

THE MYSTICIAN



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Dusty the snowman welcomes back students for the Spring 2022 semester with warm thoughts and valentines.
(Credit: photo by Zachary Weiland and illustration by Samuel Kraft)

THE MYSTICIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS – FOR THE STUDENTS

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The Mystic Media Statement and Disclaimer

The purpose of college media is to serve and give voice to the students.

We, as the student-based forum of journalism on the Bismarck State College campus, provide content that is informative, fair, concise and of importance to students and the community. With this goal in mind, Mystic Media is dedicated to accuracy and maintaining ethical journalistic practices.

We strive to give a voice to student issues and policies within the local community.

Our goal is to incorporate as many students as possible and be an outlet for student expression.

Mystic Media strives to be objective and is not affiliated with any outside organization.

Mystic Media upholds the principles guaranteed by the First Amendment and utilizes these rights to bring diverse, entertaining and thought-provoking material to the college community. Thoughts expressed may not be the opinion of all the staff or BSC community.

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with letters to the editor

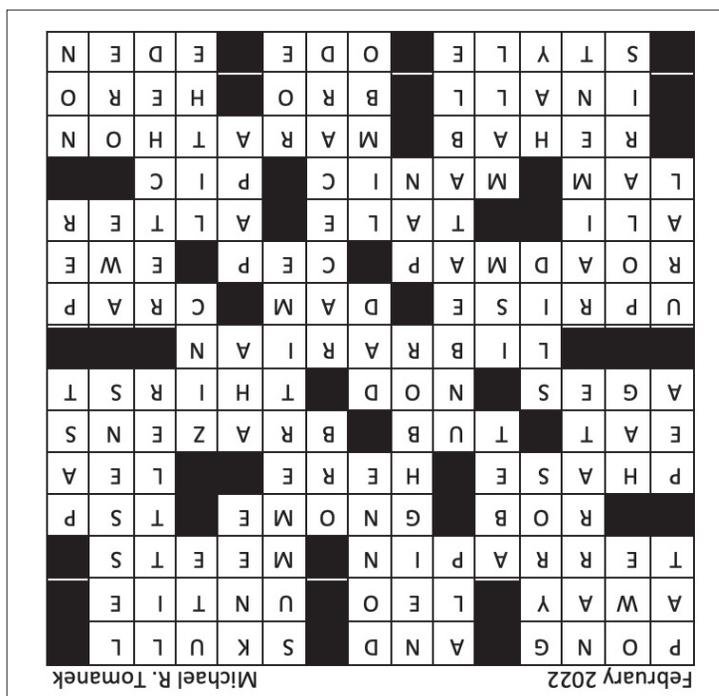
or any concerns/comments regarding this publication.

E-mail: bscmysticianeditor@bismarckstate.edu

Crossword Information

BSC's own Language, Literature and Communication Department Chair (and crossword aficionado) Michael Tomanek has created and submitted this month's puzzle. Experiment, explore and try to find the answers yourself for the most satisfaction.

The crossword puzzle can be found on page 10.



Michael R. Tomanek

February 2022

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

What up?

I'm struggling to find the words to write a proper letter from the editor, but I think that's the case for a lot of us in this day and age. There is so much happening all at once that I just don't have the words to explain how I'm feeling. Everything feels very sad and heavy, so I hope that you are all taking care of yourselves and doing what you need to do to be happy. Hopefully the photo of my dogs will make you smile.

Go big or go home,
Amy

P.S. Hello, mystery editor. You've made your point. Have a great day.



MYSTIC MEDIA

BISMARCK STATE COLLEGE STUDENT PRODUCTIONS



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BSC GROUNDS STAFF WORKING HARD THIS WINTER



Trucks have been busy on campus moving snow to allow smooth travel. (Credit: Chad Erickstad)

By Chad Erickstad
REPORTER

Snow removal has been a priority for the Buildings and Grounds staff at Bismarck State College as this winter continues with an abundance of snowfall.

BSC Grounds Supervisor David Rohrich said this year's winter weather has kept his staff and him very busy.

"All the entryways and all the steps are done by hand," Rohrich said. "We try to clear enough snow out to where a piece of equipment can either back up, sweep away or blade away from the building. So every doorway—we shovel. Every set of steps—we shovel. What people don't realize is that sometimes you come in and those steps have four-foot drifts over them. It's a lot of work.

"During Christmas break we had two or three days with the wind blowing after the fact. So then you always have to come back, and it's like you always get things cleaned up, and then the wind blows for two days, and it looks like you did nothing, and you just do it again and again and again."

Statistics show that this winter has produced more snow than last year. According to the National Weather Service, the Bismarck area got 16.7 inches of snow last winter. So far this

year over 20 inches have fallen, with plenty of winter weather still to come

All of the snow is hauled off site, and finding space for it can prove to be a challenge. Some is hauled north of the Bowl, some to a small parking lot off of Ward Road and the rest is pushed over the hill of the southeast parking lot.

"When the wind blows, it blows everything back in, so what we do is, we'll go out with a snowblower, widen everything past the sidewalk, so that when it does blow in, it doesn't blow right back in right away," Rohrich said. "We make it a bit wider so there is more room."

The BSC Buildings and Grounds department is also dealing with a shortage of workers.

"We're a little short this year," Rohrich said. "We're a couple guys down. Nobody wants to apply. We've been open for students, and through Job Service and BisMan Online, stuff like that. We've maybe had six or seven people apply all year."

Despite these challenges, Rohrich and his staff continue to make the school's roads and pathways open for travel.

"It's hard work," Rohrich said. "But it's worth it."

