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STUDENT NEWS MAGAZINE

THE CHRONICLE



ISSUE TWO

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.

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On the cover

Artwork by Jasmine Pomierski

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Letter from the Editors

What's next? Truly? How do we live our lives now? Well, we're here to tell you the only thing you can do is move forward and don't stop. Of course, you should never stop looking back, as long as you never stop moving. As poet Robert Frost said, the only way out is through.

With 2020 behind us and rock bottom reached, it can only get better from here. So we wanted to feature all the positive things that are to come. All the happiness, opportunities and possibilities for a brighter tomorrow.

In this issue, we will be talking about what's next. What's next for COVID-19 and the pandemic, what's next for students and their post-grad plans, what's next for entertainment with music and podcasts. We choose to see our happy ending sometime in the future, rather than accept an unhappy ending by saying our story is over.

"What's Next?" explores the challenges of moving on. We never thought we would watch movies of people walking into stores or crowded airports and cringe because they don't have a mask on. How will we reach a point when we feel comfortable hugging our loved ones? How do we stop flinching every time someone near us sneezes?

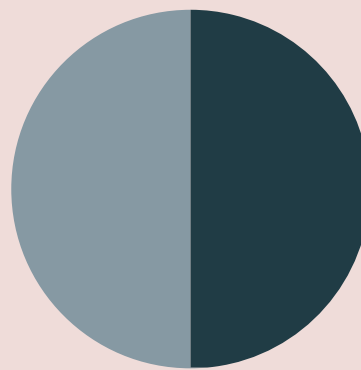
And the overall goal of this issue, really, is to give people hope. Hope for a better future, and definitely hope for a better year than the previous one. We look forward to seeing how people will come out of this pandemic and seeing how people will be able to reconnect with not only themselves but with each other.

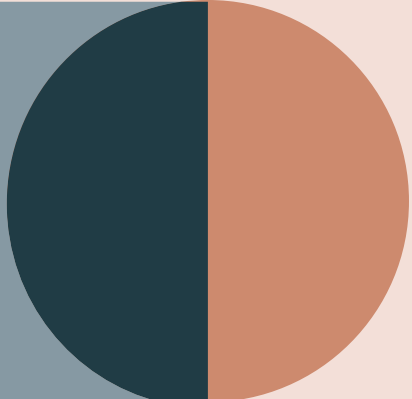
We will never forget this past year. Each one of us put a special event, an important person or a milestone on hold. We substituted our connectivity for something less. We have now lived through what will become a defining year in history e-books.

So go forward. Move. Take back the year that was stolen from us and live this year and every year to come like it's your last. Don't be afraid of what's next.

Stay happy, stay healthy and stay informed.

Jack Plewa
Allison Rott
Co-Editors-in-Chief





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Post-COVID to-do list



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

Close your eyes. For over a year, we have been together in a dark tunnel, each of us imprisoned in individual caves. Occasionally, we see a flash of light. A friend through a computer screen. An outing to the grocery store. But in the end, these flashes of light are temporary, and only result in blinding us after they have passed.

Yet over the horizon, the sun begins to rise, and the thinnest of rays have crept like silent lions into the tunnel. Our eyes slowly adjust to these changes and hope leaps in our hearts. The dreams we had in the dark, our aspirations and hopes, are nearly close enough to become solid plans — to become reality.

Courtney Kurhayez, '21, is hopeful. Her post-COVID checklist is short and simple. It was all the things that she was planning on doing regardless of COVID. Yet somehow, the denial of opportunity made her miss normalcy all the more. "There's a lot we took for granted before," Kurhayez said. "We are now more aware, or cognizant, of the things we can't do."

Kurhayez has a list of everything she wants to do after COVID. She wants to ice skate, go to VidCon and rent out the house from the "Twilight" saga with friends. Most of all, she wants to spend time with family and celebrate all that happened throughout the year.

"My grandma always talks about having one big party after COVID, for all the billion things," Kurhayez said.

And although many are optimistic that the end of the pandemic may be near, "We don't even know when it's gonna be," Kurhayez said. "It's weird because post-Covid is going to be post-graduation for us ... our lives are never really going to go back to normal college."

A New York Times article titled "What's the First Thing You Will Do When the Pandemic Ends" collected responses from over 800 people. Some had dreams to travel the

world, but most longed for easier times.

One reminisced on the simple gesture of shaking hands. Others wished to be able to hug and kiss their loved ones. Some yearned to go dancing, to the library or to the movie theater.

Rebekah Eaton, '22, also has an attainable post-COVID checklist. For her, going to the beach in California and attending concerts again is what she looks forward to the most. As an introvert, Eaton has adjusted well to the changes that came with COVID. Even the masks have been "very helpful in the wintertime," Eaton said. For her to feel comfortable going out in public, though, "most people ... have to be vaccinated."

"We've had lots of epidemics," said Ann Keating, Dr. C. Frederick Toenniges professor of history, but there are far fewer now than in earlier years, where cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid, smallpox and Spanish flu devastated communities.

"If you go back to 1918 through 1919 you've got a pandemic that bears a lot of similarities to the one that we've got right now." Wearing masks, social distancing and outside gatherings were encouraged. Although it is unlikely most of these were mandated, according to Keating, some rules, such as mask-wearing on public transportation, were required. "They outlawed spitting and smoking on trains," Keating said.

There was a big spike of Spanish flu in the fall of 1918. "And then it just kind of peters out. The assumption is that we hit some kind of herd immunity," Keating said.

Communities, rather than states, made the call to shut down. Theaters, saloons and schools in Chicago closed. However, instead of month-long shutdowns, these closings were often several days at a time when the sickness reached peak points.

The spread of Spanish flu was mostly due to the soldiers in WWI as they moved about. When the flu came to Naperville, most likely transferred by soldiers from Fort Sheridan in

- ice skate
- Go to Vidcon
- Rent a house w/ friends
- Spend time w/ family



Chicago, Goldspohn became a field hospital.

The population at NCC dropped, partially due to the number of young men signing up for the war, and partially due to the flu. Resident students who got sick usually had their parents come to nurse them back to health.

“They played football in the fall,” said Keating. “They had trouble fielding a team some games because they had so many kids that were sick. “There’s an attempt to go on normally,” Keating said of the sports continuation.

The largest difference between previous pandemics and the current one is that we have a vaccine, Keating said. “The terrifying thing to me is that when ... I started looking more carefully at 1918–19 in Chicago ... when they said 675,000 deaths in the United States, I’m like, ‘We’re never going to hit that number’ ... it’s sobering and terrifying to me how close we are.”

With precautions in place and the vaccine currently in distribution, experts hopefully predict the U.S. will receive herd immunity sometime this year.

“The end of this story is a different one,” Keating said. “We’re going to get herd immunity, but it doesn’t have to end with everyone getting sick.”

Keating is hoping to be back in classrooms in the fall, especially so she can take her Chicago history class into the city for field trips.

There are many things Keating hopes to do after the pandemic has ended. “Going to the grocery store and not worrying about this, oh my God, going to a RESTAURANT, oh, not doing takeout,” Keating laughs, “Not doing dishes after we eat!” Most of all, Keating misses being able to talk to her students, co-workers, family and friends.

The world is ready to be normal. With wishes for brighter days and sans-mask smiles, with post-COVID checklists anxious to be ticked off, with expectations, we move forward.

“God, I’m hopeful,” Keating said.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR CHARLIE KLEMM?

Class: Senior

Sport: Baseball

Position: Pitcher

Major: Marketing/Sports
Management

High School: Hinsdale South

Hometown: Darien, Ill.

