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NEWS | Coming home

Latter-day Saint missionaries discuss the hardships of returning home because of COVID-19.

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STUDENT LIFE | Boarding for mental health

Many students struggle with anxiety. Could a vision board help you stay focused and positive?

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SPORTS | Super seniors

The 2019-20 USU men's basketball class was a special one. How will they be remembered?

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USU gymnastics sweeps postseason awards



Coach Amy Smith gives advice to the USU gymnastics team at their meet against Boise State on February 21.

PHOTO BY Amber French

By Scott Froelich
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

Three members of Utah State University’s gymnastics team were recognized Wednesday for their excellence during the 2020 season.

Coach Smith named 2020 MRGC Coach of the Year

The Aggies managed to beat all other members of the Mountain Rim Gymnastics Conference in the 2020 campaign, and on Friday, it was announced that coach Amy Smith was named MRGC Coach of the Year. In Smith’s third year with USU, she delivered the program’s first winning season in 21 years.

Junior Autumn DeHarde was also named MRGC Gymnast of the Year on Friday — a first for the Aggies. Freshman Sofi Sullivan earned the distinction as Freshman of the Year — the title DeHarde won in 2018.

This is the first time any team, in conference history, has swept all three awards.

DeHarde and Sullivan earn Co-Beam Specialist of the Year
DeHarde and Sullivan were named MRGC Co-Beam Spe-

cialists of the Year, for the highest National Qualifying Score (NQS) at the end of the season.

Since the 2020 campaign was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MRGC canceled its championship and the year-end honors were based on NQS rankings at the end of the regular season. The duo tied with a 9.895 score this season, good for a No. 27 national ranking.

The award capped off a year of MRGC beam specialist accolades for DeHarde, with four MRGC Beam Specialist of the Week honors during the 2020 season. Her 9.889 on beam average put her at first all-time in USU history for single-season performances. At the Boise State quad meet on Feb. 21, DeHarde recorded a career-high 9.950 score for the event, which tied for second in school history.

Sullivan was equally prolific this season, with four weekly beam specialist honors under her belt. She earned the first beam title of her career Jan. 25, posting a USU record-setting 9.975 on beam. This achievement also ranks second all-time in MRGC history and made her the fourth gymnast in school history to reach that mark.

see “Gymnasts” PAGE 5

REVIEW: How does the new ‘Animal Crossing’ compare to other games in the series?



PHOTO COURTESY Nintendo

By Sydney Dahle
STUDENT LIFE MANAGER

In case you’ve been living under a rock, Nintendo recently released a new “Animal Crossing” game where you get to design your own town on a deserted island. It has been eight years since the last game, so anticipation was high.

Exactly how does “Animal

Crossing: New Horizons” stack up to the other games?

“Animal Crossing” (2001)

This was the first “Animal Crossing” game released in the United States, but technically the second in the series behind Japanese Dōbutsu no Mori, which translates to “Animal Forest.” The Nintendo GameCube game followed a

“Animal Crossing: Wild World” (2005)

Made especially for the Nintendo DS, this game holds a

special place in my heart. It was the first “Animal Crossing” game I personally owned and I remember spending hours collecting bugs and fish for the museum curator Blathers to display. Similar to the first game, “Wild World” followed real time, meaning it would even snow during the cold months! However, in this game, there were far more customization options with the help of resident tailors, the Able sisters. The town could also be modified by cutting down trees or planting flowers. If you ignored the game for a while, weeds would pop up all over town. “Wild World” also introduced the ability to draw

see “Animal Crossing” PAGE 8

Students continue to work on campus despite closures due to COVID-19



PHOTO BY Savy Knapp

A dining room in the Aggie Marketplace sits empty after classes went online and many students returned home.

By Taylor Cripe
NEWS SENIOR WRITER

The loud ringing from construction sites and the echo of power drills are the only sounds heard on Utah State University’s almost lifeless campus these days.

“It’s a ghost town,” sophomore Emily Gilbert said. “It’s almost eerie.”

Although campus is basically shut down, there are places on campus, including the library and cafeterias, that remain open. Remaining open requires student workers. USU students working through the COVID-19 pandemic share opinions on job security, safety and getting through the day.

“I wish there was a definitive answer on what is going to happen to us,” Kielee Kinghorn, junior, said. “We don’t know if we are going to be open a week from now.”

Kinghorn, who works at Quickstop, a convenience store located inside the Taggart Student Center, said USU Dining Services has “been good at keeping them informed,” despite all the uncertainty.

Caylee Broderick, a non-student worker in Dining Services, said she was grateful to have a job. According to Broderick and Kinghorn, many students who work for Dining Services left campus to go home when campus closure was announced. Fortunately, they said, Dining Services has fair hours and most operations have remained open as usual.

As Broderick spoke, she held a bottle of WAXIE cleaning spray, a new disinfectant brought in to combat any germs customers leave behind.

“It’s supposed to be stronger than anything we’ve cleaned with before,” she said. “We are also cleaning constantly, wiping stuff down that we never used to and wearing gloves for everything.”

