenge with remote learning is keeping students engaged. She said students would be engaged when the class worked through a lesson together. However, she said difficulties arise when she gives students time to work on assignments alone. Only about a third of the class gets the work done before the group call resumes, according to Gentemann.

"They're distracted because when they unmute, you hear so much going on around them," Gentemann said. "The difference of being in school and at home is just a drastic thing for them that they aren't, they know that they have an assignment, but they don't complete it."

Visit <u>our website</u> for more.



54% of schools did not have a pandemic plan before COVID-19

By Kelly Bowen Staff Writer

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the last time the U.S. shut down schools across the country was in 1918 when the influenza pandemic hit.

While schools reported high percentages for a plan in case of a natural disaster or an active shooter, data shows that the majority of schools were initially unprepared for COVID-19. In the 2017-2018 school year, only 46% of U.S. public schools reported a written plan in case of a pandemic.

An associate professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Florida, Chris Curran, explained why most schools did not have a procedure.

"Compared to other crisis situations like natural disasters or school shootings, we have to go much further back in history to find an example of a pandemic that caused widespread disruption to public schoolings in the U.S.," Curran said. "...more recent outbreaks of infectious diseases have tended to be more contained. So, like most of us,

the possibility of a pandemic as disruptive as that caused by COVID-19 was just not salient."

Webster Groves School District (WGSD) did have a plan prior to the 2020 pandemic. The original plan included information on how to respond if a student or staff member had symptoms, what organizations they would work with, and how they would determine if they should close schools.

Between 2008 and 2010, the number of schools with a plan in response to a pandemic almost doubled. In 2010, 69% of schools had a procedure in response to the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak. Since then, the number has slowly decreased

number has slowly decreased.

"The decrease in the percentage of schools with a response plan since 2010 likely reflects a decreasing perception of the risk of a pandemic. To some extent, the trend in the data may also reflect decreasing awareness of existing plans. It may be that, in some cases, plans existed, but school administrators were less aware of them over time because of decreased attention to pandemics as a threat," Curran

said.

Even with a plan in place, WGSD still struggled at first. In a short amount of time, they had to help give students access to computers who did not have devices at home and ensure food services were available, among other things.

"While the district has dealt with infectious diseases before, this was different because our district and the others in the county decided to shut down over spring break. We'd started making plans for how we'd offer virtual classes before the decision was made and had

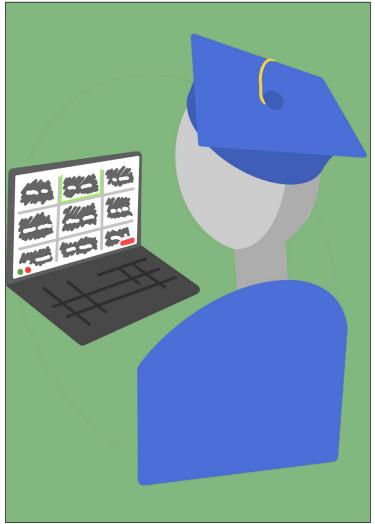
to finish those plans over the break," chief communications officer, Cathy Vespereny said.

WGSD currently has the option of allowing students to attend in-person classes or learn virtually, with 74% of students choosing to learn inperson.

"Ultimately, it is about trying to strike a balance that keeps people safe but also minimizes the harms to learning of disrupted schooling," Curran said.

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Graduation from Page One



Graphic by Kenzie Akins Maryville University will also

Boren and Anderson both suggested the university consider breaking the ceremony up by school and holding the event outdoors with attendees wearing masks.

This is similar to the approach Mizzou will be taking. Its 2020 graduates will kick off festivities the last weekend of April, hosting the first ceremony. The following two weekends will be dedicated to the 2021 graduates.

Missouri State University will follow a similar procedure, according to its website. It will be hosting two ceremonies, staggering graduate ceremonies at different times and days. Attendees will be required to wear masks.

Northwest Missouri State University offered its graduates three options: participate in one of two ceremonies held on May 7 and 8 with a cap of 175 graduates and two guests per graduate; participate in a ceremony held in the fall of 2021; or, not participate in graduation and have the university mail their graduation items such as their diploma and regalia.

The University of Missouri
- St. Louis (UMSL) and
Marvville University will also

be holding virtual ceremonies. Saint Louis University and Washington University have not announced their 2021 commencement plans yet.

A representative for Webster directed The Journal to the statement the university made when asked about the decision-making process and suggestions the students had brought up.

Webster junior William Legens agrees with the university's decision to move the graduation online.

"I think it is the safe decision. It saves, most importantly, people from risk of getting sick, but also it saves Webster from liability," Legens said.

Kaleigh Finney graduated in December but was planning to attend commencement in May. She agreed with Boren and Anderson, saying the university has different options to work out graduation and feels like the university didn't look into it enough.

The statement by the university said the administration has been monitoring the situation in anticipation for the virtual ceremony and "[has] been monitoring local conditions

and public health restrictions amid the pandemic, while also pursuing contingency plans to hold an online-only ceremony, as took place for the 101st Commencement in May 2020."

However, senior Samuel

Wobbe said he does not understand why the ceremony could not be outdoors.

"By May, lots of people will have had the vaccine and they usually have it at the Muny if I'm not mistaken. Masks on, seats between families, departments split up and outside? Feels doable," Wobbe said. "It just seems strange at this point not to do it, considering all we know and the way that COVID is trending. I'm kind of sad that I won't be getting a traditional graduation or photos while most of my friends from other schools will. Especially when it seems solvable."

In a press statement, St. Louis County said it wants tp vaccinate roughly 10,000 people a week if given enough doses. This would put the county at roughly 100,000 doses by the day of the

commencement ceremony.

Boren argues Missouri cases have seen a decline, as well as St. Louis County cases.

December 2020 saw a high of 1,004 cases, while February has only seen a high of 301 new cases reported. Legens said there are too many unknowns at this point in the pandemic.

"We have no idea how the future of the pandemic will play out," Legens said. "Will the vaccines work? Will enough people have the vaccine by then? Will there be a second strain? Unfortunately, pandemics don't last for a couple of months like some people wishfully think but can last a couple [of] years."

Finney, however, argues that the unknowns are exactly why Webster should not have announced the move to a virtual setting yet.

"I want the school to understand how we feel as students," Finney said. "We've worked ourselves to the bone. Most of us [are] working multiple jobs just to afford Webster and now, months in advance, they're deciding to cancel the one thing we deserve to have to celebrate, even though the current situation could change at any moment."

