

2021

Class A

JOURNALISM
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Grades can be the cause of a lot of stress in students' lives. Discussion surrounding the American education system highlights the deep flaws of ranking students based on memorized knowledge. Public education has set a standard as to how we are graded. In my experience we learn for a solid month, prepare for a giant test with quizzes, and then take a test. Our understanding of the content widely comes from our district's curriculum and teachers who are tasked with ensuring the success of every students in their classroom.

Grades are extremely subjective. To some these grades are meaningless letters, while to others they serve as a determinant of success. Grades can be influenced by your teacher's feelings toward you, which is why grading should be more transactional. Giving students the option to grade their teachers will increase accountability in our school district and allow room for more progressive, equitable changes in the future.

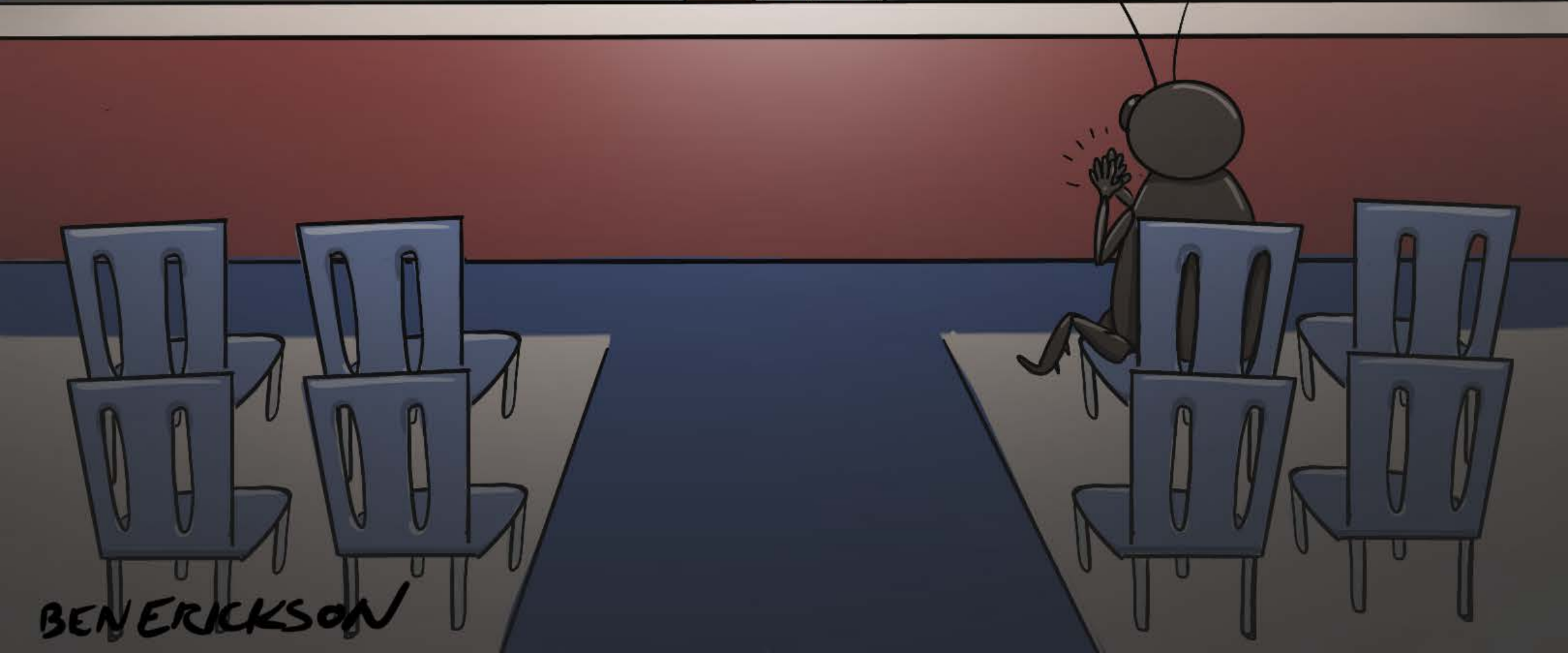
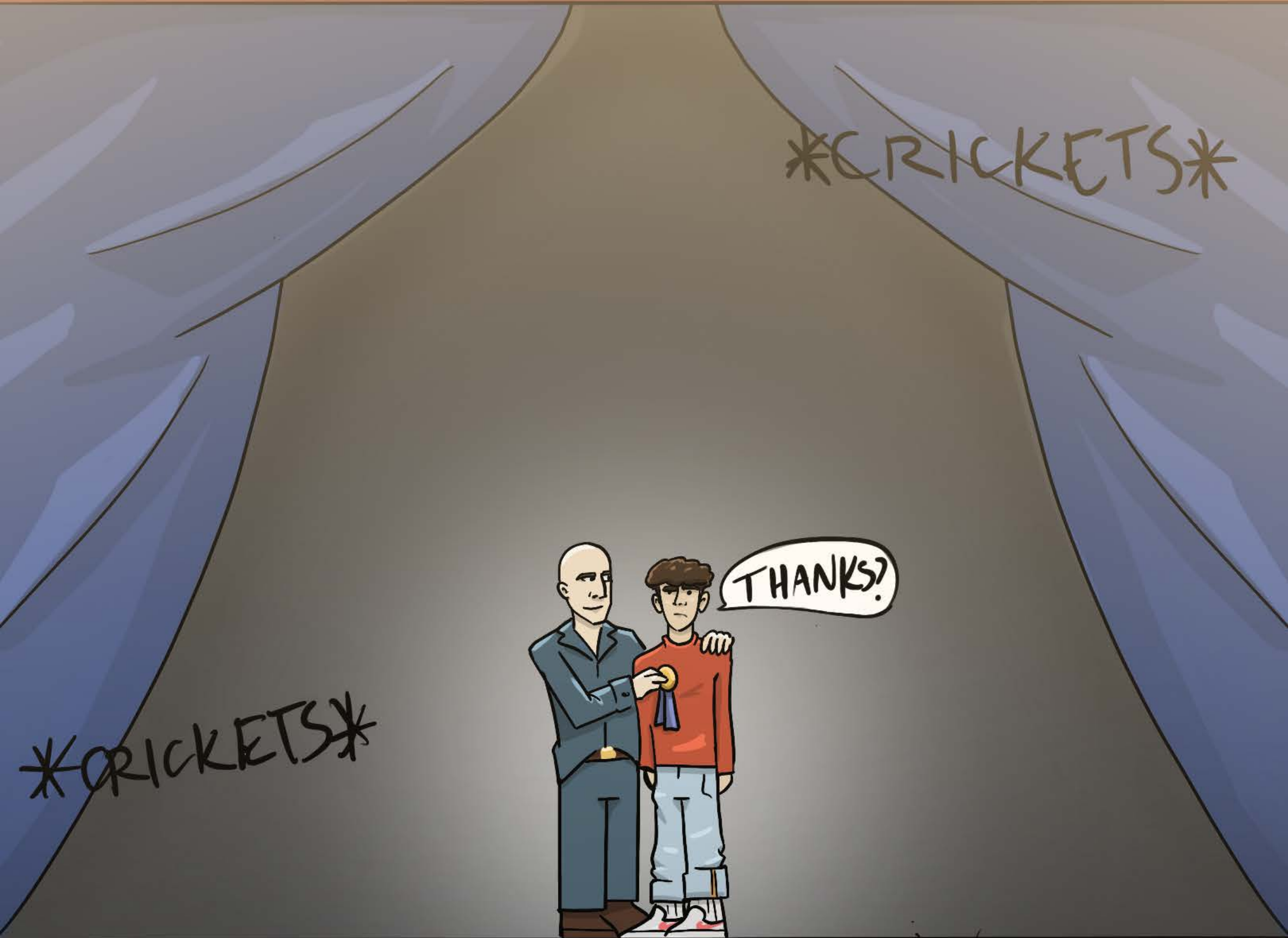
Allowing students to grade their teacher's performance would benefit students overall. Creating a system of accountability would increase student's quality of education. Teachers who relied solely on a mundane Google Slide presentation would quickly be confronted with their students' possibly displeasure, but more importantly there would be more motivation to improve. Making that information readily available to potential students may attract more students to the class, also increasing the quality of discussion and communication in the class.

Many teachers encourage end of the year feedback from students, however I have yet to hear of a universal grading system for educators. Several career tracks use a ranking system as a form of accountability or prestige. For example, athletes across the board are subjected to ranking based off of event statistics. For high school athletes the ranking serves as a reminder there is room for improvement. The same principles should apply in a classroom. Additionally, district judges in Nebraska are placed on a ranking system. This allows constituents to better informed when voting on district judges and ultimately remove individuals that are not representing the ideology of the institutions they inhabit.

Most importantly devising a grading system for students use will foster a sense of self advocacy. Forcing a student to review the performance of a system and write critical feedback based on their experiences in the classroom will create more equitable classrooms in the future. The process of respectfully forming a critical opinion about people of authority is a valuable skill. Educators are responsible for teaching generations of leader how to problem-solve and communicate, their performance matters.

School should be a place for students to thrive regardless of their instructor. By offering students the opportunity to rate their teachers we are ensuring they feel heard in spaces designed for them. By offering the students the opportunity to grade teachers we are encouraging students to demand the best and setting a standard that mediocre teaching just will not suffice.

"END OF THE YEAR AWARDS" ... HOW FUN



Emma Baker

Students love snow days – until they get out for the summer in mid-June. Suddenly, there's no Friday night movies or days spent at the pool; rather, students cram geometry into their brains past midnight and toil inside the too-hot school building wishing they had put down the sled and opted for just a few hours of online learning that winter.

Principal Darnell Williams' new policy to hold classes virtually in the case of snowy conditions makes perfect sense. The policy not only secures a timely end to the school year but also keeps students caught up in their studies and safe from potential disaster on icy roads.

First and foremost, parents, like Lauren James, say not enforcing this policy could be detrimental to her son's future: "My son is applying to college this year, and he can't afford to miss AP Biology."

James' son isn't the only one, however. Hundreds more Smith High School students would be negatively affected by missing valuable instructional time. Freshman have to get a feel of what a high school workload looks like. Sophomores need to take graduation requirements like Health and Personal Finance. Juniors must take test preparation classes and get ready to take the ACT. Seniors need to finish strong in their classes and keep their grades up to get into the schools and careers they desire. All require discipline and direction to keep them on track for success; hence, online school on snowy days is a perfect fit.

This is not to say that students cannot have fun and enjoy themselves; after all, parents are free to call their children out in the name of their own personal "snow day." Rather, it's important to remember that missing even a day of school can snowball (no pun intended) into being behind for a week's worth of lessons.

We also need to support this policy because, as Superintendent Debbie Dawson said, “Kids and teachers can avoid hazardous road conditions.” Some might argue that avoiding dangerous travel is just as possible on traditional snow days; however, there are those families hoping to find the biggest sledding hills or get the best hot cocoa in town – all of which requires driving. With the new policy, students would be required to be engaged in learning at home, thus limiting the risky dangers of being out and about in bad weather.

Still, some believe online learning is just not effective. Well, let’s pose the question: Is playing in the snow more effective than at least trying to learn virtually? The answer is, quite simply, no. Of course, online education is tough, but the pandemic has prepared us, and it’s only temporary. When parents don’t even want their kids to try learning through a screen, the lesson to “try your best no matter what” goes completely out the window. If the school is willing to offer devices for students, there should be no issue in simply logging in for a lesson. Once the metaphorical bell rings, they’re free to play in the snow till their heart’s content.

Yes, students love snow days, but they also love summer, routine and achieving their academic goals. Williams’ policy would ensure success for students, prevent an extended school year and stop tragic winter weather accidents. Online learning snow days aren’t a punishment – they’re helping students and teachers stay safe and on track.

Livia Ziskey

Amanda Gorman delivered a moving speech at the Biden presidential inauguration. Although she is just 23 years old, her advanced maturity and elegance are clearly present in the words she delivered to the people of the United States.

Gorman begins her poem, "The Hill We Climb" with a formal and polite address of President Biden, Americans, as well as the world. This introduction felt natural and allowed for a clean transition to the rhythmic body of her poem.

She reminds her audience of the strides America has made toward equality when she says, "...where a skinny black girl descended from slaves can dream of being president, only to find herself reciting for one."

Through this line, Gorman makes the audience aware of the needed changes America has made since its creation, as well as the possibility of a diverse future where anyone can be a leader.

By incorporating the aspect of hope, Gorman effectively addresses the youth who may be listening to her presentation and she gives them the message to dream big, for they could find themselves in a position of power in the future.

Gorman has a knack for effortlessly incorporating alliteration into her words, which gave her poem a smooth flow and rhythm. She says, "If we merge mercy with might..." which not only sounds pleasing to listeners in the crowd, but also delivers the powerful message that America can continue to change for the better through compassion and bravery.

Other phrases such as "reconcile and recover" and "battered and beautiful" increase the cohesion of the poem and kept the audience on the edge of their seats, awaiting further rhythmic phrases from Gorman's lips.

"To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, and conditions of man" is a particularly thought-provoking line featuring alliteration that adds to the message of a bright future for the United States, aided by the Biden administration.

Gorman consistently speaks with full force, unapologetically confident in her poem and presentation. Her hand motions throughout the poem added to the profound delivery of the speech. Gorman gestures and extends her forearms as she says, "We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms...", which adds to the lively and dynamic quality of her poem.

Toward the closing portion of her poem, Gorman excellently calls the audience and the Biden administration to action. She says, "we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one...we will rise...reconcile, recover."

Through this eloquent statement, Gorman leaves the audience with the task of making America a better country, which is a fitting message to deliver at the presidential inauguration.

She also says, "Our blunders become their burdens. Love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright."

Listeners have no choice but to agree with the soothing words Gorman produces. The pleasing way in which she delivers her poem moves the audience to envision a brighter America and a brighter world.

She closes her poem with a positive and thought-provoking message: "There is always light if we are brave enough to see it...if we are brave enough to be it."

Gorman's poetry brings both hope to a new administration as well as expectations for citizens of the United States. "The Hill We Climb" features a beautiful message of healing that Americans desperately needed to hear at this time, and the way in which Gorman delivered her words was nothing short of spectacular.

Name: Jessica Brusnahan School: Marian

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # - 2

Headline - ~~Color me... winning?~~
Nonwhite golf balls aid visibility, but men doubt success

Article # - 3

Headline - sky-high shortage on the ground:
How rental car companies are managing
nation's travel demand amid pandemic

Article # - 6

Headline - Fire up your tastebuds and add a little spice
to recipes from Venezuela, Nigeria, and more
and more to add to your favorites

From, your daughter

Through a Facebook post, junior reconnects with her birth mother

May 4, 2021

Shaking hands poised over her keyboard, junior Lauri Hill of Leaguetown High School drafted her Facebook post. Meticulously typing the little information she knew regarding her birthdate and mother, Hill sent her plea.

“My birth mother’s first name was Hallie, and we were told she was 17 at the time of the birth. Could this be you? Please share this with friends and family and help me find my birth mother,” Hill wrote.

She was stunned when within 24 hours, her birth mother, Hallie Looper, had responded to her message. Hill will visit Looper at her home in West Texas with her parents the weekend of May 10.

“My birth mom still has a few friends in the Leaguetown area, and she saw a repost of my original message,” Hill said. “My parents helped me write my first email to her. I was so nervous. I had no idea what to say.”

Adopted when she was just two days old, Hill decided to investigate her birth mother after feeling unable to complete a hereditary project in biology class.

“Lauri hated that her project was somewhat incomplete because she didn’t know her genetic history,” biology teacher Marilyn Sneeters said. “I told her to use her parents, even though she was adopted, but she didn’t want to do that.”

Since Hill and Looper have been in contact, they have learned intimate details of each other’s lives and qualities they share.

“We have exchanged photos, and I look so much like her,” Hill said. “She sent me her high school graduation photo, and it looks exactly like me. Same brown hair. Same big brown eyes. Same crooked smile.”

Following Hill’s birth, Looper moved to Florida with family to finish high school. Despite developing depression following the adoption, Looper was able to graduate top of her class and attend Texas Tech University. She now teaches elementary schoolers.

Initially, Hill’s parents knew little about their daughter’s birth mother, so they are grateful she has the chance to build a relationship with Looper.

“My only real concern when we started this journey was whether Lauri’s birth mom wanted to be found,” Hill’s mother, Marsha Hill said. “I wanted to protect her, but I knew she had to take the risk. It turned out wonderfully.”

Lauri is excited to drive the five hours to meet her birth mother. They will see each other for the first time in 17 years on Mother’s Day.

“It’s a pretty cool coincidence,” L. Hill said. “We didn’t even realize it was Mother’s Day when we were planning the trip.”

Still, the Hills said it has become routine to receive questions about their motivations behind reuniting Lauri and her birth mother.

“I guess I could have felt threatened when Lauri said she wanted more time with her birth mother, but I would have been faking it,” M. Hill said. “I always knew she might want more answers. This has been an amazingly short journey to find Hallie. [She] is a very special woman, which makes sense. She’s like Lauri.”

Responding to others’ inquiries regarding the search for her birth mother, Lauri wants to make her intentions clear.

“I love my parents. They are the best parents ever. I just had questions,” L. Hill said. “My relationship with my parents isn’t going to change. If anything, we have gotten a lot closer. I have room in my life and in my heart for more, and my parents do, too.”

Though her biology project is now complete, Lauri still revisits her wishful Facebook post that initiated a forever connection. Through visiting her birth mother, she hopes to understand her past and grant herself peace for the future.

Renovating, revitalizing, remaking a city

Norfolk leaders look to draw younger inhabitants by instituting large-scale infrastructure initiative

It is all too common for out-of-state residents to view Nebraska as a fly-over region, filled with quality corn yet lackluster professional opportunities. Since his election as Mayor of Norfolk in 2016, Josh Moenning has made it his mission to change this stereotype by drawing young adults to his home city through the *Northeast Nebraska Growing Together* project.

“As is the case in many parts of rural America, we have struggled to maintain our young people,” Moenning said. “The only way for rural places to survive and grow is to the reverse that trend.”

Through the initiative, Moenning, city leaders, entrepreneurs, and developers have banded together to fund \$15 million worth of infrastructure development. These improvements range from adding regulating structures that prevent flooding of the Elkhorn River to establishing a higher minimum wage.

“Our biggest barrier in Northeast Nebraska is letting ourselves decide that there’s nothing we can do to transform our own future,” leader of the *Growing Together* effort Mike Flood said.

With this in mind, the project has been focused on six complementary components: downtown development, founders in residence, cooperative scholarships, workforce retraining, artists in residence, and early childhood education.

“The main goal is to increase Norfolk’s infrastructure and quality-of-life competitiveness,” Moenning said.

Set to receive their development permits from a local engineering corporation in the following weeks, the city plans to break ground in early 2022 and complete the project by mid 2023. Local leaders hope the efforts will begin to reverse the outmigration of individuals aged 20-34.

“It’s not unique to Norfolk, so many rural communities have a problem with brain drain,” Moenning said. “Many kids, as they grow up, want to go see the world, [but] it’s not about finding the best job right away. It’s about how you can make a difference in your community.”

From 2000-2010, Norfolk experienced a negative net migration rate totaling over 30% for 20 to 34-year-olds. By investing in a new city library, alternative energy projects, and more, locals have faith their city will overcome the implications of this migration.

“We have focused on treating people as more than just workers and creating a community people want to live in,” Moenning said.

Rich in history, Norfolk was founded by German Lutheran farmers settling on the north fork of the Elkhorn River. Despite the river’s record of being a source of prosperity, Moenning said many residents don’t see the value in the water source today, thus contributing to the indifference of younger individuals.

“Because of the flooding in the 1960s as well as in the past years, the river became viewed as a liability instead of an asset,” Moenning said. “So, this revitalization is a ‘back to the future’ project that will help us prosper for years to come.”

While it saddens leaders like Flood and Moenning to see their community weakened by the loss of a demographic, the mayor understands the aspirations of young adults.

“I grew up in this area like a lot of kids,” Moenning said. “I went to school and couldn’t wait to get out and leave. But I came back. I always wanted to raise my family in a smaller, more rural area.”

While places like Omaha and Lincoln are more metropolitan in nature, Norfolk natives feel there is a unique culture that comes with being a part of a smaller town.

“One of the things I particularly like about living in Norfolk is my ability to make a difference,” Moenning said. “Being involved in local government has been my most gratifying experience because I could see a difference being made.”

As downtown Norfolk, the riverbank, and recreation areas undergo their developments, Moenning will continue to share his experience and hopes with the younger community.

“If you want to make a positive difference in the future, [Norfolk] is a great place to be.”

Gaming has reached an all time high in the past several years. What started as a pastime with arcade games and home consoles has evolved into careers and livelihoods for many people worldwide. Right here, in Norfolk, the Norfolk LAN party has made the world of gaming more accessible to more people.

The Lan Party, which stands for Local Area Network Party, was started by Dr. Dan Kassmeier, who worked to organize with with the Norfolk Business Bureau and Sports Council for two years and get the idea into motion. In January of 2020, the event started off with 32 gamers in attendance, but has grown significantly with the number of participants tripling by a year later.

The event is hosted in the former Also Store across from the HyVee East every January and August and registration is open to all; from competitive gamers looking for tournaments to hobbyist gamers just wanting more playing time. The tournament also hosts colligate E-Sports teams, including the team from Wayne State, and represents around 36 college and university programs.

On tournament weekend, participants show up starting at 6 p.m. to get signed up in their desired brackets and set up their systems, where they will play from 7:30 p.m. until 2 a.m. and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m the next day. Throughout the weekend, all gamers can enter into a raffle where prizes range in size and value, including a \$2,000 PC set up, and names will be drawn randomly all day.

Raffle prizes are provided through the registration fee, which is \$30 a player, and sponsorships that they have acquired since starting off. One of the sponsors is Monster Energy, a national energy drink company known for sponsoring other large scale events across the US like Motocross tournaments. Additionally, local and smaller gaming companies and related organizations, including Hyper, Gamidas, District Table and Tap, and the Wayne State E-Sports team, make their own generous contributions to the event. Their first sponsor, Icegiant, even provided them with 10 headsets and 5 keyboards for the tournament a year ago.

Kassmeier tells of one instance where the raffle made an impact for the gamers he was able to bring in. At the first LAN party tournament that he hosted, there was a high school-aged boy that was eyeballing one of the keyboards that was a prize for a raffle ticket. At the end of the second day, there was only one prize left, that keyboard, and when the volunteer behind the counter pulled the final ticket, it was that boy's name. Kassmeier said that he loves the opportunity that the events provide in giving kids access to new and up-to-date technology that they wouldn't be able to find or afford without it.

When he isn't working for the LAN party in organizing events, Kassmeier is a full time chiropractor and physician, as well as a softball coach for a local team. By working with this new gaming organization, which is also a non-profit, Kassmeier has been able to use the revenue from the events to donate to the softball organization that he coaches for, which assists the teams and tournaments in the area.

Assistance goes both ways, though, as Kassmeier is able to recruit players from the gaming tournaments to help run brackets and game information at softball tournaments so the coaches are able to be there for their teams the whole time.

For Kassmeier, this idea started, really, at a young age "in the time of PacMan" when kids and peers he knew were struggling in school but could memorize the first three levels of the widely popular arcade game. He saw that for many of these people, the application of different skills and intelligence was there, they just needed to facilitate it in a different way and he wanted to provide a space where like-minded people with a common ground of gaming could network and work on their abilities.

"Some of these gamers have teammates that are over seas," Kassmeier said. At tournaments, he has met many gamers who know and play with others located outside of their state, region, and country. The world of gaming has no boundaries and this event in the middle of Nebraska has demonstrated that.

Since starting this organization, Kassmeier has learned of graduates from Norfolk High School who are now working for large companies to develop and improve the same software

and gaming systems that they use back in their hometown, and all across the world. One of these previous students now works for League of Legends, a popular video game, to develop aspects of the software and game design.

The reach does not have to be far to be significant. Kassmeier speaks of a family that travels from Columbus every year to be involved in the tournament; a family tradition that is sure to be filled with fun and memories.

Aside from the benefits that he is facilitation through the audience he reaches, Kassmeier also uses his practice to correct certain downsides to gaming. As a professional in ergonomics, which is the study of how joints and bones move and how the body works, he treats patients with bad posture that is often the result of slouching and hunching over while playing video games for hour on end. He sees both ends of this deal and can appropriately help people out in correcting these aspects of their gaming habits that should be broken.

Despite the bad posture, there are many benefits that are reaped through gaming and E-Sports. Overall hand-eye coordination is a major factor in playing games, as well as hand and finger mobility and dexterity, which gaming has shown to improve in most cases of avid players. Cognitive benefits are great, as well, due to the learning of, virtually, a second language of gaming jargon and computer knowledge. The process of quick critical thinking and problem solving is present in the actual playing of the games, as well.

Although he is no professional gamer, Kassmeier has used this new organization as learning opportunities even for him to become even more accustomed to the world of technology. ““I can understand what it takes to be in a bracket and play and play and play and drop into a loosing bracket and keeping it organized so it flows,” Kassmeier said.

And it does flow, so well that the event only continues to grow as new technology is released and the gaming community grows. This event is merely a catalyst.

Anthony Rubek

It is the biggest moment in these kid's lives. They step onto the same field they've watched their heroes play on, ready to battle. After four quarters of hard nose football, a team has a chance to cement themselves in history as a state champion.

There also is a coach who after tonight's game will call it quits. He has never won a championship but it looks like that is going to change in a minute. However, He is relying on the foot of a man who hasn't attempted a field goal in the last five games.

The Jackson Rabbits (12-1) defeated the Summit Hawks (10-3) 17-16 to win the Class D state football championship after senior running back turned kicker Dan Smith drilled a 44-yard field goal with just under a minute to play. This secured the Rabbits first state championship and sent off head coach Jeff Wittry in style.

After starting the game with a Summit punt, the Rabbits were able capitalize by going on an 11 play, 76-yard drive ending with a four-yard touchdown run by Smith. The senior made his presence felt early, rushing for seven times and gaining 56 yards on the drive.

"He's a pretty tough runner," Wittry said. "He can find his holes and keeps those legs churning."

Summit kicker Joe Welch was able to put on through the uprights on their next possession, but after a Summit fumble, Smith scored another touchdown for the Rabbits which gave them a 14-3 lead at the half.

"We were disappointed at halftime, being down 11," Summit junior quarterback Larry Brown said. "But we were still confident."

The Hawks came out of the locker room completely rejuvenated for the second half and after forcing a turnover on Jackson's opening drive, they were able to score another field goal. They then marched down the field, going 85 yards in 13 plays, finishing the drive with a 23-yard touchdown pass from Brown to receiver Tom Jones, cutting the Rabbit lead to just one point.

"I was proud of my kids for battling back after being down 11 at halftime," Summit head coach Rod Johnson said.

Summit was in full control by the start of the fourth quarter. The Hawks had another successful drive were Brown took over on the ground rushing for 34 yards. Welch was able to hit his third field goal of the game from 31 yards out giving Summit their first lead of the game.

It was do or die time for Jackson and all was looking good until it was fourth and one at the Summit 27. Initially, Smith was able to easily convert, rushing for seven yards. However, there was holding on the play resulting in a fourth and six.

"I thought that holding penalty was going to cost us the game," Smith said.

This left coach Wittry with a decision to make. They only needed a field goal to take the lead, but it would have to be a career long for Smith who not only has rushed for 178 yards and two touchdowns, but hasn't attempted a field goal since the regular season. Wittry made the biggest call of his career in his last game by sending Smith onto the field to kick the 44-yard attempt.

"When coach said we were going to kick it, I got a big lump in my throat," Smith said. "I've only made a few kicks over 40 yards in practice."

Smith lined up knowing that he was one kick away from history. It had the distance and just sneaked its way inside the uprights.

“When I hit it, I knew it could be good,” Smith said. “I was just hoping it would stay inside the right upright and it did.”

Summit still had a chance, but after four incomplete passes, all Jackson had to do was take one kneel down to send coach Wittry out on top.

“We were all so excited to win, and then when Coach Wittry told us he was retiring, we all got teary-eyed,” Smith said. “We couldn’t ask for a better way to send him out.”

As for Summit, while this isn’t the result they wanted, they still left it all on the field and showed a ton of heart.

“We’re crushed that we lost in the last minute, but we’re also proud of how well we responded in the second half,” Brown said.

Both sides were a part of an instant classic which featured multiple moments of grit, triumph, and defeat. No matter if they won or lost, each player showed out on the state’s biggest stage.

A Race for First Place

Activities' Booster Club Throws Its Annual Marathon Fundraiser

3...2...1. The whistle blew and the race began. English teacher at Quartz City High School, Mr. Davis, was off. Davis had been working for that moment for the past seven years.

"I'd been training for marathons for the last seven years," Davis said. "I've competed in marathons for the last six years, never finishing as a champion. I've only ran in this race the last two years, and as far as I could tell, the competition only gets better every year."

Little did Davis know that this year would be different for him.

Davis ran with every ounce of energy that he had. The finish line was a few steps ahead of him. He saw that finish line and knew that he had made it. For the first time in six years, Davis was now a winner, he was the men's marathon champion.

"I originally wasn't planning on running in the Miners' Marathon for a second year, but I had made deal with my students, that if all the senior fall sport athletes took one of my two AP (Advanced Placement) English classes, whether it would be AP credit or not, I would run the race," Davis said. "I did that because, I thought 'who could it hurt?' It got more student athletes to take a class that prepared them for college, my signup fee goes to a good cause and it brought up some school spirit and morale in the classroom."

At the end of August, the Activities' Booster club put on a fundraiser. The fundraiser included a 5k run, a half marathon and a marathon called "Miners' Marathon." Proceeds that were made, came from runners simply signing up.

"As a competitive runner, I liked that the boosters were putting on a fundraiser like this," Davis said. "It was a fundraiser that could get the community involved and could utilize the community's streets and facilities. As a smaller school and community, it was easy for the rest of the world to miss us, and this race was a good way of bringing new people to the rest of our community."

A specific amount of money that was made went to an academic scholarship that any graduating senior that attended Quartz City High School had the opportunity to get. The school had a population of 300 students grades 9-12, and senior Michelle Yoder, was the person to win

the award. Yoder was a cross country runner, distance runner on the track team, a member of National Honor Society and had a role in the Spring musical.

“I was extremely grateful to have received the Miners’ Marathon Scholarship,” Yoder said. “I know there was a lot of competition for it considering as long as you were enrolled at Quartz, you qualified for it.”

To help the fundraiser happen, different groups and organizations at school came together and set up hydration stations throughout the route.

“The Miners’ Marathon Scholarship meant a lot to me because I had been helping put it on, through the clubs and organizations I had been in, for the last four years,” Yoder said. “I would like to help raise money to fund the future Miners’ Marathon Scholarship recipients, since it will help me greatly with making a college education affordable.”

This year brought in a record high with proceeds. The Activities Booster Club was able to raise \$10,000. The remaining money that wasn’t given to the Scholarship was divided evenly between the groups and organizations that helped during the race.

Knowing that most of that was possible because of Davis and the deal he made in the spring semester, Yoder was grateful.

“I remember when Davis suggested that deal last year,” Yoder said. “I had already planned on taking one of his AP English classes anyways, but now it made it easier for me to convince some of my friends to sign up for the same one. He mentioned that he ran, but never told us he was a marathoner, that was a surprise to all of us students. The classroom surely had a different energy to it, now that there was a champion among us.”

Caleb De La Cruz

Victoria High School has done it again. After placing second last year to Plainville High School in the East-North-West-South Conference (ENWSC) girls track championship last year, the Knights have reclaimed the throne, winning the meet by .5 points. Victoria has now won nine of the last 10 championships, but this year's road to glory came different than any other. With poor weather conditions and a slippery track, seniors and top scorers Shelby Schister and Betty Bonker both went down with injuries mid-meet, meaning the Knights would have to rely on freshmen Ally Williams and Bonnie Blue to step up.

"When I got hurt, and then Betty got hurt, I started crying because I thought there was no way we could win the championship, and that's one of our major goals," Schister said.

Along with Schister, all hopes at a championship seemed to be lost for Victoria coach Doug Moeckel as well. Moeckel expressed how proud he was of the freshmen for stepping up in a big moment, especially when both had no prior varsity experience.

"Once Shelby and Betty became injured, I did not think we could win the championship. Those two freshmen had not run in a varsity meet before and I didn't know how they would respond," Moeckel said. "I am so proud of how they didn't seem to let the pressure bother them and they simply performed. This title is definitely a team title."

Moeckel was not the only one proud of the freshmen, as Schister also spoke of Williams and Blue highly. To her, not only did they come up big in the championship, but their work ethic at practice was also impressive.

"Ally and Bonnie were awesome. Betty and I ran up to them and gave them a big hug we were so excited," she said. "They've done a great job in practice all season in our workouts and when we practice handoffs. I'm glad I'm graduating because I don't know if I will be able to beat them next year."

For Williams, all that was going through her head was to win. Not for herself, but for her teammates, no matter how tired she was, or how scared she felt.

"I was so scared for those two relays that I almost forgot to take out my earrings," Williams said. "I still can't believe we won. In that 1600 relay, I just ran as hard as I could and tried to catch the Plainville girl. My legs got tired, especially since I had just run the 400 relay, but I didn't want to let my teammates down, especially the seniors."

As for the meet itself, Victoria athletic director Dr. Dan Josoff thought it went well, as he said despite multiple injuries and the poor weather conditions, he didn't feel it was enough for cancellation.

“The meet went very smoothly, despite the poor weather conditions. We feel bad that a few athletes sustained injuries, but we did not feel the weather was dangerous enough to postpone the meet,” he said.

After the meet concluded, legendary Victoria coach Moeckel retired. Finishing his tenure with a total of 17 conference titles in 25 years, most would say his time as a coach for the Knights was a success. Although he won many titles, he knows he’ll always have a special place in his heart for his final championship.

“I’ll always remember my last EWNCS championship for the way we won it,” Moeckel said. “Aren’t these girls amazing?”

Izzy Fonfara Drewel

Theme: Moving Up and Moving On

Opening:

There comes a time in life where a decision has to be made. A decision between staying stagnant or Moving Up and Moving On.

Husker High has never been a school to simply sit around and wait. We've always been ready and willing to adapt and move on to the next best thing.

As Husker High celebrated their 20-year anniversary, we observed how we've changed over time.

Some of our staff moved on to a new chapter in their life and we welcomed in a new superintendent and 23 new teachers at our school.

During the senior trip to the Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame, students grasped how sports at Husker High have evolved.

At the Back to School Barbeque, we realized how others had changed and moved on to becoming who they truly are. They moved up and away from their childhood and on to who they will be.

The year opened full of opportunities and chances for us to Move Up and Move On.

Division (Sports):

Sports were the heartbeat of our school and we knew it.

It showed in the cheers during the football and basketball rivalry games against Hawkeye Central.

We heard it from John Cook during his assembly on winning culture. Our athletes took his message to heart and proceeded to have amazing seasons.

The senior class learned about the importance of Husker High's sports department during their trip to the Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame. They saw countless past champions and state medalists, and realized how they could keep that legacy alive.

The Cowboys have constantly strived to keep their athletics at the top, and to do that we had to adapt.

After the disappointing end to the girls' basketball season, we hired a new coach who helped our girls move on. They went on to defeat Hawkeye Central in their rivalry match this year.

