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Opinion: Mental health support in high schools is not optional

When my father died in my final semester of my senior year, school was the worst place for me to be mentally. I couldn't focus in class because it was all I could think about, and senioritis exacerbated my inability to get work done. My only safe space was in the tranquil office of my high school's social worker. Without her, multitudes of periods would have been spent in the bathroom breaking down, with no one who knew how to handle it. In an environment ridden with things to be anxious or sad about, mental health employees are a necessity in all high schools in order to allow all a safe and understanding place to go in a time of need.

The primary reason that it is important that mental health workers are available at all high schools is because some students have difficult home lives. Some may not be able to afford exterior mental health support, costing hundreds of dollars per session. Some may not feel comfortable enough to express how they are feeling to their parents or guardians. Moreover, a lot of students will not actively seek out help, and that is when a high school social worker can step in. If a teacher or other staff member notices a difference in behavior, they are able to report it to the school's mental health workers, and then are able to be checked on within the same day. Other forms of mental health care are usually appointment based, and sometimes are required to be booked months ahead of time in order to obtain a one hour time slot. That timing difference can sometimes be greatly impactful depending on the severity of the mental health crisis. All in all, high school social workers are the only available assistance that is free, immediate and completely private.

Additionally, high school-- for some people-- is the worst years of a person's life. People are judgmental, the halls are crowded and parents place high expectations on their children to do well. Aside from restrooms, there are no private locations one can go to calm down from sudden mental health crises such as a panic attack. However, since vaping has come into vogue, the bathroom is no longer even a safe space. Often, staff members make unfair assumptions for why one would spend so long in them, when that is not the sole reality of every situation. Once, when I was using the bathroom, I could hear a girl sobbing in a stall as another girl tried to calm her down. Soon after, a hall monitor came into the bathroom yelling "Ladies, you need to go to class. What are you doing in there?" and forced the girl to reveal what had really been going on. The girl slowly unlatched the bathroom stall with bloodshot eyes and moist cheeks. Speaking from experience, it is humiliating when someone I'm not comfortable with to notice when I have had a breakdown. As a consequence of the bathroom not being a space made for those situations, the hall monitor made the problem worse. Therefore, a safe mental health space is necessary for struggling students.

Having staff that are trained to handle a crisis can make a difference between life or death. Though one's regular counselor sometimes steps up to take on students' mental health struggles, it is simply not enough. Their job is to make one's schedule and help them with their future needs. They are not properly trained to adequately support a student, and if one wrong move is made, it can sometimes greatly worsen the situation at hand. The term "triggers" describes a certain sense that can set one off due to a traumatic experience. Most people do not understand what to say to avoid one's unique triggers which will sometimes coincide with the mental health disorder at hand. For example, most people think that if someone's body looks

good, they want to be complimented about it. However, for those who suffer from anorexia nervosa, that is the worst possible thing to say to them because it is a reaffirmation that what they are doing is paying off. Though this may seem like an honest mistake, it can make a grand impact. Therefore, it is necessary that staff dealing with these students are properly trained.

In my time in high school, there have been four deaths by suicide that I had some relation to. And those numbers would only get higher if our social work resources were not available. Suicide is the leading cause of death in the US. Mental health kills more than any physical ailment in this world, yet for some reason physical health work requires more schooling, more resources and more attention. Schools need to start considering the term health as more than if a student is throwing up or has a cough. If there is no dispute that our schools should have nurses for when one is sick, there should not even be a question whether or not we have mental health counselors in our schools; and they should be just as qualified as any nurse, doctor or surgeon.

Texas public school boards:

#3 Editorial Cartooning Champion: Cecilia Urbanski, Omaha Marian



#4 Editorial Writing Champion: Margaret Morris, Omaha Marian

The bell rings. Classes dismiss. Students sprint down to the cafeteria to find their friends and claim their seats at the table. They get to the front of the lunch line just to find out they have no money left in their account.

'Big deal. My parents can pay the balance tonight. No one has to know.'

But then an administrator pulls out a stamp and darkly marks the hands of the students with no money. Shame, embarrassment, guilt, sadness, hunger. These feelings wash over the students, becoming a heavy burden and weighing them down. They worry about what their friends will think and if they will be able to eat.

We live in a society where you never know what kind of situation someone is living in and how they are making it through each day. School is supposed to be a place where students can temporarily forget about whatever worries they might be facing at home and simply focus on academics, extracurriculars and their friends.

Stamping hands of students with a negative lunch balance will not create any positive change. Sure, it might act as a reminder to some parents that they need to put more money into their child's account. But for many, it will be a scarlet letter screaming at them of another thing they forgot to do, another minute task that ultimately slipped through the cracks.

Los Santos High School administrators argue that this policy is a more effective and timely way to prevent lunch balances from becoming negative. But is it really worth shaming students and parents in the process?

Some children come from single-parent households with multiple siblings, where their parent(s) is struggling to make ends meet. If a parent is trying their hardest to take care of all of their children, on top of themselves, it is not fair to make it known to the whole school that they are facing financial obstacles.

In most cases, a parent is not intentionally missing payments for their child's lunch account. They just forget or don't have enough money to pay on time.

This debt is a matter that needs to be taken care of through an email or phone call, not a dark black stamp. If the negative balance persists for a longer period of time, then a meeting with a school administrator, like Principal Lake, should be in effect. And if the account is still empty after that, then Superintendent Atwood should implement a new policy to financially assist struggling students and their families.

But it should never get to the point where the student suffers from feelings of shame and embarrassment for something that is generally out of their control. And students should not be limited on the amount of times they can go through the lunch line, either.

Delaying a bill payment is something that can be done later on and doesn't hurt anyone. But withholding food from students can cause them to feel hungry and uncomfortable, ultimately leading them to be distracted and unfocused throughout the school day.

So while this new policy might seem appealing to those in charge, the students and parents who are part of the Los Santos High School community will unnecessarily suffer in the process. Starving a child and humiliating a family is not a solution to unpaid bills.

The standing ovation at the end of Ariana DeBose's opening 75th Annual Tony Awards performance was well-deserved. DeBose performed a one-woman lead show to an original song called "This Is Your Round of Applause." The song paid homage to musical theater greats and the musicals themselves. This all culminated in a joyful audience and a dazzling performance. But, not only was the performance well put on, it was also an undoubtedly impressive feat by DeBose herself.

DeBose has certainly established herself in the musical theater industry over the last few years and so she was the perfect candidate for this task. Not only does she represent something special to the Tony Awards, being an LGBTQ woman of color, but she also provided the perfect amount of theatrics and overall energy to the performance. Her renditions of songs from classic musicals like *Chicago*, *Hairspray*, *Rent*, and many more, were perfect for the night. Her voice was great, and she also had an infectious energy that spread to the crowd. Her outstanding efforts proved her one-woman lead to be very impressive.

While DeBose did enhance the performance with her musical skill and expertise, it was also a well-written act by writers Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss. Everything from the mashup of iconic musicals to the "keep it gay," line made this performance by theater lovers, for theater lovers.

At the beginning of DeBose's performance, she sang "we are the leading part in this side of making art." She certainly meant it. The performance did a spectacular job of showcasing all of the amazing work that people do in every aspect of the industry. It truly was a night for everyone's "round of applause."

That is a large part of what made the performance so enjoyable. It was sweet. You could see that the audience not only appreciated DeBose's theatrics but that they felt appreciated as well. After all, that is what the Tony Awards are all about, highlighting talent in the musical theater industry. No group went unnoticed in DeBose's performance, not even past winners.

Towards the end of DeBose's act, clips of past Tony Award-winning speeches were displayed on the screen. This was the icing on the cake for me. Videos of teary-eyed winners giving iconic speeches, no doubt made the audience teary-eyed as well.

Overall DeBose proved that there was no one better for the job than her. Her performance was inspiring, thoughtful and perfect for musical theater's biggest night.

2023 State Journalism Championship



#6 Headline Writing

Time Limit - 1:15

Directions:

You are a copy editor for your student newspaper. You are being given 6 formatted articles. Write headlines for 3 of the 6 articles using the following conditions:

1. Write at least one 2-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline. ✓
2. Write at least one 3-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline. ✓
3. You have creative license to write a third headline of any length or line count. ✓

Turn this paper into the proctor when finished.

Name: Jennifer Hubert School: Papillion La Vista

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # - 1

Headline - Love at First Bite
Texas Pic Queen shares the secret ingredient to falling in love.

Article # - 5

Headline - Now You See Him, Now You Don't
Creighton Mens Basketball loses Ryan Nembhard
to the transfer portal, the rest of the team...

