

GUSTIE of the WEEK

Abbey Sletten

Emma Kelsey
Staff Writer

Senior Abbey Sletten is this week's Gustie of the Week. A business management major with an emphasis on entrepreneurship and a Spanish minor, Sletten values the personal experiences she has been able to get at Gustavus. She has made an impact on campus and in the lives of her peers, and has high hopes for her future after graduating from Gustavus this spring.

Sletten reflects on what she loves about the Gustavus campus and community, saying how much she loves the intimate learning style and passionate faculty and students. "My favorite part of Gustavus is probably the small, conversation style learning that comes with the business courses. My professors this semester are all very passionate about their jobs and passionate about our success as students - a majority of my classes are discussion based and student directed which is

something that works well for me personally," Sletten said. She hopes to focus specifically on fully immersing herself in her Entrepreneurship II class she is taking this semester.

"My main goal after college is to be happy and enjoy my life."

After graduating this spring, Sletten will work another summer at Al & Alma's Charter Cruises on Lake Minnetonka, and see where life takes her from there. "My main goal after college is to be happy and enjoy my life and see where the adventure takes me, while being the best & most independent version of myself," Sletten said.

Junior Britta Blanding, who was roommates with Sletten for all of last year, says that Sletten was not only the best roommate, but a unique individual with so many good qualities. "She is a very open, outgoing person, who is always understanding and accepting of others. One of the qualities that stands out most about Abbey is her kind-

ness to everyone around her and her ability to put herself in others' shoes," Blanding said.

Fellow senior Claire Johnson, who met Sletten during their first years here at Gustavus in a Spanish class, and roomed with her during their sophomore year, says that Sletten represents Gustavus well, that she is always prepared, organized, and takes on leadership roles with grace in classes and on campus.

"If someone were to ask me, 'who is a strong woman in your life?', one of the first people to come to my mind would be Abbey. She works very hard to achieve her goals, she knows what she needs to do and she does it, yet, she is very balanced. While striving towards her goals she still prioritizes making time for herself, the people that are important to her, and her overall well-being. I really admire that about her," Johnson said.



Abbey Sletten

Soren Sackreiter



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Do you have a suggestion for a Gustavus student, professor, or staff member who could be our next Gustie of the Week?

If so, send their name, position on campus, and a short description of why you think they should be recognized to

weekly@gustavus.edu
for a chance to be featured!

A representative from the Gustavian Weekly will be in contact with you via email if your suggestion is chosen to be featured in an issue of the paper.

Get into the swing of it

Michaela Woodward
Staff Writer

On Wednesday nights, Alumni Hall gets swinging.

Gustavus' Swing Club meets every Wednesday from 9-11 for students interested in learning dance steps or practicing their existing dance skills. Not only an environment for learning, Swing Club is a relaxing social gathering where everyone is welcome.

President Addison Schloo and Vice-President Megan Lipke began attending Swing Club as first-years. Now sophomores, Schloo and Lipke run the club.

"[Schloo] and I both started going together when we were freshmen. It was really fun for both of us. We were dance partners. I was the lead, she was the follow. We found out that all of the leadership team were seniors last spring. They kind of just said, 'Oh, you two were the only ones interested in leadership, so here's the club'. We've kind of made it our own this year. We've been teaching ourselves new moves so that we can keep teaching different stuff to people who are involved in it, which is super fun," Lipke said.

"We started talking to the

leadership team and learned that they were looking for underclassmen to volunteer to take over since most of the leadership team was graduating. [Lipke] and I agreed that we wanted to make sure that the club would always be there for students so we would take over the club when the leadership team graduated," Schloo said.

Swing Club is a low stress environment, even if you have no experience dancing.

"Swing Club is just a bunch of people who like to hang out together. You don't really even have to be good at dancing, because with the lesson, you're taught how to dance and we try to take it as slow or as fast as people seem to want it. You learn how to have social dances. We're learning swing dancing particularly, we're also learning a bit of ballroom, this spring, which I think will be super fun. Honestly just getting to know partners and being able to dance with different people is the main goal," Lipke said.

"We strive to create a welcoming environment for people to come and be able to express themselves through dance. Unlike individual kinds of dance, swing dance is a social dance which means you have to learn how to dance with a partner. While that may be very stressful

for some people, we try to create a place where everyone feels comfortable and welcomed. Swing dance is an amazing club and is the best stress reliever and way to have fun with your friends!" Schloo said.

