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NEWS | Meet the candidates

USUSA student elections are in full swing. Get to know the presidential candidates.

see PAGE 2

STUDENT LIFE | Taking care of business

Sara Dent Merrill represents the Huntsman School of Business as its senator. What inspired her to take this role?

see PAGE 3

SPORTS | Tournament-bound?

Is the USU men's basketball team good enough for March Madness? Read about what helps or hurts their chances.

see PAGE 6

SETTING RECORDS & TAKING NAMES

USU gymnastics sets program record on beam at Boise State meet



By Dalton Renshaw
SPORTS MANAGER

Utah State University gymnastics had another record setting week, continuing its impressive run of form by setting a program record 49.575 on beam Friday. The record eclipsed the old mark of 49.475, which had stood since Feb. 26, 1999.

Not only did the Aggies set a record, they also finished with the second-highest score in school history — 196.800 — after recording the third-highest score just a week prior against 196.525.

“What an amazing night,” said third-year Utah State head coach Amy Smith. “It’s a broken record, but I keep saying that we keep getting better and better, and we keep getting better and better.”

Boise State (4-5-1, 0-3-1 MRGC) hosted the quad meet and tied Utah State (5-6-1, 2-4-1), while the Aggies picked up wins against UC Davis (8-6) and Sacramento State (3-12).

The Aggies and Broncos split

wins on the four events with Utah State claiming vault and beam wins, while Boise State picked up victories in the floor and bars rotations.

Junior Leighton Varnadore won the all-around for the Aggies with a career-high 39.350 and freshman Sofi Sullivan took second with a score of 39.325.

Utah State was led by junior Autumn DeHarde and Sullivan on the beam, who tied for first with scores of 9.950s. For DeHarde, it was her 11th such title on the event, which tied the school record.

“It felt really good,” DeHarde said. “I just wanted to get up there and do what I do every day in practice, and I knew that they were scoring high, so I knew it could pay off.”

Next up for the Aggies is a home meet against UC Davis on Friday.

—renshaw.dalton@gmail.com
@dren_sports

PHOTO COURTESY Wade Denniston/USU Athletics

Freshman Sofi Sullivan helped USU gymnastics achieve its second-highest score in school history, with 196.800.

That's the way the cookie 'Crumbl's

Students and USUSA candidates enjoy cookies at meet and greet

By Josh Wilkinson
NEWS STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, the Utah State University Student Association hosted its first meet and greet event between students and candidates in the upcoming USUSA elections.

Held on the first floor of USU's Merrill-Cazier Library, the event invited students to interact with candidates through informal one-on-one conversations and cookies from Crumbl Cookies.

USUSA public relations and marketing director Cameron Olds said this is the first time USUSA has hosted an event like this as part of the annual student elections. Olds said the purpose of the event was to provide a new outlet for students to get to know candidates outside of the candidates' A-Frames during elections week.

“It was a good way to spread more information without annoying people,” Olds said. “It sounds like people have made connections and spoken with candidates that they vibe with, and they’ve made some decisions, which is what we were hoping would happen.”

Olds is a USUSA election co-chair alongside Cooper Lowe, the USUSA Student Events vice

president. Lowe said USUSA had received negative feedback regarding campaign practice from students following last year's election and, many of the complaints focused on the use of A-Frames in campaigning.

Students said having candidates campaign almost solely from their A-Frames throughout campus made it both annoying to walk to class during elections week and difficult to interact with candidates on an individual basis. Lowe said this event was designed in response to that feedback.

“[The A-Frames are] still going to happen, but we wanted to facilitate something where the candidates could have a casual conversation with students and where it was really nonthreatening,” Lowe said. To incentivize students to come to the event, Olds and Lowe ordered 300 Crumbl Cookies. According to Olds, most of their advertising for the event spread by word-of-mouth and Instagram posts focused on the cookies.

“It looks like a lot of people got to know candidates that they otherwise would have avoided at the A-Frames during election's week,” Olds said. “Obviously Crumbl helped too.”

Lowe agreed. “What better to

incentivize students than with cookies?”

Students and candidates at the event also offered feedback. Most students and candidates saw the event as a step in the right direction for USUSA elections, particularly in regard to fostering relationships between future student leaders and other students.

Dallas Cook, a USU student who attended the event, said the setup of the event was a pleasant surprise.

“It wasn't what I expected,” Cook said. “I like it because instead of just getting opinions pushed in your face, you can kind of get to know them and see how they are one-on-one.”

According to Caine College of the Arts Sen. Nathan Scott, the event also helped students to be more informed voters — including himself.

“I think it's important not just to vote for people you know,” Scott said. “I think it's important to vote for people who are qualified and able to do what they say they're going to do. I honestly wish that they had it around when I was running.”