John Cook's assembly really inspired some of our athletes and they used that to move up in their activities.

"I really took what he said to heart, and I just practiced my hardest," Joe McLaughlin [11] said. "I ended up finishing the season with a new PR in high jump."

The Husker High Cowboys did their best and it showed. After Moving Up and Moving On they became a force to be reckoned with all while wearing our signature green, white and black.

Closing:

Moving Up and Moving On is essential to life but it also means leaving things behind.

Our seniors will no longer hear the roar of the crowd at the rivalry football game or the applause of the audience after the Spring Musical.

No more will the freshmen be teased during the Homecoming Pep Rally.

Moving On will be tough but memories are always there.

The shenanigans pulled at post-Prom will live on in our minds. Especially when our Prom King dropped and broke his crown directly after coronation.

After the attempted sabotages, class competitions will be hard to forget. The juniors still won even after the seniors rigged the counts.

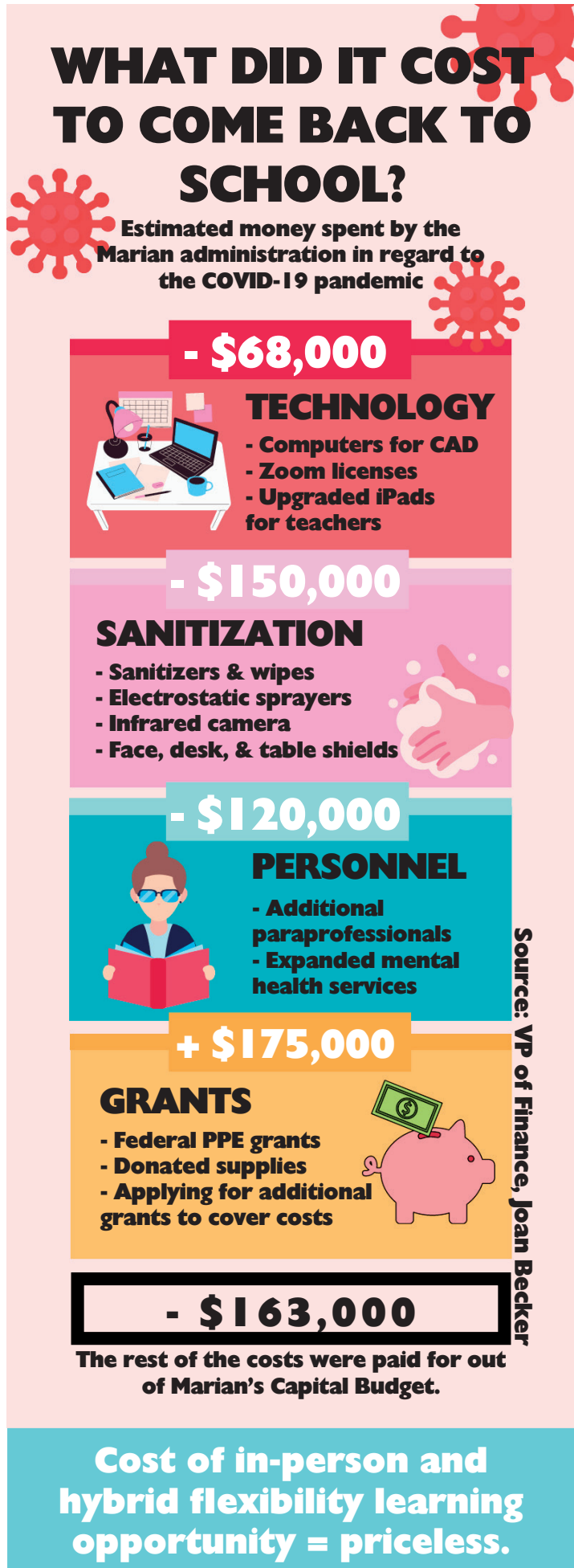
One of our freshmen learned a valuable lesson about not sticking keys into outlets, which almost caused him to lose his chromebook.

We have created enough memories here to last several lifetimes. Husker High gave everyone a great year and hopefully it gives 20 more great years.

We congratulate those who are moving up in their schooling and we wish our graduates luck as they move on to their next chapter.

The end of the year was a bittersweet moment for everyone but now is a time for Moving Up and Moving On.

#14 Info Graphic, Naomi Delkamiller, Omaha Marian



Infographic by NaomiDelkamiller

Omaha grapples
with its ugly past

we don't learn about
things that contribute
to life in NE

ppl are forgetting that our
city's name is literally
stole from the Omaha

discuss highway 75's
impact on the north
Omaha comm

MOVING FORWARD

Millard community discusses
concerns relating to race,
representation in the classroom

do you believe I was
the same city as
Malcom X and never
learned abt him in
school??

statues were of horrific
racists! doesn't that
prove that no one
learned history?

NE schools
teach more
Nebraska's race

American history
books are misleading

we only learned
about Malcom X for
2 days in school

discuss the race
riots of 1919

The text displayed in this cover
comes from tweets written by Millard
students and other voices from the
Omaha community.

DIVERSIFYING NARRATIVES

Students, staff give their opinions on representation in curriculum

SNEHA SELVERAJ
Staff Writer

When sophomore Sarah Qaud heard the topic of Islam being brought up in her AP Human Geography class, she braced herself, ready to hear the stereotypes she faced so often. She was instead surprised to hear her teacher call out the false portrayal of Muslims in the media. After years of seeing her religion taught in a negative light, she was relieved to hear her teacher speak from an unbiased perspective.

MPS promises a diverse education for all of its students. In MPS Superintendent Jim Sutfin's statement in June regarding racism, he said that the district plans to implement input they receive from students into the curriculum reform process and focus on elevating minority voices.

Following this statement, an open letter to Millard was published by Millard West alumni. In addition to concerns regarding systemic racism within MPS, they requested a review of social studies standards to ensure they cover more diverse areas.

Current students gave their opinion on concerns that they had with the English and history curriculums as well: Junior Manali Mukherjee spoke about *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which she read in her freshman English class. She said that while it was "undeniably well-written," there should still be acknowledgement of its white

savior complex.

"We should be reading it, but it shouldn't be the book to teach us about race," Mukherjee said. "We need stories from BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] authors also. I'm tired of hearing about people of color from white authors."

The amount of curriculum-required books focused on POC perspectives vary from class to class. In Honors English 9, it is three of the twelve books. In English 9, it is six of the twelve.

The ultimate decision of which books are read comes down to each teacher. While sophomore Keira Levering read four of the six POC perspective books in Regular English 9, in junior Sammy Ward's Honors English 9 class, she read one: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

English Department Head Leslie Irwin said that this may be subject to change. Books that were optional could become required when the curriculum for English is discussed in five years

"I would fully expect that there will be updated language to require a bit more [required books]," Irwin said. "We are rethinking how we do things to make a better effort towards equal representation. We would have seen more immediacy if not for the pandemic."

When examining the social studies curriculum, while it covers many areas, there is some concern over a lack of multiple viewpoints. When Qaud found out that Abraham Lincoln was not a true abolitionist, she was

surprised that she hadn't been taught this side of him in school yet.

Social studies department head David Diehl said that while he likes to have his students read multiple perspectives, exploring the facets of every historical figure or event isn't always possible. With so many opinions to balance within the district and limited time within a school year, it is a difficult decision to decide what to keep in and leave out.

"Every group's story is important and deserves to be told," Diehl said. "But what do you do when Group A's story conflicts with Group B's story?"

Every seven years, the district discusses the curriculum for each subject. This year, the focus will be on social studies.

"We have committed to listening to our students, staff, and community members as we revise the curriculum," Associate Superintendent of Education Services Heather Phipps said.

Phipps and other teachers will discuss the state curriculum standards. While she isn't sure what will change, Phipps said diversity is "always something we consider in the process".

So for now, both the students and staff of MPS can only wait for what changes will come.

"To find a perfect answer that pleases everybody is almost impossible," Diehl said. "But making progress towards the good is a noble goal worth fighting [for]."

HITTING THE BOOKS
Breaking down the cornerstone reads in Millard's English curriculum
For every high school English class, there is a cornerstone novel that every teacher is required to assign. Here are the book titles and their authors.

FAHRENHEIT 451
BY: RAY BRADBURY
Honors English 10

Published in 1953
Written by a white, male author
Awarded "Retro Hugo Award for Best Novel"

THE GREAT GATSBY
BY: F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
English 11

Published in 1925
Written by a white, male author
Recognized as one of "America's Best-Loved novels" by PBS

LORD OF THE FLIES
BY: WILLIAM GOLDING
English 10

Published in 1954
Written by a white, male author
Awarded Nobel Prize in Literature

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
BY: HARPER LEE
English 9/Honors English 9

Published in 1960
Written by a white, female author
Awarded the Pulitzer Prize



Disclaimer: there are specific units and collections dedicated to social justice, identity, and other topics. To see the full list of curriculum reads, scan this QR code.



"If I could change the curriculum, I would make more classes emphasize subjects that focus on abilities that we need for when we are adults. Changing tires, taxes, and other everyday things that most teens don't know how to do [are important]."
-Payton Stone, Sophomore

"If I could change something about the school teaching, it would be less testing and more creative thinking. Sometimes tests put lots of pressure on students, and that makes us miss out on real-life applications and connections."
-Ava Rhode, Junior

"I wish we learned more about the bad parts of American history as well as the good parts. Sometimes I feel like we only highlight the good parts of our past and repeat some of the mistakes we've made."
-Romey Loveridge, Freshman

"I would want to focus more on applying the things we learn in every class rather than just learning it for the test and then pushing it to the side."
-Corbin Augustine, Senior

COMMITTING TO CHANGE

Millard starts district committee to hear student diversity issues

LILY TAYLOR
Sports Editor

As a district, MPS guarantees each student will demonstrate character, knowledge, and skills required to succeed. While education-wise students are prepared for success in college, when confronted with societal issues previous alumni feel their Millard education has put them at a disadvantage.

"Since our graduation, each of us has confronted a reality that our MPS education did not prepare us for... We have discovered that the narrative of equal opportunity and access in America is a myth," alumni said in their Open Letter to Millard written this summer.

In an effort to change the racial dynamic and systematic racism present in the Millard community, alumni have called for the implementation of a new committee formed strictly for the diversity and inclusion of minority voices in district decisions.

"Solutions must value the voices and needs of Black and other marginalized students, and we must follow their lead in implementing change," alumni said.

In June, Millard Superintendent Jim Sutfin released a plan for a new Student Diversity Committee tailored towards preventing and ending racial issues in our community.

"Moving forward we are developing a listening strategy so that we make sure we are hearing from our black students, and other students of color as well as other marginalized groups," Superintendent Jim Sutfin said in his June 8 statement. "We can't solve what we don't know, and we can't assume. This will give us the information and data. We will listen."

The committee will be made of students from each high school with representatives from each grade. They will conference regularly with head district officials Sutfin, Associate Superintendent of

Human Resources Kevin Chick, and Associate Superintendent of Education Services Heather Phipps.

The individual students on the committee will be nominated by the principals of each school.

"Each principal is establishing the Student Diversity Council in [their] building. Many schools already have diversity clubs. Then, each principal will recommend a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior for the District Student Diversity Council," Chick said.

With their focus being to listen to the issues and experiences of each individual student, they plan for the students to lead the discussion.

"Our primary focus this year is to listen. We want to hear from our students in terms of their experiences and feelings around these issues," Chick said. "These issues will be driven by the students on the Student Diversity Council."

With MN's Diversity Club starting Sept. 10, no students have been elected for the committee.

According to Principal Brian Begley, they worked closely with senior Valery Shafack this summer to determine which students would best fit the role in the district committee.

"[Mr. Begley] asked me to pick a group of students who I think would be able to push that boundary and help change the narrative. It wasn't tough because I have a lot of friends who are very passionate about the issue," Shafack said.

They have high expectations for the committee and have set their standards for change. Committee meetings will be open to any students.

"I want us to bring hard-hitting topics that normally people would be scared to talk about," Shafack said. "We can learn from each other and understand each other better."

With this new committee, students believe change is imminent and welcomed. Their hopes to grow as a community become ever stronger as conversation starts and change begins.

“Solutions must value the voices and needs of Black and other marginalized students.”

JIM SUTFIN
MPS SUPERINTENDENT

CURRICULUM REQUESTS
If students could have a say in class material, what would they change?

"While it is important to talk about, I am tired of only hearing about my skin color when it's to talk about pain. I think it is important to represent us [people of color] beyond that."
-Manali Mukherjee, Junior

FROM TWEET TO STREET

Millard students use social media to amplify voices

SIDNEY ANDERSON

Opinions Editor

3.8 billion. It's hard to imagine that half of the world's population is affected by Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Nothing else touches that many people globally.

On May 25, George Floyd's last breath was seen across a nation. With social media in the hands of many, the word was spread of another unjust death in the black community. Black Lives Matter or BLM was once again trending on all platforms. Senior Cartney McGuigan said the resurgence of the movement called action to all Americans to remove themselves from their personal "bubbles."

"The movement has opened the eyes of many and made a problem that has been around since the beginning of time seem like it can be changed," senior Cartney McGuigan said.

Social media has connected the world in ways that no other platform has been able. BLM has capitalized on utilizing applications that connect multiple nations. Not only were there protests in North America but also in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. On June 2, Blackout Tuesday, people posted a black image on all social media platforms in support of BLM. It called for people to support the movement and black owned businesses.

"Social media plays a big part in getting voices heard by raising awareness, raising money, [and] just plain out telling people we [BLM] are here. A single post can educate many," senior Sena Ahovissi said.

The importance of social media regarding the Black Lives Matter Movement is that it is now possible for the usually unheard voice to be shared. Black people are now able to share personal accounts of their struggle on a very public scale and call for change.

"Social media is positively affecting the BLM movement because it's giving people of all races the confidence to share stories and support the cause," senior

Kya Carter said.

Another big role social media plays is getting young voices heard. Social media has allowed a space where teenagers can speak freely about their beliefs. When the BLM movement started to gain traction, teenagers took to social media to show their support.

"Social media allows young people to gain confidence in sticking up for what they believe in," Carter said.

BLM has also asked people to educate themselves on black history. Social media has provided a platform where people can take the first steps to better educate themselves on the topic.

"Social media has created a space for me to educate myself and other people on the things [BLM movement] happening in the country right now," McGuigan said.

Though social media can be used as a tool McGuigan said that social media can be seen as a "double edged sword" and does not always have a positive influence.

"It [social media] shows people what really happens, but can also create a place of false narratives," McGuigan said.

Millions of people post on social media, and it can be difficult to monitor all of the content. The lack of control allows for posts to not always be factual and for a spread of misinformation. Misinformation spreads

quickly on social media because of confirmation bias and validation of preexisting beliefs.

An example is when people post something without context to lean towards their views. Pictures and videos that are cropped and cut can be made relevant when they are actually not. This past summer there were many pictures and videos of violence at protests spread on social media, however, some were later proven to be at different time periods. The pictures were used to create a narrative of untrust on both sides.

Even with social media's missteps it has become essential to BLM. Because of social media, members of the Black community have realized how many are standing in unity with their cause.

As Carter said, "This is everyone's movement."



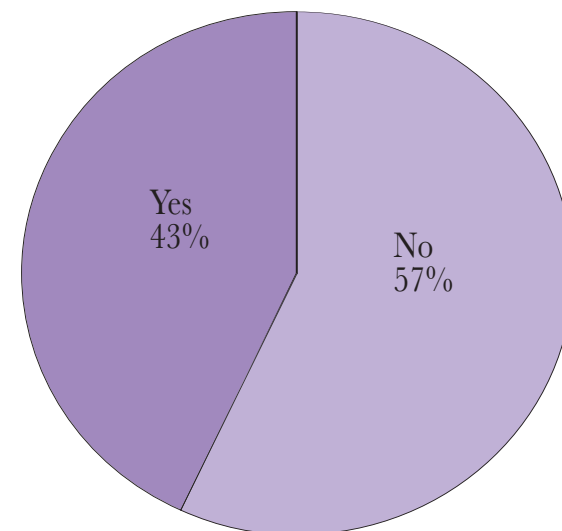
Uploading a Movement:

Junior Will Ramsey attends marches in support of the BLM movement and posts updates on his Instagram (above). "I think it mobilizes a lot of people; there are hundreds of millions if not billions of people on social media," Ramsey said.

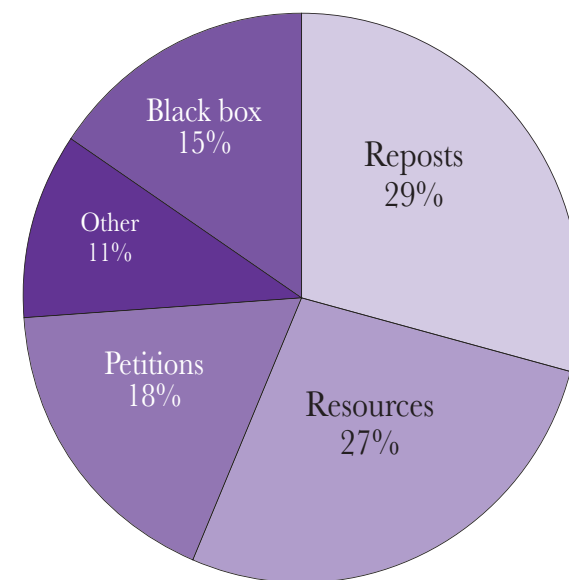
Photographs contributed by Will Ramsey

QUICK POLL

Have you posted anything on your social media accounts relating to BLM?



What did you post?



**Survey of 100 students*

HONORING A COMMUNITY

LGBTQ+ History Month empowers students throughout October

ISA LUZARRAGA
Editor-in-Chief

Senior Sara Foley** first came out to her best friend over three paragraphs of text on Snapchat. Finally confiding in someone that she was bisexual, Foley was scared at this vulnerability. Her friend came over that day, tears streaming down both of their faces as they embraced, and Foley knew she was accepted.

Her coming out story and subsequent acceptance of her sexuality remind Foley of the importance of LGBTQ+ history month.

“LGBTQ history is super important, not just for kids involved in the community, but also for straight allies,” Foley said. “It helps lead to more understanding who we are and what we stand for.”

The month-long celebration was founded in 1994 by Missouri high school teacher Rodney Wilson and now honors a prominent LGBTQ+ figure every day of October.

“Its purpose, in a sense, is to normalize talking about an integral part of the past that most of the time gets overlooked,” gay senior Jared Gerhardt said. “By providing an outlet to discuss it, LGBTQ+ history month is an amazing way to expose people to new perspectives that they previously had not been aware of.”

Gay senior Marc Hoyer said the discussion of LGBTQ+ history has become more important than ever due to continued discrimination.

“It’s easy to assume that we don’t really have to [teach LGBTQ+ history] because we are a more accepting country,” Hoyer said. “But like any minority, we pretend we’ve fixed all of the problems related to LGBTQ+ issues when the ideologies of hatred still persist.”

In the United States, there are currently four states that require the teaching of LGBTQ+ history in schools. However, according to an article from the U.S. News Report, implementation in New Jersey, Illinois, Colorado, and California schools could be slowed since individual districts can choose their own standards regarding how the community’s history is taught.

State laws regarding same-sex relationships have lead to Texas, Alabama, and four other states prohibiting the teaching or portrayal of LGBTQ+ individuals in any positive, instructional form.

“The lack of education stems from a bigger problem with the system of not counting queer people as people in general,” Foley said. “Teaching more people about our history will lead to fewer negative connotations with the community as a whole.”

Junior Ella Eckerman came out as a lesbian in 2019 and said the only exposure to LGBTQ+ history she experienced was in her Human Diversity class.

“Each and every student can benefit from learning about the history of the community,” Eckerman said. “Understanding the past and growth of acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals is very important.

Art department head Jon Austin said his Art History class discusses the identity of artists when their experience as LGBTQ+ individuals influences their work. When introducing art made by Keith Haring, Austin discusses how his sexuality and the contextualization of the AIDS epidemic can be seen in his pop art.

Austin said acknowledging this makes queer students feel recognized in school. “By including LGBTQ+ history where it’s appropriate or where it comes up in curriculum, it shows students that they’re heard and understood,” Austin said. “Not only could it lessen bullying, but, when you look at suicide rates among LGBTQ+ students, those numbers could go down because they’re seeing themselves represented, they’re not being ignored.”

With this connection between education and acceptance in mind, LGBTQ+ students, teachers, and allies alike said they hope to see LGBTQ+ history month and significant historical events integrated into classrooms.

“Just understanding America and our history, it’s a piece of the puzzle,” Austin said. “The events in the past have importance. Equity in education helps students know they’re heard, they are seen.”

**Name has been changed



Laverne Cox

The first openly transgender person to be on the cover of Cosmopolitan Magazine.



Todrick Hall

Social Media Star and Drag Queen. Made the 30 under 30 list and was in a Taylor Swift video.



Vincent Rodriguez III

A gay Asian-American actor most known for his role in Crazy Ex-Girlfriend.

HELPING HINTS

A quick dictionary for expanding your LGBTQ+ vocabulary

COMING OUT

A metaphor used by LGBTQ+ to self-disclose their sexuality of gender identity. It is important to allow the person to come out on their own time and not “out” them without their consent.

CISGENDER

Referring to a person whose gender and personal identity corresponds with what they were assigned at birth.

QUEER

An umbrella term for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community. Formerly a slur that has been since reclaimed by some members of the community.

SHE/HER HE/HIM THEY/THEM ZE/HIR

Pronouns. A word that is used to refer to someone. They/Them is singular as well as plural. Ze/Hir is a neopronoun, and is typically referring to nonbinary individuals.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and everyone else who feels represented by this community

MONUMENTOUS MOMENTS

A timeline of historic moments in the LGBTQ+ community

JUNE 28, 1969



Homosexuality was removed from the official list of mental disorders

The police raid at Stonewall Inn, a historic gay bar, occurred, creating the first pride protest

1973



JUNE 26, 2015



Mayor Pete Buttigieg announced his run for President, becoming the first openly gay candidate.

APRIL 14, 2019



HEARTLAND PRIDE

Heartland Pride has occurred annually, with the exclusion of 2020 due to the pandemic, each June since 1985 in celebration of Pride Month. The first Omaha Pride was a memorial of those who lost their lives to AIDS.

FLAG FACTS

Breaking down some of the who and what in the LGBTQ+ community



Made in 2015, the lesbian flag most basically refers to a woman interested in women. There is no official design, however this is the most widely recognized, symbolizing femininity and community.



Gilbert Baker designed the gay flag in 1978 as a symbol of hope and liberation. From top to bottom, the colors represent sexuality, life, healing, the sun, nature, art, harmony, and spirit.



December 1998 marks the first appearance of the bisexual flag. The colors symbolize same sex attraction, opposite sex attraction, and attraction across the gender spectrum.



The transgender flag was first flown at pride 2000. It represents traditional colors for baby boys and baby girls, as well as white, for those who feel as if they do not have a gender.



In 2014, the non-binary flag was made. Yellow is for people outside of the gender binary, white for people with multiple genders, purple for those with mixed identities, and black for agender individuals.



The progressive pride flag was designed to be more inclusive. The black and brown stripes are for marginalized POC groups, and the white blue and pink are from the transgender flag.



WHO IS WHO ON THE COVER

Clockwise from top left: Laverne Cox, Pete Buttigieg, Vincent Rodriguez III, Freddie Mercury, Jonathan Van Ness, Janelle Monae, Elton John, Lil Nas X, Todrick Hall (Center).

THE MARIAN NETWORK

VOLUME SIXTY-FIVE • ISSUE FIVE • FEBRUARY 2021

MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL • 7400 MILITARY AVENUE OMAHA, NE 68134 • WWW.MARIANDIGITALNETWORK.COM



“AS SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES HAVE GOTTEN MORE INVOLVED IN NEWS...THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES AND HOW THEY ACTUALLY FUNCTION HAS BEEN REACHING A BREAKING POINT.”

- BECCA LEWIS

PHD CANDIDATE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Free speech on social media: where is the line?

Naomi Delkamiller

For Marian girls who use social media, the decisions being made to ban certain accounts and content is concerning. Junior Sydney Schroeder said she believes that “people can say, do or post whatever they believe in as long as they respect others and do so in a peaceful manner.”

In the fallout of Twitter’s decision to ban former president Donald Trump from its platform, a national conversation has been ignited around free speech on social media.

“Free speech frequently crosses into hate speech when others begin arguing and get angry. Slur dropping and tone raising become apparent in these situations,” Schroeder said. “[However] I don’t believe anything political should be taken down unless it promotes violence, or any illegal activity.”

The decision to ban and remove content may seem strange in the context of social media, but Becca Lewis, a PhD candidate in communication at Stanford University, has been researching the process for months. “As social media companies have gotten more involved as intermediaries in news and political coverage, the difference between how they present themselves and how they actually function has been reaching a breaking point,” Lewis said. “We need to acknowledge [Twitter and Facebook] as editorializers so we can hold them accountable for what they actually do.”

Mary Catherine Ruesch, Marian’s digital media coordinator, said that people equate the right to assembly with the right to use social media as a meeting place. “[Yet] with that comes rules,” Ruesch said. “Twitter is a company, they have their own brand to promote, and company values to uphold. If they feel like someone is violating that to an extreme, it is their right to ban someone or remove them.” Ruesch has a unique perspective on the matter, as she is responsible for all of Marian’s social media accounts. “If I shared something that did not uphold Marian’s brand, the six core values, the administration would have every right to

take it down.”

Ruesch sees social media as a marketplace of ideas and a platform for engagement. However, she has noticed a shift in its use, citing the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020. “In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, people were stepping up and being vocal. People were no longer afraid to expose the injustices they felt,” Ruesch said. “People have realized that their voice matters.”

Courtney McGann is the head of the social media management team at KreativElement, an internet marketing service in Omaha, Neb. “The word ‘censorship’ leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and for good reason. It’s a slippery slope,” McGann said. Yet, she views terms and conditions as a safeguard for the social media company to “help them carry out their fiduciary duty to their audience to shut down hate speech, stop scammers, help stymie the spread of misinformation and a lot more.”

Due to the liability placed on social media companies, McGann does not see unrestricted platforms as a solution to the current controversy. “As the standards of our news organizations have crumbled, we have now had to say that these social media platforms have a responsibility to their users/community to step in and uphold certain standards,” McGann said.

Platform leaders like Jack Dorsey and Mark Zuckerberg are facing an ethical dilemma: Is it possible to uphold the right to free speech and simultaneously halt the spread of misinformation and violence? In the coming years, there will likely be widespread reform around the use of social media, but there is no doubt that free speech is being redefined, leaving many users wondering “Where is the line?”



Graphic by Madde Genoways



Freshman Anna Egermayer checks her socials. Photo by Naomi Delkamiller



#18 Sports Action Photography, Anna Burton, Millard West



#19 News Feature Photography, Jamie Reiff, Omaha Central



Special Report
Pages 46-59

C O R O N A V I R U S

***THE SHOCK
SETS IN***

**HOW THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC CHANGED
HIGH SCHOOL LIFE**



Special Report

For your safety, please walk
ONE WAY
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Zesto

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Thank you for keeping us all safe!

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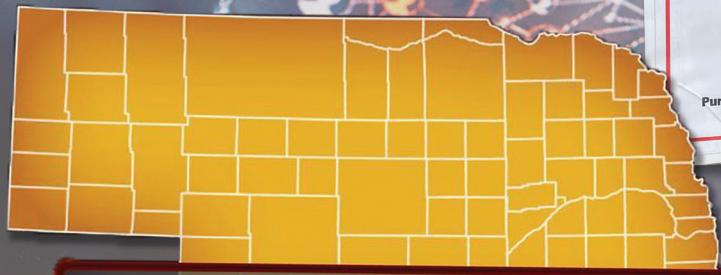
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\$1 each

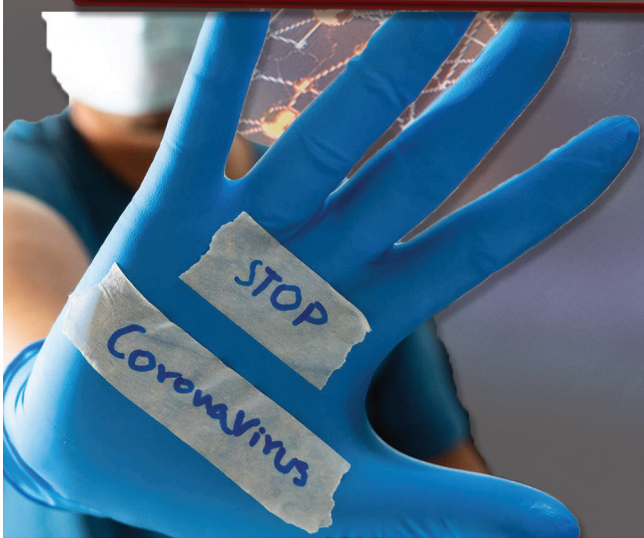
Purchase mask at Service Desk

Thank you for keeping us all safe!

MENARDS



CORONAVIRUS DATA



Special Report **47**

#21 Yearbook Theme Development

Samantha Chase, Delany Jepsen, Sophia Allen

Gretna

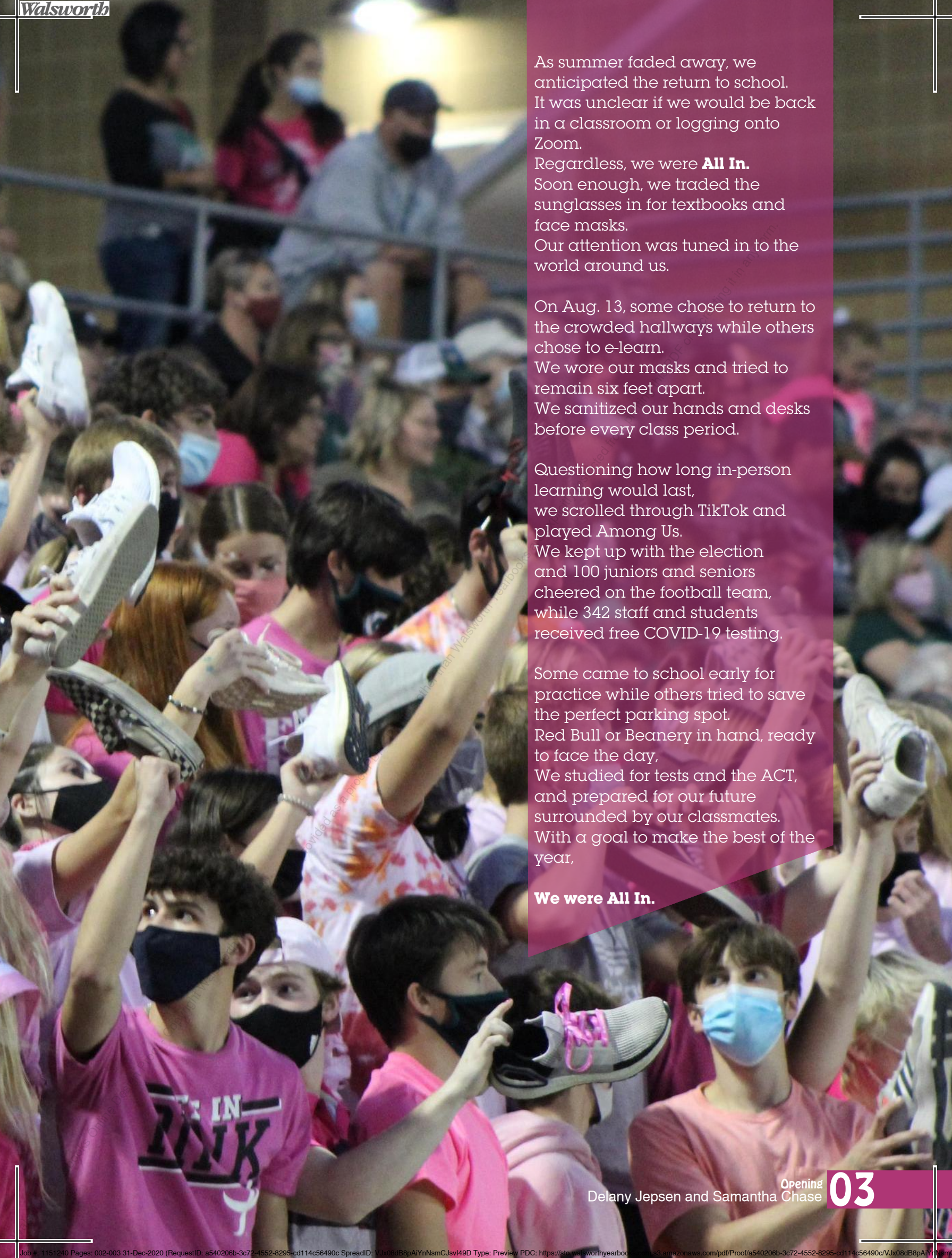
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The Dragon 2021

All In

Pink Out At a football game, the student section holds up their shoes. "I'm glad we got to go to the games our senior year," senior Tagg Crnkovich said. "I liked being able to support the team." The team lost to Elkhorn South 35-10. Photo by Delany Jepsen





As summer faded away, we anticipated the return to school. It was unclear if we would be back in a classroom or logging onto Zoom.

Regardless, we were **All In**. Soon enough, we traded the sunglasses in for textbooks and face masks.

Our attention was tuned in to the world around us.

On Aug. 13, some chose to return to the crowded hallways while others chose to e-learn.

We wore our masks and tried to remain six feet apart. We sanitized our hands and desks before every class period.

Questioning how long in-person learning would last, we scrolled through TikTok and played Among Us.

We kept up with the election and 100 juniors and seniors cheered on the football team, while 342 staff and students received free COVID-19 testing.

Some came to school early for practice while others tried to save the perfect parking spot. Red Bull or Beany in hand, ready to face the day, We studied for tests and the ACT, and prepared for our future surrounded by our classmates. With a goal to make the best of the year,

We were All In.