The inclusivity of Swing Club is something that Senior Olivia Panning appreciates about the organization.

"I think Swing Club is unique from other orgs on campus because of how inclusive it is for people of all abilities, learning styles, backgrounds, etc. What I appreciate the most is that you can come knowing nothing about swing and leave at the end knowing the basics steps and some cool trick combos to show off. I've only been swing dancing for the past three and a half years and know moves that surely look advanced but just took a little time and a few times of trying with my dance partner to get down," Panning said.

Panning began attending Swing Club meetings as a first year with minimal dance experience, like Schloo and Lipke.

"I was at the involvement fair signing up for everything I could and wasn't sure which clubs I'd actually get involved in and stick with. So, during the first week I was on the edge of whether or not I actually was going to go to swing. It was

kind of a choice between going alone and anxiously trying to find a person I just met to be my partner or not going and not getting out of my comfort zone. Naturally, I landed in the middle. I went to swing with a friend who danced with me as my partner so that was comforting and then was dancing in a group setting learning a dance I had never done before which was very uncomfortable. Aside from polka dancing during family events, I hadn't danced since I was very young. That first meeting though, I was hooked. Swing is fast paced and fun, always keeping you on your toes," Panning said.

Swing Club naturally has a relaxed environment that is flexible for people of all abilities.

"Our typical meeting, we start at 9 pm and we usually wait a few minutes for people to show up, and then we start our lesson for the day, sometimes do announcements or a little overview of events coming up. We'll do our lesson for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on how many moves there are. And then the rest of the time, until 11 is free swing. Anybody can stay as long as they want and keep practicing the moves we've learned so far. We've had some people try to teach themselves new moves during that time

and they teach other people as well which is really fun to see," Lipke said.

Newcomers should not worry about being behind – those who attend the club consistently will be able and willing to teach the moves.

"Recently we have been having other students teach moves if they know any so that we give others an opportunity to teach their peers. We strive to have a very relaxed environment where anyone is welcome, no matter their skill level," Schloo said.

On April 21st, Swing Club will be hosting the Spring Ball on campus with live music. In preparation, they are learning ballroom dances this spring.

"We're very excited, it's going to be our biggest event yet, I think," Lipke said.

Students who want to refine their dance skills before the big event are invited to Swing Club meetings whenever they're able to attend.

"Even if you don't attend Swing Club, you're definitely welcome to come to the dances," Lipke said.



2017 Gustavus Swing Club

Relieving Stress Through Breathing

Written by *Aiya Jorde*, Features Writer

Breathe in, breathe out.

No, seriously.

Do it.

The other day, hunched over a desk mid-assignment, I was hit with such a wave of anxiety that I thought I was going to die. When I stopped typing and asked myself what was wrong, I noticed one thing: I wasn't breathing.

So yeah, I WAS going to die.

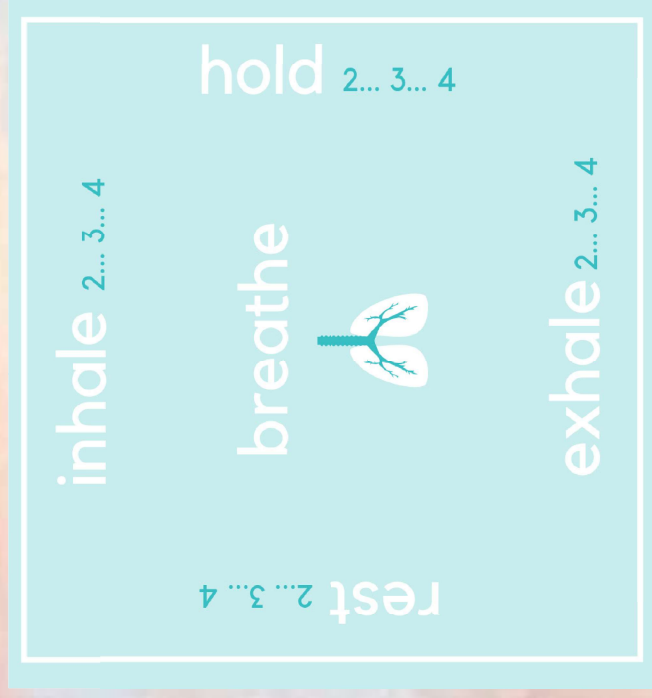
Since then, I've become aware of my breathing habits (or lack thereof) and noticed that throughout the day, I'm either holding my breath all together or shallow breathing. In an effort to learn to breathe like a fully functioning human being, I did some research on breathwork.