Charlie Klemm has pitched in 133 innings and has a 16-2 record with 140 strikeouts prior to his senior season with the NCC baseball team. In 2019, Klemm helped the Cardinals reach the NCAA Division III Regional Championship after leading the team in earned run average, opponents batting average, wins and strikeouts. He tied the program's record for most wins in a season, ranked second in school history for strikeouts and fifth in games started in a single season. Klemm was named the CCIW Pitcher of the Year, D3baseball.com's First Team All-Central Region and D3baseball.com's Fourth Team All-American. "NCC has meant the world to me," said Klemm. "It's developed me into the player and person I am today. I've created relationships with teammates, coaches and friends that will last a lifetime. North Central will always be a special place to me." After the school year is over, Klemm will head east to participate in the MLB Draft Summer League to prepare for the 2021 MLB Draft.



Getting sports fans back into stadiums

Erika Rosas-Lopez – Sports Editor
Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski

The sports world will forever be changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. From the cancellation of games to mask requirements and social distancing, the list of changes goes on and on.

Some of the sporting events that were canceled or postponed include the Olympic Games, the Kentucky Derby and Wimbledon.

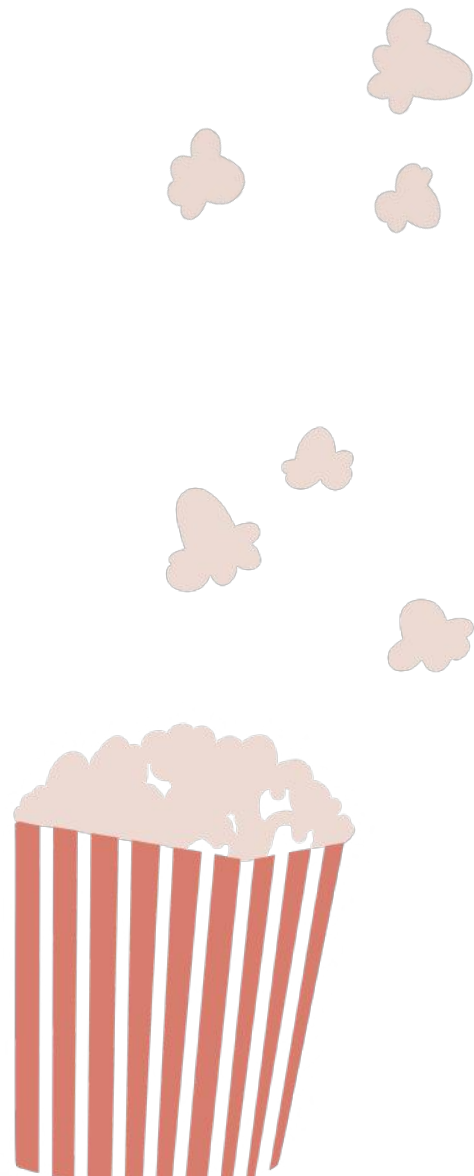
At the beginning of the pandemic, the cancellation or postponement of sporting events left many sports fanatics asking, “What now?”

Like dominoes, one sporting event after another was canceled. Last year’s season for NCC’s men’s basketball team was cut short due to COVID-19. The team had made it past the second round of the NCAA tournament when all competition was halted.

At the time, no one was really sure how long sports would be suspended. It was also uncertain as to whether fans would be allowed to attend events when they eventually return.

Shortly after the cancellation of the 2019–20 winter and spring championships, the NCAA announced that DIII sports would experience a \$7.6 million deficit.

“The financial loss for Division III will be significant, but money should never take precedence over life. We value people above all else,” said Fayaneese Miller, chair of the committee and president of Hamline University. “The losses will impact money



available for students and programming now and in the future, but Division III has done an incredible job in managing our resources and is uniquely prepared to weather the financial storm we face.”

College athletics is not the only thing affected by the pandemic. ESPN reported in May 2020 that “The sudden disappearance of sports will erase at least \$12 billion.”

Although fans are not allowed inside the stadiums, many teams have taken the initiative and gotten creative to keep fans involved.

In an effort to get fans excited, many sports teams have taken interest in creating a space that will allow fans to watch games together safely. Peter Feigin, the president of the Milwaukee Bucks, decided to invest in an outdoor space for fans to enjoy games.

And he was not the only one to do so. Hard Rock Stadium, which houses the Miami Dolphins, announced via Twitter that the building would be temporarily transformed into an open-air and drive-in theatre. In addition, the Las Vegas Raiders have turned to outdoor tailgating to adhere to social distancing protocols.

The initiative to get fans involved in some way leads one question to be asked: Does not having fans in the stands really make a difference? The short answer is yes.

“Before COVID, fans would create such a fun and exciting atmosphere. We fed off their energy,” said women’s basketball player Hadyn Braun, ’21. “Now, we are learning to create our own energy on and off the court by being our own fan section within the team and making sure we are staying rowdy so that we can feed off our own energy.”

Without fans in the stands showing support and school spirit, collegiate athletes can feel the difference.

Many senior athletes say the COVID-19 pandemic has “cheated” them out of their final season at NCC.

Although some athletes were able to compete, many saw their seasons shortened.

“I was given a chance to do what I love one

more time,” said women’s basketball player Page Desenberg, ’21. “There are so many other athletes out there that did not get a chance to play. They do not get to put their shoes on every day like we are able to.”

The question left to ask is: Will there ever be a time when fans can enter stadiums safely?

Maybe. There is a lot to consider, especially with the threat of COVID-19 still here. There will probably still be guidelines in place just as a precaution.

“If they decide to do so, they could start with inviting only players’ immediate family, completing screenings and temperature checks, requiring masks and social distancing and limiting interaction pre/post-game,” said Braun.

With the world forced to adjust to life during the COVID-19 pandemic, the question of “what’s next?” with sports remains unanswered.



E-learning post-COVID

Cory Griffin – Contributing Writer
Illustrations by Jessica Sciabica

When the COVID-19 pandemic first took hold in March 2020, both students and teachers were thrust into the world of e-learning. Now, over a year into the pandemic, e-learning has become commonplace in most households across America. However, while most families are focused on how to work with e-learning in the present, students are also looking ahead to what the sudden shift to e-learning means for the rest of their schooling.

Does this mean that the famous “snow day” has now become a thing of the past? Will there ever be an unexpected day off again now that schools are ready to shift to at-home learning at the click of a button? The 2021 spring semester ultimately allowed schools to test out that system. As more schools moved to return to in-person learning, they still had the ability to switch to remote learning as snow and ice storms and extreme cold temperatures made an already rough winter miserable.

As much as online learning has essentially abolished the snow day as students knew it, the growth and widespread adoption of e-learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic has essentially guaranteed a complete overhaul of our education system.

While the world transitions to remote learning, many schools, including K–12, realize how easy remote learning was and how to make it accessible for students at a moment’s notice. This transition has made it obvious to many schools and colleges that education can be effectively done online. It has the potential to be an alternative to in-person learning for some students permanently.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hopefully comes to an end soon, it is becoming clear that many of the precautions and practices that government officials put in place to protect everyone might just be here to stay. The world is going to look much different, even post-pandemic, and online learning could lead to a whole new way to educate the next generation of students.

Sydney Chmielewski, '23

"I see online options continuing well into the future past COVID. This experience has shown that it's easier than people had previously thought to be inclusive through online learning."



Sam Koppitz, '22

"E-learning can provide different opportunities for more equitable modalities of education for all students. As a music education major, I have seen my friends plan incredible and engaging lessons where students can move at their own pace, participate and collaborate in group discussion in a variety of ways that can be adjusted to their comfort level. These lessons were so effective because they did a fantastic job of utilizing the online environment to its fullest extent. Their students wouldn't have had that same opportunity without e-learning. ."

Kenny Miller, '22

"We are walking into new territory with online learning. We are making education more accessible to people in many different places. (Moving forward), it will change the way we view accessible education for many."



A new normal: the post-pandemic era

Sabha Fatima – Contributing Writer
Illustration by Daniela Sormova

With the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic hopefully behind us, a new era has begun. Will we simply return to our pre-pandemic lives? Or will mask-wearing and physical distancing practices have a lasting effect on our daily routines?

