

The case of the missing vacuum



Grace Worwa
Opinion Columnist

be it was neither and the 2020 universe just decided to turn half the vacuums to dust and Res Life agonized so much over how to distribute them evenly that they just called it quits. Either way, we are now without vacuums. So, my dorm-dwelling friends, let's look at our cleaning options this school year.

"Brooms, on the other hand, are immune to COVID, so we still get to have brooms. That's right, the virus just slips right off them."

As you all may have noticed by now, the communal vacuums in the dorms have mysteriously vanished. While this is a tragic loss, and one worthy of our 2020 master list of disasters, we all know it was necessary because... Wait, why was it necessary again?

Let's go back to the move-in email sent out by Res Life on Sept. 8, shall we? Surely that will provide us an answer.

Ah, here's the line, slipped in right at the end of the email: "Communal vacuums will not be available during this academic year—consider bringing your own personal cleaning supplies for your room." Ahh I see. They "will not be available." Yes, that really clears everything up.

Well, since the vacuum deficiency appears unexplained, we are left to ponder what could possibly be behind it.

Let's just assume for a second that COVID is the culprit. I know, why would I assume anything revolves around COVID, but bear with me. Vacuums are shared, right? And since sharing is unwise in the COVID era, that seems the most logical answer to why we longer have vacuums. Brooms, on the other hand, are immune to COVID, so we still get to have brooms. That's right, the virus just slips right off them. The same must go for bathrooms, showers, sinks, and cleaning kit supplies. That reminds me, I've been meaning to sweep my rug.

COVID aside, another potential motive could be the school's desire to teach us a lesson. After all that hullabaloo last year about students wanting vacuums that actually sucked up dirt instead of just making engine noises and pretending to suck up dirt, the school decided to take away vacuums completely, just to show us how lucky we are to have vacuums at all. Haha. Take that, you ungrateful students.

Well, it worked. I miss those boxy vacuums. Maybe they didn't work so well, but when they were here, at least I could pretend I'd cleaned my room instead of facing the reality that my rug is still full of dirt.

So perhaps it was COVID, perhaps it was the administration teaching us a lesson, or may-

Our first option is to take Res Life's advice and bring our own cleaning supplies. Perfect. I'll just borrow the vacuum from back home; I'm sure my mom won't miss it. Even if she does, we all know my 5x8 foot rug takes precedence over the carpet covering the entire living room at home. Of course, the other option would be to get one of those teeny tiny portable vacuums—it would only take me an hour to vacuum my rug with one of those.

However, if you are like me and you are unwilling to steal your parents' vacuum or throw away forty dollars on a mini one, then you are doomed to spend this semester vacuumless. It's okay, my stubborn friends, there is some good news: I found cheap magnifying glasses on Amazon. Now, we can at least crawl across our rugs on hands and knees and scour them for whatever delights we might find there. In the meantime, try not to dream about that sleek, silver, silent vacuum you hope to have one day if this college thing works out.

helpers.
All that said, Gusties were definitely up to the task. My COVID-19 move-in experience was quick and efficient with minimal safety scares. The self-accountability of my fellow students in the way everyone followed the guidelines gave me a sense of security and hope that perhaps the Gustavus community can tackle this semester with only a few bumps and bruises along the way.

Despite the extra challenges this year, I am glad to be back. The only thing left to do now is watch the case count within the next two weeks with fingers crossed because, by then, we will know the true effect of the move-in policy.



Elusive vacuum skips town (he leavin')

