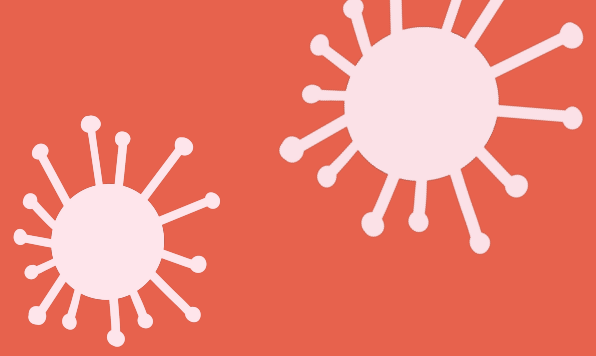


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STUDENT NEWS MAGAZINE

THE CHRONICLE





ISSUE ONE

THE CHRONICLE

The North Central College Chronicle is published once a semester by students of North Central College as a forum for providing news, opinion and information of interest to the campus and the greater community.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Chronicle editorial board or of North Central College.

On the cover

Artwork by Jasmine Pomierski

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Letter from the Editors

In 2019, we were excited for 2020. It was going to be the Roaring '20s again. We could start calling people 'old sport' and wear flapper dresses and fedoras. But before we could even learn how to do the charleston, the Roaring '20s faltered, flapped its wings and dropped like a ton of bricks. It became, as someone's mother called it, the Boring '20s.

Between COVID-19 and the polarized political climate, it seemed as if people were in need of a break. But, we are already on a break, stuck quarantining inside our houses or dorms.

So, instead of taking a break from the world, we decided to embrace it and make this magazine about action. As student journalists, we have more power than we give ourselves credit for.

2020 has been an eventful year, both nationally and globally. A lot of action has been taken and still needs to be taken in order for all of us to get through this year and years to come.

Action can mean a lot of things. It can be related to the literal definition of the word, which is the process of doing something to achieve a goal. It can be the act of doing something physical like sports, or it can be related to entertainment and superheroes.

Right now, as a student media organization, we need to take action in reporting hyperlocal news relating to NCC and the Naperville area, while also looking at state, national and global news from a local perspective.

In this issue, we'll be talking about some important action issues related to voter suppression, mental health action and awareness, protests and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this issue, we want to send the message that action always needs to be taken in order to make this world a better place. We also want to keep it lighthearted and show people that action can be fun when related to sports or movies and entertainment.

So enjoy. Have fun. Take action. End 2020 with a bang. Go into the next year prepared for anything that may come our way.

Stay happy, stay healthy and stay informed.

Jack Plewa

Allison Rott

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At home and out of mind

Allison Rott – Co-Editor-in-Chief
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

We stay away from people in public. We can't see loved ones, and we intentionally isolate ourselves. Anxiety and fear about a new disease, about being sick and about what may or may not happen is overwhelming. With over 200,000 people dead from COVID-19 in the U.S. alone, people are plenty concerned about physical health. Every cough and sneeze in the grocery store causes glares as people step away.

But within our physical bodies lies another obstacle: the mind. Months into the pandemic it seems only now that mental health and the stressors associated with COVID-19 are a concern.

Stress can cause a variety of symptoms, some of which can weaken the immune system. Changes in sleeping and eating patterns, worsening of chronic and mental health conditions and increased use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances are all symptoms of stress. "Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about and your community stronger," the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported.

Zoom happy hours have become iconic with many turning to liquid therapy. According to Winsight Grocery Business, online alcohol sales went up 339% for the week ending May 9, 2020, as opposed to last year at the same time. Alcohol removes all the happy hormones in the body, Tatiana Sifri, director of Dyson Wellness Center, said. "It's like shooting yourself in the foot by using substances." Alcohol does no favors for mental or physical health.

The CDC lists a variety of resources on their page about mentally coping during the pandemic. The resource list includes everything from 911 and the Disaster Distress Helpline, to hotlines for suicide prevention, domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault.

People who may react more strongly to current stressors include those at higher risk for illness, children and teens, essential

workers, those socially isolated and racial and ethnic minority groups.

Sifri finds it surprising that she has only recently started to see a rise in requests for counseling since the pandemic started. People are having a hard time. But only now, months after the first shutdowns began, are students getting comfortable enough to reach out. "Mental health issues are on the rise and are predicted to be extraordinary in the next year and beyond," Sifri said.

The conversation about mental health is at the forefront with college presidents across the country pushing for resources. "It's become a ginormous need in colleges across the U.S.," Sifri said. "For me, what would be really helpful is not just focusing on the physical concerns of COVID but on the mental health aspect of how this pandemic is impacting people right now."

Anxiety and depression are rising. Any previous issues people had are becoming more prominent.



"I would love to see more focus on how we can do prevention work and really build on all the ways we can manage ourselves and manage stress," Sifri said. Basic needs must be fulfilled. Many of the actions required to take care of physical health are the same things required to take care of mental health. "We're all one being," Sifri said. "We're physical and mental and emotional." The things she does for herself boosts not only the immune system but "relaxes my muscles,

which tells my mind I'm safe and okay ... I can reduce my likelihood of getting a cold by relaxing my body."

The impact this pandemic has on our futures is dependent on the person, their circumstances and their outlook on this unprecedented time. "If someone has to isolate, for example, and they are in a household that is abusive, they are going to experience that, potentially, in a very different way than, you know, someone who is in a very safe and loving, calm environment," Sifri said.

Dyson Wellness Center is currently providing telehealth appointments only, but, Sifri said, many prefer an in-person approach. "People are slow to come to telehealth. It's new; it's a little different," Sifri said. "There are different stages of adapting to this whole new way of life."

Introverts and extroverts are also going to be affected differently. Introverted people have been thriving during the pandemic. Opportunities they may have yearned for in the past, such as the option to contribute to classes through an online chat instead of an in-person discussion, are now possible and practical.

Callie Todaro, '23, worries about the scholastic impact COVID-19 is having. Trying to learn from computer screens in a shortened amount of time, she explained, is not ideal. "When you're sitting there, you know, seven hours a day just doing homework on your computer ... sometimes you feel like you're just in the same routine and never getting out of your bubble."

Todaro is extroverted and prefers in-person classes. "It's not the best way to learn but we have to improvise," she said.

"We steer away from taking care of ourselves," Todaro said, and instead are focused on the overwhelming amount of projects and homework for school while trying to do it all in unfamiliar formats. Everything has become a learn-as-you-go process. The time no longer exists to sit down and get a grasp on a specific subject.

Balancing the stress of being a full-time student during a pandemic is not the only thing Todaro struggles with. She works at the campus radio station and Boilerhouse Cafe. "They expect a lot of us as student workers," she said. Todaro also lives five hours away, making it difficult to see family.

"I do worry about my parents most of all," Todaro said. Her dad coaches softball and is an essential worker surrounded by people,

while her mom works from home. Todaro's grandparents are quarantined at home.

"I feel bad that they can't get out and see their grandkids and do stuff that grandparents want to. As they get older, you never know what's going to happen. They're stuck behind closed doors," Todaro said.