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference goes 'beyond conversation' Multiple panels promote productive conversations, ranging in topics throughout conference

By Kate McCracken Staff Writer

This week, Webster hosted the sixth annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Conference. The conference that was first held in 2016, around the topic "Critical Conversations" was moved to a webinar platform this year.

The 2021 conference features presentations centered around this year's topic, "Beyond Conversation: Driving our Future."

The welcome message from the university on the conference's website states, "Breaking down barriers to success and creating a more liberated and inclusive environment has never been more important than it is at this very

Sarah Hill, President of Student Government Association, hosted a panel alongside Jessica Battle, vice president of SGA, about advocating for those underrepresented in leadership. The panel aimed to address how people in positions of power can support and be an ally to others.

"This is important because DEI involves every single one of us - it cannot be the responsibility of one sole person," Hill said, "We hope that everyone from students to working professionals will benefit from our workshop, because ... each of us, regardless of position or privilege, can make the spaces we are already in welcoming to

For the sixth DEI Conference,

having productive conversations about difficult subjects was the focal point. Panels ranged from discussions on disability, race, sexuality and gender identity and exemplified how those who have struggled overcame adversity.

Freshman Nae Lowery and her family hosted a discussion panel centered around her journey as a transgender woman of color.

"Not everyone listening to my story is African American or trans, but I want them to be able to pick apart something that they can relate to. We are all facing some sort of hardship in life, and I want [my panel] to resonate with other people." Lowery said.

Having faced discrimination, bullying, and ostracization because of her identity, Lowery spent much of her youth hurdling over challenges.

"It's just like going to the grocery store. When my parents go, they're going to the grocery store. When I go, it's more so, 'is my safety in danger'?"

For transgender women of color, the rate of violence perpetrated against them is considered by advocates, such as the Human Rights Campaign, to be at "crisis level." According to the FBI's 2019 Uniform Crime Report, hate crimes against transgender people rose by 20% from 2018, going from 189 victims in 2018 to 227 a year later.

Not only did Lowery worry for her safety, but institutions thought to serve as protectors and supporters mistreated her as well.



Student Government Association President Sarah Hill and Vice President Jessica Battle discuss how they advocate for those underrepresented in

In kindergarten, when Lowery was asked by the teacher to draw a self-portrait, she drew a girl with hoop earrings and a ponytail. At the time, Lowery presented masculine. After the teacher saw the picture, there was a subsequent meeting with Lowery's parents.

"I just remember in my head being like, 'what is the big deal about this? This is me, this picture is me," Lowery said during her panel. "I think I was drawing who I was on the inside, rather than on

For Lowery, she said her experiences as a Black, transgender woman in the city of St. Louis made her stronger.

"Never lose hope. One day, it gets better. It might be tomorrow, it might be five years from now, but when it's there, it's so worth it." Lowery said.

Experiences, stories, and perspectives such as Lowery's showcase the types of conversations and topics Webster strives to nor-

Starting off the conference was Kai Stowers and his presentation, "Mindfulness and Intercultural Communication: Showing Up in Mind, Body and Heart." Stowers' panel set the stage for the rest of the conference; he discussed strategies on how to have healthy communication with people of diverse backgrounds.

Stowers approached his perspective in his panel from his background as a white, transgender man. In this, he realized his plete his Executive Master's Derole as a communicator who has minority identities, but also socially dominant identities.

"Learning and developing in intercultural communication requires a lot of self-reflection and vulnerability," Stowers said. "I'm hoping that if I can show my process and things that I've struggled with, that will help other people understand that this might be hard, not because you can't do it but because it's challenging."

Stowers has worked as a chemist for companies such as Fortune 500 and Genetech, and eventually progressed to coaching mindfulness in organizations. He obtained a certification in Integral Coaching in 2015 and went on to com-

Black Lives Matter co-founder speaks at Webster

gree in Organizational Psychology

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONFERENCE / Screenshot

Webster

& Change Leadership. Having recently started working with educational organizations, Stowers sought to make an impact on students attending his

"I'm hoping [students] can walk away with new tools to use to continue to develop, because we all have things to learn," Stowers said. "Many of us have fear when it comes to navigating conversations across differences. By normalizing it and giving us some tools on how to support ourselves, it can help us be more effective."

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First panel focuses on mindfulness

By Jordyn Grimes Staff Writer

Stowers was the first speaker at the three-day conference. Kai Stowers went to work in his human resources (HR) job one day, knowing his next move would cause friction and tension. That was the day Stowers came out to his work as a transgender man.

"My place of work prided itself on being friendly and warm and welcoming, but it wasn't the kind of place that encouraged employees to rock the boat," Stowers said at Webster's sixth annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) conference.

He shared his experience about coming out as transgender with Webster students on Feb. 23. He spoke at Webster University's DEI conference during a segment called, "Mindfulness and Intercultural Communication: Showing Up in Mind, Body and Heart."

The DEI conference was organized by Vincent Flewellen, Webster's chief diversity officer. "We go into these fields because we want to fix or correct the experiences we had that didn't fit right or feel right, and to ensure others also don't have to experience that," Flewellen said at the conference.

Stowers now works full-time in organization development and diversity, equity and inclusion in the San Francisco Bay area.

Before he began his work in DEI, he worked in HR. This



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONFERENCE / Screenshot Kai Stowers is a trans man. He shared his journey and tips on mindfulness on the first day of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference.

transgender.

Stowers came out to chosen relatives, friends and the women's hockey league he played in. He hadn't come out to his workplace yet.

"It was very clear, to me at least, that asking an organization that hasn't yet started its DEI journey to use male pronouns to refer to someone who is still presenting as female is considered as rocking the boat," Stowers said.

Stowers decided it would be best if he didn't come out to his organization, but by not coming out, Stowers did face challenges.

"I had to tolerate the sandpaper-like grating that comes every time somebody used the wrong pronouns," Stowers said.

Eventually, Stowers' name and gender marker change had come in, and he knew it would be visible to his coworkers. He decided it was time to come out to his organization. Stowers knew coming out would

was after he began identifying as be difficult, so he hired a consultant to help him with the process.

> Zakiya Mabery, a diversity, quity and inclusion strategist also spoke at the event. She discussed disabilities and how practices, language, attitudes and stereotypes have an impact on individuals with disabilities. Jackie Glenn, founder and CEO of Glenn Diversity, Inclusion and HR Solutions, hosted a lecture on the power of allyship.

