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THE UTAH
STATESMAN
Since 1902

Off-campus housing 'scam':

By Jacee Caldwell
NEWS CONTENT MANAGER

This is a continuation of a previous story about Alpine Flats. To find the first article, go to usstatesman.com

The stories from tenants at Alpine Flats may seem like the worst of the worst. However, this complex, owned by California-based company Nelson Partners, is not the only place facing backlash.

According to Whitman County Wat in April 2021, Nelson Partners faced multiple claims in court after the company sought approval to build housing in Pullman, Washington. They said the student housing company failed to pay thousands of dollars to contractors for previous construction work.

Nelson Partners has also been sued for fraud and negligent misrepresentation and was accused of operating “Ponzi-like” schemes on multiple occasions just this year.

One recent case, reported by Business Wire said after receiving a \$36 million loan to develop a luxury student housing complex in Austin, Texas, dozens of investors filed lawsuits against CEO Patrick Nelson, who later said he stopped paying dividends to investors because of pandemic-related struggles.

The New York Times also said investors still have no

idea where the money went, but they believe it was used to invest in other student housing projects and for Nelson’s own personal use.

In Mississippi, another property owned by Nelson Brothers, Taylor Bend, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy just in August. Across the country, tenants at this 80-unit complex have been dealing with eerily similar experiences as Alpine Flats tenants.

The Oxford Eagle reported even though the property will be in different hands, renters are still uneasy.

“The bankruptcy filing does little to ease concerns among complex residents,” Maya Martin wrote, “whose water and internet services were disconnected by utility providers in July due to lack of payment by the complex owners. Although water service has been restored, residents have told city officials they are dealing with a lit-



any of ongoing management issues, including broken air conditioning units, moldy washing machines, low-quality water and uncut grass.”

After multiple attempts, Nelson Partners failed to respond or make a comment by time of publication.

Another important note is even Alpine Flats has been in and out with management multiple times within the past year due to issues of their own.

Current residents Seth Parry and Emmet Hart both said Chelsie Brown-Candia, the current manager, is the only person running the office because all of the other employees quit after Nelson Partners refused to stop booking more rooms even after it was full.

Lauren Broadhead, a returning renter this year, emphasized management has failed in almost every area and explained they aren’t even around to talk about it. She said she has gone into the office countless times in one day, only to find it empty and the voicemail box full.

“Chelsie has been by far the worst at this out of all the managers,” Broadhead said. “It is very frustrating to be held accountable for rent and other issues when as a resident you can’t even get in contact with a manager to address your problems.”

According to Lauren Morrow, also a returning tenant at Alpine Flats, Candia was two hours late on check-in day, which she said was a regular occurrence.

On the other hand, Candia claimed although she may be gone at certain times for trainings since she’s new,



she is usually there during office hours and even stays past hours most days.

“I’m here all the time,” she said. “I’ve actually opened this window so that people can see that there’s somebody in here, not just walking in and walking out.”

Amanda Lowery, a mother of a current renter, contradicted Candia’s statement.

“I personally witnessed on move-in day the maintenance guy with his phone ringing and asked Chelsie what to do and she said ignore it,” she said. “They simply choose not to answer sometimes.”

A tenant over the summer, who prefers to remain anonymous, also said this isn’t a new issue. After moving out in July and still being charged for another month’s rent in August, she was unable to get ahold of anyone at Alpine Flats or corporate at Nelson Partners.

“I emailed both, texted, showed up in person at the office several times for over two weeks and no one responded,” she said. “I once went three different times three days in a row. Ghost town.”

This isn’t a new problem for other past renters either. One previous tenant who lived at Alpine Flats last year said she also experienced challenges with management and when he heard of the students’ anger towards the management, he wasn’t even surprised.

The former renter, who also preferred to remain anonymous, shared his own stories that included having to call the corporate offices in both California and Arizona multiple times after receiving no response after days from anyone in the office.

He also recalled a time when his hot water went out in his apartment and after management failed to even recognize the problem days later, his roommates resorted to using an extra-large burger king cup and boiling water in it just to shower.

ended up homeless after the student housing complex, 800 Block — also owned by Nelson Partners — told tenants construction would be finished by fall semester and fell through on the promise, even after contracts had been signed.

From the countless horror stories from both past and present renters, they each stated Alpine Flats and any place owned by Nelson Partners is the last place that



Legal backlash

Part II



Alpine Flats apartment complex remains under fire from angry tenants

PHOTOS BY Jared Craig

they would ever recommend to anyone looking for

Gage Manning is a sophomore tenant who originally had a room reserved at Apple Tree Cove —also owned by Nelson Partners— but was switched at the last minute due to over-booking. He said water and plumbing are a continuous cause of complications.

“I know I’m not the only one with plumbing troubles either. Me and my roommates literally can’t even shower right now,” Manning said.

The anonymous former renter also mentioned he has yet to receive his security deposit, even though his tenancy ended back in May.

Under the Utah Code 57-17-3(2), this act is illegal. The law states security deposits must be refunded within 30 days, unless designated as non-refundable or deducted in writing for that tenant.

Google reviews on Alpine Flats are also relentless against the housing complex. Just within the last two weeks, Ramzie Farr wrote, “If I could give this place ZERO stars I would because we have had SO MANY problems with Alpine Flats. I would rather live in a box than this place.”

A six-month-old review by Alex Olschewski said, “If you are looking for a nice college apartment, keep looking. This place is TRASH.”

On Google reviews, Alpine Flats has an average 2.4-star rating.