Vin Branom

The Good, the Bad, and the Meh



Fall break is just around the corner



You're having a hard time seeing your carpet



The wind is a constant on the Hill

Your vote *does* matter



Tori Smith
Opinion Columnist

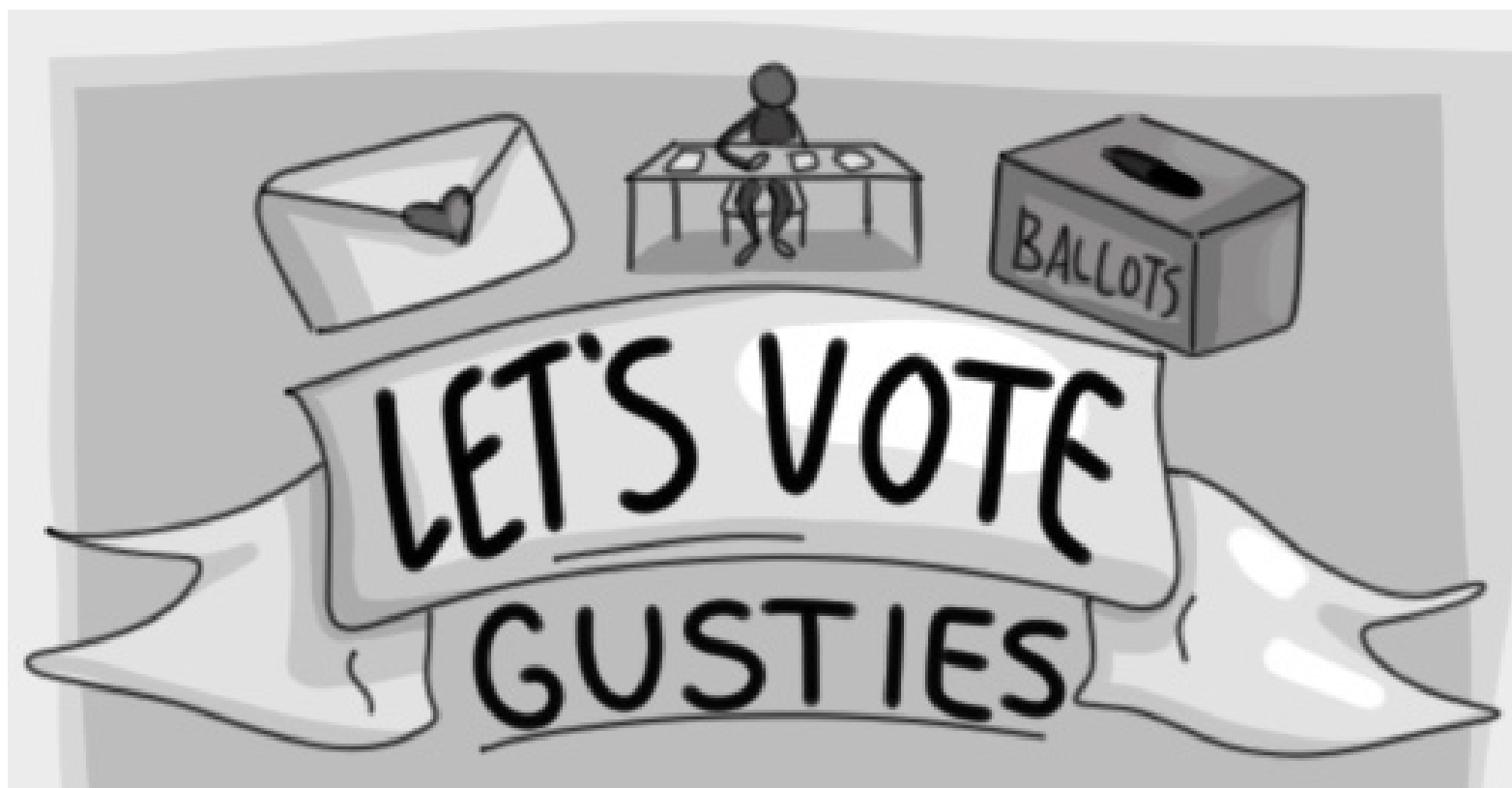
With all the ads, phone calls, emails and texts I've been receiving, it comes as no surprise that the 2020 election is just around the corner. Many people are facing this with a mix of emotions. Some are excited about the possibility of new leadership while others are anxious.

For me, election time has always been filled with anxiety, even before I could vote. I remember not being able to sleep the night of the 2016 election. I especially remember yelling at my 19-year-old brother the next day because he conveniently "didn't have time to vote." Colossal mistake, big bro.