Although it is slower than normal, Broderick and Kinghorn are fine with the quiet and said they are happy to still be working when others cannot.

Just up the hallway, senior Maggie Thompson stood near a large sign in the TSC that states all dine-in services are closed by order of Gov. Herbert. Students may order from the food court and leave, but tables and chairs are roped off. Chairs are even stacked together on outside tables to discourage people from utilizing any dining spaces. On top of being unhappy with the quiet in the normally bustling Hub, Thompson said it’s “really boring.”

“I miss the social interaction,” Thompson said. “This is my senior year, and I am sad it’s ending like this.”

While she agreed that dining services had been fair with hours, she said the hours worked felt much longer.

“We are doing a lot of deep cleaning,” she said. “I don’t think I’ve ever done so much cleaning in my life.”

Thompson said she is not worried about COVID-19 and is grateful dining services is keeping people on staff.

“I’m a college student, I can’t afford not to have a job,” she said.

Not every student worker feels at ease. Gilbert works at the campus store and doesn’t understand why they are still open.

“They don’t want anyone on campus,” Gilbert said, “yet they have us here as non-essential staff.”

She added that they were taking things “day by day.”

However, one advantage to closing campus is very few students are coming into campus stores anyway. Besides the employees, there are only four or five other people in the whole building. As a result, social distancing is easier to maintain.

see “Employment” PAGE 5

Missionaries return home early



PHOTO BY Rick Egan/The Salt Lake Tribune via Associated Press

Missionaries returning from the Philippines on Sunday exit the Salt Lake City International Airport. Large gatherings of family and friends who went to the airport to welcome the missionaries home when people are supposed to be keeping their distance from one another to prevent more spread of the coronavirus.

By Alison Berg
NEWS CONTENT MANAGER

Saige Cooper was angry when she received a text message from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mission president over her.

The text ordered her to pack her bags as she would be leaving her Santa Rosa, Calif. mission within the week.

Cooper, of Providence, did not understand the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic as Latter-day Saint missionaries do not have access to news or non-church media.

“I didn’t understand why this was happening,” Cooper said. “Being sheltered, we didn’t really understand how bad corona was because we were inside all the time, no news or anything, so we didn’t understand what was going on and why it was important enough for us to get sent home.”

Although her release was considered “honorable,” Cooper said the stigma surrounding missionaries who return home early — involving swirling rumors about potential mistakes or questions about a missionary’s church worthiness — has bothered her.

“I was just upset that I couldn’t finish out my mission because there’s this stigma of going home early,” she said. “I was pretty mad at first but I realized I’d rather be at home quarantined with my family than spending and making the last three months of my mission memories sitting inside an apartment.”

Cooper was one of thousands of missionaries returning home early after the COVID-19 outbreak shook nearly every aspect of society.

“We were surprised,” said Nicholas Chambers, of Wellsville. “We kind of thought it was a joke at first.”

Chambers served his mission in the Philippines for 21 months — just three months short of a typical mission term of service for young men.

The news that he needed to pack his belongings came in the morning. By the evening, Chambers was out of his house and staying with a local Latter-day Saint family.

“We didn’t know when we were supposed to leave or what airport,” Chambers said. “We were kind of just waiting, trying to figure out what the plan was.”

As he began his 14 days of isolation, as is required of all missionaries returning home for the foreseeable future, Chambers said the adjustment from a full-time, structured religious mission to a world of uncertainty is “strange.”

“As a missionary, you’re so focused on other people and focused on trying to help the people you’re teaching, when you come home I guess you’re more focused on how you can try to grow yourself,” Chambers said. “I don’t think I’m ready for that next step but it’s kind of a good way to throw yourself back into society.”

Chambers had hoped to look for a job after his two-week isolation period ended, but now said he expects a difficult time given many businesses are closed or not in the financial shape to hire.

While missionaries struggled to make sense of the news and rapidly-changing adaptations, several missionary parents said they were sad — yet relieved — to have their children home and safe.

“We were probably a little bit relieved to know he’d be able to come home and be in a safe place,” said Brian Chambers, Nicholas’ father. “We knew whether he stayed in the Philippines or

came home he’d be protected, but we took comfort in knowing he’d be able to come home.”

The elder Chambers also said the news came as less of a surprise to him, as he has followed the coronavirus crisis news carefully.

“We had been following the virus and the pandemic and the different countries and things that were being impacted by it so we weren’t surprised,” Chambers said after receiving a message from his son that he would be flying into the Salt Lake City International airport just a few days after receiving the news.

Don Guyman, of West Bountiful, said his son — who is serving in Pittsburgh, Pa. — was set to come home in August and will now return in May.

The unexpected time shortage was the hardest part for their family, Guyman said.

“I was kind of sad because I know he’s really loved his mission and I could tell he was disappointed because it was kind of sudden,” Guyman said. “As a missionary, you know you’re going to be coming home around a certain month and that sudden, final ‘hey this is the end and it’s earlier than you thought it was going to be’ is hard to process.”

While families expressed mixed emotions about their experiences, all said they recognized the decision was in the best interest of everyone involved.