Imagine a dangerous disease looming over a world of panicked people. Though slightly less dramatic than the popular 2011 film “Contagion,” this was our reality. And unless you’ve been living under a gigantic rock for the past year and a half, you know that the SARS-CoV-2 virus arrived and conquered our lives, and the rest is history. The effects of this worldwide pandemic, more commonly known as COVID-19, have taken their toll on people and nature alike, ranging from the environmentalist’s heaven to the extrovert’s prison.

As summarized by Bloomberg CityLab, “two images of the post-pandemic city have emerged. One is the urbanist’s utopia of widened sidewalks, ample bike lanes, parking lots converted to green spaces. The other is a dystopia of empty streets and boarded-up shops, a barren cultural landscape in which the diversity, energy and pageantry (have) been replaced by a tableau of socially-distanced and masked citizens, scurrying quickly between their jobs and their homes.”

Masks, distancing, hand-washing

Most people have seen the drastic effects of the pandemic in the shortage of ICU beds and massive COVID-19 death toll. Many have become accustomed to wearing face masks, face shields and bandannas when going out in public. Although the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are possible solutions to this issue, the fear and apprehension that radiates around the world may encourage folks to continue wearing masks, practicing physical distancing, regularly using hand sanitizer and engaging in frequent hand-washing long after the pandemic is over.

People are expressing new social norms more verbally and visually, such as normalizing six-foot stickers in stores and restaurants or adhering to

written policies about sanitation in public spaces. And who knows how long this will continue? It may last for the next few months, the rest of this year or even beyond that.

Work from home

However, just because there is an ongoing pandemic does not mean people have stopped working altogether. Work and school took on an entirely new form in the midst of this pandemic. Online, remote meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams have allowed us to stay in contact with classmates and professors, colleagues, friends and loved ones through the toughest of times.

This convenient form of staying connected with people across the globe cancels out the need for commuting from point A to point B, essentially saving time and energy. It is no big surprise then that Zoom and Teams may be here to stay. Schools and higher education institutions are adapting to this new way of life. Summer courses, labs and regular semester classes are being actively remodeled to fit the needs of remote students.

Higher education institutions and K–12 schools have remade many classes to fit the needs of remote students during the pandemic. There’s also a high chance that corporate businesses will permanently integrate this virtual workplace from here on out. From standard virtual corporate interviews to virtually proctored standardized exams, working from home is the trend of the future. Even campus clubs and organizations across the country have found ways to adapt their events and meetings for virtual spaces.

“I’m not a futurist, but I really hope to move back to seeing some fun activities and events and be able to engage and have a vibrant campus community,” said Kevin McCarthy, assistant vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students.

Accessible medical assistance

Along with widespread COVID-19 testing and vaccines in distribution, other great sources



of remote medical assistance have emerged from the COVID-19 crisis. Doctors and medical professionals have started carrying out virtual check-ups over the phone or over live telehealth appointments. Patients can log into their medical account and schedule time to meet with a doctor virtually or call in an emergency right there.

But clinics and hospitals aren't the only ones trying to maintain a high standard in regard to health. In fact, NCC's very own Dyson Wellness Center (DWC) collaborated with TimelyMD and a new telehealth service specifically for students called Students Care. This 24/7 service is completely free and fully confidential. It covers both mental and medical health for full-time NCC students free of charge. In addition, this new system is here to stay, even after the pandemic is over. Tatiana Sifri, director of the DWC and a licensed

clinical professional counselor, spoke about the ease of the new telehealth service and how it can help students.

"With the new telehealth system, we still have our counselors and medical staff but now there's also Students Care," said Sifri. "What I like about it is that when we are closed, and you are up late studying, it's nice to have that option at 11 at night to talk to a counselor or medical (professional) in the moment. And you're just going to wait a few minutes."

Restaurants, stores, public spaces

Let's talk about food. For obvious reasons, buffets and similar high-contact areas in restaurants and stores have been, for the most part, eliminated, if not abandoned. In addition, there has been an increase in online food orders delivered straight to homes through apps like Grubhub, Doordash and UberEats.

As stated by Deliveroo CEO Will Shu in a CNBC article, “our initial analysis suggests that COVID-19 has accelerated consumer adoption of these delivery services by about two to three years. We saw this incredible increase in new customers joining the platform. My bet was that this was going to be the future of food delivery.”

Handshakes, high fives

Some things that have come out of this pandemic have been beneficial. Creative ways to solve everyday problems caused by a worldwide crisis have emerged. Some innovative examples are those of deliver-only restaurants and direct-to-consumer movie premieres. And while these tactics will continue to exist in the post-pandemic world, we will have to cut other unnecessary, pre-COVID habits from our daily lives.

For example, excessive touching, handshakes and high fives are all things that have dropped out of our lifestyles slowly but surely as we were forced to stay six feet apart. And it is unlikely that these practices will come back soon, judging from how suddenly they were eliminated from our lives.

Privacy matters

In the distant, or not-so-distant, future, smartphones may actually be a radical solution to tracking the spread of COVID-19 in humans. The Bluetooth in your smartphone tracks how long you’ve been at a location and who else was near you for several minutes, so your phone could easily track the possible spread of disease.

While this may sound invasive and unlikely, the reality is that not much personal information is required to track a person. Also, a few countries, such as the UK and Singapore, have already started thinking about smartphone COVID-19 tracking.

As described by MIT News, “Phone owners would get involved by downloading an app that enables this (COVID-19 tracking) system. After a positive diagnosis, a person would receive a QR code from a health official. By scanning the code through that app, that person can upload their log to the cloud. Anyone with the app could then initiate their phones to scan these

logs. A notification, if there’s a match, could tell a user how long they were near an infected person and the approximate distance.”

The most obvious problem with this solution is that downloading an app is optional, so unless it is mandated, not everyone would consider installing it. For those who do, it isn’t always possible to leave out personal data because it is sometimes required for identification purposes. Without proper privacy measures, this futuristic approach to tracking the disease could impede the process if we are not careful.

Future implications

On a less serious note, since most of us lived through a toilet paper shortage last year, we can expect that come Halloween, fewer houses will be TP’d and more candy will be saved for those long days spent inside, possibly attending online meetings. In fact, we might as well say goodbye to snow days since most classes and work meetings can easily be held online.

But good times are just on the horizon. We might not ever completely return to our pre-COVID lives since we are forever changed by the pandemic, but we can try our best to stay safe and return to the “new normal.”

“I think we’ve learned a ton from this experience and we (will) continue to learn, and I believe that some things may be different going forward,” said McCarthy. “I’m optimistic to see what things will look like in August. I’m hopeful that we hopefully saw the worst of it, but we have to continue to take this seriously, even if it feels like we’re doing better.”

All in all, we can certainly expect more distancing offline and more work online, even in our post-pandemic lives. But as long as we remember the three W’s to ward off COVID-19 — wear a mask, wash your hands and watch your distance — we can make a quick recovery and continue to live our lives in a COVID-free world.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR SAMANTHA GADOMSKI?

Class: Senior

Sport: Softball

Position: Pitcher/Infielder

Major: Exercise Science

High School: Conant

Hometown: Hoffman Estates, Ill.

Throughout Samantha Gadomski's softball career at NCC, she has played multiple positions for the team. As a hitter in 2019, Gadomski posted a .314 batting average with 32 hits, 20 RBI's and 11 runs. In 2020, before the pandemic, she recorded a .474 batting average with five runs and five runs batted in. As a pitcher, she posted a 2-1 record with 17 strikeouts. In the 2019 season, Gadomski won five games on the mound, struck out 14 batters and threw three complete games. She has been named Academic All-CCIW twice in her collegiate career. "I've had a great time playing softball here and making great friends," said Gadomski. "It's been a great experience and I'm happy I chose to come here!" After graduation, Gadomski plans on going back to Conant High School, where she will work for about a year and then go back to school to earn a master's in teaching.