For this year's election, I'm hoping the majority of Gustavus students choose to exercise their right to vote.

"Voting is the most important right we have, and it's one that we can't take for granted" Junior Ben Menke said.

It is especially important for young people to go out and vote. The changes that are implemented now will have lasting consequences that could affect the rest of our lives. It's our responsibility to make sure those changes are beneficial rather than detrimental.



Gusties need to make sure to vote early this year.

Vin Branom

"As young people, we can prove that we're a force that politicians should pay attention to," Menke said.

In order to get a feeling for my peers' voting decisions, I put a poll on my Instagram story for my followers to participate in. When asked about voting plans, a whopping 95 percent of participants said they are planning to vote in this upcoming election. I have to say, I am pleasantly surprised by this finding. After my brother's inability to exercise his rights out of inconvenience, I was expecting a good portion of my followers (most of whom are young college students) to decide not to vote either. I am happy to stand corrected.

Taking it a step further, I also wanted to know how people were planning to vote. With no end in sight yet for the pandemic, many people have been

considering voting by mail this year in order to avoid the lines, stress and germs that can possibly spread by voting in person. When asked about the method of voting, 44 percent said they were planning on voting in person.

Going off of my incredibly accurate data (not really), nearly half of the voters will be voting in person. Will voting in person be safe amid a global pandemic?

"In order to protect St. Peter residents and our election workers, it's best to vote before election day if possible," Menke said.

From now until November 2, voters in St. Peter can visit the Nicollet County Government Center to register and place their ballots early, all within less than thirty minutes.

In order to vote by mail, Minnesota voters will need to request an absentee ballot from mnvotes.org. Out-of-state voters

will need to check their state's Secretary of State's website to find out how they can request a ballot. Once completed, the ballot can be dropped off in the Campus Center mailbox or at the Nicollet County Government Center.

Many students at Gustavus will be first-time voters this November. This process can be intimidating and confusing, but there are a multitude of resources that can help. Peers such as Menke, for example, are happy to answer any and all questions people may have. I would know because I asked Menke a handful of questions for this article, and he was happy to answer all of them.

So, if you are thinking about voting, but are confused by the process, reach out.

"Once you vote for the first time, it becomes a rewarding

habit of engagement with the community," Menke said.

I agree. The first time I voted was in the 2018 midterm elections. It was scary, but the election workers knew exactly what to do and explained everything. After turning in my ballot, I walked outside with my red "I voted" sticker feeling like I was on top of the world. I was proud of myself for exercising my right to vote unlike my brother who, at the age of 23, has never voted in his life.

Don't be like my lame brother, folks. He may sound convincing with his whining about "My vote wouldn't matter, blah, blah, blah." It's all lies. The truth is, your vote does matter.

"Whether you support Republicans, Democrats, or neither party, you have a voice that matters," Menke said. So, go out there and use it.

Making the choice to learn from home: The reason and the results



Maddy Smerillo
Opinion Columnist

Deciding to take my final semester of college courses via an all-online format was not a smooth process. I went back and forth between a certainty that I was ready to move back to campus and a fear that if I did go back, I would not be as

healthy of a student and person as I might be learning at home. Before the on-campus portion of the semester was shortened, I had decided to come back to Gustavus and live with my best friends in an apartment together. However, once we learned that our time on-campus would be abbreviated, I knew that it would be more stressful than productive for me to return to my home on the hill.

As I came to this decision, I found myself in a period of reflection; my time at GAC as an on-campus student had ended. I spent a mere 2.5 years in the dorms here; I felt robbed of an experience I had been anticipating since I was a child. I felt uncertain of the future; what would this semester feel like? Would I lose touch with Gustavus entirely? Talking to my academic advisor helped a bit with this; she knew that I would be better off staying at home and that even though I'd be distance learning I would still be just as much of a

Gustie as I was before.

Eventually came time for classes to begin, and most of my nerves had subsided. Starting online classes was familiar to me because of our experience last semester, and I knew how to navigate my learning environment. I fell into a bit of a routine: wake up, go to class, work, hang out with friends online, sleep, and repeat. This routine is one that I still practice now, and it's one that works for me.