Many have had to quarantine at home at some point during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is vital to remember that staying home requires just as much self care and attention to being healthy as being at school or work.

"Step back," Sifri said, when taking care of mental health. It's vital to think about the things that make you happy and to "remember the things that make you feel good," such as music, exercise, sleep and food. It's "so much about the basics first," she said. Even when you can't physically be around people, you can be virtually surrounded by the people you love.

"I will never forget the teacher who taught me 'small hinges open large doors,'" Sifri said. The small things, such as sleeping a few more minutes, treating yourself or taking a short break can significantly impact well-being.

Todaro stays mentally healthy by taking time for herself, reading, biking and having a planner to stay organized.

"When I think of mental health, I think, 'Are you actually taking the time to focus on yourself and satisfy your needs?' And now, I think it's looked at as, 'Are you taking the right precautions?'" Todaro said. "We were never a proactive community; we were always a reactive community."

Todaro is glad she sees this starting to change on campus.

Finding a therapist is also important. For those who cannot afford professional therapy, there are often free support groups, mentors and other resources to turn to. Sifri also highlights the importance of getting help for others and having each other's back. She advises students to use the Early Alert referral found on NCC's website, where students, faculty and staff can identify anyone they think might be struggling.

The COVID-19 pandemic has us stuck at home, in our dorms and going out of our minds.

"We are social beings," Sifri said. "Love and connection is what we thrive off of."

Class: Senior
Sport: Soccer
Position: GK (Goalkeeper)
Major: Marketing
High School: Oswego
Hometown: Oswego, Ill.

MADISON LOCKARD

Madison Lockard played and started 24 games in her two-year collegiate career with the North Central Women's Soccer Team. In 2019, Lockard wrote her name in the Cardinals record book as she posted five shutouts in a season, ranking second in program history with 113 saves. This ranked her sixth in program history. She then earned a Second Team All-CCIW selection. After graduation, Lockard plans to travel around the world while exploring the marketing side of the fashion industry. She eventually plans to own a boutique business. Lockard has taken action by supporting the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the American Heart Association, as well as those who have served in the military. She also plans to give back to NCC athletics.



Gregory Williams – Sports Social Media Editor
Illustration by Jessica Sciabica

SPORTS ACTIVITSTS STEPPING UP AND SPEAKING OUT

OPINION

Erika Rosas-Lopez – Sports Editor
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

For years, athletes have been seen as the stereotypical “dumb jocks,” with their athletic ability overshadowing everything else about them. Professional athletes are not expected to do or participate in anything other than what everyone knows they excel at.

Many movies and TV shows perpetuate this stereotype. Programs like “Friday Night Lights” show that performing well trumps all. Athletes have come a long way and have proven that they are more than just “dumb jocks.”

Recently, athletes have been using their platforms and influencing their fans to speak up about injustice. People like LeBron James and Colin Kaepernick have shown that athletes are more than just entertainers. They are also people who care about what happens to others and what happens in the world.

Athletes have stepped up in many ways this year. One of the biggest ways they have stepped up is financially.

At the beginning of this year, the country was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic that forced many businesses to close temporarily or permanently. It has left people without jobs and unable to pay their bills.

The pandemic forced sports seasons to be postponed until further notice, which left many arena workers jobless. Athletes and sports team owners stepped up to the plate and offered to donate money to cover the wages of arena workers.

Athletes from all sports have made donations. Basketball players like Giannis Antetokounmpo, Kevin Love, Zion Williamson and Blake Griffin all individually pledged to donate \$100,000 to cover the arena workers’ wages. Following suit, baseball and hockey players have also made donations. Whole teams have contributed as well.

Professional athletes make millions of dollars. They see more money than most people see in their entire lives, yet they are willing to pay everyday people’s wages, people they don’t even know. The fact that they are willing to support their

fans is a huge step up. They are able to show that they care about others in this world.

Although they may not have been directly affected by the pandemic, many professional athletes are donating to help those that support them. Helping arena workers financially lets the fans know they care.

New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson said in an Instagram post, “These are the folks who make our games possible, creating the perfect environment for our fans and everyone involved in the organization.” He continued, “This is a small way for me to express my support and appreciation for these wonderful people.”

Not only have athletes given their support financially, but they have also spoken up about injustice. They have spoken up about police brutality against African Americans and the importance of voting.

In an effort to create a safer voting environment, sports arenas and stadiums across the country have become polling locations. The list of stadiums and arenas include the NBA, MLB, NHL and NFL.

“In every city where the league franchise owns and controls the arena property,



team governors will continue to work with local election officials to convert the facility into a voting location for the 2020 general elections,” the NBA said in a statement.

The focus has not only been on creating safe places for people to vote but also making sure that they go out and vote.

More Than A Vote, an organization created by Black athletes and entertainers, aims to inspire African Americans to register and vote in the next election. Athletes in this group include LeBron James, Jason Heyward, Kyle Lowry and Skylar Diggins.

The push to get out and vote came after protests against police brutality broke out across the country. The deaths of George Floyd and Jacob Blake at the hands of police officers created outrage.

In late August, the Milwaukee Bucks refused to play as a way to protest the shooting of Jacob Blake. This sparked a chain of events. Not long after, athletes from all different sports organizations followed the team’s initiative. Sports had once again hit a major pause.

Pro tennis player Naomi Osaka decided to sit out of a semi-final match at the Western Southern Open, stating on Twitter, “before I am an athlete, I am a black [sic] woman.” She continued, “And as a black [sic] woman I feel as though there are much more important matters at hand that need immediate attention, rather than watching me play tennis.”

Putting the Black Lives Matter movement at the forefront, NBA players like Kyle Korver and Russell Westbrook wore jerseys with “Black Lives Matter” across the front and back. Others chose “Say Their Name” as their message. The courts also had the message stamped across them, visible to both the fans and players.

Athletes used their voice and their spotlight to let people know things were not right. They have taken the initiative and have shown they are willing to do something to create change.



BEST ACTION MOVIES

Jack Plewa – Co-Editor-in-Chief

Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER (2001)

Angelina Jolie is by far one of the best female action stars out there. Although she has not played in any action movies recently, young Angie had several outstanding action-packed films. Playing as the popular tomb raider known as Lara Croft, she runs around the globe to save humanity. As an intelligent archaeologist and kickass ex-Royal Marine, Croft is 1000 times better than old-timey Indiana Jones (played by Harrison Ford). With supernatural components and lots of empowering female action scenes, Tomb Raider is a perfect watch for everyone.



EDGE OF TOMORROW (2014)

Have you ever played a video game like Call of Duty and could never beat a certain mission? You keep dying and dying and dying, but each time you get a little farther because you're able to predict what's going to happen? That's exactly what Edge of Tomorrow is like but in a movie. Very similar to Groundhog Day and Happy Death Day, the main character (Tom Cruise) dies every day in a battle against an alien race that is trying to take over the Earth. Every time he dies, he starts the day over again. Although he seems to be the center of attention in the movie, Emily Blunt is the badass soldier on the battlefield. While it feels like a long movie (1 hour and 53 minutes), it is definitely worth the watch.