Article # - 2

Headline - A Signature Like No Other
Museum uncovers artist's secret self portrait
X-rays reveal Paul Cézanne's side profile in painting.



The first time Julie Albertson saw musician Spencer Schwarz onstage in Austin in 1985, she knew she was going to marry him. To help him come around to her way of thinking, "I baked him a buttermilk pie," recalls Albertson, now 60.

"Best thing I'd ever eaten," says Schwarz, 67. "Next thing I knew, we were together."

Known as the Texas Pie Queen, Albertson understands that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But her pies are made with something extra—and she swears they can help others find their match, even before they've met them. "It's like prayer," she says. "It's intentional. As you roll the dough, you talk about who you want to meet, your future together. It's imbuing emotion into what you're making."

The list of those who have shared their hopes with Albertson—who then bakes them into existence—continues to grow. It includes her niece Haylie Raymond, 37, who met her partner, Zack Snider, 36, in September 2015, not long after pouring her intentions into a cherry pie. As her aunt's apprentice, Raymond says the magic runs in the family: "People come back and say, 'You won't believe what happened.' And I say, 'But I do believe.'"



Slice of Life

Schwarz and Albertson (top, in costume in 2019) have been married 28 years. Her niece Raymond (with Snider) knows firsthand the power of the pie: "When I told him about it, Zack asked if he was under my spell."

Cincinnati Art Museum's chief conservator Serena Urry was conducting a routine inspection of the institution's prized Paul Cézanne painting "Still Life with Bread and Eggs" when she noticed something "odd."

For an artwork dating back to 1865, the appearance of small cracks was no surprise. But they were concentrated in two specific areas, rather than distributed evenly across the canvas. What's more, they revealed tiny flashes of white that stood out in contrast to the brooding palette of the French painter's so-called "dark" period.

"I thought there might be something underneath that we should look at," Urry said in a video interview.

The conservator asked a local medical company to bring a portable X-ray machine to the museum, where a technician scanned the 2.5-foot-wide oil painting in several parts. As Urry stitched the series of images together digitally using Photoshop, she saw "blotches of white" that indicated the presence of more white lead pigment.

When the scan was rotated vertically, an image of a man emerged, his eyes, hairline and shoulders appearing as dark patches. Given the the figure's body position, Urry and her museum colleagues believe it to be Cézanne himself.

"I think everyone's opinion is that it's a self-portrait ... He's posed in the way a self-portrait would be: in other words, he's looking at us, but his body is turned.

"If it were a portrait of someone other than himself, it would probably be full frontal," she added.

Should that be the case, it would be among the earliest recorded depictions of the painter, who was in his mid-20s when the still life was completed. Cézanne is known to have produced more than two dozen self-portraits, though almost all of them were completed after the 1860s and were largely executed in pencil.

"We are at the outset of the process of discovering as much as we can about the portrait," said Peter Jonathan Bell, the museum's curator of European paintings, sculpture and drawings, over email. "This will include collaborating with Cézanne experts around the world to identify the sitter, and undertaking further imaging and technical analysis to help us understand what the portrait would have looked like and how it was made.

"Stitched together, this information may add to our understanding of a formative moment in the early career of this great artist."

Unanswered questions

Part of the Cincinnati Art Museum's collection since 1955, "Still Life with Bread and Eggs" was painted in a realist style — inspired by the Spanish and Flemish Baroque periods — that Cézanne deployed early in his career. He later developed a more colorful aesthetic under the guidance of Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro, before spearheading the more structured style of the post-Impressionist movement.



There's no such thing as shocking anymore in college basketball's offseason. But this is a shocker. In the wake of Creighton's Elite Eight loss to San Diego State, Creighton coaches were prepared for roster turnover. Any combination of Ryan Kalkbrenner, Baylor Scheierman, Arthur Kaluma and Trey Alexander staying or leaving.

Not Ryan Nembhard.

Now, Nembhard.

It's a move that Creighton coaches didn't see coming. And it's a move that has made instant transfer portal waves in college basketball. Most everyone will be interested in Nembhard's services. Even if coaches have a point guard, it's likely he's not Ryan Nembhard. Maybe one day we'll hear an explanation for this move, but most transfer portal moves are layered, about playing time, money, fresh start, new coach.

There's already talk about Nembhard heading to Arizona, which lost its point guard to the portal, and where the head coach (Tommy Lloyd) recruited Nembhard's older brother to Gonzaga. Oh, and I'm sure the NIL is more than ample down in Tucson. They care about basketball there. A lot. But they care about hoops in Omaha, too. And CU's NIL bank is reportedly more than up to any challenge.

If this is about NIL, Nembhard is about to hear from everyone. He'll be one of the hottest free agents in college hoops. This is what's known as Bad Portal. But Creighton fans can't complain too much. They've benefited from Good Portal the last two years.

And, in fact, CU just scored a big transfer in Isaac Traudt from Virginia. Of greater importance on the Hilltop is what impact this has on the remainder of the roster. Nembhard didn't just run Greg McDermott's spacing offense to perfection, he made everyone better. Mac will find a point guard. But it won't be a third-year quarterback like Nembhard, a coach/offensive coordinator on the court.

If you're Kalkbrenner, how do you feel about this? Reportedly the 7-1 senior is mulling testing the NBA waters. He and Nembhard had a special radar in Mac's offense.

What about Scheierman? There's a lot of buzz about the senior coming back for his extra year. Now?

And what about Trey Alexander? A candidate to also test the waters. But Alexander looks like a Big East Player of the Year candidate next year.

Now? Would he be asked to fill the point guard spot next year, as he did superbly the last month of his freshman year? Alexander likely won't be a point guard in the NBA. Would he want to spend all of next year doing that? Decisions, decisions.

Based on what I was hearing around Creighton, I felt there was a better than 50-50 chance that most of the Jays would return next year. Start with a top 10 ranking and take another swing at the Final Four in Glendale, Arizona.

That sort of thinking started with Nembhard, who had the tough call go against him against San Diego State but was a star for the Jays throughout the NCAA tournament. He looked like he was born for that stage and was just scratching the surface.

Now he's left everyone at Creighton scratching their heads. That's life in college basketball. Here today, portal tomorrow. It's a surprise. Creighton has to hope it's the last one.

Adding Accessories to Horizon Heights

Horizon Heights Junior opens and runs successful online jewelry shop

Isolation can cause humans to do one of two things- feel an immense sense of loneliness, or fuel us to innovate new ideas to pass the time by. Joanna Lin, a Horizon Heights Junior, chose the innovation route.

Lin was quarantined her Sophomore year with COVID. Lin was completing an assignment for a business class and discovered jewelry making. Lin experimented with many different kinds of jewelry and used the internet to help her get started. Soon after, Lin started her very own jewelry business called Nocturnal Jewelry.

“I found the inspiration for Nocturnal Jewelry in owls, when I discovered the prefix ‘noct,’ meaning night, is related to owls. This symbolism is emanated in my business’ logo, which features two, owl-like eyes” Lin said.

Lin’s main goal as a business owner is to offer affordable jewelry like bracelets, earrings, and necklaces that make the customer feel more confident.

“I feel like I’m oftentimes just following the trends but, I think a lot of jewelry is getting a lot more expensive, so I am trying to find and make higher quality pieces that aren’t as expensive as others” Lin said.

All while maintaining a popular jewelry business, Lin has also stayed successful in school and active in her community. Qui Lin, Joanna’s mom, applauds her daughters success during this exciting endeavor.

“I am so proud of my daughter for taking initiative while being quarantined to completely change her life. She has done about 400 sales and currently has 2,000 followers on Etsy. Last month she even donated part of her sales to the local food pantry” Lin said.

The original idea for Lin’s business came into fruition from a homework assignment. Her business teacher, John Murphy, gave her the opportunity to come up with a mock business idea.

“Little did I know she would take that assignment and not look back! I am proud of her resilience and creativity. She has a solid business plan and is saving the money she uses for college” Murphy said.

Lin’s entrepreneurship has opened up many doors for her future. She has garnered a following of thousands of people who check in on her jewelry shop daily. Lin’s minimalist aesthetic leaves the customers coming back for more. She has many loyal customers, like Audrey Muck who discovered Nocturnal Jewelry while scrolling through Etsy.

“I loved the unique patterns and fresh look. So far I have purchased two necklaces and a bracelet. I am constantly getting complimented when I wear them” Muck said.