> A panel discussion on "second chance" employment, referring to those who were jailed and the disproportionate amount of minorities affected by incarceration, was also featured.

> Rounding out the day was one of the keynote speakers, Charlotte Clymer, a military veteran and LGBTQ+ activist, discussed being trans in a post-Trump era.

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By Jenna Jones Editor-in-Chief

Over two thousand people registered for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference this year. Associate dean of students Colette Cummings reported this at the opening of "When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Dialogue with Patrisse Cullors." As the hour-long segment went by, the number of attendees rose from 75 to 140 in a matter of minutes.

The segment featured Cullors, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and two moderators: students Grace Gilliam and CJ Berry.

The two moderators interviewed Cullors about her work, beginning with her book "When They Call You A Terrorist."

Cullors created a young adult's version of the book and when asked about the decision by Gilliam, Cullors explained she felt it was necessary to provide a separate book for the age group.

"Young people are often told they have no agency to change things," Cullors said at the conference. "So my work can tell them they do have the power."

Cullors fielded questions from the audience, as well. The questions for Cullors ranged in topics such as: how to be a better white ally, what Cullors would say to accusations of BLM being Marxist or antifa, what her favorite thing is about being Black and how to have a conversation with



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONFERENCE / Screenshot Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Movement answers questions from the crowd.

your loved ones about BLM.

ence earlier in the session about how they can impact change.

"We can't just be good people," Cullors advised. "We need to change the institutions."

Assistant professor of music and director of music education Stuart Chapman-Hill led a discussion in an earlier session on changing the institution in "Leading and Doing: Anti-racist Curriculum Review and Redesign." The session hosted Chapman-Hill, fellow music education professors and students.

Another panel was "My Space is Your Space" led by Student Government Association (SGA) President Sarah Hill and Vice President Jessica Battle. The two women discussed the recent Youth in Leadership conference hosted. Hill and Battle were not the only two SGA panelists of

the day, however. "Voices of Di-Cullors also advised the audiversity: Global Student Leaders" hosted Yatina Katunga, an SGA graduate senator, along with other student leaders from Webster's international campuses.

> Alex Tha Great, a spoken word artist, preceded Cullors by performing multiple poems then taking questions from the audience. Then, at 7 p.m., it was time for Cullors to speak with Webster.

> Gilliam, the moderator for the discussion with Cullors, was grateful for the opportunity to moderate the discussion with Culllors.

"[Cullors] is so influential to so many communities," Gilliam said. "I am so glad we got to have her here at the Webster University Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference as I believe she embodies all of these things."

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GameStop stocks see instability as Redditors challenge hedge funds

By Caleb Sprous Staff Writer

As we enter the second stage of GameStop's Wall Street drama, we may forget the truly ridiculous ride that led us here. The GameStop short squeeze is a story with multiple characters: a hedge fund CEO, an investor app, a corporation potentially on its deathbed and retail investors.

The Deathbed Corporation

The story begins with the corporation GameStop. GameStop is an American chain of brick-and-mortar video game stores. For years, GameStop allowed gamers to trade-in games they no longer played for small amounts of cash or in-store credit. However, GameStop faced struggles in recent years due to consumers' increased taste for digital distribution.

According Statista, physical game sales accounted for 80% of total tales in 2009. In 2018, digital game sales increased to 83% of total sales.

tastes can be attributed to a variety of factors ranging from convenience to the expansion high-speed internet. Regardless, this posed a severe risk to GameStop's business

Goliath and his Gamble In 2020, GameStop's

problems were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to an unaudited balance sheet created by GameStop in May 2020, GameStop's total assets decreased by nearly 33% from the previous year while their total liabilities grew. Hedge fund managers began to bet against the company.

One of those hedge funds was Melvin Capital, founded in 2014 by Gabriel Plotkin. During an interview with Bloomberg, Plotkin stated the firm had an "intense focus" on short selling.

Short selling is the practice of an investor borrowing shares of stock from a company and immediately selling them. managed a portfolio valued

The change in consumer short seller, is contractually obligated to buy back the stocks by an expiration date.

> As with all investments, there is risk and reward. With the practice of short selling, the reward is in the value of the stock decreasing rather than increasing.

> In simple terms, the short seller hopes to borrow and sell a stock now then buy it back cheaper later.

> However, the risk can be extremely high. Certified Financial Planner Jay Peters, a strategy and allocation specialist with the St. Louis based MSMF Wealth management, explained the

> "If the stock price goes from \$5 to \$10," Peters stated, "[the short seller] just doubled the money he lost."

Peters stated the potential losses short sellers could incur are unlimited.

Before starting Melvin Capital, Plotkin worked for SAC Capital where he This investor, known as the around \$1.3 billion. Plotkin's

investment success translated the bet against GameStop made to his newfound firm, which had returns over 40% in both its first year and in 2017.

Last year, Plotkin's firm landed on the Polish Short Sale Registry because of a short position in the Polish game developer CD Projekt.

The investment paid off after the game developer botched the launch of its highly anticipated Cyberpunk 2077. Plotkin and Melvin Capital's success paid lucratively, earning him \$300 million in compensation in 2017 according to Forbes.

In December 2020, Plotkin spent \$44 million on two adjacent, beachfront homes in Florida.

Melvin Capital was not alone in their bet against GameStop: a report by Investopedia stated the short position adopted by Melvin Capital and other investors accounted for a staggering 139% of existing GameStop shares, meaning some already shorted shares had been re-lent and shorted again. The doubling down on

its equity the most shorted in history.

David Meets Goliath

In the first month of 2021, Plotkin's Melvin Capital began suffering extreme and debilitating losses. By the end of January, Melvin Capital was down 53%. The cause of the firm's quick and prominent downfall stemmed from numerous short bets that soured; the most prominent bet was short selling GameStop.

But how could Plotkin's bet against GameStop fail? How could a firm like GameStop, with a possibly outdated business model, rise in value so quickly? In every regard, it seemed to be more foolish to bet on GameStop than against

A subreddit known as r/ wallstreetbets, an online community Reddit on dedicated to retail investor discussions, had on-andoff conversations GameStop's stock over previous years. Some users had taken

GameStop's addition of Chewy co-founder Ryan Cohen to its board as an indication the company's financials would turn around with the company.

However, some Reddit users and other retail investors began taking notice of the short bets against GameStop.

This is not some form of insider trading or heavily kept secret: information on shorted shares is publicly available on outlets such as Yahoo Finance. Reddit users realized the GameStop short was so extreme that they could force a short squeeze.