PRIEST (2011)

In this action-horror film, Paul Bettany plays a fearless priest who is using his God-given abilities to slay vampires in a post-apocalyptic world. Religion is tied beautifully into this film and sends the message that no matter what religious institutions (in this case, the Catholic Church) say is right or wrong, man serves God in the end, not people. Bettany's character defies the church to do what he believes is right while still doing God's will. If you are into the supernatural, this is the movie for you.



UNDERWORLD (2003)

Ever feel like one action movie isn't enough? So, why not five? Underworld will keep you on your toes and captivated to watch the whole series in one night. The word badass is an understatement to describe Kate Beckinsale's role as a vampire Death Dealer who hunts and kills Lycans, or werewolves. In the middle of a war between vampires and Lycans, each movie brings in a new twist that keeps you hooked and eager to keep watching more.

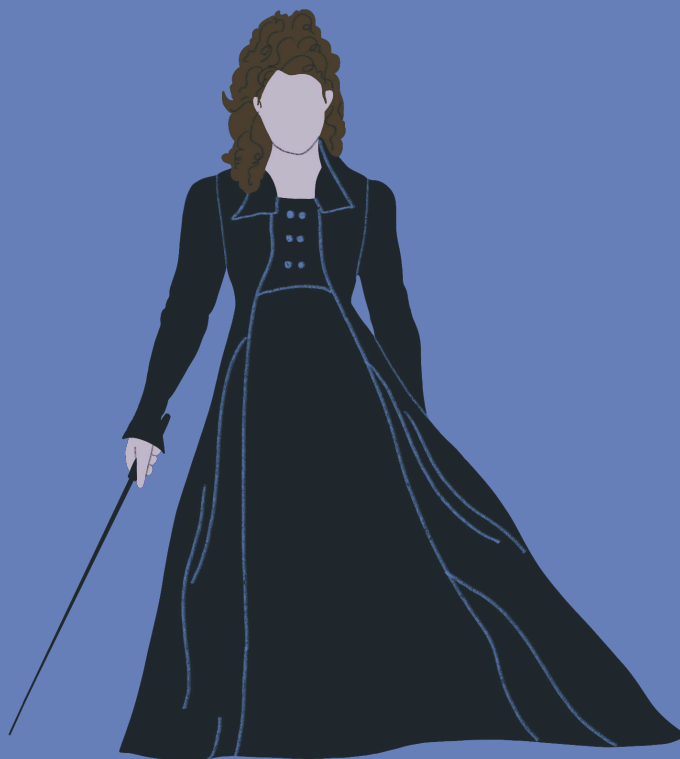


RESIDENT EVIL (2002)

Milla Jovovich does not disappoint in this zombie apocalypse film series. Playing the character Alice, she fights her way through hordes of zombies and monsters as she tries to save the world and find an antidote to the T-virus, a bioweapon engineered by the Umbrella Corporation that turns people into zombies. But Alice is special and is immune to the virus, making her the perfect test subject for Umbrella to get their hands on. Making it through all six movies and watching how the apocalypse progresses is the only way to find out whether or not a cure is found.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES (2016)

While having some similarities to the original Pride and Prejudice movie, this action-horror film follows Elizabeth Bennet (Lily James) and Mr. Darcy (Sam Riley) around a 19th century English countryside ridden with the undead. Although both feel much contempt towards each other, they are able to set aside their personal differences to fight a battle against the zombie race and save their country. It is the epitome of a sophisticated action film. Regency elegance integrates with smooth and beautiful combat. This is a must-see for all zombie and Pride and Prejudice fans.



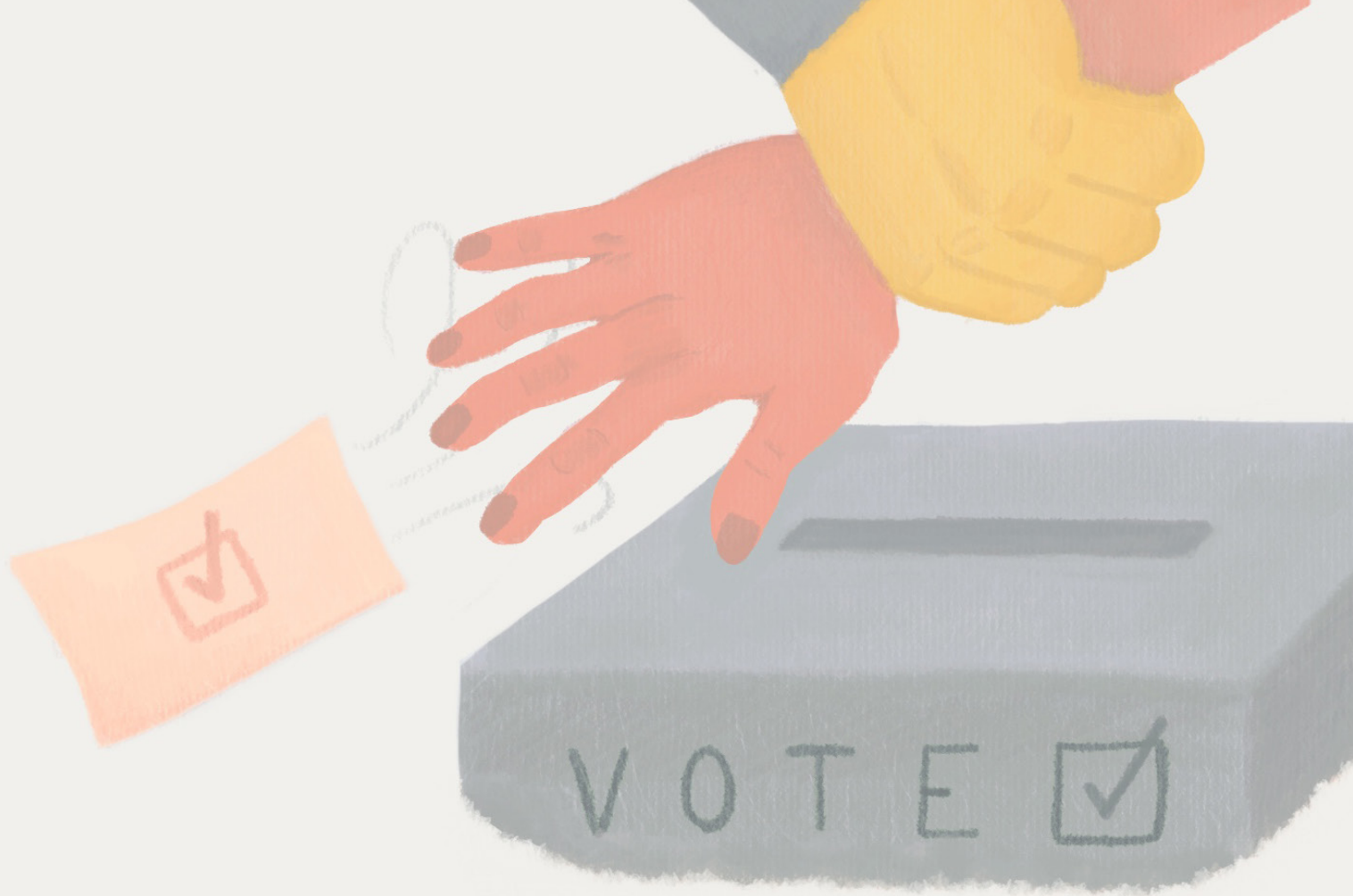
Class: Senior
Sport: Golf
Major: Neuroscience
High School: Effingham
Hometown: Effingham, Ill.



