Women’s Club Volleyball

By: Alexis Barnes

This semester was definitely a new experience for myself, and I believe the team. We had our ups and downs, and some pretty fun times. A few memorable moments to name a few would have to include hosting our second home tournament ever, as well as placing 3rd in the Bradley University Fall Tournament. My personal favorite moment from this season was organizing the home tournament, because it was something I had never done before and myself and Leah Murphy, my fellow co-president, had a lot of fun running the tournament. It was also pretty cool to be able to have a WIU A and WIU B team for that tournament. We hosted one tournament and attended two, one at NIU and one at Bradley. The NIU tournament was the first tournament and was a round-robin. It was a warm-up to the season with an entirely new team, so we learned a lot about each other and how we worked as a team from that tournament. Our home tournament, mentioned above, went better. Our WIU A team made it into the Gold Bracket, and both teams played some great competitive volleyball. Bradley was our best tournament by far. We placed first in our pool during pool play and claimed the 3rd seed for bracket-play. We played 3rd and I was so proud of my team for how well they played and worked together. This year, we had 16 active players on the team, with Leah being an administrative president but active player from her internship. Overall, during my three years on this team, I believe this was the best season and team we have had so far, and we can only go up from here. I am excited for next semester and the years ahead, and my team is as well.
The Live-Action Roleplaying Network (LARPN) was started by myself and a handful of friends in the Fall of 2018. Live-action role-playing (LARP) as a broader hobby brought me joy as a teenager, and now I see that joy in those who attend our meetings. The LARPN was designed to create space for many different kinds of LARPs here on campus since they come in many shapes and sizes; but, we chose to start an Amtgard park after the passing of a friend of mine who also played Amtgard. I had met her through Amtgard, but cancer took her life and light away from us. She is dearly missed, but her kindness and welcoming attitude to Amtgard was something that I try to foster in all our members.

As a new chapter of Amtgard, we got to pick our own chapter name and founded “Scholar’s Stronghold,” registering it with the Amtgard International. Then in January, we were recognized and welcomed in by a regional kingdom known as Tal Dagore. We have seen some ups and downs since then, but this semester we have seen rapid growth in membership-- our biggest day drawing in 27 people. We see visitors from other surrounding area chapters regularly, and they always remark on having a great time. Over the winter break, we will be holding a convention for other LARP groups to come and see the university as a venue and possibly get started here at Western Illinois University.

I get asked regularly what LARP is, and what happens there, but like I said, all LARPs are different. Amtgard focuses on battle gaming, and the easiest thing to relate that to is capture the flag like you see it played in paintball. We have rules about how combat works, rules for classes (like in D&D), and we use those rules in conjunction with game designs to further structure what we’re doing. So we might run capture the flag with wizards and warriors on the field, and later have a bridge fight without any classes after a water break from the first game. You can imagine how this might break up the monotony of classes. Even if you don’t fight though, there is a place for you since we value arts, crafting, and leadership. It is not uncommon for someone to become interested in LARP because they enjoy cosplay, Amtgard gives them a venue for that and access to skills that can improve that other hobby.

I’ll be graduating this semester, and other members of our leadership are too. We are confident in those we are leaving with the reins to this chapter of Amtgard and the LARPN. We are sad to go our separate way but the hope is that all of our adventures might one day bring us back to this little group we started, or at least we can bump into our college friends at larger regional and national Amtgard events.
Bowling Club

By: Andrew Wagner

The bowling club has been practicing three days a week and competing one day a week in a league since the beginning of the semester. We have traveled to tournaments in and out of state to compete. The largest tournament we competed in was our very own Leatherneck Classic. We host one of the largest collegiate tournaments in the country. The event has grown to be held in four different bowling centers and two different states, Illinois and Iowa. We are always looking for new members to join the team to make our club better.

Water Polo

By: Natalie Starczowski

Some of the best memories of the season were from the tournaments. We traveled to Harper College in Palatine, back in September and Iowa State University in November. Traveling is always fun, it is an enjoyable experience and a nice way for the team to bond. Although we only won 2 games, all of the games were plenty of fun and everyone learned something new. The other teams we play are very competitive, but also full of kind people. This semester we had a total of 18 members part of the club.
Equestrian Club

By: Gabe Cairncross

The 4th Annual Memorial Trail Ride was October 11 through October 13. The public was invited to spend a day, or camp for the weekend, and enjoy trail rides, a band, raffle baskets, silent auctions, a movie, warm food (it was a cold weekend), and a costume contest. The proceeds were donated to Dough La Fever, who was injured in a horse related accident earlier this year. The money helped cover medical expenses, and other unforeseen expenses from him being out of work.

The WIU Equestrian Club donated 2 Angel Trees this year to help families in the community provide Christmas for their children. We spent the evening picking out toys for 2 lucky children.

We hosted the first Discover Equestrian on December 5th to provide students with an opportunity to de-stress before finals. There were free horse rides, games, and food for WIU students to enjoy.

Cookies With Santa and His Reindeer was held on December 7th. Members of the community were invited to bring their children to take pictures with Santa, ride his “Reindeer”, eat cookies, play games, and get crafty.
Badminton Club
By: Tae Seok Yang

What is the badminton club? It is the truly COLORFUL club composed of members from many different countries! Our club has been growing. As of today, we have 27 registered members, the most members for the last three years! Furthermore, we received tremendous support from the director and staff of the rec center. This year we had new court nets and more equipment for the members. We also had several social gatherings for building up better relationship between members. Our badminton club was nominated for an OSA Leadership Award. Even though we did not receive the prize, we were happy with the fact that school recognized our commitment to the mission of the WIU sport clubs. The badminton club meets twice a week (Fridays and Sundays 3-6pm) providing the opportunities to play in the competitive matches as well as the basic trainings to the beginners. We have rackets and shuttlecocks for all members. Join us! You can find more about us in Facebook by searching WIU Badminton Club.

Equestrian Show Team
By: Haley Smith

The Equestrian Show Team provides students the opportunity to develop/further their riding skills and compete at the collegiate level. As a newer organization, the team is thrilled to represent WIU and the School of Agriculture as one of the many organizations here on campus. We have members from a variety of majors who came to us with a wide range of horse experience. It’s been great watching students with little to no riding experience join the team, and then place first in their class at just their second show! We practice outside Colchester twice a week and attend 5 shows a year. This upcoming semester, the team will be traveling to Iowa State University and back to Black Hawk East for the final show of the season. It’s been an exciting show season and we’re looking forward to the rest of the year and expanding our membership. As a second year member of the team and the current President, I couldn’t be happier with how well the team is doing this year and I’m so proud of every member!
This semester, WIU Women's Rugby placed 3rd in conference. Winning 75-0 against SIU, and beating ISU, for the first time in WIU Rugby history, during the playoffs!

We were able to use the new jerseys we purchased last semester. This semester we started our first shirt fundraiser, selling over 100 shirts this semester. We spent a lot of time volunteering at events such as Paint the Paws, Big Pink Volleyball, Horn Field Campus, Stuff the Bus, and the Big Brothers Big Sisters event, Bowl For Kids Sake.

Before playoffs, the men's and women’s rugby teams held a mini service for our coach Pete at Argyle State Park. Pete was the greatest mentor any of us could ask for. He had a passion for rugby and caring for others. Thank you for everything, Pete.