Lowery said her and her daughter’s experi-

ence with the complex has been very similar.

“This place is horrible,” Lowery said. “The only reason my daughter is there is for her mental health by being surrounded by people she knows or else we would make her move.”

Some upset tenants at the Nelson Partners-owned complex created fliers, slipped them under each door and put them on every car in the parking lot, asking for everyone to stand up to management, voice their complaints and spread their stories. However, rent dates and contract issues aren’t the only problems these renters are trying to solve.

Morrow also said, even last year, there were unacknowledged struggles.

“During finals week, Wi-Fi was out the entire week when everyone was online,” she said. “There were kids who would just gather around one phone and hotspot the entire apartment. It was ridiculous.”

More recently, Mikaela Smith, a new renter at Alpine, said they are already having similar basic living standard complications.

“We have no A/C and everyone is opening their doors and buying fans because it’s so hot and so unlivable here,” Smith said.

Candia said she is doing the best she can to accommodate all the tenants by herself and she is willing to correct things if individuals come to her.

“I don’t want to have a bad taste in their mouth because I’m here and all this stuff is happening,” she said. “It’s just because the

people that were here before me never did their job.”

Renters did point out it isn’t just the Alpine Flats management or Candia that they’re blaming. It’s the higher-up administration at Nelson Partners they feel is taking advantage of them.

“It feels like they’re milking people for money,” Hart said.

These complaints come after hundreds of students ended up homeless after the student housing complex, 800 Block — also owned by Nelson Partners — told tenants construction would be finished by fall semester and fell through on the promise, even after contracts had been signed.

From the countless horror stories from both past and present renters, they each stated Alpine Flats and any place owned by Nelson Partners is the last place that they would ever recommend to anyone looking for housing.



Jacee Caldwell is a second-year journalism student at USU going into her second year with student media. Other than her passion for writing, Jacee also enjoys eating Subway, watching football and anything made by Nike.



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COVID-19 surge fills ICU beds and postpones non-urgent surgeries

By Jared Adams
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Logan Regional Hospital intensive care unit beds are filling fast due to a surge in COVID-19 patients. This trend is consistent across much of the state of Utah.

According to a joint statement released by Logan Regional Hospital and the Bear River Health Department on Aug. 31 regarding the influx in COVID-19 cases, the ICU unit is at 100% capacity.

This joint message came alongside a plea from the health department and hospital officials to get vaccinated and wear a mask.

“This situation is dire and means if there are urgent cases there is nowhere for them to go at our hospital,” said Taki May, the Logan Regional Hospital Medical director, “and even less ability to transfer them outside of our hospital as most facilities in our state are in a similar situation.”

He continued, “The past 18 months have been exhausting for our caregivers and this pandemic has taken a huge toll on all of us mentally and emotionally.”

However, not every patient in the ICU is there for COVID-19 related issues. As of Aug. 31, 40% of the patients in the Logan Regional Hospital had tested positive for COVID-19 and 95% were not fully vaccinated.

Since then, the current surge in the COVID-19 pandemic has not improved.

Intermountain Healthcare reported they were 360% higher in their COVID-19 cases after Labor Day this year than last year. The New York Times reported a 1,455 daily average of new cases in Utah on Sept. 20, with a 64% increase in the previous two weeks.

Belle Lloyd, a sophomore at USU, tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 2 and described the experience as emotionally draining.

“The first couple days of being in isolation were physically challenging,” Lloyd said. “But it quickly became very hard to be alone for two weeks.”

While Lloyd said the experience of testing positive for COVID-19 as a student was a hardship, she also said it wasn't the end of the world. She also stressed the importance of her community during that time.

Jared Espiritu, a senior at USU, works as a student nurse and made note that while events and parties on-campus have resumed, the COVID-19 pandemic isn't over.

“We should take the guidance of our public health officials who have years of experience in this field,” Espiritu said. “While the percentage of Cache Valley residents who are vaccinated should be applauded, the others still have a responsibility to ensure safe, quality care in a hospital.”



PHOTO BY Edward Harimoto

BUSINESS WEEK

September 27th – October 1st

MONDAY 9/27 

■ **Pitch Competition with E-Club**

5:00 PM in Huntsman Hall 222

■ **Movie on the Quad**

8:00 PM on the Quad

TUESDAY 9/28 

■ **Taco Tuesday**

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM in Huntsman Hall

WEDNESDAY 9/29 

■ **Mental Health Day**

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM with the Huntsman Health Foundation

THURSDAY 9/30 

■ **High Fitness on the Quad**

6:00 – 7:00 PM on the Quad

FRIDAY 10/1 

■ **Tailgating with the HURD**

4:00 – 6:00 PM at Maverick Stadium South Entrance
USU vs BYU at 7:00 PM

“Hospital” FROM PAGE 4

As of Sept. 21, 51.8% of eligible Utah residents are fully vaccinated according to the Utah Department of Health.

On Sept. 10, Intermountain Healthcare announced all non-urgent surgeries would be postponed at 13 of its hospitals, including Logan Regional Hospital.

One person this impacted was Paul Kelley, a Cache Valley local and former Aggie. Kelley graduated from Utah State in 2009 with a degree in print journalism, and again in 2016 with a degree in accounting.

Back in December, Kelley found out he would need a kidney transplant and on Sept. 3 he made it onto the National Kidney Registry.

The following Friday, Intermountain notified Kelley that they had to shut down non-essential surgeries due to a lack of resources.