“It was nice to come home but it was sad leaving the people,” Cooper said.

—alisonberg28@gmail.com
@alison__berg

F1 team adapts CPAP for pandemic

By Steve Douglas
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Formula One team Mercedes has helped develop a breathing aid that could keep coronavirus patients out of intensive care and ease some pressure on Britain’s strained health service.

As part of a combined effort involving seven Britain-based teams, Mercedes worked with engineers at the University College London and clinicians at University College London Hospital to adapt and improve a device that bridges the gap between an oxygen mask and the need for full ventilation.

The device, known as continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), has been used extensively in hospitals in Italy and China to deliver oxygen to the lungs of coronavirus patients during the pandemic.

UCL said the adapted devices have been recommended for use in Britain and that 100 of them are being sent to its hospital for clinical trials. There is the potential for quick roll-out by Mercedes to hospitals across the country.

Tim Baker, a professor from UCL’s department of mechanical engineering, said clinicians called on the “capability of Formula One” to reduce a process “that could take years down to a matter of days,” with the adapted device taking less than 100 hours to develop from an initial meeting.

“We have been proud to put our resources at the service of UCL,” said Andy Cowell, managing director of Mercedes, “to deliver the CPAP project to the highest standards and in the fastest possible time frame.”

The technology arms of six other teams — Red Bull, Haas, McLaren, Renault, Williams and Racing Point — has contributed to the developing of the medical devices in the fight against the virus, as part of what F1 has labeled “Project Pitlane.”

McLaren, for example, told The Associated Press it has been focused on component manufacturing for ventilators, and is “additionally deploying planning, project management and purchasing teams to procure all parts to help ramp-up production.”

F1 said the teams will continue to pool their resources and

“support in other areas requiring rapid, innovative technology responses to the unique challenges posed” by the pandemic.

The CPAP machines work by pushing a mix of oxygen and air into the mouth and nose at a continuous rate, helping to increase the amount of oxygen entering the lungs. They are used routinely by Britain’s National Health Service but are in short supply currently.

There have been almost 20,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Britain, with more than 1,200 deaths.

For most people, the new virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

The F1 season has yet to start, with the first eight races of the schedule having been postponed or canceled. It means there will be no racing until the middle of June at the earliest.

Mercedes is the leading team in F1, with defending champion Lewis Hamilton as its top driver.

Fighting anxiety with a vision board

By Emily White
STUDENT LIFE STAFF WRITER

The struggle with mental illness has been a real one for me. Like so many people, I have struggled with anxiety, depression and other mental disorders. The most difficult part of these mental illnesses is that we lack clear solutions that will create inner healing so many people need. However, after several years of having no solutions to my struggles, I finally found something that brought relief.

I made a vision board at the end of summer 2019. I wanted this year to be different. I wanted to feel good about myself and feel confident about my inner goodness. For me, that meant I needed to get some sort of control over my anxious ways.

Vision boards sound a little silly, but they are nothing short of extraordinary. Vision boards function similarly to a poster you hang up in your room, except a vision board is decorated (by you) with pictures or quotes that capture your goals. All it took was a quick trip to the dollar store and print shop. Vision boards can provide you with a creative outlet while helping you achieve your goals.

The most important thing for you to do is to pick images that inspire you. A vision board is supposed to send you positive vibes. The last thing you want to do is paste a bunch of depressing and intimidating images onto a board that you see every



Vision boards are helpful for finding structure and security during anxious days.

day. Doing so would bring you down, and that’s not the point. The easiest way to get everything you want on the board is to write down a list of goals you have for yourself. These goals can be as simple as “I want to be happier” or “I want to help others more.” Your vision board does not have to be a new years resolution board, it can be more about your vibe goals. Think about what your vibe is and

what you want your aura to feel like. That’s what you want on the vision board.

The rest of the creation is simple. Print out pictures that inspire you and correspond with your goals. Make the board as colorful, plain or exciting as you want it to be. For my vision board, I ended up using a white corrugated board from the dollar store and just glued my pictures onto it. Put the board some-

where you’ll see it every day. Think of it as an inspiring poster.

Unless you’re an art major, there are not a lot of opportunities to be creative as a college student. Though some may consider it juvenile, there is an art to creating a good vision board. The truth is making a vision board just involves a lot of cutting and pasting. A kindergartener could do it.

TWEETS of the WEEK



@natyourpresident

you know that part in hamilton where they say “can we go back to politics?” “PLEASE” and he just sounds so sad and pleading?

yeah. that’s how i feel right now.