Rachel Taylor, a USUSA executive vice president candidate, said the event was also an opportunity for candidates to foster positive relationships.

“It's hard sometimes not to



PHOTO BY Chantelle McCall

Students had a chance to talk to this year's USUSA candidates over Crumbl Cookies at the library on Thursday.

dehumanize your opponents and not get competitive,” Taylor said. “I think it's a step in the right direction, quite honestly.”

Sami Ahmed, the current USUSA president, is up for reelection. He said he was surprised at the number of students who came to the event. While he had no input into the event beyond scheduling,

Ahmed also said he was happy with the results.

“Student elections seem like the most annoying things, and I know because I was one of those annoyed students, but it really means a lot to those students who are running,” Ahmed said. “I think it's a great event.”

Past USUSA elections have not been without controversy. The

2017 USUSA elections marked the presence of online bullying in connection with candidates. In 2018, USUSA election bylaws experienced a massive overhaul to comply with USU's free speech policy. Last year, a candidate was penalized for violating other campaign bylaws.

—jshwilki@gmail.com
@jshwilki

PRESIDENTIAL

Rachel Arner

By **Tabrynn Tucker**
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Rachel Arner loves spending time outdoors, hiking, wearing Chacos year-round and eating mangos in all forms. The Weber High School graduate said she finds herself to be pretty hilarious and enjoys making other people laugh.

And she loves being involved on campus. So much so that she decided to run for Utah State University Student Association president against the incumbent, Sami Ahmed.

She was inspired to run for student body president based on some suggestions from friends and two unique personal experiences.

During her freshman year at USU, she had to deal with the student legal system, which she said took a lot of time and left her feeling confused. "I didn't know where to go, who to talk to and how to deal with it."

In the fall semester of 2019, Arner had to re-learn how to walk following an accident, and she was completely unaware of resources on campus that would have aided her in getting to classes and receiving a parking pass that would allow her to park closer to campus.

These experiences helped build her platform.

Arner finds the most importance in bringing accessibility to Utah State students. She compares her platform to a ramp for the student body.

"I want to create an environment where students are equipped with the knowledge and capacity to fulfill their education to the best of their abilities," she said.

Arner wants to centralize resources so it is easy for students to find the help they need. One objective of hers is to create a database connected to the MyUSU page that allows for a user-friendly way to connect to university resources such as SAAVI, Title IX, mental and physical help, clubs and more.

"It is time for a new vision for the USU student body, and Rach has the experience, the heart and the drive to create change for the students," Arner's campaign manager Jeremy Ludwig said. "She wants everyone to know what resources are available for them, and everyone to know they have value and can succeed on our campus."

Arner also wants to add accessibility and ap-



proachability to the student body president and President's Cabinet.

"I feel like a lot of people give the position too much power, but at the end of the day we are just peers that are representatives of the student body," Arner said.

A way Arner wants to bring more accessibility to the office and cabinet is by integrating members with the student body at USU events. In addition she would like to create an office in the Taggart Student Center where students are welcome to ask questions, make suggestions or address concerns to the student body president and cabinet.

"Rachel is friendly and approachable, and genuinely cares about the student body. The whole idea behind her slogan 'Say Hey to Rach' is that she wants the student body president to be someone who students know is accessible," Ludwig said. "That she cares and fights for their success."

Arner would also like to place importance and attention to the specific colleges and making resources in each college available to students. She has met individually with the deans of each college to see how she can help improve students' knowledge of their programs and what it has to offer.

"Rachel is one of the smartest and most hard-working people I know. She has a huge heart and genuinely cares about other people. All those qualities will make her an incredible student body president," Ludwig said.

If you see Arner on campus, don't be afraid to say "hey" to Rach.

She works at the Aggie Recreation Center, is a Connections peer mentor, a Huntsman School of Business ambassador, and a public speaking teaching assistant. She is currently majoring in communication studies and marketing with a minor in English.

— tabrynn.tucker@gmail.com
@tabrynn_tucker



PHOTO BY **Chantelle McCall**

Sami Ahmed



PHOTOS COURTESY **Utah State Today**

By **Taylor Cripe**
NEWS STAFF WRITER

At the end of his first term as Utah State University Student Association president, Sami Ahmed turned down a job offer to take another shot at student body president.

Ahmed, a senior majoring in finance, said believes the projects he is working on are important. By running for re-election, he can ensure those projects are not forgotten, and they benefit students in the long run.

"A lot of officers make significant progress throughout the year towards their goal, but then they leave," he said.

But Ahmed didn't want his legacy to end like that.

"The first six months of being student body president you are just meeting people and learning what committees you are on," Ahmed said. "After about six months you know exactly what you are doing, but then it's time to go. That's why I want to run again."