If a kidney match is found for Kelley during this time, the match will be passed on due to constraints in resources.

This shutdown was a result of the high number of COVID-19 positive patients.

This news impacted not only Paul Kelley but also Corinne Kelley, a former HURD president and Paul’s wife.

“To be so close and then have it put on pause for something like this is really hard to stomach. I was so, so angry,” Corinne told Fox 13 earlier this month. “It’s just really especially hard knowing that this surgery isn’t just a surgery that can be put on hold. It’s very urgent, and we don’t know how much time we have, and there’s really no way of knowing.”

The Pauls hope their story will encourage others to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

“It is important when considering whether to be vaccinated or not to realize that your decision doesn’t just affect you,” Paul said.

Paul also said a large percentage of current Intermountain patients are not vaccinated.

“If everyone that can get vaccinated was vaccinated, then transplants wouldn’t be getting postponed. By making the choice to not be vaccinated, you may be taking away someone else’s choice to receive a life-saving surgery.”

Paul has since been notified by Intermountain Healthcare that this hold on transplants and other surgeries will continue to be in effect for the coming weeks.

Emily Hill, a senior at USU, calls these updates in the pandemic concerning. She said these resources not being available if she needs them is scary.

“It might not be a life-or-death situation for me, but if a health issue is prohibiting my activities or my life to an extent where I can’t live as I wish, that should be considered essential and needs to be available,” Hill said.

Hill also supported the use of vaccinations and encouraged her peers to be vaccinated.

“The past couple of years have been hectic,” Hill said. “The fact that people are taking this hospital space from patients who potentially need them is absurd.”

Kaitlyn Anderson, a junior at USU, agreed with Hill.

“All because it doesn’t relate to you now doesn’t mean it’s not important. There could be long term health consequences for the individuals affected,” Anderson said.

Anderson also agreed with encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations.

USU, Intermountain Healthcare, and the Center for Disease Control continue to encourage vaccinations and face coverings to slow the spread of COVID-19.



Jared Adams is a sophomore at Utah State studying communications. Outside of news writing, Jared enjoys coffee, elephants, rainy days and Taylor Swift.

Amy Geis: Utah-based singer with honest ambitions

By **Natalie Rust**
LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

She sits, hunched over a piano. The words flow effortlessly, her fingers dancing across the keys. She opens her mouth and her heart lets loose.

Utah-based singer and songwriter Amy Geis receives inspiration for her songs sitting down, more often than not on a piano bench, and allowing herself to free the worries of her heart in the form of song lyrics.

Geis has been singing and performing ever since she can remember. When she was younger, her parents enrolled her in singing groups, igniting a passion for music. As she grew older and began sharing her songs, she started to view singing as more of a career.

Geis, now working as a singer/songwriter on the side, has produced numerous songs and focuses on a unique, vulnerable approach.

One of Geis's inspirations is Taylor Swift. She loves the honesty of her songs and how her music speaks about issues everyone can relate to.

"I love her so much because she's so honest," Geis said. "To the point where you're like, 'Wow, I can't believe she just said that.'"

Geis not only admires Swift's approach to writing songs, she lives it. One of her goals is to incorporate her own struggles into her songs, no matter how scary that might be.

In many of her songs, such as "Be Me" and "Pain," she focuses on issues most people deal with like self-esteem, anxiety and body image.

"I have this little deal with myself," Geis said. "If I think of something that I want to write or sing — even if it's like really scary — if it pops into my head, I just have to do it."

For her, it's therapeutic to be vulnerable in her songs. Writing down her honest, personal thoughts helps her feel liberated in a sense.

"It's so therapeutic to kind of just write down what you're saying," Geis said.

In addition to being singer and songwriter, Geis also works a nine-to-five job, coaches an acapella group and picks up gigs whenever possible.

Geis produces all of her songs herself, which can get expensive. Despite the challenge this presents, Geis continues to produce music, working hard to come up with the funds it requires.

"She's just always going," said Patrick Lorsche, Geis's husband of four years. "When I see her going out there and really giving it her all it totally inspires me to do better at my dreams."

Geis' friends, family and fans help her keep motivated. When her fans reach out with feedback or her friends ask about her songs, it gives her the push she needs to continue.

The thought that her songs could be helping others inspires her. From her own experience, she understands songs that explore real issues have real power.

"If I hear someone I look up to singing a song about how they are insecure, that makes me feel so validated," she said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

she's not being authentic.

"I just can't stop writing and putting out music" Geis said, "It's just something that is, I think — you know — deep inside me. And so it's almost like I have to keep doing it."

Just this last week on Sept. 24, Geis released her brand new single "First Time." The song is different from most of her other songs. Instead of focusing on the hard and the personal, "First Time" encapsulates the excitement of a new relationship.

Geis wrote the single with Adam Turley, a Utah-based producer who has millions of streams on Spotify. Geis looks up to Turley as a musician, so she said she is especially excited to collaborate with him on the song.

According to Geis, "First Time" is about "wanting to go back to a relationship at the beginning, when everything was magical and perfect."

It's still a song most people can relate to, but it concentrates on a lighter topic. It's a song meant to be happy and fun.

"This one is kind of cool for her just because it's so different from her other songs," Lorsche said, "It's just a fun song to turn up in your car."

"First Time," along with all of Geis' other songs, is available on all platforms. According to Geis, one of the best ways to support her as a local artist is to save, download or stream her music. Sharing her music with friends and family also helps.

"Sharing the music with others helps a ton" Geis said, "any support seriously helps so much, even if it's just with one person."