QUIZ: WHAT'S YOUR FIRST MOVE AFTER COVID?

Allison Rott – Co-Editor-in-Chief
Illustration by Allyson Randa

1. AT THE BEGINNING OF COVID, I:

- A. Did nothing. I already had six months' worth of food and water in a well-filtered bomb-proof shelter in the basement of my cabin.
- B. Ignored it. There was no way we could have a pandemic now. Plus, I had concert tickets. You think I'm staying at home and missing BTS, the greatest boy band of all time?
- C. Possibly ran someone's grandma down in Costco buying the last six pallets of toilet paper.

2. I WOULD DESCRIBE MYSELF AS:

- A. Intense. Very, very intense. I am on high-alert at all times and I do know how to escape from handcuffs with nothing but a bit of dental floss.
- B. Kinda chill but sometimes I have Red Bull and then I am capable of everything my siblings can't do.
- C. High energy. I am currently running two businesses. One sells locally sourced honey. The other is black market toilet paper.

3. MY DREAM DESTINATION IS:

- A. The basement of my cabin which is located in the middle of a forest in a place that is confidential. I'd tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.
- B. Anywhere with internet. I heard Dubai had some really Instagram-worthy spots. Just pop me in a place with a ring light and my phone and I'll be good.
- C. I can't choose. I want to travel to every country and can pay for it with the profits of my black market toilet paper business.

4. MY LAST DATE WAS:

- A. Online with an amazing survivalist I met on Reddit. I ordered venison to their house, and we talked about our favorite types of metal detectors.
- B. Unsuccessful. I think they read some Cosmopolitan article about what to do on a first date and kept touching my hand while I was trying to eat my sandwich.
- C. Productive. COVID has really upped my dating game. I go on two Zoom dates at once, and switch back and forth feigning a janky internet connection. Opening line: I have toilet paper.

5. THE BEST THING ABOUT COVID IS:

- A. No people! I haven't seen anyone in two months. It is the ideal scenario, really.
- B. There is NOTHING good about this. My family is batshit crazy and I cannot stand them any longer.
- C. I have so much time! I've made new friends, I read books, I bake and I do yoga. My toilet paper business has also done well enough that I can afford college!

THE RESULTS

MOSTLY A'S

Your first move after COVID is to do absolutely nothing. You are going to pretend the world is still on lockdown, because gosh darn it, you've enjoyed COVID lockdowns. For once, the world was still and you were more than happy with that. You are also the go-to expert about the end of the world. A metal detector treasure hunt with your new significant other might be in order.

MOSTLY B'S

You are finally going to move out! You deserve it and the rest of your family is so desperate for space that they're helping to finance it. Finally, you'll get a studio for your vlogging channel! Take-out will never again be a part of your routine, and there is nothing wrong with that. Life will go back to normal.

MOSTLY C'S

The black market toilet paper business is no longer profitable but you'll be prepared for the next pandemic that comes along. You are going to come out of COVID brighter and better than before because you know where you want to go and what you want to do. Your first move after COVID is to take a few months of vacation in Europe before coming back refreshed for your next business venture: personal protective equipment recycling.



SIX ARTISTS WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM IN 2021

Adrian Martinez-De la Cruz – Co-News Editor
Illustrations by Daniela Sormova

For most of us, 2020 was a year of being stuck inside. We passed our time watching “Tiger King,” attempting sourdough starters and trying to get along with our families. Music helped us get through all of that. 2021 is upon us and we’re eagerly awaiting more music from some of our favorite artists. Here are six artists that we are hoping to hear from this year.

WALLOWS

The Los Angeles-based alternative rock band had an interesting year in 2020. They recorded their entire six-track EP “Remote” while each band member was quarantined due to COVID-19. They released a deluxe version of “Remote” on Feb. 19 which included five additional tracks. While promoting the deluxe EP on the Zane Lowe Show, vocalist and guitarist Dylan Minnette, who played Clay Jensen in the Netflix series “13 Reasons Why,” revealed the band is in the middle of recording their second album, hoping to have it finished in summer of this year and released in fall. However, they mentioned it will depend on the landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic.



KHALID

Known for his hit song “Location,” Khalid’s last album “Free Spirit” was released in 2019. In 2020, he released four singles, including “Be Like That” with Kane Brown and Swae Lee. Currently working on his third album, Khalid said backstage at the Billboard Music Awards in October that his first two albums won’t compare to what he has planned for his third album. In a tweet he posted on Feb. 16, Khalid thanked fans for their support and can’t wait for them to see/hear what he has been working on.

AJR

The New York-based indie group composed of the Met brothers, Adam, Jack and Ryan, have three studio albums, with the most recent, “Neotheater,” released in 2019. On Dec. 20 of last year, they announced the name of their next album, “OK Orchestra,” on social media. The album was a year-long project released on March 26. On Feb. 17, they released a single off the album called “Way Less Sad,” along with three other songs.



LAUREN JAUREGUI

The 24-year-old former member of girl group Fifth Harmony started her solo career with the singles “Expectations” in October of 2018. In 2020, she released the Tainy-produced single “Lento” and “50ft.” She even contributed to the DC Comics “Birds of Prey” movie soundtrack. She has been teasing the release of her debut album for a while, including a video snippet posted on Twitter late last year. Eager fans have been eating it up and have been using hashtags like #LJ1iscoming. However, Jauregui took to Twitter in January criticizing fans for their impatience.



DODIE

The British musical artist and YouTube vlogger, Dodie, started producing original music in 2016 with the release of her EP “Intertwined.” Since then, she has released two additional EPs and various singles. In October of last year, she posted a video on her YouTube channel announcing that her first album, “Build a Problem,” would be released on March 5. She released the single “Hate Myself” ahead of the first album in January. In early February, she gave an update via social media saying the release of the album would be pushed back by three weeks due to issues with vinyl distribution. While she kept fans waiting a bit more, she released a voice memo version of “Hate Myself” on Feb. 26. The album was released on March 26.

STILL WOZZY

In 2011, Still Wozy, an indie artist from Oakland, Calif., was part of the alternative rock band, Feed Me Jack, until their disbandment in 2016. His solo career started with the release of his single “Vacation.” Known for the intriguing cover art created by his fiancée, Amiya Kahn-Tietz, Wozy has strictly only released singles with the exception of his EP “Lately” in 2019. Fans have been begging for a full-length album by Wozy since 2019. While there has not been any indication that the artist will release an album soon, fans hope 2021 will be the year.



FACES OF NCC

QUESTION: WHAT HOBBY OR PROJECT DID YOU PICK UP IN QUARANTINE?

Lauren Kainrath – Social Media & Photo Editor

Contributors: Reyna Oliva, Claire Roth and Cory Griffin

Illustrations by Jasmine Pomierski



Shaune Lapp, '23

“Over quarantine, I assembled a car and became a shadetree mechanic.”



Ashley Zima, '22

“I started to knit a little bit more. I'm not very good at it but I'm getting there. I was also able to read more for my own pleasure as opposed to school stuff which was really nice.”



Angelina Kirkpatrick, '23

“For me, just lots of baking and crafting.”



Madison Vermeland, '24

"I started running, working out and doing yoga almost every day. I also started to drink more water which is really good."



Diego Mateo, '23

"Over quarantine, a project I did was work with the lower-income schools in my area to produce a curriculum in education for civil rights music, just so that they can feel represented and can one day look back on their history through music."



Malea Palahnuik, '23

"I learned how to make TikToks and how to enhance my relationships with friends virtually."



Jason Medrano, '22

"Being stuck at home gave me the ability to edit more videos and go back to my original roots of content creation and really expand my skills."



Autumn Gall, '23

"In quarantine, my mom and I worked on gardening. We moved a whole bunch of rocks and put in all these new and pretty flowers. We also got to clean up our beach so we cleaned out all the weeds and put down fresh sand."

