

The Ultimate Cure or a New Disease?

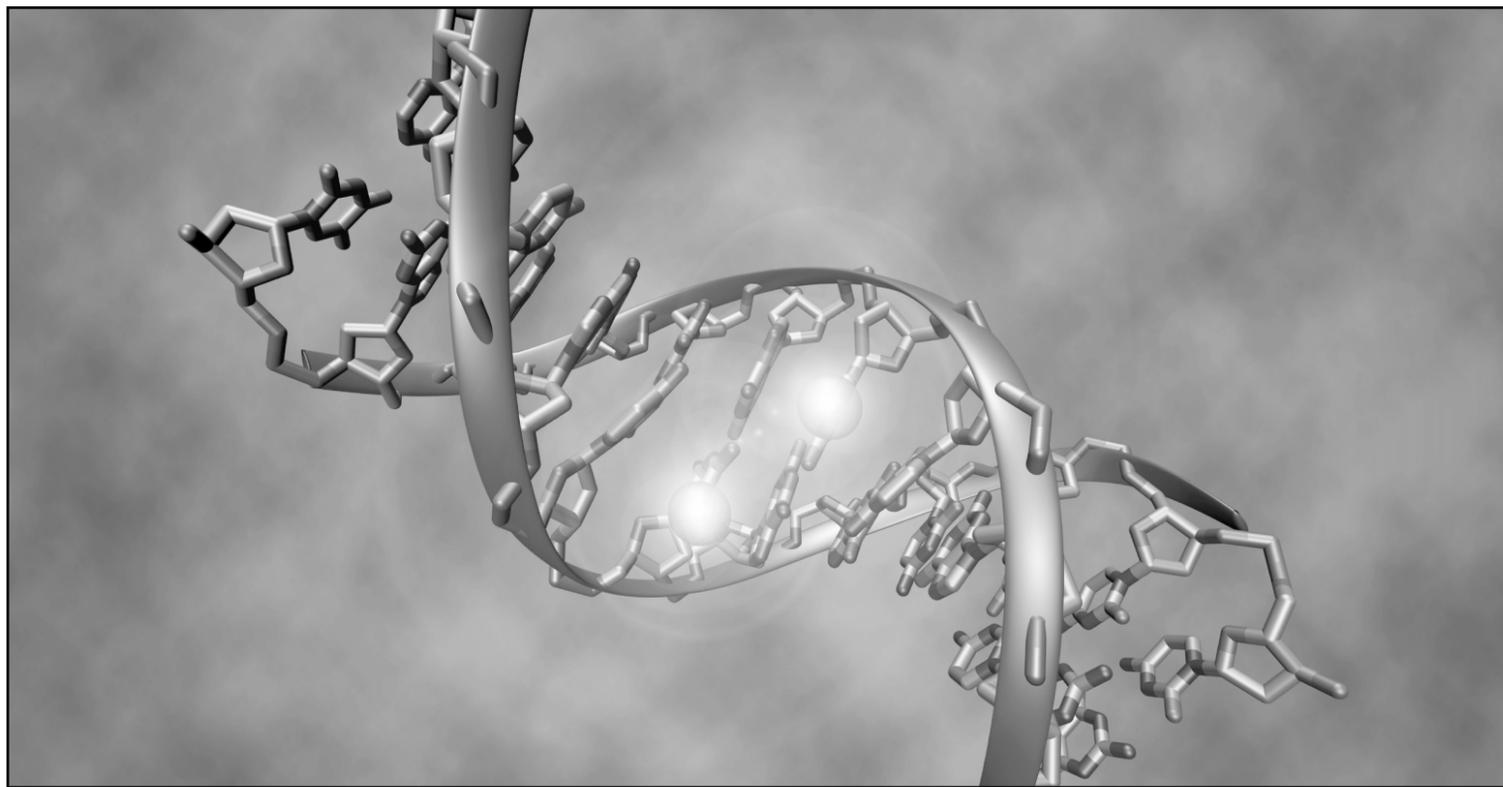


Jordan Schwakopf
Opinion Columnist

From Dec. 1 to Dec. 3, the International Summit on Human Gene Editing took place in Washington, D.C. with the intention of discussing the pros and cons of human gene editing, and whether it should be allowed at all.

For those who are unfamiliar with gene editing, the easiest way to explain it is that science now has the tools to remove and replace damaged or unfavorable DNA inside cells, or even in gametes and embryos. This offers the capability to neutralize genetic diseases, as well as alter other traits. Why is this important? Think of it this way; some cancers have been proven to have inherited susceptibility, meaning gene editing could be the next cancer treatment.

Now, it's hard to argue against a potential cure for cancer. However, one concern with gene editing is the unknown potential effects of its widespread use. Gene editing in somatic cells makes DNA changes that are not passed on to offspring, making it far less controversial, but



Genes (which are made up of DNA, as pictured above) are the basic physical unit of heredity.