Natalie Rust is a freshman interested in studying international studies at Utah State University. In her free time, she loves to read, thrift and explore the great outdoors.

— Natalie.rust@usu.edu

For Geis, singing means more than a career or hobby; it's an integral part of her life. Geis has found when she stops writing songs, she feels a certain emptiness. She feels as if

Library showcases downstream decisions

By Clarissa Casper
LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

Have you ever spent the time to really think about where your water comes from? Or the ecosystems affected by your water use? Do dams affect fish and other aquatic species?

These are some questions Sarah Null, an associate professor with Utah State University's Watershed Sciences, wants students to consider more as our water resources face an uncertain future.

Null has a hands-on research program here at USU, where she and her watershed students focus on water resource management — especially environmental management. They spend time modeling and measuring habitats in rivers in order to find ways to fit the needs of the ecosystems into water resource management.

Null said they are ultimately trying to protect aquatic ecosystems while maintaining water resource benefits for those who live in water scarce regions throughout the American West. Her team has been exploring different tools used to make better decisions when it comes to water.

"Here in Utah, we have a bunch of different options on the horizon," Null said, "from buying new dams to water banking, which is now legal following legislation last winter."

Null wanted these issues to be brought up in a way that might spark some emotion in a person who isn't a scientist — or studying watershed sciences. She accomplished this by creating an exhibit that is equal parts art and science titled "Decisions Downstream." This exhibit was originally placed at the Natural History Museum of Utah but is currently set up on the first floor of USU's Merrill-Cazier Library.

"We wanted this exhibit to spark interest in people enough that they might go and check out the rivers near them," Null said. "Or they might, you know, go to a meeting about water management, or even just talk about it with friends and family. We really are trying to bring attention to these issues that affect both the river ecosystems and humans."

To accomplish this goal, Null teamed up with artists Chris Peterson and Carsten Meier. With the help of Null and her students research, these artists created huge panels, a large and vibrant painting of a freshwater fish, and set up educational projections. According to Null, the art visualized her work amazingly.

"My favorite part was working with artists," Null said. "This was really new to me because as a scientist I often only work with other scientists. They were able to make my work into huge artwork. When you walk in the library they're right there. You just can't miss them. That part was so exciting for me."

The exhibit offers educational panels about the trade-offs associated with human interference, as well as the ways these trade-offs effect different species of fish and humans. There was also a panel that explained how our rivers are fragmented, which proves to be a big threat to many aquatic species.

Possible examples of improving our water systems in or-

der to reconnect our fragmented rivers were also on display.

One of the panels states: "While removing large barriers like dams is daunting, rethinking smaller barriers that block fish movement is quite feasible and can have big impacts."

This is exactly the type of thinking that Null wants to instill in her students, as well as those who see her exhibit. Building dams and providing water to people in agriculture is obviously important and needed, but Null wants to probe the question of, "How much is enough?"

"I want students to consider what other species and eco-

these pressing topics, especially since science can often times be dry. This is exactly why she teamed up with artists for this project.

"Pairing with artists is a really great way to bring some meaning, feeling, emotion and new ideas to science," Null said.

One of the artists Null had on her team, Chris Peterson, uses his art to communicate science. Outside of this exhibit, Peterson creates wildlife and landscape paintings.

"My work is about the collective loss of wildness, nostalgia and the residue left on the psyche by wild animal encounters," Peterson said. "It is meant as both an elegy



Sarah Null's library exhibit on water resource management.

PHOTO BY Joseph F Myers

systems also share our same water resources," Null said, "and how can we make sure to provide water for these habitats, so we can continue fishing and rafting and all those fun things we enjoy — while also providing water supply."

Null encouraged students who are interested in these topics to get involved. She mentioned there are many meetings going on open to the public in terms of rationing and thinking about the best ways to preserve Utah's rivers, lakes and streams.

Students can also go to public hearings or go online and submit comments for different water resource issues.

"There are many ways to get involved," Null said. "Me and a number of other faculty in my department are always looking for undergraduate students to get educated about these water issues, and to help with research."

You don't have to be a watershed or natural resources student to contribute to the cause. Null said communicators of all kind are needed to broaden the audience for

for — and celebration of — charismatic megafauna on the brink."

Null's and Peterson's goals are quite similar in how they want to show the public these difficult, and often times sad, realities in a way to inspire others to take action. Scientists' extensive research paired with artists' creativity can create education that is accessible and admirable by others.



Clarissa Casper is a sophomore studying journalism and aquatic science at Utah State University. Outside of writing for the Statesman, she loves to hike, write poetry and watch whales.

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Facebook Campus:

A new way to stay involved

By Natalie Rust

LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

Staying up to date on events as a college student can be a daunting experience. The myriad of emails, Instagram posts and flyers add up quickly, leaving many students switching between platforms to keep informed.

What if there was a way to stay involved through one app?

Facebook Campus, a section of Facebook launched in November 2020, provides a single space for the whole college experience. Through its array of features, students can stay up to date, find peers with similar interests, get involved with clubs and contact their classmates.

Utah State University adopted the Campus program this September, becoming one of 204 universities utilizing the program. Now Aggies have access to all Campus has to offer.

To join the Utah State University campus community, students can tap the Campus icon found under the menu section of their Facebook profile. All students need to start is their school email.

According to Kaylee Slusser, the program manager for Facebook Campus, campus has a few key aspects.

Campus' main feature is its campus-only news feed. Through the newsfeed, students can get updates on events and fellow classmates. In addition, students can create study groups, plan virtual con-

certs and ask for advice with college-only groups and events.