Balancing school, extracurriculars, and a full time jewelry business is hard work for a teenager, but Lin manages it well. Lin's passion towards jewelry offers a fresh new perspective into the industry that excites many customers.

“Joanna is interested in many things, but creating is her passion. I am proud she has been able to turn her passion into sellable jewelry” Lin said.

#8 Newspaper News Writing Champion: Jane McGill, Omaha Central

When Northeast Community College first began providing on-campus nursing, the nurse they hired had to work out of a closet. This was the latest warning sign to the small Nebraska college that its Norfolk campus simply lacked the space to accommodate the services needed by its student body. So, when the college's 2019 Master Site and Facility plan identified the eroding student center as one of the buildings in greatest need of renovation, college administrators saw an opportunity to expand the space available to serve its students.

"We wanted to build this building in a way that provides for all students," explained Amanda Nipp, Northeast Community College's Vice President of Student Services. "We visited a variety of colleges of our size in the area to get inspiration."

Construction on the project began in Spring 2019, with the college renovating the 36-year-old structure while building a 27,000 square foot addition. The ambitious project, financed through the college's revenue bonds, brings the Service Center, Library Resource Center, Academic Support Services, Business Services, the Hawk Shop, food services, and a gameroom into one location along one of the Norfolk campuses' busiest pedestrian thoroughfares.

Expanding accessibility for disabled students was a top priority in the design of the building, explained Nipp. "One of the things that definitely changed in this new space was that we widened the doors. Wheelchairs were a lot smaller 36 years ago, and so that was really important... We also installed a wheelchair lift so that students can access the upper level without having to make use of the stairs."

Nipp said that the building was designed to increase the amount of square footage on campus dedicated to enhancing student health and wellness. The center now includes physical and mental healthcare facilities for students. "There's a small door by the student health and wellness that allows students to exit and enter if maybe they're dealing with something and don't want to see people," Nipp said. "I don't see a lot of students using it but I think the ones who do are very grateful it's there."

Originally slated to open in January 2021, the college missed its opening date, eventually opening its doors in May of the same year. "We experienced delays due to staffing and product shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Nipp. "It was just something that was out of our control... But our students graduating in May told us that they wanted to study in that space and so we had it open in time for them."

Despite the amount of planning put into the project, Nipp said the college encourages students to customize the space to fit their needs. "One of their favorite spaces to hang out has become a

place that we were going to put computers,” Nipp said. “If that is how they want to use it, we’ll make sure they can use it that way.”

After much lively debate, Nipp and her associates choose to name the college Union 73, paying homage to the college’s past while describing the space they hoped it would become. “Our college was formed in 1973 when Northeastern Nebraska College merged with Northeast Nebraska Technical School,” said Nipp, “So, Union 73 calls back to that history while also referencing a student union.”

For the 550 students who live on-campus at Northeastern Community Community the Student Center will serve as the center of their college life, and that knowledge informs every facet of its design.

“A college union is often described as the living room of campus,” Nipp said, “That’s how we wanted our students to use this space and feel in this space.”

#9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing Champion: Nora Corrigan, Omaha Marian

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the mountain biking industry exploded. As families and individuals were seeking a social-distance friendly way to escape their ever-shrinking homes, mountain biking offered an opportunity to not only get outside, but to do so in a healthy, recreational way. For Jason Tollefson, however, mountain biking had been a part of his routine for nearly 20 years.

The owner of Norfolk Bike Company and a coach of numerous local mountain biking programs, Tollefson began his passion for cycling in the late 90s. "I was 18 years old when I began mountain biking. I remember riding in the forest in Massachusetts and there was an endless stream of greenery and trees and that's when I was like 'Oh I like this'."

Tollefson's memories of the feeling of getting lost in the woods on his bike stuck with him throughout his formative years, though it didn't become a passion until 2016. "I did airfield navigation for the FFA. After about 10 years of traveling across the U.S., I decided I wanted to get back on my bike." And Tollefson did just that.

He returned home to Norfolk and jumped right into the local mountain biking scene. Tollefson did trail work at Ponca State Park, helped with the Missouri River Expo (a mountain biking experience that provides children with a taste of the sport) and established the Norfolk Mountain Biking Team for youth and teens. "I saw an opportunity to introduce the Norfolk area to mountain biking and the community supported that. Two years later and we're still going strong."

Between trail work and coaching, Tollefson picked up another skill- business management. While mountain biking was exploding in the area, business at the local cycling shop was dwindling, eventually resulting in the closure of the city's only bike shop. Fortunately, Tollefson took a leap of faith and purchased the shop. Now, he is the owner of the Norfolk Bike Company.

"I've always wanted to make my passion a full time job, but there was room enough for only one bike shop in Norfolk. Luckily, I was able to purchase the shop when the opportunity arose and have even had help from the previous owners. I'm learning as I go," said Tollefson.

Tollefson's "learning as I go" attitude has translated into his coaching style, too. As the kids face challenges in mountain biking, Tollefson reminds them of their ultimate goal, not the immediate reward. "The moment you tell yourself you can't do something, you've already given up. We want to show the kids that there is nothing you can't do yet."

As Tollefson approaches the third season as a mountain bike coach, he recalls why this sport has become his passion. "The most beneficial part of mountain biking [for me] has been coaching. It gives me purpose. To know that I helped someone, and that I loved what I was doing while doing it, is so rewarding."

Tollefson has scheduled four races for his leagues in the upcoming autumn months. Until then, he will continue coaching, caring for public trails and tuning bikes in his shop.

#10 Sports News Writing Champion: Noah Atlas, Omaha Westside

Boxley defeated Drake in the highly anticipated state championship game by a score of 58-44.

In come from behind fashion, the seventh seeded Buzzards stormed back from an imposing halftime deficit to complete one of the most shocking upsets in state history against the first seeded Destroyers.

“Even though we went down by thirteen these guys never gave up,” Boxley head coach Rick Dees said. “They believed in themselves and came out in that second half on fire.”

Dees led one of the most historic turnarounds in recent memory in spite of it being his first year with the team. Last season, Boxley finished with a 3-20 record and the school scrambled to find a new voice in the locker room. This season, the Buzzards improved their record to 17-7.

“Last year our School Board considered dropping boys basketball because we just couldn’t get any wins,” Dees said. “My guys worked their rears off this season.”

Drake, on the other hand, found themselves in familiar territory having appeared in the state championship game twelve times. Though getting off to a hot start, the Destroyers seemed to cool off in the final two quarters as they struggled with turning the ball over and getting to the free throw line.

“It was like we were playing a different team in the second half,” Drake head coach Monte Dean said. “We just couldn’t stop them.”

Boxley’s senior guard Ernie Hernandez had his way throughout the match, putting up a game-high 32 points. The three point shooting disparity was evident, as Drake was unable to get one to fall out of nine attempts, whereas the Buzzards nailed seven shots from downtown.

“They got hot on the three’s and we couldn’t stop them,” Dean said. “It didn’t help that our shots weren’t falling.”

The emotions that were shown from the Boxley players, parents, and students are a telltale sign of the significance that this win has for the community. Dees and his guys have basketball hardware that they can proudly add to the trophy case for the first time in school history.

“It feels like a dream,” Hernandez said. “Last year we could hardly win a game let alone make it to state and then win the championship.”

The road to the finale for both teams were extremely different. Drake ran through eighth seeded Millrose by a score of 67-38, and cruised past the #4 seed Wilcox, winning comfortably by 17. On the other side, Boxley endured an overtime thriller against Schubert in which they’d narrowly escape with a two point victory, and then the Buzzards advanced to the championship after defeating Green Valley 40-36. Entering the final test, Dees made sure that his team didn’t get caught up in the noise.

“[Dees] fired us up and made us remember what got us here,” Hernandez said. “We are a team, a family, and we needed to band together.”

Although Dees won this battle, Dean, a hall of famer, has displayed pure and outright dominance throughout his tenure at Drake High School, winning ten straight championships in an 11-year span. Though it didn’t end in his favor this year, he’s proven that he can never be counted out.

“We are obviously disappointed, but we will come back with more intensity next year,” Dean said. “Proud of my guys for all their hard work this season.”

In an underdog story to be remembered, Boxley High stands alone at the top.

#11 Yearbook Feature Writing Champion: Alondra Hernandez-Muniz,
Lincoln Southwest

Senior Allie Smores stared into her phone in disbelief as she watched her TikTok go viral. Passing seven million views and over 800,000 shares, Smores TikTok had done something unbelievable for her community. Smores had posted a TikTok advertising an evening of festivities organized by the seniors of Frankfort High School. Weenie Roast was an event hosted by the senior class of Frankfort High School to raise money for the local food pantry.