10 PODCASTS TO BINGE LISTEN

Fredlyn Pierre Louis – Podcast Editor
Layout by Daniela Sormova | Graphic by Jasmine Pomierski

Podcasts are a wonderful escape. They are a friendly companion for walking the dog, cooking dinner, folding laundry and other little tasks when you can't sit down to watch a show. Moreover, podcasts are mostly free, available on apps like Spotify and Apple Music. According to Oberlo, there are around 850,000 podcasts, and 32% of Americans listen to podcasts, mostly for educational purposes. Here are 10 podcasts to binge listen.

1

DYING FOR SEX

This podcast is a delicious but sad show. It's a real-life story of two women who are best friends, one of whom is dying of cancer. Molly, diagnosed with stage five breast cancer, decides to leave her unhappy marriage and embarks on a series of sexual adventures to make her feel alive. Meanwhile, she shares the funniest and most touching details with her best friend, Nikki. It takes shame off the table when it comes to a woman's relationship with intimacy in sex.

2

MODERN LOVE

In 2004, "Modern Love" started as a New York Times column which evolved into a television show, three books and a podcast. It goes through different issues of love, dating, self-acceptance and mental illness. Guest speakers talk about the lust that has lost its flame, long-lost emotion and young and old relationships. "Modern Love" epitomizes the transformational powers and forms of connection, as well as the successes and failures associated with it. In one episode, the guest speaker read an essay by Adam Lunquist, '16, an NCC alumnus who had sex with a male student in the first week of freshman year of college while he was in a relationship with a woman. The essay turns out to be Lunquist coming out as bisexual and the reason for telling his ex-girlfriend the truth.

3

STILL PROCESSING

Wesley Morris and Jenna Wortham are two Black culture writers for The New York Times who are also members of the LGBTQ+ community. In this podcast, they talk about how different cultural artifacts, past and present, affect how we relate to the world. They cover topics such as art, television, movies and pop culture. In one episode, they discuss how Michelle Obama's memoir "Becoming" fits into a powerful lineage of Black women navigating circumstances with strength and grace.

4

THE NOD

"The Nod" is a podcast that focuses on society, film and culture. "The Nod" tells the stories of the Black experience that often are not told anywhere else. Topics range from an explanation of drugs coalition with Black culture to the story of an interracial drag group that traveled the country in the 1940s. This podcast celebrates the ingenuity, novelty and resilience that is so particular to being Black in America and in the world.

5

SO MUCH TO SAY

“So Much To Say” is an informal podcast because of the foul language, but the topics are very interesting. Its producer, Gregory Stewart, has published four books about his experience as a Black gay man. In his podcast intro, he talks about being involved with a closeted married man and about having meaningless sex with strangers from the internet.

6

KIND WORLD

“Kind World” is about how an act of kindness can make a difference in someone’s life. It offers short and sweet episodes that share something beautiful, loving and kind that has taken place in the world. It’s refreshing to hear and is a pleasant refrain from heavy and grief-creating stories that punctuate modern news.

7

BLOOD TIES

“Blood Ties” by Wondery is a fictional story but verges on the precipice of being realistic. The story is about two siblings, Eleanor and Micheal, who are from a wealthy family. On their way to spend time with their parents for Christmas on the Caribbean island they own, something tragic happens to the parents. That’s when all of the family secrets come out. As an elite group of people, these secrets are degrading to their reputation. For example, in episode two, it is revealed that the father was a serial rapist.

8

SOMETHING WAS WRONG

“Something Was Wrong” is an Iris Award-winning, true-crime, docuseries podcast. It’s about the discovery, trauma and recovery from shocking life events and abusive relationships. The podcast focuses on Sara who is stuck in a bizarre relationship with a guy she met online. Then the day before her wedding, she cancels because she discovers her fiancé is pathological liar.

9

HISTORY OF THE 90’S

In “History of the 90’s,” listeners travel back in time through stories that define the decade. If a story happened in the 90’s, you will hear about it on this podcast. It’s interesting to hear tales from childhood, such as “The Menendez Brothers.” The host takes you through these stories with a reporter-like tone.

10

SMALL DOSES

Amanda Seales is a truth-teller with a comedian attitude. “Small Doses” is a podcast and also a published book. The podcast focuses on various topics like woke culture, family, being Black, women, love, sex, working and immigration. It educates people about being “woke.” Listeners learn that racial awareness is a constant re-evaluation and self-reflection process.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BLAISE MEREDITH?

Class: Senior

Sport: Basketball

Position: Shooting Guard

Major: Management

High School: Neuqua Valley

Hometown: Naperville, Ill.

Blaise Meredith has played in all 85 games prior to the 2021 season, including three appearances in the NCAA Division III men's basketball tournament, two appearances in the Round of 32 and one appearance in the Sweet 16. In the 2019–20 season, Meredith scored in the double digits nine times. His season-high 23 points was during an 84-82 overtime win against Wisconsin-Oshkosh in the second round of the NCAA tournament. Also, he had a perfect 6-for-6 from three-point range in a 94-87 CCIW tournament semifinal win over Wheaton, marking the second-most three-pointers made in a game without a miss in the Cardinals' history. During those two seasons, Meredith was named to the All-CCIW Second Team. Meredith is unsure of what's next for himself after NCC, but he's glad that he was able to stay in his hometown, make friends, play basketball and get an education.



Gregory Williams – Sports Social Media Editor
Illustration by Jessica Sciabica

COVID-19 and the next pandemic

Jack Plewa – Co-Editor-in-Chief
Illustration by Allyson Randa

It's been over a year since the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, made its debut in the world. Several quarantines, tons of masks, endless testing and plenty of social distancing have plagued the earth (pun intended). Scientists created vaccines, which have reduced hospitalizations and helped us transition back to our pre-COVID lives. But still, all these protocols and preventative measures are still in place. I guess you can never be too cautious or too prepared, right? No one knows what lies ahead of us, not really. When exactly will things start to get better?

COVID-19 and vaccines

To start, let's talk about the COVID-19 vaccines, which are in fact working ... so far. But as previously observed, new strains and variants of the virus easily develop. Will old vaccines work for new variants? According to Gregory Ruthig, associate professor of biology, the ability to adjust current vaccines for new variants is possible. This has to do with how they are made. On the one hand, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use something called messenger RNA, also known as mRNA.

"(The mRNA uses) your cells' own processes to make a protein that's part of the spike protein of the coronavirus, and so then your body is exposed to that spike protein without the rest of the virus," said Ruthig. "It elicits an immune response so that if you're ever exposed to the real thing your body recognizes it much faster."

Spike proteins protrude from the outside of coronaviruses and help them infect human cells.

On the other hand, the Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca vaccines use an adenovirus, which is another kind of cold virus, similar to coronaviruses. This virus delivers the mRNA into your genome, then causes you to produce the same spike protein, just like the other vaccines. Both animal and human models tested these

vaccines. They work in different ways but produce the same outcome.

But are either of those options really safe? According to Ruthig, "There's no risk of infection."

As far as other, more long-term side effects, we don't know, but they're unlikely. People do get cold-like symptoms or allergic reactions in the short-term, but long-term effects remain unknown. The protein produced in your body won't live forever, according to Ruthig.

Currently, the Dyson Wellness Center does not offer COVID-19 vaccines to the NCC community. However, they hope to have them to distribute eventually, said Director Tatiana Sifri.

"It certainly is our goal to be able to do everything in our power to help contribute to making the campus safe and healthy so that everyone can do what they're here to do," said Sifri. However, it's a challenging process right now to make that happen. Dyson is currently figuring out if/when they'll be able to offer vaccinations.

What now?

We can't just jump right back into the pre-COVID lifestyle. We must slowly ease back into it. To do so, people can start getting vaccinated.

"Herd immunity is based on the rate of transmission, so if transmission is really high, that means you need to vaccinate more people; if transmission is really low, you can have herd immunity when you vaccinate fewer people," said Ruthig.