BNSF EMPLOYEES BLOCKED FROM STRIKING OVER NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY

By Daniel Grzesik
REPORTER

More than 17,000 Burlington Northern Santa Fe union workers are preparing to go on strike over its new attendance policy. BNSF Railway's new CEO created its "Hi-Viz" policy which the company describes as giving its employees "real-time information and greater flexibility." President Jeremy Ferguson of the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation union, representing more than 17,000 BNSF workers across the nation, authorized regional chapters to "initiate a strike." This would cut BNSF's roughly 35,000 person workforce in half.

The new attendance policy gives every employee 30 points and each

absence or sick day lowers point values. An employee has the option to make up points by working 14 days straight without time off or forfeiting future sick days. If a point total drops below zero, consequences are likely.

In a statement, SMART President Ferguson said, "[BNSF's] half-baked attempt to characterize this policy as an 'improvement' and an 'incentive' is nothing short of disingenuous, and outright insulting."

According to a spokesperson for BNSF Railway, the company hasn't updated its attendance policy in more than 20 years, set to take effect on February 1st. But, in court documents provided to Mystic Media, it shows ten amendments to its attendance policy since 1999. The spokesperson says the new change will allow more decision-making processes in schedules and give more direct access for scheduling to employees.

"This policy update is consistent with practices across the transportation industry, while helping us safely and efficiently serve our customers and the communities that count on us," said BNSF executive director of public affairs Lena Kent.

On January 25, a federal judge temporarily blocked workers from striking against BNSF. U.S. District Judge Mark T. Pittman of the

Northern Texas District issued a restraining order against the employee union which expires on February 8. Judge Pittman says the company is "arguably justified by the terms of the parties' collective bargaining agreement such that the dispute is minor."

SMART union will likely file an appeal as employees weigh their options.



The BNSF bridge crosses from Bismarck to Mandan. (Credit: Zachary Weiland)

BRIEFS

POSITIVITY EVENT SET FOR 2/22/22

Student Life is sponsoring a Feb. 22, 2022 event focused on resilience, healthy coping skills and positivity. There will be self-care activities, therapy dogs and free give-away items. Information will be available on healthy coping skills that students can take with them. Positivity messages will be posted on the windows of the Student Union. The MYX will provide music featuring Taylor Swift's "I'm feeling 2022" and other uplifting tunes. Check the Student Union display case for a list of "22 things to do on 2-22-22."

APPLY FOR SPRING 2022 GRADUATION TODAY

Students completing their degree requirements this Spring 2022 semester need to apply for graduation soon. The Application for Degree is an online form found at <https://bismarckstate.edu/academics/graduation/prepare/> and the Academic Records Office is encouraging students to apply for Spring 2022 graduation by Monday, Feb. 14, 2022.

Students with questions about their BSC degree, can run an Academic Requirements Report in CampusConnection or make an appointment with their advisers.

FIGMENTS OF IMAGINATION ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS

Bismarck State College's Literary Arts Magazine, Figments of imagination, is accepting submissions for their next volume. The deadline for submissions is on Friday, March 4. All types of creative art will be accepted: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, art (painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art, etc.), video shorts, and music.

The Figments staff is offering to assist with staging and pictures of artwork for submissions. To submit artwork or get in touch with the Figments staff, contact Josh Kern at joshua.kern@bismarckstate.edu.

BSC MEN'S ENSEMBLE OFFERS SWEET VALENTINE SERENADES

On Monday, Feb. 14, trade that box of conversation hearts for a Valentine serenade by the Bismarck State College Men's Ensemble. Dressed in tuxedos, the ensemble offers to serenade on the BSC campus or a pre-arranged location throughout the Bismarck-Mandan community on Valentine's Day.

The service includes one song as well as a long stemmed rose. This

year's song selections include, "Sh-Boom, Life Could be a Dream" or "Can't Help Falling in Love."

Serenades can be scheduled for Valentine's Day between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Reservations will be taken through Friday, Feb. 11, by contacting Dawn Hagerott at 701-224-5768, or Dawn.Hagerott@bismarckstate.edu. Bookings do fill up fast. All proceeds go toward BSC music scholarships.

MYSTIC ATHLETICS IS EXPANDING

Efforts are continuing to expand collegiate athletic opportunities at Bismarck State College. On Jan. 28, BSC was approved by the NJCAA to add:

Fall 2022 Men's and Women's Cross-Country (D-II)

Fall 2022 Men's and Women's Half-Marathon (D-I) Fall 2022/Spring 2023 Men's and Women's Indoor Track & Field (D-I)

Fall 2022/Spring 2023 Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field (D-I)

These additions will provide male and female athletes with an opportunity that has not been offered since 1985 when BSC discontinued the track program. Our communities have been very supportive and have encouraged us to provide this opportunity to our local athletes.

CELEBRATE WORLD PULSES DAY ON FEBRUARY 10

Celebrate World Pulses Day with the Northern Pulse Growers Association on Feb 10. World Pulses Day is to encourage people around the globe to make these nutrient abundant, environmentally friendly crops part of their daily life.

Pulse is a term for the edible seeds of legume crops, and includes dry peas, lentils, chickpeas and beans. Research shows that regularly eating pulses can lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and help to maintain a healthy body weight, which all promote heart health.

In addition to nutritional benefits, pulses play a significant agricultural and environmental role. Pulses fix nitrogen in the soil, which can save producers half of the energy inputs of most other crops. In addition, pulses provide a break in disease, weed and insect cycles. Pulses improve soil health, have a low carbon footprint and are water savvy.

Any event can qualify as a World Pulses Day event – from a family meal to a corporate party to a seminar on pulses. For more information on World Pulses Day, or to learn how to incorporate pulses into your diet or farming operation, visit the Northern Pulse Growers Association website at www.northernpulse.com.