“Our initial goal was to raise \$1,000 for our town’s food pantry,” Smores said. “When my video went viral it changed everything for the better. Not only did we reach our goal, but then some!”

With Smores viral video, her class had surpassed their goal and had raised over \$32,000.

Although the Weenie Roast had long stood as an inaugural tradition at Frankfort High School, the outcome of this year's event was unlike any other. As a service project, the students chose to benefit the Frankfort and Bean community each year. This year’s Weenie Roast attendance exceeded the enrollment of 9-12 grade students at an estimated 5,200 patrons. A total of 329 seniors participated by donating their hard work, time and grills.

“Our senior class is filled with the best and brightest. It was an amazing show of community support for the inaugural Weenie Roast.,” said principal Beth Bologna. “We have never had a senior class raise so much money for their community service project.”

Not only did the seniors donate their effort to the event, but Hy-Vee had generously donated 10,000 dogs. In addition to Hy-Vee’s generosity, Inflatable Wonderland contributed to the fundraiser by donating three bounce houses for family fun.

What had captured the eye of many was the evening raffle. The Hot Dog Athletic Boosters graciously received a 2023 Ford F150 by Frankfort Ford to give away. The lucky winner was able to drive home in a brand-new truck

“ I wasn’t even going to come to the Weenie Roast because I had cows that needed to move patured,” prize winner William Wienerschnitzel said. “My wife kindly suggested I show up to support my town and I’m sure glad I did. I couldn’t believe it because I had never won anything!”

With a grateful and supportive community, the Weenie Roast wrapped a successful and memorable event for those in attendance and senior hosting.

“It was a super crazy evening and we couldn’t believe so many people showed up to support us,” said Smores. “It was a wonderful way to cap off my senior year at Frankfort! Go Hot Dogs!”

With high hopes for the future, the senior class plans to use the money raised to support the local Frankfort food pantry and pay off outstanding lunch balances for 1,300 students at Frankfort.

“The communities of Frankfort and Beans really banded together to support our kids and our town,” Bologna said. “There are plans in the works to make this an annual event and it’s all thanks to the amazing vision of our seniors.”

#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing Champion: Ella Miller,
Papillion-La Vista

A legacy lies on the very backs of two twin sisters. Every stroke of the arm through the thrashing cold water pushes and pushes them into the name of their idol who came before them.

As they face pressure from their mother, pressure from their coach and pressure from the water they're fighting through, they push themselves into the day they've trained for. Even through the muffling water, chants and shouts reach the ears of the twins and bring them into the day's spotlight.

The momentum of the day pushed every member of the Sheridan County High School girls' swimming team to show their top performance as they competed at the Fox River Classic Conference. Of those who showed their best that day included the coach's twin daughters who faced the pressure to live up to their mother, or coach's name.

Swim Coach Kari Klecka competed on the first ever Sheridan County Conference Champion team, and has brought up and coached her twin daughters who have fought and won the journey of living up to her legacy.

"I am so proud to be these girls' coach," Kari Klecka said. "They show up hungry and ready for practice day in and day out."

Named conference swimmer of the year, Senior Bri Klecka with her sister by her side, broke two conference records. Klecka achieved conference-record times of 57.91 and 52.27 in the 100 backstroke and 100-yard freestyle respectively.

"All those early morning practices really paid off and I am so proud of our team," Bri Klecka said.

The twin's shared motivations and pressures increased and bettered their performance like never before. They battled through their season no differently than their teammates even though they had a familiar face with them throughout the season.

"I don't think because my coach is my mom that she takes it easy on me," Senior Brandy Klecka said. "Sometimes it's brutal, but totally worth it in the end."

All together the two girls broke four conference records and drove the team into their victory. By the end of the meet, the twins had lifted their mother's legacy off their backs and held it in their hands in the form of the first place Fox River Classic Conference championship trophy.

Opening Theme Copy: Core of the 360

Take my hand, come with me.

look around and see who is surrounding us, every person in our circle is uniquely their own. As we all fill the circle, we see our peers and faculty bleeding red, white, and blue. The blood of patriots is scattered throughout our circle. From the volleyball team left a trail of red behind at the State arena. To the show choir bursting the crowd with blue at their final showcase. Or our mental health curriculum, turning students' darkest days into white. As we turn our heads in a full 360, we see the drops of red, the white, and the blue that is below our feet, we realize that every drop originates from a different person in the circle. We learn to see the things that we could not see from our own perspective. Looking at the whole 360 allows us to expand our minds to new opportunity and possibility. We are able to meet new friends and build relationships that will forever be in our circle. By moving in a full 360, we learned to perceive our differences but appreciate that we each have one thing in common. We all are a part of our circle, the 360. At the center of our 360, our arms are linked, we sway back and forth, and we realize our circle made us one.

Academic Divider Copy: Welcome in

Our circle was founded from a warm, white light shining in the center. Every student had their own battles that they fought every single day. By patriots taking a walk through the 360 we opened our eyes to our peers' challenges, and we take their hand and walk with them. Leading them to our core. Seeing that every individual needed light, Eisenhower placed an emphasis on implementing a curriculum based on mental health into our classrooms. The health academy studied the brain, and learned why we think the way that we do, shining a light on mental health instead of leaving the topic unspoken and dark. Culinary academy baked cupcakes just to sprinkle some white into a student's day. Even the construction academy built "buddy benches" for the hallways just in case someone needed a place to talk. In all classroom, students and staff learned how to advocate for each other. We were taught to look deeper into the people who make up the 360 and guide them through the walk to the center.

Closing Theme Copy: Mending our circle

We have gathered our people from all around the 360. The time has finally come, we are gathered around the light together, standing side by side and reminiscing on what it took to get here. Remembering that before we began to turn our heads and look around the 360, the only perspective we saw was our own. This year, we were able to open our eyes and hearts reminding ourselves to see from the perspective of our peers. Which led us to form the 360, the foundation that has always been there, but the people surrounding we had to gather. When some turn their heads at peers in judgement, we turn our heads in admiration. We appreciate the people who are around us, the people who contaminate our halls. As we trotted through

the year, stopping at the Boo Bash and Patriots Day Parade we left behind drops of red, white, and blue so we know if anyone gets lost, they will always find their way back to the 360.

HOW WAS THE ROBOT BUILT?

The building of the robot is divided into three parts - design, construction, and finally, programming. The team lays out a design first, and soon after constructs the chasis together. To finish it off, the team works on programming mobility in C++.

WHAT IS THE ROBOT'S GOAL?

Although it differs by year, the goal of this robot is to play disk golf and change colors on double-sided rollers. The robot can pick up disks and fire them into goals to score points for MN.

ROBOTIC ROLES

THE VARIOUS PARTS AND PIECES OF *TIME WELL SPIN'T*

Created by Brayden Hemje, Bryce Closman, Nathan Hartman, Nathan Hoer, and Cooper Wilkinson, *Time Well Spin't* is a bot designed to fling disks with precision into goal-cages, with multiple parts in play, all at once.

ROLLER MECHANISMS AND SCANNERS

Used to spin and orient the double-sided rollers. Paired with sensors to detect color, these wheels help MN rake in points by positioning their color on top.

AIR TANK

Used to launch disks, as well as the expansion string. With two tanks total, the robot has 200 PSI available for use when necessary.

Contains string utilized later in the match for point-scoring. Makes use of air tanks and expansion mechanisms for prime coverage.

POINT-SCORERS

The barrel that lines up disks before and during launch. Loaded from pre laid-out disks, the barrel contains disks that move at an estimated 10 miles per hour.

EXPANSION MECHANISM

Used to launch a string, which, when touching a certain amount of tiles in the ring of activity, allows for a corresponding amount of points to be given to MN.

THE BRAIN

Holds all written programs for actions and robot protocols. The Brain is the connection between robot and controller, and all commands are processed here.

LICENSE PLATE

Used to differentiate the team each robot is on. Referees make use of this feature for identification purposes for issuing warnings and penalties when necessary during matches.