If everyone socially distances, wears masks and receives vaccinations, the number of cases may go down over time. In order to go back to pre-COVID life, about 70-80% of the population must be vaccinated.

However, immunity to common cold viruses doesn't last, according to Ruthig, so reinfection with COVID-19 is possible. While previous infections offer some

immunity, he believes that vaccination will provide longer immunity. Moving forward, Ruthig guesses that people will need a booster for this every year, similar to flu shots. With about 1 million vaccines distributed every day, if not more by now, the entire population of the U.S. can be vaccinated within a year from when vaccinations started.

Ruthig mentions that we need to get kids below the age of 16 approved to receive the vaccine. The effect of COVID-19 vaccines on children currently remains unknown.

In addition to children, Ruthig thinks we should also push for supplying underdeveloped countries with vaccines. "For humanitarian reasons, but also for our own benefit, we need the world to be vaccinated," said Ruthig.

Ruthig further mentions the idea of vaccine nationalism. The World Economic Forum defines this as when "the richest nations have secured billions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines, while developing economies struggle to access supplies."

This push for developed countries to get access can slow the global economic recovery.

"It's the developed world's best interest ... the wealthy world's best interest to really work on getting vaccinations to the entire world," said Ruthig.

While it's definitely possible to wipe COVID-19 from the face of the earth, similar to smallpox, Ruthig thinks it's unlikely due to the fact that the vaccines do not last long.

Eventually, the situation will shift from a matter of public health to personal health. Once vaccinated, people will only need to worry about very short-term, minor symptoms if they end up getting sick. Vaccinated people will already have a level of protection where they can come out of infection quickly and safely. COVID-19 will become endemic, just like the flu, and we should mostly return to normal. However, the virus will never go away.

Fortunately, we've had a very mild flu season this past winter, most likely because of the social distancing and mask-wearing that we did to prevent catching COVID, since the flu and COVID both spread through the air and very rarely from surfaces.

It is also possible to get co-infected with the flu and COVID. Some viruses will outcompete others in a host, while others will facilitate each other, such as HIV and Tuberculosis. However, according to Ruthig, the flu and COVID-19 don't seem to have an impact on each other.

Dyson's role on campus

"The goal is to be able to collaborate with everyone across campus on ... what is the best use of our time and how can we plug ourselves into where we're most needed," Sifri said.

Much of Dyson's time goes to working with contact tracing and advising a plan, with contact tracing being their biggest priority. They also work with school committees to come up with solutions and work on the #TogetherNC pledge. This is a joint effort with the office of marketing and communications, campus safety, operations, etc.

"We're all working together," said Sifri.

Dyson recently hired two new contact tracers, so now they have four total working on campus. Dyson's role has changed because they've never had contact tracers before the pandemic.

"We really did learn a lot together about working together as a team across all areas of the campus and we learned a lot about that cross-communication and how critical it is to work together and to support each other," said Sifri.

The next pandemic

With the end of a pandemic approaching, it's clear now that another one could emerge. Whether it be next year, in five or 10 years, in the next generation or after we're all gone. Are we ready for the next pandemic? Will the world be prepared ahead of time to prevent a microscopic pathogen from wreaking havoc across the 58 million square miles of land on this earth? Will NCC be prepared?

According to Sifri, there is so much unknown about possible future pandemics. She said the best way to approach it is to address the systems we have in place as an institution. Moreover, we need to talk about the ways and methods in which we communicate.

"In terms of future pandemics, there are certain

processes and protocols that North Central has developed over the past year that could be useful if and when the College is faced with another pandemic,” according to Peter Barger and Michael Hudson, co-chairs of the College’s COVID-19 Institutional Response Team. “Further, for any future pandemic, the College would continue to work within the guidelines and regulations provided by outside bodies such as the CDC and state and county health department.”

On a more biological level, Ruthig talks about bushmeat and animal farming. “Bushmeat trade is a place where pathogens get into human populations, particularly bats,” said Ruthig. Examples of pathogens that have spread from bushmeat include HIV, Ebola and SARS. Additionally, proper education and reducing animal contact on meat preparations can reduce the spread of diseases. This could potentially help to prevent future pandemics.

Looking at the U.S. as a whole, having enough PPE produced and available is vital in preparing for future pandemics. Developing future vaccines with RNA technology or using adenoviruses is promising. And on a different note, cultural differences definitely affect how well-prepared countries are for pandemics, especially when it comes to whether or not people follow the rules and mandates.

The biggest takeaway from this pandemic that Sifri mentions is supporting and recognizing each other. Meeting the needs of everyone is essential. She also said that it’s very important to seek support and to reach out to Dyson and use their resources provided online and to use the new telehealth system called Students Care. She wants to encourage everyone to get the help they need, especially since the pandemic seriously impacts mental/physical health.

So, let’s make sure that we learn something from this pandemic. Don’t act like it just didn’t happen and move on. Instead, move forward, occasionally looking back, strategizing and preparing for the next pandemic.



FACULTY FEATURE: IS YOUR FIELD PREPARED FOR THE NEXT PANDEMIC?

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

MICHAEL BLIGHT, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

The double-edged sword of all things social media is the power to broadcast information, which includes the dreaded misinformation. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter have created several mechanisms to help create cognitive friction in their design (e.g., interactions that prevent users from accomplishing their goals). Twitter users are now prompted to click and read an article if they attempt to share it without first reading it.

Certainly, these features are far from misinformation stoppers. Instead, Twitter notes these features are designed to “help promote informed discussion.” These platforms’ business models require users to stay active on their platforms. Until we implement critical thinking and civil discourse curriculum into our school systems, we will have to rely on social media platforms to create the environments for civility.



ANN KEATING, DR. C. FREDERICK TOENNIGES PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

I don't think we are prepared for the next pandemic, but I think the current one has shown us a template for making those preparations. As a historian of Chicago, I see connections to past crises and our response to them. Cholera ravaged Chicago annually between 1849 and 1855, affecting everyone, but most of all, the poor immigrants living in the worst districts.

In response, city leaders launched an ambitious infrastructure program to build a water and sewerage system for all Chicagoans because the ill-health of the poorest affected everyone. Similarly, the COVID epidemic has ravaged Chicagoans in the last year. While it attacks without regard to race, ethnicity or class, we have seen that communities of color and those of lower-income have suffered disproportionately. In response, I hope that we will launch another ambitious infrastructure program to create the public health and social service networks that will afford equal access to good health care and prevention.

PAUL BLOOM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS

Climate change does not directly cause disease of course. The next pandemic will be caused by a virus or bacterium. But where will that pathogen come from? It might be due to a mutation of a known pathogen (like Influenza or Ebola), but as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has shown us, we are likely more vulnerable to pathogens that are novel to humans. This is where climate change comes into play. As we warm the earth, ecosystems are shifting, which in turn is forcing the ranges of various wildlife as well as the pathogens they carry to come into closer contact with human civilization.

This is already happening due to our unmanaged growth as we encroach on the few remaining wild places, but the process will accelerate. This will inevitably cause us to come into contact with more and more pathogens that are novel to us (a process called zoonosis). The question is not whether there will be another dangerous pathogen capable of causing a pandemic, but when. And while we can be better prepared for that event in terms of the public health and immunology response, we can also help ourselves by slowing the rate at which these zoonotic events occur by slowing down our growth into animal habitats, and by reducing the rate at which we are changing those habitats through our greenhouse gas emissions.



LEILA AZARBAD, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted people's mental health around the world. Rates of stress, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and many other psychiatric illnesses have increased significantly since the start of the pandemic. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that over 42% of Americans reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in December compared with only 11% one year earlier. Social isolation, unemployment, anxiety about contracting the virus and disruptions in education and daily routines are just some of the key contributors to our heightened distress.