Now, Ahmed feels he has the connections in place to continue making changes to help students. He said he is working on the "MyUSU" student portal to make it more user friendly, and he added scholarship deadline notifications to Canvas to help students stay on top of things.

Junior Nanyal Rout said he appreciates Ahmed's commitment to helping students get access to scholarships.

"Sami should be re-elected because he wants students to succeed," Rout said. "During his term he made a push toward more scholarships and better resources for students. This is awesome, especially for someone like me, where scholarships are very important in order to continue my education."

Additionally, Ahmed was asked by administrators how to utilize the space in the Taggart Student Center and recommended putting a TV, games and booths up for students to access.

"The number of students we have on the third floor of the TSC has tripled," Ahmed said. "So that's why I want to carry the third floor example, which has been a tremendous success, and

see if we can do it for other places in the TSC."

Ahmed will continue to focus on these initiatives, as well as "promoting inclusion, not just diversity."

"I don't think forced diversity should be the point," he said. "It should be, 'are we as a school going to accept different people coming into our culture and treat them perfectly?'"

Ahmed, who was born in Ethiopia, served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia, and traveled to Rome, Korea and Singapore. He said his experiences abroad helped him connect with a more diverse student body.

"So, for example, if you have an issue with something and tell me you are from Korea, I can say, 'Oh, I understand how you would see it that way,'" he said.

Ahmed's success as USUSA president has been recognized by other students as well.

"After spending the year working on USUSA with Sami, I couldn't think of anyone else I would like to have as our student body president," Student Advocate Vice-President Paulina Rivera-Soto said. "What people don't see are the early mornings and the late evenings Sami spends in the office."

Rivera-Soto said she hopes that Ahmed can continue to work on his agenda.

"Next year, I know he has plans on what he'd like to build on from this year. I fully know he will make that happen," Rivera-Soto said.

Several other students recognize how hard Ahmed worked to develop relationships with administration.

"Administration loves him, which goes a long way," USUSA administrative assistant Anna Kremnev said. "He has done a lot this year, but things move slowly at a university. With another year to tie up loose ends, his impact at USU would last for decades."

Overall, Ahmed says there is a lot to love about being an Aggie.

"The school is truly built for the students," Ahmed said. "I've had the opportunity to go to many schools because of my position this year, and we are by far the best."

— taylorcripe@gmail.com
@cripe_taylor



PHOTO BY **Iain Laurence**

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SL STUDENT LIFE

Meet Your Senator: Sara Dent Merrill

2019-2020 Jon M. Huntsman School of Business Senator



Sara Dent Merrill serves as the 2019-2020 senator for the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business.

PHOTO COURTESY Utah Statesman

By William Bultez
STUDENT LIFE COPY EDITOR

Sara Dent Merrill is a true-blooded Aggie. Not only did her parents, parents-in-law, grandparents and other family members attend Utah State University, but she has the qualities to go with it.

Her mother, Kristen Dent, said Merrill grew up wanting to be an Aggie, and Merrill said the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business was what drew her to USU.

"She is an amazing team player, but she excels at being a leader," Dent said. "If there was a project, she was the leader."

In the 2018-2019 academic school year, Merrill was a member of the business school student council and served as a managing director.

"I just got really involved with trying to make students' lives better," Merrill said. "And I became really passionate about helping students understand all the value that the Huntsman school can bring."

Holly Trafelet, one of Merrill's childhood friends, said they would always be creating projects, such as movies or made-up school assignments.

Trafelet said Merrill was outgoing as a kid and had many friends. When faced with competition, she never changed

who she was or lowered her standards.

Many of her family members and colleagues all agreed her genuineness and capacity to care for her peers is why she is successful as a leader.

"She has a very large interest in caring for the less fortunate," said Mark Jenkins, a member of the business council.

Jenkins and Merrill went to India with the business school where they met with a representative from PricewaterhouseCoopers — a global networking firm. According to Jenkins, Merrill said "one of her biggest desires is to start or be a part of or run a

nonprofit that operates internationally and that contributes to helping the less fortunate."

Jenkins said he and everyone at the dinner was impressed with her goals.

"Everybody in the business school will say that they want to help somebody," Jenkins said, "and I think most people want that in life. But coming up with a specific plan to be able to help people to gather the individual capital and resources to do that ... I think that's kind of a differentiator when someone can specialize, decide how they're going to help people and then be willing to put forth the effort to make that happen."

Jordan Ball, another member of the business council, said Merrill is an exemplary leader because she is willing to stand up for unpopular things.

Ball said Merrill and the business council were recently considering discontinuing round-table discussions they host every semester for students and professors of the business school to give feedback about the program. Merrill fought to continue them because of their significance in giving students a voice.