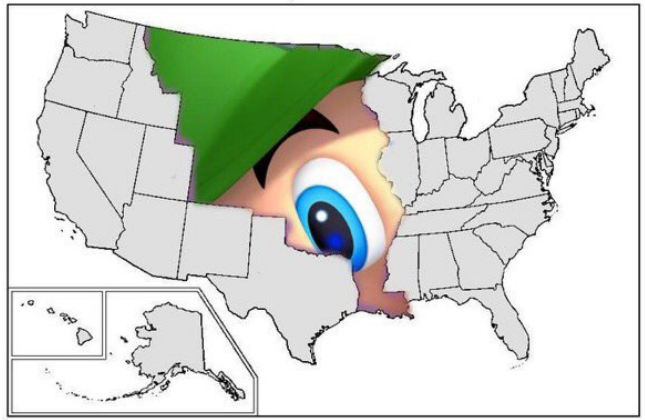
@steed_krista

Is animal crossing a cult be honest



@wethsworld

the luigiana purchase



The effects of making a vision board may not happen overnight, but it will happen. All I wanted my vision board to do was inspire me to love myself exactly as I am, and it did. No matter what you’re struggling with, a vision

board can help you overcome what you need to overcome. Just trust yourself, trust your brain and get pasting.

—emily.white@aggiemail.usu.edu

Review: ‘Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812’

By Dara Lusk
STUDENT LIFE STAFF WRITER

Broadway is evolving from classical Rodger and Hammerstein musicals to modern, upbeat tunes. Although “Hamilton” popularized this, before the hip-hop founding fathers there was the electric-opera Russian aristocracy.

For history, literature and musical fans alike, “Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812” is a show that portrays a small portion of Leo Tolstoy’s notorious Russian novel, “War and Peace.”

The story follows Natasha Rostov, a young countess visiting her godmother, Marya, in Moscow while her fiancé, Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, is off fighting in the Napoleonic Wars. After nearly a year of separation, Natasha is beginning to feel lonely and doubt her fiancé’s love. She spends her days longing for him for return but is powerless to do anything. To distract her from

her pining, her cousin and godmother take her to the opera where she fatefully meets Anatole Kuragin, a rogue prince known for his profuse drinking habits and nefarious pursuit of women. This seemingly innocent acquaintance slowly becomes a scandalous affair as Anatole sets his advances on the unsuspecting Natasha whose moral compass stalls to allow her heart to overrule her mind. On the brink of ruin, Natasha’s only hope is the rich, awkward and kind-hearted Pierre.

With a two-hour run time, the show manages to pack in the emotion of watching a car crash in slow motion. Much of this raging emotion can be found at the heart of its soundtrack. Uniquely, it is categorized as an eclectic-pop-opera musical because of the way it combines multiple elements from each genre. Amidst beautiful romantic arias, there are also electric vamps, and pop beats



“Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812,” created by Dave Mallroy, first premiered in October 2012 and ran on Broadway in 2016.

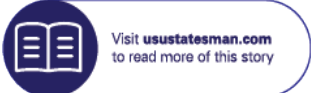
in the background. Many of the show’s lyrics are taken directly from Tolstoy’s novel with near word for word translation.

“Natasha, Pierre” first premiered in October 2012 at Ars Nova in New York City. Ars Nova is a small off-Broadway,

non-profit theatre that helps develop shows while in their early stages. After its two-month run and raving critical reviews, it returned several more times in small theater between 2013 and 2014, until hitting Broadway itself in 2016. The original off-broad-

way production starred a pre-“Hamilton” Phillipa Soo (OBC’s Eliza Schuyler/Hamilton) and composer Dave Malloy as Pierre, while the Broadway starred Dene Benton as Natasha and popular singer Josh Groban as Pierre. During the 71st annual

Tony awards in 2017, “Natasha, Pierre” was nominated for 12 awards including best musical, best leading actress (Dene Benton) and best leading actor (Josh Groban).



The Fab Four

Utah State University men’s basketball 2019-20 senior class

By Jason Walker
SENIOR SPORTS WRITER

The four men who make up the graduating group — Sam Merrill, Diogo Brito, Abel Porter and Roche Grootfaam — amassed 3,445 points, 946 assists and 1,101 rebounds for the Aggie cause. But more than individual accolades, the greatest accomplishment of these seniors came not from their stats, but rather in their joint success as a team.

Two years ago, one could hardly envision the kind of success that will soon be memorialized in Aggie lore. Entering the 2018-19 season, the Mountain West preseason poll predicted Utah State would finish ninth come year’s end. It encapsulated USU’s basketball woes in the post-Stew Morrill era.

Rather than accept the ignominious prediction, these seniors — along with a determined youth movement — proved all doubters wrong by claiming the university’s first-ever Mountain West regular season title and conference tournament crown. The latter, in turn, handed the Aggies its highest-ever seed in the NCAA Tournament: an 8.

One year later, these seniors were once again doubted because of a lackluster season compared to preseason expectations and the rise of San Diego State to top-five AP rank status. But they shocked the world with a stunning upset of the Aztecs in Las Vegas to repeat as conquerors of the west. These are the four men who make up one of the finest groups of seniors in USU history.

Roche Grootfaam: The Practice Monster

“If there was one guy that you wanted to have a special, shining moment, it was Roche (Grootfaam).” — Diogo Brito

Likely the least known, or, more accurately, the least seen, among the Aggie seniors was a man who could not be missed on the practice court. Grootfaam only logged 63 on-court minutes for Utah State in two seasons. On senior night, he was given 10 minutes against San Jose State, which wound up being the longest he got in a game against a Division I foe.