THE DISKS

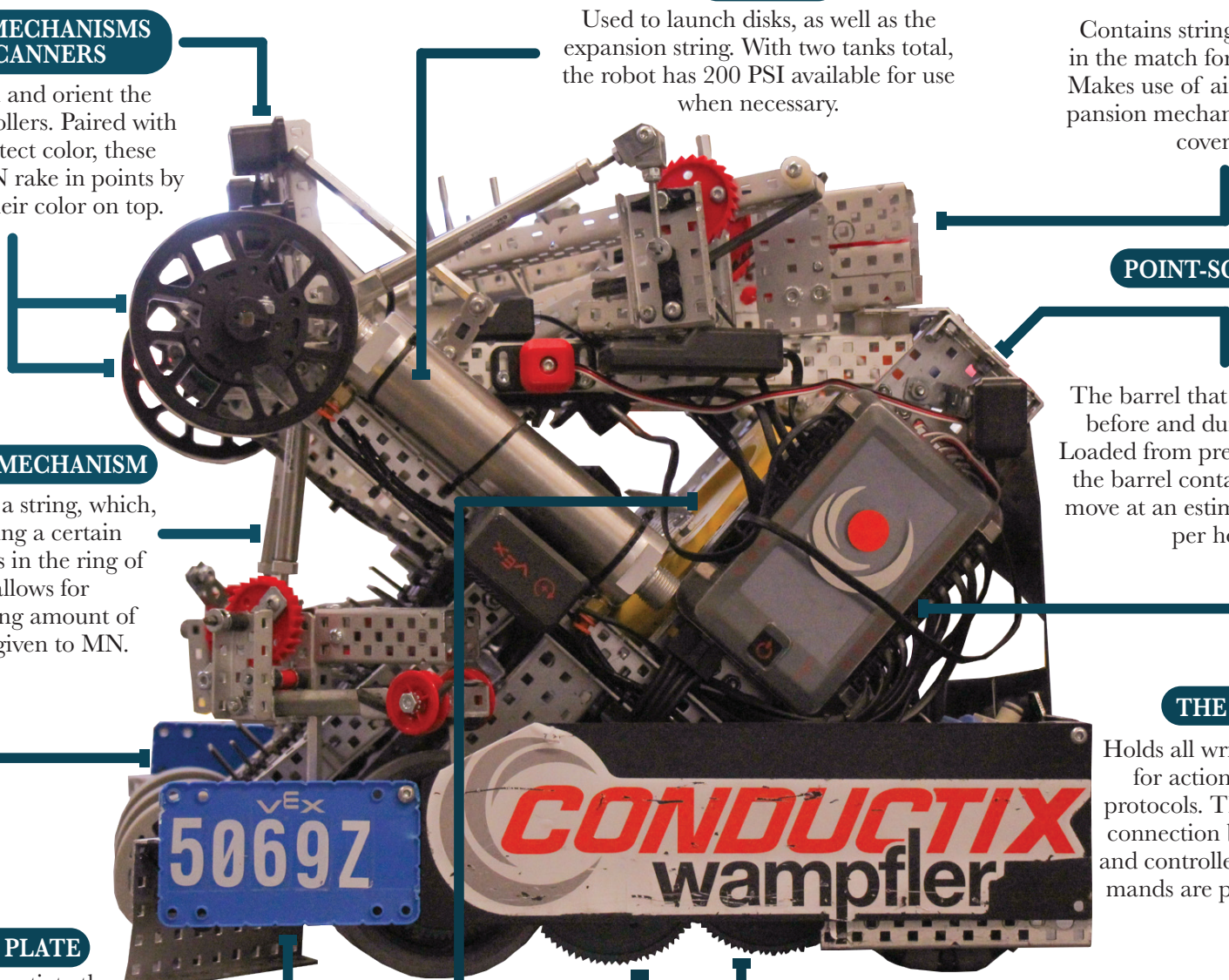
Stored for battle, the yellow foam disks are used to score or give away points in high and low goals around the arena

THE GEARS

84-tooth gears spin at 200 rotations per minute, and are used to control driving speed for the robot.

On The Cover Pregame Prep:

Juniors Brayden Hemje and Bryce Closman prepare their robot for battle. MN hosted the robotics tournament on January 6th and 7th.



SENT AWAY

PULLING BACK THE CURTAIN ON THE
“TROUBLED TEEN” INDUSTRY

Chloe Fitzgibbon | Copy Editor

Editor’s note: Anne is a pseudonym [a fictitious name], and Eliza’s first name only is used for the privacy of their families

At 6 a.m. on May 14, 2020, Anne (12) was sleeping soundly when two strangers entered her room, turned on the lights and said, “We’re taking you to Utah.”

Without knowing it, she was being “gooned.” This is the term used to describe the legal kidnapping of a person who is to be escorted to a therapeutic or recovery program.

Still unaware of what was occurring, Anne was brought to the airport and told that she could call her mom when she arrived in Utah.

“I didn’t get to say goodbye to any of my friends or my parents,” Anne said, who was a sophomore in high school at the time.

“And the lady lied to me; I did not get to call my mom when I got there.”

WILDERNESS THERAPY

After the long plane ride, during which she was able to come to terms with where she might be heading, the two strangers dropped Anne off at a “Wilderness Therapy Program” in Utah.

Most wilderness therapy programs define themselves as a mental health treatment strategy that helps adolescents

experiencing maladaptive behaviors by providing challenging outdoor experiences along with therapy.

Some mental health professionals, though, claim these programs have found “loopholes” in order to avoid regulation.

“[The programs] call themselves wilderness therapy or come up with their own categories so they can avoid the criteria that would apply to, for example, a mental health treatment facility,” Child Psychologist Nicki Bush told *The Atlantic* in 2014. “Then because they’re not regulated, no one is really ensuring their staff has adequate training, and in many cases we’ve seen, the staff are by no means qualified to provide the type of care that is being advertised and certainly not the type of care that these facilities require.”

Upon arrival, those attending the program are sent to-- as Anne says they called it-- “get outfitted.” She was given two pairs of pants, two shirts and a week’s worth of underwear that she would have to make do with until the start of another week.

Then, they were given their backpacks.

“Now these backpacks literally

weigh like 60-70 pounds, mind you I’ve never hiked before so I’m like, what is going on?” Anne said. “I think I still have stretch marks on my back from my backpack.”

Anne says she was then given a food ration for the week-- the majority of it dehydrated so she could prepare it herself-- which typically consisted of rice, oatmeal, beans, a jar of peanut butter for protein, a bag of trail mix and a couple of noodle packets. However, says Anne, the noodles were not your typical ramen noodles, but instead, “the gross ones.”

“We had to get our water from the lake and put bleach in it to clean it,” she said. “We’d go to the guides and they’d put our drops of bleach in our water and we wouldn’t be able to drink it for 30 minutes.”

Anne says their time for showering was once a week, five minutes.

“I just remember the water was brown,” she said.

The counselors made it known that if a shower was over five minutes, there would be a punishment, but Anne says she never got to find out since she made sure to always be quick.

“It was just so dehumanizing,” she said, comparing the constant orders to being rounded up like a herd of cattle.

After two months of attending wilderness therapy, Anne was to be picked up by her parents. She says the program made sure every time a person was set to leave, they were showered and well groomed.

Reflecting on her stay, Anne says she thinks the wilderness program had some benefits. All throughout her freshman and sophomore year, she says she was having problems with substance use, and wilderness therapy helped with this.

“It scared me enough to get sober,” she said. “I wasn’t doing hard drugs, just smoking weed, an immense amount; There was not a time where I wasn’t high. I don’t remember things from freshman through sophomore year.”

As a result of her wilderness experience, she learned coping mechanisms that were different from ones she had previously used, and she realized she could do things that she never knew she could.

“I haven’t smoked in two years. That’s how I used to cope with my anxiety,” she said.

She says the experience created a mindset for her that helps with anxious feelings.

“Like if I can do all the s**t that I did the year of 2020, I could give this class presentation, things like that. I try to think of it in a more positive way,” she said.

Not everyone gets gooned. The tactic is typically only used for those who are resistant to being sent to these programs. But in Eliza’s experience, she decided to go willingly on advice from an “education consultant” who was highly recommended to her parents.

For Eliza, her stay at the program-- which was the same location as Anne’s-- has more negative feelings connected to it than Anne’s for one big reason: Eliza attended the program through the winter.

In her time at wilderness therapy, she was forced to endure freezing temperatures, hike on icy terrain and suffer great illness.

Since Eliza began the program in the fall, she was issued the fall clothing due to her arrival time and was never given some of the items issued for winter.

“The coldest it got was on New Year’s Eve. It was negative 15,” she said.

The frigid weather was dangerous.



Eliza and the other attendees were often given time to journal.

“The girl who I rode [to the program] with, she got frostbite and almost lost one of her toes,” she said. “And they didn’t take her to the doctor.”