When the college came out with the decision to move students back to campus, I was unsurprised but also sad. I began to question my decision again; was it really best that I chose to learn online? Amidst these questions I ultimately came back around knowing that I had made the right choice for my learning and my wellbeing.

All but one of my classes are entirely online for all students, something I appreciate. In my class that meets in person, I simply yell out my name should I

have something to say, an audible version of raising my hand. This habit came naturally and works just fine, so all the stress I had regarding being the only online student was essentially baseless.

My days are calm and I have settled into my day-to-day habits, legitimately taking it easy for the first time in what feels like forever. My choice to learn online has allowed me to comfortably grow into my own learning environment rather than to try and make living on campus work when I was not ready to go back. This means that my time physically spent on the Hill has in fact ended, but it is okay. I feel less disheartened about my shortened college experience than I had previously because of one key realization: my decision to stay home has given me a clean break, something I am very grateful for.

You see, as a senior graduating this December, it was healthier for my brain to stay

away from campus and keep in my home routine than to try and rebuild in-person relationships and connections at a place I have to leave in 8 short weeks. As an emotionally driven human being, this would have been like opening up wounds I had been working to heal since March 13. So yes, while I am very sad to be away from my home on the hill, I know that remaining at a distance has been better for my wellbeing and has allowed me to heal the pain so graciously forced upon me by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here is to hoping that I can come back and visit sometime in the near future, and that not too much will have changed by the time that happens. Remember, your time as a member of the Gustavus community does not end when you leave campus. You will always have something to contribute as a Gustie; you just have to take the time to figure out what that might be.

Faith of darkness: Iceland and isolation



Alma Jorgenson
Opinion Editor

Last January, I went on a J-Term course to Iceland titled “Glaciers, Volcanos, Sagas, and Songs: Interweaving Culture & Landscape in Iceland.” A big part of the course was looking at how isolation both from the world and from other Icelanders shapes Icelandic culture. At the time I had no idea how intimately I’d get to know isolation. We spent a few days in Reykjavík and then spent the rest of our time going from small town to small town. We were led by Associate Professor in Geography Jeff La Frenierre, a glacial researcher, and Associate Professor in Scandinavian Studies Kjerstin Moody, who specializes in literature. This course was the first time Gustavus had brought students to Iceland and I was so honored to be part of it.

The word “awesome” is overused. But as I look for the words to describe the trip, awesome is the only word I can come up with. Every day I

was filled with awe. I remember one specifically awe-inspiring day. We hiked around a mountain to a river, then put our swimsuits on and jumped in. The river was hot and hotter than many of the pools that we went to. We sat and relaxed after our three-and-a-half kilometer hike. A lot of people were chatting, laughing, and taking pictures.

After sitting there for around half-an-hour with the constant chatter of human beings, I spoke up and asked everyone to be quiet for a few minutes. When people finally quieted down something magical happened. We could hear the wind whipping around the mountain above and the cold air nipped at our throats, but we were surrounded by the warm comfort of this natural hot river. This was one of the best moments of my life. Then we all slowly and quietly got up and got dressed. The hike back was completely blissful, despite the wind and freezing rain that almost seems to be a constant in Iceland.

The night before that hike is another night that I still can’t find the right words for. We spent the day hiking around the Althing, which is the original meeting point of Iceland’s government; people started meeting there around 900 AD. This point is on the rift between two tectonic plates. It really, truly does have a special feeling; I fully understand why the settlers picked this point as their central meeting point. After visiting the Legal Rock and the Althing, we went for a soak at a natural water pool, where



Hot river flowing in the Icelandic landscape

Submitted

there were four different pools at varying temperatures.

The biggest pool was called a “natural” pool and was completely built out of rocks local to the area. Oh, and all these pools were outside and on the lakefront. We were encouraged to take a dip in the lake. I spent my evening moving from pool to pool, sometimes sitting in silence and sometimes sitting in conversation with the other amazing people who were on this trip. At the beginning of this evening, there was still enough sunlight to make out the breathtaking landscape

that surrounded us, but as the blanket of darkness fell, the landscape disappeared. As I sat in these pools and looked out over the dark lake, knowing what laid beyond, it occurred to me that this is what faith is. Faith is knowing that the landscape around you is breathtaking, but sometimes it is just too dark to see.