His time on the court in Logan that night, much like his entire career with the Aggies, was short. Much of that had to do with an ACL injury that ended his 2018-19 season before it started. In addition, the emergence of Justin



Utah State men’s basketball’s four seniors pose with head coach Craig Smith on senior night against San Jose State on Feb. 25.

Bean last year and the addition of Alphonso Anderson, Grootfaam never really got his true shot.

Even against SJSU, Grootfaam didn’t even make it into the game until the 11:45 mark of the second half. When he did play, he immediately began trying to make the most of his last chance to impress the home crowd. With 11:01 on the clock, Grootfaam took his first shot and missed. Another missed attempt came two possessions later. With 8:21 remaining, his third attempt went in, accompanied by the roar of a crowd fully aware of what that bucket meant.

At the 2:47 mark, Grootfaam would one-up that five-foot hook shot with a moment that will stay with him forever: Setting up on the left block, Grootfaam posted up for the sixth time that night. The previous five had all ended with right-handed hook shots with only the one falling through the bottom of the net.

This time, the approach was slightly different. When Grootfaam noticed a chink in the one-on-one post defense, he rolled toward the basket and all 265 pounds of determined basketball player rose straight into the air. He threw down his weight in disrespect upon the poor, unsuspecting head of Seneca Knight

with a dunk that forced the bench up on its feet and brought the house down.

It was a brief shining moment for the young man, a culmination of hard work which many of the cheering crowd assumed, but his teammates knew fully. Each man on the bench went crazy not just because of the highlight-worthy nature of the play, but because they saw just how hard Grootfaam worked behind the scenes.

“There’s not a lot of guys that I’ve seen in my 18 years of playing basketball that bring so much energy and make their presence known

on the road against New Mexico. Almost immediately afterward, Porter received a scholarship, and he returned that generosity from the university by being a reliable starting point guard during the Mountain West championship run. In 17 starts spanning January to March, Porter averaged 8.1 points, 3.8 assists, 3.5 rebounds, just 1.6 turnovers and led the team in 3-point percentage with a 45.5 % rate.

The departure of Porter is a complicated one. All through the season, Smith spoke of his starting point guard as though he were



Abel Porter brings the ball down the court during USU’s game against Denver on Nov. 12, where USU won 97-56.

so much as Roche in every single practice,” Brito said.

Abel Porter: ‘Mr. Dependable’

“We all know his story and what he’s done. He is Mr. Dependable and Mr. Reliable and just does everything you ask and certainly has been a huge part of what we’ve done.” — Craig Smith

Porter’s story is an underdog tale at an underdog university. A walk-on for two-and-a-half seasons out of Davis High School, he had to wait his turn behind higher-rated guards until finally his shot came. In a seeming epiphany from Smith, the then-redshirt sophomore Porter saw a mid-season increase in minutes around the start conference play in 2018-19. Later, he was upgraded to an out-of-the-blue start against Colorado State. Then, in his second career start, Porter hit the shot of his life — a buzzer-beating, game-winning 3-pointer

a senior and Porter received a senior’s farewell in the final home game against San Jose State. The 24-year-old has not exhausted his NCAA eligibility as of yet, but it was clear he would leave at the end of the season. Presumably, it meant entering the workforce with his multiple degrees in business. However, Porter entered the transfer portal, and now the Aggie-world awaits news of where he will take his talents.

Diogo Brito: The Swiss Army Knife

“I felt like we grew together and we did this together. He’s such a competitive guy and he takes losing as hard as anybody.” — Sam Merrill

Brito is the second-most recognizable senior on the team behind Merrill, but his efforts



Roche Grootfaam and Neemias Queta stop for a pose before going to the locker room after their Jan. 21 game against Air Force. USU Men’s Basketball won this game 72-47.

“Seniors” FROM PAGE 4

went almost as far as his more famous team-mate. In terms of counting stats, Brito’s efforts don’t seem to measure up against your average four-year Aggie. But that’s not where the Portuguese Swiss Army Knife made his mark. True to that informal nickname, Brito did a little bit of everything at Utah State and did all of it at an above-average, sometimes elite, level.

Brito’s senior night became a special affair. As he paced onto the court for the pregame ceremony, Brito walked alongside his parents who were in the United State for the first time in their lives. After four years of watching from 5,000 miles away in their native Portugal, Jose and Maria were able to watch their son don an Aggie uniform, in person at his home stadium. According to Diogo, it was his parent’s first time in the United States.

“Before walking on the floor, I was just telling my mom, ‘please don’t cry’ because the only way I usually cry in public is if my mom starts crying,” Brito said.

Luckily for the Brito family’s pride, they held back the tears, but Diogo said being able to walk across the Spectrum court with his parents is “something that I’ll never forget.”

That night, Brito put on his typical all-around show with just six points, but also five rebounds, five assists and a pair of steals to show off his defensive prowess. Later, in the conference tournament, Brito helped save USU’s season with one of his best performances of the year. He scored 15 points — his highest total against a Mountain West opponent in more than a year — which he paired with seven rebounds in a comeback win for the Aggies.