Although you may have seen breathwork recently trending on Instagram or TikTok, it's nothing new. With roots in yoga practice, breathwork has been practiced by people for thousands of years in order to release toxins and stress on the breath out and nourish your mind and body on the breath in. In terms of scientific research, breathwork is praised for its ability to alkalize your blood PH, elevate your mood, and have an anti-inflammatory effect on the body.

In addition, breathwork can have an amazing effect on your central nervous system. When stressed or anxious (like when you're cramming in a last-minute assignment), we have the tendency to breathe the fast and shallow, which limits the oxygen entering the bloodstream and triggers our fight or flight response. When slowing down and consciously taking deep breaths, your brain gets the memo that you're safe and decreases the fight or flight response. Let's take a look at some popular breathwork techniques to get started:

Deep Abdominal/Diaphragmatic Breathing:

As the name suggests, this technique involves taking in a long, deep breath that utilizes your muscles to move your diaphragm as you breathe. To practice this technique, sit or lie down in a comfortable position, placing one hand on your chest and another hand on your stomach. Slowly breathe in through your nose and try to send the air down towards your stomach, feeling your belly rise against your hand while keeping your chest still. Tighten your abs (which are looking super defined and sculpted btw) while pressing downward and breathing out through your lips. Keeping your chest still, continuing to breathe in and out.



Box Breathing:

Also known as 4-4-4-4 breathing, this technique is used by a variety of athletes and professionals to reduce stress and improve performance. To practice this technique, sit up straight and slowly breathe all the air out of your lungs. Slowly breathe in via your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for another count of 4. Then breathe out via your mouth for a count of 4. Finally, hold your breath again for a count of 4. Repeat while focusing on the sensation of breathing air in and out of your lungs.

4-7-8 Breathing:

Similar to Box Breathing, this technique allows you to control your breath and can be used as a sleep aid. To practice this technique, inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 7. Then breathe out through your mouth to a count of 8 while making a whooshing sound (super fun, right?). Repeat to combat stress and anxiety.

Of course, there were a plethora of more "advanced" breathing techniques that sounded interesting, but let's take it one breath at a time. The next time I feel like I'm gonna die (which happens quite often), I will stop and intentionally breathe myself back to life. I encourage you to give this practice a try and let me know if it works for you. Have a great week!

The importance of snow days



Jonas Doerr
Opinion Columnist

It's clear that the weather is becoming more and more unpredictable. An oddly warm winter, severe snow storms in February, and dried up water sources all around Minnesota are just a few of the indicators that something is out of the ordinary. Through all of the uncertainty, one thing is certain—that we have a right to the magic of snow days. Snow days are an impor-

tant facet of the reality of living in the snowy land of Minnesota.

"There is something sacred in a snow day."

Snow days are a Minnesotan kid's dream. There is something sacred to a snow day, as if some divine entity touched down and declared a break themselves. The declaration signals it is time to do all of the things that we would not otherwise have the time to do.

Immediately after a snow day is announced, you can almost feel the air buzzing with the excitement of possibility. In the vibrations of the buzzing are ideas of what movies to watch, what snacks to have, and which board games to play during the impromptu break. It is the type of excitement that cannot be found during our typical daily routines.

Our routines and the way we normally do things have been permanently altered in more ways than one. The effects of COVID-19 continue to impact every

part of our lives. I am preaching to the choir a bit when I say that the pandemic has made a significant and course altering difference in how school operates. We are seeing an increase in the number of classes held online, or distance learning days in primary schools. The convenience of online learning has come with meaningful advantages, but forcing students to attend school during a snow emergency isn't one of them.

"The benefits of online learning do not outweigh the divine right Minnesotans have to have a snow day."

It does sound like Gustavus has come to this same conclusion: that the benefits of online learning do not outweigh the divine right Minnesotans have to have a snow day. Snow days are a mystical few days of a break where we can contemplate why

we put ourselves through such an ordeal that is a snow storm. We already live in what could be considered a winter wonderland to some, and a winter nightmare to others, so a snow day is a bonus for such harsh conditions.

Given the world we live in, we need to take what kinds of magical moments we can get. It feels like everyday there is a new heartbreaking and miserable news headline that confirms the rough nature of the world. Snow days can appear to be an insignificant element to consider in the grand scheme of everyday life, but they have the potential to be a small escape from exhausting routines.