A couple of Merrill's initiatives while senator was to "empower the voices of students that aren't adequately represented and increase transparency of business school happenings," both of which are helped by the round-table discussions.

"She's very driven, goal-oriented and she cares," said Dave Patel, a dean for the business school.

From his experience, he said truly caring is an essential component to success and it is what sets Merrill apart.

"Student elections are in a few weeks," Patel said. "She could mail it in."

But, he said, that is not in her nature.

"She puts in the time, she does the work, she doesn't seek attention," Patel continued. "She doesn't need to do

TWEETS of the WEEK



@phoebe_bridgers

if your car has a name you're a cop



@tropcberysprite

the candy bowl in the basement of the Meril Cazier library is my sustenance for the day



@lewnitedstates

If you play as baby peach on Mario kart, block me

any of that. She's graduating, she's already got a job, her term is almost over."

"She doesn't give 90% in anything in her life," Ball said. "She sprints to the finish line."

Despite her time on the business council, Merrill did not seriously consider her candidacy for academic senator until a week before she had to declare it.

"It was a spur of the moment thing," Trafelet said, "she is usually pretty methodical."

Merrill's husband, Kaden Merrill, said he was surprised by her sudden interest in running for the position, but was mostly just impressed with her decision.

"It did scare her because failure was not in her vocabulary," Dent said. "I was terrified for her because it wasn't in her comfort zone."

It was the She's Daring Mighty Things Summit that pushed her to run for the office. One of the board members at the USU event, Tessa White, asked, "What would

you do if you weren't afraid?"

Merrill, realizing that fear was the only thing holding her back from making the leap, declared her candidacy and won the race.

"I've learned that being a leader means you have to listen more than anything," Merrill said. "Anyone can be a dictator. Anyone can tell people what to do. But to actually make an effect -- make an impact -- you have to be able to listen to the needs of those around you."

Merrill's message to Aggies everywhere is anyone is qualified to be a leader if they truly care about the people and organization.

"If anyone is interested in running for this kind of role, there's not a particular mold," Merrill said. "You have to be able to listen to the needs of those around you."

—william.bultez@aggiemail.usu.edu

🐦 @willistheginger

What's the difference between vegan and plant-based diet?



GRAPHIC BY Regan Johnson

While vegans avoid all animal-food products, a plant-based diet is less strict.

By Emily White
STUDENT LIFE STAFF WRITER

Plant-based diets have been booming with popularity, but what exactly does a plant-based diet entail? Are plant-based diets the same thing as veganism? Why do people go plant-based, and how do they get all the nutrients they need without animal products?

A plant-based diet is very similar to a vegan lifestyle, so the difference between plant-based and veganism is a small one. A vegan avoids all animal products, whereas those who follow a plant-based diet usually only avoid animal food products. Plant-based dieters decide whether or not they will consume animal products, but the focus is on consuming foods from

plant sources.

People go on plant-based diets for several reasons. The most popular reason is because of animal cruelty, followed by health and environmental benefits.

One of the most common critiques about plant-based diets is the assumption that participants are not getting enough nutrients. While it is true that animal products are a good source of protein, Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin B12, it is possible to receive all those nutrients through plants.

Foods like lentils, chickpeas, quinoa, beans, tofu, nuts and seeds are all great sources of protein and provide enough protein for someone pursuing a plant-based diet. B12 can be found in nutritional yeast and some fortified plant-

based milk, while iron is found in beans, spinach, oats and dark greens. Increasing citrus into your diet will increase the absorption of that iron. Omega-3 fatty acids can be taken in a supplement.

A popular misconception about dietary restrictions is that it is expensive. The truth is, if you truly change your lifestyle, eating differently will not end up being more expensive. In fact, purchasing foods that are premade will always be the more expensive route. Sticking to the produce section will not be a financial strain.

Because going completely plant-based is so difficult, some opt for a vegetarian lifestyle first and then transition to plant-based. Melody Wooten, a freshman at Utah State University, went vegan

for a month after being a vegetarian for about a year. She said the hardest thing about the vegan lifestyle was not feeling full.

"It's something that would have been easier as it went on," Wooten said, "my body had to adjust to it."

Wooten suggested to not hesitate if one is going vegan for moral reasons. For some people, though, starting a plant-based diet can be difficult, but the regimen can be started by gradually reducing your meat and dairy intake. Some ways to do this include switching out an animal product for a plant-based one or eating a plant-based meal twice a week.

—emily.white@aggiemail.usu.edu

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SPORTS

Column: Are the Aggies headed back to the NCAA Tournament?

By Sydney Kidd
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

With one week left in February and March Madness on the horizon, one question seems to be on the minds of Aggie fans everywhere: Will the Utah State University men's basketball team make the NCAA tournament?