Through Campus, clubs and organizations can publicize events and even recruit new members.

"Organizations can create groups on Facebook Campus open to the student community," Slusser said. "These can be either private or public groups where they can recruit new members, organize and promote events, and generally get the word out in a space that is specific to their school."

Drew Thorngren, the HURD director of operations, is especially excited for the new Campus program. He hopes to use it in an effort to inform and recruit students for the various organizations he is involved in.

"I think this is a great tool to be able to see what other people are involved in and being able to reach out to them and get them involved," Thorngren said.

The second key feature of Campus is the directory. Here, students can find out more information about their classmates and connect with peers with similar interests.

"Like in the early days when Facebook was a college-only network, students can find classmates by class, major, year and more," Kessler said.

With the pandemic and prevalence of Zoom or online classes this year, the directory feature is more relevant than ever.

According to Reagan Harrison, a freshman studying journalism, the directory will be helpful with class projects in some of her Zoom classes.

"I haven't met these people in real life and so it's hard when we have to communicate because it's all through email," Harrison said, "I feel like Campus would be an easier way because people can get a hold of each other easily."

The directory feature will also be helpful for students looking to meet peers with similar interests. Students will be able to search for other students in the same major as well as other commonalities.

Coming into another school year, Facebook Campus will provide an important tool for students, helping them connect to campus on a newer, deeper level.

Natalie Rust is a freshman interested in studying international studies at Utah State University. In her free time, she loves to read, thrift and explore the great outdoors.

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Classic musical revives company

By Malorie Ellefson
LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

After over a year, Music Theater West has been able to express their creative energy into one incredible production of “The Sound of Music.” A live orchestra and a team of talented individuals brought a musical classic to life on stage at the Ellen Eccles Theater.

“The Sound of Music” is the story of a young woman who finds love, while trying to do the will of God,” said Alex Lambert, who played Ralph in the production.

While the musical does vary slightly from the classic movie we all grew to love, it still has all of the amazing songs and scenes that make us smile and laugh.

This musical is set in the time of World War II, following a young woman named Maria, who is studying to become a nun in Salzburg, Austria. Because of her enthusiasm and lack of discipline, Mother Abbess sends Maria away from the Abbey to be a governess for the very wealthy von Trapp family. Captain von Trapp’s way of parenting follows strict military rules.

Disagreeing with his unique way of parenting, Maria makes it her duty to bring some playfulness and joy into the lives of Captain von Trapp’s seven children. Most importantly, she teaches them the power of music and how it can bring people together in love and joy.

This musical has a powerful message of love and hope surpassing all other things in times of hardship and darkness. With Nazi Germany looming over Austria’s heads, tensions are high for this well-off family. However, they learn to overcome it all together.

“Through Maria’s spunk and her music, she’s able to help bring a family out of mourning,” said Rachel Grob, who plays Ursula, the maid and a nun. “They stand up for their country and their freedoms together.”

It’s a musical most of us grew up watching and loving, and seeing it up close and personal adds so much more to the experience. You can tell this cast really connects with the message of this musical, and that’s shown with the enthusiasm of their performance. Which is all due to the passion the director and founder of Music Theater West, Jay Richards, has with this musical in particular.

Richards has produced over 30 of the last productions his company has put on. This is the first time he has put on a production of “The Sound of Music.”

“It’s the first musical I was ever really acquainted with as a child,” Richards said. “My mom died when I was young, and I wanted Maria to come and be my mom. I wanted her to come and finish the job.”

The theater puts on many musical productions all year, many of which are in the Ellen Eccles Theater. With every production, an army of individuals come together to donate and create fabulous sets and costumes, making sure it all looks authentic and real.

Within these groups of individuals are the performers who truly have a devotion for what they are doing. Performers of all ages and ethnicities with all kinds of backgrounds, coming together to put on a performance that they love.

“I love how theater intermixes acting and music to tell a beautiful story,” said Meredith Ashcraft, who plays Sister



PHOTO BY Bailey Rigby

The Ellen Eccles Theatre, located on Main Street in Logan, housed Music Theater West’s “Sound of Music.”

Margaretta.

Music Theater West also has great people working behind the scenes, making all the magic happen that you see on stage.

Connor Stevens, who works on sound for the productions, said, “Theater is what I love. I get to see people enjoying something that all of us have come together to put together.”

Many of these producers, directors and performers alike are grateful to be back at it with the setback that happened in March 2020.

“COVID hit on March 10 and the world shut down,” Richards said. “We’ve been able to do little productions within the last year, with three or four people in the cast and a band. Now we’re back to our normal production sizing, and we try to be careful with distancing and masks during practices.”

“It’s hard to do something that’s typically up close and personal when you’re having to distance yourself,” Lambert said. “But we’ve adapted and done what we can do. We’ve done a good job.”

Despite the struggles the theater and the company has had from COVID-19, there have also been some benefits.

“I graduated close to when things started to die down,” Stevens said, “which opened up a lot more opportunities for me to find a job here. And the local efforts of different companies have been keeping the Eccles afloat.”

Despite the new delta variant of COVID-19, the production has received a lot of much deserved attention already. “The sales are outstanding for this show,” Richards said. “Some of the best sales ever.”

With all the hard work and effort put into these productions, it’s no wonder the Ellen Eccles Theater was packed

on opening night. All of the performers, combined with a live orchestra, made for a wonderful night.