ALEX BRUMMER

North Central Women's golfer Alex Brummer has recorded 21 events during the fall season with the Cardinals. Brummer is coming off of her best season average in 2019 with an 84.08 score and placed first overall at the Dechert Classic. She shot her season-low at the CCIW Women's Golf Preview with a 78 and placed fourth overall and shot a season-low for double round play with a score of 163 at the IWU Fall Invite. After NCC, Brummer hopes to find something she loves. She knows she will find that dream job, but hopes to find it outside of Illinois as her heart is set on the mountains. There are many ways Brummer takes action in the community, but the causes that mean the most to her are Habitat for Humanity and the Americares Foundation.

Gregory Williams – Sports Social Media Editor
Illustrations by Jessica Sciabica



Stain of voter suppression lingers long after elections

Shealeigh Voitl – Vision Editor
Illustrations by Jessica Sciabica

In June 2020, during the primary elections, Georgia voters were forced to wait in line at their local polling places for hours. Election authorities cited technical difficulties and missing voting machines as the culprits, according to the New York Times, but the event underscored a broader pattern of racially discriminatory voter suppression in the United States.

“Once *Shelby County v. Holder*, section 5 of the Voting Rights Act that provided for preclearance—once that was basically invalidated, then we saw this slew of changes in the South that have disproportionate effects on communities of color,” said Associate Professor of Political Science Suzanne Chod. “Rural areas as well but mostly communities of color. And the data are very, very clear on this. There’s really no way to talk about it unless we talk about the strategy of disenfranchising certain voters.”

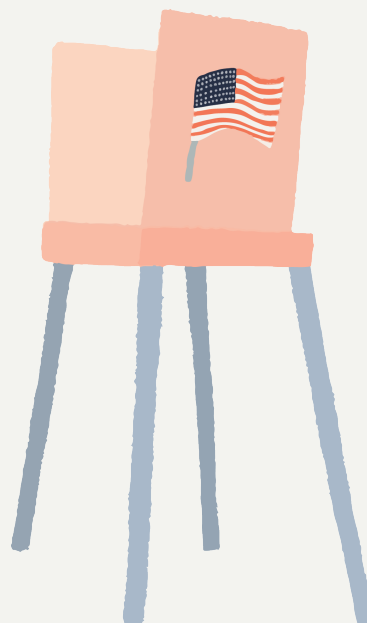
Following this Supreme Court decision, according to the Center for American Progress (CAP),

many Southern state governments made swift and substantial changes that affected predominantly Black and brown communities.

For example, North Carolina promptly ushered in a law that required all voters to show proof of ID at the polls. In response, CAP reported, the NAACP filed suit that argued the law allowed “only those types of photo ID disproportionately held by whites and excluded those disproportionately held by African Americans,” citing state employee cards and public assistance IDs as examples of prohibited forms of identification.

Other states continue to disenfranchise voters by imposing discriminatory restrictions and closing local polling places.

“I don’t think people realize that voting isn’t always easy for some people,” said Haven Denson, ‘21, who participated in voter engagement week on campus through the Center for Social Impact this past September. “It’s a privilege, not a right, even though it should be a right.”



The familiar “not voting is a vote for the other side” is a particularly cutting fallacy often used to shame eligible voters into fulfilling their “civic duty.” But not all nonvoters are consciously abstaining.

“We’re an individualistic nation, so we think first about personal responsibility, accountability and the individual and we think next about community, institutions and systems,” Chod said.

A 2017 Pew Research analysis of Census Bureau data found that 4% of registered voters didn’t cast their ballot due to “registration problems.” And according to the New York Times in 2016, 10% of Florida residents over the age of 18 can’t vote due to prior felony convictions. Additionally, the Times reported, the vast racial disparities in court sentencing largely impacts the voting rights of Black and Hispanic people.

In July 2020, according to CBS, LeBron James’

nonprofit organization for voting rights, called More Than A Vote donated \$100,000 to pay the fines of formerly incarcerated Floridians, allowing many to vote in the upcoming November election and beyond. Similarly, in September 2020, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg raised and donated \$16 million, which helped 32,000 Florida residents reclaim their right to vote years after serving time behind bars, Salon reported.

“During Jim Crow and Reconstruction, there were taxes and literacy tests, and since we got rid of that, we don’t like to admit that we still have tactics in place that suppress voters,” said Rachel Maida, ‘21, a political science major at NCC.

Although much of President Trump’s re-election campaign has focused heavily on rampant “voter fraud,” according to AP News, leaders like Stacey Abrams, founder of Fair Fight, which advocates for fair elections, and former Georgia state representative, tell NPR that this is nothing more than a harmful myth which disillusion voters and convinces them their voices don’t matter.

Abrams cited The Heritage Foundation’s database as an example, which, out of 625 million votes cast, has only recorded a little under 1,300 proven cases of voter fraud.

“We know for a fact that mail-in balloting does not give a partisan advantage to Democrats or Republicans,” Chod said. “It advantages voters who vote regularly already because it gives them more access. It advantages older voters. It disadvantages voters of color and those in racial and ethnic minority communities because their ballots tend to get rejected at a much higher rate.”

The Washington Post recently analyzed mail-in ballots cast in Georgia during the 2018 midterm elections and found that a disproportionate number of ballots submitted by younger voters, first-time voters and people of color were rejected. It’s unclear why this happened. However, in an election that expects 35% of registered voters to vote by mail—a drastic drop from the 70% projected by experts in the spring, according to NPR—these statistics are alarming.

Chod firmly believes the “voter fraud” narrative is incredibly damaging.

“If we discredit the system, if we delegitimize

our electoral institutions, if we delegitimize the postal service, if we talk about ballots being in creeks, which never happened—all it does is confuse voters and make them feel like the system is rigged, which is something the president wants,” Chod said. “The effect of that is not a partisan effect. It is an effect on our democracy.”

These patterns of delays, closures, ballot rejections and restrictive voting laws have a cumulative impact on communities and future elections.

Pew’s analysis of Census Bureau data in 2017 also found that 15% of registered voters sat the 2016 election out because they were “not interested” or felt “that their vote wouldn’t make a difference.”

Denson described this as a “vicious cycle.”

“Not only are people potentially prevented from voting in that election due to them not being able to take off work or find childcare or so many different things, but then, in the future, they realize how difficult it’s going to be and say, ‘What’s the point?’” Denson said.

Denson believes this isn’t an individual issue but rather evidence that leaders aren’t doing nearly enough to support their constituents. Maida agrees.