So, are we ready for the next pandemic? One could argue that we have experience now, and "what doesn't kill us makes us stronger." It is true that humans tend to be more resilient in the face of stress than we give ourselves credit for. However, on the other side, the negative psychological impacts of the pandemic are not declining, nor are they expected to decline anytime soon. Many have experienced significant trauma that will affect them far beyond the pandemic. We need time to heal.

ROBERT MOUSSETIS, PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

We are not ready for the next pandemic.

The frequency and complexity of viruses will only increase. On the other hand, global interaction will not regress. It has never regressed; historically, it pauses only to move forward again. Therefore, this necessitates an international response strategy and coordinated tactical approach. Just like the environment, countries, states and cities cannot have a diversity of policies with a varying application. The debacle of the COVID response and vaccination process, here in the U.S., is a clear example of the need of a well-coordinated Crisis Management method. Environment and pandemics clearly dictate a global response plan to isolate and suppress them quickly.

For those involved in developing strategic health (pandemic) policies, this pandemic was not a surprise. We just did not know when. In fact, basic research reveals that we had all the information that it would happen relatively soon. And, it did! The U.S. government had established a pandemic crisis response mechanism under Barack Obama that unfortunately was abandoned by the next administration. Maintaining a pandemic response mechanism (logistics, research, etc.) may be an expensive proposition but I would argue that our car insurance is expensive and rarely used by most of us, nevertheless, we all carry one ... just in case!

Again, it will take a good faith approach by all the major powers and leading countries to work together and devise policies to address this meaningfully and timely. I am skeptical that in an increasingly multipolar world we will find effective leadership and solutions.

We are not ready for the next pandemic.



JASON RICE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

First, let me say that I am sorry to be a downer, but my general view is that NO, sport is not well prepared for another pandemic. The main reason for this is because we still have a lot of issues with the current pandemic. While serious cases of COVID-19 remain low within the sport community, containing the virus without creating a “bubble” has proved challenging. Here we are (over) one year after the first reported U.S. infection and sporting events are still being canceled.

With the possibility of live sporting events being “super spreaders,” we have seen venues in Chicago with zero fans for an entire season. Across the board, sports that rely on gate revenues (ticket sales, concessions, parking, etc.) have and will continue to be financially impacted as they have lost somewhere between 30–65% of total revenue (pre-pandemic). While many professional sport teams have financially propped themselves up to survive, they have done this by collecting debt and reducing costs (mainly through reduced payroll). The sport industry will be digging itself out of the current pandemic for at least a few years. Not until then, and after considerable reflection, will we be ready for the next pandemic.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR HAYDN BRAUN?

Class: Senior

Sport: Basketball

Position: Point Guard

Major: Sports Management

High School: Hamilton
Southeastern

Hometown: Fishers, Ind.

Throughout Haydn Braun's collegiate basketball career at NCC, she has played in all 77 games prior to the 2021 season. In the 2019–20 season, Braun ranked second on the team with 41 assists and 23 steals. She also averages a 36.2% (38-of-105) success rate from behind the arc. On Feb. 19, against Illinois Wesleyan, she connected six three-pointers, which tied for third in single-game history. In 2018–19, she led the team in free-throw percentages at 90.3% (28-of-31) and was third in assists with 26. "NCC means so much to me and has truly impacted my life," said Braun. "Playing basketball here has definitely had the biggest impact. I have grown so much as an athlete and as a person. They weren't lying when they said these four years fly by fast. You have to cherish every moment of it." After the season, Braun hopes to land a job in marketing. Ideally, she would love a marketing position in the sports industry where she can continue to be around athletics.



THE ZODIAC SIGNS: BEFORE AND AFTER QUARANTINE

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

ARIES

March 21–April 19

Kicking off the beginning of the zodiac wheel is the adventurous and energetic Aries. This sign tends to be the self-initiators. Being in quarantine has you feeling caged and trapped in a mundane routine. Once quarantine comes to an end, take a leap of faith (not that I have to tell you twice) and try something that will give you an adrenaline rush. Bungee jumping, skydiving or mountain biking can be a good place to start. Not into anything that extreme? Try singing at an open karaoke night or asking out your quarantine crush.



TAURUS

April 20–May 20

The steadfast and grounded Taurus has been able to make the most of the worldwide lockdown. Innately creatures of habit, Tauruses have been able to convert their living space, whatever that may look like, and transform it into the ultimate sanctuary of relaxation. However, extended periods of isolation can make a Taurus go stir-crazy. Something that this sign would enjoy after quarantine would be going to see a live show, taking a calm hike in a new place with friends or having a paint and wine night.



GEMINI

May 21–June 20

Geminis, it is no secret that this quarantine has been hard for you. You are the sign that is the definition of being a “social butterfly.” Social media has been a semi-decent outlet to express yourselves, but there is nothing like the physical presence of people, whether that be of friends, family or even strangers. Once you get the “go-ahead,” turn those Zoom dates into in-person dates. Buy a ticket to the soonest concert. Plan a mini trip. Just go out and do something with people.



CANCER

June 21–July 22

Possibly considered the biggest homebodies of the zodiac, Cancers have thrived in quarantine, being able to focus on self-care/self-rehabilitation and dive into the at-home activities they are most passionate about, such as baking, video games and creating art, just to name a few. Though it is nice to refine niche skills, you have been missing the deep, face-to-face connections of those you are attached to. Find a healthy way to balance the two. Have a movie marathon, set up a picnic in the park or have a pool party with your closest pals.



LEO

July 23–August 22

Leos are creative and just want to have a good and thrilling adventure. Being tied down in quarantine has you planning, in detail, all your future excursions. Like many of the other signs, you were able to indulge yourself in self-care, but after weeks of the same thing, it started feeling monotonous. Your abundant energy needs some sort of release and a night out dancing with friends or finally taking a trip to that very specific place you have researched will do just that.



VIRGO

August 23–September 22

Quarantine for a Virgo has “productivity” written all over it. Virgos are a sign that do not like to waste precious time. One could bet a Virgo redecorated, repainted and refurnished their home ... more than once. This extremely independent sign did not view quarantining as a huge burden and, similar to Cancers, also invested time in their creative side. Once “normalcy” returns, the inquisitive Virgo does not need a big hurrah to celebrate. Have a game night with friends ... charades, Monopoly or rounds of poker or chess, all over a neatly plated charcuterie board.



LIBRA

September 23–October 22

Staying at home for a Libra can be quite relaxing. They are excellent adapters to their environment and have been able to find beauty in quarantining. Discovering new music, improving the feng shui of your space or finally reading that book you always meant to get to is what you have been up to this quarantine. Still a highly sociable sign, Libras would enjoy a stimulating, all-day outing with their friends. This could include going to the mall to shop, watching your favorite sports team play in-person or spending the day at the pool or beach.



SCORPIO

October 23–November 21

Scorpios have stayed vigilant for the entirety of the pandemic. Quiet as they may be, Scorpios have kept tabs on who has done what and who has gone where. You may have spent too much time on the internet, but you justified your investigative research on topics like famous murders, conspiracy theories, philosophy or the creation of sliced bread, as information you “might need later.” When the world is open again, the naturally curious Scorpio should go to a museum, visit “hole-in-the-wall” cafes or try to figure your way out of an escape room.



SAGITTARIUS

November 22–December 21

Quarantine has grown old quickly for a Sagittarius. These individualistic people are inherently explorative of the world and not made to be pinned down to one place. They are accustomed to freedom and autonomy, so they struggled with “shelter-in-place” orders. Sagittarians have exhausted doing activities in their local area and long for a change of pace and scenery. A post-quarantine suggestion for a Sagittarius would be to find the cheapest flight on Google and tour the city it brought you to. This will definitely help you rediscover the little things you love about life.



CAPRICORN

December 22–January 19

Finally! An indefinite amount of time for you to kick back and relax right? Not exactly. You have viewed your time in quarantine as a way to “get ahead” as much as you possibly can. Your self-made checklist, at last, has its own check mark of completion. Capricorns typically remain as loners but have occasionally checked in on a handful of friends. This sign has a fixation on being in control at all times so going to a local bar to play billiards or darts would be the ideal way a Cap would want to celebrate the end of quarantine. That, or to go somewhere with live music.