This argument cannot be made without acknowledging how annoying snow days can be to educators and administrators. Snow days complicate things. They interfere with pre-planned lessons and the flow of the semester. They force teachers and professors to reconfigure their schedules and cut out important material from their plans. I'm sure that I would feel a bit differently about snow days if I have

not been a student for more than a consecutive decade of my life. But the fact remains that a snow day can be a much-needed break for everyone.

I believe that small breaks can make a big difference in student performance. For many of us, a weekend is no longer a break. It is filled with work, volunteering, or some other responsibility that prevents us from taking that much-needed rest from the academic rat race. A snow day can be a much-needed disruption to our normally scheduled programming.

Like many people, I hate deviating and changing my schedule to accommodate unforeseeable circumstances. It is annoying, inconvenient, and a nuisance. However, the only certain thing in life is that there will be plenty of uncertainties. We can choose whether we want to embrace the magical uncertainty of a snow day or continue the hustle and shove our way through.

and make someone happy.



The snow-covered Arb

submitted

Is this a cult of learning?



Jonas Doerr
Opinion Columnist

We're living in a cult, and our charismatic leader is learning. This campus is obviously not a cult, however, it has many characteristics of one. According to Dr. Janja Lalic, a leading expert on cults out of California State University Chico, cults focus heavily on bringing in new members and making money, expect members to spend inordinate amounts of time on group activities, promote an us vs. them mentality, and are not accountable to higher authorities for many of their actions. Our recruitment efforts clearly demonstrate the first point. Before I applied to Gustavus, I received what seemed

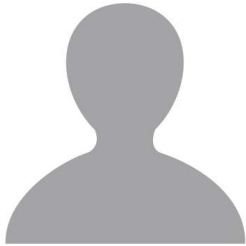
like dozens of emails. One might say Gusties overcommit themselves on campus, but there seems to be a culture of encouraging people to become very involved. Walk once through the halls of the involvement fair, and one will probably find themselves on five or more clubs' email lists. It's difficult to find time for jobs or activities off campus unless one wants to feel isolated from what's going on here. Our sports teams cultivate an antagonistic mentality. Perhaps it's usually just silliness, but Gusties can get rather riled up about St. Olaf. And how many Gusties wouldn't say our school is better than others after being here two or three years? And while private colleges do have to follow most laws, there are plenty of things they can get away with. For example, the First Amendment does not apply to private colleges. Because they are not receiving public funding, they can make whatever rules they want about free speech. That's not enough to make this a cult, however. To the best of my knowledge, we don't perform mind-altering practices to brainwash people, we allow disagreement and dissent at least to some extent, and

as much as we appreciate our President, I don't think any of us consider her a Messiah or an exalted being. There's plenty of cult characteristics we avoid. But what if we reframe the question? What if it's not this place, but our end goal that makes us a cult? What if learning is the exalted being that's dragging us in? Learning is glorified over nearly everything. We promote education as the solution to life; graduate college, and you are on the path to success. Drop out of high school? Good luck! Very few people are encouraged to go into the trades if their family members didn't. Much of that learning is only for the sake of learning. Regardless of whether one finds their classes useful or not, nearly everyone consumes pointless learning. Who hasn't seen an eye-catching video promising life hacks that will change your life? Of course, their life was probably exactly the same afterwards, minus a wasted 5 minutes. Even when students seem to not want to learn, they wish they were learning. Those sleepy students in an 8am class, if they can't go back to bed, probably have a number of learning activities to do as soon as they get out of class.

They'll scroll through social media feeds, learning what 'friends' they haven't seen in years have been doing. They'll read some of the latest news, learning what's happening in places they will never visit. They'll watch Tik Toks or YouTube videos, learning the latest trends so they will seem knowledgeable in conversations. So much learning for so little purpose. Purpose or not, there are consequences. Learning dictates how learners should think and feel. It tells people not to disagree; the facts don't lie. People who achieve high levels of learning are placed in an elite group with special titles. People who don't learn enough are shamed. People have to spend inordinate amounts of time learning or risk falling behind. People are encouraged to socialize only with others of similar knowledge levels. They're afraid of what would happen if they left; if they turned off their news feed, their social media, or their daily podcasts. What is this? It's a cult. A cult of learning. Perhaps this is only the hive mind speaking through me, but I don't believe the way to escape is by not learning. Learning is good, in modera-