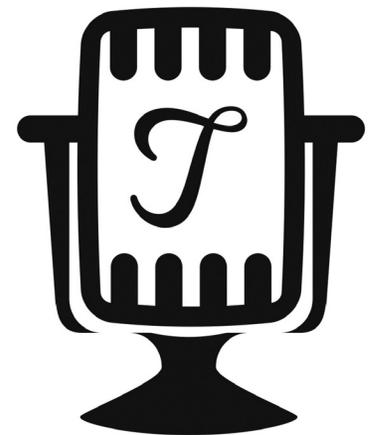
**Snow Removal
Workers Needed**

**\$16.00/HR
Part-time**

**BSC BISMARCK STATE COLLEGE
Grounds Department** Contact Dave 527-6760

MYSTIC MEDIA MADNESS IS HAPPENING ON MARCH 3

Mystic Media is planning a campus event for Thursday, March 3. Mystic Media Madness is scheduled in the Bismarck State College Armory from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. A dance floor will be set up in the gym alongside available court space to play basketball-themed mini games with the chance to play for prizes. Mystic Media Members will be providing refreshments and concessions. The MYX radio will DJ for the night. Other activities will be in the Mystic Media office and studio spaces. Door prizes will be given away toward the end of the night. Admission is free.



NEED ADVICE? TALK TO TAY

Hello readers, how are you? No really, tell me how you are. I genuinely care. I know what it feels like to go through rough times and not have anywhere to turn. Whether it be relationship issues or just a small daily annoyance, let me help you and be your outlet. Submit questions for advice by sending us a message on our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. State how you would like to be addressed and responses will be posted on our socials or printed in an upcoming issue of the Mystician. I will extensively research the issue you are facing and make sure you get the best possible advice and care you deserve.

Let's talk together.

Taylor P. Aasen

COLD CLIMATE

A worker at Bismarck State College drives a tractor down the sidewalk, sweeping away freshly fallen snow.



MOVING THE SNOW

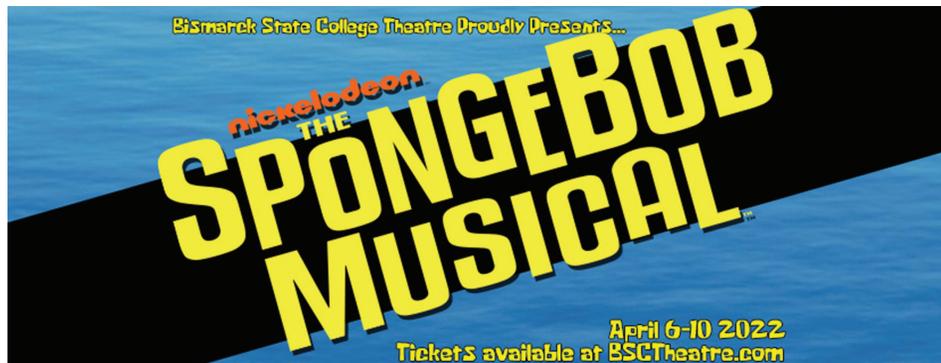
A worker blows away snow on the stairways next to the Jack Science Center and the Leach Music Center.



Pedestrians should be cautious of the icy roads and sidewalks at the schools and in the community.

BSC'S THEATRE DEPARTMENT ABSORBS NEW TALENT

By Seth Iverson
REPORTER



The Bismarck State College's theatre department will be presenting a new musical based on the long running popular TV series.

Spongebob Squarepants is a Broadway musical that was published on June 7, 2016 written by Kyle Jarrow, with the rights only recently being released for use in the public domain. The plot is an original story, concerning the town of Bikini Bottom in danger from a volcano called "Mt

Humongous" that is going to erupt in 48 hours, forcing them to evacuate. It is up to Spongebob, Patrick and Sandy to stop the volcano from destroying everything that they know.

"I think a story about the importance of community and friendship in the face of overwhelming social disaster can be a really important message right now, so I was surprised to see how much resonance this had with me in particular at this

very moment," Director Danny Devlin said.

The musical has received critical acclaim from many different award ceremonies, such as the Drama Desk awards, the Outer Circle Critic Awards, and it has been nominated for 15 Tony Awards for best book of a musical, costume design, lighting design, scenic design, sound design, best actor and multiple nominations for best original score.

The soundtrack is a mix of many different artists, with examples of songwriters being David Bowie, Aerosmith, The Plain White Tees, T.I., The Magnetic Zeroes, Panic! At the Disco, and Sara Barailles.

Devlin said that while the story to the musical would be the exact same, the soundtrack has been changed since the original filmed performance.

This is not the first time BSC has

done an extravagant musical like Spongebob, with a track record of former performances such as Legally Blonde in 2016, Chicago in 2017, The Producers in 2018, Heathers in 2019, and a performance tour of Kiss Me Kate which was canceled because of COVID. After a couple of rough years, the theatre department has decided to return to a normal production rate.

"We felt like this year when we were coming back to a more regular production schedule," Devlin said, "we wanted to come back with what has sort of become one of the signatures at BSC theatre, which is a big, splashy, colorful, fun musical and this just fit the bill for that."

The musical is scheduled to perform from April 7 to April 10, with the Thursday to Saturday performances at 7:30 pm and the Sunday performance at 2:30 pm.

ANNUAL ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE NEEDS YOUR HELP

By Chad Erickstad
REPORTER

"Figments of Imagination," Bismarck State College's annual art and literary magazine, is looking for submissions from students to help fill its 2022 edition.

Created in the spring of 1993 as a way to celebrate the arts and to give students an opportunity to publish their creative works, "Figments of Imagination" has been a prevalent part of campus-life at BSC for many years. Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of the long-running publication. Copies can often be seen scattered across the campus or in the BSC library, free for anyone to pick up and discover the artistic talents of fellow students.