“Employment” FROM PAGE 1

Another campus store employee, freshman Melody Wooten, said she also had the “one day at a time mentality” but is worried she will wake up one of those days and not have a job.

“The campus store has been awesome with us, but we can’t stay open if people stop coming in,” Wooten said. “We have to get money somewhere.”

Cash is no longer allowed to purchase items in the campus store, and Wooten wipes down the keyboard after every transaction.

“I guess I didn’t take this COVID-19 thing as seriously as I should have,” she said. “I was worried about other things.”

Across campus in the Merrill-Cazier Library, freshman Alisha Hawley sits behind a circulation desk surrounded by cleaning chemicals. After

Sam Merrill: The Newest Legend

“Sam Merrill will go down as one of the best players to ever put on an Aggie uniform.”

— Craig Smith

The ending of the 2019-20 season will live on as one of the most bittersweet conclusions in USU basketball history. On the one hand, Merrill completed what may be the greatest two-year run in Mountain West Tournament history. Between this season and last, Merrill averaged 25.3 points, 4.7 rebounds and 3.8 assists, all the while shooting north of 50% from the field and 35% on 3-pointers.

A long line of brilliantly strung together performances culminated in what is now Utah State’s version of “The Shot.” With 2.5 seconds on the clock, Merrill buried a game-winning 3-point dagger in the heart of Aztec nation.

Before that moment, it was unknown if the Aggies would manage to crack the 68-team NCAA Tournament field.

“After we lost at New Mexico, we as a team felt almost an urgency that we had to win the whole thing,” Merrill said. “Maybe we would have made it if we lost in the championship game, but I personally felt a responsibility and an urgency to play my best this last weekend because I didn’t have my best game at New Mexico. And I wasn’t sure that I had it in me to play that well.”

After Merrill’s now-legendary shot, Utah State’s postseason destiny seemed secure with hope restored for a magical end to the season.

“To be able to beat a team like that and finish the way we did, because I know that a lot of people, I know that a lot of our fans lost faith in us after we lost four out of five and then lost again at New Mexico,” Merrill said. “I just always felt like we had it and we were

their best interest, which is to stay home and not get others sick,” she said.

Bradford Cole, USU’s dean of libraries, is also optimistic about how the library is running. He said students have been respectful about new rules, such as remaining on the first floor, and they have had no problems with the general public.

According to Cole, they have been able to keep all library personnel employed and have them working on special projects from home. One project includes transcribing documents to make them “keyword searchable.” Cole said doing this will finally make them in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards.

“So this COVID-19 thing does have a silver lining,” Cole said.

—taylorcripe@gmail.com
@cripe_taylor

good enough and we had the right guys and the right character as a team to put a run like that together and that’s what we did.”

Ten days later, the team learned that rather than extending the season, Merrill’s shot had ended it.

“We were expecting it was going to happen, just because of all the cancellations that had gone on,” said Merrill. “But even then, when you’re expecting it, it was tough knowing that not only we weren’t going to play in the tournament, that we weren’t going to have that opportunity, but 30 minutes later it finally hit me that, like, that was it. My career ended just like that.”

For Merrill, the sweet taste of victory became the bittersweet taste. He knew how special the win was but lacked the fulfillment of one last dream: winning an NCAA Tournament game.

During his time at Utah State, Merrill made it clear that he wasn’t content with short runs in the conference tournament or even a simple

“Gymnasts” FROM PAGE 1

Varnadore and Sullivan named to MRGC all-around honors

On Thursday, both Sullivan and junior Leighton Varnadore were honored for their performances in the MRGC all-around category. Sullivan was named to the first team, while Varnadore was named to the second-team.

This is the third time in her career that she received all-conference awards, with her recent second-team recognition earlier this week on vault and last year’s second-team honors in the all-around. Sullivan’s naming to the first-team was also her third time earning MRGC honors.

appearance in the Big Dance. He wanted to win a game on college basketball’s biggest stage. Last year, his own failures contributed to falling short of that dream. In USU’s opening game against Washington, Merrill scored just 10 points on 2 of 9 shooting from the field in what became a 17-point loss.

Though not ideal, Merrill ended his time in Logan with a legendary moment fitting a historic career. His 2,197 total points put him in the 2,000-point club which holds roughly 600 members in the NCAA’s long history. Merrill also now stands as the only Aggie to be top-five in career points and assists in the school’s record books. His individual accomplishment, along with what he did alongside his teammates, will live on in the annals of history.

—jasonswalker94@gmail.com
@thejwalk67

Rankings used to determine team designations were based on NQS scores, with the top three in the all-around named to the first team and the fourth through sixth named to the second team. Sullivan’s No. 3 ranking in the MRGC, No. 8 in the North Central Region and No. 41 slot in the nation helped propel her to the top team. Varnadore earned a position on the second team but was just one spot below Sullivan at No. 42 in the nation.