A short squeeze is when the price of a stock starts to spike, causing short-sellers to quickly buv-back the stock before the contractually obligated date in an effort to cut their losses.

A short squeeze can be instigated when increased demand for a stock causes its share values to rise.

Visit our website for



Track athlete wins first in SLIAC Indoor Track Championships

By Iland Shurn Contributing Writer

The year of 2020 was unexpected, to say the least, especially for then-junior, Jacob Ridenhour.

He had just qualified for nationals in the 200m for indoor track before the season was brought to an end due to COVID-19. In that same qualifying meet, he had taken No. 11 for the 100m race. Going to nationals was not a new thing for Ridenhour –his sophomore year, he qualified for nationals in the 60m.

"I remember running and not being able to see my time after the race. The only thing I saw was my 6-foot-10-inch coach jumping up and down. That's when I knew I had a good time," Ridenhour said.

Ridenhour grew up in the small town of Jerseyville, Illinois with two older siblings.

Baseball was his sport at the time, but now he would much rather watch the game in person "It's much more fun that way,"

Ridenhour said. The baseball-player-turnedtrack-athlete didn't even start running track until his senior year in high school. Even going into Webster, he was going to play soccer. He eventually gave up that sport his sophomore year to focus on track. Ridenhour, now a senior, runs the 60m,



LARRY RADLOFF / Contributed Photo

Webster athlete Jacob Ridenhour runs past opponents at a track meet.

200m, 4x4, and the open 400m Having people such as The for indoor and 100m, 200m, 4x1,

"Track is the hardest sport I've played, but I love competing and racing people," Ridenour said.

When getting ready for a meet, some might listen to hype music or sad music. Ridenhour, however, prefers to listen to Rock in his ear right before a race prepares him for his meets. That is exactly who he listened to going into the latest meet at Principia College.

Ridenhour ran 6.88 in the 60m which is just under his personal best, and a 22.32 in the 200m, which despite not being motivational videos on YouTube. his best, still ranks sixth in the nation.

Ridenhour's goals for this year are to be Webster's first national champion, qualify for three events to win the team trophy and qualify for the 2021 Olympic Trials in Tokyo, Japan.

Ridenhour, an accounting and finance major, now works an internship at Ultra Electric. He plans to work here after he

graduates. In his spare time, his favorite hobby is playing golf. This past summer he played over 20 times.

Ridenhour also loves country music, playing volleyball and bowling in his free time.

Teammate Sam Baker said Ridenhour is the ideal teammate.

"Jake has been a role

model for me ever since my first day of practice. His humility and driven attitude inspires me to go beyond my limits," Baker said. "Jake is one of the most hardworking people I know and works endlessly every day to perfect his craft."

The St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) Indoor Track Championships was held on Feb. 27at Principia College. Ridenhour took first in the 60m dash running a 6.81, breaking the school record making him the number two runner in the NCAA Division-III this season.

Ridenhour also finished first in the 200m dash, running a 22.35, and second in the 4x400 meter relay, running a 3:31.19.

The team finished second overall for the second consecutive year, and Ridenhour was named the SLIAC Indoor Track Athlete of the Year.

The date for the next indoor meet has not been decided, but due to his times in the 60 and 200m dashes this season, Ridenhour is anticipated to earn an invitation to compete at the Division III Elite Indoor Championships on March 12 through 13.

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Ali Spohr earns a triple-double, one of only two in DIII this year



Ali Spohr sets the ball during a volleyball game at the Grant Gymnasium

on Saturday, Feb. 27. Webster won 3 - 0.

By Robby Floyd Sports Editor

On Feb. 24, Webster University volleyball junior Ali Spohr came just one kill away from a triple-double. She had double digit digs and assists, but just nine kills. A tenth kill would have made Spohr the third volleyball player in Webster history to record a triple-double. The last Webster triple-double was in 2005, by Webster Athletics hall-offamer Melanie Klingelhoefer. Spohr was one kill away from making Webster history.

In her next game, just two days later, she did it.

Sixteen assists. Fifteen kills. Eleven digs.

A year ago, Spohr did not play enough varsity to even think about a triple-double. In her sophomore season, Spohr played in just 21 of the team's 106 sets, playing mostly junior-varsity (JV). This year, Spohr has played every set. Those JV sets did help Spohr improve her game, however. Entering college, Spohr was exclusively a setter.

"Playing JV really allowed me to work on all aspects of my

game outside of setting," Spohr said. "That's where I played my first match as an attacker and learned how to switch my mindset based on what role my team needed me to play."

I'll do whatever I can to throw [opponents], off.

Ali Spohr

Webster volleyball player

Spohr is the starting setter for varsity this year, but when another setter comes onto the court, Spohr doesn't come off. She becomes an attacker, completely switching her mindset and changing her responsibili-

"When I'm setting, I'm pay-

ing attention to the blocking comparing the strengths of my attackers to the weaknesses in their defense. When I attack, I'm focused on my blocker. I want to know their tendencies and which way they like to

Spohr uses the tendencies of her opponents to find weak-

"I'll do whatever I can to throw them off," Spohr said. "Like if a blocker overshoots my right shoulder, I know the line defender can't see my that outside blocker."

fore the season that Spohr was headed in the right direction.

"[Spohr] has kept herself in great shape and looks to find her way onto the court this year," Graf said prior to the start of the season. "She is a very hard worker, and I anticipate all her efforts will help her on the court this season."

Spohr was not thinking about the triple-double at all during the game. Webster was playing Spalding, a team that is just behind Webster in the standings.

"We're always just focused schemes," Spohr said. "I'm on that next point," Spohr said. "I'm more happy about the team win [than the tripledouble]."

> The team currently sits third in the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) standings. Spohr is the only member of the SLIAC with a triple-double on the season. She is only one of two players in all of Division III Volleyball with a triple-double this year.

In her next game, Spohr again achieved a double-douhand, so I'll have the right over ble, this time finishing four kills shy of the triple-double. Coach Merry Graf knew be- But Webster got the win, and to Spohr, that's what's most im-

> "I did have a moment after the [triple-double] talking to my parents where I realized how far I had come from the little girl who was scared of the ball," Spohr said. "But other than that, I try not to think about it too much. We have a lot of work to do to achieve our team goals and finish at the top of the conference."

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Overlap from Page One

He also broke a school record for 73 goals and 39 assists in his soccer career at Hillsboro High School.

Both Siener and Men's basketball coach Chris Bunch understand Moore's situation

> Mark is one of the more dedicated and focused players we have ever had in our program.