As we find ourselves facing the dark Corona winter ahead, I have found myself thinking back to these moments in Iceland. Even in complete darkness and cold, I was able to find peace, friendship, and an

overwhelming sense of coziness. The Icelandic way of life had isolation built into it, even before COVID-19. They coped by building up their stories and folklore; maybe we need to go back to that. Instead of focusing on how alone we are, let’s bring back the elves. I urge you to take some time to write a COVID-19 fairy tale. We can prep our past travel stories and have them ready when we’re sitting around a fire. Together we can reminisce about a world where we were allowed to travel. Lots of good can come out of this lonely time.

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Word Search

Cosmology

O	G	Q	R	B	U	C	P	D	J	P	C	O	M	E	T	W	S	I	V
L	B	R	K	G	J	G	G	X	Y	B	L	H	Q	O	H	Z	U	G	Y
I	D	H	A	Q	I	A	A	O	A	L	P	K	O	Z	S	C	P	Q	G
N	S	L	Z	V	O	Q	L	I	W	A	D	C	Y	G	M	M	E	F	P
J	I	O	N	M	I	X	A	F	C	C	B	J	W	L	N	A	R	A	D
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antimatter
Asteroid Belt
black hole
comet
galaxy

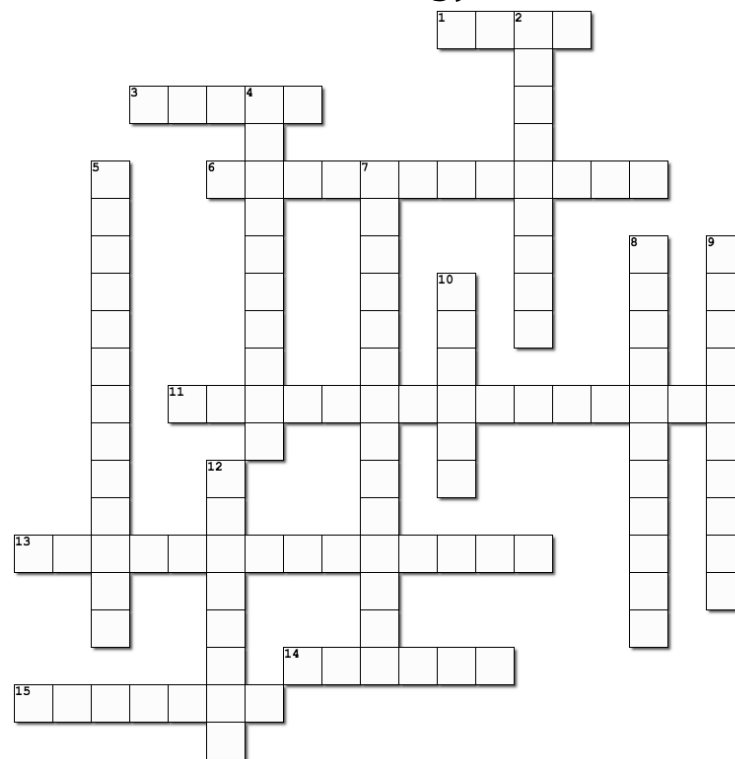
gravity
Inflation Theory
matter
meteor
moon