"Figments" features a wide array of artistic selections: poems, paintings, photographs, sculptures, short stories, novellas, ceramics, music, songs, drawings, digital art, short films—nearly anything creative can be featured. High-quality photographs of physical art are displayed in the magazine. QR codes are used for audio

and video selections—people simply scan the code with their cell phones and experience the piece right on their phones. As long as one member of a band is a student at BSC, songs and videos will be allowed. Students can even submit anything as unique as spoken word or stand-up comedy.

A panel of judges from the faculty of BSC determine which selections make the cut to be included in the publication. The number of submissions for each category is limited. For example, five poems, two short stories, three pieces of fine art, two short films—the submission forms explain how many entries are allowed. If students need help photographing their art, the staff of "Figments" has access to cameras and can take photos for them.

This year's submission deadline is Friday, March 4. Submission forms can be found around campus or by visiting bscmysticmedia.com. Or stop by Armory 143, MWF between 12 and 12:50 pm.



BSC INSTRUCTOR NOMINATED FOR A GRAMMY AWARD

By Zachary Weiland
THE MYX PRODUCTION MANAGER

Students in the Bismarck State College music program are surrounded by prestige, and they may not even know it.

Jason Thoms, BSC assistant professor of music, has been nominated for a 2022 Grammy Award. Thoms, who conducts BSC's Concert Choir and Women's Chamber Ensemble, is nominated as a featured soloist in the choral ensemble of the Saint Tikhon Choir. Written and

conducted by Benedict Sheehan, their album is titled "Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom," and its performance has been nominated in the Best Choral Performance category. Capella Records originally released this track during 2020, and it was produced by producer Blanton Alspaugh who has been nominated for a Grammy in the past.

Thoms has been a member of the Saint Tikhon Choir since 2015. This ensemble is based in Pennsylvania, and has met every May and occasionally has recorded CDs

through its existence. Thoms has been involved in five other CDs as a member of the Saint Tikhon Choir. One of those CDs, named "Kastalsy Requiem" was nominated for two Grammys in a previous year.

Overall, Thoms has been involved in professional music for years. Before coming to BSC, Thoms was the Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music and Humanities at Concordia College in New York. He held this role for 13 years before the institution shut down due to financial struggles related to the pandemic.

Thoms has also been involved in other professional ensembles, allowing him to perform around the country and even internationally.

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, and other work from The Saint Tikhon Choir can be found on Spotify and YouTube. Their work is also available as a Blu-ray or CD and can be ordered from Amazon.

The 64th Grammy Awards will be aired Sunday, April 3. Programming will be at 7:00pm on CBS.

SPONGEBOB THE MUSICAL CAST LIST:

SpongeBob – Patrick Watson
Patrick – Brittany Bearheart
Sandy – Charli Fool Bear
Mr. Krabs – Alyssa Lechler
Plankton – Adam Michal
Squidward – Jeremy Lindemann
Perch – Alex Brady
Karen – Hannah Hertz
Pearl – Melissa Westphal
Mayor - Brynn Gaebe (u/s Sandy)
Mrs. Puff – Paige Jung (u/s Patrick)
Old Man Jenkins – Robert Day (u/s Mr. Krabs)
Buster – Braxton Kroh (u/s SpongeBob)
Larry/Gary – Tanner Hostetter
Bikini Bottomers – Nick Zezeus (u/s Plankton) Shanley Windish (u/s Pearl),
Fischer Ackerson, Abby Nicholson, Reya Kramlich, Chloe Nieuwsma



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EVERY STUDENT'S VOICE

QUESTION: WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY?

I get angry when people talk over others and don't give them a fair chance to finish telling their story or making their point before they have to barge in with their own thoughts or opinion. I see it as very rude and obnoxious and I honestly can't stand it. I will instantly be more reluctant to talk if I am having a conversation with someone that does it.



You know what grinds my gears? Put simply, online player versus player video games. When I'm losing and I have no idea why, I find it very unfair. And then that same thing happening over, and over, and over again for 20 plus games is ridiculous. Period.

What makes me angry? The fact that companies, politicians, and those with power choose profits, and votes over future generations makes me angry. Short-sightedness, greed, and selfishness make me angry.



What makes me angry (or more so just annoyed) is when you ask someone a question, and they don't respond. Or even when they take too long to respond. Like at least just say I'm thinking or even an "Uhhh" will do. Now I understand that sometimes people can be busy. And other times people can simply just not hear you. So I realize that you cannot put standards of perfection on people. But in my personal opinion, it doesn't make it any less annoying.

It makes me angry when people are close-minded and not willing to hear other people out on things that they disagree with. We do not always have to agree with others, but I think it is important to acknowledge the opinions of others and realize that their thoughts are just as important as our own. They may not be able to change our mind, but they can change our outlook and give us insight that we did not have before.



I get really angry when I see other people being degraded or talked down to, especially children. I think words carry a lot of power, and it is our responsibility to respect each other, and lift each other up.

I get frustrated over a variety of things, both minor and major. There is one thing that makes me angrier than anything. That would be the mistreatment of kids and animals. These living beings cannot defend themselves, as much as an adult, so when they are mistreated it is completely cruel. Animals and children should be looked after by good people and that have these beings' best interests at heart. Both kids and animals love and trust the person who cares for them. To take advantage of that and demonstrate cruel and evil practices are vile. I have no understanding of people who do such things.



Something that makes me angry is when someone calls me by a nickname. When working as a bartender, you meet some rude individuals. Almost every day I would be called "babe", "baby", "hun", "sweetie", or "blondie". I really dislike when people use these nicknames, especially if I do not know who they are. I find it very disrespectful and degrading as a young female to be catcalled. I'm not your baby. In addition, if you think by calling someone these names it will get their attention, you're sorely mistaken, "hun".