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germline editing, the editing of gametes and embryos, alters the DNA that is passed onto future generations. Once a change is made through germline editing, it cannot be undone easily and its effects will continue to be passed on.

Humans can't see the future, and we have no way of being certain what long term effects the alteration of DNA in our population will cause. Sure, science can conduct experiments to test for possible outcomes of altering DNA in embryos, and they can make predictions

of how an altered genome will affect future generations. But at the end of the day, these actions could have detrimental effects for human race that scientists failed to consider as possibilities.

On the other hand, the widespread use of gene editing could lead to a new age of humanity marked by world peace and immortality. Unlikely, but we don't know for certain, do we?

One of the common concerns with allowing gene editing is that it will lead to the creation of designer babies. Parents choose

desired genes for their offspring based on personal preference rather than necessity. This could lead to an advanced class of humans, made more intelligent or more athletic by their parents.

Humans can't see the future, and we have no way of being certain what long term effects the alteration of DNA in our population will cause.

This in turn could lead to decreased diversity as more and more people choose the same favorable physical traits for their offspring. This homogeneity would be disastrous for the human race if these same once favorable genes become unfavorable due to an environmental or social change.

An obvious solution to prevent this from occurring would be to regulate what scientists are allowed to alter, but that leads to a host of new problems: Who is in charge of regulating, the federal government, the state government, an international authority, or a coalition of scientists? A combination of them all? Who will decide what the punishments for illegal editing be, or what would happen to illegally altered offspring?

Regulation is undoubtedly needed in this situation, but there are still a lot of questions that need to be answered and details to be hashed out before humanity embraces gene editing.

Another concern discussed amongst more religious members of humanity is that altering DNA constitutes "playing God." While people are right to be cautious when tampering with science we don't quite fully understand, we should not pass by this opportunity to prevent future suffering from genetic diseases because of a mild fear that humanity might not be

meant to use the tools necessary to do so.

I would agree that there are certainly some things germline gene editing shouldn't be used for, such as designer babies, but to argue against the use of gene editing to cure genetic disease based solely on a religious view that is not shared by all humanity is presumptuous at the very least.

At the conclusion of the International Summit, it was decided that gene editing of somatic cells, which makes changes in the DNA that are not passed down to offspring, are fair game for clinical use if the procedures are ethical and abide by regulations set forth by scientific governing bodies, whatever they may be in each country.

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However, clinical use of gene editing on gametes and embryos is on hold until further studies are done and unique regulations are put in place (though research will continue). Despite this delay, I am of the opinion that germline editing is inevitable now that humanity knows we have the capability to carry it out.

That being said, it is important for us, as members of humanity, to decide how we will deal with this issue when the time to discuss clinical use comes. While we may not be directly affected, we have before us the chance to alter humanity forever, and that is not something we should take lightly.

The Good, the Bad, and the Meh



Midnight Express! The one gleam of hope during finals week! Be distracted for a few blissful hours of food and jazz!



Reading day is okay I guess. No classes. Just tons of papers, projects, and studying. Way better...



Finals Week. You nor anyone else exist for the next week. Only papers and studying exist. But, if you survive the existential trial you will find yourself a stronger being, capable of enduring the most mind numbing of activities and consuming rivers of caffeine.

Don't Let "Breaking News" Break You



Amy Leininger
Opinion Columnist

Recently, while waiting at a bus stop with friends after a concert in downtown Minneapolis, a man approached us and asked if we had heard the news. "What news?" I asked, not sure if he was referring to Trump's fascist rise to power, the San Bernardino shooting, the Planned Parenthood attack, the killing of Jamar Clark, the protests and shootings that followed, or the Paris terrorist attacks.

As it turns out, he was referring to the Jamar Clark case, stating that he was a cousin of Clark and was trying to spread the word about the injustice of both the shooting and the sub-

sequent treatment of protesters.

After our conversation, what struck me most was that initial response of "What news?" In our heads, my friends and I each ran through a laundry list of recent current events, and they were all horrifying.

It seems as if the world has gone mad right now. In fact, the mood in the country is so low that President Obama was compelled to address the nation from the Oval Office, an event so rare that it was only his third time doing so.

Lately, each time we manage to recover from the latest depressing headline, like clockwork a new horror captures media attention, and the loathsome process begins again. Perhaps the cycle is best depicted in the way our flag seems to constantly plunge back down to half-mast; the symbol of a nation in mourning. Up and down it goes, though now it goes mostly down.

But perhaps a little perspective is in order. I called my grandma recently, asking what she thought of the latest current events. "Oh yes, all these bad events right now..." she said knowingly. I asked her if she thought things were getting worse, if she was more worried now than she was before.