nebula
Oort Cloud
orbit
planet
singularity

star
supernova
The Big Bang
vacuum
wormhole

Crossword

Astrology



Across

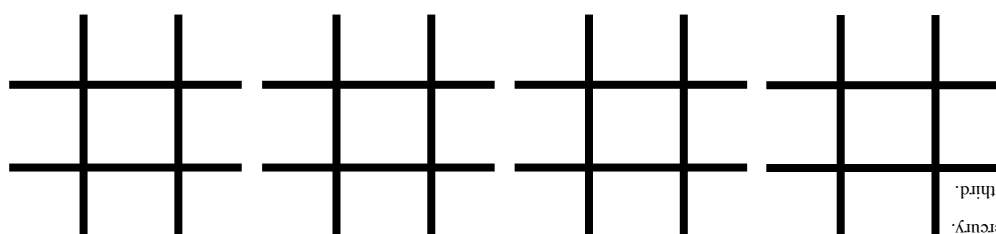
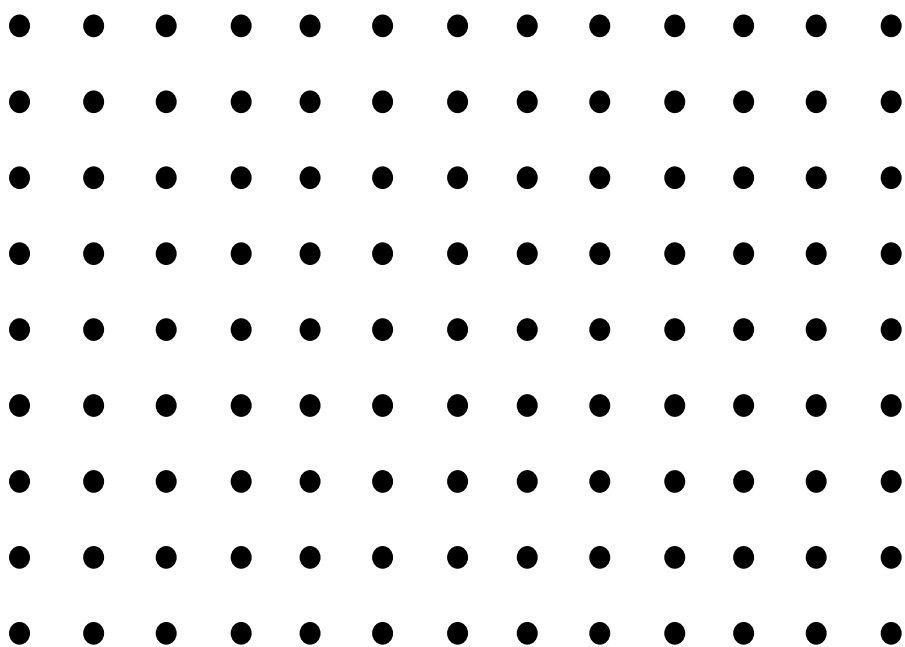
1. The Ancient Egyptians believed that this celestial body was an evil star.
3. It is currently ____ season. Yeehaw.
6. This pope drew their own horoscope. A popescope, if you will. (three words).
11. You can pay lots of money for one of these and then wish you were an English major like me (two words).
13. The signs are based around this kind of celestial alignment.
14. The nicest sign.
15. ____ doesn't actually go into retrograde.

Down

2. The Forbidden Thirteenth sign.
4. This family with two presidents were really into astrology.
5. This natural disaster in progress is slowly shifting earths axis and your astrological sign (two words).
7. Many scientists believe that astrology is more about _____ than anything else (two words)
8. A French astronomer famous for his collection of 942 poetic quatrains predicting future tragedies.
9. The earth wobbles on its axis because of this phenomenon.
10. This president hired an astologist to predict the future.
12. More than _____ of Americans belive in astrology

Dots & Boxes

Take turns drawing one line. If that line completes a square, write your initial in the box and draw another line. Continue until all dots have been connected. The player with the most boxes wins!



"Safe Break" by Bryanna Filip



Down, 2. Ophiuchus, 4. Roosevelt, 5. Climate Change, 7. self validation, 8. Nostrodamus, 9. precession, 10. Reagan, 12. one third.

Al-Houni Wins Athlete of the Decade Award

Men's Tennis Mohanad Al-Houni ('18) awarded honors



Mohanad goes to his backhand in a match

Submitted

Eamonn McCullough
Staff Writer

When compared to the vast timescape represented by a decade, four weeks is but a drop in the bucket. For current and former Gustavus student-athletes waiting for the weekly Athlete of the Decade votes to roll in on Facebook and Twitter, however, it must have felt like an eternity. On the Men's side of the bracket, the final vote was especially intense, coming down to Seth Anderson ('12, Men's Basketball) and Mohanad Ahlouni ('18, Men's Tennis).