The biggest thing that makes me angry is when people are willingly ignorant or close-minded. Today, we live in a society that is filled with hatred, creating rifts of division amongst the various factions in the United States. A lot of the tension stems from the failure to step into the shoes of our peers. People need to be more willing to have open conversations and educate themselves on why others may have a different point of view on political issues. And people need to be more open and understanding of the identities and experiences of those around them.



The world is a place full of different opinions. Not everyone will agree with everything. With that, I would like to share my experience from today. I serve tables at a bustling, fast-paced restaurant and serve many people. Today a man told me that he does not enjoy movies in which a female plays the super hero character—straight from him: "they all suck." He followed this, saying that no one wants to date a strong woman. As a strong woman, I held my tongue hoping for a good tip. I can't believe I held my tongue for \$5.

ASPIRING TO GIVE EVERY STUDENT A VOICE:

This is our mission statement at The Mystician. It is often said that in higher education, we grow as people and become who we are through learning and experience. We know you would like to let yourselves be heard, and this new addition to our student newspaper is just the way to do that. You will often see our reporters and columnists out and about getting interviews. If you would like to have your voice heard here, answer openly and honestly to them and allow your picture to accompany your opinion.

LABOR SHORTAGE

By Alecia Biel
COLUMNIST

Arguably, one of the most heated topics since the start of the pandemic: “Where are all of the workers?”

Evidence of the current labor shortage is everywhere. There are crazy wait times at clinics, long lines at banks and half-hour waits at fast-food drive-throughs are just a few examples. The effects of the shortage are more evident as burnt-out employees may be rude and a bit snappy because of being overwhelmed and working in toxic environments.

It is easy to assume that people do not want to work and are living off unemployment. Extra unemployment benefits were a controversial approach to easing the hardships employees faced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but those benefits have ended. So, the question remains: “Where are all of the workers and what do they want?”

Reflecting on some of the reasons workers have left the workforce can shed some light on the problem.

Some may have left because of health concerns or increasing restrictions during the pandemic and vaccine mandates. Others may not have returned because there was a lack of childcare during the time schools were closed and distance-learning was in place. The workers that remained on the job may have felt the stress of being short-staffed, which caused them to feel burnt-out, unappreciated and underpaid.

What will bring workers back to the jobs? What we are seeing now is a worker’s job market. Many of the people without jobs are students, parents and people nearing the age of retirement. They want strong leadership, empathy and support from their employers. Employees want to be paid what they are worth and know that their time is valued.

Empathy, understanding and appreciation can make all the difference in a job market where employees have been so deeply affected by the ongoing stresses of a global pandemic.

MY WEEK

By Mandy Dyson-Peterson
COLUMNIST

It all started Sunday, Jan. 9. After doing dishes, I walked outside and witnessed my dog, Chloe Mae, lying on the ground in front of my camper. I went over to wake her and bring her inside because we had been calling out for her earlier. When I got closer, I could not believe what I was seeing. My furry best friend of only 4-years-old had passed away. I was and currently am still so torn up about losing her. She had a heart murmur and died of a fibrillation complication. I have been reassured by my RN/LPN family members that it is a peaceful way to go but it was too soon. We gave her a wonderful life full of love, fun and adventures just like she gave us. I have peace knowing that she is in Heaven, and I look forward to seeing her again one day.

On Monday, I was scheduled to start school. I felt terrible. My body hurts, I am crying often, dizzy, did not want to get out of bed, chills and not feeling well in general. I blow these feelings off and chalk it up to being depressed. Little did I know what results I would be receiving next. Tuesday comes along and my aunt brings me a COVID-19 test that I must self-administer. No, not the small test swab, it was the long one. After sneezing 5 times during this invasive testing, I awaited my results. I was

told it takes up to 10 minutes for the results but shortly after putting the drops on the test strip it read positive.

On that same day, Tuesday Jan. 11., my mother-in-law wants to get us a puppy to help us heal from our terrible loss of Chloe. We accept her gift and plan to get the puppy later in the week. It is obviously too soon but a year from now would still be too soon. So, my husband and I decided to jump in with both feet and go all in. Oh, did I mention that my husband has COVID-19 now too?

Fast forward to Saturday, and we are on our way to getting our new family member. This upsets my mother. We live on her property, in our camper, and she disapproves of this decision due to unclear reasons. The main take-away was that she felt that somehow it would become her responsibility. This would not have been the case. My husband and I had it worked out to where she would help us out by giving us water, electricity, and land and in return give her childcare for her 6 children along with any other chores around the house. This was all working out so well until we decided to add a new fur baby. On Sunday, Jan. 16., during our grief from our loss of Chloe, sickness due to COVID-19 and the start of a new semester of school, we were required to relocate because we decided to add a new fur baby to our family.

CRYING AFTER A BAD NIGHT’S REST

By Dante Ames
COLUMNIST

“I’m not crying, you’re crying.” A meme phrase that is simple and lets others know that we are indeed crying. The act of crying itself is strange. Liquids are forced from our eyeballs because of a reaction. Although it is an odd yet normal action all humans experience, some people need to know that crying is good and natural.

Whether it be from a friend’s death or you just finished watching Dexter: New Blood and can not stop thinking about the abysmal ending, everyone inevitably cries. Although some may try to avoid the act altogether, after it does happen, they end up feeling better. Crying is like purging. According to Newhouse of Harvard Health Publishing, medical professionals agree crying is a tool our body uses to release stress and emotional pain.

When people repress their feelings and try not to cry, it can harm them physically and mentally. A poor immune system, a heart attack or a stroke are some of the physical ailments that can happen if crying is suppressed. Stress, anxiety and

depression are a few of the mental health issues that can worsen with a lack of crying.