All In The Experience

Students Travel Within COVID-19 Restrictions



Cole **Dobberstein** (23)



Reid **Schelding** (23) and Braden **Schelding** (21)

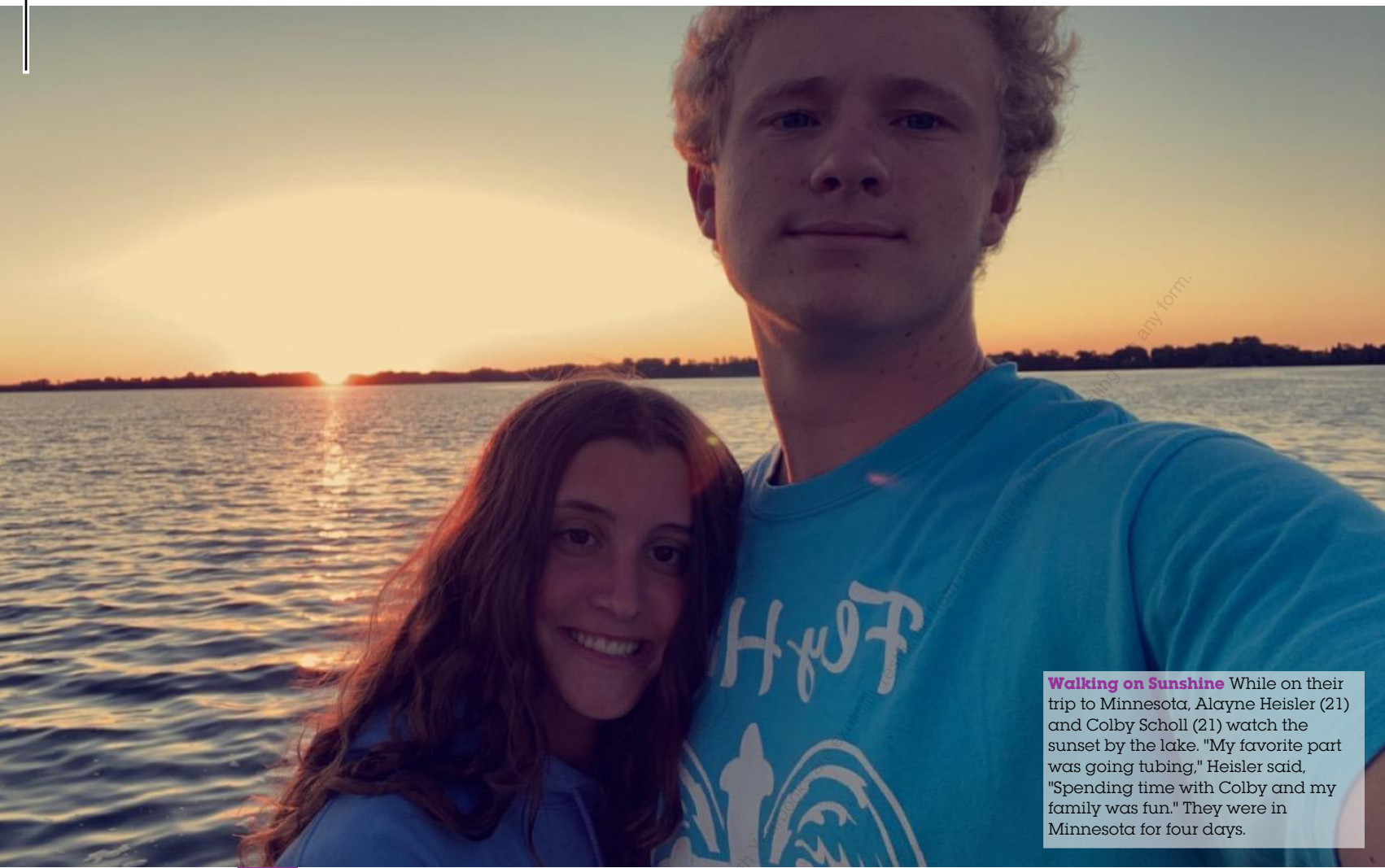
Happy as a Clam Under the palm trees, Brooke Cwelich (24) enjoys the beach. "My favorite part was parasailing," Cwelich said. "We were there for five days." She enjoyed the beaches of Treasure Island, Florida.



The Shade is Real Staying at a resort, Ava Nelson (22) shows off her sunglasses. "It was so much fun to go swimming and relax in such a beautiful place," Nelson said. She stayed in Cape Coral Florida for five days.



Free in KC While in Kansas City, Missouri, Paige Kittelson (21), Bella Donovan (21) and Abigail Randall (21) go out for dinner. "My favorite part of the trip as going to Worlds of Fun," Donovan said. "Spending time with my best friends was awesome." They spent three days riding rollercoasters and shopping.



Walking on Sunshine While on their trip to Minnesota, Alayne Heisler (21) and Colby Scholl (21) watch the sunset by the lake. "My favorite part was going tubing," Heisler said, "Spending time with Colby and my family was fun." They were in Minnesota for four days.



Gearing Up For Colorado Riding bikes in the mountains, Carsen Gobber (19) and Clara Gobber (23) strike a pose. "My favorite part of Colorado was definitely the hikes we went on," Gobber (23) said. "I was there for four days." Their trip was cut short due to COVID-19 concerns.

What is your favorite vacation memory?

1. "I went to Japan. I got to see this dog statue with a ton of history behind it and it was cool." - Connor Beck (21)

2. "My favorite vacation memory is going cliff-jumping in Belieze." - Leah Heck (24)

3. "My favorite vacation has been going to Disneyland in California." - Edie Doorenbos (22)





You Want A Piece Of Me? On the last day of first semester, Zoey Schultz (21) shoves a pie in Mr. Todd Mueller's face. "Our first hour class donated the most clothes and I volunteered to pie him," Schultz said. "I chose him because he was the principal and I knew him the most." Ponchos were given to those getting pied to keep their clothes clean. Photo by Avery Kallman



When we returned to the classroom, there were still unknowns. But we kept up with sporting events, and looked forward to the moments ahead that would make us proud. As the sound of our alarms woke us up for another school year, we were **All In** for whatever laid ahead.

Although we did not have a traditional homecoming, royalty was still crowned. We held a mock election and of age seniors voted for the first time. The overall student body voted for Donald Trump's second term, But, our nation elected Joe Biden and the first female vice president Kamala Harris.

Our football team advanced to the playoffs for the first time in Class A. The boy's cross country and tennis teams competed for a title. In their second year, the e-sports team qualified for state, bowling became an official Nebraska High School Sport and One Act won their 11th state title.

Modern Acapella sang spooky Halloween songs as we anticipated Thanksgiving and Winter Break. We crammed for tests, finals and assignments while working part-time jobs.

We worked hard to pass our classes. Through contact tracing, some of us were quarantined. During that time, we kept up with our classes through Zoom. Despite changes, we participated in clubs and extracurriculars. Juniors and seniors volunteered for their NHS hours, And we jammed out to our favorite artists ranging from DaBaby to Morgan Wallen.

Together, we remained **All In**

No Dance? No Problem

Students Show Spirit Despite Cancelations

The school gym was empty on Sept. 18, the day that would have been the homecoming dance, due to COVID-19 precautions, but that did not stop students from making homecoming week memorable. The week leading up to the Homecoming football game against Lincoln Pius X was filled with wacky costumes for spirit days and the feeling of unity as students went through a modified spirit week together.

"I love homecoming, but I understand because of COVID-19 why it is canceled," sophomore Eric Chatham said. "Since some people have underlying health conditions and have to social distance for their safety, I think it is good they canceled it just to stay safe."

The decision to cancel the homecoming dance was made by the administration on Aug. 20 based on the current COVID-19 restrictions. Although there were drab feelings due to the cancelation, the administration was required to for the safety of the students.

"The decision to cancel homecoming was kind of made for us," principal Mr. Todd Mueller said. "At the time, there were restrictions on the number of people you could have in one room and there still are restrictions. That was a large part of it. The other part was just the realization of expecting kids at the dance to maintain their mask, and if they don't, then the problem of trying to trace an

environment like that would be pretty much impossible."

Although students would no longer be dancing the night away, arrangements were made to hold a coronation. The announcement of king and queen would typically be heard echoing throughout the auditorium the night of the dance, but instead, royalty was announced after the football game. The king and queen were seniors James Johnson and Roan Brandon. The prince and princess were seniors Trent Fechtmeister and Sarah Weber.

"Winning homecoming queen was a super surreal experience and I just feel really lucky to win," Brandon said. "Everyone on court was super deserving, and I really had no idea who was going to win. I owe it all to everyone who has supported me, and the real queens of Gretna High are the four lucky stars looking over us at the end of the day."

Despite having no homecoming dance, the spirit homecoming week provides was not lost. Spirit week was in full force by students showing off their themed attire and the football game was commemorated by the senior student section cheering on the team for their win against Lincoln Pius X. All in all, Students remained united as they celebrated while following precautions to remain healthy.

Can't Hide Our Pride At the homecoming game, Shea Dolezal (21) helps write the chants for the student section. "I loved that the school allowed the seniors to attend," Dolezal said. "This year has been so unpredictable and going to the football games felt as close to normal as it could have." The white board was used to communicate the chant to the entire student section. Photo by Sophia Allen



Rachael Hall (23)

Walk It Like I Talk It Gearing up for coronation, homecoming king nominee Creed Leathers (21) walks down the track with his parents. "I'm just happy to be on court," Leathers said. "I don't really care about the award." Leathers cheered on James Johnson (21) as he took the crown. Photo by Savannah Andrews



Kelsey Cano (22) and Sarah Weber (21)

Roses and Royalty Holding her bouquet of roses, Roan Brandon (21) is crowned queen. "I am just overall super grateful for everyone who voted for Sarah (Weber), Trent (Fechtmeister), James (Johnson) and I," Brandon said. Each homecoming queen nominee received a bouquet of flowers. Photo by Savannah Andrews

We've got **SPiRiT**

CLASS COLORS
 freshman: **YELLOW/GOLD**
 sophomores: **GREEN**
 juniors: **WHITE**
 seniors: **BLACK**

homecoming SPIRIT WEEK
 day 2
TIE DYE
 tuesday, 9-15

homecoming spirit week
COSTUME COSTUME COSTUME
 DAY 3

homecoming SPIRIT WEEK
JERSEY
 DAY 4
 9-17

homecoming SPIRIT WEEK
Hawaiian
 DAY 5
 9-18



King James After defeating Lincoln Pius X, James Johnson (21) claims his crown. "It felt great to win homecoming king and I'm super honored by it," Johnson said. "I'm just happy to be supported by my school and town." The football team and the stands cheered Johnson on. Photo by Sophia **Allen**



Spirit Of Homecoming On the sidelines, Olivia Runge (22) cheers on the team. "I was so excited that the seniors could come because it was such a fun environment to cheer at," Runge said. "I was also glad the theme was '4the4' because I thought it was a perfect way to honor our girls." Signs were made by the student section to honor the lives of students who have died. Photo by Savannah **Andrews**

Avery **McLaughlin** (22), Danah **Afana** (22) and Alexis **Arellano** (22)

1



2



3



4



- 1. James Herrold (21)
- 2. Layla Siskow (23), Harper Wood (23), Gabrielle Ritterbush (23), Josie Hegge (23), Claire Sallee (23)
- 3. Taylor Eurek (24)
- 4. Erin Frank (21)

Come Together

ACC Room Combats COVID-19

Within the walls of the Alternate Curriculum Classroom (ACC), students stayed entertained by the various activities available. Instructor of the ACC room Mrs. Ann Ross had the goal of making her room a fun space that was open to all.

"Our room is a very happy place," Mrs. Ross said. "When people come in they are excited, and it's contagious and I think that's why people love coming in"

Activities ranged from cracking eggs while baking homemade apple pies to playing with a parachute to create waves. ACC teachers and helpers maintained high-energy activities that every student would be able to participate in.

However, due to COVID-19, the ACC room saw some changes that had not been seen in years past. Students could no longer take walks around the hallways and teacher aids (TAs) were no longer permitted in order to distance themselves from potential COVID-19 carriers.

"I really miss not being able to interact with the kids everyday," senior Kailee Stones said. "We always played fun games together and their smiles never failed to brighten my day. I really loved taking them on walks and hearing about all of the fun things they did that day."

The COVID-19 pandemic also required adjustments to the teaching style within the ACC

room. Mrs. Ross experienced difficulties in communicating with her students and keeping her classroom an engaging space.

"It still has a great impact on the kids when they are able to socialize with their fellow classmates and be involved in their classroom," Mrs. Ross said. "Hearing the voices of their teachers and classmates has a very positive effect on them."

Efforts were made to encourage students to keep their masks on. When students were unable to maintain their masks, teachers made sure to keep their mouth and nose covered when working with the kids. Keeping safe from COVID-19 was especially important in the ACC room because certain students suffered from complex immune systems, making COVID-19 deadly to them.

"Zooming is difficult," Mrs. Ross said. "But I'd rather see them, then not see them, and hearing our voice and seeing their friends is really positive, but it does create a challenge."

Despite unusual circumstances, students kept to as normal of a routine as possible. While students in the ACC room continued to learn new skills, the number one priority was always staying healthy and safe.

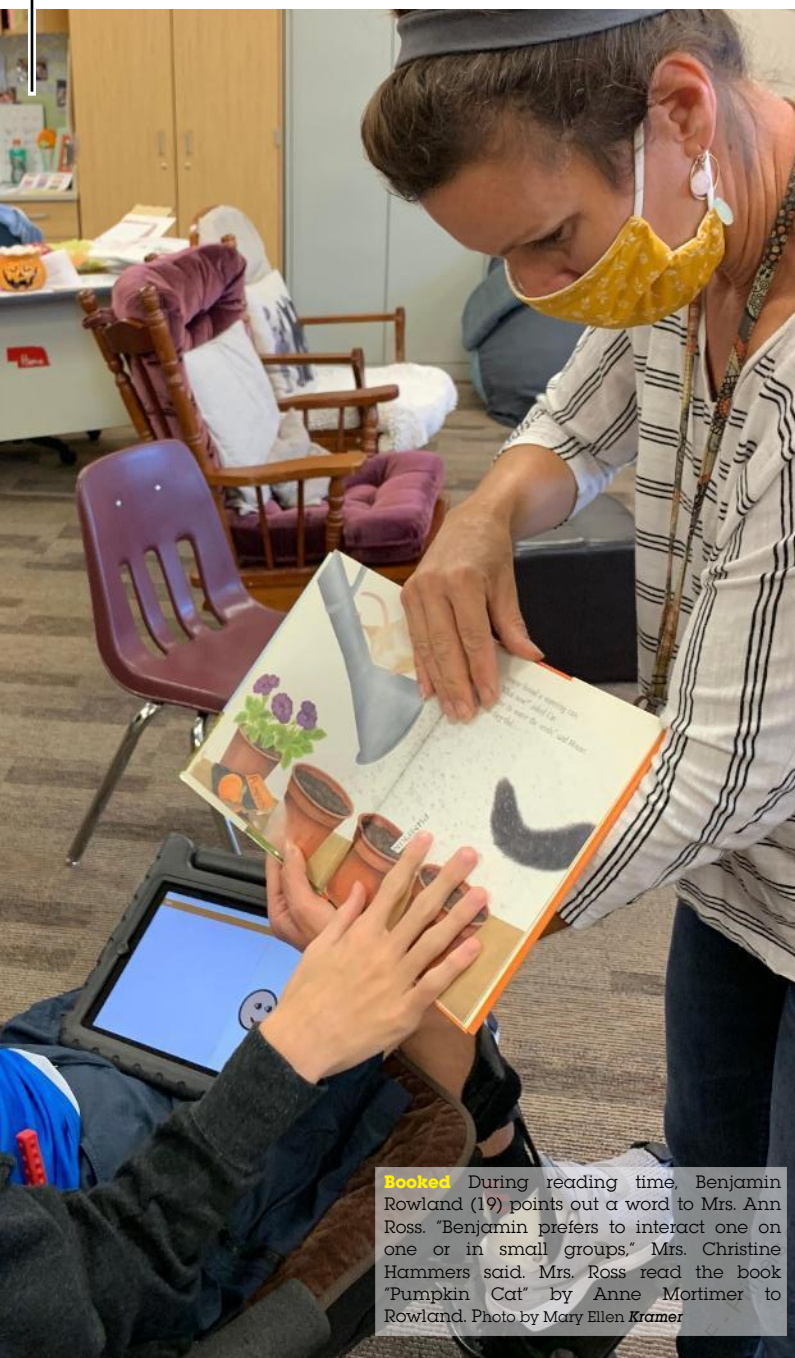
Buddies And Broncos For spirit week, Benjamin Rowland (19) and Guidance Counselor Mr. Curt Mace wear matching jerseys. Benjamin is pure joy," Mr. Mace said. "Stopping in the ACC room is the best part of my day." The Broncos were Rowland's favorite football team. Photo by Mrs. Ann Ross



Parachute Pandemonium In the gym, Aisha True (21) and Emeryl Dale (22) participate in a group activity involving a parachute. "We would all lift it up and the kids would run under it," True said. "Afterwards, we would put a ball in the middle of the parachute and toss a volleyball around." Although TA's were no longer allowed, students still had the opportunity to assist in activities. Photo by Ericka Kushiner

Walmart Worker Once a week, Addison Sibley (21) helps out at Walmart. "Addi is extremely helpful in the classroom," Mrs. Christine Hammers said. "And will go with the flow." She practiced placing food properly in the aisles and helped organize food in a pleasing manner. Photo by Mary Ellen Kramer





Booked During reading time, Benjamin Rowland (19) points out a word to Mrs. Ann Ross. "Benjamin prefers to interact one on one or in small groups," Mrs. Christine Hammers said. Mrs. Ross read the book "Pumpkin Cat" by Anne Mortimer to Rowland. Photo by Mary Ellen Kramer



Foiled You Everyday, Broc Bartenhagan (19) comes into the classroom and gives everyone a hug except for ACC instructor Mrs. Ann Ross. "Broc is playful and happy, he loves to be mischievous," Mrs. Ross said. "He is gentle, loves people and is very affectionate." He always ended up giving Mrs. Ross a hug. Photo by Mary Ellen Kramer



Send Mr. Mueller Over Students and teachers encourage their principal Mr. Todd Mueller to join their activity; red rover. "We (the administration) do try and stop in and take part in activities when we can," Mr. Mueller said. "However, our schedules do not allow us to do it as much as we would like." Red Rover was a favorite game of the ACC room. Photo by Ericka Kushiner



Toy Story
ACC room's favorite toys and books.



#2 With Some Attitude At Bellevue East, Thomas Silliman (22) jogs in for a touchdown with support from Trevor Marshall (21). "I caught the pass and two guys were running at me," Silliman said. "I just juked them out and walked in for my first touchdown." The team scored 35 points in the first quarter. Photo by Avery Kallman



Zane Flores (23)



Mark Staley (21)



Trevor Marshall (21)



Joseph Roll (23)



Secured the Package After receiving a hand off from Skylar Graham (23), Nathan Minarik (21) carries the ball down the field during the annual green versus white scrimmage. "I feel like we wanted it more this year," Minarik said. "We show up to practice every day putting in the work for Friday's games and we go 100% every play." This was Minarik's first year on varsity. Photo By Sophia Allen



All **IN** to Win

COVID-19 Prevents Students From Attending Games

Fall in Nebraska means football; and students attending games showing off their school spirit. With Friday night lights out of the picture, students dressed up in themes for the school day. COVID-19 restrictions prevented fans from attending, but the quiet atmosphere and specific guidelines did not stop the team from winning.

"To be honest, so far I have not seen any effect," head coach Mr. Michael Kayl said. "You can feed off some of that noise, but you just focus on the task at hand and each play."

They started 2-0 with wins over Lincoln Southwest and Lincoln High. Throughout preseason and the season openers, the starting tight end senior Colby Scholl and defensive tackle senior Caleb Hardy faced injuries.

"They are both, we think, out for the season," defensive line and running backs coach Mr. David Stastny said. "The younger guys are filling in and doing a good job of coming out and doing what they are supposed to do to fill those holes."

The underclassmen stepped up and helped get them to a 4-0 record with two more wins against Papillion La-Vista South and Pius X. Without some top players and a young team, returning players continued to play their brand of football.



Breken **Helman** (21)

"Because of that experience, we have just been playing cleaner football," Coach Stastny said. "Having some depth helps, where we didn't have that the last couple of seasons."

The experience of the seniors gave the team hope. They could not feed off the noise from the crowd and coming off two losing seasons, the upperclassmen's leadership had to be strong.

"Us seniors had to change our attitude to help turn this program around," wide receiver senior Jackson Alexander said. "We have already made the playoffs, and that was one of our goals at the beginning of the season. We have to take one game at a time from here on out."

That senior leadership lifted the team and lead them to another 2 wins versus Bellevue East and Skutt Catholic. After the rivalry win, spirits were high against Elkhorn South and the start of the Playoffs. They ended the preseason 6-1 after a defeating loss against Elkhorn South and headed into the playoffs with a BYE week. For the second round of playoffs, the team played seventh ranked Kearney and lost in a close defeat 30-28. They ended the season 6-2 and with a winning record for the first time in Class A.



Golden Gloves After breaking a tackle, Jackson Alexander (21) runs past three Lincoln SW defenders down the sideline. "Not having a student section hasn't affected us," Alexander said. "Having students there is great but we have one goal in mind and that is to win." The team declared their spot in playoffs halfway through the season. Photo by Sophia **Allen**



Talk the Talk While playing at Bellevue East, Tanner Hall (21) and Jake Lukis (22) discuss strategy for the next play. "As a defensive tackle, my job is to plug up holes," Lukis said. "If I do my job with the rest of the defensive line, the linebackers will have a lot of tackles and win football games." Lukis started on varsity since his sophomore year. Photo by Matthew **McKinney**

SCORES 6-2

8/28 vs Lincoln Southwest 30-7 W

9/4 @ Lincoln High 34-7 W

9/11 @ Papillion La-Vista South 45-22 W

9/18 vs Pius X 35-3 W

9/25 @ Bellevue East 41-18 W

10/2 @ Skutt Catholic 31-28 W

10/9 vs Elkhorn South 35-10 L

10/15 @ Lincoln Southeast CANCELED

10/23 vs Papillion La-Vista CANCELED

First Round Playoffs BYE

10/30 vs Kearney 30-28 L



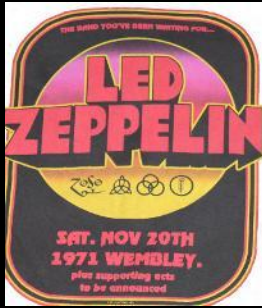
All Hands on Heck While on defense, Mason Heckenlively (22) pushes forward to make a tackle. "Helping our sophomores and getting them accustomed to how we run things is a major role I play," Heckenlively said. "It is a role all us upperclassman take charge of." The annual green versus white scrimmage was held with limited fans. Photo by Sophia **Allen**

That 70's Quiz

Which "That 70's Show" Character Are You?

Which 70's band would you listen to?

- A: The Village People
- B: Aerosmith
- C: Led Zeppelin



Pick an Accessory

- A: Floral Shirt
- B: Bell Bottom Pants
- C: Flannel

What would you do on a Friday night?

- A: Hang out with friends
- B: Watch TV
- C: Listen to Music



Pick a Class

- A: Art
- B: Science
- C: Gym

Pick a movie to watch

- A: The Wizard of Oz
- B: Star Wars: A New Hope
- C: Jaws



Go to snack

- A: Jolly Ranchers
- B: Popcorn
- C: Taki's



Mostly A's: Fez or Jackle. Mostly B's: Eric or Donna. Mostly C's: Hyde or Kelso.

The Beatles or Elvis Presley?

What is your favorite Beatles song?

"My favorite Beatles songs are 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da', and 'Here, There, and Everywhere.'" - Chloe Crowell (22)

33.5% Elvis Presley

66.5% The Beatles

57.5% of students believe in aliens

Sweet or Salty?

"My favorite sweet snack is a Kit Kat." - Skyler Hendricks (24)

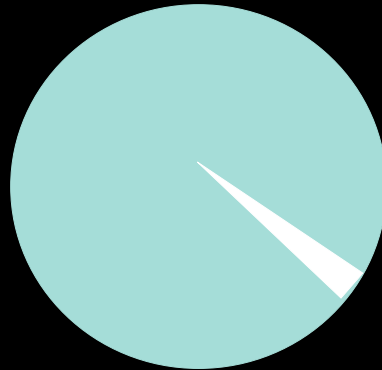
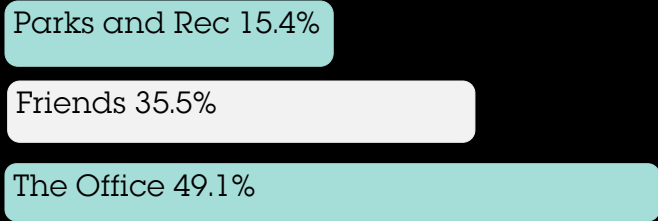
Mountains or Beach?



"I like the beach because it is warm." - Neleah Wozniak (21)

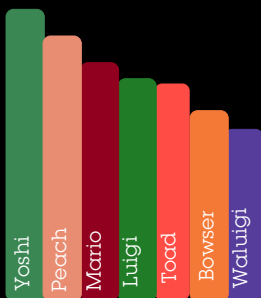
All In The Details

Out of 228 responses



57.5 % of students believe in conspiracy theories

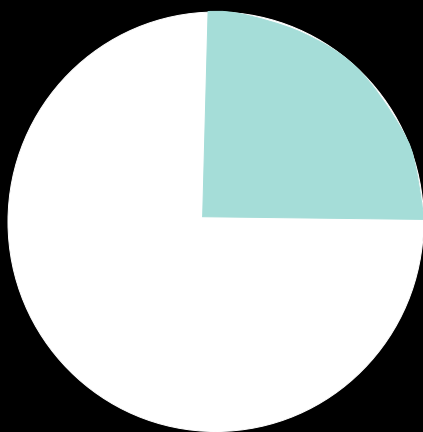
Favorite Mario Kart Character?



"My favorite Mario Kart character is Luigi" - Treyton Oliver (22).

Frozen Yogurt or Ice Cream?

"The best place to get ice cream is Dairy Queen ." - Avery Stephany (23)



Captain America 72.4%
Superman 27.6%

Hogwarts Houses



"My favorite characters are Fred, George, and book Ginny. I do not like movie Ginny. They bring light into the darkness at Hogwarts." -Kayla Wiese (22)

75.9% of students have a laptop sticker

Courtesy of Ms. Rene Schwenk



Unmasked Emotions

One Act Cast Switches To Clear Masks

Despite the uncertainty of this school year, the One Act cast and crew still practiced and performed their show "Something Rotten" at the same intensity level as always. New safety precautions due to COVID-19 were put in place for the cast members.

While rehearsing, masks were required by all production members in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Masks brought unique challenges to the cast when performing because of the goal of portraying strong emotions and enunciating every word.

"Working around masks is extremely challenging for stage acting because the audience is so far away from us so our facial expressions need to be huge and it's hard to do that when two thirds of your face is covered," senior Trey Leasure said. "To fill an entire auditorium with sound so the people in the back can hear, you have to be really loud and over do your dictation. Masks can muffle your sound so it almost feels like you have to yell your lines without damaging your voice."

Starting with Thanksgiving Break, the cast were given clear masks in order to better display their emotions. This new

style of mask made the show more engaging for the audience, but gave cast members unique challenges.

"We wanted our audience to be able to see the kids' expressions," One Act director Ms. Carole Carraher said.

The clear masks allowed the audience to focus more on the performance rather than the face coverings. For female lead junior Chloe Irwin, having a clear mask made performing more challenging, but was better than traditional masks.

"It can be super difficult to breathe because the clear plastic can get sucked up into your mouth," Irwin said. "It can also be difficult because of fogging and when you speak, you sometimes spit and that is super gross. I hate having spit in my mask. Overall, I think they're better though. They show our facial expressions more and they're not that uncomfortable."

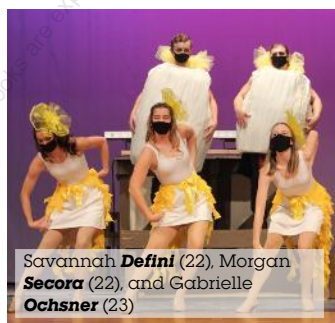
Despite the uncomfortableness of wearing a mask while performing and dealing with missing production members that were in quarantine, the One Act cast carried through to perform "Something Rotten" at the same level as a typical year. The season ended in Fremont on Dec 11 with the cast taking home their eleventh consecutive state championship win and junior Charles Sams earning the title of best actor in the state.



Jeremiah **Merriman** (21) and Christian **Wintle** (21)



Logan **Davison** (23)



Savannah **Defini** (22), Morgan **Secora** (22), and Gabrielle **Ochsner** (23)



Creed **Leathers** (21) and Michael **Huber** (22)

The Faces of Chloe



"There are many different facial expressions you need to make when performing. The cool thing about facial expressions is you can base them off different people and everyday situations. I also really try to focus on listening and reacting. When acting, you can't just say the lines. You need to listen to what your scene partner is saying and react to that." - Chloe **Irwin** (22) Photos by Kaleigh **Zollman**



State Championship



District Championship



Title Worthy During a dance number, Chloe Irwin (22) and Charles Sams (22) perform in a way that would earn Sams the title of best actor in the state. "Winning best actor was very surreal," Sams said. "I was in such shock. Everyone around me was jumping and screaming with excitement while my closest friends in One Act hugged the life out of me. I am eternally grateful for this title." He participated in One Act for three years and was involved in several outside of school productions. Photo by Samantha Chase



Faith **Polivanov** (21) and Christian **Wintle** (21)



Andrew **Blankenship** (21) and Simon **Kerr** (22)

Look Right While performing in the community show case, Gavin Egger (21) looks intrigued by the speaking characters. "This year was incredibly different, we missed out on a lot of traditions," Egger said. "But the experience of performing was the same as always and it still felt as exhilarating as any other year." Traditions that were unable to happen were staying at their usual hotel and eating at Pizza Ranch post state. Photo by Samantha Chase

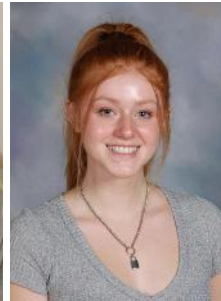
Linin" Up Performing in districts, Rylie Johnson (21) stands in a line. "The energy going into One Act this year was super exciting since it's my senior," Johnson said. "But I was nervous with how everything would work with COVID." Despite the nerves, Johnson played a role in the ensemble and as a dancer. Photo by Delany Jepsen



Class of

2022

Kyle Adams
Matthew Adams
Danah Afana
Calina Allen
Sophia Allen
Taylor Allen



Chase Anderson
Brynn Andrews
Savannah
Andrews
Hanna Annis
Alexis Arellano
Joshua Arend



Elijah Aristy
Erin Armitage
Laynie Aure
Noah Austin
Sophia Auxier
Mason Babin



Ethan Baker
Kayla Bargmann
Kaden Barton
Caleb Bartram
Prosper
Beauchaine
Cole Becker



Lillian Bernard
Samuel Bickel
Grace Biltott
Kendal Bishop
Zane Blodgett
Brooke Blunt





Gracie Boston
Mara Bosworth
Noah Bothwell
Jackson Bremer
Barrie Brichacek
Isabella Bricker

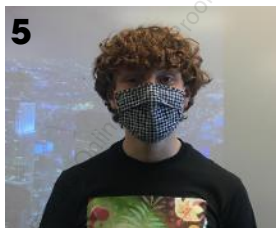
Nicole Briganti
Lilly Brophy
Ryan Brown
Tyler Brown
Jaxon
Bumgardner
Abigail Burch

Brady Burkart
Joseph Burns
Calvin Buss
Emily Caniglia
Kelsey Cano
Angelina Carson

Sophia Cerone
Brayden Chaney
Robert Childress
Ethan Chilton
Jasmin
Clark-Jimenez
Ella Clarke

Emery Cleveland
Katelynn
Cogswell
Nona Conoan
Jailynn Conway
Tatem Cook
Abigail Costanzo

Favorite Disney Movie?



1. "Mulan" - Gabrielle **Hytrek** (22)
2. "Coco." It is heartfelt and I love that it is about my culture." - Isabelle **Rangei** (22)
3. "Hamilton." I love the music and characters." - Sydney **Milhan** (22)
4. "Captain America: The First Avenger" - Matthew **Waters** (22)
5. "Aladdin." It is a great story with adventure and diversity." - Charles **Sams** (22)
6. "Tangled." It was my favorite childhood movie." - Winter **Muffyly** (22)
7. "Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith" - Nathan **Kavan** (22)
8. "Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith" - Tyler **Kuzel** (22)

Class A

#22 – Broadcast News Story

Winner: Alayna Kustka, Papillion-La Vista South

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoVkvJ1lguQ>

#23 – Broadcast Sports Story

Winner: Krystin Collins, Papillion-La Vista South

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSbgfSMI83o>

#24 – Broadcast Feature Story

Winner: Millard West, Jenna Reynolds, Dana Summers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSbgfSMI83o>

#25 – Broadcast Public Service Announcement

Winner: Millard North, Sree Kolli, Laila Qureishi

<https://www.mnhsonline.com/lifestyle/features/from-pen-and-paper-to-hard-covers-knutson-get-published/#respond>

2021

Class B

JOURNALISM
WINNERS



#1 Advertising, Kyto Warner, Adams Central

It's what we do best.



 1920 Boulevard Lane

 Boulevard_Scoops

 402-950-0159

#2 Newspaper Column Writing, Vanessa Harpold, Scottsbluff

Vanessa Harpold

In a perfect world, I'd give my math teacher an F for her subject. My gym teacher too, with all that running involved. When failing and passing seems to just make everything make sense, doesn't it seem like a good idea? F – it is simple, it is a bad thing, a bad subject, teaching, work, effort, whatever you can think of. Typically, an F is not what you would like to have. Nor is it something your parents want to even think about you getting. A is also simple, an effort worthy of high achievement, something grand. So, is this “perfect world” not so far away? Should there be a push effort for students to pay these grades back?

The answer is... Yes! Students deserve to be able to grade their teachers, just as teachers are allowed to grade their students. This would provide an example to be set by teachers, as well as by students to demonstrate what works best for them. This type of equal grading could impact the school system in an extremely positive light. Without the one-sided grading, teachers, as well as students work harder. A push in the right direction, some might say.

Students, keeping up their end of the bargain gain a sense of authority over their curriculums. With this, students can learn the subjects they need, and gain the type of teaching that is evidence of success. Students have long been in the dark about their subjects, and the styles that work best for them individually. With a grading system for teachers put in place, students who learn differently or are struggling can give their teacher an F, a D or a C for their performance as it impacts the students. This would give a chance of individual talking amongst the student and the teacher to solve the problem of the curriculum, or simply the homework problem.

Now, obviously, the grading system would not have the same effect it has on a student. An F for the teacher simply means more one-on-one effort is needed, where as an F for a student might spell out certain doom. There is no graduation ceremony for teachers after all, and therefore there cannot be a valedictorian speech waiting in the midst. It is just simply a tool that should (and could) be accessed by students for students.

MacKenzie Mercer

Snow days are cherished tradition for many students. Waking up with the anticipation from the night before still looming; kids jump out of their beds and run to the television to turn on the local news. With the words “School canceled for the day,” a groggy demeanor suddenly turns to ecstatic joy.

For the students of Smith High School, this oh-so loved tradition is coming to an abrupt halt.

Last week, Principal Williams announced a new policy was being put in place. Beginning next school year this policy will be enacted. This policy states, “School will not be canceled due to snow. Classes will instead be held online if weather prohibits safe travel to and from school. Students will be counted absent if they fail to attend online classes”.

As Principal Williams stated, “...This policy allows for the continuity of learning while avoiding dangerous winter driving conditions. It also eliminates the possibility of extending the school year due to multiple winter weather storms”.

This policy eliminates the possibility for a snow day to ever occur again at Smith High School.

For many students and parents alike, this change is detrimental to the ‘high school experience’.

Sam Seaborn, a student at Smith High School, remembers snow days of school years prior, explaining, “This is unfair. Some of my best memories of school are the days I met my friends at the grocery store to go sledding down the huge hill. Kids need a break.”

As for Bill Fitz, a parent of 4 students, this policy is yet another tradition being taken from students. He states, “...This isn’t something that needs to be taken away from kids. Snow days are a tradition!”