“We see that with not fighting for a national election day where people can take off work,” Maida said. “Until something like that happens and we get rid of voter ID laws and things like that, I think (the system) is just going to continue to allow voter suppression.”

But the fight isn’t over. Chod is encouraged by those on the frontlines, like Abrams, who are actively seeking solutions.

“What she is doing, and others who are not necessarily working in government but those who work in advocacy, are lobbying members of government to bring awareness and social activism to this issue,” Chod said. “If the government isn’t going to do anything about it, and in fact, if state governments are going to continually, purposefully suppress votes, then we have to start a grassroots movement or reinvigorate a grassroots movement. That’s the only way we’re going to make any progress.”

FACES OF NCC

Lauren Kainrath –
Social Media & Photo Editor

Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO MAKE UP THE TIME LOST IN 2020?



Willow Watson, '23

“Spending time with the people that have mattered the most to me. My ‘ride-or-die’ friends, I want to spend as much time as I can with them and I also want to make sure that I spend as much time learning how to take better care of myself, that way if we do go into quarantine again, I know what to do, I’m better prepared and I have the people beside me that I need.”



Zoë Steppe, '21

“I want to make sure I focus on myself and my relationship and not worry so much about everybody else. I also want to work on myself athletically since preseason (for track) has been going really well.”



Leo Acevedo, '21

“Since 2020 was so restrictive and I couldn’t do much, I want to say ‘yes’ to a lot of opportunities, whether it’s for work or spending time with family or going out with friends. I want to say ‘yes’ more often and take advantage of going out if that’s an option.”



Dakshya Karki, '22

“I’m from Nepal and I haven’t been home in two and a half years because of everything, and I’m still unsure if I’ll be able to go home, but in 2021, I want to get together with my family and friends and the people I care about. Yeah, that’s my one wish for 2021, to see my family.”



Matthew Manuel, '22

"I want to start characterizing my 2021 by my accomplishments. I've been relaxing for most of 2020 so I want to get started on some personal projects that I've been putting off."



Alec Thrall, 21'

"I definitely want to put more of a priority into scheduling out my days. Things pile up and you forget about them so I want to be more organized with everything."



Justin Babor, '21

"I want to take advantage of opportunities to go and hang out with people and do things that I can't do right now since things are shut down. I don't want to take those kinds of things for granted."



Jocelyn Perez, '22

"For me, I'm pre-med and this year I was supposed to be shadowing doctors and volunteering but all that got canceled. So, in 2021, I'm planning to do all of that to gain those experiences and stay on track with my education."



Arianna Jones, '21

"There's an entire list of things in my phone to do. I have dates and outings with my friends and family that I have every intention of finally doing once 2020 and the pandemic is over. I'm gonna start knocking things off my 'fun' to do list . . . yeah that will encompass everybody I care about."

COVID inspired me to take a gap year

Craig Dent – Contributing Writer
Illustration by Daniela Sormova

Higher education has different meanings for different people.

To some, higher education means freedom or escape from family and tradition. It can also mean learning about and expressing oneself, setting out to understand the world and what it has to offer.

To others, it is constant stress and fatigue, a jumbled ball of red tape, promises unmet and mistakes that may change the course of one's life. Students often find that they are in control of themselves for the first time ever, and the consequences of the decisions they make have never been clearer than now.

There are many drastic ways people interpret their time in higher education, and no matter what it means to you, this last year has been remarkable in its ability to change everything for everyone.

COVID-19's ability to spread quickly and silently created a perfect storm for

educational systems. With dozens, if not hundreds, of students packed into lecture halls and often less than a foot between them, transmission is inevitable. According to the CDC, the smart thing for the world to do is to shut down for a bit and ensure everyone is able to stay home and remain safe until a vaccine is developed.

According to WorldoMeter, there is no chance of decline in the rates of COVID-19. Businesses, schools and sports are opening as if the pandemic has ended. As a result, students and employees across the country are faced with making decisions that will inevitably aid the spread of the coronavirus.

According to the World Socialist Web Site, students everywhere are being blamed for the spread of COVID-19 after school has started up globally. Some students wonder about the viability of gap years to do their part in defending against the spread of the virus.



A gap year is a period of time students use to take a break from education. They present a solution for students with educational burnout, individuals with disabilities to spread out their time more meaningfully, to pursue work and financial stability, to feel more comfortable within the educational system and many other issues that people find themselves facing in higher education. However, this does not mean the world thinks highly of gap years.

“I think the public consensus is that they are for students who don’t exactly know what they want to do,” said Sam Cahue, ’20. “I think they have a negative perception, like it implies you don’t know what you are doing or that you are lazy.”

When asked about how people view gap years, usually, their responses are not positive.

“I feel like people haven’t quite come around to (gap years) as much,” said Robert Baldino, ’20. “I feel like they’re still a little stereotyped to be like a bit of a cop-out.”

Not only are students afraid of how they might be perceived, but school administrations often don’t make the process of taking a gap year easy. Some people can’t financially support taking a gap year, especially when scholarships and FAFSA can cut your aid if you do decide to take one, according to Edmit. Students who decide to take a gap year during the pandemic may find themselves unable to recover the loss of scholarships and unable to pay or take out necessary loans. Students who take a year off could ultimately risk not being able to return.

Among the excessive stress many students find themselves under, students in some ways are being financially

strong-armed into remaining at their institution, adding far more stress and pressure to an already aggressively challenging part of their lives. For incoming first-year students, transfers, students who already battle the academic red tape of disability services and others, their lives became that much more difficult.

A solution many schools are offering is online learning. According to EDWeek, there is heavy debate on the effectiveness of well-done online education. The rushed and shoehorned online education that many universities are deploying is “not a suitable replacement for traditional classroom learning, especially at the college level,” said Cahue.

The unfortunate truth is that gap years are immensely helpful for many students who need them, and this year, students who need these gap years will be the students not able to take them. Students won’t be able to travel or sightsee, and for many, that’s the entire point.

“Gap years are commonly used to gain more experience in your field doing fellowships or research assistantships,” Cahue said. For some, the need for work, further education and personal peace of mind is imperative to creating a better educational experience.

“It’s a rough one out there,” Baldino said. “I mean, not just like financially and with employment, but also just mentally and emotionally for a lot of people ... I think it’s important for colleges to support doing college well instead of just doing college.”

Class: Senior

Sport: Cross Country

Major: Elementary Education

High School: Oswego East

Hometown: Oswego, Ill.

ALEXIS HENZ

Throughout Henz's career as a cross country runner, she has competed in 22 races with North Central. In Henz's first year in the program, she competed at the CCIW Championship and was able to earn Second Team All-Conference. In her second year, she was able to record her best finish at the Elmhurst College Earlybird Invitational (4K), and placed fourth (15:42.4). Each year, Henz has been able to compete in the Midwest Regional Championship and has earned Academic All-CCIW. As an education major, she will be graduating from NCC in December 2021. She hopes to become a teacher and to stay active in helping students in her community. Henz continually supports Premier Care Consulting in Naperville, which provides home and community support for individuals with disabilities.