"Things have always been like this. The world has always been a little crazy," my grandma told me. She reminded me that I was calling her on December 7, the day that would live in infamy. "Amy, when Pearl Harbor happened, people thought, 'Oh my God, is this the end of the world?'" My grandma described how people watched the scene unfold later in movie theater newsreels, stunned by what they had seen.

Things have changed in 73 years. Now tragedies play out on a loop on CNN, and nonstop coverage and commentary of the latest outburst of violence is available at our fingertips. We are steeped in 24/7 coverage of horrific events, and we can't seem to shut it off.

The last thing I do at night is check my phone, swearing I'll only read one more pointless article. And guess what I do first thing in the morning when I wake up? A quick scroll through the headlines, checking to see if the world is on fire yet. My grandma mentioned she had a similar routine.

She wakes up in the morning and thinks, "Well, I wonder what happened while we were sleeping... What's the latest breaking news?" Because she knows there's always breaking

news.

My grandma thinks the obsession with digging up the latest tragedy and blasting it on every available form of media is too much. "We don't need to see all that stuff. We know too much." It wasn't always this way, however.

Reflecting on how media coverage of tragedies has evolved to the nonstop parade of violence that calls itself news, Gramma quipped, "Anderson Cooper wasn't at every bad event ever!" No, he wasn't. But now that he is, ratings are high.

This drive for ratings explains the pinnacle scene of insanity in the media that unfolded two days after the San Bernardino shooting. Various cable news networks broadcasted live from inside the rental home of the two shooters, rifling through their belongings on air. This was clearly not an act of journalism so much as an act of voyeurism, and it was disturbing to watch. But this is what we asked for, isn't it?

We demand around the clock coverage, and the media does its best to keep up. Perhaps it's a mutually destructive relationship that we have developed with the media. "You become addicted - you have to have that noise all the time," Gramma

reflected, adding sardonically, "Anderson Cooper is my best friend!"

The human brain did not evolve to withstand the onslaught of violence and threats that are broadcast right into our living rooms. Studies have demonstrated that we significantly overestimate the danger posed to us by dreadful but improbable events.

So when the brain is exposed to information about a violent shooting, coupled with nonstop coverage of the event, creeping anxiety takes hold, and we no longer feel safe. So even though we are more likely to be struck by lightning than killed in a terrorist attack or a mass shooting, we can't help but think: "What if it happens to me?"

As we return home for the holidays, so happy to see all the people we love, I think we can comfortably turn off our TVs and tuck away our phones. Because odds are, whatever nightmare is happening miles and miles away does not need our undivided attention right now. Your world, and the people who really matter, are already right in front of you. Gramma was always far more interesting than Anderson Cooper, anyway.



Logan Boese
Opinion Columnist

Whoa, so I may be about to put out one of the more controversial pieces that we have seen in a long time. However, something that has been weighing heavily on my mind recently is peace and how we approach this as Americans and as a society in general. After sitting through countless hours of Christmas in Christ Chapel, saying hundreds of prayers, and singing songs for peace you think I would be a big proponent of it by now, right?

Well, I think that there is a serious conversation that needs to happen that we are shying away from whenever we send out a prayer for peace or call for action. Here it is: Peace is a very complex problem, both philosophically and theologically. Our conversations about peace are simple and well-intentioned at best, but misleading at worst.

The philosophical problem lies within how we understand the world around us.

Depending on your orientation towards the world everything may naturally tend towards chaos or order. Do you believe in determinism or radical free will? Whichever way you go there are serious complications that form from your stance in relation to peace.

If you believe in determinism, which we will say for the sake of brevity means that everything aims at a predetermined end, then we have a world that was created without peace. The natural world is not peaceful. Earth was formed out of chaos, mistakes, and situations that cannot be replicated.

I for one, reject determinism as a folly and cop out. So let's say that we as humankind are endowed with radical free will.

Our conversations about peace are simple and well-intentioned at best, but misleading at worst.

When presented with free will our problems as humans compound upon one another even more. We have an insatiable appetite for all things violent. I am not just talking about video games or gun rights. No, think about how we love action movies, dystopian books, and politics that are aggressive.

Are we not entertained? We live in a new Rome where the colosseum is now the media

circus and the court is that of public opinion. *Et tu, Brute?* I am Brutus and you are too. If with our radical free will we desired peace above all else we could have it within a year. However, we all profit off the violence that plagues the world around us. America, the West, indeed, modern society itself was not formed off a dialogue of peace and this runs through our collective consciousness stronger than we know.

Now what about theology? We pray to God and ask where he is in the violence that surrounds us. However, how much do we really know about that which exists outside space and time? The Prince of Peace and the Day of the Lord within the Bible are two motifs that will not signify peace in the slightest upon their arrival. The Prophet Amos warns us of the Day of the Lord and John of Patmos in his revelation states that Jesus will come to judge.