DeHarde tacks on Co-Floor Specialist and all-league first team to her awards

The 2020 honors didn’t stop for DeHarde, who added both Co-Floor Specialist of the Year and all-league first

team to her total awards. Her latest MRGC Specialist of the Year award, which is given to the student-athlete with the highest NQS, marked the fifth honor of her career.

For the Aggies as a team, March 6 ended up being the final meet of the season. They faced No. 17 BYU, and in the end, DeHarde, Sullivan and Varnadore helped the Aggies reach the top of the MRGC standings and earn the No.19 national ranking on beam. Despite the abrupt conclusion to the season, USU finished with a school record setting average of 49.039 on beam.

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Master your fate by mastering your decisions and your words

By Kristian Fors & Sam Paepke
OPINION COLUMNISTS

Editor’s note: This column was condensed for the print edition. To read the full article, go to the Utah Statesman’s website.

Taking ownership of our lives is the best thing we can do for ourselves. We all constantly make decisions in our lives, but often we are tempted to avoid ownership. While there are certainly things outside of our control, rarely is one forced to do a particular thing. In this piece, we’d like to highlight the benefits of taking ownership of one’s life, the common pitfalls of avoiding ownership, and a couple of adjustments that will help you to take ownership. People generally seem healthier when they feel that they

have control over their lives. In Psychology Today, Dr. Romeo Vitelli said, “The confidence we have in our ability to control our own lives plays an important role in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and avoiding high-risk activities that can cause medical problems later in life.” Ownership of our life and self-determination are not only shown to increase health benefits, they are enshrined in our culture, including in iconic literature. For example, the often-cited poem “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley ends with “I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.” We would be wrong if we didn’t acknowledge there are things in life that are outside of our control. These include

where we are born, our genetics, our looks and the choices of others. Outside of these factors, we have the ability to choose to do whatever we want with our given lot. The factors that have been “chosen” for us need not control our lives. If we don’t take active control, however, we will feel that we are being controlled, like “life is living us.” One way to control your life is by first understanding and taking ownership for how you make decisions. Many interactions and decisions you make are calculated to maximize the benefits. In simple economic terms, this is labeled “utility:” a measure of satisfaction or value. When you determine whether or not to make a purchase, you are basically analyzing which creates

more utility for you — the money that you exchange or the product that you buy. Whichever you perceive as having greater value will be the one that you ultimately select. This also illustrates a core principle of economics: tradeoffs are everywhere. When you make a decision you gain something, but you also lose something. Economists describe the foregone option as an “opportunity cost.” For example, if I study for two hours for an upcoming exam, I will be more prepared for that exam, but I will also incur the opportunity cost of using my time in other ways, like watching my favorite movie or going to the gym. Many interactions and decisions we make are calculated to maximize our own preferences,

particularly for single college students. We often forego certain opportunities in exchange for other opportunities. When we chose to come to Utah State, we decided that it was the optimal use of our time and resources according to the information we had at the time. In spite of this, some still interpret their own optimization equation as outside of their control. No one was forced to come to Utah State, and those that think along those lines should reflect on the choices that brought them here. By understanding one’s decision making, one can take ownership of those decisions and, ultimately, one’s life. Let us consider the example of having a job. Often, people will tell their friends that they cannot hang out, because they

“have to work” later that evening. They may have committed to work, but they do not have to do anything. They are making the rational choice to forego hanging out with their friends for the sake of their employment and the money their job generates. Next time you say that you “have to” do something, consider changing your language. “I have chosen to take accounting instead of history because it will accelerate my graduation timeline.” Next time you feel the need to say that you “need” something, consider framing it as a desire, because that’s what it is. Sam and Kristian are USU undergraduates both studying business.

Could our action to prevent the coronavirus be more inclusive?

By Emily White
OPINION COLUMNIST

Schools around the world have closed to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including Utah State University. In-person courses are being changed to online courses, and university campuses across the globe are closing down until the coronavirus is neutralized. Due to these drastic measures, some students have been put in a difficult position. Alejandra Iglesias, a student at Harvard University, is one of these students. She tweeted: “72 hrs Harvard told me to leave campus. My mom and I are homeless and I no longer have my term-time job I use to support my family.” She asked her followers to help support them while she doesn’t have a job or long-term housing. Iglesias is not alone. University students are expected to participate in online classes, when

they originally signed up for in-person lecture courses. Students are expected to leave campus housing altogether and find different places to stay. On campus jobs and opportunities are being shut down, leaving students unemployed. What seems to have slipped people’s minds is the fact that not everyone is lucky enough to have the resources to accommodate these new realities. According to a set of surveys conducted by Hope Center at Temple University, 48% of four-year college students who responded to the survey faced housing insecurity. On top of that, 14% of four-year college students whose parents received a college education have been homeless at some point while attending university. The coronavirus is only making these financial and housing situations worse for students. While I don’t believe that universities are trying to cater to privileged students, it is very clear that this is exactly what is happening. My family lives in Germany, so going home is