"It's definitely something we think about," sophomore forward Justin Bean said. "But at the end of the day, like coach always tells us, we just have to be our best each day."

The answer to whether the Aggies are NCAA bound, of course, is unclear. The NCAA tournament has 68 spots — 32 conferences in the country are given an automatic qualifier spot. That spot is given to the conference tournament winner. The remaining 36 spots are at-large and a committee determines who is chosen to fill them.

The NCAA Evaluation Tool (NET) is partly how the committee determines its at-large picks. According to NCAA.com, NET uses a "Team Value Index, which is based on game results and factors game location, the opponent and outcome, as well as net efficiency, winning

percentage, adjusted winning percentage and a capped scoring margin" to determine the ratings of teams.

Utah State currently has a NET rating of 38, eight spots up from its Feb. 14 rating of 46. This jump can be attributed to both Utah State's wins over Fresno State and Wyoming, and other closely rated team's recent losses.

"We know what we're playing for right now," junior guard Abel Porter said. "We're in a great position and every game matters the same, whether they're San Diego State ... or whether they're Wyoming and have one conference win."

But even with this jump, the Aggies remain a bubble team and will have to impress to make it into the tournament.

"We just need to win and I say that because I don't know that you can differentiate yourself in any other way, besides just winning games," Porter said. "We try and play a style that is free flowing and everything, but I don't really think the committee cares about style of play or anything. They care about 'what's your record? how many games have you won? and who have you beat?' and so all we can really do is just go

out on the court and just win games in order to make our resume, or whatever it is, the best it can be."

Last year, Utah State qualified for the tournament, with a record of 28-7 and won the Mountain West. The team currently sits in second place in the conference with an overall record of 22-7, with two games left in the regular season.

The Aggies would not have to win the conference tournament to qualify and, aside from Mountain West top-seed San Diego State, are the only team in the conference who can say this — but it is the only guaranteed way to make it in. According to Bean, it is also a goal the team set for itself at the very beginning of the season.

"Our goal at the end of the day is to win a Mountain West championship and play in the NCAA tournament, so that's been the same from day one," Bean said. "I think we're doing a great job just keeping that in the back of our minds and just letting that reflect how we practice how we play, how we talk. Just day in and day out."

To not win the tournament would leave Utah

State's fate up to the NET and the selection committee. Head coach Craig Smith said he prefers to remain in the dark when it comes to the subject of his team's tournament chances.

"I haven't paid any attention to any of that stuff and that's the honest truth," Smith said. "I know our staff knows, I know our players know, like I just have purposely kind of lived a little bit in a bubble."

Smith said what he can control is his energy, enthusiasm and making sure his players are well coached.

"When you do that, that carries over for the rest of the team, and put them in the best positions and continue to climb the ladder and be the best that we can be," Smith said. "And at the end of the day, if it's good enough it's good enough and if it's not it's not."

The Aggies next shot at improving their NCAA tournament odds will be on Tuesday, when the team takes on San Jose State in the Spectrum. This will be Utah State's final home game of the 2019-20 season, with game time scheduled for 9 p.m.

@SydChap



PHOTO by Hailey Larson

Utah State players Sam Merrill, Diogo Brito, Sean Bairstow and Justin Bean help up teammate Neemias Queta during the Aggies' home win against Boise State on Saturday, Feb. 8. Utah State beat the Broncos 70-61 in the teams' second meeting of the season.

ATHLETICS HOME EVENTS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

DEE GLEN
SMITH SPECTRUM

VS NEW MEXICO

2.27.20 - 7PM

MEN'S BASKETBALL

DEE GLEN
SMITH SPECTRUM

VS SAN JOSE STATE

2.25.20 - 9PM

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS

DEE GLEN
SMITH SPECTRUM

VS UC DAVIS

2.28.20 - 7PM

MEN'S TENNIS

SPORTS ACADEMY
& RACQUET CLUB

VS NORTHERN ARIZONA

2.28.20 - 10AM

VS WEBER STATE

2.28.20 - 2PM



#AGGIESALLTHEWAY

USU hockey celebrates senior night, drops game to Weber State

By **Scott Froehlich**
SENIOR SPORTS EDITOR

Utah State University's hockey team ended its regular season with a heartbreaking 5-3 loss to the Weber State Wildcats on Saturday. Before the game, which was dubbed "Senior Night," the Aggies paid tribute to four departing players: forward Chris Cutshall, defenseman Olli Jansson, forward Gavin Lubin and goalie Colton Pritchard. USU wasted no time in the opening period, scoring in the first 30 seconds. The goal came off Bradley Green's stick after he fired a shot past Weber State's goalie, with Cutshall making the key pass. The lead would not stand for long, however, as Wildcat forward Kody Goodwin put the puck past Pritchard to knot the game at 1-1.