The world will not end in peace, but with a remarkable amount of violence if we adhere to sacred texts. Faith only further complicates notions of peace once we realize that it is not in agreement about the natural state of the world. In the King James Version of the Bible "peace" shows up 470 times, "death" 456, "wicked" 413, "war" 280, "battle" 232, and "kill"/"killed" 208. Faith is certainly not without its recognition of the darker aspects

of humanity.

The questions of determinism and free will once again enter the conversation when speaking about peace in relation to faith. There is no simple answer and we must push ourselves to think outside the little picture of the problems occurring around us. I cannot help but to feel amazed when we look at violence happening in other parts of the world and try to help them as

Birth, life, and death are not peaceful and we crave security so badly that we will do anything to convince ourselves that it is possible.

if we are any better.

It is the remnants of empiricism and colonialism that teaches us to pity and grieve for others without a recognition of our own faults and brokenness. We have much to learn about the state of our own affairs when we decide to finally crane our necks out of our high glass windows and look at others. Unfortunately, we usually choose not to do so if we can avoid it.

So what do I believe? The natural state of our universe is that of discomfort and violent unrest. Birth, life, and death are not peaceful and we crave security so badly that we will do anything to convince ourselves

that it is possible.

Instead, we must recognize that which is wrong with ourselves and the world around us and then strive to do the best we can to serve our neighbor. We cannot create heaven here on earth and to think we can do so borders on hubris. We must stop burying our heads in the sand or in our hands when we must roll up our sleeves and dive into the messiness and chaos that is life.

Sure, praying for peace sounds great and all, but this isn't Ms. Congeniality. No, this is real life. World peace is something that exists in the understanding, but nowhere within reality. Peace is not the natural state of things, so now the question is what will you do with that realization. My hope would be that you would stop putting the affairs of the world off on others and instead take an active role in shaping the community that you want. Just don't do it naively. Actually read the newspaper and history books.

Don't draw an opinion after reading one Facebook post or opinion article. You are directly responsible for the state of things around you and far away from you as well. When we can recognize the reality of the situation we are in then we finally can envision a reality different than our own. My life is not predetermined and so you can bet that I will continue to decide how I engage with all that is around me.

The Naiveté That is Peace

Breaking Down Political Parties



Megan Bertrand
Opinion Columnist

The politics of the United States are broken into two very select parties: Democrats and Republicans. Sixteen of our presidents were Democrats, and eighteen were Republicans. That means there were ten presidents, who were neither Democrats nor Republicans. One was an independent, one was a federalist, four were Whigs, and the other four were

Democratic-Republicans. Then in 1824, the party split, effectively changing the fate of political United States.

Most people I know willingly choose the next president not by their political platforms and what they promise to change, but solely based on their party. That isn't a very good reason to choose the next president.

I for one don't care about who the party candidates stand with, but what they are willing to fight for and fix. I care more about their platform, which is why I say we should demolish the systematic parties, and focus more on their platforms.

What the presidential candidates bring to the election should be taken into consideration more than the party they stand with. At the end of the term, it's not the party that makes the difference, but what they bring to office. Being a Republican or Democrat doesn't make the president good or bad; what they can fix and who they

can help determines if they did their job or not.

We have a Democratic president, yet our House of Representatives is full of Republicans. I hear so many people complain that President Obama hasn't done anything that he promised. Yet, we have a house full of Republicans and a Democratic president who never agree on the same things.

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So many bills get vetoed, and so many laws never get passed. This is why a lot more hasn't been done, because we are a house divided. I firmly believe that if our House of Representatives refuses to listen to our president, and our government is so divided, then we lose any

political standing we have with foreign affairs.

If we are so divided, we lose diplomatic respect also. Why should other countries listen to our president, if our own congress won't even listen?

I think we should demolish these parties, and let independent candidates run on their own, without the political parties. I say we let them find their own ways to get campaign funding.

I can guarantee that breaking up these parties won't cause the end of government. In the past, ten of our presidents weren't associated with either party, yet we've managed to elect our 44th President just fine, and we still are considered one of the greatest political powers in the world.

At the same time, though, if we can't even agree on the government's budget, because of the division between parties how can we still consider ourselves as a great political coun-

try? I think the rift between the parties is the number one reason why so many of our presidents go back on their promises, and can't fix the problems we have.

More and more people of my generation are choosing to associate with independent parties because there are things from both parties they agree with. The people of my generation are going to become the next House of Reps, the next presidents, and I firmly believe that the more of us who consider ourselves independent, the greater our chances are of fixing the country and breaking down the political parties.

The people in power now are so set in these ways of keeping the tradition of a political party, they seem to forget that this isn't what's most important when it comes to politics. As Abraham Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe it's only a matter of time before our whole political foundation collapses.