The chemistry between the cast members was incredible, you could tell they all cared about each other and were just up there having fun together. Not to mention, the different vocal talents and ranges that were presented were astounding. They even had trained opera singers as part of the nuns to sing these beautiful, old Latin pieces.

Music Theater West puts so much into their productions, and they do their best to make everyone feel comfortable in the environment and try to work with everyone as best as they can.

“This is my first time working for Music Theater West, and they were so professional,” Grob said. “This is a community theater. We don’t get paid for this. We do this for fun. With everyone donating their time and their talents, it was very well run. They were very respectful of our time, and everyone who has been working to make this production happen is just so kind. You can tell Jay, the director, just has so much love for the stage.”

This company is one to keep an eye out for future productions. With the pure talent and effort that was displayed in “The Sound of Music,” it’s clear this company knows how to put on a show.



Malorie Ellefson is in her first year of studying English and working at USU Student Media. Outside of writing for The Statesman, she loves watching all types of movies, going to local plays and writing novels.

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USU Soccer wraps up historic non-conference slate



By Jake Ellis
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

Utah State Soccer is off to its best start in program history. The Aggies have a 7-1-1 record at the end of non-conference play and took down nationally ranked BYU — their first time ever beating the Cougars. This resurgence in Aggie soccer is fueled by first-year head coach Manny Martins, and by several players who are having great seasons.

Senior midfielder Ashley Cardozo and junior goalkeeper Diera Walton have stood out the past few matches, but especially in their most recent match against BYU.

The Cougars were ranked No. 18 in the nation going into the match. It was a hard-fought contest by both sides and was tied at the end of regulation 1-1. Utah State's first goal came courtesy of Cardozo in the 24th minute of play. It was her team-leading fourth goal of the season. Walton recorded 11 saves against the Cougars, allowing only one goal on 30 shot attempts, 12 of which were on goal. The hero of the game was one of the many freshmen performing at a high level on the team. Tenzi Knowles booted in the game-winner in extra time — her first collegiate goal — to lift the Aggies to a 2-1 win. Cardozo, Knowles and Walton swept the weekly Mountain West Conference awards, being named offensive player, freshman and defensive player of the week respectively.

"I've been impressed with their performances and how different people have stepped up when called upon. Obviously, Tenzi [Knowles] is a good example," Martins said. "Her minutes have maybe not been consistent, but when we needed her in the last game she went in and played considerable minutes and scored the winning goal."

Knowles is just one of many contributing freshmen. Bizzy Arevalo and Addy Symonds have played in all nine games this season, with Symonds starting all nine. Coach Martins touted the strength of his depth chart and credits this year's success to the hard work of all the players.

The victory in Provo marked the first time Utah State has recorded a result over Brigham Young in program history.

"It's just as important as any other game," Martins said. "It was the game that mattered at that point so it's big because we got another result and we were able to implement some of the things we did in training. With that said, I don't overlook the fact that there is a little bit of history. It's a program that in-state has been a perennial power. It just gives a little bit of credibility to the work that the girls have been doing, that our staff all-around has been doing and the progress that's been made to this point."

The record of this year's Aggie squad is evidence of

PHOTO BY Joseph F Myers

Utah State freshman Heidi Smith fights for the ball in the Sept. 16 game against Utah. The Aggies dropped the game 2-1, their lone loss of non-conference play.

See "Soccer" PAGE 11

Nationally ranked Aggie XC poised for another big season

By Nathan Dunn
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

The Utah State Men's and Women's Cross Country teams started their 2021 season last week, and both squads are hoping to compete for a conference championship and return to NCAA Nationals.

The Aggies men's team finished No. 11 in the nation last year, and looks to get into the top 10 this upcoming season. The men are currently ranked No. 17 in the nation and No. 4 in the Mountain Division. The women are ranked No. 8 in the division.

They're off to a hot start this season. At the Montana State Classic on Sept. 18, both the men's and women's teams picked up victories over a host of Big Sky schools.

"It's early in the season," Head Coach Artie Gulden said, "It is great to have both teams in those positions, the goal is to be higher by the end of the season. We have some meets over the next few weeks and as we perform well ... we hope to improve those rankings and put ourselves in a position to qualify for both teams for NCAA championships."

"We haven't gotten a lot of recognition the last few years in the Mountain Region or the national polls," said senior Caleb Garnica. "It's usually after the first or

second, right now it's really nice."

Garnica finished No. 28 at the NCAA championships last season, and won the Mountain West individual championship. He hopes to improve this season as a team and as an individual.

"I want to [help the team] win the conference," he said. "I want to defend my conference championship title, that's number one to me. I also want to repeat my All-American status at nationals but get higher than 28th in the nation."

Much of the preparation to reach those goals has already been put in over the summer.

Coach Gulden said off-season training, specifically the summer, isn't much different than normal training, but more miles.

"Summer is the most important time of training and putting in a lot of miles," he said. "Collectively they ran thousands of miles this summer, and did very well in terms of keeping up with the work and doing what they need to do to prepare for the season."

Optimism is high entering the season because, according to Garcia, every guy from last year's team is back. And there are some big meets on the horizon to help them qualify for nationals.

"The really big one, the most important meet on our

schedule for NCAA qualification purposes, other than the Mountain Region meet, will be the Nuttycombe Wisconsin Invitational," Gulden said. "Right now, I believe there are 35 men's teams that are supposed to be there and 38 women's teams. Virtually, all of those teams that go to that meet, their goal is to qualify for NCAAs, so it is super competitive. Our kids will have a great opportunity to beat some teams there and put ourselves in a position for the NCAAs."