The goal didn't phase the Aggies and they regained the lead three minutes later thanks to a nifty net-front deflection by Cutshall to put the team up 2-1. Following the goal, things settled down a bit scoring-wise, though both teams maintained a quick, back and forth pace.

At the 6:51 mark of the first period, Aggie forward Conner Mckeachnie broke the tempo up by taking an interference penalty which earned the Wildcats a power play. The Wildcats pounced on the opportunity and Jeremy Regeon netted a goal just 20 seconds into the man advantage to tie the game at two goals apiece.

Once again the play settled down and, aside from a failed penalty shot by the Aggies and a cross checking penalty to the Wildcats, the period ended with little fanfare. Both teams went to the locker room with the score tied at 2-2.

In the second, USU began the period like they did the first, with Austin Moser scoring on a breakaway 30 seconds into the game, giving the Aggies a 3-2 lead. Utah State used the momentum from the goal to dictate the play for the next several minutes, but once again shot themselves in the foot by taking a penalty. Jansson, the guilty party, drew a boarding penalty on a Wildcat player, which then led to a feisty scrum along the boards.

On the ensuing play, Weber State again made the Aggies pay for their overzealous play with a goal 18 seconds into the power play. The Wildcats followed up their goal with a strong defensive showing, containing the Aggies and keeping them from getting many quality chances.

USU did manage to fight back with a short spurt



Utah State head coach Todd Renae with the Aggies' four seniors Gavin Lubin, Colton Pritchard, Chris Cutshall and Olli Jansson on Saturday.

PHOTO COURTESY of **Dark Star Photography**

of shots on net, but Wildcat goalie Logan Alam stood tall and batted every chance away. Afterward, the game settled into a lull until the final five minutes of the middle frame. That's when things got all too familiar for the Aggies.

After exchanging scoring chances, the Aggies took yet another penalty with 4:14 left in the second. Weber State, in a brutal moment of deja vu for USU, capitalized on the power play and took their first lead of the game, 4-3. Heading into the intermission, USU needed to figure out a way to limit their penalties and bounce back.

Despite a strong start to the third, the Aggies struggled to find the back of the net. A barrage of chances and a goal-line save by Alam were the closest USU would get to tying the game. Aggie head coach Todd Renae praised the team for its effort, noting, "we didn't really give up, we kept going." He went on to say that, even though they had many chances to score, they couldn't find any "puck luck" on the night.

Ultimately, penalties proved to be the self-inflicted wounds that allowed Weber State to pull away.

Renae attributed the loss to the team's struggles with a lack of discipline.

"10 penalties, that absolutely killed us," he said. "They [were] all lazy penalties; unacceptable. With how short our bench is now we can't afford to be taking penalties like that."

Weber State put the final nail in the coffin late as forward Joel Johnson scored an empty net goal with four seconds left to put the team up 5-3. When the horn sounded, the score stood and the Wildcats handed the Aggies their second straight

loss to finish the season after the home and home series. "It's a huge loss for us, but the season is not over," Renae said.

"Honestly, it's just beginning for us."

According to Renae, the Aggies will need to have a "short-term memory" as they head to the ACHA's West Regionals on Friday, Feb. 28 and face the Oregon Ducks. The game starts at 4:15 p.m.

— swfroehlich@gmail.com

The Score

USU results for the week of Feb. 17 - Feb. 23

Results

Men's Basketball
W, 78-58 -- WYOMING

Women's Basketball
L, 64-45 -- WYOMING

Men's Tennis
L, 4-1 -- BYU

Gymnastics
T, 196.800 -- at Boise State

Softball
L, 8-7 (8) --- vs. Cal State Northridge
W, 7-0 --- at Grand Canyon
Cancelled --- at Grand Canyon
L, 8-0 (5) --- vs. Drake
L, 11-3 (5) --- vs. Cal State Northridge

Women's Tennis
L, 4-1 -- Utah

Top Performers

Justin Bean: 20 points, 14 rebounds
Sam Merrill: 26 points

Marlene Aniambossou: 13 points
Hailey Bassett: 10 points

Sergiu Bucur singles win (7-6, 6-4)

Leighton Varnadore won the all-around with a career-high 39.350

Stephanie Reed led the team at the plate, hitting .429 (6-of-14)
Alissa Noble and Kapri Toone combined for a shutout against Grand Canyon with Noble earning the win.

Hannah Jones singles win (6-2, 6-4)

Men's and women's indoor track & field teams continue travel to Albuquerque, N.M., to compete in the Mountain West Indoor Championships from Wednesday through Saturday, Feb. 26-29.



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GRAPHIC COURTESY Keith Wilson

State your case: Facebook comments

FOR MODERATION

By Scott Froehlich
SPORTS EDITOR

It isn't news that online comment sections are plagued with incivility and vitriolic discussions, but things are getting out of hand. Gone are the days when one could engage in a productive conversation without resorting to ad hominem attacks.