This attempt at change in policy has its flaws, and parents, students, and some teachers alike are aware of that. While the student body has shown a disliking of the policy change, according to a teacher who requested to remain anonymous, parents and teachers are in disapproval as well. This teacher remarked, “It’s kind of sad for the kids. Snow days are a fun surprise – it’s a day off when you weren’t expecting it. I think attendance will be lighter than normal, as many parents have told me they plan to let their children have a day of vacation”.

While one issue with this policy change is the fairness toward students in taking away the well-loved tradition, another issue is the ability for students to participate in online classes. This policy requires that students participate in online education, with this requirement arises the problem of what do students who do not have access to internet at home do?

A concerned parent argues, “There is no guarantee that online learning is effective. Online learning depends on the availability of an internet connection and a functioning device. Is the school district willing to provide both?”

For many people, stable internet access and a working computer are not a necessity, rather a luxury. Are these students going to be marked absent, despite being both physically and virtually unable to attend class?

This policy, while designed to keep students engaged and avoid taking time off school, may prove useless. Many students are unable to attend online school due to not having reliable internet access, while others flat out refuse with complete support from their parents.

With disapproval from students, teachers, and parents alike, administration at Smith High School should seriously consider either changing this policy, or rather rethink enacting it entirely.

A change that could be made to this policy is to allow students the choice to attend school on snow days. For many students, a day to work with help from a teacher in a smaller class size would be highly beneficial.

Rather than making attendance a requirement, those students who need the extra time to work would be able to do so by choice, without the groans and annoyance from students who are being forced to attend.

While this policy as of now is very all-or-nothing, with a simple change, the controversy surrounding the change could be diminished. Students would still have the opportunity to learn, or to have a snow day, like many students before them have enjoyed.

Emelia Richling

Amanda Gorman perfectly captures American hope and healing in her Inaugural poem 'The Hill We Climb'

We write to feel something, we exist to be someone and we watch others perform pieces of poetry because they portray our deepest, most sincere thoughts. In Amanda Gorman's Inauguration poem 'The Hill We Climb,' the former first National Youth Poet Laureate and racial justice, gender equality and environmental activist perfectly encapsulates the most idealistic vision our nation can ever hope to achieve while simultaneously maintaining an impeccable delivery style and immeasurable passion.

At the beginning of Gorman's poem, she describes the foundation of our society, one built on differing cultures and colors. She describes the way justice is formed and even speaks about her own story of being an aspiring Black woman daring to consider a place as president, a personal touch that leaves her mark on words that would have otherwise been the story of every citizen. She precisely captures how a perfect society may be a lesser one than the country that is purposeful in bringing its people together. The words Gorman speaks form a rhyme scheme more united than the nation she performs the speech for, an ironic but disappointing deliberation.

As the words seamlessly slip off Gorman's lips, she approaches the climax of her piece, discussing how victory is about how we repair our past, rising and reconciling with history. Every word Gorman selected was perfect. Not a single syllable didn't move the onlooker and not a single stanza failed to capture the vision of the nation she imagined. Her passion was so tangible that one could feel it in the way she emphasized some words and quieted others. Although delivery and word choice are important, sensing the passion of a performer is more impactful than a beautiful poem performed with mundane style.

Yet, Gorman captures it all. The effective word choice, delivery and passion are united in the climax of the poem when she raises her voice to something less than a shout but something more impactful than it.

Near the end of the poem, Gorman discusses leaving behind a better country, one that is golden and bronze. Her delivery is effortless, and the masks on the onlookers' faces does nothing to conceal their undivided attention. In only five minutes, Gorman had united the nation. Although she could have taken shots at America, she instead spoke of healing and repair. Her decision to not include slander toward oppressors was not a bold decision, but it was the right one. In a time of division, she reminded us how broken we are but how healing is something we have already done and something we can do again.

At the beginning of her poem, Gorman poses a question about the identity of the American nation: "Where can we find light?"

We find light in her words. We find light in her rhymes. We find light in the rise and fall of her voice, mimicking the thoughts concealed in our cavernous minds.

'The Hill We Climb' will be etched into the annals of history as something more than just a poem. It is the spoken word of progress, passion and purpose.

#6 Headline Writing

Name: Ava Imhof

School: Scottsbluff High School

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # - 2

Headline - WORLDWIDE COLOR BLIND
Colored balls meet resistance from male golfers.

Article # - 1

Headline - ALL CHOKED UP:
U.S. trade ship volume at 19 Southern California's coast surges
~~as to stimulate resiliency~~ following COVID-19's economic effects.

Article # - 6

Headline - AROUND THE WORLD IN
TEN DISHES
These ten international dishes allow you to enjoy the
cuisine of everywhere from Venezuela to Iran, all from
the comfort of your home.

By Peter Funt

Pebble Beach, Calif.

One of the great mysteries in amateur sports is being probed again this spring: Why do so many women use colored golf balls, while most men continue to reject them?

Scientifically there is little doubt that nonwhite balls, particularly yellow ones, are easier to track in flight and easier to spot in the rough, which speeds play. Yet resistance remains among many male golfers, who persist in associating colored balls with high handicaps—and with women. Female golfers have long accepted balls in a variety of hues.

More than color separates men's and women's golf balls. Compression differs, as do spin rates and even the number of dimples. But the only effect a ball's color has on any player's performance is mental.

Manufacturers target women with a dazzling array of colored golf balls, such as Srixon's Soft Feel Lady ball in "passion pink." For men, the change from white is slow, but Titleist, Callaway and Taylor-Made have added yellow versions to their most expensive, tour-quality golf balls.

Colored balls improve play, but male players are slow to shift from the traditional white.

At Whispering Pines Golf Club north of Houston, the pro shop tells me that less than 10% of men purchase colored balls, while nearly 60% of women do.

Katherine Marren, head professional at Quail Golf Course in Carmel, Calif., emailed: "I love the new colors and when they make better-

performing balls in more colors, I predict more colors on the LPGA Tour."

Tennis woke up to the virtue of yellow balls half a century ago. The International Tennis Federation required yellow balls, instead of white or black ones, in 1972, in part because they photographed better on color television. Wimbledon waited until 1986 to go yellow, but then the changeover was complete.

In 1982, Wayne Levi became the first golfer to win a PGA Tour event with a nonwhite ball. Mr. Levi's ball was orange, the same hue used later that year by Jerry Pate in winning the Players Championship.

You'd think that would have ended the male bias against colored balls, but it didn't. Virtually all pros stuck with white, as did amateurs. Bubba Watson, one of the more charismatic long hitters on the PGA Tour, surprised fans and fellow players in 2017 by using a pink ball in

the Masters. Mr. Watson has since favored yellow balls in competition, and has gradually influenced other players to do the same.

As more companies manufacture high-quality yellow golf balls, more PGA players will be offered cash enticements to use them. As they do, more male amateurs will take note—which is, after all, the purpose of the payments.

My highly unscientific research on this matter involves walks with my dog, Abigail, at Poppy Hills golf course in Pebble Beach. We used to find one yellow ball for every 10 white ones. Last year the proportion of yellow balls doubled, and so far this spring it's tripled. Abbie seems not to care about the color of the balls. Soon, male golfers won't care either, although it is tough to teach them new tricks.

Mr. Funt is a writer and host of "Candid Camera."

By COSTAS PARIS
AND PAUL PAGE

A monthslong logjam of cargo ships at Southern California's ports appears to be easing even as imports continue to flood the major U.S. trade gateway.

"We are making progress," Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka said Wednesday. "Today we have half the number of anchorage ships that we reported at the peak in February."

The shipping traffic jam, part of a broader gridlock in supply chains around the world amid disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic, is thinning while record cargo volume is landing in the U.S.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which together handle more than a third of all U.S. seaborne imports, saw their busiest March on record, handling a combined 898,287 loaded container imports, measured in 20-foot equivalent units, or TEUs. That was up 97.1% from the same month last year, when the Covid-19-driven shutdown of factories in China depressed shipping volume, but also 65.1% ahead of the more normal March 2019 imports.

The surge at the California ports is part of a broader deluge of imports that has hit U.S. ports as businesses restock inventories that were depleted early in the pandemic and to meet resurgent consumer demand.



A terminal in Los Angeles last week. Container volume is expected to stay strong into the summer.

Trade data group Panjiva said in a report Tuesday that U.S. seaborne imports of containerized freight surpassed 3 million TEUs last month, 50.5% more than the same month last year and 36.9% ahead of the more normal March 2019 level. Container imports of leisure products and home furnishings nearly doubled the level of two years ago, said the group, which is part of S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"As more Americans get vaccinated, businesses reopen

and the economy strengthens, consumers continue to purchase goods at a dizzying pace," Mr. Seroka said.

There were 23 container ships waiting offshore to dock at Los Angeles and Long Beach on Tuesday, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California, which monitors ship traffic in the region. That was down from a peak of about 40 waiting vessels in February, and the group said the flow of ships to berths was picking up.

"Today 17 container ships

are being processed, that's 70% more than pre-pandemic levels," Mr. Seroka said, calling the traffic "March madness."

The arrival of so much cargo has been straining inbound supply chains fanning out from the ports.

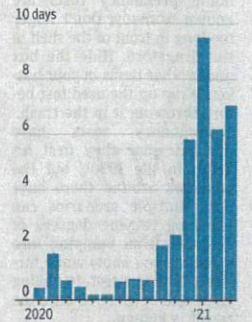
The waiting time to load containers on trains out of Los Angeles reached 11 days this week from a normal yearly average of around two days, according to port officials. "The rapid succession of vessel calls, inclement weather across the

Change from previous year in combined inbound loaded containers at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach



Sources: Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach (containers); project44 (days)

Median number of days container ships traveling from Shenzhen to Los Angeles were behind schedule.



country and the one-way trade surge make it difficult to get railcars back to Los Angeles fast enough," said Mr. Seroka.

Container volume is expected to continue to be strong into the summer. The port expects box volume to rise 28% from last year in April and 45% in May.

Volume heading into Western countries has surged since last summer, even as suppliers of trucks and containers have struggled with capacity shortages.

Liner operators say there isn't enough capacity in the water to handle the demand.

"At this point we need to add one or two more ships in our weekly services," said Rolf Habben Jansen, the chief exec-

utive of German container line Hapag-Lloyd AG.

Hapag-Lloyd expects the bottlenecks to ease in the third quarter.

The backlogs have left many retailers waiting weeks for goods stuck on ships at sea or at the port, hitting small- and medium-size companies with lean operations particularly hard.

Michael Murray, who runs DeSales Trading Co., a threads and yarns wholesaler in Burlington, N.C., has been working to secure both containers and supplies from China for about a year. He has been getting emails from suppliers warning him that they won't be able to fulfill his orders and that prices will go up.

01 Hallacas
Venezuela (Achiote)
 These banana leaf tamales stuffed with pork and beef are full of Venezuelan flavors. Piloncillo has a deep, almost smokey flavor, sometimes with notes of rich caramel and achiote paste—a popular Latin American spice blend—contains annatto, cumin, pepper and other spices.



03 Degué
Guinea (Millet)
 This sweet, tangy breakfast pudding is made with black millet, a grain that grows across Africa and is similar to rice once it has been cooked. Millet can have a slightly bitter, nutty taste—a versatile flavor that works in both sweet and savory dishes.



06 Fattoush
Syria (Pomegranate molasses)
 Fattoush is a vegetable salad topped with pieces of crispy fried pita to give it a crunch and drizzled with a dressing of lemon juice and olive oil and sweet-sour pomegranate molasses. The end result is a fresh, light dish packed with Middle Eastern flavor.



07 Spiced Brownies
Iraq (Sumac)
 Adding a dash of sweet-tart sumac to brownies gives them an exotic and surprising twist. This maroon-colored spice is iconic in Middle Eastern cuisine, and its citrusy taste adds unique flavor to dessert recipes, meat rubs and even teas.



02 Poulet Yassa
Senegal (Scotch bonnet pepper)
 This roast chicken dish gets its bold taste from Scotch bonnet pepper, which is more than twice as hot as cayenne. This pepper is used across West Africa and the Caribbean—and along with lots of heat, it also has a distinct sweetness.



04 Jollof Rice
Nigeria (Cameroon black pepper)
 Cameroon black pepper is known for its reddish color, aromaticity and very spicy taste. Jollof rice, a favorite dish in West Africa, includes tomatoes, rice and curry powder and is spiced with Cameroon black pepper to give it a finishing flair.

05 Adas
Eritrea (Berbere spices)
 Berbere is a traditional blend of spices used often in Eritrean and Ethiopian cuisine. It can include ginger, fenugreek, cinnamon and other indigenous spices like korarima and ajwain. Its heat typically comes from chile de árbol. These spices add delicious northeast African flavor to Adas, a lentil dish served with flatbread.



09 Manchurian Cauliflower
Nepal (Maggi sauce)
 This dish uses Maggi Hot & Sweet sauce to coat fried cauliflower. The tomato chili sauce is commonly used throughout Nepal and India, and it gives the light, nutty fried cauliflower a spicy South Asian flavor with an edge of sweetness.



08 Kuku Sabzi
Iran (Zereshk barberries)
 This Persian take on an herbed frittata features a delicious combination of Iranian flavors held together by the baked eggs. Bright red barberries lend a touch of tangy flair; their bold tartness compliments the dish's fresh green garlic and herbs.

10 Kowa Varrai
Sri Lanka (Curry leaves)
 This side dish features coconut—Sri Lanka's "tree of life"—and fresh curry leaves. Together, these ingredients give the cabbage bold flavor, with the coconut adding sweetness and the curry leaves balancing it out with their herbal, citrusy taste.



THE KITCHEN WITHOUT BORDERS
 by The Eat Offbeat Chefs (Workman Publishing, March) features traditional favorites from immigrant and refugee chefs from around the world.



When people leave their native countries looking for a better life, one thing they try to bring with them is a taste of home. Family recipes are more than just food—each of the dishes collected in *The Kitchen Without Borders: Recipes and Stories from Refugee and Immigrant Chefs* comes from someone's beautiful memory of home. With bold flavors—from Syrian pomegranate molasses to spice blends like Venezuelan achiote to insanely spicy Scotch bonnet peppers—this is food for both the body and soul.

01: APOMARES/GETTY; 02: ALLEKO/GETTY

Photographs by PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

#7 Newspaper Feature Writing, Beckett Allen, North Platte

Beckett Allen

Out of this Leaguetown

Most students see biology as just another class they have to take in order to graduate high school. For junior Lauri Hill, it changed her life in ways she never would've imagined.

When Hill was four years old, she was informed by her parents, Marsha and Marty Hill, that she was adopted. From then on, Hill was curious about finding her real mother. At first, the only things that Hill knew about her mother were that her name was Hallie, she was from Texas, and had given birth to her at age 17. "My parents have always been open about my adoption," Hill said. "They believe honesty was the best for all of us, and I think it was and still is."

Even though Hill had always been curious about finding her mother, a genetics project in teacher Marilyn Sneeters' biology class really got the ball rolling. "Lauri hated that her project was somewhat incomplete because she didn't know her genetic history," Sneeters said. "I told her to use her parents, even though she was adopted, but she didn't want to do that."

After the discrepancy, Hill took to social media to attempt to find her birth mother. "My dad's Facebook idea was brilliant," Hill said. "I was planning on contacting the adoption agency for my first move; I didn't even have to do that."

Following the initial Facebook post, Hill heard back from her birth mother very quickly. "When I saw I had a message on Facebook, I thought someone had emailed me about my post," Hill said. "I didn't expect it to be from my birth mom- not that quickly."

After getting the confirmation that Hallie was in fact Hill's mother, the two exchanged personal details over email. "She went through some depression because of the adoption, but managed to graduate at the top of her class," Hill said. "We have exchanged photos, and I look so much like her. She sent me her high school graduation photo, and it looks exactly like me."

With plans to meet with Hallie for the first time on Mother's Day, questions arose about Hill's future relationship with her adoptive parents. "Everyone keeps asking me why I wanted to find my birth mother. Was I not happy with my parents? Did I feel empty? And the answer is definitely no," Hill said. "I just had questions...In fact, if anything, we have gotten closer. I have room in my life and in my heart for more, and my parents do, too."

Hill has said continuously that she is grateful for the help and support that her parents gave in her journey. "This has been an amazingly short journey to find Hallie," Marsha said. "Lauri's questions are getting answers, and we are growing as a family."

With the help and support from her teachers and family, Hill's journey is turning out to be a success. "It turned out wonderfully," Marsha said. "Hallie is a very special woman, which makes sense. She's like Lauri."

#8 Newspaper News Writing, Janae Rusher, Columbus Scotus

Janae Rusher

Norfolk planning new young adult opportunities

With an 11 million dollar budget, and 77% of those funds collected, Norfolk, Nebraska plans for new jobs, housing, entrepreneurs, and a growing population starting in 2024. By 2024, Northeast Nebraska Growing Together, a workforce project that will create jobs and housing in downtown Norfolk will be completed. Started by Senator Mike Flood, this project will provide jobs, housing, and community to the downtown district of Norfolk, Nebraska.

The Aksarben Foundation pushed this project into motion while Flood was a board member. Flood found that the out-migration of 18-34 year olds in Nebraska was growing, making the opportunity to develop housing and job opportunities more prevalent than ever before. Candice Alder, Economic Developer for the City of Norfolk, under Mayor Josh Moenning, is a part of Growing Together and the development of these opportunities.

“We are intentionally putting this age group into the downtown area,” Alder said. “The plan is to create an atmosphere where residence can create relationships with amenities and the downtown atmosphere.”

Norfolk has partnered with Wayne State College and Northeast Community College in ways to get college students into the area, living and working, to start the downtown development. Students from Wayne State College, could have the opportunity to live and have internships in downtown Norfolk their senior year.

“The Aksarben Foundation has funding to allow 30 students to live in the new development in 2023, 45 students in 2024, and 75 students in 2025,” Alder said.

These students would receive housing their senior year of college as well as work opportunities. Students right out of college and young adults will have many job opportunities to start their own business or find good paying work after graduating.

“We are going to stimulate in the tech area to help the new automation area in the workforce,” Alder said. “And we also have a focus on cultivating the entrepreneurs to create an atmosphere intimate to Norfolk.”

By targeting communications, marketing, and technology areas, Norfolk plans to accommodate for many entrepreneurs as well as those just looking for a job. Norfolk has also been planning for new amenities that will be fun for the young adult age group. The city has added an escape park and will be adding a White Water Park by 2024.

“The White Water Park is going to be a huge feature for us,” Alder said. “The park will go into the beach, there will be an amp theater built in River Point Square as well as concerts and music.”

With large plans for the future, the city of Norfolk is confident in their ability to achieve their vision. With adequate funding from the Aksarben Foundation and being on track with fundraising, the project should be finished by 2024.

#9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing, Brandon Orgilbold, Elkhorn North

Brandon Orgilbold

It's a scorching hot summer in the 1990s. Too hot for any activities to be played outside, a rare scene for the kid's of this era. The classic 8-bit Mario theme music from the original Nintendo fills the cool air-conditioned room. A grey box hooked up to the old TV and a little kid amazed by a world that is controlled by the palms of his hands. This is what video games looked like 30 years ago and now today we have professional gaming.

It is obvious that video games have impacted this world a ton, so much so that we now have ESporting teams. There are many high schools that now have varsity ESports teams and colleges that offer ESports scholarships. Just a couple years ago, professional gaming was unheard of and no one would think that so many people would be playing video games. Including the Technology Director of the Norfolk LAN Party, Zach Miller.

"When I first started playing video games, I would never have thought gaming would've come this far," Miller said.

Video games have been in Miller's life for as long as he could remember. He would always play with his friends and saw it as an easy way to hang out with his friends. He would have never joined the Norfolk LAN Party if it wasn't for his friend Nick Wildman. Wildman was a year older than him and always played video games with Miller. After Wilman joined the LAN Party, it inspired Miller to join.

The LAN Party is a program that provides a comfortable environment in hosting events for kids who thrive to be a professional gamer one day. Making it a great place for kids with common interests to become friends with one another. It's often harder for some kids who play lots of video games to make more friends because of bullying. Which is one of the few reasons why the LAN Party was first created.

Another reason why the LAN Party was created was because Dr. David Kassmeier, the event director, went to a gaming event located in Omaha that had about 600 people attending. This caused Kassmeier to believe that Northeast Nebraska needed something similar.

With these events, there are different age groups. The more popular age groups are assumed to hoan the more skillful and more entertaining battles.

"Our most popular age group would probably be 18-25 and then 14-17," Miller said.

The LAN Party advertises their events everywhere whether it be social media or on flyers. In their advertisements, they have when their events are and what games that will be played there. The games range from the sandbox game of Minecraft to the blood and guns of war in Call of Duty Cold War.

The most popular game is Valorant according to Miller.

When programs are created, they always have an ulterior motive. For the Norfolk LAN Party, they hope to keep growing to 200 participants at each event, help kids get scholarships and help someone in becoming a professional gamer. In a sense, it is no different from educational programs.

Although the ESport world opens up many new opportunities for this growing generation, many parents still have doubts. For them, playing video games was never seen as anything more than a pass-time. The internet can also be a scary, and toxic place but as long as parents do their research and lock down everything on their child's online accounts, there should be nothing to worry about.

"Parents should do their research and lock down emails and set restrictions on their children's accounts for their safety," Miller said.

With the world evolving each and every day, ESports will continue to grow and grow. Causing programs like the Norfolk LAN Party and people like Zach Miller to grow in demand. One day, we could see ESports being as big as other professional sports like football, basketball and baseball.

#10 Sports News Writing, Jack Sorensen, Mount Michael Benedictine

Jack Sorensen

Thanks to the last-minute heroics of running back Dan Smith, the Jackson High School Rabbits drove home their very first Class D state football title at Memorial Field in a rousing 17-16 victory over the Summit High School Hawks. As the seconds ticked down, Smith kicked a 44 yard field goal to secure the victory.

“What an emotional roller coaster that last minute,” Summit coach Rod Johnson said. “Kudos to the Smith kid for making that kick under so much pressure.”

The momentum started early in Jackson’s favor, running up a touchdown in both quarters and taking a commanding 14-3 lead over 12th seeded Summit. The latter touchdown was the result of a costly fumble, sparking a 59-yard drive and a double-digit lead that would not be relinquished until halfway through the fourth quarter.

“We were disappointed at halftime, being down 11, but we were still confident,” Summit quarterback Larry Brown said. “We finally were able to stop them the second half and got our offense going a little better.”

A strong performance from Brown quickly made up the deficit in the third quarter. Rushing for 51 yards and throwing for 118 on 7 completions, he spearheaded the offense and brought new life to his team, scoring an easy field goal after a Jackson turnover.

After the Rabbits failed to convert on their next possession, Brown and company marched down the field, accruing 85 yards, 43 of which were passing. A 10-point quarter left the Rabbits with a slim 14-13 lead heading into the fourth.

“I was proud of my kids for battling back after being down 11 at halftime,” coach Johnson said. “This is what a championship game should look like.”

Yet another Summit drive left the Hawks in prime scoring position halfway through the fourth quarter. Joe Welch kicked one through the uprights to give Summit its first lead of the game: 16-14. Then came Jackson High’s final drive, picking up 36 yards in 8 plays.

As the Rabbits neared the endzone, a successful 4th and 1 conversion was negated by a holding call, leaving them stranded on the 27 with 58 seconds left to play. It was up to Dan Smith to kick the game winning field goal.

“When my coach said we were going to kick it, I got a big lump in my throat,” he said. “I’ve only made a few kicks over 40 yards in practice.”

The kick was good. After a grueling final few minutes, Jackson High emerged the victor, lead by Dan Smith with 178 of the team’s 218 rushing yards and the game-winning kick.

“We got just enough on that last drive to give us a chance, Smith said. “When I hit it, I knew it could be good.”

The state title came at the perfect time for coach Wittry, who plans to retire after an illustrious 21-year career with Jackson High, leading the Rabbits to 5 playoff appearances in a row.

“I couldn’t ask for a better way to end a 25-year career in coaching,” he said. “This is a storybook ending to my coaching career.”

#11 Yearbook Feature Writing, Brynn Novotny, Fairbury

Brynn Novotny

Newly-crowned champion highlights Miners' Marathon

When English teacher Mr. Davis crossed the finish line of the annual Miners' Marathon, he accomplished an achievement seven years in the making.

The champion, who had competed in the same race last year, had not originally been planning on returning to the event for a second attempt. It was an agreement between him and certain members of the senior class that pulled him in. The terms of the deal were this: if every senior fall sport athlete took one of Mr. Davis's two AP English classes, he would run in the race.

"I did that because I thought, 'Who could it hurt?'" Mr. Davis said of the deal. "It got more student athletes to take a class that prepared them for college, my signup fee goes to a good cause, and it brought up some school spirit and morale in the classroom."

While Mr. Davis was running on behalf of his students' course decisions, this was not his only source of motivation. Six years of marathon competition and seven years of training without a first-place finish were also at play. The Miners' Marathon marked Mr. Davis's first marathon win and solidified itself as a defining point in his running career, though the champion noted the benefits extend beyond personal gain.

"As a competitive runner, I liked that the Boosters were putting on a fundraiser like this," Mr. Davis said. "It is a fundraiser that can get the community involved and can utilize the community's streets and facilities. As a smaller school and community, it is easy for the rest of the world to miss us, and this race is a good way of bringing new people to the school and to the community."

The Activities' Booster Club traditionally puts on the Miners' Marathon, a half marathon, and a 5k run every August, recruiting multiple groups and organizations within Quartz High School to assist by setting up hydration stations along each of the routes. Along with community outreach, these events also aim to give back to the groups and organizations involved with the races. A portion of the record-high \$10,000 was divided evenly among these partners, and a specific amount was placed into an academic scholarship awarded to a graduating senior. Michelle Yoder was this year's recipient.

"The Miners' Marathon Scholarship means a lot to me because I have been helping put it on through the clubs and organizations I have been in for the last four years," Yoder said. She is involved in cross country, track, National Honor Society, and the spring musical, all of which had a hydration station for the races. "This is something I plan on becoming a part of after high school, but as a competitor rather than a volunteer. I would like to help raise money to fund the future Miners' Marathon Scholarship recipients since it will help me greatly with making a college education affordable."

Yoder and Mr. Davis, as well as the school groups, organizations, and community, benefitted from the Miners' Marathon in their respective ways. Through involvement from many sources, the fundraiser gave back, both financially and personally, to those it aimed to serve.

#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing, Brynn Novotny, Fairbury

Brynn Novotny

Despite injuries, Victoria girls track claims conference title

Two mid-meet injuries were not enough to strip Victoria of its girls track conference championship title, a feat that had the team eventually presiding over second-place Plainville by half a point.

The drizzle that settled over the East-North-West-South Conference (ENWSC) meet in Plainville made for slippery conditions, particularly in the field events. These conditions were behind the injuries to two of the Knights' primary scorers: seniors Shelby Schister and Betty Bonker. While Schister pulled a leg muscle after slipping on the triple jump board, Bonker fell on the vault runway, sustaining an injured knee in the process. Both were unable to continue competing.

"When I got hurt and then Betty got hurt, I started crying because I thought there was no way we could win the championship, and that's one of our major goals," Schister said.

Entering the final two events, the 400 and 1600 relays, Victoria had 98.5 points. Schister and Bonker had already contributed with a combined three gold medals as well as a second-place triple jump effort from Schister. The seniors were supposed to run legs in both of the relays. Instead, Ally Williams and Bonnie Blue, freshmen athletes with only relay experience from junior varsity meets to rely on, were called upon.

"I was so scared for those two relays that I almost forgot to take out my earrings," Williams said. "I had to borrow Cindy Callahan's jersey because since I never run in varsity meets, I just wore my sweats."

After Victoria sprint coach Chris Fontaine worked with the relay squads with a particular focus on handoffs, the 400 relay began. The combined efforts of the two freshmen and varsity runners Amanda Olson and Sara Johnson led the Knights to a first-place finish. As for the 1600 relay, Victoria was running third after the first three legs. Before the end of the race, Williams would go on to anchor her team to the win, the girls finishing with a 4:03.8 time with Plainville taking the silver medal at 4:04.5.

"I still can't believe we won," Williams said. "In that 1600 relay, I just ran as hard as I could and tried to catch the Plainville girls. My legs got tired, especially since I had just run the 400 relay, but I didn't want to let my teammates down, especially the seniors."

The two relay wins solidified Victoria's ENWSC meet title with a final point total of 118.5, squeezing past Plainville's 118. The conference meet also marked Victoria coach Doug Moeckel's last as he decided to retire after the season. This year's conference title was Coach Moeckel's 17th in his 25 years with the Knights.

"Once Shelby and Betty became injured, I did not think we could win the championship," Coach Moeckel said. "Those two freshmen had not run in a varsity meet before and I didn't know how they would respond. I am so proud of how they didn't seem to let the pressure bother them and they simply performed. This title is definitely a team title. I'll always remember my last EWNCS championship for the way we won it."

While the ENWSC meet did not go as expected, the Victoria's girls track program still managed to add another conference title to its list of accomplishments.

#13 Yearbook Theme Copy Writing, Liah Haines, Lexington

Liah Haines

Theme: Unscripted

Opening:

Last spring, students left Husker High on March 13, not knowing the year would come to an abrupt end. Our school was closed, Tomorrowtown became isolated, and our world shut down. Students never got the opportunity to finish the narrative of the school year.

In August, we finally got to reunite. The first page of this year was drafted at the Back to School Barbecue, where students and faculty were able to interact after months apart. This gathering, something that in the past had been taken for granted, set the tone for this year's narrative.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our eyes were opened to the struggles that were present in everyone's lives. Together, we choose to change the story by giving back to the community that has done so much for us. Hosting clothing and food drives is small way that we helped to give this year's script a positive ending.

At Husker High, we are writing our own story. While there are uncertainties surrounding almost every aspect of our lives, no one can take away the power that we have - the power to write our own story. No one knows what the future holds. But we are embracing our diversity, growing from the lessons we learned, and defining what it means to be a Cowboy. All of these aspects add to our story.

The story for this year hasn't been drafted yet. This year is unscripted, but we are going to write a narrative that we will be proud of.

Closing:

This school year has been anything but ordinary. Our day to day lives have changed drastically and we have had to adapt to our new normal. We came back to school with an empty script, waiting to fill it with this year's triumphs and tribulations.

At Husker High, we embraced this opportunity. Throughout the year, we have worked to craft a story that we will be proud of. As Cowboys, we have chosen to set a positive tone for this year. A social media campaign promoting good sportsmanship embodies these qualities that shine bright everyday in our school.

Cowboys, both past and present, gathered to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of our school. While celebrating our history, we recognized the power that our current student body holds - the power to create our own legacy to leave at Husker High.

On the daily, students and staff came together to work on this year's narrative. Some staff members added to their Husker High story this year, while many others were just beginning. Freshmen began to craft their high school narrative, while seniors prepared to conclude theirs.

Our journey this year was unscripted. Cowboy nation set the tone and wrote this year's story. Coming back to school, we didn't have a story for the year. But together, we came together and chose our own narrative. The story of this year is authentic, raw and real.

Our story was unscripted, so we wrote our own narrative for Husker High. This is our story.

Athletics:

This year's sports teams embraced the opportunity to write their own stories while wearing the Cowboys jerseys. Our football team changed the narrative by beating Hawkeye Central for the

first time in a decade. While many doubted that would be the ending to the story, our school rallied behind the team, and everyone involved is a part of the story.

Students supported in the stands all season long, repping green and white to show support for all student athletes. Cowboys were at games, parades, and pep rallies embracing our school spirit. The support and dedication to our school and its athletic program shows the theme that has been present the entire year.

All athletes, coaches, and fans contributed to this year's sports narrative. By sharing in the victories and supporting each other when we fell short, Cowboy athletics created a story that is authentically Husker High. We will remember this year not by the wins and losses, but by the relationships formed and the lessons learned.

Cowboys athletes took the risk to write their own stories. Each season began with a blank, unscripted page, but the stories that were written will forever be remembered.

CORONAVIRUS FACTS

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

WET HANDS



Wet hands with clean, warm water and apply soap.

LATHER



Lather by rubbing soap on the front and back of your hands, between your fingers and your nails.

SCRUB



Scrub your hands for 20 seconds. If you need a timer sing "Happy Birthday" twice.

DRY



Dry your hands thoroughly with a clean towel.

According to the CDC

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19



According to the CDC and Sanfordhealth.org

COVID-19 IN NUMBERS



According to Worldometers.info

HOW COVID-19 CAN BE TRANSMITTED

COVID-19 is thought to be transmitted mainly through close contact with individuals who are sick via physical contact or through respiratory droplets (sneezes, coughs) expelled by the infected person.



ANIMAL TO HUMAN



Another way COVID-19 can be spread is by touching an object that has the virus on it and then touching your face, eyes, mouth, or nose.

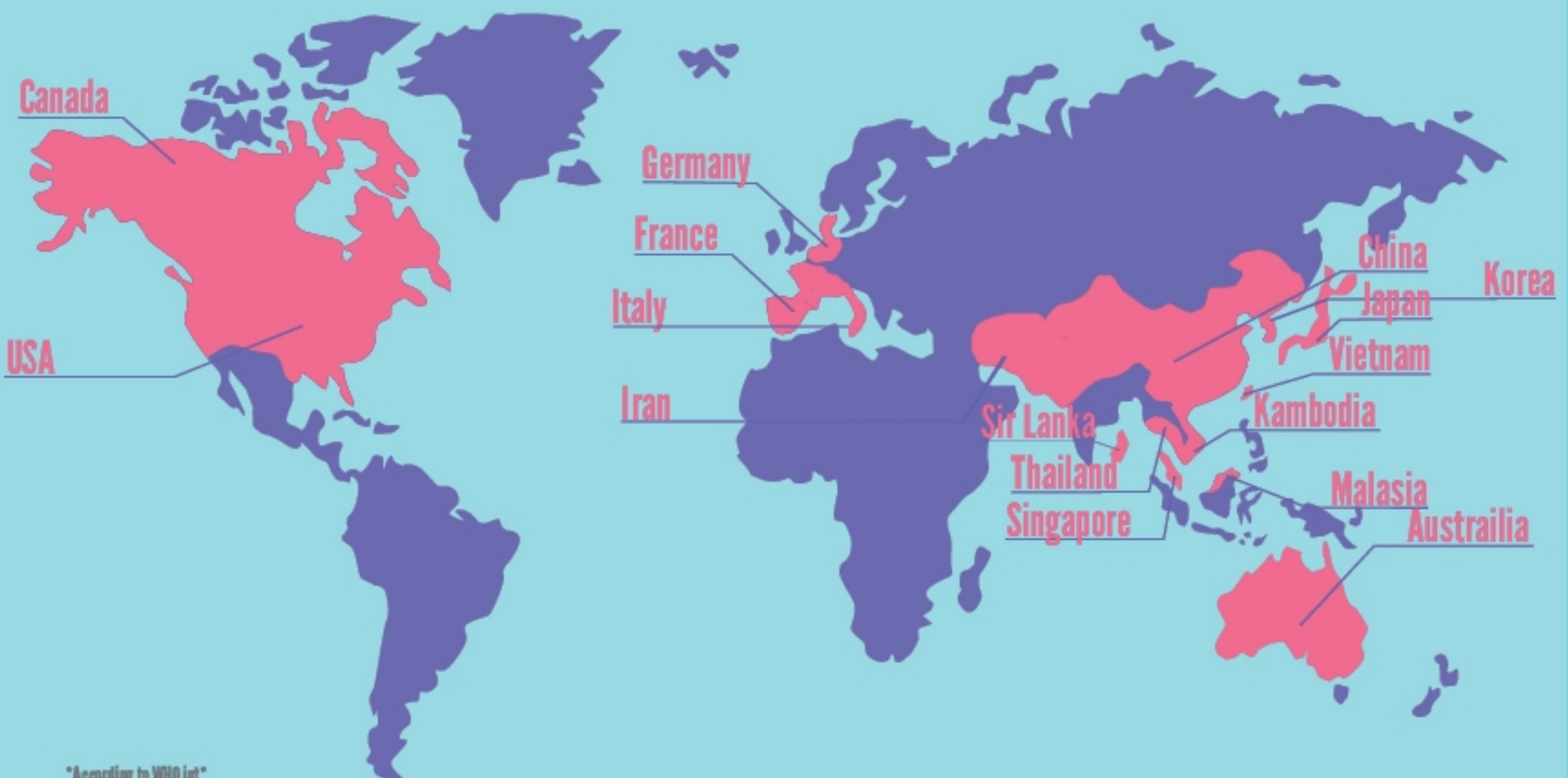


HUMAN TO HUMAN



According to the CDC

COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST REPORTED CASES OF COVID-19



According to WHO.int

MAILIN' IT IN FOR 'MERICA

The 2020 presidential election will take place amidst a pandemic and social turmoil, and bring changes to political norms.