not an option for me. I’m very lucky to have a good job off-campus, so I don’t have to worry about being unemployed. I can only imagine what it would be like if USU sent everyone home; I would be forced out of the university student housing and have to find an apartment somewhere else, which would be much more expensive and incredibly stressful. I understand that the worldwide panic has put USU and other universities in a difficult position. However, when universities like USU make important decisions regarding their students and don’t account for the socioeconomic variances in need across the student body, poor decisions are made. In other words, assuming that each student at USU is in the same position is wrong. While shutting down the campus and transferring everyone to online courses is reasonable, I think it is unreasonable to force students out of on campus housing. Not everyone has a family to go home to. Thank goodness that USU’s off-

cial policy is to leave student housing if possible, rather than having a blanket-eviction notice like Harvard and other universities. It’s important to remember that everyone is in a different situation, and every individual needs to be accounted for. So, while we’re all going through this unprecedented situation together, let’s think about how we can prepare so that next time: our response is a bit more inclusive. We need to consider that some students at USU don’t have anywhere else to go, so kicking students out of housing can force them into homelessness. I know that the universities around the world are doing the best they can with what they’re given, but I know that there’s a solution that doesn’t involve abandoning underprivileged students. Emily White is a junior studying English and broadcast journalism.

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	4		5	2				
7		9	4					
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						3		7
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TO PLAY: Complete the grid so that every row, column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. There is no guessing or math involved, just use logic to solve.

SOLUTION FOR : 03/24/2020

1	6	3	5	7	9	2	8	4
2	9	4	1	8	3	7	5	6
5	7	8	6	2	4	1	9	3
4	8	2	9	3	6	5	1	7
3	5	6	7	1	8	9	4	2
9	1	7	2	4	5	3	6	8
6	2	1	4	5	7	8	3	9
7	3	9	8	6	1	4	2	5
8	4	5	3	9	2	6	7	1



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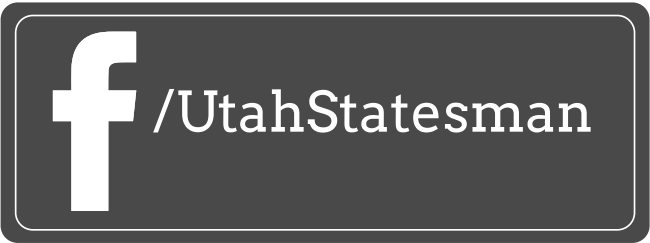


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“Crossing” FROM PAGE 1

constellations in the sky and utilized both screens on the DS to display both the ground and the sky.

“Animal Crossing: City Folk” (2008)

This is one of the top-selling Wii games of all time, with 3.38 million copies sold. “City Folk” continues to follow the basic layout of the other two games, but introduced a city aspect where the player could get their hair done, buy clothes or even see a movie. Previously there were only two shops in the village plaza, so this made the game more enjoyable. New characters were also introduced, such as Kicks, a skunk who makes customized shoes, and Phineas, who loved to give out prizes. Unfortunately, the number of villagers decreased from 10 in “Wild World” to only eight in “City Folk.” Compared to the other two games, this one was a lot harder to get into if you weren’t familiar with the other games in the series simply because of all the new controls and activities.

“Animal Crossing: New Leaf” (2012)

“New Leaf” was made available only for the Nintendo 3DS. What made this game fun was that your character became the new mayor of the town rather than just a resident. Similar to “City Folk,” “New Leaf” had a main street

with all different kinds of shops. This was also the first time the player could customize the exterior of the house. Some other new features included living in a tent prior to the construction of your home, enacting city ordinances and public works projects, hanging pictures on the walls and a brand new furniture store ran by llamas Reese and Cyrus. New Leaf was a breath of fresh air, as being mayor not only gave you many more customization options but gave you many more responsibilities. (Remember, because Animal Crossing is supposed to be played in real time, it wouldn’t be long before the player ran out of things to do for the day.) “New Leaf” made play time even longer.

“Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp” (2017)

“Pocket Camp” is a free app developed by Nintendo in which the player can create a campsites and house animals. Although it is not considered a part of the main “Animal Crossing” games, like the console games, you can fish, catch bugs, plant flowers and buy clothes and furniture. Some aspects of the game are carried into the new “Animal Crossing” game, such as crafting, which is why I am including it in this article. If you are someone interested in getting into the Animal Crossing scene, I would recommend this app!

“Animal Crossing: New Horizons” (2020)

New Horizons not only broke selling records but has also given millions of people something to do during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the app “Pocket Camp,” the player can craft furniture and tools to have at any time. Instead of traveling to a new town, you join Nook and two other villagers on a deserted island getaway, where the goal is to make the island ready for living. Not only can you fully customize your character, but you can even change their hair and skin color. Additionally, the island contains new collectibles like weeds and stacks of wood that aid you in crafting. For the first time, players can cross rivers without bridges by pole vaulting and can climb cliff sides with ladders.

Personally, I haven’t been this excited for an “Animal Crossing” game since the release of “City Folk” simply because there are so many new things to do and explore! This is also a good introduction game for beginners or new players because the layout is different and there are a lot of introductions and explanations. If you have the time and the money, get “New Horizons.” You won’t be disappointed!

—sydney.dahle@aggiemail.usu.edu
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