Ten steps to peaceful protest

Fredlyn Pierre Louis – Arts & Lifestyle Editor
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

The First Amendment gives “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” In other words, you have the right to protest peacefully. So, how can people do that?



1 Know your rights. The First Amendment protects people’s right to protest in the U.S.

2 Do your research. A person can’t work to solve a problem if they can’t first identify the problem. Protests always focus on a specific issue. For example, Black Lives Matter protests against police brutality.

3 Plan ahead of time to make sure you are prepared for any situation. For example, avoid attending protests alone. Go with people you know and trust so you can look out for one another. Ensure you know how to stay in touch and agree on a meeting place if you get split up. In case you get lost, apps like Google Maps help you share locations with friends.

4 Pack lightly. That means knowing what to bring and what to leave at home. Make sure to take your phone fully charged and a portable battery charger, water, cash, hand sanitizer and wipes, face mask, snacks, umbrella, pen and paper for emergency information and posters. What not to bring: anything expensive like jewelry and anything you don’t want to get arrested with like guns or knives.



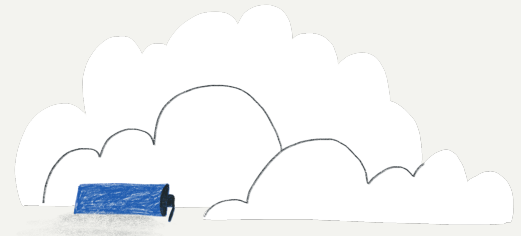
5 Remember words are powerful, so make a sign. Your sign should be concise. Readers should read and understand your message quickly. For example, “If God hates gays, why are we so cute?”



6 Dress appropriately with safety in mind. According to Essence Magazine, you should wear a mask, gloves, drawstring hoodie, sneakers, backpack, glasses and goggles and fitted clothing made of moisture-wicking materials.

7 Be aware because troublemakers are everywhere. Most protests are peaceful, but things can change. For instance, in over 10,000 protests during the summer of 2020, The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reported that 95% of protests were peaceful but 5% involved violence. Stay calm and be polite to others to prevent violence. Treat people how you want them to treat you.

8 Watch out for your safety if protests get out of hand. Police can use rubber bullets, pepper spray, water cannons and/or tear gas, depending on where you protest in the world. When protests get out of control, always remember to have, and be prepared to execute, an exit plan.



9 Be prepared to deal with and accept the consequences. Being arrested is a potential consequence protestors have to be aware of. According to AP News, over 10,000 people have been arrested following the George Floyd protests. Tear gas and pepper spray have temporary side effects, which, according to Healthline, may include tearing, itching, burning, temporary blindness, blurry vision and chemical burns.

10 Remember to participate. That means not to give up until change is made. Stay up to date and donate to organizations that tackle the problem. Protest is a great way to make your voice heard, but perseverance is key.

Class: Senior
Sport: Soccer
Position: D (Defenseman)
Major: Finance
Hometown: Naperville, Ill.
High School: Neuqua Valley

SPENCER WIESE

Spencer Wiese has played a total of 49 games as a defenseman for North Central Men's Soccer, but it wasn't until his junior year that he started receiving public recognition. Wiese accumulated 10 points in the season, scoring five goals, including two game-winners. Wiese led the defense into the record book as the team allowed the fewest goals (14) in school history for a single season. The awards came in for Wiese as he earned CCIW Player of the Week (Oct. 22, 2019), First Team All-CCIW Selection and First Team All-Central Region by the United Soccer Coaches. After his time at NCC, Wiese plans on getting a finance job in the Chicagoland area. Wiese and his family have been able to support the non-profit organizations St. Vincent De Paul and St. Jude Research Children's Hospital.



COVID-19 and the coming year

Jack Plewa – Co-Editor-in-Chief
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

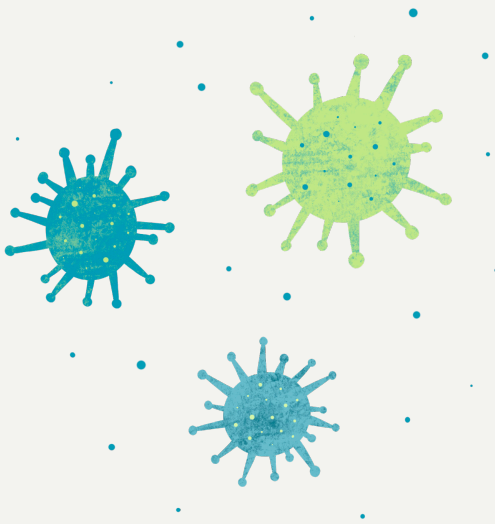
With the start of the new year came the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state, country and rest of the world have gone through quarantines, shutdowns, travel bans, restrictions and major social distancing guidelines. Almost a year later, while most quarantines and shutdowns have been lifted, extensive preventative measures are still in place, such as wearing face masks in indoor public spaces. Action has been taken to keep people safe and healthy and to slow the spread of coronavirus. However, there is still much more action that needs to be taken.

On the school, state, national and global level, people are taking action to end the pandemic. At NCC, the administration has been working hard to keep things running smoothly. There was both optimism and pessimism regarding people's initial return to campus this fall.

"I felt confident that we were doing the planning necessary to be able to have an in-person fall semester," said Kimberly Sluis, former vice president for Student Affairs and Strategic Initiatives and also former co-chair of the College's COVID-19 Institutional Response Team (IRT). "I've been surprised, I think pleasantly, by just how seriously our students and faculty and staff, for the most part, have taken their role in keeping the community safe."

Tension and anxiety ran high with regard to returning to campus. It took all summer for the IRT to plan for not only this semester but the whole academic school year. Members of the IRT did not want to push back the start date of the 2021-22 academic school year. This meant next spring semester couldn't be delayed much.

"We really couldn't delay it anymore than two weeks if we were going to employ the same basic structure of meetings and weekly schedule that we're employing right now for fall semester," said Peter Barger, assistant



provost, director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and co-chair of the College's COVID IRT.

In an interview with *The Washington Post*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield spoke of a second wave of coronavirus hitting this winter in the U.S. In addition, there may also be an overlap of the flu season with this suspected second wave, which may lead to more illnesses and leave people questioning whether they have the flu or coronavirus. Therefore, starting the spring semester later at NCC will allow coronavirus to run its course with the hopes of the virus not affecting any students, faculty or staff. To help prevent the spread of the flu and to stay healthy, everyone is encouraged to get their flu shot this year.

Looking forward to next semester, the IRT plans to continue enforcing the same preventative measures,

practices and protocols. Among those include requiring everyone on campus to continue wearing face masks, social/physical distancing and more. As always, the IRT will add to or adapt their measures as they see fit to best meet and exceed the needs and safety of the campus community. This may include different modalities of testing, surveillance and monitoring. The return to pre-pandemic life is not yet possible. Barger stressed that we cannot get complacent.

"We are very happy about where we are today," Barger said. "I want to encourage everybody—faculty, staff, students—to continue their trend behavior."

Updated information can always be found on the College's COVID website at covid.northcentralcollege.edu.