By Sydney Kucera, Kayli Comine, Sofia Hartman and Faith Herbers

Anticipation flutters like leaves dancing in the air on a brisk fall morning. 18 year-old Alexis Welker is a ball of nerves, and her pulse matches the dancing leaves as she timidly waits. She stands in a growing line of people, most socially distanced and contemplates her decision to vote for the first time in-person. She could have filled out her ballot in the comfort of her living room like her mom, but at this point, it's too late.

Welker's change of heart is not unusual this voting season. With this year's monumental election, the challenge of a global pandemic has shifted the focus from in-person to mail-in voting.

Locally, there is confidence that mail-in voting will be secure. Douglas County Election Commissioner Brian Kruse said 160,000 mail-in ballots had been sent out this year, doubling the approximately 80,000 sent out in 2016.

"There's no question the virus is driving it," Kruse said. "Early voting was on the rise, but it was nowhere near this."

Casting a ballot by mail is not new in the U.S., but the coronavirus pandemic has made it a prominent topic this election. Mail-in voting is intended to provide flexibility to those who need to cast a ballot in a location

other than a polling place, and during a global pandemic offers an option for voters to cast a vote safely from home. Welker, a senior at Elkhorn High, will participate in an election for the first time, and is excited to use her right to vote. Welker turned 18 in late



Photo by Sydney Kucera

October, so it was a close call for her eligibility to vote.

"It's great to be involved in something of this extent," Welker said. "Especially since my birthday is so close to election day."

According to an article published by the Omaha World Herald, 200,000

Nebraskans have already voted in this year's election, nearly a quarter of the 860,573 votes that were counted in the 2016 election.

"We are seeing numbers much bigger than normal," Kruse said. "This is pushed by the pandemic for mail-in voting."

With the 2020 election just days away, mail-in ballots have been steadily arriving at the Douglas County election offices, despite an increased concern with the ability of the United States Postal Service to deliver ballots where they need to be on time. The USPS has faced scrutiny for operational changes and budget cuts that lead some to question if the service could process the millions of absentee ballots and worries that this could create inaccurate outcomes during the election. The USPS has reinstated some of the changes it made to alleviate some of the concerns.

If Nebraska voters don't want to use the USPS to deliver their ballot, they have the option to bring their ballot to the election commission office or to drop boxes located around the city. Absentee ballots in Nebraska must be received by November 3, election day. In addition to mail-in voting, Nebraska also offers in-person voting. Like voting by mail, one must register to vote in-person

by October 23. Kruse said both methods are secure and voter registration is verified; twice in the case of mail-in ballots.

"In Nebraska, you always have to request a ballot," Kruse said. "The signature is checked on both the request ballot and the actual ballot."

In Omaha, most will vote in-person at traditional polling places such as schools and churches. Counties with fewer than 10,000 residents, however, can close traditional polling places if they wish. In-person voting will still be offered at county election offices in these counties. There have already been 11 counties that have chosen to use this arrangement.

Social studies teacher Ashley Anderson chose to vote in-person.

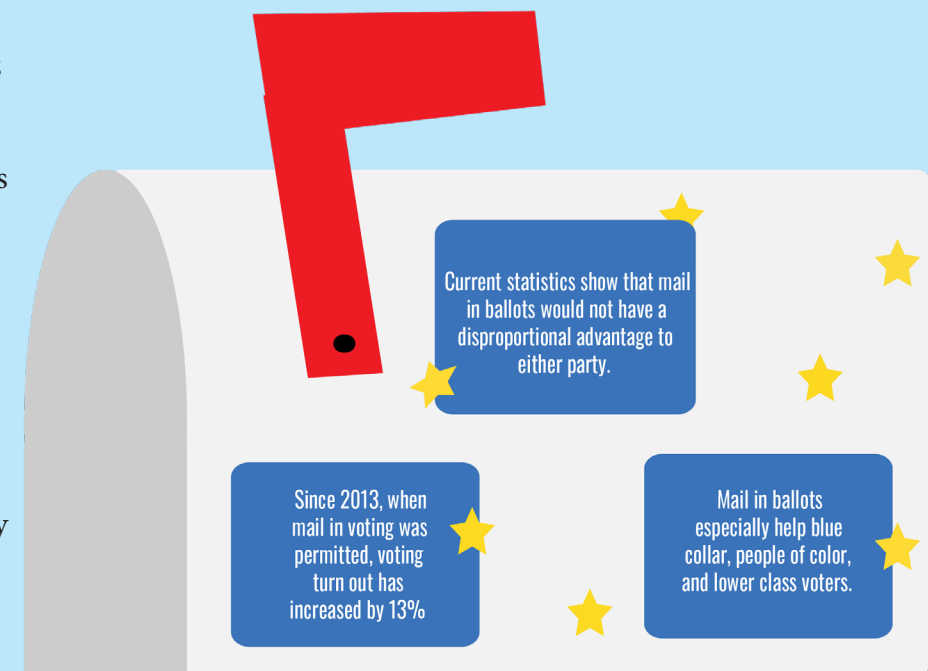
"I like the experience and I trust it more," Anderson said.

Many who put faith in traditional in-person voting must often find a time to vote around busy schedules. This year, the Elkhorn School District opted to give students the day off and teachers an inservice on election day. Nine EPS schools are polling places which presented a challenge with pandemic guidelines to follow.

"A change in this election from previous ones was the need for the Douglas County Election Commissioner to use Elkhorn South High School as a polling site," Superintendent Dr. Bary Habrock said. "The use of a high school as a polling site has not been done previously and creates lots of challenges to the campus including access and parking for voters."

In addition to this challenge, Habrock said the district continues to seek additional planning time for teachers since this year they are teaching remote and in-person students.

"The challenge for teachers to meet the needs of learners in-person and remotely has proven to be very difficult, thus, we continue to seek additional time for them," Habrock said.



Stats by Pew Research Center.

"November 3rd seemed like an opportunity to this end."

English teacher Kayla Anderson said she is grateful for the election day inservice, but had already requested a mail-in ballot before EPS announced its plans. "School was the biggest factor for my decision to mail-in vote," Anderson said. "I was worried that the lines were going to be super long."

President Donald Trump, candidate Joe Biden, and their respective parties, have different views on mail-in voting.

President Trump has made it clear he does not support the wide expansion of mail-in voting. In an article from National Public Radio, Trump called mail-in voting a "scam that will lead to the greatest rigged election in history." He claims voters must have a valid reason for casting a ballot by mail. Giving everyone free reign to vote by mail would make the election process substantially fraudulent, he said in the article. Even though Trump has voiced his opposition against the expansion of voting by mail, state and local Republicans are telling Americans mail-in voting is safe. Pennsylvania's Republican Party website encourages voting by mail as it states, "Vote Safe: By mail. From

home.” The Republican Party in Ohio even sent mailers with a photo of Trump saying “Join President Trump and Vote by Absentee Ballot.” According to the NPR story, some Republicans are hesitant to openly disagree with Trump’s stance on mail voting, but privately worry that many Republican voters will shy away from voting remotely in swing states.

Although there is national concern with mail-in voting, Douglas County has no worries regarding its security.

“It is absolutely safe,” Kruse said. “I’m confident that early voting by mail is secure.”

Even though she isn’t voting by mail, Welker said she thinks it’s important that people have it as an option. “It [mail-in voting] will make sure everyone has an equal opportunity this election,” Welker said.

Biden and other Democrats support nationwide voting by mail. During his campaign, Biden has urged Congress to provide enough funding to states to allow voters to cast their ballots by mail. Democrats said voting by mail is helpful for vulnerable populations. A person collecting and turning in ballots from a nursing home is what Democrats call com-

munity ballot collection. Republicans in Congress, however, call this ballot harvesting, and they claim it makes these vulnerable populations susceptible to manipulation.

With an added focus on mail-in voting comes the real possibility of a prolonged contested battle over the results of this election. It would not be the first time an election’s results were called into question. One recent example is the presidential election of 2000. On November 7 that year, millions cast their vote between Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush. As the polls closed that night, it was clear perennial battle ground state Florida was too close to call, and no winner was declared on election night.

This year’s election could bring back memories from the 2000 election, but it is not certain the argument will be over recounting ballots. Instead, social studies teacher JJ Zumbrennan said the debate could be about total ballots and the electoral college.

“The outcome won’t go away without a fight,” Zumbrennan said. “I’m not necessarily sure if the issue will be concerned with popular and electoral

votes.”

Not all states are going about the same policies when it comes to voting by mail for the 2020 election. According to the website projects.fivethirtyeight.com, some states, such as Colorado, allow everyone to vote by mail, and ballots are automatically mailed to voters. In other states, like New York, everyone can vote by mail, but nothing is automatically mailed to voters.

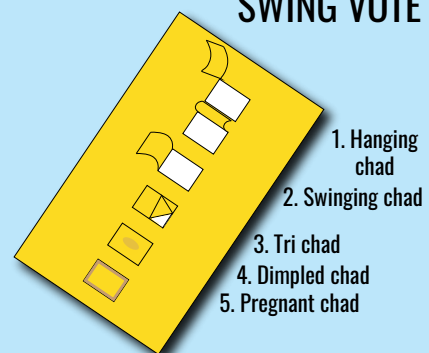
Some states let all registered voters vote by mail and mail-ballot applications are automatically mailed to voters. Nebraska is using this policy and the deadline to apply for an absentee ballot was October 23. Counties with fewer than 10,000 residents are an exception to this policy. These counties can automatically send mail ballots to voters and 11 counties have already chosen to go by this.

This year’s election will be remembered, as both campaigns have said, as a “fight for our nation’s soul.” How long that fight will continue past Nov. 3, is yet to be seen.

“I’m so excited to exercise my right to vote in this year’s election,” Welker said. “And I’m excited to hopefully make a difference in the country.”

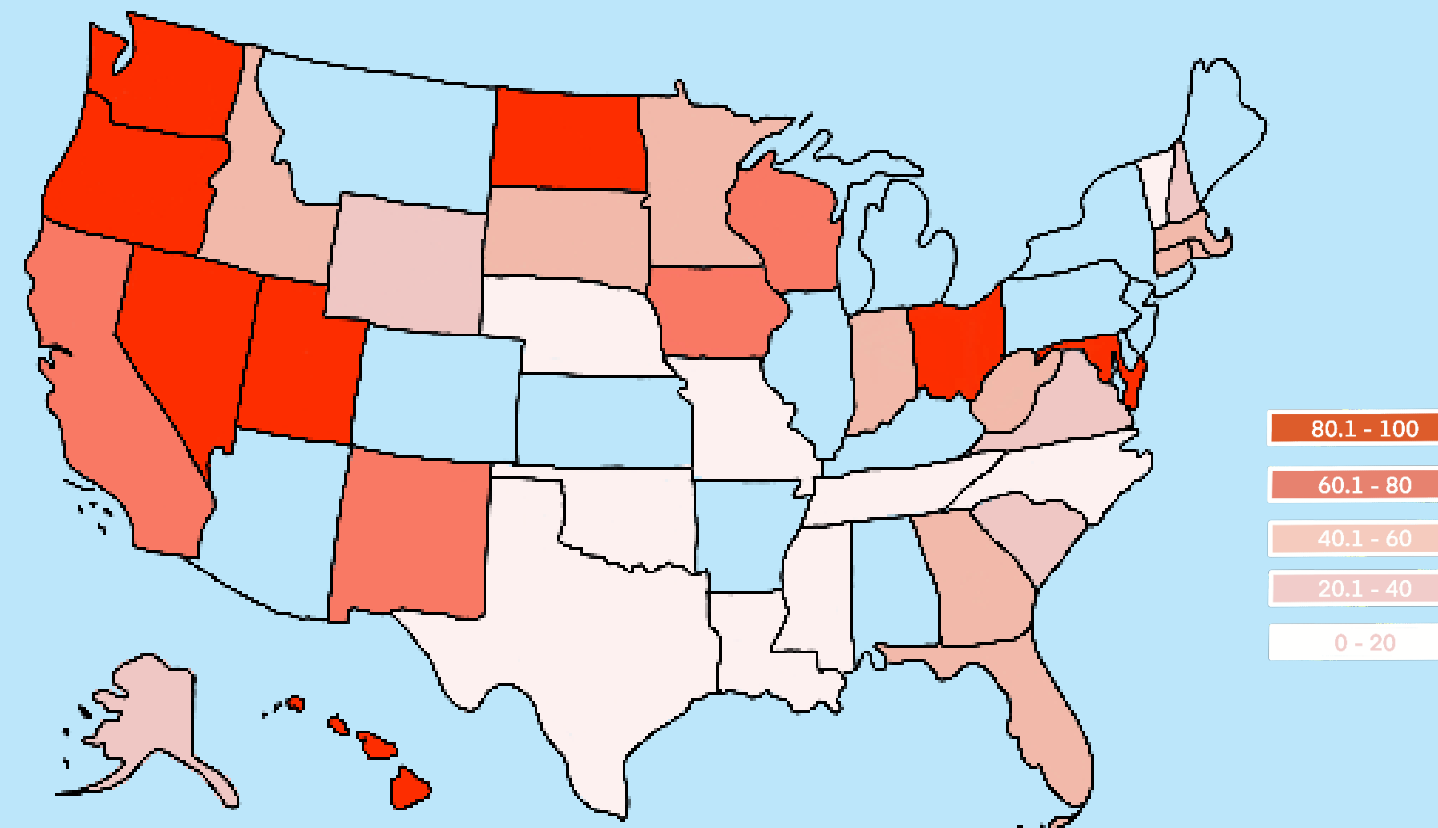
In the 2000 Presidential election between Democratic candidate Al Gore, and Republican incumbent George Bush, the results of Florida’s vote became controversial, resulting in a call for recount and accusations of voter fraud. Terms such as the “Swinging” and “Dimpled” chads came into popularity regarding the legitimacy of voter ballots. Gore won the popular vote by over half a million, however Bush won the Electoral College and Presidency.

SWING VOTE



1. Hanging chad- one corner remained attached to the ballot.
2. Swinging chad- two corners remained attached.
3. Tri chad- three corners remained attached.
4. Dimpled chad- all four corners remain attached, indented in the center.
5. Pregnant chad- all four corners attached, indented on the outer edge.

Amid COVID-19 Outbreak, Absentee/Mail Voting Increased During 2020 U.S. Primary Elections



2020 WHAT’S AT STAKE

Health Care

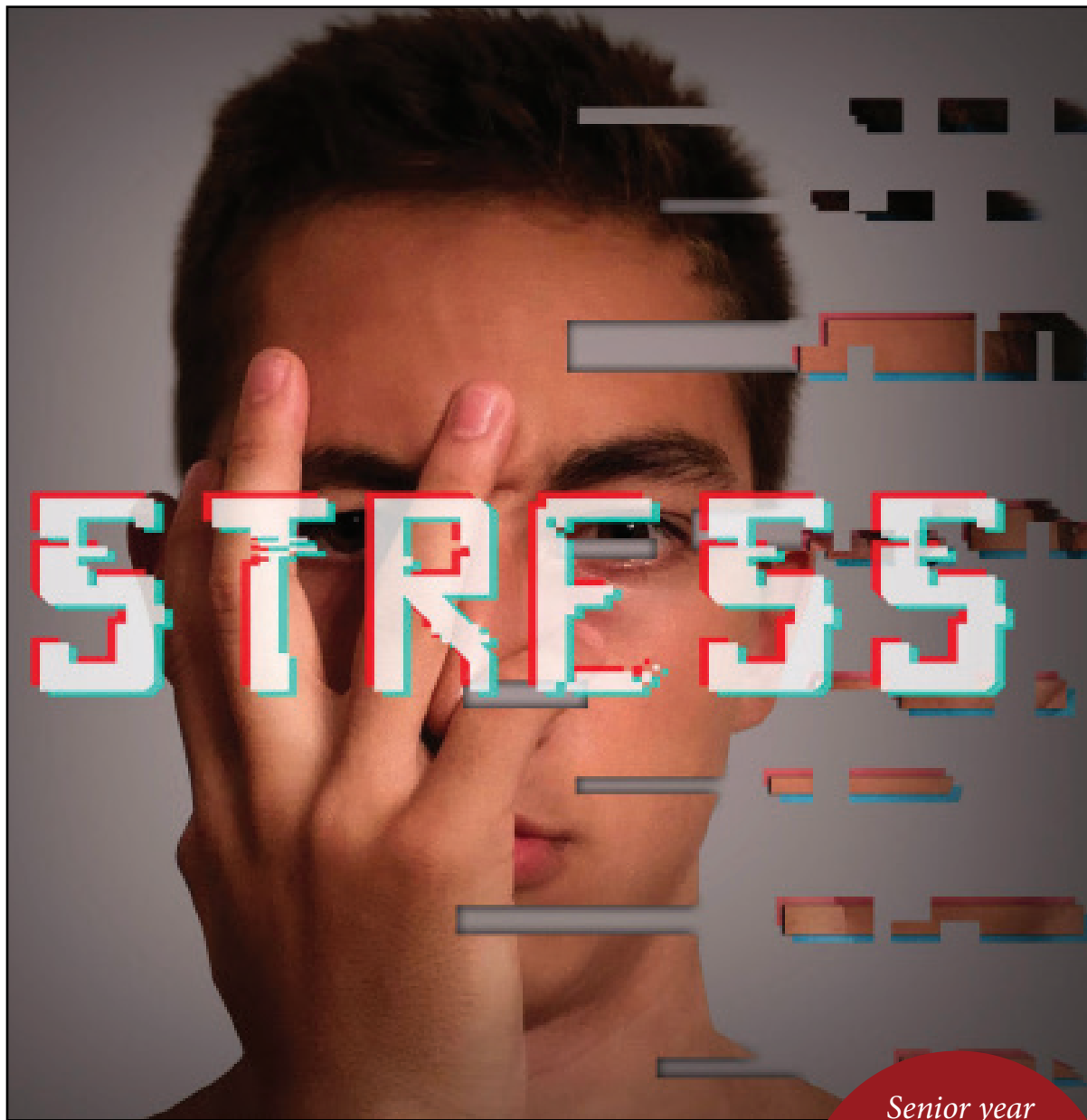
- If re-elected, President Trump could eliminate the Affordable Care Act through the Supreme Court or legislation.
- If Joe Biden wins, improvements or additional coverage could be added to the Affordable Care Act.

Legislative Control

- Republicans are defending 23 seats while Democrats are defending 12
- It is a tight race for the Senate in these states: Maine, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Arizona, Iowa, Colorado, and Alaska. Democrats need to flip four seats to gain control.
- Republican control of the senate would give President Trump the ability to further his agenda, or potentially limit a Biden administration’s ability to pass its agenda.
- A Democratic Senate would give the Democratic Party power over the legislative branch which would allow Biden to pass more of his legislation.

Electoral College

- Nebraska uses the Congressional District Method where two electors are awarded to the popular vote winner of the state while congressional districts receive a single elector. (Douglas County could possibly be blue while the rest of the state is red)

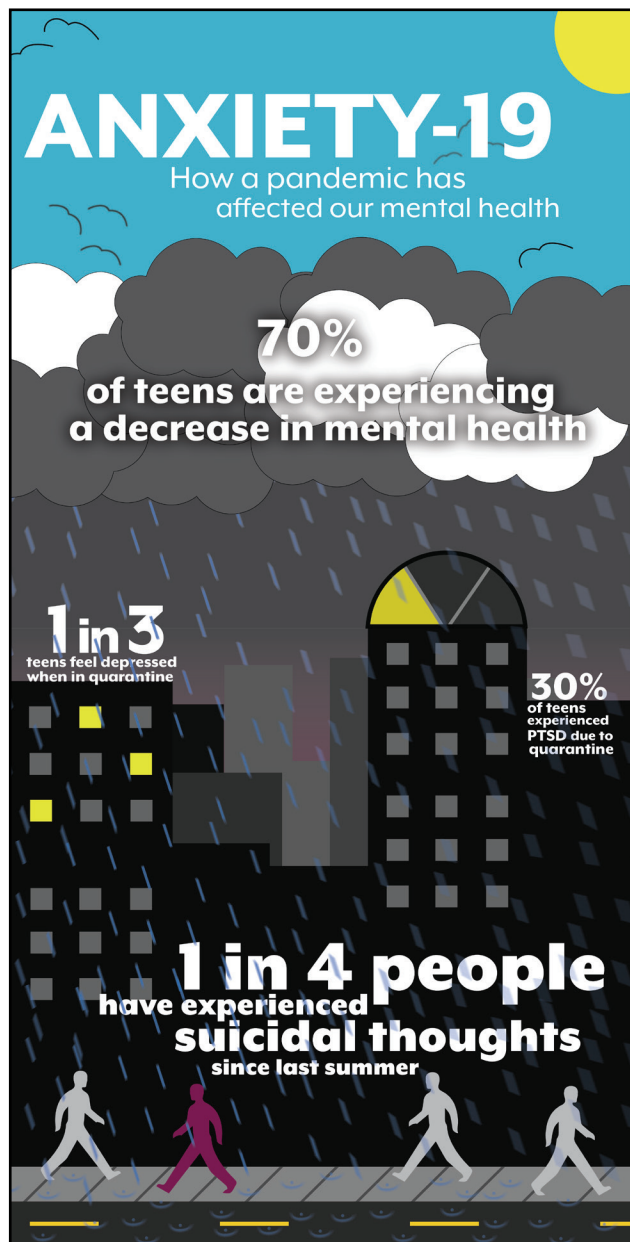


Above: Graphic by senior, Kyto Warner

Senior Stress

BY: CLAIRE ANDERSON

Senior Stress. Well, that just about sums it up. Applying to collage, just to turn around and apply for scholarships. Right now we are making one of the first big decisions we can make in life. Just deciding where to apply is its own headache. we have to write every-



Above: Infographic by senior Dante Boelhower

Senior year really hits when "have a great summer" turns into "have a great future/ life"

thing about us out on paper and hope that it's enough to get us to the future we've been dreaming of. No biggie, right?

All the normal stress that the final chapter of high school entails, and we're dealing with the added factor of COVID-19. it has been said a lot, so much so that it feels a little annoying at this point, but it's true. we are just feeling overwhelmed.

This is supposed to be our year of good-byes and lasts for the activities we've filled every minute of our time with. But now, those activities are up in the air too. Incoming winter sports athletes scared of not getting to fulfill what they've worked for.

Students who participated in the musical last year, knowing how it felt to spend all that time and effort on a show just for never getting the gratification of performing it for an audience. Never being able to watch it on DVD together as a cast like it was planned was heartbreaking.

The fear of growing up is real, and it gets a little scarier when it feels as if the days left in school are numbered. this year it's not just a countdown to resuming classes online. you get the gist.

Time keeps passing by and seniors are a little angry with the continued, reliable motion forward that is entropy. Every year you could ask any student in the graduation class for advice. You'll hear roughly the truths of "don't procrastinate", "treat others with kindness", "appreciate your time here, it goes by fast." Yet, everyone's a little shocked when the final year, and the stress that came with it, arrives.

In a study completed by the American Psychological Association to calculate stress levels of both teens and adults, it was found that today's high school students have stress levels adjacent or higher than adults. There are many hypothesized reasons for this; however, one is that stress management is not emphasized enough to today's youth. Instead, academic achievement, community involvement, and other activities are valued high.

As a student who has been stretched too this with involvement, I understand the emotional toll. While trying new things is exciting and a great way to challenge yourself, it is important to know your own limits. Be prepared and willing to say now. Learn that it's okay to quit things later if they get to be too much for you. It's just high school, and time will keep moving. Life doesn't begin and end here, it's just a step.

Christmas Comfort

BY: NOLA YOUNG

Ever since I was a little girl, I've always loved Christmas. Not for the gifts, but for the church programs, the cookies and the smell of Christmas trees. Nothing smells better than homemade cookies and a Christmas tree. Christmas brings me lots and lots of joy! There's nothing more I'd rather do than make hot chocolate and watch a movie. Here are a few of my favorite movies, songs, and cookie recipes for the holidays. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

MOVIES

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Nightmare Before Christmas | A Christmas Story |
| Polar Express | Jack Frost |
| The Star | Christmas with the Kranks |
| The Grinch | The Holiday |
| A Christmas Carol | The Nutcracker |
| Arther Christmas | Home Alone |
| Elf | Love Actually |

SONGS

- "Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas" -Judy Garland
- "Let It Snow" -Dean Martin
- "The Little Drummer Boy" -Bing Crosby
- "Little Saint Nick" -The Beach Boys
- "Rocken' Around the Christmas Tree" -Brenda Lee
- "Angels We Have Heard on High" -Josh Groban
- "Away in a Manger" -Sarah McLachlan
- "The First Noel" -Andy Williams
- "Silent Night" -Pentatonix
- "Joy to the World" -Jeremy Riddle
- "Hark the Harald Angels Sing" -Pentatonix

COOKIES

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sugar | Oatmeal Cream Cheese |
| Eggnog Meltaway | Butter |
| Peanut Butter Blossoms | Ginger |
| Gingerbread | Shortbread |
| Sinckerdoodle | Peppermint |

5 minute Holiday Cookie Recipe

12 oz. White Chocolate Melts
1 Box Nilla Wafers
1/4 Cup Mini Chocolate Chips
1/4 Cup Crushed Candy Canes
1/4 Cup Mini M&M's

Melt white chocolate according to package instructions. Dip Nilla Wafers into melted chocolate and lay onto a sheet of parchment. Sprinkle cookies with toppings of your choice. Place in freezer for 2 minutes to set chocolate. Serve at room temperature. Enjoy!

How Much Is Put Into Christmas?

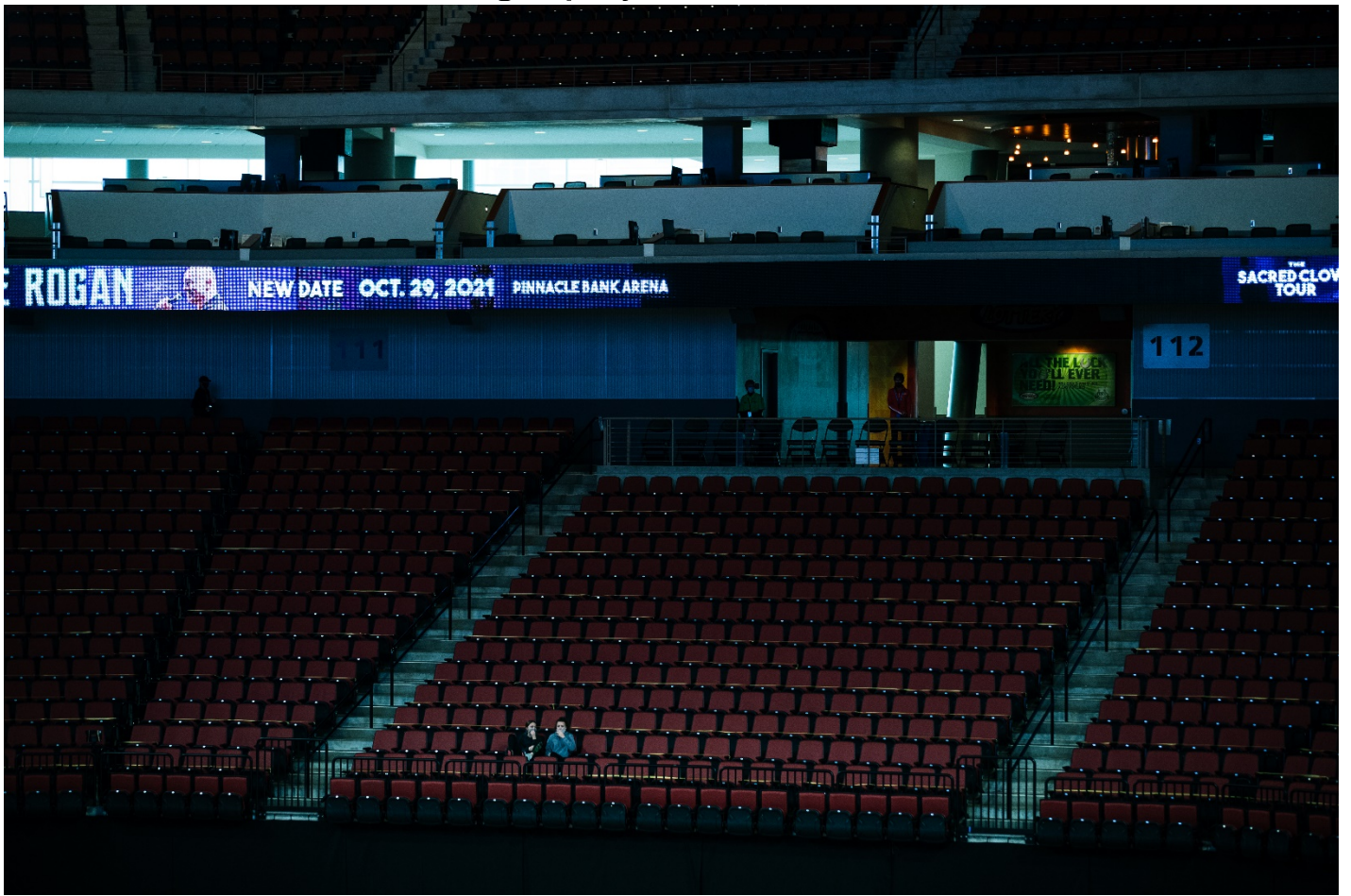


Above: Infographic by sophomore, Zelia Hoagland

#18 Sports Action Photography, Morgan Smith, Lexington

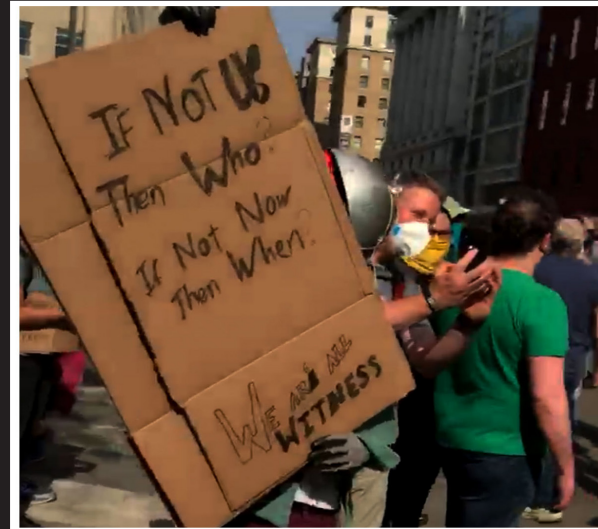


#19 News Feature Photography, Dante Boelhower, Adams Central



INJUSTICE FOR ALL

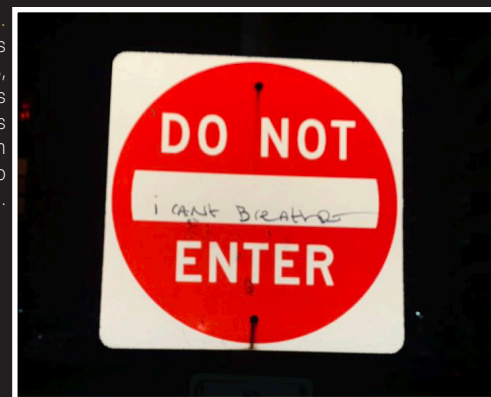
No justice. No peace. During a protest on June 2, 2020, people gathered in Washington D.C. Sophomore **Wilson Overfield** got to attend a protest. "Maybe the one protest I went to in D.C. did not have an impact alone, but if you combine the nationwide protests, I feel they inspired lots of people and were eye opening," Overfield said. Photo Courtesy of Wilson Overfield.