Some of Anderson's greatest athletic accomplishments while wearing the black & gold include the title of NABC and D3Hoops.com All-American, 2011-12 MIAC MVP (as well as a two-time all-conference team member), and a Gustavus Men's Basketball program record of 45 points in a game. Ahlouni boasted an impressive resume of athletic prowess as well, with standout achievements including the title of 2017-18 Gustavus Athlete of the Year, four All-American honors, and three ITA Midwest Regionals championships, all rounded out by the 2017 ITA National championship. It was these impressive statistics that would propel Ahlouni to a victory at the virtual polls, taking

the crown of Gustavus Male Athlete of the Decade.

Ahlouni reacted to his newest athletic title, his time as a Gustie Student-Athlete, his current career as a pro tennis player and coach, and lessons learned both on and off the tennis courts.

Q: What was your favorite thing about being a member of Gustavus Tennis? How big of a role did your team play in helping you accomplish your goals?

MA: "I think the biggest thing is how close with each other we were. It didn't really matter if you were a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior, I think the whole philosophy of the team was really including everyone. I think that, right off the bat, gave me some confidence to excel from there... From number one on the team to number 15 or 17, they would always bring their A-game in practices... We've always challenged each other to be the best that we could be."

Q: How do you apply lessons or resilience strategies you learned on the tennis court to your everyday life?

MA: "I'm a tennis pro, I coach at Lifetime [Fitness] in St. Louis Park right now, and I'm doing my

THE WEEKLY'S



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**Athlete of the decade Q&A with Mohanad Al-Houni
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Gustie Baseball begins Fall World Series

Seniors reflect on their first return to competitive play as a team

Jack Wiessenberger
Staff Writer

The Gustavus Baseball team is currently in the middle of their annual Fall Ball World Series. The tradition of playing an in-club 'world series' to end the season has been a staple of the team for years. In a season where only one regular season game was played before the pandemic hit, the desire for competition is being fulfilled by this series.

Last spring, the baseball team was in Tucson, Arizona when COVID-19 began to shut sports down. The team played the first game of their season and was then sent home. After a quiet summer, the team was anxious to get a chance to compete again - even if it was only against their own teammates.

"I thought game one really showcased the resilience that the Black Team has this year. We were losing by what appeared to be an insurmountable deficit, and yet we found a way to climb back into the game and win by two runs. The rest of the series should be a hard fought battle," Senior Torben Urdahl said.

Urdahl, a member of the Black Team, was inspired by his team's rally to get a win in the first game of the series. Since then, the Black Team has earned another win over the Gold Team.

"After dropping game two of this series, we just need a little more energy. I'm not worried about us. It's an awesome experience to take the field again with the guys. After last spring, obviously you can't take any chance to compete with the team for granted," Senior Christian Johnson said.

Johnson and his Gold Team are looking to regain some momentum by getting a win in the upcoming third game. The stakes are high for the teams. Whichever team comes away with a series victory receives steaks at the end of season grill-out while the losing team gets only hotdogs.

"We are just excited to have all of the guys back out, competing, and showing us what they have. I think our seniors have set the tone for the way we do things from a training standpoint and have come ready to compete. The great thing is that the freshmen have come to play too, and it's going to be exciting to watch the talent we have come together and compete to win the title this year," Assistant Coach Andrew Woitas said.

The series is a way for the coaching staff to evaluate some players while also having fun. It is also a way of getting the first-year athletes engaged with the team. The Fall Ball



Gusties prepare for their game one

Submitted

World Series means a lot to many of the players. This year, it's not so much about winning or losing the series, it's about being back with their team.

"My favorite memories in my life are on that field. I love playing with my closest friends and watching everyone compete with each other. It's so much fun to play against your own team because even if you do bad, it makes someone else look good so it works out. Going up against guys you spend so much time with is so funny especially when you get to make fun of them at the end of the game," Senior John Campisi said.