Paying for a Chance at Better Life



Zainab Ferrer
Opinion Columnist

Being fifty years old and still paying student loans seems to be the path our generation is predetermined to follow. Over the past four decades college tuition in the United States has skyrocketed like never before. As CNBC reports; the average cost of tuition and fees at a private, non-profit, four-year university in the 1970's was \$1,832 (in current dollars). Now we're looking at a 1,500% increase, with tuition costing on average \$31,231.

With the average American family at an income of \$50,000 a year, how can all Americans have the same opportunity of obtaining a degree? The answer is, they don't. Attending university, is seen in many countries as a right. In the United States it's seen as a privilege.

We are brainwashed into thinking that if we go to college we will be guaranteed a better lifestyle, a better job, and more money. Although this may be true in some cases, there are way too many college graduates that end up working at supermarkets or gas-stations because there simply aren't enough available jobs for them to put their degree into use.

Even so, many graduates that

do find a good, stable job end up working in areas completely unrelated to their major. So why is the education system still determined to make us go through at least 4 years of college and become heavily in-debt with no guarantee of finding a job?

The answer draws back a parallel to the ideology of slavery a hundred years ago. Farm owners claimed that their workers were free to leave, as long as they paid off their debts. However, as slaves were forced to purchase expensive goods from the farm-owners, they became more and more in debt, permanently tying them to the farm.

Similarly, as students take out government loans, we are predisposed to start life at a negative balance, pushing us to work extremely hard, under the inevitable urge to pay them off. Although this may seem like a motivational reason to work hard for some people, the pressures that come along with loans, just as we are trying to get our foot in the door, is tremendous.

With the average American family at an income of \$50,000 a year, how can all Americans have the same opportunity of obtaining a degree? The answer is, they don't.

I remember one of my high school teachers who had attended Michigan state (a public institution), admitting to having paid off her loans at the age of 36. We are thought to be free individuals living in a free country, but are we really? Or are we just workers at a farm, believing that we are better than everyone else because we chose

to make the 'smart' investment of attending college?

It costs an average of \$120,000 dollars to get a bachelors degree, not to mention room and board, but most higher-paying jobs such as being a doctor, or lawyer, require even more years of education meaning further investment. In Mexico a law degree can be obtained within 3-5 years, and in a country like Sweden it might take 4.5 years.

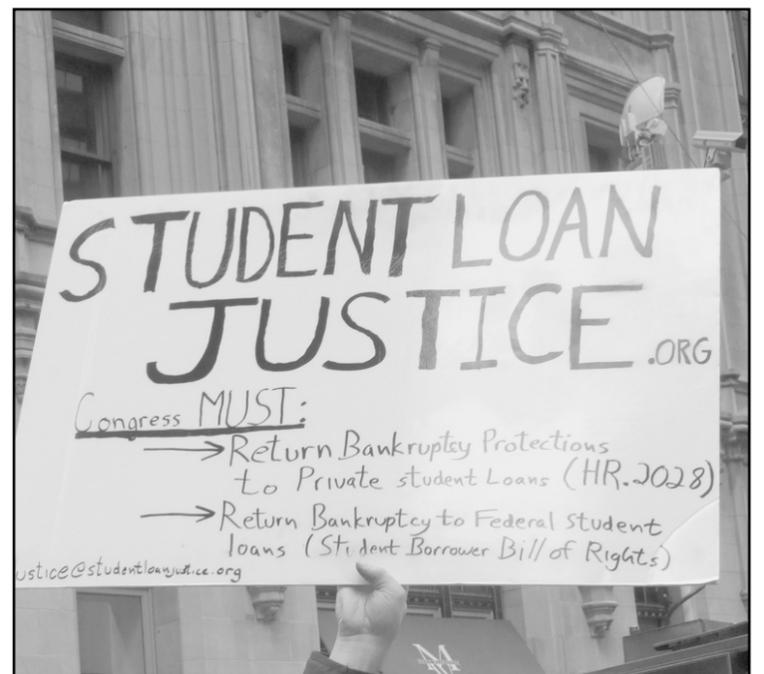
Yet in the United States, it takes twice as long. This makes sense, because the more one is required to study, the more in-debt one will become, so the more we will work, boosting the economy even more. This is why society is so focused on money, thinking that the richer you are, the happier you will be.

Nonetheless, studies have found that the average American is just as happy as a low-income family in Dheli. In a survey made within the last decade, one of the most popular bed-death regrets was, "I wish I hadn't worked so hard".

A college degree is indeed important, and should for sure be appreciated by those who have the chance to earn one. Nonetheless, the price we have to pay for the opportunity at a better life is shameful. It makes the wealthy able to become more educated, while the poor are left questioning whether it's truly worth it.

With America's values of equality and freedom, it would make sense for everyone to be as educated as possible, for knowledge is power. However, it seems like we can't have too many powerful people.

Although it is not ideal, this is the way our society and education system is shaped today. So, I say, if we have to pay crazy amounts to go to university, then we should receive



A protest sign calling for action regarding student loans.