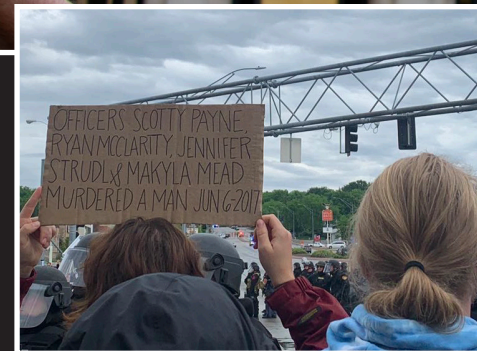
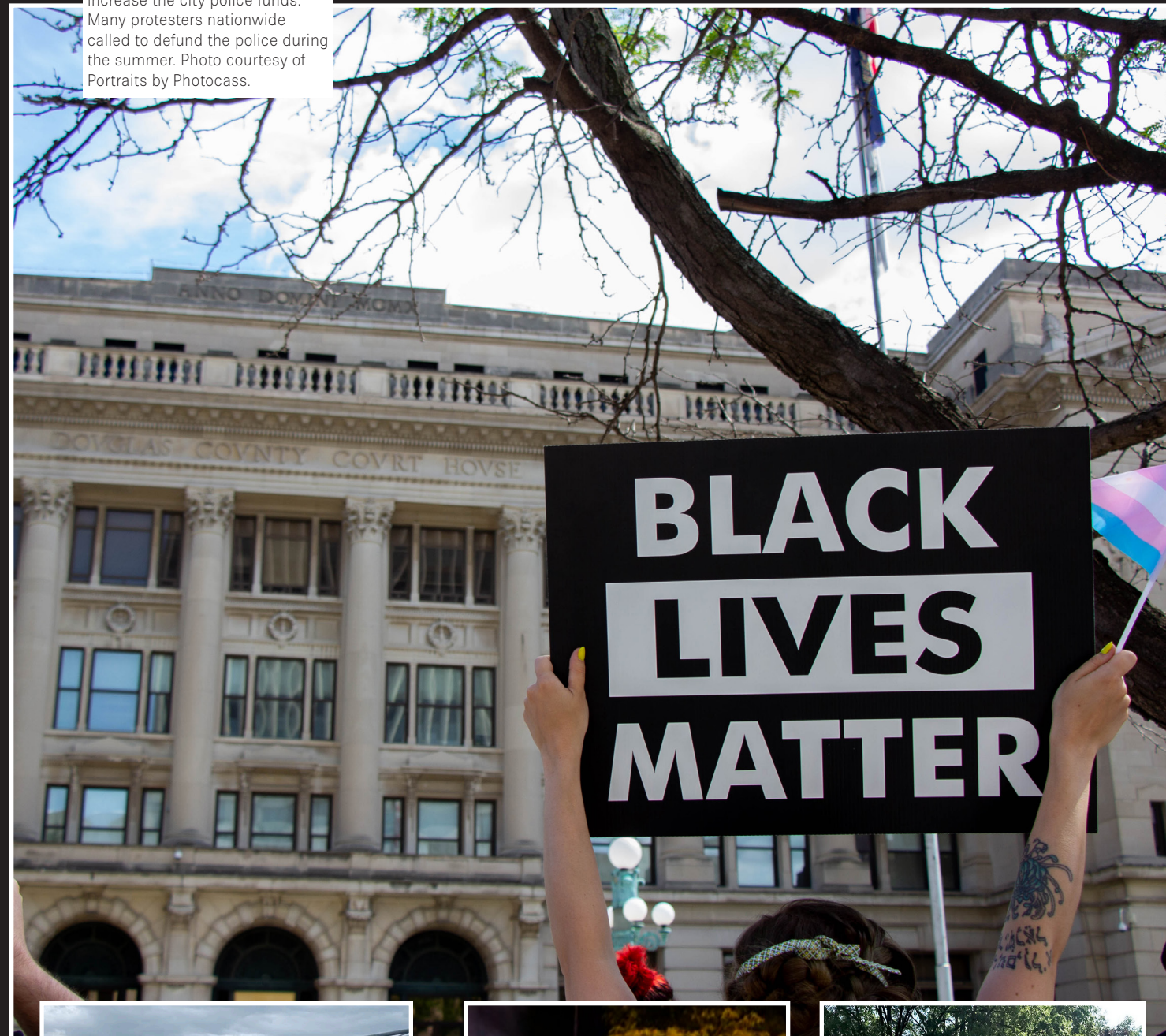
Let it begin. Like those in Washington DC, protesters across the nation marched on the streets. Photo Courtesy of Wilson Overfield



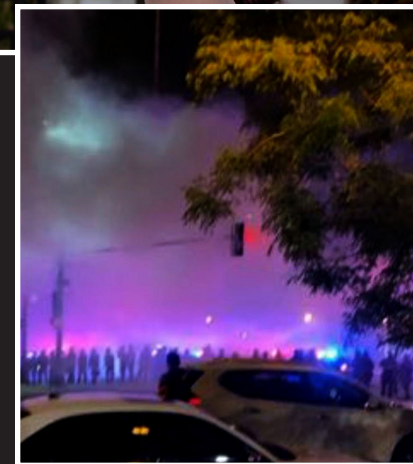
I can't breathe. In Omaha, some businesses reported broken windows, vandalism, and other damages to their storefronts. Graffiti was used on road signs and on buildings or sidewalks. Photo Courtesy of Anesa Espinoza.



Budget crisis. Protesters gather outside the Omaha City Council building to protest a proposal to increase the city police funds. Many protesters nationwide called to defund the police during the summer. Photo courtesy of Portraits by Photocass.



Trying to make a difference. A protester in Omaha holds up a sign on the corner of 72nd and Dodge accusing three Omaha Police Officers of murdering a man, Zachary Bearheels in 2017. Bearheels, a mentally ill man, died as a result of the use of a stun gun while in police custody. One officer was acquitted of second degree assault charges, and all were initially removed from the force. Three of the four police officers involved were reinstated over summer. "Just because there was something done about the inequality and racism before doesn't mean things are going to stay that way," sophomore **Ella L. Johnson** said. "What I do know is that things need to start getting better or the protests will start to be violent riots." Photo Courtesy of Anesa Espinoza.



Behind the lights. After dark the initial summer protesting in Omaha took a turn. Smoke filled the air from tear gas, and rubber bullets were employed by Omaha Police Department. Many thought the protests went too far and used the words rioting and looting to describe the scene. President Trump labeled the BLM movement as terroristic. Photo Courtesy of Jammal Hunter.



It starts with us. Protesters in the nation's capitol hold up handmade protest signs. "The atmosphere was so insightful," Overfield said. "It felt like I was really a part of something positive." Photo Courtesy of Wilson Overfield.



Speaking out. Senior **Jammal Hunter** speaks in front of Omaha City Council about the Black Lives Matter Movement and protesting. Photo Courtesy of KMTV.

After attending Black Lives Matter protests, Wilson Overfield and Jammal Hunter share their experiences.

This was a family vacation like no other. Sophomore **Wilson Overfield** took a trip down to Washington D.C. for a cousin's graduation. Little did they know that they would also wind up attending a Black Lives Matter protest in the nation's capital, the hub of political and social unrest.

After seeing a few tourist sites on June 2nd, the family headed over to one of the protests to participate. "I took part in the protests because my family and I believe in the goals of the BLM movement," Wilson said.

After George Floyd, a Black man from Minnesota, died in police custody, over 7,750 protests erupted nationwide. A police officer had knelt on Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes, and the death was caught on film. The video soon went viral.

Some protests turned non-peaceful, but according to the Armed Conflict and Event Data Project, 95% of protesters were peaceful and only 5% of people participated in any violent acts.

"While my family and I were there, the protests were peaceful," Overfield said. "There was no violence or looting at the protest I attended. I was part of the protests that kept everyone and things safe."

For the safety of protesters, police, and the community, many cities enacted a curfew. In Washington D.C., the curfew was set for 7:00 pm. In Omaha, it was 10 pm. The curfews lasted for about a week.

After curfew, protesters in both cities became violent. "Since my family and I did leave before the 7:00 pm curfew, we most likely avoided police and protester altercations," Overfield said.

Curfew violations led to arrests across the nation. Senior **Jammal Hunter** was present at the protests in Omaha and was even tear gassed by police. "It felt like I was suffocating," he said. "Trying to run from it to catch your breath was almost impossible."

On the second night of the protests in Omaha, May 30th, James Scurlock, a protester, was killed by a downtown business owner Jake Gardner who claimed to be defending his shop from non-peaceful protesters.

Gardner would later become indicted by a grand jury on manslaughter and felony assault charges. Gardner died by suicide before turning himself into police custody.

After this incident the public was quick to classify protests in Omaha as riots. Discussion on social media indicated a divided perspective: some felt the police presence was necessary to protect businesses and property downtown.

Meanwhile, Hunter and other protesters in the area maintained that law enforcement escalated otherwise peaceful events.

"I was never scared," Hunter said. "The part that amazed me was the police showing up in riot gear to a protest. They looked like they were going to war or something when all we were doing was exercising our First Amendment rights."

After protesting, Hunter appealed to the Omaha City Council about systemic racism in policing, the death of James Scurlock, and racism in schools.

"I knew I could be a big change so I decided it was time to defend black people for real this time," Hunter said.

Hunter and his family believe that in order to make a change you need to be the change. "When the protests had started my mom had told me that I needed to know that the way people treated me would be based on the color of my skin," Hunter said. "I believe that more than ever after being shot with rubber bullets and having tear gas being thrown at me." Story by Alyssa Garcia.

north platte high school 2021

the wind up

Volume 101
North Platte, Nebraska



Written by: Paige Anthony and Olivia Eckel

2020, known as the year of the unknown. Jobs, seasons and memories, all lost. In January our only worries were if we had a friend in our new classes. Now, our worries have grown into a bottomless pit. Starting the year off with World War III to six months in quarantine, we will never know what curveball is going to be thrown next.

"Behind the mask" is uncovering the struggles and hardships of this crazy year. We made it a point to get personal with the student body to get to know them behind the mask. Walking down the hallways, we are hidden behind a mask that conceals who we really are. Between quarantining for two weeks and with no contact to the outside world, our mental health worsens since we are living in isolation from loved ones, friends and activities.

This yearbook is to remember what we hold behind the mask, the strength and perseverance of pushing through a pandemic. Throughout the book, you will see that the color scheme changes. This represents how the risk dial has skewed during the year. The difference between the black and white pages sheds light on finding the positives in the darkest times.

Going into 2021, we have hope for a better year full of new beginnings, new friends and covid vaccines. Despite all the pitfalls, 2020 is a year we will all remember and something our children will dread learning about in school.

activities

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people

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Photo by: Elsacia Buck

Written by: Olivia Eckel

On Oct. 16, the North Platte high school homecoming king and queen were announced. Seniors Thomas Moss and Abby Orr were chosen to be class of 2021 royalty. "It was a lot of fun, it was kind of cool to see that my classmates look at me like that," Moss said. The homecoming court nominees were seniors Treven Hipwell, Haeley Folk, Callen Zurn, Maya Lashley, Aaron Franz, Abby Orr, Thomas Moss, Baylee Steele, Jahmani Sterling, and Skyler Sudbeck.



Photos by: Elsaacia Buck

masked royalty

(Pictured below) Senior homecoming court nominees **Callen Zurn** and **Maya Lashley** walk down the field on Oct. 16. Lashley said, "All of the people on the homecoming court were all just people that I really admire."



(Pictured above) On Oct. 16, seniors **Treven Hipwell** and **Haeley Folk** walk across the field while their names are being announced for homecoming court.



(Pictured above) Seniors **Aaron Franz** and homecoming queen **Abby Orr** walk down the field on Oct. 16. "To be real, I don't really care, I thought it was kind of cool though," Franz said.



(Pictured above) Seniors **Thomas Moss** and **Baylee Steele** walk across the football field on Oct. 16. "It was a fun experience to get out there and stand with some friends also," Moss said.



(Pictured above) Seniors **Jahmani Sterling** and **Skyler Sudbeck** walk across the field during the homecoming game. Sterling said, "It wasn't a surprise because I asked my friends to vote for me."



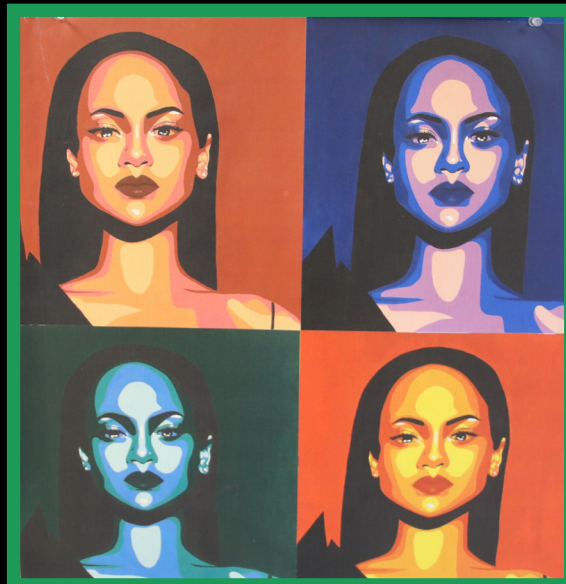
(Pictured above) Junior **Anezca Bannink** created this painting and respectfully titled it "Lions" and entered it into the pets and animals category.
 (Pictured left) Freshman **Ellie Gaedke** poses with one of her many pieces she entered. This one is titled "The eyes are the windows into the soul" and was entered into the abstract category.



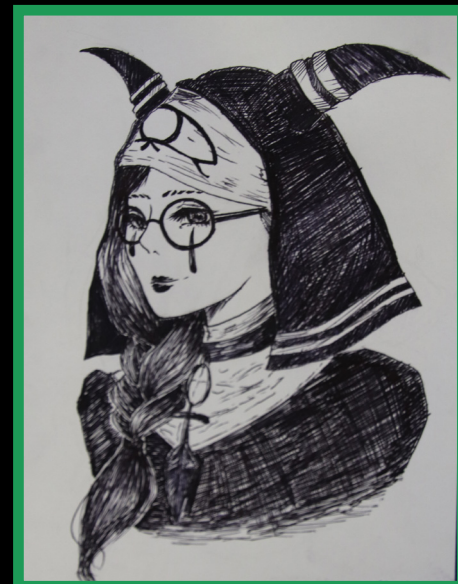
(Pictured left) Freshman **Chloe Bostwick** titled this piece "Christine's Picnic" and entered it into the creepy category.



(Pictured above) Junior **Kaitlyn Evans** poses with her painting of birds, that was entered into the pets and animals category.



(Pictured above) Senior **Molly Fitzpatrick** created this piece she titled "RiRiRiRihanna" and entered it into the collaborative category.



(Pictured above) Freshman **Nhu-y Huynh** entered her drawing into the anime category and titled it "IOV Fiona Gimán."

Written by: Sophia Walsh

Many North Platte High students are involved in art. Art is described to be a creative outlet to express feelings. Starting on Feb. 16, the art department set up a stand outside the 1500 rooms for students to enter and showcase their art. "I really wanted to show people my art, and so, then maybe it'll make them happy when they see it," freshman **Ellie Gaedke** said.

There are many different categories, a few being animals/pets, tiny art, in my mind, and abstract. Students were able to enter multiple pieces of art into all the different categories.

Crystal Franklin (pictured right) poses with her abstract paint-pouring artwork. Along with a couple paint pourings, Franklin also entered a painted sky, a practice sheet of human features like noses and lips, as well as multiple doodles. Franklin created her larger art pieces a few years ago but entered her doodles into the display after learning about the show, as a way to contribute more. "The paintings I made a couple years ago. I was going through a lot and I thought just putting together a cup and dumping it on something was relaxing because the end product turned out really good," Franklin said "I really enjoyed it."



Photos by: Sophia Walsh

creative
 minds
 NPHS art show

drive to victory



Written by: Paige Anthony

The **Lady Dawg golf team** finished their season with a bang, taking home the State championship first place trophy. Along with winning a state title, the girls also brought home first, second, or third places for every meet they competed in.

This accomplishment did not come out of thin air, it took hours of dedicated work. Sophomore **Abigail Jones** works during her off season to improve her mental and physical game. "Playing with the girls all the time is really fun, I've improved a lot," Jones said.

Individually at the state competition, sophomore **Kaylee Carlson** hit a hole in one. She explains that she felt so lucky to have this happen to her. "I didn't even know it went in at first; I was surprised and shocked that it went in," Carlson said. Along with Carlson's hole in one, three girls placed individually. Seniors **Maya Lashley** placing ninth, **Baylee Steele** placing fifth, and sophomore **Karsen Morrison** placing third.

Senior Maya Lashley explains how important the coaches, **Jim Orcutt** and **Matt Kaminski**, are to the team. "The coaches are two of the best leaders I've ever had. They always push us to do our best and they're always there for us," Lashley said. Orcutt has been the boys' and girls' golf coach for 36 years in total. "My proudest coach moment is watching young people's good games get better," Orcutt said. These coaches led the team to victory.

Photos by: Paige Anthony and Olivia Eckel

(Pictured right) Sophomore **Karsen Morrison** hits a wedge shot down the fairway at the North Platte invite on Sept. 17. (Pictured below) Sophomore **Abigail Jones** lines up her next shot at the Districts meet on Oct. 2.



scoreboard

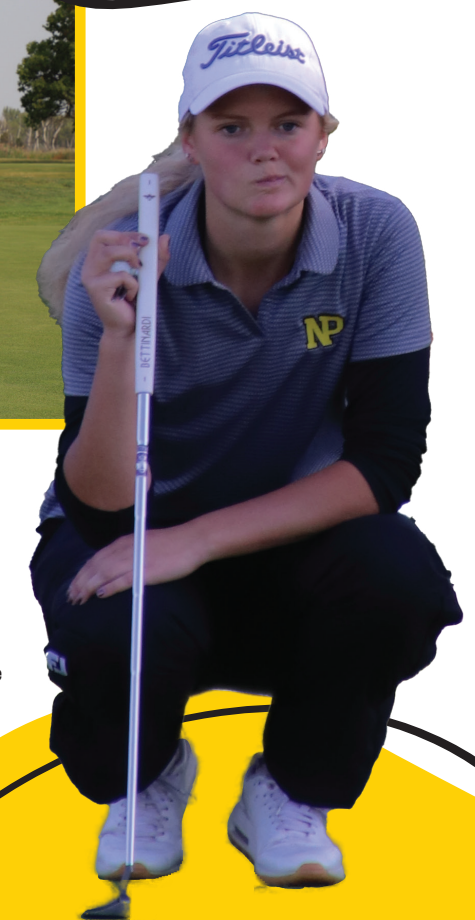
- Ogallala Duel - 1st
- Kearney - 1st
- Lincoln Pius - 3rd
- Grand Island - 1st
- Lexington - 1st
- Hastings - 1st
- North Platte - 1st
- Ogallala - 1st
- Gothenburg Duel - 1st
- Kearney Duel - 1st
- GNAC - 1st
- Districts - 1st
- State - 1st



(Pictured above) Focusing down the fairway, sophomore **Kaylee Carlson** drives the ball into the green at the GNAC meet on Oct.2.



(Pictured above) Freshman **Hailey Mathews** sinks her putt into te hole at the North Platte invite on Sept.17. (Pictured right) Senior **Maya Lashley** stratigizes her putt at the Districts meet on Oct.2.





batter up

Written by: Elsaacia Buck

The 2020 softball season wasn't a regular season. Not just because of the masks, restrictions and players being out due to quarantine. This year the bulldogs qualified for state in Hastings, at Bill Smith Softball Complex, for the first time since 2018. The girls got class A runner up champions against Papillion-LaVista after playing hard for three days with a total of five games. This season, many records were broken including sophomore **Tatum Montelongo** leading the records in most strikeouts and shoutouts in a single season, also Montelongo and junior **Sydney Barner** sharing the record for most home runs in a season. "I love being able to do and play, what I love during these hard times and not having to sit out," Montelongo said. This year the bulldogs were ranked 4th in Nebraska for class A softball. They had a total of 31 wins.

"This season has been really good, we started off strong, we've had a couple of disappointing losses, but overall things have gone really well. Our defense is the best it's ever been since i've been coaching here and our pitching is really strong.

We have also hit the most home runs by far," Coach **Jeff Barner** said. All of the girls fought hard to be where they are at this season, on and off of the field.

Photos by: Elsaacia Buck

scoreboard

- Ralston- Win
- Lexington- Win
- McCook- Win
- Gering- Win
- Scottsbluff- Win
- Columbus- Loss
- Lincoln Northeast- Win
- Norris- Loss
- Gothenburg- Win
- St. Cecilia- Win
- Gretna- Win
- Lincoln Northeast- Win
- Bellevue East- Win
- Lincoln Southeast- Win
- Lincoln Southwest- Win
- Papillion-LaVista- Loss
- Lincoln Southwest- Win
- Papillion-LaVista- Loss

scoreboard

- Adams Central- Win
- Gering- Win
- Norris- Win
- Beatrice- Loss
- Gross Catholic- Win
- Skutt Catholic- Loss
- Columbus- Win
- Waverly- Win
- Elkhorn North- Win
- Lexington- Win
- Lexington- Win
- Hastings- Win
- Hastings- Loss
- Chadron- Win
- Gering- Win
- Grand Island Central Catholic- Loss
- Lincoln Southeast- Loss
- Northwest- Win
- Scottsbluff- Win
- Scottsbluff- Win
- Chadron- Win



(Pictured left) Senior **Ellie Hanson** moments before she throws the ball back to the base before the runner is able to score for their team.



(Pictured below) Junior **Emily Winkler** fist bumps teammates at lineup before the game begins.



(Pictured above) Senior **Abby Orr** slides into third base at home game against Hastings Tigers on Aug. 4.

(Pictured left) Junior **Sydney Barner** hits a home run for the bulldogs on Sept. 29. at Dowhower Softball Complex.

Photos by: Elisacia Buck



aiming high

JV/Reserve boys' basketball

Written by: Elisacia Buck

(Pictured left) Junior **Caleb Tonkinson** shot a three-pointer and scored against Skutt Catholic, at Mid-Plains Community College. "The area I've improved the most on this season has been my shooting skills," Tonkinson said.

(Pictured right) Sophomore **Carter Kelley** jumped and shot the ball to the hoop. Kelley scored against Skutt Catholic at Mid-Plains Community College on Dec. 11. "The high point of this season would probably be our JV's record," he said. "We did a really good job this year."



(Pictured right) Sophomore **Daniel Shea** kept his eye on the ball after a teammate shot a free throw. "I want to work on getting my athleticism back from last year. I also want to work on getting stronger, and be stronger with the ball," Shea said.



(Pictured above) Junior **Andrew Solon** dribbled the ball down the court and brought it to the hoop to score for the Bulldogs. "My favorite memory from this year was being stuck in Scottsbluff, in the hotel because we got snowed in," Solon said.



(Pictured left) Freshman **Cayden Rombach** aimed high and shot the ball to add points to his team's scoreboard against Ogallala. "The biggest difference from playing middle school basketball to high school basketball is the tempo," Rombach said.

(Pictured left) Freshman **Myles Peters** jumped high and kept his eye on the hoop to make a two point shot for his team. "One tip I would give to someone wanting to do basketball is to work hard in practice and always try your best," Peters said.



(Pictured above) Freshman **Eli Kempke** dribbled the ball behind his back to keep the opposing team from being able to bring it to their side of the court. "Two of our best players were injured this year, and that was a big setback," Kempke said.



(Pictured above) Freshman **Lance Gifford** on offense, slowed the ball down before he drove the ball to the hoop to score. "This year I have gotten better at defense on the court," Gifford said.



(Pictured right) Freshman **Landon O'Brien** passed the ball to an open teammate on Jan. 14, against Sidney. "After losing a game I always tell myself we will get better and win the next one," O'Brien said.

big ballin' freshmen

Freshmen boys' basketball

Written by: Paige Anthony

Students have had it hard during 2020, not just in school, in their jobs, home life, and extra curriculars. With not being able to have a normal high school experience and only seeing half a face on the sidelines.

Hours are being cut back in student's jobs, making it hard for them to pay off cars, buy new clothes or even help support their families.

Coming back to school after a six month quarantine changes your perspective. You don't realize how important school is, not just the education part, but the social aspect.

Student life covers what's behind the mask, the stuff that you don't see in your classmate's lives.

student life





"I've never gotten school lunch before," freshman **David Fitzpatrick** said. Fitzpatrick tries out the grab and go as part of freshmen first day activities.



Assistant principal **Nick Miller** directs freshmen to their classes. Coming to a new school can be intimidating, especially when the high school is so much bigger than Adams Middle School. "It's a much bigger building with a lot more people. That's also a good thing because there are a lot of opportunities to find things that you want to be involved in," Miller said.



Freshman **Allison Einspahr** is excited for her first year of high school. Her main point of interest is the library because it's a quiet place for her to go hang out in. Even though she's excited about being in a bigger school, Einspahr said "I'm scared of the stairs because there's going to be a lot of people going up and down and I don't want to get trampled."



(Pictured above) On the first day new students can be uncertain of the highschool. But luckily having friends in your classes makes it all better. Freshmen **Brody Sheets** and **Camron Young** laugh at a joke posted in civics teacher Jessica Briscoe's classroom. "I don't know what my favorite part about high school is yet, I just got here," Sheets said.

fresh out of quarantine



jon brouillette



"Creativity is intelligence having fun." - Albert Einstein

Bubs,
Thank you for showing me what love, courage, creativity and joy look like. You are a gift who lights each day. I will forever love and cheer you on.

Love,
Momma/Mommy/Mom/Bruh

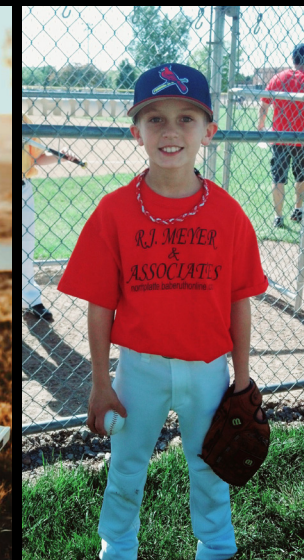
jose ortiz cosme



Congrats Buddy!
Proud of you! Keep working hard and believe in yourself!!



tyler tobey



"Pursue the things you love doing, and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you." - Maya Angelou

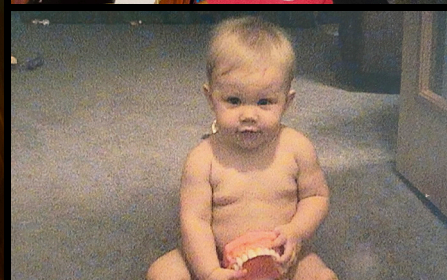
Tyler, we are beyond proud of you.

Love,
Mom, Dad & Jake

hallie sexson

Good better best, never let it rest, until your good is better than your best. Hallie, keep striving for your best!

Love,
Dad, Colleen & family



We are so proud of you! Good luck!

Love,
Mom, Natalie, Grady & Alex



brooklyn douglas



"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

We are so proud of you!!
Dream Big!

Love,
Mom, Dad,
Raegan & Josie



gracelyn cauffman



As another chapter in your life begins, may you persevere to be all that God created you to be. Follow your dreams and always know we will love and support you every step of the way.

Love,
Mom & Dad

Class B

#22 Broadcast News Story

Winner: Gabriel Lorenzo, Jacob Kaminski, Northwest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65yyGMZTcgQ>

#23 Broadcast Sport Story

Winner: Juan Zapata, Parker Janky, Northwest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rievy9yE0IO>

#24 Broadcast Feature Story

Winner: Conner Wells, Cody Swinarski, St. Paul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXMfK8M1EYY>

#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement

Winner: Alyssa Earl, Alejandro Cabello-Munster, Northwest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbClaQdmyvA>

2021

Class C

JOURNALISM
WINNERS



#1 Advertising, Leann Hawkins, Tekamah-Herman

Choose Your Scoop

Come in Monday-Thursday
12-7pm and
Friday-Sunday 12-10pm

1920
Boulevard
Lane



Don't miss out
on all the flavors

Come support Charlie Smith who has made an impact at our school!

Come down and choose your scoop and flavor to help raise money for Boulevard Scoops

Leann Hawkins

Teachers Shouldn't Fear Red Ink

High School students throughout America are faced with the tip of a red pen on a daily basis. Millions of grades are inked by the pens of hundreds of thousands of teachers every day, and under the weight of so many grades, some students have come to want to fail their teachers in return.

While this country is full of many amazing teachers, it also contains some bad ones who use unkind methodologies and behave unfairly towards their students. One idea to help hold such teachers accountable is to turn the usual grading scheme of school on its head. This “inverted grading” scheme would allow students to grade their teachers instead.

This idea sounds good on the surface, but it comes with too many downsides.

Those in favor of this form of accountability are correct about some of its upsides. Students are obviously the most knowledgeable group to ask about any given teacher's practices, for example. It follows their analysis would be able to see into the blind spots of existing accountability systems.

Proponents of this inverted grading scheme also cite how it would give a voice to students who feel intimidated by the leaders of their classrooms. An inverted gradings system could give them a chance to talk about bad teaching practices in a relatively safe space.

Proponents also stress that this grading scheme would augment, not replace, existing review systems. Any student who tries to intentionally attack a teacher would be stopped by caring administrators who would know and be able to catch and dishonesty among students. Or at least, that's the theory.

The truth of this matter, however, is that such administrative filtering would be imperfect. Scathing reports by angry students could impair or ruin an educator's entire career over a petty grudge. Even worse, this grading could impose a corrosive form of politics in the classroom.

Even if students were to grade their instructors honestly, good and bad teachers alike would still be incentivized to alter their behavior or even manipulate their students to improve their scores. Students attempt similar manipulations on their teachers on a daily basis. The only difference between these two groups is that educators have far more influence over their students than their students have on them.

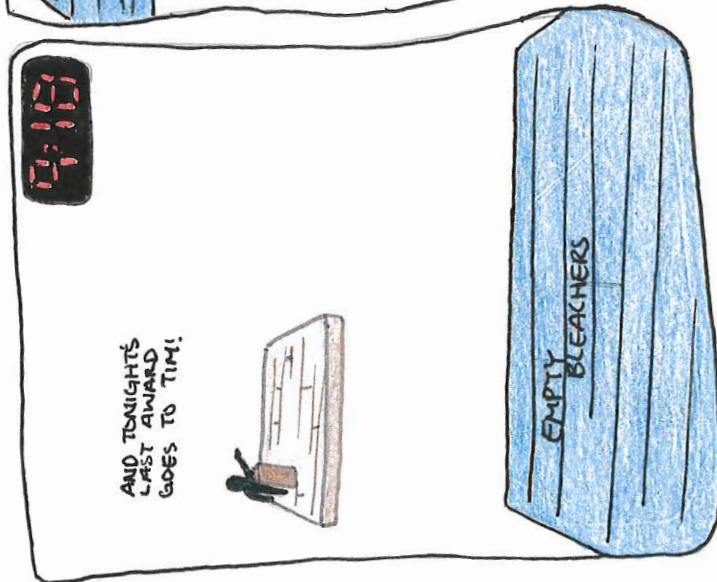
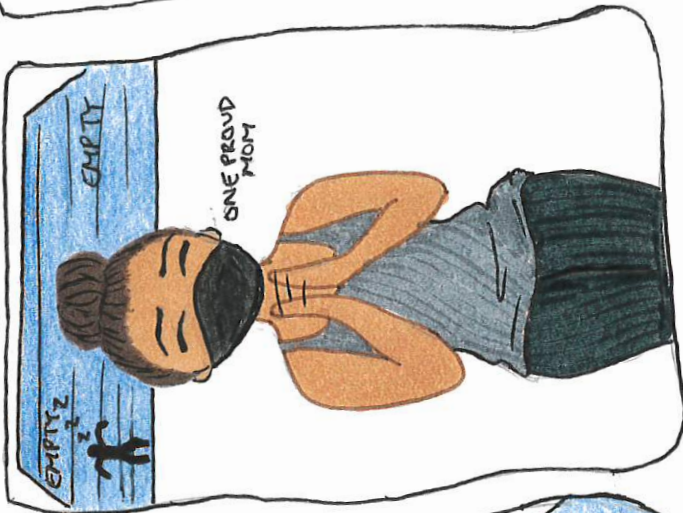
It is common knowledge that politicians act dishonestly because their main motivation is to be reelected. Teachers will react to inverted grading similarly – their focus will no longer be on teaching, but on convincing their students that they are good at teaching. The space between these two is subtle, but contains the difference between teaching honestly and making concessions – like weaker rules, fewer assignments, and less challenging curriculum – to cater to the short-term desires of their pupils. This is not in their best interests.

In short, the sovereignty of America's educators over their students is too important to jeopardize with a measure as destructive as inverted grading. They need to teach character and integrity in their classes, and while that can mean doing what students want, it can also mean going against their short-term desires in the name of a long-term gain. It can mean homework, hard assignments, and a lot of other measures that students may not be willing to accept. This is what a teacher *needs* to do. Adding a measure like inverted grading would only make it harder for teachers to do what is best for today's youth.

So, what is the correct solution to this dilemma? The answer is nothing. Instructors already face plenty of scrutiny from students and parents, and additional measures like classroom sit-ins already provide enough accountability to prevent bad educators from causing undue harm to students.

Teachers in high schools today are used to red pens, it is true, but they don't need those pens turned back against them. They are the men and women who work tirelessly to build America's youth, and only with the freedom to truly challenge their pupils can they prepare our nation for the trials of tomorrow.

NIGHTTIME Ceremonies



New School Policy Needs to Take a Snow Day

Smith High School's New Policy Towards Snow Days Doesn't Account for the Negatives

Jonestown NEB.—When the pandemic hit a little more than a year ago, we as a society had to adapt. Schools had to learn a new way to conduct business on the fly. Now that the option to learn is available remotely, the question that is rising is “how far do we take this?” Some, including the administration at Jonestown’s own Smith High School, believe that remote learning is a viable and necessary option to replace snow days. But this is a step that cannot be taken.

The new policy rolled out last week states that, “School will not be cancelled due to snow. Classes will instead be held online if weather prohibits safe travel to and from school. Students will be counted absent if they fail to attend online classes.”

The new guideline will effectively end the existence of the experiences which made so many cherished memories. This is something that we cannot afford to lose. As one student, Sam Seaborn, stated, “This is unfair. Some of my best memories of school are the days I met my friends at the grocery store to go sledding down the huge hill. Kids need a break.”

Besides, many have already expressed that they will not adhere to the new policy. One teacher who wished to remain anonymous told us, “I think attendance will be lighter than normal, as many parents have told me they plan to let their children have a day of vacation.”

One such parent who expressed that sentiment is Bill Fitz. According to Fitz “This isn’t something that needs to be taken away from kids. Snow days are a tradition!”

On top of all of these things, the new rule will accentuate the wealth disparity as it did during the pandemic. In order to attend classes remotely, students will need to have reliable access to the required equipment. “Online learning depends on the availability of an internet connection and a functioning device,” said one concerned parent. “Is the School district going to provide both?”

These are things which not everyone has. This means that some students may miss a day of classes which their peers were able to attend. A school should not be putting kids in this situation unnecessarily.

When schools shut down before and instituted remote learning, it was in a nationwide effort to fight the deadly coronavirus. This policy only hopes to stop students from missing one single day of school. While learning is important, it likely will be impacted very little by losing one day of classes.

As for Principal Daren William's point that it will ensure that school won't need to be extended, there is already a solution in place. School years are built with more than the required number of hours so that, in the event of school being cancelled or delayed, they can still end normally. If there are consistently more snow days than extra days, it can be easily remedied by writing in more extra days.

While there is a little bit to gain from the new guideline, that good is far outweighed by the downsides. Between the necessary tradition of snow days for kids, the likely lack of attendance by some students, and especially the exclusion of those who may not have access to the proper materials, this policy shift is not for the better. Which is why we must respectfully condemn the change.

America Needs A Choir

As many of us were growing up, we were often told that being American means being prideful, but never “Being American is more than pride we inherit.” In the poem “The Hill We Climb,” poet and speaker Amanda Gorman recites a poem at President Biden’s inauguration. In her works, Gorman typically concentrates her words on the environment, gender equality, and racial justice. In “The Hill We Climb,” Gorman focuses on how America is no longer the same as it once was, but it is still not to the standards that we need it to be. She believes, like many others, that in order to become the America that we need as people to grow, we to fight to include those who are of a different color, character, background, etc.

Amanda Gorman stated that “quiet isn’t always peace.” As she speaks about this, and throughout the poem as a whole, she uses her hands and voice to push the power of her words. As she says this, she says it with a voice that says that the world needs to advocate for those whose voices aren’t heard. Historically, people of color are hugely unrepresented and oftentimes, their voices aren’t heard by enough people, so change is hard, sometimes seemingly impossible. Gorman’s tone seems to not beg for change, but demand change. The way she delivers it, makes myself, and likely others, feel as though I/they could do more to help empower the voices of the unheard. When Gorman says that “quiet isn’t always peace,” she is saying that every voice is needed to make our America, America for *everyone*. I can push for equality as much as I possibly can, but that’s only one person, and they *need* a choir.

Gorman is passionate when she talks, she *is* the choir. She isn’t angry, but she is assertive. She says that this is the “era for just redemption.” No one should have to go underrepresented in this nation, but because they are, it does not mean that we have to let it be that way and remain as

such. She states that we must “merge mercy with fight, so that love becomes our legacy.” We cannot remain divided and push one another apart because of our differences. She urges that we should fight for one another and demands that we all advocate for our neighbors. As she spoke, I was filled with hope, but not the hope that leaves you wondering what to do, but the hope that pushes you to do exactly what you think you should do.