The school reports the cumulative number of positive tests. However, Sluis emphasized that positive tests are not equivalent to positive cases. First, there is a potential chance of false positives. Second, it is possible people who have COVID-19 are not getting tested because they either don't know they have it or have been exposed. Some people immediately start isolating because they know they're sick and getting tested wouldn't change anything. So, even if zero positive tests are ever reported on campus, that does not necessarily mean campus is COVID-free.

At the state level, Illinois had a rough start with Chicago reporting its first positive case of COVID-19 on Jan. 24. "We have locked down and encouraged masks and had a more coherent strategy from what I can see than a lot of states," said Associate Professor of Biology Gregory Ruthig.

Although he said Illinois wasn't

looking so good in July and August, Ruthig also said that “it’s tough to use numbers as a real great metric of how we are doing” because there have been little mini waves of coronavirus across the country. As the pandemic continued, rural areas, which had initially dodged COVID, began to feel the same strain as urban populations.

“There seems to be a cultural divide on how seriously people have taken this,” said Ruthig. People in rural areas may not be wearing face masks and practicing social distancing nearly as much as people in more urban areas, like Chicago.

Compared to other countries, the U.S.

has a poor deaths per capita number, according to Ruthig. We have around a quarter of the world’s COVID deaths but only make up about 4% of the world population. People who die with COVID-19 often die from another illness.

“There are comorbidities that are associated with getting sick from coronavirus,” said Ruthig. Merriam-Webster defines comorbid as “existing simultaneously with and usually independently of another medical condition.” That means someone sick with COVID-19 may end up acquiring, let’s say, pneumonia and then dies from pneumonia. Under



normal circumstances, the person would not have acquired pneumonia and died, rather it would because of COVID-19. Ruthig compares it to someone shoveling the snow in a snowstorm and then suddenly dying from a heart attack. That person would not have gotten a heart attack and died if it had not been for the snowstorm, therefore it would be listed as a snowstorm-related death. “Those are tough, and they’re certainly controversial,” said Ruthig.

Moving on to action at the state and national level, Ruthig described what the duration of this pandemic might look like. “If you allow a spread to happen faster, more people get sick, more people die (and) the epidemic goes away a little faster,” Ruthig said. However, this may not be the case with COVID-19 due to the fact that people might be able to get reinfected. If people can’t become resistant, then we cannot “flatten the curve,” so to speak.

“I tend to be in favor of reducing transmission, even if that prolongs the duration of this a little bit because fewer people get sick and die and that’s what’s most important to me,” said Ruthig. Wearing cloth masks is effective in keeping people from spreading anything and somewhat protective from keeping the wearer from getting anything.

Ruthig sees the future for now as us continuing to be careful, wear masks, wash our hands and avoid big crowds, but hopefully, still return to school. He says the vaccine is critical in order to get out of this pandemic. However, if people can get secondary infections, then the antibodies produced in response to the first infection won’t work in fighting the second.

Therefore, we cannot rely on herd immunity if a vaccine ever comes out.

“Herd immunity occurs when a high percentage of the community is immune to a disease (through vaccination and/or prior illness), making the spread of this disease from person to person unlikely,” according to the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. “Even individuals not vaccinated (such as newborns and the immunocompromised) are offered some protection because the disease has little opportunity to spread within the community.” If secondary infections occur, then this idea of herd immunity no longer applies.

According to Ruthig, getting a vaccine to build antibodies may be better at preventing a secondary infection of COVID-19 than getting antibodies from a primary infection with it. However, the research is still insufficient in determining whether secondary infections occur with this particular coronavirus. Even so, vaccines are on the horizon.

“Vaccine development usually takes on the order of 10 years and we’re doing it in eight or nine months,” Ruthig said.

There are currently four vaccine candidates in Phase 3 of clinical trials being tested in the U.S., according to the National Institutes of Health. In Phase 3, the vaccine is given to tens of thousands of people, about a third of which are usually given a placebo group to act as a control.

Some people volunteered to be injected with coronavirus to see if the vaccine worked, but ethicists decided that would have been unethical since there’s technically no cure/rescue drug for COVID-19. “We just have to wait to see that the people who got the vaccine are at least 50% less likely to get infected than the people who got the placebo,” Ruthig said. “The faster that people get infected, especially the placebo



group, the faster that we can make that statistical claim that these (vaccines) are statistically better.”

Animal vaccine trials have been successful, according to *Science Mag*; now we just have to wait and see if human trials yield the same result. When it comes to vaccines, there are two things that scientists look for. One, Ruthig already mentioned, there needs to be at least a 50% reduction in people getting infected who are vaccinated compared to people who are not, and two, the vaccine cannot make anyone sick.

According to NPR, a U.K. volunteer candidate acquired a spinal infection in a COVID-19 vaccine trial. The study has since been paused for review. More recently, CNN reported Johnson & Johnson paused their COVID-19 vaccine trial after a volunteer in the study acquired an “unexplained illness.” The company has yet to release the identification of the illness.

Until a vaccine is produced, life as we now know it will not change.

“We cannot stop the preventative measures that we are doing right now until we have a vaccine,” said Ruthig. The tricky part after successful vaccine development is distribution, such as how many vaccines should be created and who gets them first. Ruthig suspects healthcare workers will be at the front of the line, followed by vulnerable populations—most likely the elderly and immunocompromised patients—and putting young healthy people at the end of the line.

This year, Redfield testified before Congress that everyone in the U.S. who wants a vaccine will be able to get a vaccine around fall of next year. This is true only if the vaccines work, but more data needs to be collected to know for certain what the future holds. But until then, we need to continue following COVID-19 safety guidelines.

“Student behavior is what’s saving us right now, and that’s why we’re doing better than some other schools,” Ruthig said. “It’s the combination of a bunch of people’s efforts that’s keeping all of us safe.”

WHAT SUPERHERO ARE YOU?

Lauren Kainrath – Social Media & Photo Editor
Graphics by Daniela Sormova

ARIES – WOLVERINE

March 21 - April 19

Wolverine is ambitious and bold. He thrives on being independent and relies on instinct to guide him. Just like an Aries, Wolverine uses courage and instant intuition to make quick decisions. Those born under the Aries zodiac are fire signs, meaning they have a rare type of passion. Wolverine's hot-headed, impulsive temperament can be to blame by his intense passion when dealing with emergencies.



TAURUS – CAPTAIN AMERICA

April 20 - May 20

Taurus' are strong headed. They are secure in their beliefs and will stand by them until the end of time. Captain America is devoted to his country and knows his job is to protect its citizens by any means. He is loyal to his country and grounded in practicality and realism, all traits of a Taurus. A Taurus may be hard to compromise with, similar to Captain America, but both are only trying to do what is right for everyone.



GEMINI – DEADPOOL

May 21 - June 20

Deadpool is known for being talkative, sarcastic and unconventional, similar to one of the two faces that represent a Gemini. Gemini's have a reputation of being two-faced, which is not necessarily a bad thing. With their witty and playful face showing more often than not, they also have a serious and meaningful side they wear. It's not all jokes and laughs when it comes to Deadpool and what he deems important.