AQUARIUS

January 20–February 18

The winner of taking the pandemic as serious as it should be is the classic Aquarian. Aquarius people are the humanitarians of the signs and continue to have others in mind with every step they take. They have had no problem staying in to read a book, journal and/or binge watch a new television series or rewatch one they love. Aquariuses struggled with not being able to see their inner circle of friends, but have directed that energy into helping them through this hard time. After quarantine, you would love nothing more than to reconnect with those you lost touch with over a nice brunch.



PISCES

February 19–March 20

My sweet Pisces, quarantine has been tranquil for you. You have enjoyed the mandatory relaxation period and have had time to connect to your creativity and spirituality. Nevertheless, your friendly and emotional self has missed physically seeing the people that matter the most to you. The romantic and imaginative Pisces has probably spent a lot of time daydreaming about what the future will be like. You appreciate life in a multitude of ways so try something where you can embrace its beauty. This could be going kayaking, seeing your favorite band live, taking a tai chi class or going to the theater.





Seniors solidify post-grad plans despite pandemic setbacks

Shealeigh Voiti – Vision/Arts & Lifestyle Editor
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I've watched so many movies about people in college. When I was in high school, I read young adult novels where twenty-somethings at liberal arts schools had meet-cutes and clarity. Those characters seemed hopeful and prepared, like they had always known exactly how their life would go.

But for me, and many others, school has been a collection of stops and starts. Community college, associate's degree, transferring to a four-year school and then, of course, the unforeseeable pandemic. As the world navigated a global health crisis, my classmates and I moved home for the remainder of the semester. We said goodbye to our campus and days spent with each other, wondering if we'd ever be able to return again.

As a result, the pandemic affected a lot of college students' plans, work, motivation and preparation for the future. Undergraduate enrollment dropped by 3.6% compared to 2019, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education.

For Michael Longworth, '21, his four years spent at NCC have been a time of growth and self-reflection. He began his first year studying Spanish and education, then pivoted to Spanish and international business and shortly after, landed on Spanish and human resource management.

By junior year, Longworth settled on attending law school after undergrad. After his final major switch, he said he finally felt ready to start preparing for life beyond college.

"It was something that I thought about before, but I'd kind of given into a lot of imposter syndrome, thinking I couldn't do it," Longworth said. "So I never let myself imagine a career in law. But then sophomore year, I started to think, 'Why not?'"

But Longworth never anticipated having to take the LSAT remotely or apply to law schools in isolation. He was among the second round of prospective law students that took the exam online and was feeling the pressure. Longworth completed the test in an office space at NCC, but in the middle of a section, Longworth was disconnected from the server.

"I'm sure that my proctor, if they, like, watched my video back, saw absolute panic for 30 seconds," Longworth said. "It did kick me out of my exam, but I sent a frantic message, and finally someone was able to get me back in. It thankfully saved all of my progress but it didn't stop the timer, so I lost eight minutes on the hardest section of the exam."

When the test ended, Longworth took a deep breath and silently decided he'd never take the LSAT again. Thankfully, he didn't have to. Because after endless nights of studying, a few

technical errors and a frenzied phone call, he was happy with his score and started applying to law schools as soon as he could. Things worked out.

“I’ve narrowed it down to Marquette University and University of Oregon,” Longworth said. “So I will hopefully be in either Milwaukee or Eugene next year. I’m excited to move, have my own place and feel like a real adult.”

For theatre students, like Michelle Ortiz, ‘21, and Ariana Burks, ‘21, senior year was different and daunting. All slated productions for the year had to be performed virtually and new obstacles arose for which the old rules didn’t apply.

Ortiz had to quickly learn how to do light design projects over Zoom, like for the fall 2020 production “How I Learned To Drive,” tweaking small details until her vision came to life.

“You’re just figuring it out as you go, like ‘OK, turn that light on, or eh, turn it off, or OK, now turn around!’” Ortiz said. “But it’s also nice that everyone is figuring it out at the same time. As frustrating as it can be, it’s also incredibly rewarding when it turns out the way you want.”

Ortiz also said this time has given her space to think, find gaps in her portfolio that need to be filled and search for internships and acting auditions for after graduation. While talking about these plans, Ortiz started laughing, “I also want to be a live-in nanny,” she said. “That’s random, but it’s something I’d like to do while looking for shows.”

Similarly, Burks had to draw a completely different road map for the year she thought she had completely figured out.

“I was booked throughout 2020 into early 2021,” Burks said. “Because all of those (acting) jobs got canceled, I kind of went through a phase where I was like, ‘Wow, am I going to do well in this field with everything going on now?’”

But the show must go on, and Burks has found new ways to channel her artistry.

“I’ve been able to be a part of some really cool workshops and other opportunities that are virtual,” Burks said. “I have hope things will get better. I’m still auditioning, just not in person right now.”

Ultimately, Burks wants to act for as long as she can, maybe sing and dance a bit along the way, too. She has plans for so far in advance, she says it’s become a running joke between her and her friends.

“When I’m older, I’d love to have my own casting company because I’m really passionate about breaking down those walls and barriers that trap people of color into certain roles and stereotypes so that more art is created by everybody, not just a select few,” said Burks.

Zacary Heren, ‘21, arrived at NCC from Joliet Junior College in 2018, studying computer science. By then, he still wasn’t totally sold on his major but didn’t know what to change it to.

“On a whim, I did radio, which isn’t something I’d normally do,” Heren said. “But being around other broadcast and media studies and journalism majors, I was like, ‘OK, yeah, this is more where I want to be.’”

He switched his major to interactive media studies, joined student organizations like Cardinal Public Relations that allowed him to shoot and edit video projects and found classes that catered to his interests in technology and creative storytelling.

“Even if we were totally normal, I’d say this was my busiest year,” Heren said. “I like everything I’m doing, and this is the first semester where that’s been the case.”

Heren already has a job lined up for after graduation and he’s hoping to continue working on his capstone project, a podcast on media and society, even after he’s said goodbye to NCC.

Eventually, everything ends, and then we move on to the next thing. And OK, so I missed some meet-cutes. And I definitely dodged clarity sometimes, especially when the world erupted during my second to last year of school. Making plans seemed impossible then. But college was special. I learned about myself, what I want and more importantly, what I need.

And even though the question of “What’s next?” makes me feel totally bananas and afraid and intimidated, I made it.

We made it.



SENIOR YEARBOOK

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR PRE-PANDEMIC SELF?



ALLISON – CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“Try to see as much and do as much when you can, because you don’t realize it’s a privilege until it’s taken away.”



JACK – CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“Just when you think things can’t get any worse, be prepared for the worst. Never get your hopes up, and don’t make any big life decisions until absolutely necessary.”



GREG – SPORTS SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

“Some things can change real quick so make sure you cherish everything and don’t take them for granted. Also, no matter what, make sure you buy toilet paper. You’ll never know if they’ll ever be a shortage.”



JESSICA – WEB EDITOR

“It will be hard to feel hopeful sometimes. But you’ll still feel hope :)”



ERIKA – SPORTS EDITOR

“Pick up a new hobby, or you’ll spend quarantine watching way too many Netflix documentaries.”



JASMINE – DESIGN EDITOR

“Cherish all the little moments with people and don’t take anything for granted. And use this time to catch up on the things you love because you’ll have more time on your hands than ever.”



SHEALIEGH – VISION/ARTS & LIFESTYLE EDITOR

“It is okay to take the time to grieve for life before. And also, every dessert I’m about to bake during quarantine will be very ugly and won’t look anything like the photos in Bon Appétit, but they will be delicious every time.”



LAUREN – SOCIAL & PHOTO EDITOR

“Bitch, good luck lmao XD”

**WE'VE GOT ISSUES.
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