Thirty schools across the country qualify for nationals for both the men's and women's teams. The Aggies will continue to work hard throughout the season to solidify their spot at nationals on Nov. 20.

"If you see a lot of shirtless men around town, just give us a honk and please do not get mad at us if we are causing traffic we are just doing our best training and having fun," Garcia said.

Utah State will travel to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on Oct. 1 to participate in the Paul Short Run at Lehigh University. A week later, the Aggies will host the Steve T. Reeder Memorial meet on Oct. 8. They close out the regular season at the Nuttycombe Wisconsin Invitational on Oct. 15.

🐦 @NateDunnUSU

"Soccer" FROM PAGE 10

the improvement of this program over the past few years, but especially when compared to the pre-season Mountain West Conference rankings. Coaches of all 12 teams in the conference selected Utah State to finish seventh in the conference, but after preseason play, the Aggies are in first place in the conference.

Utah State's main blemish on the first half of the season was a home loss to Utah on Sept. 16. The game was close as both teams went back and forth early in the second half. Utah struck first with a goal in the 50th minute. Cardozo answered for the Aggies with a long-range goal to tie the match two minutes later. Down the stretch, the Aggies committed a foul near the top of their penalty box, which led to a goal off of a freekick for the Utes. Utah State would fall 2-1.

"Even the game against Utah where it didn't go our way, I think we did a lot of things right," Martins said. "I think I got the tactics wrong, particularly in the second half, and I think if we had done things a little differently we might've influenced the outcome a little more."

UNLV, Boise State and New Mexico seem to be the Aggie's main challengers coming into conference play, however, Coach

Martins isn't underestimating any team in the conference.

"I don't think you can overlook any opponent," he said. "I think every opponent is going to be very difficult. I think the fact that we've had a fairly successful preseason, I think it puts a little bit of a target on our backs. I don't think anyone is going to take us lightly so I don't think we'll surprise anyone. I think every game is going to be very, very challenging, maybe in different ways."

Coach Martins is quick to say his team's focus is on the next game. They aren't worried about future opponents or previous program history.

"I never play to tie, I never play to minimize a loss, it doesn't matter who we're playing, the objective is to win," he said. "That being the attitude going into every game, yeah, ideally we want to win the conference, but we can only focus on one game, which is Nevada, and then do that 11 times and see how it works out."

The Aggies will play their third conference game on Oct. 1 at New Mexico.

🐦 @JakeEllisonair



PHOTO BY Joseph F Myers
Ashley Cardozo has shined through the first nine games of the season.

O P I N I O N

Decriminalize marijuana



ILLUSTRATION BY James Clayton

Utah has over 6,000 arrests each year for a harmless crime. It results in thousands of dollars worth in fines and even years in prison time. The crime in question is selling marijuana. Ridiculous.

We must decriminalize marijuana as it has proven to have no major long-term negative effects. Meanwhile, legalized substances such as alcohol and tobacco cigarettes are freely sold in stores and gas stations and are actually proven to cause forms of cancer, brain damage, addictions, overdoses and other long-term health defects. It's completely unfair.

Tim Pickett, the CEO and founder of the Utah Ther-

apeutic Health Center, seeks to educate Utahns about proper cannabis use while providing medicinal cannabis for those with underlying conditions in Cache Valley. Pickett believes decriminalizing weed in Utah is the first step to destigmatizing its medical uses and improving job security and gun ownership for citizens.

"It's not a gateway drug," Pickett said. "I want people to view it not as a gateway drug but as an exit drug for people who want to reduce other prescription medications."

While Pickett does not believe that cannabis should be fully legalized in Utah, decriminalizing it will prevent unjust jail time for thousands of citizens. On the other

hand, Cole Lambourne, an Aggie alumni, believes fully legalizing the substance will benefit Utah more than not. He said Utah is missing out on tax revenue since most Utahns are buying their weed out of state.

Lambourne does, however, agree with Pickett on normalizing medicinal cannabis use. "Citizens should be able to choose to manage their pain/problems how they see fit," he said. "They should be able to use cannabis without fear. It would be a good alternative to having a doc prescribe oxycodone and getting addicted."

Making marijuana accessible to low-income communities instead of arresting them for possession would help these families. Since the War on Drugs, which began in the 1980s, the strict laws focused on drug users have been almost as bad as those who sell opioids. Weed, on the other hand, is not nearly as dangerous.

According to C.J. Alexander and Isaac Reese from The Daily Utah Chronicle, the House of Representatives wanted to pass a bill to completely decriminalize marijuana in the United States with the MORE Act of 2020. This act would work to break the negative reputation marijuana has built up over the past ninety years, which relied heavily on racist stereotypes.

Today, marijuana is proven not only as a capable pain reliever but is also safer than most other drugs. No one has ever overdosed from weed. No one gets addicted to weed. The benefits, both financial, social and medical outweigh the risks. Pickett commented as long as cannabis is cemented as a medicine, we can move forward from there with newer and better information. It's all about progress, and the only thing we can do if we don't decriminalize cannabis is to continue what we've been doing for years: selling and buying illegally, with zero tax revenue for Utah and dangerous stigmas surrounding medical use which can harm those who really need it.



Megan Cowdell is a second-year communications student. She loves going on bike rides, reading mystery novels and watching cheesy movies.