There are three categories of tears: reflex, basal and emotional. Reflex tears are a result of external stimuli such as cold, wind or irritation by a foreign body. Basal tears serve three purposes. They coat the eye protecting it from general debris, supply nutrients to the eye and prevent the eye from drying out by continuously being excreted.

Emotional tears are the ones that make us feel better. When we cry as an emotional response, oxytocin and endorphin hormones are released from our brain easing both physical and emotional pain. Imagine it as taking an Advil that makes you feel happy.

Everyone cries for different reasons. Whether watching that one show that makes you cry or remembering when you played Yu-Gi-Oh with that long gone friend or thinking about how the world is unfair and cruel to the best of people; when you inevitably break down and feel that good cry session, let it happen. Your brain will thank you.

LIFE LESSONS OF THE UNEXPECTED VARIETY

By Rikki Roath
COLUMNIST

I’d been warned by many. “Mexico is dangerous,” ... “you’ll get robbed,” ... “they’ll kidnap you.” And yet, still harboring the last remnants of my rebellious youth, I decided to travel Mexico for a month and a half.

Everything was rainbows and sunshine, tacos and salsa for the first five weeks. I became braver, more confident, and bolder by the day. Walking at night, exploring backstreets, eating in establishments free of handwashing facilities—all conquered. Until the day I was robbed of my blissful ignorance (and \$300) by the very people whose purpose it is to protect naive tourists: the police.

While it wasn’t as dramatic as my friends’ and family’s promises of violent crime, being scammed by police took my mind on a rollercoaster. Which half of the strange combination of fear and relief that I feel when I see a police car is the correct emotion? And how can those two feelings even be combined? Especially when the people that society has taught us to trust can turn out to be untrustworthy. This may be what it’s like when slowly, one by one,

your parents drop the bomb on your eight-year-old brain that santa, the easter bunny, and the tooth fairy are all lies.

And then there’s the issue of how to feel about the money itself. Should I mourn the pesos that could have bought me more churros and a few extra nights at my Airbnb or accept their departure in the hopes that their new owners need them more than I do? Is it greedy to get mad at being tricked out of one’s money? Or should I give them credit for outsmarting me? At least it’s real people who have to support their families tricking me out of my money instead of a miraculous marketing algorithm that convinces me that I have expensive and unfulfilled needs.

But even after this earth-shattering, perspective-altering scam, I refuse to stop traveling, even in Mexico.

Traveling teaches us things that no classroom ever could. I’ve learned to speak new languages, to cook deeper, more complex food, to interact with people from other cultures and to handle myself in stressful and uncomfortable situations. And now, I even know how to avoid police scams. Try finding that in your textbook.

THE BATTLE FOR STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

By Zachary Weiland
THE MYX PRODUCTION MANAGER

Today, America is facing a financial crisis of unprecedented proportions. No, I'm not talking about the economy, or even the national debt, but something much more personal. Students are racking up more student loan debt than ever before and it has many young adults around the country asking for help.

Roughly 43 million Americans owe the federal government over \$1.7 trillion according to a December 2021 report from The Hill. When looking back a decade, in 2011, that number was just under one-trillion. On average, those with student loan debt owe around \$40,000. It is not uncommon for former students to be paying off their student debt into their thirties or even forties. On top of historically high rates of inflation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and higher average costs of living, combined with low wages and income inequality, this has become quite a stressor.

In recent years, the conversation around student loan forgiveness has turned divisive. During the 2020 election cycle, Democratic candidates campaigned on progressive style social programs, many of which included some sort of plan to address the crisis of student financial aid. In what was a surprising move by more progressive members in the Democratic party, the eventual Democratic nominee, the moderate former Vice President Joe Biden, advocated for a more progressive plan. The plan included canceling up to \$10,000 per person of their student debt owed to the federal government. This policy brought Biden a slew of young voters, helping to carry Biden to a victory on election night.

Since taking office, President Biden has been spotty with keeping this stance. In recent months, Biden has been avoiding questions on the issue. His administration has extended the student loan repayment pause through May of this year, but many are arguing that this action is not enough. Many within his party are asking Biden to

forgive \$50,000 worth of student loans owed to the federal government per person.

Despite the political narrative around student loan forgiveness, studies have shown that the action would have practical benefits economically. If we use Biden's plan for \$10,000 in student loan forgiveness, there can still be a large impact. According to a February 2021 report from Business Insider, "Based on fourth quarter 2020 data, loan forgiveness of \$10,000 would mean complete debt cancellation for 33.6% of borrowers." If a plan to cancel out \$50,000 were to be implemented, complete debt cancellation would jump up to as high as 75% of borrowers according to the same data.