> > **Chris Bunch**

Men's basketball coach

and communicate with him weekly to try to monitor his

workload. "We understand that Mark will be an important part of both of our programs, so we work together to ensure that he can play both sports without burning him out, so to speak," Bunch said. "Mark is one of the more dedicated and focused players that we have ever had in our program, especially as a freshman." Moore played four sports

in high school, so he is used to having to time manage between sports and school.

He said this year has been easier with COVID-19 since there are not a lot of social events and he can get enough "If I do not get at least nine

hours of sleep, I really feel it the next day," Moore said.

Moore has only one class per day and said it was easier to have online classes because he has more free time to do his schoolwork.

Whenever Moore feels worn out from the day, he thinks about the fact that seasons will not interfere with one another again. He also thinks of his dad.

'When my dad was 18 and in the army in Panama, he was dealing with way worse stuff than I am at 18. I'm just playing sports, so it cannot be that bad," Moore said.

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WEBSTER SPORTS SCORES



Baseball

Feb. 27 at Wartburg Win 5 - 0 Feb. 28 at Wartburg Loss 3 - 5



Volleyball

Feb. 20 at Greenville Loss 0 - 3 Feb. 24 at Eureka Win 3 - 0 Feb. 26 at Spalding Win 3 - 1

Feb. 27 at Iowa Wesleyan Win 3 - 0





Feb. 24 at Greenville Loss 66 - 71

TODAY'S SCHEDULED GAMES





Women's Basketball **Spalding University**



Fontbonne University



Men's Basketball Fontbonne University

Graphics by CAS WAIGAND

LIFESTYLE

Webster students create clothing to connect with others

By Cas Waigand Managing Editor

Webster student Taylor Zarr began thrifting and upcycling clothes out of her love for sustainability. She said her main motivation, even when sharing her creations, is not about making money. Gabriel Peppers, another Webster student who started the clothing brand "Dayzed," felt the same way.

For both students, creating and designing clothing is a way to connect with and inspire others.

Driving motivation

Zarr is a philosophy major with an emphasis in arts and creativity. In one of her courses, Zarr said the class discussed the idea of whether art can have a practical use. She thought it could and she used clothing as an example.

"Everyone's wearing some sort of piece of clothing," Zarr said. "We use it as a form of expression, whether it's plain monotone clothing or something crazy and extravagant."

Peppers' clothing brand, along with his graphic novel called "Topia Ending Days," are expressions of the subconscious mind. He also focuses on peoples' thoughts and feelings.

For the clothing brand, Peppers said he was particularly struck by seeing posts on social media where people expressed

their feelings. He said seeing people also express their feelings and thoughts on social media inspired him to put designs on black backgrounds, as he was trying to reflect the look of social media posts. Overall, Peppers said he wanted to create a personal brand.

"Think about any movie animation, cartoon or hit songs. Those are the best when they target and when you can relate to them," Peppers said. "Anything has to be relatable in order for it to be very good and true. And it's all naturally going to be good because that audience can relate to

Webster student Austin Davis has been a model for some of Peppers' designs. Davis is an animation major and has not been involved in modeling before. However, he said he wanted to be involved because he felt Peppers created a brand people could relate to.

"He has one that talks about how the days have been since COVID Zoom, repeat, eat because everyone's been doing that," Davis said. "It's something that I can relate to - everyone can relate to - and everyone is able to just probably connect better because we all have been through the same experiences."

For Zarr, thrifting and up-

cycling clothes came from her desire to avoid "fast fashion." Michael Brady is a philosophy professor who teaches environmental ethics at Webster University.

He said clothing relating tasks like production and transport contribute to about 10% of global carbon emissions. That percent is mirrored in a 2018 press release from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which also estimated the fashion industry is responsible for 20% of wastewater.

There's just a whole lot of messed up things with the fast fashion industry," Zarr said. "So to remove myself from that as much as I can, and then also support the other side of it and use the clothes that are already here on this Earth to create less waste and new items is the whole part

Along with sustainability, Zarr said she also wants to share her creations with others and inspire

Brady said in order to overcome the negative environmental impacts of "fast fashion" it is important for people to educate themselves, learn and make individual decisions to change their habits. Changing habits and behaviors, however, can take time.

Brady said coming together in groups to stand up against the



CAS WAIGAND / The Journal

Webster student Taylor Zarr displays a pair of pants she made from a blanket. Zarr upcycles and thrifts out of her love for sustainability.

current system can have even more of an impact.

"If you and I can get a bunch of people to not do that," Brady said, "to think about the habit or learn about the habits through an article or a class, or just talking to your friends or whatever, it can start to create like groups of people and then groups are powerful." **Getting Started**

Zarr said she has upcycled and created clothing for others as gifts, and said she considered expanding and making clothes for even more people.

Initially, however, Zarr said she was unsure of whether anyone would be interested in her clothing.

Her cousin, who also helped her get a sewing machine to work with, encouraged her to pursue her idea.

> Visit our website for more.



Program hopes to help young adults stay sober through art

By Jewell Wood Contributing Writer

On Feb. 27, Hope Creates hosted a virtual gala called "Extraordinary Stories of Creative Young Artists in Recovery." The event's goal was to help inspire young addicts to stay sober and provide information for families looking for ways to help loved

The gala included videos highlighting individual stories and a silent auction featuring pieces from program participants. Jeffery Small, TV personality and actor, emceed the gala.

Kathie Thomas, founder of Hope Creates, described the vision of the gala as, "a society that understands addiction, recovery and supports healthy, constructive lives for our recovering addicts."

In 2017, Thomas founded Hope Creates after her daughter's own struggle with addiction. This program was created to empower young adults who were in recovery for addiction through expressive art and the development of entrepreneurial business skills. Hope Creates also provides support for the family of those struggling with addiction.

"Addiction" is preventable if you can work a program and have the support you need to do what you need to do. Just like a diabetic needs to do what they need to do to save their lives, which is what every human being needs to do every day," Thomas said.

Lexy Algiere — a ceramicist, participant in the program and a part of Hope Creates leadership team — has been sober now for about five-and-a-half years. Since being in recovery, she has graduated college and entered into the workforce as an employee



HOPE CREATES / Contributed Photo Lexy Algiere helps paint a tree for a project at the Hope Creates event.

for an environmental consulting firm. She said Hope Creates and Thomas played a major role in where she is at today.

"From a societal view, people who are addicted are weakminded, they don't know how to say no or control their life. That's not it, it's an anomaly. I had a substance put in my body, and something changed," Algiere said. "They say in recovery that this disease either ends with institutions, death or you get sober. And I got the chance to get sober."