Campisi and many others are enjoying the sense of competition and comradery the series brings after having missed their season due to COVID. In a year where sports seasons have been destroyed, the baseball players are thankful to have this annual tradition.

"I didn't think that fall ball was going to happen this year, so the fact we got to play is such a blessing. I know we all really care about playing and are looking forward to the spring. We will be wearing a mask and social distancing to the best of our abilities to make the season happen. I'm counting everything as a blessing right now. I'm just happy I got to play with my friends again," Campisi said.



Christian Johnson in his last game before the season was canceled in 2020

Submitted

Athlete of the Decade Cont.



Mohamed holding the ITA Championship

Submitted

Continued from page 14

Master's at the University of Minnesota in Sports Management...So, definitely a lot of the mindset, going to practice, going to matches, being around your teammates...Every single bit that I've learned from four years at Gustavus Men's Tennis for sure helped me...And now, I'm doing it professionally. So, the kids I'm working with, I'm trying my best to give them things and lessons I didn't know [then]."

Alhouni also cited one of the most influential mantras he still thinks about in his daily life, the "Three Crowns" of effort, sportsmanship and a good attitude.

Q: Are you still connected to former teammates, role models or coaches from Gustavus?

MA: "Yeah, for sure. Especially in these uncertain times,

I got to connect with them even more, with the time and the space...I was able to connect with former teammates who live in Minneapolis, maybe we'd go and hit at a park... Same thing with coaches, [I could] connect with them through text messages. Whenever I come to Gustavus, I always try to go see the tennis bubble, go watch some matches..."

Q: What was your reaction when you learned that you were in the running for "Athlete of the Decade?"

MA: "I think one day I woke up and did see an Instagram post with two brackets...Then I looked closely, and that's when I was, like, woah, it's very cool to see just some of the greatest athletes to play in the last ten years...Just seeing what they've accomplished was pretty cool to see. After that, I was just pumped to see how everyone was involved with every vote. Even for me, [it was] probably one of the few times I was able to connect to family members from even Libya and Egypt...you know,

back home a lot throughout the days. I'd send a link and ask them to please vote, and we'd reconnect again."

Q: What's your most profound memory of Gustie Athletics?

MA: "I think I cherish the little things about our whole Athletic department. Literally, from the trainer's room, I've had amazing memories with Troy [Banse, Gustavus Head Athletic Trainer], just the little things before practice, whether I'm getting my ankle taped, and just the jokes we'd throw...Just seeing the whole Athletic department after you, it's very neat to remember until this day. The most important thing that a lot of student athletes should learn about Gustavus athletics is that they care for everyone involved."

Q: Were you familiar with any of the other athletes in the running? If so, how did you know them and did they positively impact you while at Gustavus?

MA: "Yeah, for sure. Like, Arthur [Parens] ('18, Soccer) and Mitch Hendricks ('16,

Football)...And a couple [people] older than me, who were doing great...Seth Anderson, too, who was a finalist with me, I had heard his name and how he represented the Basketball team, but I didn't really know how much impact he had on the Gustavus Basketball team, how he helped even after, with the Special Olympics and the work he's doing now...I think watching other sports gave me the incentive to do good at what I'm doing, and just being able to represent the tennis program well."

Q: Do you have any advice for current Gusties, especially looking towards this very different school year in terms of sports?

MA: "Definitely to be able to have a positive mindset about this. You know, I think a lot of upcoming, future Gusties [should] be able to trust that they're in good hands. If you're able to have a positive mindset about it and take care of your academics, and for those of us who maybe wanna play a sport at a high-level DIII school like Gustavus, don't put too much

stress on that. You'll still end up enjoying your experience. If everything opens up again and things get back to normal, the sport will come. Trust that Gustavus will give you all the support and they'll be behind you."

Ahlouni, as well as every other Gustavus athlete who was in the running for the Athlete of the Decade, left a mark on their respective programs that will last a lifetime, and set a successful tone for Gustavus Athletics that's sure to last for decades to come, regardless of challenge and tribulation.