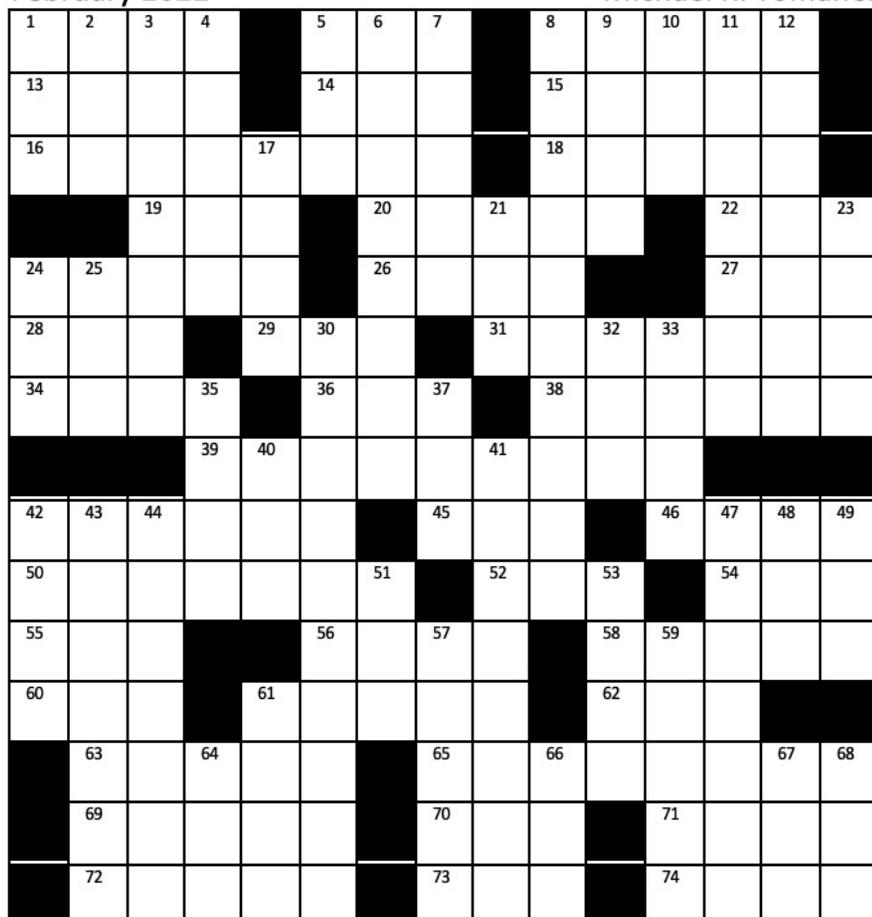
The money saved by the average American as a result of debt cancellation can be set aside for savings or other spending, which would benefit the economy. Having an extra \$200 to \$300 extra per month could help families pay for other bills. Extra money can allow younger adults to hit life milestones such as further

education goals or buying a house. Extra money can allow them to feel more comfortable interacting with the economy whether that be through stocks or by consumption of goods.

Student loan forgiveness would also further benefit wealth disparity amongst people of color. According to research from Brookings.edu, Black college students on average owe \$7,400 more in student loans than their white peers. Black students also on average owe double what white college students owe in student loans after graduation. By canceling student loans, Black college graduates will be able to close that financial gap.

Overall, the benefits of student loan forgiveness would have a widespread benefit for all Americans. The fight for student loan forgiveness is far from over and will not be dispersing any time soon. It is worth pushing for policies that can help students everywhere to build a more stable future not only for themselves, but for everyone.

February 2022 Michael R. Tomanek



ACROSS

- 1 Atari classic
- 5 A joiner
- 8 Bonehead?
- 13 Visitor's game
- 14 Zodiac purrer
- 15 Loosen a shoe
- 16 Algonquin turtle
- 18 Comes together
- 19 Mr. Zombie
- 20 Garden dweller
- 22 Meas.
- 24 Period
- 26 Your location, on mall map
- 27 Meadow
- 28 Absorb, as in a loss
- 29 Follows bath
- 31 Does so, boldly
- 34 Matures
- 36 Silent approval
- 38 Ambition
- 39 Researcher's aide
- 42 Surge
- 45 Block
- 46 Poo
- 50 Destination aide
- 52 Penny Bun mushroom
- 54 Mama sheep
- 55 Clay
- 56 Story
- 58 Change
- 60 Flee
- 61 Frenzied
- 62 Precedes -tionary
- 63 Get better
- 65 26.2
- 69 Total
- 70 Frat member
- 71 Protagonist, sometimes
- 72 Way of doing
- 73 Poem
- 74 Paradise

DOWN

- 1 Vanna's partner
- 2 In the hole
- 3 Tell a story
- 4 Pita sandwiches
- 5 High, rugged mountain
- 6 Person next door
- 7 "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" poet
- 8 School vacation
- 9 A joint
- 10 Indigenous Coloradan
- 11 Even smaller
- 12 Diminishes
- 17 Actively Encourage
- 21 Sphere
- 23 Expired
- 24 Mattress vegetable
- 25 Female demon
- 30 A sure thing
- 32 Norwegian 80s pop band
- 33 #30
- 35 Moved on ice
- 37 Father
- 40 Tao or Buddha follower
- 41 Guide at the track
- 42 Russian river
- 43 Ursa Minor shiner
- 44 Vestments
- 47 Heaved
- 48 Wonder
- 49 Each
- 51 Chicago's dish
- 53 Father
- 57 Up in the air
- 59 Nimble
- 61 Teen hangout
- 64 Barnyard feed
- 66 Caviar
- 67 Raw Material
- 68 Smoking or _____?

MIND YOUR MONOLOGUE

By Taylor Aasen
MYSTICAST EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Sticks and stones may break bones but words can hurt. Practicing mindful speaking toward one another is a step we could all take to help change the world for the better. Words play a powerful factor in everyday life.

Whether someone gives a compliment or approaches another with joyful words, it feels good for the person on the receiving end. However, words can also have a negative factor.

When one conveys a pessimistic message, it can have a repercussion on the listener's life. Others pick up on the negativity in the conversation, which could cause them to feel sad or angry.

"Words can make us feel happy

or sad," Bismarck State College's Associate Professor of Speech, Sheryl Omlid said. "Words tend to have different meanings for people. Not in terms of definition, but in terms of emotions. It is important to think about the tone and 'how' we say something," Omlid explained.

When we use discriminatory dialect, we cause harm not only to others but to ourselves as well. Practicing mindful speaking improves one's career and personal life. Acknowledge the context and culture of others when communicating. This may save harm done to personal and professional relationships.

"Hasty communication can have lasting negative impressions on relationships and even your job," Omlid wrote. "It is important to take

the time to think about the message you are sending. Patience and thoughtful reflection will go a long way to ensure that you are effectively communicating in a mindful way."