According to Eliza, many would try to run at night, and the guides would follow them, but not interfere until necessary. However, they could not access their shoes after bedtime, so they would be barefoot.

She heard horror stories about people getting frost bite when they ran away barefoot in the middle of the night.

“And the people would just watch them until it was critical, to prove they shouldn’t [run],” she said.

Additionally, when Eliza was “getting outfitted,” she says despite not having any history of drug use, she was strip searched [the act of searching someone for concealed items, typically drugs or weapons, in a way that involves the removal of all their clothes] with the door wide open.

At one point, she became quite ill, yet was not allowed to visit a doctor until she passed out from hitting her head on a rock while hiking.

Eliza says the program took thousands of pictures throughout the time spent there, but only the photos where she was smiling, or didn’t look visibly upset, were sent home to her parents.

Additionally, privacy was not taken into consideration when sending these photos home.

“The photos were available to every-



body, even if your child wasn’t in them,” she said.

This detail concerned Eliza because it gave others the opportunity to exploit these photos without their permission, if they chose to do so.

Eliza says that-- similar to Anne-- “resilience” was also one of the positives she experienced from wilderness therapy.

“I had really bad anxiety,” she said. “The beginning of sophomore year I stopped going in-person because I was having panic attacks in every single class.”

After the wilderness program however, Eliza realized these feelings were no longer as pressing of an issue.

“Way worse things were happening so I had to deal with that,” she said. “So then I came back and I was like ‘Oh, that doesn’t make me anxious anymore.’ That was the only good thing though.”

Eliza recognizes that although her stay was not pleasant whatsoever, she may have had it better than some because she believes the wilderness program she attended was a lot safer than others she’s heard about.

**STATISTICS DERIVED FROM
BREAKINGCODESILENCE.ORG**



\$23 BILLION

In public funding spent on troubled families



20,000

Youth placed in congregate care annually



6,000

Underregulated congregate care facilities



0

Federal Legislation overseeing TTI facilities

“We always went back to get food restock at the hill,” she said. “But most other [programs], you have to hike to, and if you don’t make it to the point, you just don’t get more food.”

THERAPEUTIC BOARDING SCHOOLS AND "THE RANCH"

For both Anne and Eliza, wilderness therapy was just the beginning. Their next destinations are where most of their negative feelings towards the “Troubled Teen” Industry were fostered.

Vox reported on the industry in an article titled “I went into the woods a teenage drug addict and came out sober. Was it worth it?” According to the story, those who run these programs hire transporters and “education consultants” to “exert tremendous pressure on transitioning children from wilderness directly into a therapeutic boarding school regardless of the child’s progress in wilderness,” all for the money.

“Yeah, or else ‘it doesn’t work,’” Eliza said, quoting what she had been told as the reason for attending a second program.

Anne attended a Ranch also located in Utah, and Eliza went to a therapeutic boarding school-- two institutions with similar missions.

If “The Ranch” sounds familiar, it may be due to the common “solution” prescribed to patients who go on the televised therapy talk show, “Dr. Phil.”

The Internet Star Danielle Bregoli, aka Bhad Bhabie, who first gained her popularity from the show, was ordered to attend one of these locations after additionally being sent to a wilderness therapy program prior.

Anne says the Ranch was actually “right down the street from Bhad Bhabie’s ranch.”

According to Anne, the Ranch was not originally built to become a mental health facility.

“The Ranch was an old guy’s mansion and he had houses for each of his kids. And that’s where we stayed, those were our cabins,” she said. “I think his kids sold the Ranch to [the current owner of the Ranch], and then decided to do whatever came out of that.”

At the Ranch, Anne says privileges are awarded in phases, starting from orientation phase where students cannot stand



Eliza and her best friend from the program taking a break while on a hike.

within arms length of a staff member, yet have to always be visible by the staff when using the facilities. Anne says that as a student shows good behavior, the restrictions begin to loosen and they are allowed special “privileges,” such as being allowed to eat whenever one wants to.

“And then phase three, you can finally wear makeup, jewelry and curl or straighten your hair. And you can wear a backpack to school. Because those are privileges. And it’s a privilege to not be arms length and take a s**t by yourself,” Anne said.

The goal for everyone was to reach the highest possible phase. Anne compares it to “a game.”

Anne says they would sometimes have therapy sessions, but they were hardly beneficial. And aside from the therapists, the workers who the teens were around the most, were not qualified to deal with mental health.

“The staff were college students,” she said. “Not like certified therapists or whatever. They were just the staff.”

Anne says the Ranch preached structure and neatness, and that she was punished for minor details.

“I put my towel in the hamper, and the corner was hanging off the hamper. I got in trouble for that,” she said.

If there is a violation of rules, privileges are revoked. The SOS level, though Anne is unsure what it stands for, was basically a removal of all privileges.

“You’re not allowed to talk on SOS which is just, again, dehumanizing. Like, freedom of speech, I can talk if I want,” she said.

Meals, according to Anne, were not enjoyable, and left her and the other students ravenous.

“I kid you not, every morning we got

scrambled eggs. They weren't even real eggs. They were like the prison eggs, the powdered ones, so they were actually nasty," she said.

Anne says the portions were much too small to satisfy her hunger.

"I'm a tall girl, I need to eat more than other people. I don't eat the same as this little 13-year-old sitting across from me that's like 5'2," she said.

Aside from measly portions of unappealing food, Anne would often receive a small nighttime snack of trail mix or the cheese and peanut butter crackers called Munchies, as well as occasional apples.

Anne says that students would apply for certain jobs such as the "kitchen manager," which meant a single student in charge of food order.

"[The kitchen manager] would always forget to put in food orders so sometimes I wouldn't even get my apples," she said.

Anne says there was one cafeteria worker who went by the name of "Mama."

"Everyone would try to be nice to her because she decides what we eat. So every time we walk into the dining hall we'd be like 'Hey, Mama!'" Anne said.

Although Anne was allowed to wear the clothes of her choice, she says the dress code was strict.

"The shorts had to be knee-length. So on my little two-day break from wilderness to the Ranch, guess where I went? I went to Dick's and got myself some boy shorts," Anne said.

Anne says during her stay at the Ranch, she saw things she "didn't need to see."

At these two locations, both Anne and Eliza witnessed others self-harming, or even attempting to take their own lives.

Eliza describes the staff at her boarding school as "neglectful," saying they hardly interfered unless necessary.

At times when others were having traumatic flashbacks or panic attacks, the teens were not allowed to help due to a "no interference policy" set in place by the staff, and would get in trouble if they did help.

"We all knew how to deal with it since we'd all seen it enough times, so we'd be able to calm them down," she said. "But the staff would be like, 'You can't do that.'"

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

Throughout the course of the experience, Anne says she struggled to find a way to communicate what she was experiencing with her loved ones. But once she had returned home permanently, Anne was able to finally come forward and talk to her family about it.

"I told them everything because I trust my parents. And I don't blame them, they had no idea," she said. "They told me I was going to a therapeutic boarding school, which is what they thought it was."

Eliza says she and her family, too, were not well informed about the programs beforehand.

"The website makes it look like a summer camp," she said.

Additionally, she says the "Educational Consultant"-- whom Eliza and her family had greatly put their trust in due to others' positive regard for him-- had told them that any negative reviews online were children who had just not wanted to be sent away.

"To a parent, that probably sounds kind of legit," she said.

Eliza and Anne both believe the staff appeared to mostly have good intentions.

"Some of the staff think they're doing a good thing; like they're trying to help," Anne said.

But despite their efforts, Eliza thinks they just "did not understand enough to be effective," due to the fact that most of them had never dealt with mental illness before.

Eliza thinks that not only was it a difficult situation for her and the other people attending the programs, but it was emotionally taxing on the workers, as well.

"A lot of them ended up quitting when I was there," she said. "One guide... I would cry and talk to her and she then quit the next week."

Anne believes the owners of the programs are the ones responsible and who should be held accountable.

"The people that are to blame are those corporations. They need to realize there's other ways. You don't have to dehumanize kids that already don't think they're worthy of anything."

Eliza believes the industry is only there for making money, and its efforts

are not sincere in trying to help children.

"I think it just puts everyone in a bad situation except for the execs that are making money off of it," she said.

With a couple hundred dollars in fees per day, and the \$1,000 worth of gear they receive, the guides and workers at these programs are still not greatly paid. According to Ziprecruiter, the national average pay of a wilderness Therapy guide is \$16 an hour, and Indeed says a Direct Care Worker at the Ranch Anne attended makes \$11.96. Eliza thinks the rest of the money is being pocketed by the business owners. She says the wilderness program even provided a "discount," which allowed for the price to decrease each day in order to prevent parents from pulling their children.