OPINION

Utah baiting laws
impact hunters

PHOTO BY Bailey Rigby

In July 2021, Utah passed House Bill 295, making baiting big game illegal. According to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the bill “restricts the baiting of big game animals (like deer and elk) when hunting in Utah.” Hunters can still use bait during the summer months while they are scouting an area they plan to hunt in the fall, but “they must remove the bait before the hunt — with enough advance time that the animal isn’t still being lured to that area,” according to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

The bill, which passed 63-6 in the House and 22-5 in the Senate, defines baiting as “intentionally placing food or nutrient substances to manipulate the behavior of wildlife for the purpose of hunting or attempting to harvest big game.” Violations under the new baiting law may result in criminal charges ranging from a class B misdemeanor to a third-degree felony, and may also lead to the suspension of hunting privileges.

Other states have also passed bans on baiting, such as Michigan’s 2018 baiting law. In 2019, Ted Nugent, affectionately called “Uncle Ted,” testified in support of a bill to reverse the ban. He slammed Michigan state officials as “liars” or “stupid” for supporting a ban on baiting deer and elk and said, “the ban will spark civil disobedience across state.” I believe the same is true for Utah’s ban.

Baiting has a long history in hunting and fishing. Hunters have used bait for big game since the dawn of time.

While Utah’s baiting law has good intentions in preventing chronic wasting disease, or CWD, it harms hunting conservation by deterring new hunters from entering the sport and paying the hunting fees that conservation depends on. The baiting ban also cuts into the state’s economy and criminalizes hunters by the simple act of baiting game.

Advocates for anti-baiting laws claim they are trying to prevent or eradicate big game diseases, but these arguments do not seem to be based in science and are yet another example of powerful individuals trying to control something they know nothing about, and in the process harm what they claim to believe in.

Any avid hunter or wildlife watcher will tell you that deer and elk are chewing on the same branches, licking and grooming each other, and eating the same food. Wildlife behavior will not change or be controlled by man through any hunting law. Various studies have shown animal-to-animal contact is the main point of transmission and that infectious prions can enter the environment through “saliva, feces, urine, blood or placenta from infected animals, as well as by decaying carcasses.” They are also transmissible through the soil and “grass plants bind, retain, uptake and transport infectious prions that create the disease.”

I will be the first one that admits wildlife is a right and needs to be regulated, but the ban on baiting big game does nothing more than handicap conservation and will

rob hunting revenue from the state of Utah, just as it did in Michigan. If anything, we should be regulating the types of bait used and not ban baiting altogether.

Less hunters means more deer and elk and more deer and elk means increased odds of transmission. By deterring hunters from the sport, it has the opposite effect to promote big game diseases like CWD by allowing the herd populations to grow larger and interact more often. Instead, we should allow hunters to thin the herd during high infection seasons through the use of bait, slowing or preventing the chances of infection. We should promote hunting laws that allow the hunting industry in Utah to grow, providing a robust conservation community. I think we should listen to Ted Nugent when he said, “Hunters should have no ‘stranglehold.’ Let hunters bait deer and elk.”

Stop criminalizing hunters and let them do what they do best — hunt.



Keaton Hagloch is a public health major and has a passion for politics and writing. He loves the outdoors, playing the guitar and spending time with friends and family.

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The Utah State University Men's Soccer Club defeated Boise State University in the Aggies season opener on Sept. 17 on the Aggie Legacy Field

PHOTO BY Edward Harimoto

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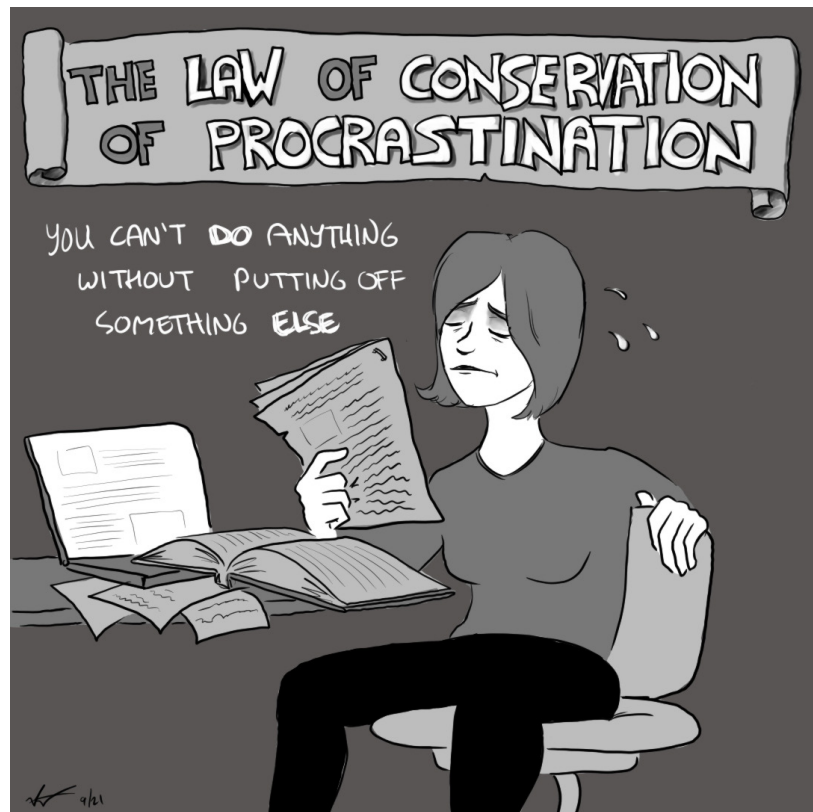
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