Algiere works to help other people who are sober because she got the chance herself. She commends Hope Creates as an avenue to be able to reach other people who are in recovery.

"When I got to Hope Creates, there was this whole other energy about everybody who was there. It was loving, accepting and everyone was so excited to see you. At the same time there was a lightness about everything. With the people there, we could laugh, we could joke and not be so serious and heavy," Algiere said.

Pottery is Algiere's favorite form of art to create. When she learned to create pottery at Columbia College, she was taught in a traditional way. However, since graduating, she gets to be creative and use glazes and textures.

Hope Creates has a Algiere created when she was on an assistantship in New Castle,

Both Thomas and Algiere described addiction as a very isolating disease. Now, during the time of COVID-19, when people are forced into isolation, addiction is more deadly.

Hope Creates has had to change its routine meetings because of COVID-19, but Thomas still tries to bring people together.

"Being together as human beings is critical in the sobriety of people," Thomas said.

For more information about Hope Creates visit https://www. hopecreates.org/about.

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Counseling center wants to start COVID-19 support group

By Alexandria Darmody Staff Writer

The Webster Counseling and Life Development staff has noticed the toll the pandemic has taken on students' mental

"COVID-19 is certainly a shared experience contributing increased isolation, decreased social activity, higher elevations of anxiety and depression, loss of energy, termination of employment and life challenges of biblical proportions," said Patrick Stack, the director of Counseling and Life Development at Webster.

In order to combat this, the counseling center decided to create a virtual support group for students to meet with each other and licensed counselors. Students will be able to share tribulations they have faced during the pandemic. The goal of the group setting is to help students feel a connection they may have lacked during a time where traditional mental health services might not be available.

"Research informs us that group therapy can be an efficacious method of support because of a shared experience," Stack said.

And the virtual format necessarily away from the benefits and connection provided The counseling therapy. center has had online singular sessions since the beginning of the pandemic, and students have taken advantage of the

dio to work freely on projects and

get help and critiques. Doherty en-

joys hearing about his peer's work

him in charge of leading this af-

ter seeing how he interacted with

students at a group critique last

His advisor, Noriko Yuasa, put

and helping them improve it.

spring.

resource. Junior Halani Harber time in the spring of 2018. I has been consistently using the counseling center since last fall.

"Having to social distance and stay home has taken its toll," Harber said. "This was an outlet that let me express my frustration and handle the ongoing pandemic."

Along with being able to air concerns and stresses due to the pandemic—and its effects on the already stressful school and work—the virtual sessions

> 66 [Counseling] has changed my life dramatically by giving me the tools to navigate my life.

> > Halani Harber

Webster student

are meant to help attendees

grow.
"Participants will have an opportunity to share their experiences, both positive and negative," Stack said. "Healthy coping skills will be introduced as effective ways of conquering the COVID Blues."

Therapy, especially in group setting, may seem overwhelming, but the benefits are worth it. Harber exemplifies how hard the process can be sometimes.

"I started using the counseling center for the first

"I like how Michael is so inclu-

sive. He does it so naturally," Yuasa

said. "A lot of students, especially

in art, can be introverts. But Mi-

chael reaches out to people, and

that person feels comfortable talk-

around combining his two pas-

sions: art and music. The art he

creates has a unique, trippy quality

Doherty's own work revolves

used it for a few counseling appointments but didn't feel right at the time," Harber said. "There are several different counselors at Webster. If you try one and it doesn't feel right, try another. They all want to support you and you should feel safe opening up."

Despite the benefits and the sessions being posted on Webster's website, not many students have expressed interest. Because of this, the counseling center isn't yet able to provide the virtual sessions. They need more people to sign up to effectively provide the sessions.

"We have had one student express interest participating in the support group," Stack said. "Therefore, the group has not yet developed."

For anyone interested but not sure, Harber gave advice.

"Just give it a try, you will feel better just being able to talk with someone who cares no matter how small," Harber said. "It has changed my life dramatically by giving me tools to navigate my life."

The group, if developed, is scheduled to meet Tuesdays at 6 p.m. on the HIPAA- compliant program Zoom. To express interest in the virtual support group and get the program started, email Stack your name

Contact the writer: websterjournal@gmail.com

For one graphic designer, love of music and art mixes together

By Charlotte Renner Photo Editor

Senior graphic design major Michael Doherty's life changed forever when he first experienced live music. It was Ozzfest 2007, a metal music festival put on by Ozzy Osbourne. He remembers it as the hottest day of the year.

At 12 years old, Doherty saw mosh pits, got a whiff of marijuana and watched one of the bands set fire to a Bible. In the end, Doherty didn't even get to see Ozzy - he got a bad sunburn and had to leave

"It was pretty crazy stuff to see when you're 12 years old," Doherty said. "My music taste started really intense like that. It still has a degree of intensity."

This experience stirred something in him. He's attended 250 concerts in the last 13 years. Doherty now creates art inspired by and made for the musicians he loves so much.

"It's so amazing to watch a show unfold and not know where the band's gonna take it, but knowing it's going to be incredible," Doherty said. "It's suspending all of your expectations, allowing a band and the crowd to be one and just going for the ride."

Doherty devotes a lot of time



Graphic design major Michael Doherty makes a print in the printmaking studio at Webster University.

and money to music and art. When he's not making art, he's "consuming a ton of music with [his] cats." He jokes that he's finally gotten better about saving money now that COVID-19 has put a halt

"It's priceless," Doherty said. "I wouldn't [do it any other way]

because I've lived my life with the artists and the people that matter most to me."

Doherty now spends a lot of his time at the Visual Art Studios at Webster — he takes classes, works on printmaking projects, fulfills his work study and even hosts an open studio hour on Fridays.

Students come to the open stu-

"I'm trying to break apart patterns," Doherty said. "That's something I've been recognizing -building patterns, recognizing them and then swirling them around."

ing to him."

Most of his work is dedicated to the musicians he loves, like Dead & Company, King Crimson and local St. Louis bands. This brings him closer to his dream of being a graphic artist for a record label.

The peak of Doherty's art career so far was when Dweezil Zappa, his favorite guitarist, reached out to Doherty personally to make text art for him.

'That was a complete shock to me. I was up until like 2 in the morning so psyched," Doherty said. "Then the reality hit me, like 'Oh I really have to do this."

Doherty said he neglected all of his classes that weekend and only focused on Zappa's project.