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the whole package in order to be successful and achieve our goals.

Perhaps through a half-work-half-study program, we could get to know potential employers, and build a reputation in the working environment while we pursue our degree, that way getting our foot in the door before graduation. This idea is similar to internships, except that it would be through the school, and for an extended period of time, as an actual employee. As a form of networking, and gaining job experience, this would make us more marketable after graduation, potentially granting us a secure job.

Unfortunately, though, this system is yet to be put into practice. Being realistic in today's world, with the average Ameri-

can earning a salary of \$50,000, a year at Gustavus would mean all that money would not be enough to pay for tuition, room, and board, adding up to nearly \$60,000.

Having just graduated, we will probably start from the bottom, making below-average wages, and becoming more, and more in debt as we try getting our lives on the road. Digging our hole deeper as we go, unless we actually "make it" in this competitive world, and are able to pay off all those loans, we are owners of nothing, becoming a cycle that seizes to end.

Therefore, if you have hundreds of dollars, get a degree. If you don't, then don't worry, debts will always be there for you.

BENEATH THE CROWN



What is a personal value that you think is extremely important?

In the long run, it's being there for my family. In this day and age, I see people grow up, get older, and kind of abandon their parents once they're older. They seem to forget that those were the people who raised them and took care of them for all of those years.

In Pakistan, your parents invest everything in you. They'll pay for your entire college education for you, they'll work their butts off their whole lives to do that, and give you everything. They do all of this in the hopes that, in return, you'll be there to take care of them in their old age.

It's funny how that works. When you're young, you need your parents there to help you out and take care of you. Then once they're older, those same kids end up taking on the role of taking care of them.

Was there anything else that really struck you when you arrived in the U.S.?

Well, it's always a mixed bag when you change locations. First of all, I did have more freedom coming here. That's one of the great things about being here in the United States, I wouldn't deny that. I have a lot of freedom to be myself as an individual, to practice what I want to practice, to study what I want to study, and to just



Zak Khan

Cameron MacDonald

be who I want to be.

However, I do feel like there's a lack of diversity coming here, which sounds funny saying that because the U.S. is known for being a country of immigrants and many cultures.

But, for me, I feel like there's a sense of that all getting watered down. People here are so individualistic that they kind of do their own thing, and it felt like I had less of a group community to fall back on. I found it kind of hard to find my group of people here.

Growing up in Saudi Arabia, I got to meet a bunch of different people from all kinds of places who brought all sorts

of different perspectives to the group, whether it be through humor or just telling me their experiences and other ways.

My friends in Saudi were so diverse and they had so much to share; I feel like that shaped the basis for who I am. I believe that you are the sum of your experiences and, somewhat vicariously, the sum of others' experiences. So you meet somebody and they share some of the aspects of their life that might change the way you think.

I wish it was more like that here, with people willing to be more open to share things like that. People here socialize and talk well, but I'm not sure what it

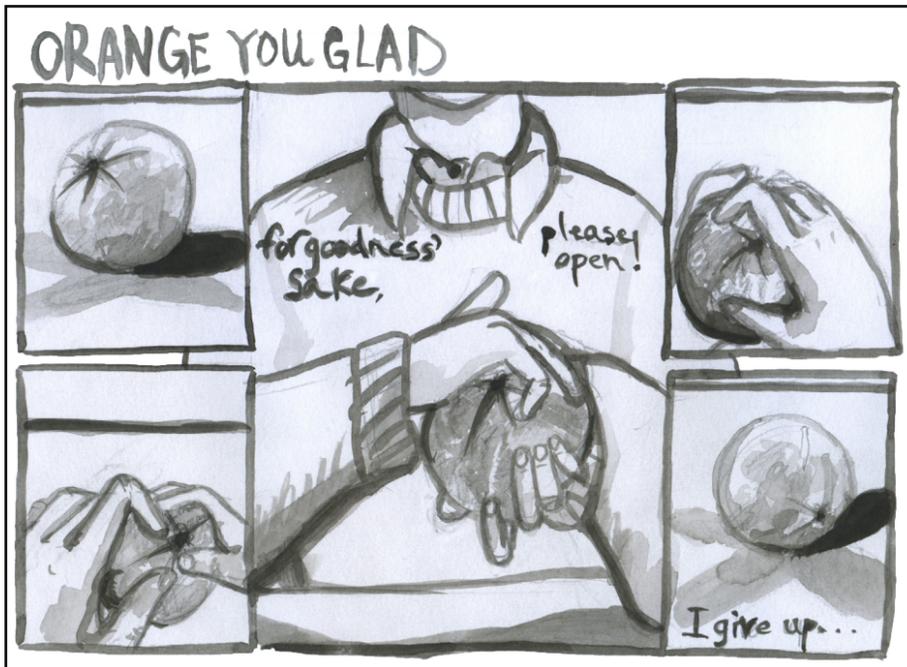
is: whether they're afraid to open up to people or seeming like they're too self-involved or something like that. It's funny because I personally love hearing about people and what they do. It helps me continue to shape my identity.