Returning home after a long period of being MIA from normal life is another situation Eliza and Anne had to face. Eliza says becoming a social outcast was "probably the hardest thing" that came out of the experience.

"I came back from this terrible thing and then I was like 'Oh my friends are going to hang out with me, this is going to be fun,'" Eliza said. But instead, it was actually the opposite. She says a lot of her friends thought she was "ghosting" them because of her abrupt disappearance from their lives, and as a result did not have any friends for the entirety of the summer when she returned.

CHILD ABUSE IS BAD ENOUGH



THEY PROFIT FROM IT

#breakingcodesilence

GRAPHIC BY CHELSEA FILER

Eliza says that certain sensory information-- mostly auditory-- will give her flashbacks.

"Sometimes I get triggered, but not super bad," she said. "The main thing is songs because the guides would play them when we were driving across the interstate. So there's certain songs that when I hear them I freak out."

She believes that trauma does not always develop immediately, and the effects of the situation may not be realized until years after the experience occurred.

"It's such a shock," Eliza said. "I think it didn't hit one of my good friends until last month, and it's been over a year."

THE "TROUBLED TEEN" INDUSTRY AND #BREAKINGCODESILENCE

The programs attended by both Eliza and Anne fall underneath the category of what's called the "Troubled Teen" Industry, which is made up of "a network of private youth programs, therapeutic boarding schools, residential treatment centers, religious academies, wilderness programs, and drug rehabilitation centers," which date back at least 50 years, according to American Bar Association.

Eliza believes this idea of the "troubled teen" is not always the correct label to use.

"So the traditional sense of a 'troubled teen' [those who participate in reckless behavior that risks the safety of themselves or others]-- that's maybe 10 percent of the people who are actually in the industry," she said.



One of the many photos taken of Eliza during her time at wilderness therapy.

She says the majority of the people are simply just traumatized, sad or anxious, and some don't have any problems whatsoever.

Eliza thinks the root of these negative behaviors may be some of these common mental disorders that could be solved with something as basic as regular talk therapy.

She also thinks rather than trying to "fix" someone, rehabilitation programs should put an emphasis on healing.

"Any real therapist would say there's no fixing you. You have to live with it everyday," Eliza said.

She says educating more people on mental illness is the only way to improve these programs because many often don't understand other people's mental health struggles, let alone their own.

"And so they are meant to [people who struggle with mental illness], or they don't get it," she said. "So I think teaching people from a young age is important."

Eliza believes these programs derive their "therapy" methods from the misattribution of where the behavioral issues are really stemming from.

"Starting in elementary school, we villainize substance abuse, which I think teaches people from a young age that people who abuse substances are evil, which is not true because most of the time it's a coping mechanism," she said.

Eliza thinks that, for therapy, one size does not fit all. Therefore, creating one solution for a wide range of problems is not always what's effective.

"I had a lot of similar issues to a lot of people who were there. But someone who has the exact same diagnoses can have a completely different life," she said. "Each person is so different to understand, and I think insurance, government, society...[puts] everything into a single group."

Anne and Eliza acknowledge there are some people who have good experiences, and there are positives that come out of these programs.

"Everyone experiences things differently, and I don't want people to change their perception of the experience," Eliza said.

However, for many, that has not always been the case.

"99.9 percent of people I know would rate it from bad to a very bad experience," Eliza said.

The Accountability For Congregate Care Act (ACCA)

The Breaking Code Silence organization (formed in 2021) is working to get this Act passed. If successful, ACCA will provide a formal Bill of Rights for all youth in congregate care. The Youth Congregate Care Bill of Rights will give power to the ACCA Joint Commission to make decisions on reduction of congregate care placement and to consult with states on the closure of any facility in violation of the Bill of Rights.

And people are speaking out about these bad experiences. The organization Breaking Code Silence was formed in 2014 as a "collaboration of advocacy groups to encourage survivors of institutional abuse to share their stories." To share their experiences, people can use the hashtag #BreakingCodeSilence on social media posts, with "Code Silence" referencing the often-used punishment of not being allowed to speak, previously mentioned by Anne. The purpose of it is for "encouraging alumni of the 'Troubled Teen' Industry to share testimonials online," according to the New York Post.

On Nov. 16, 2021, Eliza decided to finally speak out about her experience on social media with #BreakingCodeSilence. She says leading up to the post, she had become a victim of a multitude of false rumors about where she had gone off to, and she was determined to clear it up.

Another reason was because she wanted to provide a space for others with similar experiences to feel comfortable enough to reach out to her, or also speak up.

"I think it was kind of a way to get it out there because I know more people than you would think who went through similar things," she said.

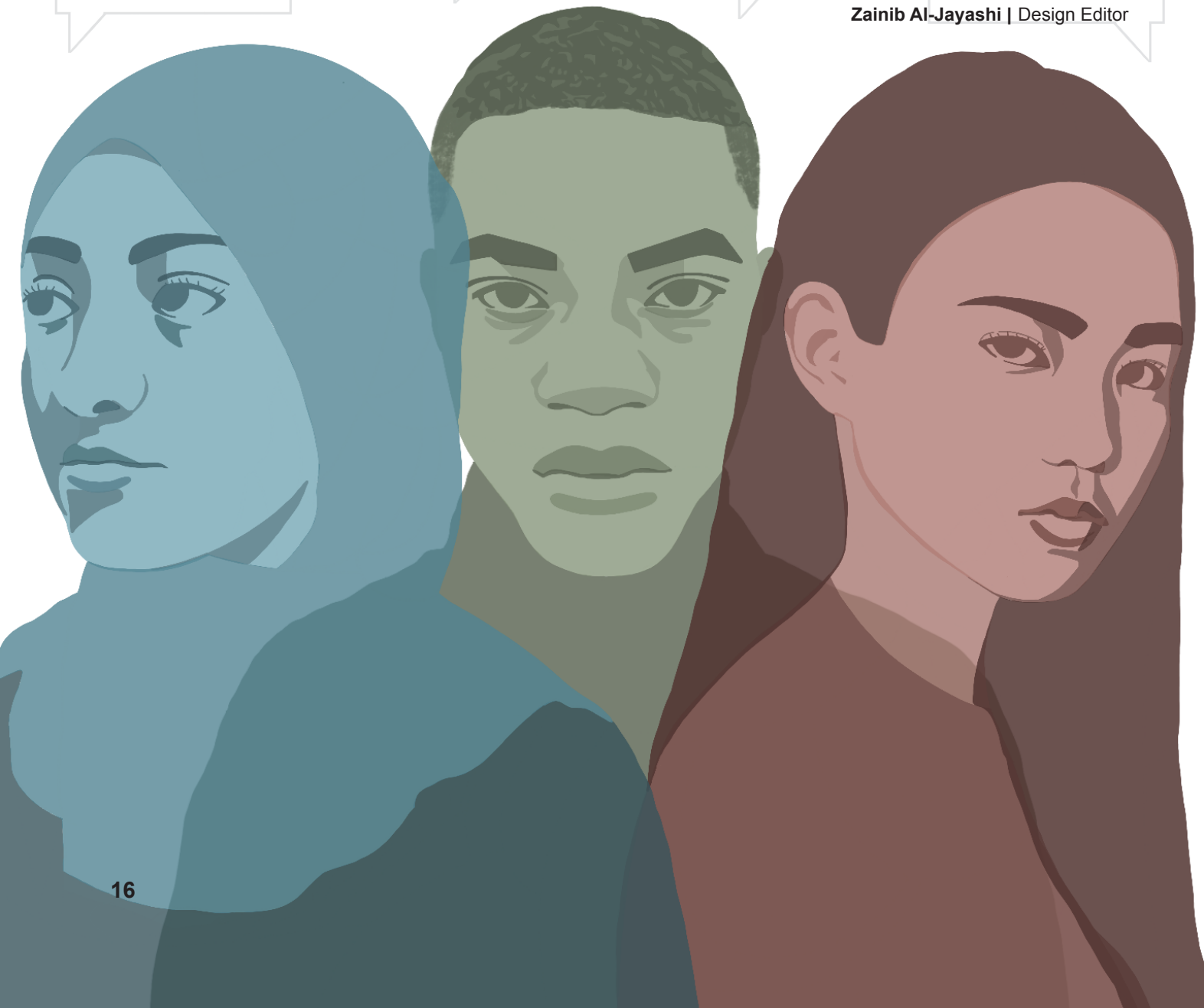
Since Anne got back from Utah, she has buried the experience in order to protect herself from what her peers would think of her.