To borrow from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" — something is rotten in the state of Facebook.

While Facebook is not the only medium suffering from a crisis of civility, it certainly boasts the largest user base. Nearly everyone — including their dogs — has an account and spends countless hours scrolling and voicing their opinions. Mind you, the word "opinion" is used loosely, since contributing to comment sections has devolved into digital slugfests.

This is where things get tricky; how do you separate the toxic discourse from the everyday debate? The problem isn't with the general public's collective penchant for spirited dialogue, it's with the prevalence of mean-spirited and hateful trolling. A large population of Facebook users get their kicks by attacking fellow users and hurling insults.

Rather than forming logical rebuttals, social media conversations are riddled with words such as "snowflake," "deplorable" and the ubiquitous "moron" or "loser." It is no longer required to provide facts or reason to prove a point, just the right meme or snarky remark.

Not only does this hostility create an unstable online environment, it also fosters the spread of misinformation, further weaponizing the rhetoric on either side of the political spectrum. Trust in opposing viewpoints is nearly impossible to achieve when one or both sides vilify the other and their "news" sources claim everything the "opposition" says are lies.

Also, cyberbullying. According to the website dosomething.org, about 37% of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 have been bullied online. A 2012 study published in The Journal of Social Psychology reported that 30% of people experienced cyberbullying at work.

So what can be done? Obviously any alterations to the current public commenting system will cause people to accuse the platform of infringing on their First Amendment rights, although that argument isn't technically correct. Facebook is a private company, one that exists outside of the government protections reserved for citizens, religious groups and the press.

If anything, Mark Zuckerberg's refusal to fact-check political ads and selective banning practices are antithetical to the First Amendment. There are, however, reasonable options which may encourage users to think twice about what they say online.

First, increase the number of moderators in each comment section and require real-time feedback. No one likes to be po-

liced while having a discussion, but having moderators give feedback in public chat groups will drastically cut down on unnecessary trolling and misbehavior.

Second, overhaul fact-checking methods. This would tie into the first suggestion, as the real-time moderators would provide links within the comment sections to give a more factual account than a potentially false article a commenter may reference. Also, Facebook does need to fact check political ads to hold those seeking to occupy roles in government accountable, as trust and honesty are vital to public support.

Lastly, place a limit on time between comments. This would be a good way to foster a less turbulent environment. Too often, trolls filibuster their way through a discussion by posting memes and one-word comments to drown out any opposition and making them wait a minute would allow others to be involved as well.

It is a sad indictment on society when a simple concept such as social media has been clouded by hostile people, which is why something needs to be done. Civility and those who hold it dear need to take back Facebook.

Scott Froehlich is a junior who is studying print journalism. He moved to Logan with his wife and son from Price, Utah, where they attended school at Utah State University Eastern. His passions include hockey and politics.

AGAINST MODERATION

By Emily White
OPINION COLUMNIST

Facebook should allow users to continue to comment on other people's posts. Taking away the commenting function on Facebook would be taking away the freedom of speech, which is unconstitutional. On top of that, removing the commenting function would prevent positive interactions, debates and perspectives from surfacing on the social media platform.

Everyone deserves to be heard, whether they're right or not. Having the freedom of speech is a unique right that should not be taken for granted. Of course, the freedom of speech also comes with a few caveats.

The comment section is driven by the people and people aren't always bad. Comment sections provide "a forum for people who might feel uncomfortable sharing their opinions offline either due to social or legal repercussions." In other words, comment sections give a voice to the voiceless. How could we possibly justify getting rid of comment sections or censoring comment sections if they give people the opportunity to speak up?

Perhaps it would be helpful to remember why we have Facebook in the first place. Mark Zuckerberg, the cofounder and CEO of Facebook said, "the thing that we are trying to do at Facebook, is just to help people connect and communicate more efficiently ... it was built to accomplish a social mission — to make the world more open and connected."

If the goal of Facebook is for users to be more open and connected with each other, censoring comments would run completely counter to that goal. How can we possibly be connected to each other if we aren't allowed to have open dialogue in comment sections? Blocking comments restricts Facebook users from openly conversing and debating in a constructive manner.

Of course, there will always be people who refuse to debate or discuss things in a reasonable, kind way. Journalists, who often write their opinions online, are on the receiving end of internet abuse more than most. According to Wired, "the current process goes like this: Journalist writes an article. Article is published. People write comments. Journalist peeks at the comments, and sees a lot of meanness and abuse." But that isn't the end of the story. There are a few different endings, but I only know the ending of mine.