Gorman’s never fails to remind the nation that we need to push for unity, inclusivity, and equality, because that is pride. Pride isn’t wearing red, white, and blue or toting around a rifle. Pride is being the America for our brothers and sisters. Pride is pushing an agenda that says we are one. We have to make love our legacy and where our pride sprouts from. We must put the divide aside and be one America, be the choir. America is only “the past we step into and how we repair it,” and until then, this is nobody’s America until it is everyone’s America.

#6 Headline Writing, Koby Bales, Grand Island Central Catholic

Name: Koby Bales

School: GICC

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # 4

Headline - COVID or Class?

- Vaccination required for in-person classes.

Article # - 5

Headline - Old Game, New Rules

- MLB to introduce new rules to minor leagues.
- Pitchers mound to move back a foot.

Article # - 2

Headline - What's the Deal with Colored Balls?

- Why are men so reluctant to use colored golf balls?
- Colored Balls improve play

By Peter Funt

Pebble Beach, Calif.

One of the great mysteries in amateur sports is being probed again this spring: Why do so many women use colored golf balls, while most men continue to reject them?

Scientifically there is little doubt that nonwhite balls, particularly yellow ones, are easier to track in flight and easier to spot in the rough, which speeds play. Yet resistance remains among many male golfers, who persist in associating colored balls with high handicaps—and with women. Female golfers have long accepted balls in a variety of hues.

More than color separates men's and women's golf balls. Compression differs, as do spin rates and even the number of dimples. But the only effect a ball's color has on any player's performance is mental.

Manufacturers target women with a dazzling array of colored golf balls, such as Srixon's Soft Feel Lady ball in "passion pink." For men, the change from white is slow, but Titleist, Callaway and Taylor-Made have added yellow versions to their most expensive, tour-quality golf balls.

Colored balls improve play, but male players are slow to shift from the traditional white.

At Whispering Pines Golf Club north of Houston, the pro shop tells me that less than 10% of men purchase colored balls, while nearly 60% of women do.

Katherine Marren, head professional at Quail Golf Course in Carmel, Calif., emailed: "I love the new colors and when they make better-

performing balls in more colors, I predict more colors on the LPGA Tour."

Tennis woke up to the virtue of yellow balls half a century ago. The International Tennis Federation required yellow balls, instead of white or black ones, in 1972, in part because they photographed better on color television. Wimbledon waited until 1986 to go yellow, but then the changeover was complete.

In 1982, Wayne Levi became the first golfer to win a PGA Tour event with a nonwhite ball. Mr. Levi's ball was orange, the same hue used later that year by Jerry Pate in winning the Players Championship.

You'd think that would have ended the male bias against colored balls, but it didn't. Virtually all pros stuck with white, as did amateurs. Bubba Watson, one of the more charismatic long hitters on the PGA Tour, surprised fans and fellow players in 2017 by using a pink ball in

the Masters. Mr. Watson has since favored yellow balls in competition, and has gradually influenced other players to do the same.

As more companies manufacture high-quality yellow golf balls, more PGA players will be offered cash enticements to use them. As they do, more male amateurs will take note—which is, after all, the purpose of the payments.

My highly unscientific research on this matter involves walks with my dog, Abigail, at Poppy Hills golf course in Pebble Beach. We used to find one yellow ball for every 10 white ones. Last year the proportion of yellow balls doubled, and so far this spring it's tripled. Abbie seems not to care about the color of the balls. Soon, male golfers won't care either, although it is tough to teach them new tricks.

Mr. Funt is a writer and host of "Candid Camera."

By YORRER KOP

A small but growing number of colleges will require students to receive a Covid-19 vaccine, saying it is the most assured way of returning to some semblance of pre-pandemic campus life.

By doing so, they are stepping into the increasingly charged debate over whether businesses and other institutions should be able to make inoculation a condition of participating in events in person.

Duke University in North Carolina, Brown University in Rhode Island and Syracuse University in New York said last week that students must be vaccinated to be allowed on campus in the fall. They join a handful of other colleges that

that wants to hang out. "Students are built for congregation and collaboration. That's what college is all about," said Mr. Calcado. Just over 4,000 of the school's 71,000 students are currently on campus.

At Cornell, nearly all students have been back on campus since the fall but only 40% of classes are in person. If the campus can reach herd immunity, it plans to conduct almost all classes in person this fall, said university provost Michael Kotlikoff.

Many of the roughly dozen schools that have mandated the vaccine thus far have said they would allow for medical and religious exemptions.

Some schools, such as Texas A&M University, have balked partly out of concern that such requirements appear to conflict with federal law.

Glenn Cohen, a professor at Harvard Law School, said schools are likely getting tripped up by legal language requiring the federal government to inform people they have the right to refuse a vaccine approved under an emergency-use authorization.

The three vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration—manufactured by Pfizer Inc., Moderna Inc. and Johnson & Johnson—were approved only for emergency use.

But that right to refuse the vaccine doesn't prohibit universities to make it a condition of attendance, Mr. Cohen said. He said many colleges have been requiring on-campus students to submit to tests for Covid-19, many of which have been approved under the emergency-use authorization as well.

Texas A&M said it was following Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order, "which stipulates that vaccines are voluntary for all state agencies. A&M is encouraging all faculty, staff and students to get the vaccine," the school said.

Cornell and Rutgers said they are confident they have the legal authority to mandate the vaccines.

Many say they would allow medical and religious exemptions.

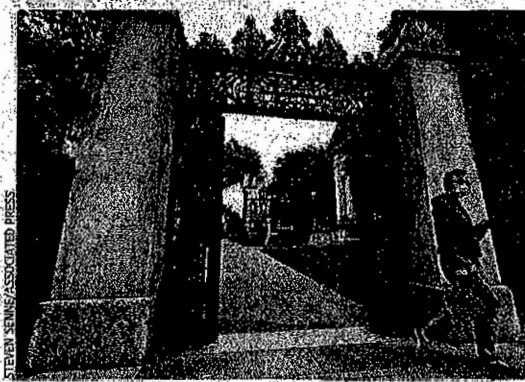
include Rutgers University in New Jersey and Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., that have recently said students must be vaccinated to matriculate for in-person classes.

Others, such as the University of California system, said their vaccination policies for fall are still in development.

Mandating the vaccine was a natural next step as accessibility opened up and supply increased, said school leaders at Rutgers, Cornell and others.

"I think there's a lot of common sense here. The science says that the vaccine is safe, it's got a phenomenal efficacy rate," said Antonio Calcado, Rutgers executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Students at Rutgers have consistently tested positive for Covid-19 at a rate 70% higher than its faculty and staff, said Mr. Calcado, underscoring that despite safety measures it is difficult to keep the virus at bay among a student population



Brown University, in Providence, R.I., has said that students must be vaccinated to be allowed on campus in the fall.

Gabe Lacques
USA TODAY

In its zeal to add excitement to the game and tilt the playing field back toward beleaguered hitters, Major League Baseball on Wednesday announced its most ambitious experiment to be carried out in its minor league laboratories this season:

Moving the pitching back one foot — to 61 feet, 6 inches.

The change will occur in the second half of the Atlantic League season as MLB once again will use the affiliated but independent minor league to workshop potentially massive changes to the game at the big league level.

Some experiments failed to gain traction — such as the “stealing first base on a passed ball” concept.

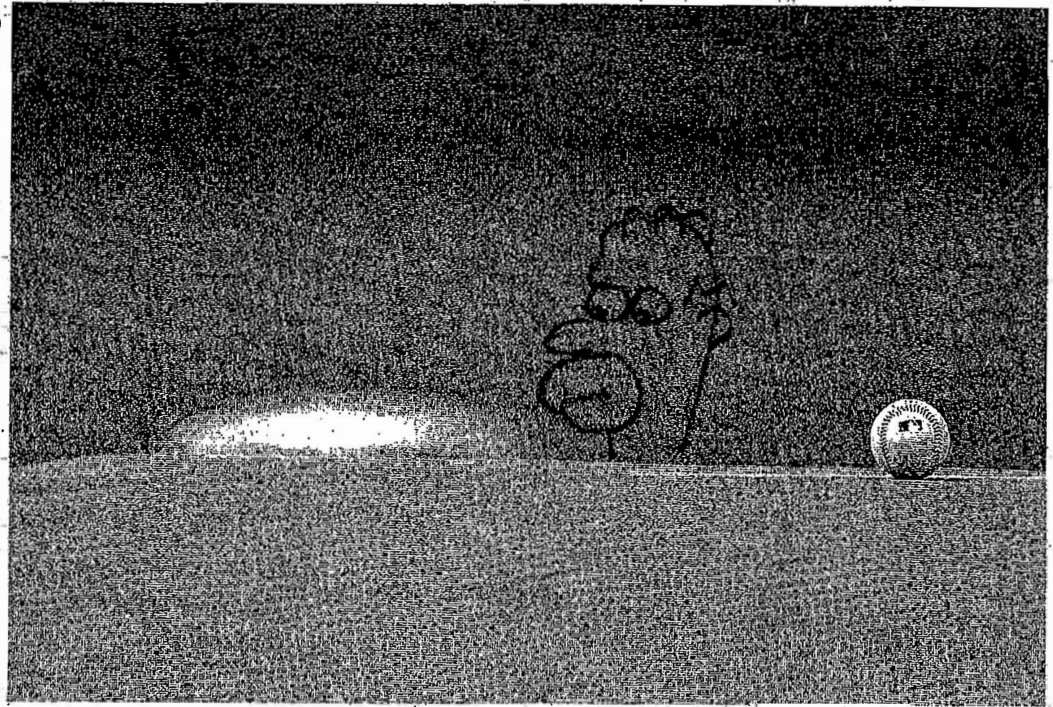
Others are now viewed as imminent — such as the automated ball-strike system, or “robot” umpire.

And others actually made it to the major leagues — such as the three-batter minimum that has handcuffed managers while also failing to cut down on the length of games.

Now, as average fastball creeps toward 95 mph and strikeouts annually outpace hits, MLB is hoping to reverse a 15-year trend of strikeout rates increasing from 16.4% of all plate appearances in 2005 to a record 23.4% in 2020.

In announcing the experiment, MLB says moving the mound back by a foot will convert a 93.3 mph fastball (the major league average in 2020) to a 91.6 mph fastball. Nearly three dozen pitchers who threw at least 80 innings in 2019 — the last full season — average nearly 95 mph per fastball, which would theoretically make their heaters easier to handle while, perhaps, impacting the bite of their secondary offerings, as well.

As for pitcher health, it cites an experiment conducted by the American



The Atlantic League has served as a proving ground for future rule changes. RON CHENOV/USA TODAY SPORTS

Sports Medicine Institute in October 2019 that utilized “high-level collegiate baseball players” throwing from various distances; they registered “significant differences in key measures of rotational motion (kinetics) or acceleration (kinematics) among the varying pitching distances. In addition, ball velocity and strike percentage remained consistent.”

Naturally, all eyes will be on the second half of the Atlantic League season for dips in strikeout percentage and

spikes in batting average. MLB last month announced a handful of experiments throughout the minors, including increasing the size of bases to better incentivize stealing them and limits on pickoff throws and time between pitches.

MLB announced an additional experiment for the league — a so-called “double hook” rule that would force a team to lose its designated hitter as soon as it lifts its starting pitcher from the

game. The league hopes the rule would “incentivize teams to leave their starting pitchers in longer” and serve as a compromise between the American and National league approaches to the DH.

The rule would theoretically curb the use of “openers” to start games, although reversing a nearly century-long trend of starting pitcher diminution would require much more than a singular-rule change.

The Journey Inspired by a School Project

Facebook Assists Hill in Finding her Biological Mother

“My name is Lauri Hill, and I was adopted. I was born at 2:02 p.m. on Oct. 14, 1996, at Leaguetown Memorial Hospital. I weighed 7 pounds exactly. My birth mother’s first name was Hallie, and we were told she was 17 at the time of the birth. Could this be you? Please share this with friends and family and help me find my birth mother.”

This is the post junior attendee of Leaguetown High School Lauri Hill spread throughout the world of Facebook. Hill, who was adopted by Marsha and Marty Hill at the age of two days, recently participated in a biology genetics project.

“The biology genetics project got me thinking and asking a lot of questions,” said Lauri.

Biology teacher Mrs. Marilyn Sneeters stated, “Lauri hated that her project was somewhat incomplete because she didn’t know her genetic history. I told her to use her parents, even though she was adopted, but she didn’t want to do that.”

The Facebook post, which was suggested by Lauri’s father, proved to be a simple, fast, and effective method of finding her biological mother.

Within 24 hours Lauri received a message from her birth mother: “I think I might be your birth mom. Please email me so we can talk.”

“When I saw I had a message on Facebook, I thought someone emailed me about my post,” mentioned Lauri. “I didn’t expect it to be from my birth mom--not that quickly.”

Through a set of emails, the Hill’s learned that this woman, Hallie Looper, was indeed Lauri’s biological mother. For the past few weeks, Looper and Lauri have been sharing information about their lives.

Sneeters said, “Lauri told me all about finding her birth mom. What an incredible story and to think the spark that started it was our genetics project.”

“I guess I could have felt threatened when Lauri said she wanted to find her birth mother, but I would have been faking it. I always knew she might want more answers,” said Marsha.

According to Lauri, “When I first told my parents that I wanted to find my birth mom, I thought they might be angry or disappointed, but they were completely supportive.”

Lauri said her parents “have always been open about my adoption. They believe honesty was the best for all of us, and I think it was and still is.”

“Everyone keeps asking me why I wanted to find my birth mother. Was I not happy with my parents? And the answer is definitely ‘no.’ They are the best parents ever. I just had questions,” said Lauri. “My relationship with my parents isn’t going to change. In fact, if anything, we have gotten even closer.”

Marsha expressed a small concern with Lauri’s journey to find her biological mother.

She mentioned that she was concerned about whether “Lauri’s birth mom wanted to be found. I didn’t want Lauri to be rejected. I wanted to protect her, but I knew she had to take this risk.”

Ultimately, the risk paid off because the Hill’s will be driving five hours next weekend, May 10-11, to meet with Looper.

“It’s going to be weird seeing her in person. I am excited and nervous. We have exchanged photos, and I look so much like her,” said Lauri.

Their visit, which happens to fall on Mother’s Day, is also highly anticipated by Marsha.

“I am a little embarrassed to say that I am just as excited as Lauri about meeting Hallie. I want to thank her for giving us the beautiful gift of Lauri, and I want to welcome her into our family,” stated Marsha.

After being inspired by a genetics project in school, Lauri, with the support of her parents, was successfully able to find her biological mother in a very short time-span.

“This has been an amazingly short journey to find Hallie,” said Marsha. “Lauri was lucky. (Her) questions are getting answers, and we are growing as a family.”

According to Lauri, "I have room in my life and in my heart for more, and my parents do, too."

#8 Newspaper News Writing, Zahna Reutzler, Harvard

No matter where you live, cities strive to keep people local. People leaving their home community can leave a negative affect and representation on certain places. These people could've given a positive impact on the community instead of leaving it for somewhere else. In 2018, Mike Flood took advantage of an oppurtunity to keep young individuals in their hometown area of Norfolk. He created the Northeast Nebraska Growing Together intiative.

Northeast Nebraska Growing Together iniative's main purpose is to keep former graduates, aging from 18-35 years of age, in their home community.

"Flood conducted research across diverse career areas about past students who graduated in local Nebraska. He looked into them whether they were in Norfolk, or even out-of-state," said Candice Alder.

Alder is the economic developer for the city of Norfolk. She gets to take on a variety of roles like assisting businesses within the community, revitalizing land, and working along side engineering teams or the parks department.

Growing Together can be broken down into seven main categories: current reality, downtown development, founders in residence, co-op scholarship program, workforce retraining, artists in residence, and early childhood education.

Downtown development is the main focus of the program. Within this category, the city creates and adds new ammenities in the main sector. These help keep the city vibrant and lively. They also can create new job oppurtunites for the younger generation searching for work.

"One project we are currently working on is creating a white water waterpark. We want to create a feeling of going white water tubing at a waterpark. It is a great fun-amentity for downtown Norfolk," said Alder.

Founders of residence is focused on all the funding involved within these new projects. One thing they do to help at risk companies is using the high risk, higher reward strategy. They can help with start-ups and other funding needed.

Within the founders of co-op scholarship category, Growing Together is partnering with Wayne State College to give opportunities to former students to have careers locally. This can create relationships with new people or other former peers throughout the community.

Alder said, "Each scholarship gives \$10,000 to students. It helps pay for the cost of living and other necessities of staying within town. In 2023, we are planning on rewarding the scholarship to 30 people. In 2024, we will give it to 45 students. We will then give it to 75 people each year from 2025 and on."

Artists in residence helps create the eye-catching downtown that is needed to keep people local. Whether it is creating murals or sculptures, art is a mode that helps shape an area and give it creativity. All work and living is being sourced downtown through this opportunity.

The early childhood and education program supports the older half of the people being addressed. It is for those who have started a family and have children of their own. It can help with many needs of young children through education and costs.

With the success of the Growing Together program, Norfolk will be able to grow in several ways, creating opportunities to help convince students to stay.

#9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing, Kayla Kennedy, Doniphan-Trumbull

Dribble, Command, Shift

A non-profit gaming organization is helping colleges and high schools partake in E-sports

By: Kayla Kennedy

E-sports is growing and so are the companies around it. Zach Miller is the Technology Director/ Gamer for a non-profit organization called LAN Party. This organization hosts video gaming events with competitive tournaments to allow gamers to connect and compete with friends.

Miller started this journey when his coworker, Dr. David Kassmeier, introduced him to this new online sport. Miller has always loved gaming and streaming in his free time, Kassmeier and him are even gaming partners. Kassmeier went to many gaming events to see how it works and what it was all about. This sparked an interest between the two and they proceeded to plan an organization that quickly became the LAN Party.

The LAN Party took off in January of 2019 with many events for college students in the local community. At first the team didn't know what to expect, they had no idea if it was popular in the older generations, if the locals would be interactive, and how long it would take for the company to take off. Soon enough the company realized that this sport would soon grow and exceed all of the expectations. LAN Party quickly became popular, with their last event reaching 96 participants in total.

LAN Party has spread through many big and local colleges who have given their students and opportunity at the E-Sport team! This new sport has grown to Varsity college levels and is soon hoping to grow to more high school sports teams. Some high schools have gaming clubs with small local events but not many participants. If more high schools partake in this new sport, then colleges can give out sports scholarships to students in high school. This new technology is growing faster than many believe.

Unfortunately, COVID has put a damper on many pro gaming organizations and has been hard for gamers to compete in person. However, the LAN Party was not too affected by COVID, local online streaming was a huge success and they have seen more participants now than they have over the last almost two years!

The future goals of the LAN Party are to be able to facilitate with helping UNL with their varsity program and help local northeast high schools with starting their own program. Also, a main focus is to preach online safety to young gamers and help participants game in a non-toxic environment.

Miller has always loved to game and some of the most memorable times were seeing the young kids' faces light up when they see all the new computers and technology inside the competition.

Not only does the LAN Party bring joy to the competitors but it brings joy to bystanders and future pro gamers.

#10 Sports News Writing, Jack Fiegenger, Falls City Sacred Heart

Dan Smith's Late Game Heroics Help Rabbits Capture First State Championship

With roughly 3,500 people in attendance, the Jackson High School Rabbits defeated the Summit High School Hawks in a battle that came down to the final seconds at Memorial Field in Lincoln, Nebraska to win the Class D state championship football game. Rabbits running back and kicker Dan Smith was the hero for the rabbits, drilling a late field goal with under a minute left in the fourth quarter to ultimately win the game.

The Rabbits had a rough start to the season, losing the first game of the season 35-17 to Washington High School, but bounced back and won 12 straight games to capture the Class D state title. This was the first state championship for the Rabbits, and their fifth straight playoff appearance.

The Rabbits dominated the ground game, rushing for 218 yards on 48 carries. Smith ran for 178 of those yards on just 25 carries.

"We had more running room the first half and then Summit shut us down the second half," Smith said. "We got just enough on that last drive to give us a chance. I thought that holding penalty was going to cost us the game. When coach said we were going to kick it, I got a big lump in my throat."

The Hawks rushed for 104 yards on 28 carries and junior quarterback Larry Brown threw for 118 yards on 7-19 attempts with just one interception. He shared his thoughts after the game.

"We were disappointed at halftime, being down by 11, but we were still confident," Brown said. "We finally were able to stop them the second half and got our offense going a little better. We're crushed that we lost in the last minute, but we're also proud of how well we responded the second half."

Defensively, Smith led the Rabbits once again, with seven solo and five assisted tackles, while Joe Welch led the Hawks team with six solo and six assisted tackles.

Summit finished the season with a 10-3 record and fell just seconds short of their fifth Class D state title.

"What an emotional roller coaster that last minute. They were driving and we thought they had gained another first down, but that penalty made it a long field goal. Kudos to the Smith kid for making that kick under that much pressure. He's also a heck of a running back," Summit Head Coach Rod Johnson said. "I was proud of my kids for battling back after being down by 11 at halftime. This is what a championship game should be like. My kids will be proud of their accomplishments later, but right now they're hurting awful bad."

The Rabbits never trailed in the game, leading 7-3 after one quarter, and boasting an 11-point lead up on the Hawks 14-3 at halftime. Summit fought back in the third quarter, outscoring the Rabbits 10-0, but the teams each had a field goal in the fourth quarter that gave the Rabbits the one-point victory.

The Rabbits dominated the time of possession, having the ball for just over 27 minutes while the Hawks had it for only 20 minutes and 55 seconds. Each team had over 50 yards in penalties. The Hawks had seven penalties that tallied up to be 54 yards, and the Rabbits had six penalties for 52 yards. Jackson recorded 13 first downs in the game, and Summit had 12. Each team also had one fumble and one interception.

Jackson's Head Coach of 21 straight years, Coach Jeff Wittry had some words for his team after the game.

"I just told the kids in the locker room that I'm retiring after this game and I couldn't have asked for a better way to end a 25-year career in coaching. The last 21 years here at Jackson have been great. This is a storybook ending to my coaching career."

Wittry ends his 21-year coaching career on top, leading his team to their first Class D state championship.

#11 Yearbook Feature Writing, Bryce Kole, Yutan

Many people participated in the “Miners’ Marathon” this year at Quartz High School including english teacher Mr. Davis.

Davis was the men’s marathon champion this year after training for seven years.

“I’ve been training for marathons for the last seven years... never finishing as the champion, until the Miners’ Marathon this year,” Davis said.

Davis liked how the event brought the community together and helped raise money for different organizations.

“As a competitive runner, I liked that the boosters were putting on a fundraiser like this,” Davis said. It is a fundraiser that can get the community involved and can utilize the community’s streets and facilities,” Davis said.

Senior Michelle Yoder also participated in the “Miners’ Marathon” by helping run the event.

Yoder also recieved the Miners’ Marathon Scholarship that was funded by the marathon.

“The Miners’ Marathon Scholarship means a lot to me because I have been helping put it on, through the clubs and organizaionts I have been in, for the last four years,” Yoder said.

Yoder is also interested in competing in the marathon in the future instead of helping run it.

“This is something I plan on becoming a part of after high school, but as a competitor rather than a volunteer,” Yoder said.

Davis didn’t plan on running the marathon this year but made a deal with his students.

“I had made a deal with my students, that if all the senior fall sport athletes took one of my two AP English classes... I would run in the race,” Davis said.

Yoder remebered when Davis suggested the deal.

“I had already planned on taking one of his AP English classes anyways, but now it made it easie for me to convince some of my friends to sign up,” Yoder said.

Davis thinks his participation in the marathon brought a new energy to his classroom.

“It brought up some school spirit and morale in the classroom,” Davis said.

Yoder agrees that the classroom was different after seeing Davis compete.

“The classroom surely has a different energy to it, now that there is a champion among us,”

Yoder said.

#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing, Kajetan Hubl, Grand Island Central Catholic

Two injuries by top athletes, rain, chilly temperatures, and last minute substitutions of two freshmen made for a challenging track meet for the Victoria High School track athletes. Along with the dreary weather, which required stadium lights, the team faced hardships in the form of injuries and improvisation.

This year, on May 5, Plainville High School held the East-North-West-South Conference (ENWSC) girls track championship. With a boasting record of nine championship titles in the last ten years, the Victoria High School's Knights had a record to uphold, and they weren't going to let two injuries break their stride.

The team had no choice but to make last minute changes when two of their star athletes, Shelby Schister and Betty Bonker, became injured during their field events. Both of them were vital members of the 400m and 1600m relays. Stepping up to the challenge, Ally Williams and Bonnie Blue, two freshmen, competed in Schister and Bonker's place. The pair had no experience in a varsity meet prior to being substituted in this meet. To coaches and athletes alike, there was uncertainty about if the team could still pull off a title with the abrupt change in roster.

"Once Shelby [Schister] and Betty [Bonker] became injured, I did not think we could win the championship. Those two freshmen had not run in a varsity meet before, and I didn't know how they would respond," head Victoria coach Doug Moeckel stated.

Williams and Blue competed in the 400m relay first, which Victoria won. This victory brought the Knights up to 108.5, only 4 points behind Plainville and put the outcome of the meet on the last event's runners' shoulders. During the final event, the 1600m relay, Williams began her leg, the final leg of the race, in third place and sprinted to win by a second over Plainville's runners. Victoria barely managed to clinch the conference title this year, winning with a score of 118.5 to Plainville's 118.

"In that 1600 relay, I just ran as hard as I could and tried to catch the Plainville girl. My legs got tired, especially since I had just run the 400 relay, but I didn't want to let my teammates down," Williams explained.

The impressive comeback and dedication of the two freshmen resulted in their well-earned victory. Williams and Blue's performance shocked the whole team and proved them deserving of a varsity spot in the coming years.

"Ally [Williams] and Bonnie [Blue] were awesome... They've done a great job in practice all season in our workouts and when we practice hadoffs. I'm glad I'm graduating because I don't know if I will be able to beat them next year," Schister complimented the young pair.

A well-earned conference title was the perfect ending to the Knight's head coach's final season. Moeckel retired his 25 year coaching career with the satisfaction of one more title under his belt and confidence in the talent of the program he'd leave behind.

"This title is definitely a team title. The rain and cool temperatures made for a difficult day, and the girls struggled to stay dry and warm. I'll always remember my last EWNCS championship for the way we won it. Aren't these girls amazing?" Moeckel concluded with pride.

#13 Yearbook Theme Copy Writing, Danni McKnight, Dorchester

Theme: What's Next

Opening:

Green, white, and black. You see it throughout the hallways, on the t-shirts of students, the exterior of the building. It's a sign of pride throughout Husker High.

When students come in during August, they take pride in thinking, "**What's next?**" and boy do they find the answer. "I want every year to be different, yet have traditions that students can look forward to," said principal Steve Bryne.

An event many students look forward to is the fall 'Back to School Barbeque' that is held annually by Mr. Johnson, the science teacher. "It's really fun, I socialize with my friends and we discuss our plans for the year, plus there's games," said junior Maria Slovak.

Students also had the gift of receiving chromebooks after the school received a grant from the local legion auxiliary. "It's very helpful to students who are unable to afford such technology. They are now able to finish projects at home if need be. Overall they now have full access to whatever they need academically," said new superintendent John Bush.

Students have a fresh start each year, wondering "**What's next?**" is just the first thought that will be on their mind.

Sports:

Endless hours of practice, personal motivation, and the burning question "**What's next?**" is what drove the Cowboys when it came to football.

Football is a fan favorite in Tomorrowtown, every year the team strives to make every game a night to remember. "It's a great feeling to have such a fan base, the whole community gets into. You know that somewhere in the crowd you have a fan. All of the hours we spend practicing pays off," said junior Jose Del Toro.

The biggest football game of the year comes down to Husker High vs. Hawkeye Central. "They're our best competition, it's always a close game. We're fighting until the very last second of the fourth quarter, it's truly our most exciting and stressful night," said senior Evan Cross.

Every year there is a new way of promoting the football season and good sportsmanship, the senior boys decided to take the lead and create a social media campaign called 'Football For All'. "We thought who better than ourselves to show that football is not a violent sport, there doesn't have to be any fights between teammates or other schools. We want our teammates to feel safe and protected, not scared or put down," said senior Dustin Banks, who was head of the organization. The team raised awareness on the bullying that can happen inside a sports team, ways to prevent it, and how to figure out "**What's next.**"

Closing:

Husker High's twentieth year comes to an end, and already the students can't help but wonder, "**What's next?**"

As the year wraps up, students look back at the memories they've made with their friends, the awards they've won, places they've gone, and the places they will go. "The best memory I've made is the senior trip we took to the Nebraska High

Sports Hall of Fame. We really bonded on the fact that this was our last trip together. It's crazy to think we won't be seeing each other in the halls anymore," said senior Safiya Mafi.

Other students are just realizing that they have a few more years to make these memories. "I really enjoyed the Fall One Act Play, I'm glad I could participate in it as a freshman. It's an activity I can see myself doing in the next three years while attending Husker High," said freshman Neko Kim.

Overall, the year was full of making memories and thinking about what's next for their future. "I'm excited to see what next year brings, this year already brought me a lot of good memories," said sophomore Gia Medosa.

COVID ENTERS THE HOLIDAY SCENE

by Alyssa Ferguson

It's the holiday season, and for most, that means lots of time with family and friends. This year, however, might look a little bit different. With COVID-19 on the rise yet again, health officials are recommending holiday celebrations that are not the same as previous years, like many things this year.

According to CNN 10, (a brief, on-demand, daily news show commonly watched in classes) Nevada, Wisconsin, and California have all announced either recommendations or mandates for their people to follow in hopes of keeping the spread of coronavirus down. California is requiring people to hold all gatherings outside. The states of Nevada and Wisconsin are urging their residents to cancel playdates, sleepovers, and parties.

These guidelines and mandates are affecting how many people will be spending their holidays. Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks are usually times when extended families and friends gather together, which most of the time involves traveling, sometimes from other states.

To ensure the safety of their residents, many states require negative tests for COVID-19 within 72 hours before entering their state or a 14 day self-quarantine upon arrival. If you plan on traveling to another state, make sure you check their requirements so you can plan accordingly.

If you don't plan on traveling, there's good news for you. Unless your holidays usually consist of spending lots of time with people you're not usually around, things should look pretty normal for you. Other than, of course, when you have to wear a mask when you go to the store to buy those "homemade" cookies you have every year. (Don't worry, I won't tell.)

While all of the restrictions regarding COVID-19 can be frustrating, there are still ways for you to have fun and celebrate the holidays! If you aren't able to get together with extended family and friends because of all of the travel limitations, find other ways to get in contact, like a video chat.

There are a few streaming services that allow you to watch movies and TV shows with people even if you're apart, such as Teleparty. All you have to do is connect it to your streaming service subscription, have family members or friends connect theirs, and join together.

Spending time with those in your household can also be fun. Play board games, bake treats, or just have fun together! You never know how much time you'll have with the people you're surrounded by. Enjoy the break, have fun, and stay safe!

#14 Info Graphic, Kinzee Derr, Harvard

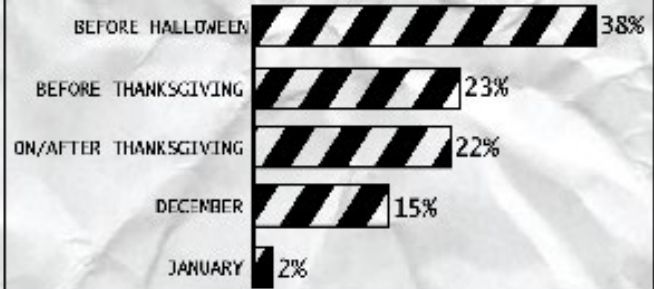
The Gift of Giving

US Christmas Consumer Statistics

AMERICANS WHO USED
A COMPUTER TO BUY
THEIR CHRISTMAS
GIFTS **76%**

AVERAGE AMOUNT
SPENT DURING
CHRISTMAS SEASON
PER HOUSEHOLD **\$1,496.00**

WHEN PEOPLE BUY THEIR CHRISTMAS GIFTS



\$ MEN TEND TO SPEND MORE THAN WOMEN \$
WHEN CHRISTMAS SHOPPING



OF CHRISTMAS
SHOPPERS BUY A GIFT
FOR THEMSELVES, TOO

**# OF CHRISTMAS TREES
SOLD PER YEAR
32.8 MILLION**



Data from <https://fortune.com/statistics/christmas-spending-statistics/#graf>

The Purple Pulse

Southern Valley and the Military

Southern Valley honors local Veterans

By Ashton Kirkendall

Southern Valley has a long history of honoring Veterans at school events. The school believes that those who have served or are serving the United States of America should be honored with the utmost respect. Tabitha Stalder, a teacher at Southern Valley, Mark Grove, the elementary principal, and Mike Quinn, the commander of the Sons of American Legion Squad 219 Oxford, are three people who help to make sure Veterans are honored regularly at the school.

Every year Southern Valley has a Veteran's Day Program in November. The school has made it a priority to teach students about the service and sacrifices of military personnel. Students participate in activities such as singing songs or reading famous passages as a way for children to say thank you to Veterans. "I think it helps educate them on what Veteran's Day is all about and why it is important. We always invite the Veterans to come to the program and direct all of the singing and the speaking parts to them as a way to acknowledge everything they did and are doing for our country," said Tabitha Stalder, the K-6 music teacher. Stalder chooses a theme for the program every year and bases songs around the theme. "One year the theme was the American flag, so a lot of the songs were about the flag, or the red white and blue. This year I am doing traditional American/patriotic songs, songs that are well known to everyone. It has been a while since we have sung those traditional songs, and it is important for students to learn them," said Stalder. Both of her grandfathers served in the military, one in the Navy and the other in the National guard. "I

guess having them has made the day more special, like I am honoring them." Stalder explains why the songs are important and what they symbolize. "Students need to know that it is a huge sacrifice for the Veterans to have served, so they need to sacrifice their time and energy to honor them. They need to see that Veteran's Day is not just another day, but it is a special day set aside to honor those who served."

Mark Grove, the Southern Valley K-6 principal, knows there is never too much the school can do to honor Veterans. "I try to thank each and every one of those that come to the Veterans Day Program personally," said Grove. He knows the pain of missing someone who is overseas as his brothers and many other family members and friends have served. "Knowing several people that have served during a war, starting with my grandfather who served during WWII, friends that were in the Vietnam War, and my brother who served three tours overseas, to hear their horrific stories, we can't do enough to thank them for their service. I think it is extremely important to always remember the men and women who died to give us our freedom in the past and the current service members that are still protecting our rights today," said Grove. This is why he is so supportive of the yearly program in November and why he wants students to help honor those who have served.

Mike Quinn, the announcer for home Southern Valley high school sporting events, honors Veterans in a very special way. After the playing of the National Anthem, he asks that all Veterans in attendance remain standing as the people at the event give them a big round of ap-

plause for their service. "Having them stand gives some recognition to veterans, as we tend to forget about them." This regular part of sporting events at Southern Valley provides a constant reminder for all in attendance that it is important to recognize and honor Veterans.