- Zak Khan

Beneath The Crown was created by Nick Theisen ('15). It is inspired by Humans of New York (HONY) and aims to bring the community of Gustavus Adolphus College closer together by providing the perspectives of the many different people who live and work at the school.

Comic

Created by Carly Maslowski



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Ups and downs for Women's Hockey



Gustavus Sports Information

First-year goalie Amanda DiNella covers up an Auggie shot as first-year Laine Fischer and sophomore Laura Johnson watch from their defensive positions. Young players have made a crucial impact this year for the Gusties.

Jake Woodrich
Staff Writer

This season has been a bit of a work in progress thus far for the Gustavus Women's Hockey team. The team currently holds an overall record of three wins, four losses, and three ties, with two wins, two losses, and two ties in MIAC conference play. The team's roster consists of ten first-year players, and only three seniors, so it is fair to say that the team is a rather young one.

"We are having an up and down season. That's to be expected with a younger team," Head Coach Mike Carroll said.

A few of these "up" moments from the season includes a home win over MIAC conference rival St. Thomas, as well as another



Gustavus Sports Information

victory over our rival," Fischer said. Fischer has enjoyed her time on the ice as a Gustie thus far. "I love playing here at Gustavus. I enjoy my teammates and the intensity and speed of the game at the college level," Fischer said.

With so many first-years, there has definitely been an adjusting period to the game of hockey at the college level. A common theme of a faster pace, higher intensity, and better competition came up when discussing the transition from high school hockey.

"I have worked a lot harder in college than I ever did in any high school practices and because of that, I think it has helped me improve a lot and

has helped me be prepared for games," First-year Amanda DiNella said.

DiNella, like many of the other first-year players, is thankful for the upperclassmen of the team.



Gustavus Sports Information

"The upperclassmen bring leadership to a very young team and keep us all focused

and help us learn," Fischer said. This leadership is essential to a team filled with as many young talented players that the Gustavus roster possesses.



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Looking forward, the team's hope is to get healthy. With winter break coming up, the team hopes to heal up and prepare for a strong finish.

"We are trying to get through the next two games with no more injuries, take a break and see how we can improve for the second half of the season. Right now, postseason play is the farthest thing from my mind," Carroll said.

Alongside the hope to get healthy and finish strong this season, the upcoming seasons are looking positive with a lot of

"I love playing here at Gustavus. I enjoy my teammates and the intensity and speed of the game at the college level."

—Laine Fischer

"We are trying to get through the next two games with no more injuries, take a break and see how we can improve for the second half of the season. Right now, postseason play is the farthest thing from my mind."

—Head Coach Carroll

young talent on the team. "We have many freshman that we think can be really good col-



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lege players," Carroll said. The Gusties take the rink next tonight at 7:05 p.m. against the University of Wisconsin-River Falls comes to campus. Then the team has a month long hiatus from competition, to be followed by a trip to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point on Jan. 8, 2016. Hopefully, the team will finish on the "up" portion of the "up and down season" that Carroll described.



Gustavus Sports Information

home conference win when Augsburg came to town. The home victory ended with a 6-4 Gustie victory. First-year Laine Fischer sealed the victory over the Tommies with an empty netter in the third period.

"It was satisfying knowing I had sealed the victory in a

Senior Spotlight: Chad Poppen



A 6'3" Wing, Chad Poppen is a product of St. Peter High School. Although he'd love to earn a birth in the national tournament this year, Poppen is first and foremost committed to the daily grind of becoming a better team.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Friday, Dec. 11

Women's Basketball at Macalester College
5:45 p.m.

Women's Hockey hosts UW-River Falls
7 p.m.

Men's Hockey at College of St. Scholastica
7 p.m.

Men's Basketball at Macalester College
7:45 p.m.

Tues, Dec. 12

Women's Basketball hosts UW-La Crosse
7 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 28

Women's Basketball vs. Rampao College in Puerto Rico
10 a.m.

Men's Basketball vs. Vassar College in Puerto Rico
3 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 29

Women's Basketball vs. Coast Guard Academy in Puerto Rico
12 p.m.

Men's Basketball vs. SUNY Oneonta in Puerto Rico
TBD

Chad Poppen

BASKETBALL

Q: What are your personal goals for the season?

A: My goals for the season are ones focused on the success of the team. Bringing a MIAC regular season and playoff title home are something the team has strived for since last season. In accomplishing those goals we hope they lead to a birth in the national tournament, but for now we are focused on becoming a better team each time we step on the floor.

Q: What is your best athletic memory?