Zappa used Doherty's finished

project as the text art for his Halloween song release "The Torture Never Stops." Zappa thanked Doherty in a blog post on his website, also wishing him a "belated happy birthday."

"It's really cool to think that in some small way, Dweezil Zappa knows me a tiny bit," Doherty said. "I think it's really great to be recognized for my work by someone that I recognize for their

Being recognized for his work is very important to Doherty.

If a customer is disrespectful of Doherty's creations, he will not work with them. Doherty relates one example where a customer he considered rude offered him \$100 to use his design for a shirt, and he turned him down.

"You don't want to put your design on an asshole's t-shirt," Doherty said. "Or if you do, at what price?"

In a way, Doherty was destined to be a graphic designer for recording artists. He recently found an assignment dating all the way back to kindergarten that affirms

"It's a line I wrote," Doherty said. "I like art and moozic."

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OPINIONS

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The Journal welcomes letters to the editor and guest commentaries. Letters to the editor must be fewer than 450 words. Guest commentaries must be between 450 and 750 words, and guest writers must have their photograph taken to run with their commentaries. *The Journal* will edit all submitted pieces for grammar, style and clarity. If there are any substantial revisions, the writer will be notified and allowed to edit his or her own writing.

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To consistently provide the Webster University and Webster Groves communities with the most current and contextual information using both print and multimedia, while serving as a learning platform for our staff and a forum for our readers.

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It's past time to abolish prisons: Take a look at the CJC protests



By Kieron Kessler Opinions Editor

The City Justice Center of St. Louis (CJC) made headlines with a major protest early February. Photos flooded the internet of protestors in front of broken windows waving for help. The images were of the third protest that has happened at the CJC since December. People being held by the CJC were protesting for their rights to adequate living conditions and COVID-19 protections.

This protest caught the city by surprise because the first two protests were suppressed by the media. As a prison abolitionist, my heart breaks hearing the human rights abuses that have been taking place inside the prison and this protest just proves to me further that the prison system does not work.

The protest took place on the weekend of Feb 7. People in the CJC took over the top floor at 3 a.m. and the protest lasted seven hours. One hundred and seventeen people being held inside the CJC took part in this protest.

In the first protest, which was peaceful, they were hosed down and tear gassed. This followed a removal of personal items because of the tear gas, or so officials say. They had personal documents taken away from them, including birth certificates and documents regarding their cases.

Keep in mind, a majority of the people inside the CJC are awaiting trial. That means a lot of the people inside the CJC have not been proven guilty and taking away those documents makes it more difficult to work on their cases. Some people have been in the CJC for five years while waiting for a trial.

As punishment for the first protest, the people involved were put in "the hole," otherwise known as solitary confinement, for expressing their right to freedom of speech. On New Year's Eve, their pod was filled with 51 people and 24 of them

were known by staff to have COVID-19. The fact that the capacity was at 60 before COVID-19 shows these facilities are not adjusting their normal policies to fit virus precautions, thus putting people in a position where they can literally die because of officials' incompetence.

Well, why hasn't anything started happening until now? Well, letter writing campaigns and peaceful protests were ignored largely by state officials. Some state officials don't even care enough to be aware of what's happening in St. Louis jails, so to me, it is no surprise that peaceful action was ignored and unheard.

This is why we must support people facing incarceration because with incarceration, your right to freedom of speech is seen as removable. Everyone involved in the CJC protests engaged in peaceful protests twice before they broke windows to gain attention from the

Jimmie Edwards, St. Louis Public Safety head, felt the need to call the protest "violent" and "destructive" in press conferences that weekend, while not taking any ounce of accountability for being in a position where he could have done so much more to prevent this third protest from occuring.

If Edwards focused more on the needs of the people inside the CJC than his personal image, then maybe those incarcerated would not have to take over an entire floor just to be heard. This is just one problem with prisons. They are tied to wealthy people or people in high positions who do not have an ounce of respect for anyone on the inside. This leads to human rights abuses and people making money off the prison industrial complex.

The living conditions and lack of policies to deal with COVID-19 were two of the main reasons why incarcerated people of CJC protested.

Since COVID-19 began to spread, people inside the prison were not allowed to see their families and meal nutritional value went down, more so than it already was. They have been denied recreation, as well as adequate medical attention.

The statement released by those involved in the protest alleged that people were forced to mingle with those who visibly had the virus. I say visibly because COVID-19 tests at the CJC had not been occurring until the weekend of the protest.

The St. Louis Department of Public Safety said there were not any confirmed cases until that weekend. However, a



LOGAN NGUYEN / The Journal

The windows at the prison in downtown St. Louis after inmates broke them and set fire to the building in protest.

statement made by the people protesting points out the fallacy in the statement. The key word here is "confirmed." They say this because they were not adequately testing people up until the protests made

Arguments made against the protests by city officials included that the CJC is not overcrowded by state guidelines. The argument was made to negate the arguments of overcrowding pits the protesters described in their statement of needs. While the jail itself was 101 below capacity, the facility was still holding 759 people. This number was decided pre-ĈOVID-19 and there have been no adjustments to the capacity numbers since the virus got to the United States.

According to St. Louis Public Radio, people have used the protest to certify the need for a second facility and better COVID-19 measures, but I think they are missing the point.

Yes, COVID-19 protections need to be a thing in the status quo, but the overall need for a prison in the first place needs to be evaluated.

The fact that the first two protests were so easily ignored leads me to wonder how many prison protests are shielded from us by the media. The prison is set up to ignore and forget about anyone held inside. It should not be this hard for incarcerated folks to communicate that their rights are

being violated.

The prison is made for profit, allowing money incentives to be the goal rather than rehabilitation. Rights can be violated inside the prison without a blink of an

Now, those at the CJC are being transferred to the Workhouse, another facility known for not treating the incarcerated folks inside with human

People have used this protest as a reasoning to advocate to keep the Workhouse, rather than evaluating the way St. Louis handles justice as a whole. The fact that we have two facilities, and both are known for the same problem, leads me to believe that just reforming them will not be enough. We need prison abolition and a focus on rehabilitation.

Inmates are cold and hungry. They need proper care, proper COVID-19 precautions, recreation and visitation rights. Inmates feel as though they are being left to die. Incarceration comes with the assumption that they are mainly BIPOC because mass incarceration targets those communities. Ignoring the needs of inmates can, and has, led to deadly outsomes.