Perhaps the most important thing to do when practicing mindful speaking is to listen to the other person. Read their expressions and actively show interest in what they are saying by nodding or making eye contact. Whenever someone is not listening, they are the opposite of a mindful speaker.

"Open-minded listening helps to provide different perspectives other than your own point of view," Omlid said. "It is important to understand the other person in a more meaningful way. Listening with an open mind shows that you respect what the other

person has to say."

Be thoughtful about how you would like to respond and consider the other person's feelings.

"With practice, we can be ourselves in all types of communication settings and be mindful about what we are communicating," Omlid added. "Taking a moment to think about effective and ineffective communication with our words can be a powerful way to transform how we interact with people."

Sticks and stones may break bones, but we have the power to not hurt others with our words. Even though the tongue doesn't have any bones, it is still strong enough to wound a soul.

MY FUTURE IS RIGHT BEFORE ME

By Autumn Beto
COLUMNIST

I started writing at the same age as every child, but I became obsessed with it. I wrote stories about everything that came to mind. Even though many of my childhood stories had a terrible plot line and the endings always ended in "the end", I loved writing them. I would write the stories at school and go home to my mother—bless her heart for sitting through my long tales—and read her the adventures I created in my young noggin.

I continued to write as much as I could. I explored different forms and wanted to make myself as proficient in the art as I could be. The more I learned about literature and writing it, the more I realized I will never stop learning. I am going to be learning about my craft forever. That is the

most exciting thing for me. I am able to explore to the end of the world and still not know everything. That is a gift given from the universe.

I find that I do my best writing when my thoughts are not constricted by stress. Writing in this form is the way that I write when I am alone. My personal journal is full of complete nonsense; it is the most real version of me that exists. I find that when I write in that way, I feel better, I learn more about myself, and I become more forgiving. When I don't write, I don't blossom in the way that I want.

I'm not going to lie to you, it took me a while to realize that what I wanted has been with me all along. For many, choosing what you want at the end of your tunnel is a hard thing to choose. For the longest time, I thought I wanted to be a nurse in pediatrics. I wanted to help people. I went through the whole process

of looking for places to job shadow, checking out nursing programs, and speaking to the nurses I knew around me. After all of that, I realized that wasn't what I wanted. I couldn't spend the rest of my life doing that job.

One teary night, I walked down the creaky wood stairs to my younger sister on the couch. As soon as I saw her I started telling her about my predicament. At the time, she was around 11 years old. She listened intently and waited for me to finish. Once I had finished, she very matter-of-factly asked, "What is it that you enjoy doing the most?" I responded, "Writing." Without thinking twice, my sister told me to "just do that."

Very simply put by a mere 11-year-old. From her there was no judgment. In her mind there is only one option and that is to do what you love. I thought more on the conversation as well as what it was exactly that

I was getting myself into. My mind wandered, wondering why I wanted to write and why I wanted to become a nurse. I came to the conclusion that they were one in the same. My goal with both of them was to help people.

When choosing a profession for the rest of your working life, you've got to choose carefully. What I wanted with my profession was to be able to help people, but I thought inside the box and made a decision too quickly. After changing my mindset and using the unlikely source of my young sister, I realized I could still help people.

With my writing, I hope that I can help all those that read it. I want my writing to make someone feel a little less alone despite the cliché that goes along with it. My goal with my work as well as my life is to save lives just as writers of my favorite novels have done for me.

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DISC GOLF CONTRACTS

By Jeffrey Savadel
COLUMNIST

The off-season is officially in full swing for professional disc golf players. The disc golf off-season is typically from October to February when the first Disc Golf Pro Tour event takes place in Las Vegas; the Las Vegas Challenge this year takes place from Feb 24-27.

After that, there are different tournaments every weekend that take place all over the country. Players will travel hoping to take home a win and some money.

Disc golf is more popular than ever now thanks to the COVID-19

pandemic with some tournament cash purses reaching new highs up to \$130,000.

Most players use the offseason to train and hone their skills; however, many professionals every off-season also must find a sponsor to help them make a living off the sport. Much like professional athletes from other sports, the top disc golfers sign contracts that pay them money based on how well they perform.

Manufacturers that make the discs are the ones that sign them to these contracts. The top brands are Discraft and Innova with other brands such as Prodigy, Dynamic Discs and Discmania signing players to contracts.

This off-season has been one of the most eventful in recent history regarding players switching manufacturers. Every off-season there are players who switch brands and sign new contracts. This is exciting for the fans because we get to see these pros throw new discs and represent a new brand.

Players this year who have switched sponsors are Gavin Rathbun signing with Dynamic Discs, Matthew Orum signing with Westside Discs, and Hailey King signing with Innova. The biggest sponsor change of them all though is Ricky Wysocki, dropping his contract with Innova and signing with Dynamic Discs.

Wysocki is generally seen as one of

the best disc golfers of all time and was coming off one of his best seasons in years. The two-time world champ was not expected to be switching sponsors this year since he still had a year left on his contract with Innova, but he threw fans into a frenzy by suddenly announcing his switch on Jan. 4.

There is still time for other players to sign new contracts, with big names such as fellow two-time world champion Catrina Allen still not signed by anyone after she voided her contract with Prodigy. However, most players are now focused on getting ready for the start of the new season that begins in a little over a month.

MYSTICS BASKETBALL IN FULL ACTION



Reile Payne goes up for a shot against Williston State College.



Kaity Hove waits to pass the ball inside.



Deonte ` Martinez looks to pass the ball against the Tetons.



Seth Nelson looks on as Alex Huber goes up for the basket.
(Credit: all photos taken by Taylor Aasen)



Kaity Hove dribbles up the court.