I wrote an opinion piece for The Statesman not too long ago that got quite a few negative comments. People criticized my ability to write and declared that I am a person of "no knowledge." In fact, one individual said that I was selling my soul, and the soul of America, for the sake of party loyalty. All of these things were said over Facebook, because I had an opinion about something and wrote about it.

The people who wrote unkind things about me didn't even know me. Reading those comments impacted me on a very personal level. I started to won-

der if I should be writing at all. Still, no matter how unkind someone's words are, the First Amendment entitles them to vocalize their opinion. The negativity we see in comment sections on Facebook are simply reflections of larger societal problems, such as abuse, bullying and bigotry. The problem is not the comment sections, it's the people commenting.

At the end of the day, I agree with Justin Ellis, who said, "I don't know that you can engineer around bad habits of a community. I just don't think that's gonna work. I think you actually need to establish norms of behavior that people will follow because they care about the space." In other words, people follow social norms. Simply removing the commenting ability will not change the norms we have developed on social media. Unkind comments are not reason to remove comment sections altogether; that doesn't fix the problem. By removing comment sections we will continue to be guilty of constantly rewarding the bullying and verbally abusive language that takes place on Facebook. Instead of taking the easy way out and removing the commenting function, we need to learn how to stand up for each other. We need to stop letting the bullies win.

Emily White is a junior studying English and broadcast journalism. She is from Kaysville, Utah, and spends her time reading and writing.

	4			2		8	6	5
7			6		8			
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			8		2			7
8	7	3		6			2	

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: 02/18/2020

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



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C CALENDAR

FEB 25 - MAR 2

TUESDAY 2/25	WEDNESDAY 2/26	THURSDAY 2/27	FRIDAY 2/28	SATURDAY 2/29	MONDAY 3/2
<p>Medical School Admissions: Preparing for Success-Tamara Martinez-Anderson 4:00 pm Eccles Science Learning Center Room 046 Logan, UT</p> <p>Men's Basketball vs. San Jose State 9:00 pm Dee Glen Smith Spectrum Logan, UT</p> <p>Aggie Radio Discovers: SLUG Magazine 6:00 pm Taggart Student Center Colony Room (219) Logan, UT</p>	<p>Talk to the Experts: Relationship and Sexuality Panel 12:00 pm TSC International Lounge Logan, UT</p> <p>"Breathe Easy" Workshop 4:00 pm Taggart Student Center Room 309 Logan, UT</p> <p>Entrepreneur Leadership Series: Joel & Jon Clark 6:00 pm TSC Ballroom Logan, UT</p> <p>Horn and Friends 7:30 pm Russell/Wanlass Performance Hall Logan, UT</p>	<p>Statesman USUSA Debate 11:30 pm TSC Hub Logan, UT</p> <p>Students and Academic Advisors Workshop 12:30 pm Merrill-Cazier Library Room 208 Logan, UT</p> <p>National Eating Disorder Awareness Week Film Screening 5:00 pm HPER Building Room 116 Logan, UT</p> <p>Women's Basketball vs. New Mexico 7:00 pm Dee Glen Smith Spectrum Logan, UT</p>	<p>Women in the Judiciary Panel 11:00 am David B. Haight Center Logan, UT</p> <p>Miss Native American USU Pageant 6:00 pm TSC Ballroom Logan, UT</p> <p>Women's Gymnastics vs. U.C. Davis 7:00 pm Dee Glen Smith Spectrum Logan, UT</p> <p>Wind Orchestra and Symphonic Band Concert 7:30 pm Daines Concert Hall Logan, UT</p>	<p>Canyon Conversations: Where the Wild Things Are 11:00 am Natural Resources Building Room 105 Logan, UT</p> <p>Maple Syrup Workshop 1:00 - 3:00 pm Stokes Nature Center 1696 E. Highway 89 Logan, UT</p> <p>Winter Whyfest 3:00 - 11:30 pm WhySound Venue 30 Federal Ave. Logan, UT</p>	<p>Spring Break No School!</p> <p>Maple Syrup Workshop 1:00 - 3:00 pm Stokes Nature Center 1696 E. Highway 89 Logan, UT</p> <p>QPR Suicide Prevention Training 7:00 - 8:30 pm Logan Library 255 N Main St. Logan, UT</p>

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TRUTH IN TUITION

MARCH 11

11:00 AM, TSC Ballroom

Join President Noelle Cockett and Student Body President Sami Ahmed for a discussion about potential tuition changes

Utah State University is proposing to increase student tuition rates. This would be an increase of 2.8%-4%, which is an increase of \$49-\$131 per semester, depending on the campus, for a full-time resident undergraduate student. All concerned students and citizens are invited to a public hearing on the proposed increase to be held in the TSC Ballroom on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 11 a.m. This will be broadcast to all campuses.