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Pokemon's virtual Post Malone concert leaves fans wanting more

By Sean Mullins Webmaster

Post Malone's Pokemon Day virtual concert, like many virtual concerts before, wasn't as exciting as it could've been. That doesn't mean virtual concerts can't be great, but rather that creators aren't utilizing their unique attributes.

Pokemon began its 25th anniversary with a week of events, including announcements of the highly anticipated Sinnoh remakes, "Pokemon Brilliant Diamond and Shining Pearl," and a new action-RPG, "Pokemon Legends: Arceus." The anniversary includes an album releasing in autumn titled "P25 Music," featuring 14 songs by 11 artists from Universal Music Group (UMG). Opening festivities concluded on Feb. 27, the franchise's birthday, with an animated concert livestream starring Post Malone.

Although virtual concerts aren't a new concept, the pandemic has made them more common. Musicians are turning to livestreams and video calls for the time

While fans eagerly await the day they can hear these performances in person, some audiences find advantages in virtual concerts that physical events can't

For example, the lack of a physical venue makes them more accessible. Online environments allow artists to accommodate disabled fans who can't attend physical events. Not every venue is physically accessible, but virtual concerts can provide a welcome environment from

anywhere. Those with noise sensitivities, including neurodivergent people like myself, can safely attend without experiencing sensory overload. Even those without disabilities benefit from virtual concerts by avoiding exorbitant prices for tickets and travel, which otherwise exclude fans who can't afford it.

These benefits make attendance accessible to more audiences, but the format isn't always enjoyable. For people who attend Zoom calls daily for work meetings, online classes and keeping in touch with friends, another video call can feel drain-

Livestream performances aren't much better, as there's functionally no difference from watching recordings or music videos. Post Malone's virtual concert falls under the latter category and exemplifies many of its weakest aspects.

The performance itself was fine, animated with lush background environments in place of an audience. From an underwater school of Lanturn to a bioluminescent forest filled with Torterra and Shiinotic, the backgrounds complemented a solid performance by Post Malone.

That said, it was comically bizarre hearing him perform "Circles," with lyrics "you thought that it was special, but it was just the sex though" as Lugia casually flew overhead.

Despite the performance and visuals, the concert didn't take advantage of animation. Mimicking a traditional concert, Post Malone's choreography was grounded and simple, limited to walking around a circular platform that moved to different environments like a travelling stage from "Super Smash Bros. Ultimate."

This made for a low-energy contrast with Pokemon in the background, many of whom were stationary or barely moving.

Animation benefits from suspension of disbelief, as audiences can accept complicated musical choreography that can't be done in stage performances. This principle is why musicals are so well suited to animation, and it could've been used to

make a stunning and memorable show. However, this is where virtual concerts tend to fail; they copy the limitations or physical venues out of tradition, leaving audiences with a lesser experience.

After three songs performed over 12 minutes, the concert concluded and left fans wondering why there wasn't more. Even with the marketing campaign and livestream, it felt more like a music video, or perhaps the opening act to a concert for the entire "P25 Music" album.

Why not showcase all the artists, or have a longer concert with music from the games' composers, similar to the "Pokemon Symphonic Evolutions" tour?

Between the rudimentary choreography and disappointing runtime, Post Malone's concert certainly wasn't mediocre, but it showed many flaws that appear when virtual concerts try to recreate physical concerts online.

However, that doesn't mean virtual concerts can't stand out, it just means they need to take advantage of the online setting and make something new. Translating physical concerts only makes audiences miss the advantages of that setting, particularly the interactive environment.

No medium does interactivity better than games, a setting in which virtual concerts are thriving. Following Marshmello's ingame Fortnite concert on Feb. 2, 2019 - a 10 minute show that attracted 10.7 million players - game developers and artists alike have collaborated to hold concerts in online multiplayer lobbies. Minecraft has held live concerts since 2016, and even featured a COVID-19 relief concert by Anamaguchi and American Football in 2020.

While Pokemon games have online multiplayer components, they don't have ioddies even close in scale to Forthite of Minecraft.

The latest entries, "Pokemon Sword and Shield," can barely fit thirty Trainers into Galar's Wild Area without lagging, glitching or accidentally making someone walk on air. However, there is a less resource-intensive option that, at the cost of a larger simultaneous audience, gives a more personal, interactive experience unique to Pokemon.

What I'm saying is that I want to challenge Post Malone to a Pokemon battle.

In "Pokemon Black 2 and White 2," downloadable events allowed players to challenge real competitors from the 2012 Pokemon World Championships as boss battles. Trainers faced off against the likes of Masters Division champion Ray Rizzo and runner-up Wolfe Glick, complete with the teams they used that year. Why not do something similar, but featuring artists collaborating with P25 Music, complete with their collaboration tracks as battle music?

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Biden bombs Syria: Imperialism breeds American ignorance



By Caleb Sprous STAFF WRITER

Nearly 100 years since his death, Vladimir Lenin's theories of imperialism still hold weight. President Biden continues to bomb Syria, following in the footsteps of both former presidents Donald Trump and Barack Obama.

Lenin, simply put, asserted richer, capitalist nations would scour the world looking for resources to devour. Syria asserts the U.S. is stealing its oil. It claims Trump admitted to doing so.

Imperialist wars have the worst effects on humanity. We in the U.S. have become too accustomed to war and death. This leads to regular people wishing death upon their fellow man. A MotherJones report found one-third of Americans would support nuking

North Korea. Essentially, they endorse the mass slaughter of millions upon millions of innocent people.

Whenever we turn on the news, we find new justifications for our own atrocities: human rights abuses, authoritarian leaders, lack of democracy,

This means largely nothing. The U.S. did not support a coup of democratically elected socialist Salvador Allende because they love democracy. The U.S. did not support his tyrannical and brutal replacement, Captain General Augusto Pinochet, because we despise authoritarian rulers.

The U.S. justifies its actions by claiming to combat terrorism. If you question this, you are anti-American or do not support the troops' sacrifices. It is important to recall that over 90% of casualties associated with Obama-era drone strikes were civilians.

Perhaps, to our victims, we are the

Instead of any moral belief system, the U.S. interests are both hegemonic and capitalist.

Those interests typically involve power, enforcing subservience and most importantly: markets. The American people deserve much

more than to let our 1% dictate who

lives and dies and for what resources. Lenin is still right and will remain so.

We are the wealthiest nation in history. Perhaps, instead of using those tools to control other nations, instead of using our resources to enrich very few with great human cost to the many, we could take care of our own? We can



Graphic courtesy of PIXABAY

do better than imperialism. We can live up to the moral code we claim to

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