A: I'm hoping my best athletic memory at Gustavus is yet to come, but for now I would say it's been the overall environment that comes with playoff basketball especially going to Saint John's and beating them in the playoffs twice.

Q: Why would you recommend Gustavus?

A: I would recommend Gustavus to a prospective student a variety of reasons. First is the



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people, everyone is very friendly and supportive and want to see you do well! Second would be the opportunities that Gustavus provides for you. The network of alums is spread far and wide and they look for current Gusties for positions they hand available or will do anything in their power to help you in your endeavors. Third, the food! The food is great and the caf is one of my favorite spots to hang with friends and chat about the day. There are many more reasons why I could recommend Gustavus but to sum it all up, it's a place you hate to leave and can't wait to get back to.



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Gymnastics: Guts, Gold and Glory



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Three Gustavus gymnasts showcase some high flying antics on the bars at the Third Annual Alumni Meet on Nov. 21. Alex Kopp (left) ranked thirteenth all-around in the nation last year and this year aims to place in the top ten, as well as leading her team to win a meet and bring the program back to the glory days.

Tanner Sparrow
Sports & Fitness Editor

This year, the Gustavus Gymnastics team is on a mission. Their first goal is to win a meet. Second off, they want a team score of 185.0. Lastly, the team wants to continue progressing as a program to become successful again, after encountering a rough patch a few years back. For now, it seems like they are on the right path.

"Last year we reached team scores that Gustavus Gymnastics had not reached in seven or eight years, and we would like to continue on that path towards making a name for ourselves once again," junior captain Alex Kopp said.

Last year Kopp placed thirteenth in the national all-around rankings last year, and this year she hopes to become an all-around All-American by cracking the top ten nationally. She also hopes to qualify for nationals.

Although Kopp is a team-player first, she cannot deny

"You are responsible for hitting all of your routines and if you don't, you can't blame any other team member.

You put in the work to get the results you want and no one else can make you look good other than yourself."

—Alex Kopp

that gymnastics has many characteristics of an individual sport.

"Although college gymnastics is more team-focused, I would argue that the sport in general is mostly individual focused. You are responsible for hitting all of your routines and if you don't, you can't blame any other team member. You put in the work to get the results you want and no one else can make you look good other than yourself. Individual awards are given out at

every meet, so we are all trying to place individually as well as in the team places," Kopp said.

The individual aspects of the sport don't hurt team chemistry however.

"Our team is very close considering the amount of time we spend in the gym with each other. Spending that much time with people allows you to get to know them on every level. Teams can only be successful if each person knows their teammates well and knows how to help them succeed individually. Outside of the gym, we spend time together at team dinners, gatherings at Coach Aryn's house, volunteering at the nursing home, or playing Just Dance on our team's Wii," Kopp said.

Gymnastics is a larger time commitment than other athletes realize. The team has three-hour practices five days a week, and a one-hour practice on Saturdays. This schedule runs from mid-September to early March, but the season is never really over.

"It is almost impossible to take more than a week off of gymnastics and come back without missing a step. Your

body has to be in such good shape to stay at a competitive level that any time off more than a weekend will set you back. I can personally attest to this since I took my entire freshman year off of gymnastics and I am still trying to regain some of the skills I had my senior year of

"The fear and mental challenges involved in gymnastics...makes it so unique from other sports because you would never go into a basketball practice scared to make a shot...Every moment in gymnastics presents a risk, arguably life threatening."

—Alex Kopp

high school. I (and most gymnasts) practice 12 months out of

the year," Kopp said.

It also is not for the faint of heart. Although undoubtedly a sport requiring much physical skill, the mental portion may be the hardest part. Why?

"The fear and mental challenges involved in gymnastics. This makes it so unique from other sports because you would never go into a basketball practice scared to make a shot. Taking a shot from the three-point line does not put your life in danger, and there is little risk of injury at that moment. Every moment in gymnastics presents a risk, arguably life threatening. The skills we do are dangerous and you could be seriously injured at any time. That being said, you have to be brave to do this sport and a little crazy. You have to be mentally strong enough to flip backwards on a four-inch beam while never doubting yourself. This aspect is particular to the sport of gymnastics and no other sport," Kopp said.

The season officially kicks off Jan. 9 when the Gusties play host to UW-Oshkosh. Show up to root on the girls, and see what it really takes to be a gymnast.

2016 GUSTIES GYMNASTICS MEET SCHEDULE

Jan. 9 hosts UW-Oshkosh

Jan. 15 vs. UW-Stout & UW-Whitewater

Jan. 19 hosts Winona State University

Jan. 29 at UW-Stout

Feb. 6 at UW-Whitewater

Feb. 12 at UW-La Crosse

Feb. 14 at Hamline

Feb. 19 hosts UW-Eau Claire

Feb. 27 at Best of Minnesota Invite

Mar. 4 at WIAC Championship/NCGA Regional