tion. Learning is good when it has a purpose and that knowledge is used for something. Learning must be balanced by doing. We must filter the information stream to what is useful. We must stop filling our memory banks with ideas that are stored for a never-coming future. We must learn to be better at action. Once the preparation of learning is done, live! Use the information to do life better. We should not be learning more than we are doing; what is the purpose of that? When we learn, we are naturally self-focused. We think of what we can do to improve ourselves and wonder what we're doing wrong. But when we act, we give back. Instead of only taking information, by doing we can share something with the world that was not there before. We can create! We can inspire! We can love. Don't drop out of college. Don't panic about the cult of learning you just realized you're in. But if you're tired of being a desert that drinks and drinks and never gives back, grow a cactus and make someone happy.

Why cookies are superior to brownies



Houston McLaury
Opinion Columnist

For desserts, the Evelyn Young Dining Hall offers a multitude of choices. Cheesecakes, crumbles, cupcakes, anything to fill the heart of the young aspiring college student. Students often grab these desserts at the end of the day as a pick-me-up, something to reward their work during the day, and to allow themselves a celebration of getting through their assigned workload. But, what is the most fulfilling to the sensitive pallet of the student, a brownie or a cookie? I believe that the standard chocolate chip cookie from the Caf is the standout, rather than

the brownie. The cookie can be applied to any pallet, thanks to its mixture of sweet flavors and crunchy exterior. Meanwhile, the chocolate brownie is much too rich for itself, destroying its potential and use in the rich flavor of chocolate that drowns the pallet of those that consume it. Not only that, but it's soft texture does little to improve its condition for my palate. These shortcomings add up, hence putting the brownie beneath the cookie. These are the following reasons why the cookie is better than the brownie. Breaking down the standard of a chocolate chip cookie will help to unravel the mystery of its flavor. For most chocolate chip cookies, the recipes often consist of sugar, flour, salt, butter, baking soda, eggs, chocolate chips and, of course, water. For brownies, it follows a similar format, consisting of sugar, flour, chocolate chips, salt, eggs, extra virgin olive oil, water, and the most obvious deviation: cocoa powder. This is where the two most important differences in the ingredients can be found, the

first being the cocoa powder in the brownies, the second being the baking soda in the cookies, which adds to the complexities of its flavor profile. These differences separate the rich flavor of brownies from the delicious flavors of the cookie. The first difference, cocoa powder, provides the most significant change to the inferiority of the brownie. As said earlier, the worst part of a brownie is the richness of them, or the immediate feeling of fullness one gets after eating a brownie. For me, I try to chase down the brownie with a glass of milk to resolve this issue, this rich feeling flooding my sense of taste, but oftentimes I rarely go back to the Caf to grab some milk. So, for the rest of the night I have to suffer through the rich taste of chocolate on my taste buds, or chase it down with water, which does an even greater disservice to the already horrid dessert. Compare this to the cookie, which prioritizes the use of baking soda. This addition of baking soda, while allowing the cookie to rise, also allows for a saltier taste of the cookie.

This saltier taste is why I adore cookies, because it balances out the sweet flavor of the cookie. In the downfall of a brownie, all I am able to taste is the sweet richness of the chocolate, while with cookies I am able to get a wonderfully delicious blend of sweetness and salt. Then there is the issue of texture regarding the brownie. With the brownie, depending on the way it is baked, it can result in three different textures: cakey, chewy, and fudgy. But on campus I've only encountered the cakey and chewy types of brownie. The cakey brownie, while sweet, often crumbles beneath the grasp, and gets stuck in between my teeth, adding to the discomfort of the everlasting rich taste. However, the chewy brownie is only slightly better. It has a much more defined crust that encases the soft center of the brownie, but still suffers from the richness all brownies are inherently made with. This is again, where the cookie shines through, brave and true. The texture of the cookie shines because of its toughness, the

crunch one feels as soon as they sink their teeth into the delicacy. There's little to no crumbs that fall from it, leading to an easy clean up and an overall divine texture. Another reason why the cookie is superior to the brownie. The problem with brownies is not the texture, but the flavor of the treat. Its richness immediately fills up a person, and requires something to wash it down, the best option being milk but what tends to be the only option is water, adding to the displeasure of the confection. Meanwhile, cookies are not fully rich due to their ingredients and they have a more complex flavor profile than a brownie. This difference in flavor, and in ingredients, is the reason why cookies are superior to the dubious brownie.