CANCER – THE HULK

June 21 - July 22

Cancers are notably ruled by their intense and ever-changing emotions. They feel a personal connection to almost everything. The Hulk shares this with Cancers as he too acts upon whatever his current and complex emotions drive him towards. However, the Hulk does present vulnerable qualities, similar to a Cancer. They are naturally suspicious yet intrigued by a particular subject or theme, and they possess so much compassion once they are truly seen.



LEO – IRON MAN

July 23 - August 22

Iron Man is confident and loves to show off his successes to anyone willing to watch. Leo's are exactly the same. They put in the work using their strong sense of determination and consider reaping their rewards in the public eye as part of their success. Iron Man and Leo's are natural born leaders who take situations head on. Despite their ego getting in the way and their reactionary decisions causing problems, both are able to "walk the walk" and "talk the talk" to get what they want.



VIRGO – BLACK WIDOW

August 23 - September 22

Mature, analytical and poised are everything that Black Widow and Virgos are. Black Widow is a vigilant woman with a knack for unconventional knowledge. She is misunderstood by most, just like Virgos, and has a hard time asking for help. They are organized individuals who have a particular process when following through with a task. Black Widow is calculated and observes before she strikes. While this is helpful in many situations, sometimes overthinking every detail can be a hindrance.



LIBRA – WONDER WOMAN

September 23 - October 22

Harmonious and peaceful to a fault, Wonder Woman and Libras have much in common. Wonder Woman is gentle yet fierce. Like a Libra, she wants to bring peace to all and avoid any unnecessary problems. Libra's become weak with internal conflict which makes for indecisiveness, but they are true nurturers to their own heart. Libra's lead with intuition. Wonder Woman at times can be a bit "spacey," but as an air sign, it comes off as charming and endearing.



SCORPIO – BATMAN

October 23 - November 21

Batman is intense, dark and mysterious, just like a Scorpio. Both are floored by an overwhelming desire to be great and seek truth. Scorpions and Batman are equally resourceful as well. They understand the tools they are given and cleverly use them to get out of any sticky situation. They are intellectual beings with a hunger for knowledge to get ahead in the game. Secrets are nothing new either. Behind many guarded walls, one can find Batman's truest identity, similar to our Scorpio friends.



SAGITTARIUS – DOCTOR STRANGE

November 22 - December 21

Doctor Strange and Sagittarius' are always on the hunt for philosophical relief. This brings them to unique parts of the world and allows them to experience it like no other. Doctor Strange has his cocky moments much like a Sagittarius, but that is only because both have a vast range of knowledge that most do not. A Sagittarius and Doctor Strange are energetic about subjects they are most passionate about and love the freedom to express themselves however they want.



CAPRICORN – SUPERMAN

December 22 - January 19

Superman is rooted in tradition just like any other Capricorn. They are steadfast in their beliefs and are ones to always follow the rules. Superman can be rough around the edges with a regal persona but has an extremely kind heart, same as a Capricorn. Both are innately responsible and understand the importance of follow through. While they can be considered “loners” at times, this can be seen as positive because both need their space to reset their mind.



AQUARIUS – SPIDERMAN

January 20 - February 18

Being shy at first but eccentric once the shell cracks is what Spiderman and an Aquarius are all about. Spiderman is seen as a friendly and creative person with a concrete method of solving problems. Aquarius-born people are similar in this way, as well as being open-minded at any opportunity introduced to them. While they are constantly looking for validation, they often fail to see the greatness they produce around them. One could describe an Aquarius and Spiderman as the “fake it till you make it” type.



PISCES – AQUAMAN

February 19 - March 20

Pisces are gentle and intuitive. They have a warm demeanor and can be adaptable to almost any situation. Aquaman knows his way around land and sea. He is versatile with all he meets and is selfless when it comes down to serious issues. Both Aquaman and Pisces are hard-working individuals that believe nothing is handed to anyone on a silver platter. They can be a bit introverted at times but only because they want to understand a situation holistically before they make their next move.



Class: Senior
Sport: Football
Position: WR (Wide Receiver)
Major: Sports Management
Hometown: Aurora, Ill.
High School: Metea Valley

BLAKE WILLIAMS

After helping the North Central football team to a National Championship in 2019 as wide receiver, The 6'4" receiver appeared in all 15 games for the Cardinals in their championship season. He caught 46 passes, totaling 639 yards, which included seven touchdowns. This ranked him sixth in the CCIW in receiving yards and eighth in touchdown receptions. Williams had three 100-yard performances, including a career-high 158 yards against Wheaton College. Williams turned his junior year into a Second Team All-CCIW selection. After graduating from NCC, Williams hopes to remain in sports, as he wants to work in the front office of a professional sports team. At NCC, Williams supports the "Be the Change" campaign; he believes NCC is heading in the right direction and is bringing awareness to the institution where athletes, coaches, administration and staff members can share their commitment to being anti-racist.



Gregory Williams – Sports Social Media Editor
Illustration by Jessica Sciabica



FALLEN HEROES

Allison Rott – Co-Editor-in-Chief
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

These are by no means the only heroes we lost this year, merely a sampling. 2020 has taken so much from everyone that to lose anyone in a time of tragedy makes it all that much harder to cope. Although they are not recorded here, it does not mean that their impact was not just as great. They didn't fight in capes or have superpowers and they didn't wish on stars for the world to change. By doing their job each day and working to get stronger, smarter and better, they made it happen. Rest in peace, our fallen heroes. You will never be forgotten.

RUTH BADER GINSBERG

Ruth Bader Ginsberg was the notorious RBG, the fighter, the dissenter, the woman. “Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you,” Ginsberg said. She was a warrior in dangerous lace collars with elegant glasses and a smooth bun. She inspired women and fought her battles in gender equality, equal pay and voting rights. Ginsberg stood up for those who could not stand for themselves. She embodied hope and confidence. Her day job was as a Supreme Court justice but she left an action hero legacy. RBG was the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court, and her voice will echo for centuries.



CHADWICK BOSEMAN

Chadwick Boseman was a legacy — the Black Panther who demanded justice, the king of Wakanda and the actor who became a cultural phenomenon. He embodied Jackie Robinson and James Brown and Thurgood Marshall. He was the action hero behind the mask and makeup. He hid his pain and inspired the Black community. “We went to work ... every day because we knew ... that we had something special that we wanted to give the world,” Boseman said. He was an inspiration for the little kids, the emotional teens and the men and women with graying winter hair. Long live the king.

KOBE BRYANT

A Los Angeles Laker, the Black Mamba, a champion, a gold medal Olympian and an MVP. Kobe Bryant’s tall shadow cast on hard maple floors for his 20-year Laker legacy. He was fearless. Bryant smashed records, challenged the greatest basketball players of all time and succeeded brilliantly. He didn’t stop when his trainer told him he was done. He figured out how to continue regardless of the challenges. “I’m here,” Kobe said. “I’m not going anywhere. No matter what the injury — unless it’s completely debilitating — I’m going to be the same player I’ve always been. I’ll figure it out. I’ll make some tweaks, some changes, but I’m still coming.”



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