Quinn is also commander of the Sons of American Legion Squad 219 in Oxford. "We have many projects that we support to help Veterans. Thanks for Yanks is one that gives a Christmas gift to all Veterans in Nebraska in Veterans' homes, hospitals, and nursing homes. We support Tunnels to Towers and Wounded Warriors too," said Quinn. Quinn has done so much for Veterans and honors them in any way that he can, so it's no surprise he makes sure to honor Veterans at sporting events. "I hope it gives the Vets a sense of pride in their service and shows that people really do care."

Honoring veterans at Southern Valley is an important tradition that will continue each year. The school is committed to these traditions and to making sure that students are taught to honor those who have served.



Mrs. Stalder leads elementary students as they practice songs for the 2020 Veteran's Day program.

Unrecognized heroes

By Alicia Bock

When students at Southern Valley High School see math teacher Mr. Chad Hamilton or principal Mr. Jeff Linden they do not think about them as heroes. When they look at their math teacher, they think of the challenging problems he assigns, and when they see their principal they think of him as a person who makes them come to school and follow the rules. What many students do not know is that both of men are Veterans.

Mr. Hamilton's specific job in the Navy was an Aviation Electronics Technician. "This means I would work on electronic equipment in the jets and other aircraft, that allows them to communicate and navigate," said Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton joined the Navy right after high school and served for four years.

Military training puts people in stressful situations so they learn how to function under pressure. The most stressful part of Mr. Hamilton's military training was trying to function with very little sleep. The least stressful part was swim qualifications. "We literally only had to jump off a high platform and swim across a pool."

Southern Valley principal Mr. Linden chose to go into the Army,

where he served for eight years. He chose this branch because he would be able to serve his country part-time while attending school. "It was the best decision I made as a young man," says Linden. He had two jobs in the Army. "My first one was a 63B, which is a small wheel vehicle

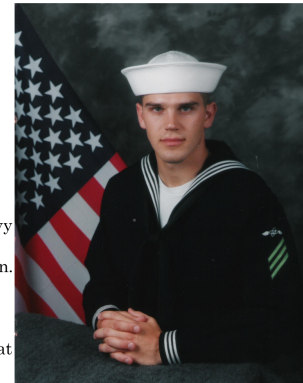
mechanic and my second one was a 92S which was a Laundry and Shower Specialist" The most challenging part of training for Mr. Linden was being homesick, "but once you did your training for five months in a row you got used to it."

For Mr. Linden, the easiest part of training was the physical tests. "I was a pretty good athlete so that part came easy to me the most," said Linden.

Although Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Linden have different roles at Southern Valley, they both still use skills they learned in the military. Mr. Hamilton said, "In the military, I learned some troubleshooting and problem-solving skills that I use all the time. I also learned how to work well with teams of other people."

Mr. Linden said, "I learned how to be an effective leader and a lot of those skills have transferred over into my ability to lead as a secondary principal."

Walking in the hallways at Southern Valley, one would not notice anything different about these two men. Yet, their time serving in the military has had a lasting effect on their character making them unrecognized heroes.



Mr. Chad Hamilton



Mr. Jeff Linden

"I learned how to be an effective leader and a lot of those skills have transferred over into my ability to lead..."
SV Principal Mr. Jeff Linden

The Purple Pulse

Soon-to-be heroes

By Shelby Rickert

Senior year is the time to make big decisions, such as where one wants to go to college, what one wants to do as a career, and where one wants to live. Southern Valley seniors Reagan Bennett and William Bartlett are two students that have made a brave choice about their futures—joining the military. Although they have both decided to serve our country, the two have had unique experiences along the way.

Reagan Bennett has enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard. “It gives me the most benefits. It pays for all of my college tuition, and it’s the least time consuming, so I can serve, but still have a civilian job and go to school.”

As for her journey through enlisting, that’s a bit rocky, she said.

“The military recruiter came to school when I was taking the ASVAB, and I had written something funny on my paper with my phone number, so he texted me and asked about being interested in the National Guard. At first I told him I wasn’t interested, and he never pushed me like some recruiters do. Then, in quarantine, I started thinking about what I wanted to do with my future, so I decided it was something I wanted to do.”

Within days, Bennett was ready for training. “It was actually a really fast process. I texted the recruiter on Monday, and he told me that if I let him know by Wednesday I could be at MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station). So I let him know the next day, and I went to his office and filled out all the paperwork,

and then went to MEPS. After that, I had to take my physical and pass my ASVAB. Then I had to wait about a month until I shipped out.”

Bennett’s training experience from May 20 to July 30 of 2020 was one that required a lot of guts. She participated in many activities, one being ruck marches. “We went on three ruck marches, where you carry a rucksack—ours were thirty-five pounds—and you walk so many miles, then stop.” Other activities included qualifying group weapons in marksmanship, tactical field care, tactical combat casualty care, and learning all of the parts of her weapons down to the bolt carrier group, as well as passing a six-event physical test.

The test, she says, was the scariest activity. “I did not think that I was going to pass it. The first time I took it I failed. I was so scared that I wasn’t going to graduate, and I would think ‘What if I don’t pass this physical test?’ That scared me.” Bennett’s favorite activity was grenade throwing because of the adrenaline rush it gave her. “We only got to practice two times, and it was never with anything that could be a live grenade. When we went to throw the grenades, it was terrifying. You’re holding a bomb in your hand, and if you mess up or drop it, you could die. I wasn’t prepared, but that’s how it would be if I was ever to get deployed.”

Bennett will leave for AIT (Advanced Individual Training) at Fort Rucker, Alabama around May 9, 2021 and stay

there for eight weeks. That’s where she’ll learn to be an Aviation Operation Specialist (AOS). She says she’s excited because she enjoyed the structure her life had and the people she was around while in training. “It’s just weird how close you get with people, that’s my favorite part; all of the friends that I met while at basics. I never thought that I’d get that close with strangers, but I actually miss them. I don’t really want to do RSPs without them, they’re my battle buddies.”

Another senior, one whose experience with enlisting hasn’t been as long as Bennett’s, is William Bartlett. Bartlett, a third-generation military enlistee, is going into the Marines. He first made the decision to enlist when he turned 17, saying, “I looked at every other branch, and nothing really stood out to me, so I decided on the Marines.” He then went through the process of talking to a recruiter and signing the necessary documents. First, he had to call the Kearney Marine Recruiting Station and set up a meeting at his house. After that, they set up the meeting for MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station). “The day of MEPS, we had to do a lot of paperwork. Maybe three trees worth of paperwork.” Now, he plans to leave for training on



July 19, 2021 and stay in the Marines for 10-20 years. He’s very excited, adding, “It’s something new and something I’ve never done in my life.”

While other highschool seniors are preparing for their college journeys, Reagan Bennett and William Bartlett are making

preparations to serve the United States of America. Although their experiences with enlisting are unique, they have a similar

excitement for this new and brave chapter in their lives. When these two students leave Southern Valley as graduates in May, they’ll join their respective branches of the military as soon-to-be heroes.

SV in the Military



Isaac Bergquist--Marines
2013 SV Graduate



Shane Williamson--Marines
2015 SV Graduate



Elmer Gonzalez--Army
2017 SV Graduate

Designed by Abree Karash

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE MILITARY



Tuition Assistance pays for up to 100 percent of the cost of tuition or expenses, up to a maximum of \$250 per credit and a personal maximum of \$4,500 per fiscal year per student. This program is the same for full-time members in all Military Services. There are also many resources that can help pay off student loans.

Education

Housing and Health

The Military has a tradition of providing room and board, including meals (rations) as part of service members’ pay. While on active duty, if a service member is not married, they will be staying in provided rooms. If a service member is married, depending on their rank, they are eligible for on or off base housing. The Military also provides health insurance to enlistees. Active duty service members are eligible for \$50,000 to \$400,000 in life insurance.



The Federal Government and most states offer support programs for Veterans such as home loan guarantees, small business loans, health care, and more. One of the most popular veteran programs is the VA Guaranteed Home Loan Program which enables qualified buyers to obtain zero-down financing, making it easier for veterans to own a home.

Veterans

Travel

With installations throughout the world, the military pays relocation expenses for service member and their family. In addition to seeing the world while serving your country, military members and their families are eligible for “space available” military flights to almost anywhere in the world at little or no cost and for space available lodging at any military base.



The Purple Pulse

Life as a military family

By Reagan Bennett

Abree Karash is a freshman at Southern Valley. Although she fits in incredibly well with her friends here, she hasn't always gone to school at Southern Valley. In fact, she has lived in four states and one foreign country in her 14 years of life. How has someone as young as her seen so much of the world? Her dad, Josh Karash, served 20 years active duty Air Force, getting new orders and moving every few years. The Karash family has lived in Utah, Arizona, Missouri, Nebraska, and Gwam. For Abree and her family moving every few years was a challenge, but to them it has always been worth it.

Moving, making new friends, and going to new schools can be very difficult for kids. As a child of a military parent Abree was no different. She said, "We have had many ups and downs throughout all the time my dad has been enlisted, but I would have to say the hardest part of having my dad in the military was when he was away. When we lived in Guam we were separated from our family back in Nebraska and it was difficult to adjust to life on an island."

In each of the locations the Karash family lived, they were able to begin new traditions and meet many new people from many walks of life. Most importantly, they were able to celebrate every new beginning as a family. Of course leaving is always difficult. Abree misses her friends she has made over the years. "I miss them with all my heart, but my parents have always made it a point to provide us with opportunities to see our friends from the places we have lived. I am so grateful for the friendships I made. I definitely miss them, but I will see them on our next visit."

Abree is proud of her dad's accomplishments. "Everything he has done has been to support our family. It may seem scary to some people to pick up their lives and move, but to me it has always been an adventure." The family moved to Oxford and joined the Southern Valley community at the beginning of the 2020 school year after Josh retired from the military. Abree said, "I will miss being able to travel and see the world, but Nebraska has always been my home and this is where my grandparents live."

Life is now a bit simpler for the Karash family since moving away is not in the plans at least until Abree graduates. Overall life as a military family can be difficult at times, but it was rewarding in the end for Abree and her family. With the many challenges and blessings as a military family, the Karashes were able to grow stronger and closer than ever. Abree said, "I don't think my family would be able to withstand as much as we can now if it wasn't for all the years that we only had each other to depend on." Now that her dad is retired, she gets to spend as much time with him as she wants. Abree is just glad that her dad is home with them, in their home state, with their family.



LEFT:
Karash checks the vision of a child as part of his service in the military.
RIGHT: Karash proudly displays an award he received while serving in the Air Force.



Due to COVID 19, the 2020 Southern Valley elementary Veteran's Day program will be available online only. The program will be broadcast live on the school's StrivTv chanel beginning at 1:30 on Wednesday, November 11, 2020.

You can watch at <https://striv.tv/channel/southern-valley/>



Thank you to all active and retired service members.
We appreciate your service to our country.
Have a happy Veteran's Day!

In Depth News: Reagan Bennett, Alicia Bock, Alyssa Fouts, Abree Karash, Ashton Kirkendall, Shelby Rickerts

Hehnke essential counselor at GICC; life-long servant of greater Nebraska

By Hayden Price

Many new innovative policies have been implemented at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) over the past several years: the way classes are scheduled, more electives available, more materials present such as improved technology, and improvements in the way students with special needs are addressed. The school has transformed dramatically in a positive direction.

Dr. Julie Hehnke, who has been at GICC for four years, has been essential to the school's transformation. Hehnke brings to GICC a plethora of experience and knowledge. When she came to the school in 2017, she had been in education since 1984; but Hehnke had not always been in education. She, at one point, ran a concession stand before getting into teaching.

"At 19, my dad said to me, 'yeah, I know you never go to class. You're just floundering. So I bought you a business.' So I owned a concession stand at 19. I had 38 employees," said Hehnke.

Hehnke gained an entrepreneurial spirit from her time running the concession stand, but ultimately she knew she did not want to be in the food industry her whole life. She went back to college and worked her way into the education field. Hehnke's roles at various Nebraska schools have ranged from substitute teaching to running a high ability education program at Grand Island Senior High (GISH).

After retiring from GISH, Hehnke thought she was retired for good, but she was coerced into coming to GICC, a school where she had taught from 1985-1989. Hehnke was concerned she did not have the proper skill set to be a school counselor; however, she caught on quickly.

Hehnke is the type of person who loves education. It's in her blood. Both her father and one of her sisters were also teachers. Hehnke has several degrees. Her most advanced degree is her dual doctorate in curriculum instruction and education administration. To become a better counselor, she just recently received her counseling degree.

"I never meant to get these degrees," insists Hehnke.

Her degrees have simply been acquired over the years to make her a better educator. With her many degrees and years of experience, she has proven valuable to GICC. She dedicates countless hours to the school. The summers are especially crazy for Hehnke.

"[During] Summer breaks, it's hundreds of hours because of scheduling," said Hehnke of her summer workload.

During the school year, she is busy, especially with seniors. Hehnke has to fill out sections



on common applications and sections on many scholarships. She is also a great help to seniors in their search for colleges and financing their higher education aspirations. Like all teachers, the school day often gets busy, and Hehnke frequently has to take her work home.

"It's a couple hours outside of school every day," described Hehnke.

Surprisingly enough, Hehnke also had another important role she filled for the last eight years. Hehnke just finished her second term as a city councilwoman for ward three. Initially, she was urged to run by a former colleague. Hehnke felt she had something to offer to the city of Grand Island.

"I've lived here all my life... it'd be good to feel like you could make a couple changes. Or figure out how things really work," added Hehnke.

Hehnke, for her first term, ran against five others in a contentious primary. Ultimately she, along with the incumbent,

1984 subbed at GIPS

1984-1985 Bladen and Guiderock teacher

1985-1989 worked in the GICC library and taught 7th and 8th-grade research skills

1989-1994 media specialist at Shelton

1994-2006 Barr Middle School librarian, tech specialist, developed a gifted program for middle schools, and was head of the media specialist program

2004-2009 taught at UNK

2006-2017 was in charge of the Media Center and Technology at GISH as well as running HAL program and the Education Quest Grant, counselor at GISH

2017-present counselor at GICC

prevailed. Hehnke was able to unseat the incumbent and represent her ward. Four years later, she ran unopposed. She enjoyed learning how the city operates from an inside perspective.

"I think just understanding why things are done, and then are they things we can change or are they things that we can live with," said Hehnke about what she learned as a councilwoman. Now that she has finished

serving, she has more time to focus on family, fun, and work. Her work is still not just exclusive to GICC. Hehnke uses the entrepreneurial spirit her father fostered in her to run a business.

"I'm the owner for the Hall County Dairy Queen franchise," said Hehnke.

Between Dairy Queen and GICC, Hehnke is busy, but she enjoys retreating to her newly refurbished home in Arizona and working in solitude when things get stressful. Despite the stress, Hehnke has immensely enjoyed GICC. She has taught at a school where the graduating class was only four kids and a school where the graduating class was 700 kids, but she has enjoyed the small-fee GICC offers.

"I like the size. I loved teaching in small schools because you have that real sense of community," shared Hehnke.

Community is essential to Hehnke, which is evident in the daily traffic through her office. She has many kids who go to her office every day and talk with her. Hehnke has become a great source of support and knowledge to students at the school, and students are comfortable talking to her, and many students seek her out for help.

"People are paying for their kids to go here, so it gives a little bit more purpose. So I like that because, for the most part, if you tell kids 'this will benefit you, it will help you' they're more willing to jump on it and do it and take advantage of some opportunities," stated Hehnke.

Hehnke uses her extensive

"I like the size. I loved teaching in small schools, because you have that real sense of community."
-Julie Hehnke

life experiences to guide students in a positive direction. She can help with issues ranging from family trouble to scholarship essays. One way Hehnke loves guiding students is by faith. She feels comfortable talking about God at school.

"You get that opportunity to put some things back on kids about faith and values, and I think that's huge," shared Hehnke.

Hehnke's drive, intelligence, and creativity have impacted GICC in multiple ways. Arguably more important, she has influenced thousands of students throughout the years. GICC is lucky to have a counselor who cares and dedicates so much to her students.



Olivia Priefert

Conestoga

For this photo, I wanted to recreate the feeling an athlete feels while performing under pressure. The athlete knows that there are certain expectations put on them, and often times feel as if they are “under a spotlight”.

To setup and take the initial shot, I used the overhead spotlight in my schools gym. I also setup two box lights on either side of the subject in order to project more light onto them, and help to minimalize unwanted shadows. After taking the shot I brought the photo into lightroom, where I cropped it and made basic editing adjustments such as changing the white balance, contrast, shadows, and highlights. I exported the edited photo in order to make further modifications in photoshop, where I used the healing tool to get rid of objects in the background. Finally, I sharpened the basketball to reduce blurriness, which resulted in the final photo.



#18 Sports Action Photography,
Angela Messere, Grand Island
Central Catholic



#19 News Feature Photography, Jackson Brundieck, Lutheran High Northeast



COUGARS

GOT

DISCO

FEVER!

CONESTOGA HOMECOMING 2020



Conestoga's Homecoming is a time of year that everyone looks forward to. This year, Conestoga was transported back to the 70s with a Disco Party theme. Hallways were filled with streamers, disco balls, and other colorful decorations.

FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT FOR A COUGAR VICTORY!



Sophomore Sophia Tegels cheers for the cougars.

On Friday, spirits were high and the stands were filled at the Homecoming Football game. The Cougars took on Cedar Bluffs in a thrilling game. Fans were loud, cheerleaders were rowdy, and everyone was excited. The Cougars came out on top, winning 76-42, their first win of the year. Sophomore Jayden Widler, and Junior Keaghon Chini each ran in four touchdowns for the team, with Widler scoring on each carry he had. The Cougars also put up their season best of 493 yards traveled, and ten total touchdowns in the game. The Cougars played a strong and complete game, and took their first win of the year in front of an energetic home crowd.



Coach Schmeckpeper encourages Sophomore Carter Plowman on the sidelines.



Junior Keaghon Chini runs the ball for a cougar first down.



Juniors Keaghon Chini and Evan Svanda celebrate a touchdown with a chestbump.



Sophomore Jayden Widler hands the ball off to Junior Keaghon Chini.

ROYALTY CROWNED!



ALL OF THE CANDIDATES LINED UP WAITING FOR THE KING AND QUEEN TO BE ANNOUNCED.

Following the game, Homecoming candidates Naomi Simones, Olivia Priefert, Taylor McClatchey, Myah Cummings, Braden Ruffner, Toby Nolting, Ben Welch, and Lane Fox took the field for coronation. The candidates were voted on by their peers to be in the running for royalty. Seniors Taylor McClatchey and Tobias Nolting took the crowns for the night, winning King and Queen. Naomi Simones and Ben Welch were crowned Princess and Prince.

The day after being deemed homecoming queen Senior Taylor McClatchey put a heartfelt post on Instagram. She had pictures of her with the other candidates and friends but the most memorable photo was her and King Toby Nolting. She wrote a lengthy caption beginning it with, "Yesterday I started to truly feel like a senior." Taylor ended the caption with, "Can't believe we're really growing up."



SOPHOMORES ALI GANSEMER AND MACKAYLEE MADSEN SMILE AS THEY TAKE FLOWERS OUT THE CANDIDATES.

Theme: Close Enough

Entry includes the following:

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Theme opening

Fall divider

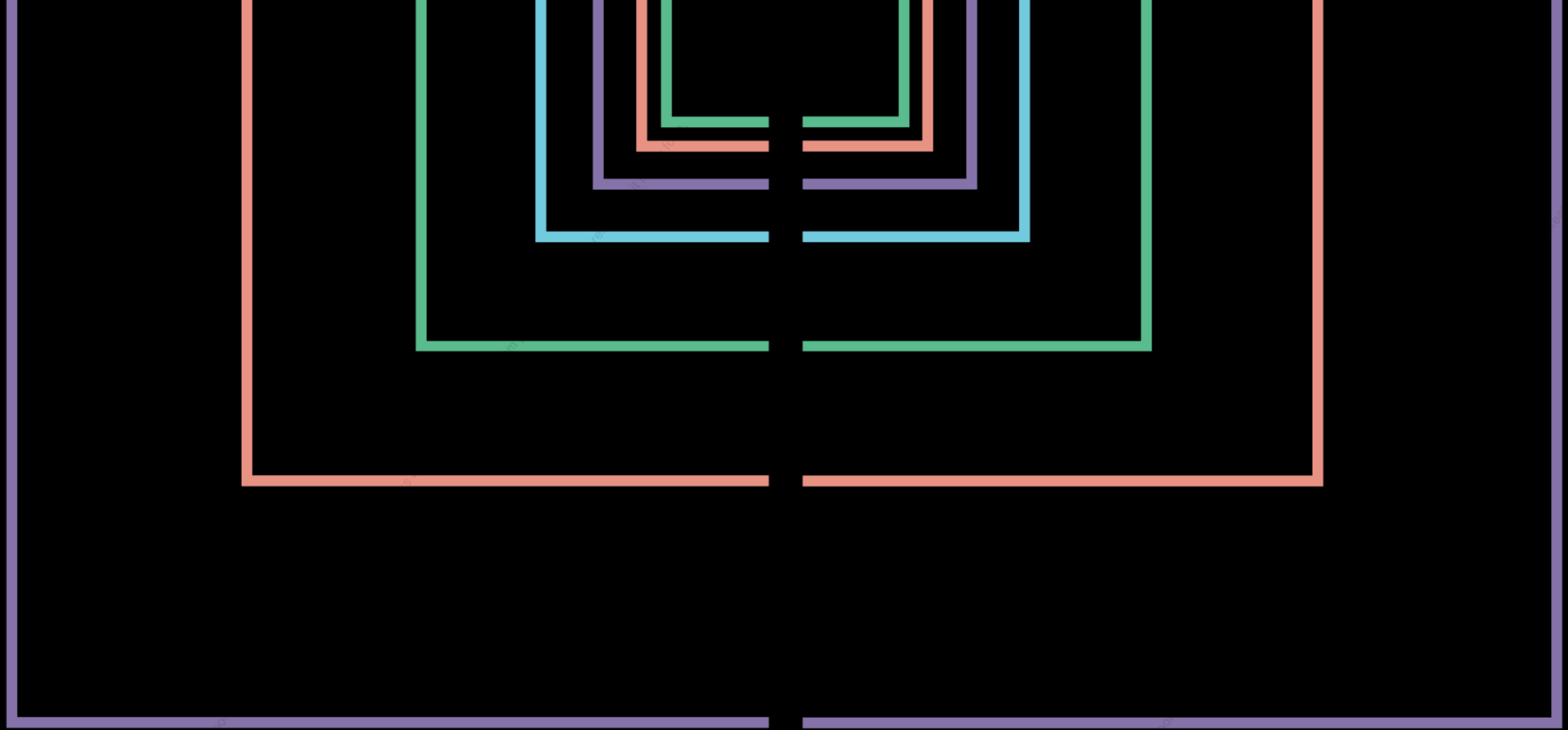
Homecoming spread

Softball spread

Winter divider

Art/Industrial Arts spread

People divider



CLOSE ENOUGH

2020-2021

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The Chieftain
Volume 70
2020-2021

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CLOSE ENOUGH

Six feet apart. 204 students. Just 26 seniors. Yutan's year has been a constant stream of "almosts"; from an increased focus on COVID restrictions to a string of close-call sports seasons, it has walked a thin line between perfect and less than ideal. The difficulty of this year has taken its toll on students, but they've come out of these trials with strengthened resolve. Instead of striving for unattainable perfection, they've decided to strive for their best. After all, that's all that anyone can ask of them. Thankfully, students were willing to put forth the effort, battling an unprecedented pandemic and an even more unprecedented number of snow days. Early morning practices turned into late seasons, their blood, sweat and hard work being exchanged for victory over adversity. Throughout the isolation of online school, the stunting of extracurricular activities, and the confusion of transitioning into adulthood, they've given it their all. And while the year has definitely been less than perfect, it's been remarkably close enough to the real deal. Now, as the year comes to a close, Yutan High School has transformed into a different place than it was a couple semesters ago. It's been a harsh, uncomfortable transition for most, but it still holds a place in the hearts of its students. To them, it is close enough.





FALL

Starting the school year this fall, everything is close enough at Yutan High School. Students walk through the halls with online learning lurking closer every day, yet the cases are staying low enough to keep them in school. The students aren't allowed to be at the games, but they still find a way to enjoy them by tailgating for football and softball. Homecoming comes early without the traditional dance; still, the students get to dress up, play Chieftain games, and even get to celebrate a victory Friday night. It isn't perfect, yet homecoming is close enough. Then the softball team ends their season early with only nine eligible girls. Cross country has one of the largest boys teams but misses qualifying for state. The volleyball team anxiously waits for a wild card to state but does not succeed. And the football players practice knowing semi-finals will be here any day, but in the end, they also fall short, narrowly missing the championship. The weather gets colder and none of the seasons end perfectly, but the students are grateful for their chance to compete, making fall just close enough.

No CHANCE TO DANCE

Students enjoy alternative

In the wake of COVID's continuing spread across the country, Yutan's student council had to figure out what homecoming would look like. In past years, the formula has been the same: spirit week, football game, dance. While spirit week and the football game were given a green light, the dance was out of the question.

Faced with this problem, the council finally settled on a game night, where students could hang out on the football field and play a wide variety of games. There were still a few kinks to work out, however. "[We faced] social distancing and trying to figure out how best to keep the excitement of homecoming...and yet still give you guys the opportunity to celebrate homecoming," Feller said.

It seems that the students enjoyed the change in plans, even though it wasn't the same as the dance. Senior Raven Sheldon was one of the students who stayed after the game to participate. "I liked that we did something for homecoming," Sheldon said, "otherwise there would've been nothing besides coronation and the parade." Though she'll be graduated by the next time that homecoming rolls around, she feels that game night is still a good addition to the homecoming festivities. "It wouldn't harm anything," Sheldon said.

Though she wasn't sure how it would turn out, Feller was pleasantly surprised with the positive response. "We had kids there at the end whereas typically at a dance people are out earlier," Feller said. In the aftermath, Feller feels that the council has "learned some things" when it comes to what's important to the student body. "Maybe next year we'll look at adding a night where we have games on the football field."



CHIEFTAIN STAMPEDE (Top) Sophomore Quran Cook leads the homecoming parade. The parade was in downtown Yutan.
SPEED STACKER (Middle) Eighth grader Max Egr stacks solo cups. Students played minute-to-win-it during the homecoming games.
SOAKING SUDS (Bottom) Seniors Jack Moan and Tyler Pinkelman splash in a kiddie pool. Students made floats for the homecoming parade and competed against the other classes.
CONGA LINE (Left) Underclassmen dance at the Chieftain games. The games were held on the practice field Friday afternoon.



ROYAL CHEER (Above) Senior Ashley Herman cheers during the football lineup. Herman was a part of the homecoming court.



SWEET SURPRISE (Above) Seniors Elijah Hampton and Austin Spudy smile for the camera. Hampton and Spudy were crowned king and queen.



'80S QUEEN (Above) Spanish teacher Samantha Due explains content to students. Teachers wore rainbow on color day during dress-up week.



SMILE AND WAVE (Above) Seniors Mya Hays and Will Elgert wave at pedestrians during the parade. Royalty followed the cheerleaders.



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STRIKE THREE (Below) Sophomore Savanna Hassler pitches the ball to sophomore Laycee Josoff. Hassler received Honorable Mention All-Conference and Josoff received Second-Team All-Conference.



MEATBALL (Above) Sophomore Shaylynn Campbell makes contact with the ball. Campbell transferred from Gretna this year.



SWING BATTER, BATTER (Above) Junior Kendyl Egr waits for the pitcher to throw the ball. Egr was a starting outfielder this year.



YOU'RE OUT (Above) Sophomore Emma Abraham tags a runner on a throw down to second base. Abraham was the starting shortstop for the Patriots.

Huddle Up (Left): The infielders for the Patriots huddle up to talk through a long inning. The Patriots' record this year was 6-21.

NEW COACH, NEW BEGINNINGS

Softball adapts to changes

After a difficult season last year, the Yutan-Mead Patriots started off the season with a new head coach and assistant coaches. The Patriots faced many challenges during the year with all of the changes, the small team, and having a new start to the program.

The new head coach, Ryan Glatter, set many goals for the Patriots, but one in particular was established along the way: "We just needed to play innings."

The girls had to adapt to many of the changes and needed to focus on winning one inning at a time, not the overall game.

Like every team, the Patriots came with strengths and weaknesses. "At times we could play very well together, but others we didn't," junior Kendyl Egr said. "We weren't very good at staying consistent, which was hurting us a lot."

Although the Patriots at times struggled with their strengths and weaknesses, they still practiced and played hard to improve each day. "We accepted the challenges that came our way," sophomore Laycee Josoff said.

Despite the record of 6-21, the Patriots took on every team they played with all their might.

Accepting the challenges, the team had the desire and determination to show their coach they wanted to be there.

"They had the willingness and heart to show up to get better each day," Glatter said.

Not only did Glatter push the team to be better athletes but also to be better people. "Keep showing up and keep trying to make yourself better," Glatter told the team. "Not only softball but as better humans too."

BIG HITS (Above) Freshman Maycee Hayes fouls off a pitch. Hays hit her first varsity homerun this season.



SCOREBOARD

ELKHORN NORTH 0-12	WAHOO 0-11
SCHUYLER 17-1	WEEPING WATER 1-11
NORTH BEND CENTRAL 9-8	ASHLAND-GREENWOOD 1-12
NORTH BEND CENTRAL 5-8	TEKAMAH-HERMAN 4-5
RAYMOND CENTRAL 9-5	LOGAN VIEW/SCRIBNER-SNYDER 1-10
LOGAN VIEW/SCRIBNER SNYDER 7-12	SYRACUSE 0-10
AUBURN 0-11	GACC 0-12
PLATTSMOUTH 1-10	LOGAN VIEW/SCRIBNER-SNYDER 3-11
CASS COUNTY 11-12	FORT CALHOUN 13-6
MALCOLM 2-11	ARLINGTON 1-12
DC WEST/CONCORDIA 3-11	CENTENNIAL 7-11

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Keith R. Kalisek
Owner

WINTER

As winter rolls around again, not everything is like it used to be. Basketball games without fans, players on the bench with masks on, wrestling meets with no supporters. This is close enough, though, since no one was sure if the seasons would happen at all. The girls basketball team with no seniors losing in subdistricts, the boys basketball team with only one senior making it to state and a record breaking six wrestlers qualifying for state all make it close enough. Virtual speech meets and concerts fill the time of athletes and non-athletes alike. Teachers and coaches strive to follow restrictions so there isn't a relapse of last year. Although many people, students and teachers both, have temporarily experienced online school, the year continues. The looming threat of online school fills December. Winter break goes longer into January. Snow days on snow days shower the school during February. It turned into a winter not quite like the others, but close enough.

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

No study halls, new courses

With no study halls this year, students had room to take more elective classes like art and industrial arts. One new industrial arts class that students gravitated toward was Robotics.

Industrial arts teacher Dan Krajcek said Robotics is a lot of fun. "Kids are enjoying themselves, doing a lot of work, and it doesn't take a lot of prompting," Krajcek said.

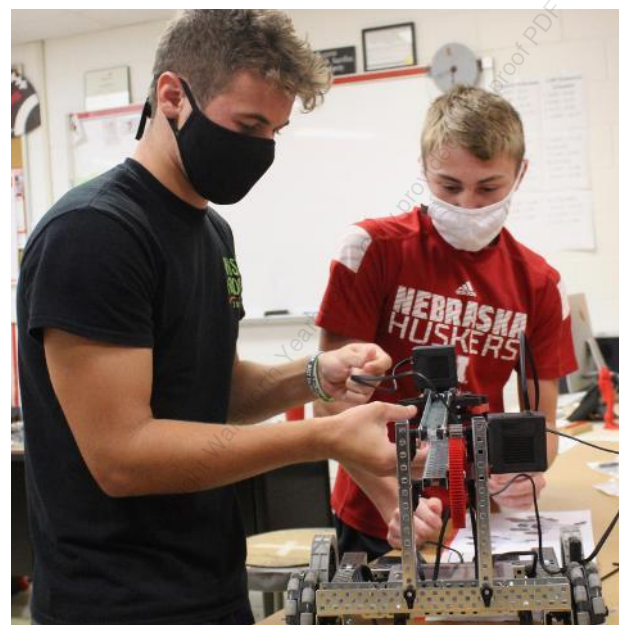
Junior Paul Kirchmann took Robotics because he didn't want to stress himself academically but was surprised by what he learned. "I kind of expected like a little bit of the Lego Mindstorms, which is kind of like a very simple robot," Kirchmann said.

Robotics includes problem solving, engineering and teamwork. "There is a lot of education that they're getting that they might think is easier. It's just because it's fun," Krajcek said.

Senior Caden Egr likes the class because he hasn't seen anything like it. "It's a lot of fun to mess around with those robots and kind of code them to do stuff," Egr said. Kirchmann agrees the class brings fun new challenges: "It's less like writing down math problems, more real-world solving."



PUMPKIN PAINTING (Left) Senior Hunter Sieburg paints pumpkins to brighten hallways. Sieburg is finishing the year online.
TAKING TEST DRIVES (Below) Senior Eric Leahy test drives a robot he made in Robotics. Robotics was added to the curriculum for the first time this year.



PRECISE MEASUREMENTS (Above) Freshman Zach Kennedy measures wood for his class project. This is Kennedy's first year in Industrial Arts.
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES (Left) Senior Caden Egr and freshman Joey Benjamin code their robot. The robots then raced against each other.



DOUBLE FOCUS (Above) Senior Delanie Graham and junior Hayley Witte work on painting projects in Art III. Both Art III and IV are combined.
STEADY HANDS (Right) Senior Austin Spudy sketches a new drawing in art class. Spudy has taken art all four years of high school.



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PEOPLE

With all of the COVID restrictions this year, the physical and emotional gap between us as people is as close enough to normal as we can get. But in this small school, sometimes close enough is just enough. Each class remains united yet divided. From seniors to seventh graders to staff, we are family-like but not as close as previous years.

The leading students of Yutan show off their individuality and success from their smarts to their athleticism; however, their differences keep them apart. Being separate in their paths that lie ahead, all seniors are still alike in the unknown of their futures.

The division of the juniors and sophomores isn't as dominant as the class above, but they still share the same aspect of adversity. They are one "different breed" and have many memories with one another. Even with all the different ideas in class, the middle-class-men still know how to fill the void with a joke or two.

Coming into high school or even the year of junior high, differences are bound to stand out, but the group of freshmen along with the seventh and eighth graders embrace their differences amongst each other. No one is left out in the underclassmen's tight-knit bunch.

As a result of COVID limitations and adversity in the small school, the distance of this year was present for all the students and staff. However, they still managed to fill the gap with the memories they created. From the laughter and joy in that empty six feet, it was not as much as we hoped but still close enough.

Class C

#22 Broadcast News Story

Winner: Karina Rodriguez Rodriguez, Roxana Rodriguez, Wood River

<https://secure.nsaahome.org/nsaaforms/downloads/8852broadcast%20news%20story%20-%20roxana%20rodriguez%20and%20karina%20rodriguez%20.mov>

#23 Broadcast Sports Story

Winner: Olivia Priefert, Conestoga

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggmr7dmUGQ8>

#24 Broadcast Feature Story

Winner: Olivia Priefert, Conestoga

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKVgPmXxKK8>

#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement

Winner: Kyle Holeman, Avery Essink, Sandy Creek

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74gk_IINTSk