"I just tried to kind of block it out because I don't want to think about it," Anne said. "And I don't want people to see me as 'the girl that got sent away,' because that's not me, and I also don't want people to see me as the person I was before I got sent away because I wasn't myself."

THAT'S NOT MY NAME

How the whitewashing of ethnic names is a silent approval of white superiority

Zainib Al-Jayashi | Design Editor



The final bell has rung and summer break has just begun. The only thing I can comprehend is the brightness of the sun and the ropes of my stress unraveling as I learn to breathe again in the warm air. For a few months, my presence is not needed at school, but as the distraction of my work is no longer drowning me, I begin to wonder if my presence has ever fully been in attendance.

Two weeks into summer vacation, I already start to dread returning back for another year; another year where I will have to correct my teachers and classmates on how to say my name. My time off from academia has never felt like a break because I still find myself rehearsing the same speech, the same “meaningless” speech I’ve been sharing for 12 years-- the speech that never seems to make a great enough impact to last.

It’s the first day of school, and I have already silently cried my wishes to all of the shooting stars that this school year will contain less of my flushed cheeks of embarrassment. Five minutes into teacher introductions, and we have a roll call. I am always one of the first people to be called on as my last name begins with the letter A, but I wish I could just go unnoticed and be forgotten.

“Zuh-nee?” they say.

“It’s Zay-nib,” I respond.

“Oh, I’m sorry. You’re going to have to correct me for a few days,” they laugh.

I promise I am not inconsiderate or ignorant. I have already acknowledged that my name is not common here in the United States (U.S.) and that it may be hard to pronounce correctly on the first attempt. But the one issue I cannot seem to grasp is the on-going mispronunciation of my name for the entirety of the school year.

I am not “Zuh-nib.” I am not “Zuh-nee.” I am not “Z.”

I am Zainib.

As a person of color, I have experienced this situation first-hand. Before even figuring out who I am as a human being or even what my interests are, my name presents a seemingly impenetrable barrier. Though it seems disrespectful to my cultural background, sometimes I give in to the mispronunciations as I am brainwashed to believe that it’s more “convenient” for others to say, but that doesn’t mean that I am not tired or angry about the lack of effort. I am only one of countless people who grapple with the foundation of their identity as they lose themselves to the pressures of unconsciously whitewashing their name.

An article written by Zulekha Nathoo and published by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) titled, “Why getting a name right matters,” mentioned the story

of a Canadian radio host’s experience in wanting to represent her entire identity, rather than half or a quarter of who she truly is.

Nathoo wrote, “Canadian radio host Naba aba Duncan decided a decade ago she no longer wanted to go by nicknames and instead reclaim her full Ghanaian name, pronounced Nuh-NAA-buh.” To ensure that her peers would acknowledge her background, she attached a name pronouncer in her emails to help those who were unaware of the pronunciation. Even with the help, she encountered a woman who claimed she could never pronounce Duncan’s real name and proceeded to laugh at her for being culturally different rather than taking the time to understand her roots. Duncan then faced the entitlement of white superiority when others began calling her ‘Nana’ for the sake of their convenience. Although Duncan despised the lack of effort and humor found in her name, she said, “I feel like I’m a spoil sport if I say, ‘actually, I don’t think that’s funny.’”

While those who continue to incorrectly pronounce names may not think much of their mispronunciations, they are slowly deconstructing an identity and dehumanizing that person. In the same BBC article, Xiao Zhao, a postdoctoral at the University of Toronto stated, “Habitually pronouncing an unfamiliar name incorrectly is a form of implicit discrimination. It sends a message that ‘you are minimal, or you are not important in this environment, so why should I take time and my effort to learn it?’”

For Lincoln Southeast High School (LSE) junior Kelly Pinto, he has altered his name to something more socially accepted in order to be seen as belonging more in a white society after experiencing the constant mispronunciation of his name from a young age.

“My name is Michel [mih-kel], but I have gotten a lot of Michael’s and Michelle’s,” Pinto said. “I don’t like any of the mispronunciations; I’m just like ‘you tried.’ From very early on, I was like ‘we’re out of here, I can’t do this anymore.’”

Though Pinto has an appreciation for his true name, he assimilated to identifying as “Kelly.”

“I kind of like my name now, but I don’t really think about it that often because I go by Kelly so much,” Pinto said. “The only reason I go by Kelly is because when I was in elementary school, I went to an all-white school. Having a name like “Kelly” [allowed] me to blend in more because I already stuck out like a sore thumb. I thought to myself, ‘Why stick out even more when I can just go by Kelly?’ My name being “Michel” wasn’t something that was like, ‘Oh, you’re

“ I can’t change my hair and my skin, so I might as well change my name.

- Kelly Pinto (11)

unique’, it was just something like, ‘Oh, that’s different.’”

In a society that praises radical acceptance, it’s ironic to think that the statement is somewhat of a hypocrisy. Through the years, there has been progress in equality for all people, but the effects of the past don’t suddenly dissolve, especially when they have scarred the mind deeply. Pinto’s real name, Michel, stems from a Ugandan background, but Kelly stems from a nickname given to him by a white family member. Though the name was created out of fun, it was ultimately turned into a white name.

“I began conforming when I was a little kid,” Pinto said. “In terms of the future, I’ve contemplated using Michel for college, but I think for the sake of convenience, I’ll continue to use Kelly just because it’s almost like my new name now.”

Although people of color often take the initiative to confront those who minimize of mispronouncing a name, it’s truly up to the people of society -- the white race -- to fully acknowledge the issue and walk towards a direction of change. The elements in the equation must balance out in order for it to be solved; one factor cannot be more than the other. Unfortunately, Pinto faced the unbalanced equation and had to make a difficult change for others rather than others making an easier change for him.

“When you’re surrounded by people who don’t look like you, I might as well blend in as much as I can,” Pinto said. “I can’t change my hair and my skin, so I might as well change my name.”

The act of branding oneself into an altered identity is not a result of embarrassment of the ethnic or cultural roots that one is born into; it is a response

MICHAEL

MICHELLE

TERESA

to the discrimination and belittlement that overshines any attempt to be authentic. An article written by Joe Pinsker and published by *The Atlantic* -- an American journal of news, literature and opinion -- titled, "American Immigrants and the Dilemma of 'White-Sounding' Names" stated that "American-sounding first names functioned more as a signal of 'an effort to assimilate' than a means of 'hiding one's origins.'" Pinto's modification to "Michel" was an unconscious force of white superiority from the environment he was surrounded in. Even if the decision of changing one's name is made personally, it is still not justified to change oneself when there has been no attempt of acceptance in an environment.

One can agree that Pinto changing his name to conform for others' sake is difficult as it toggles with the complexity of identity, but when peers choose to add to the pondering, it causes more of a dissociation with oneself. Pinto's attempt at correcting those who

were misidentifying him failed, and it left him with no option but to pretend that his name was being said correctly.

"In middle school, my gym teacher was still calling me Michael, and I corrected him several times," Pinto said. "There's layers because people call me one thing, but it's written the other thing; it's just too complex."

The reality for Pinto, though, is that he has grown accustomed to the mispronunciations.

"I almost just expect [mispronunciations], like when I'm signing up for something, I expect for that to happen and I factor that in while I'm doing it," Pinto said. "[But] it's hard because I am going out of my way and putting effort when I don't have to put effort for anyone else's name."

From his experiences, Pinto has learned that not everyone is able to acknowledge others in a way that is deemed considerate to all, and for that reason, he has had to draw conclusions to lighten the weight of the situation.

"Sometimes when you're dealing with ignorant folk, you just have to assume that they're not cultured and that they're not going to understand," Pinto said.

To those who cannot relate, it is exhausting to have to correct the people around us. It is one thing to mispronounce it on the first try, but it is another thing to continuously make the same mistake because there is no drive to learn how to say it. It is not our responsibility to teach others the correct pronunciation of each syllable and vowel, and it is almost insulting to laugh off your mistakes without learning from them. Our names are not something anyone can declare as wrong or weird; our names are something for everyone to respect because it is the beginning of our existence.

In the same BBC article titled, "Why getting a name right matters," Myles Durkee, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, said, "There are also those who use their real names, only to have people repeatedly mispronounce them. [Getting names wrong] can go under the radar for a lot of individuals. Other people can see it as, 'oh, it's not that big of a deal.' What makes it detrimental is the chronic pattern of doing this consistent mispronunciation. And the ripple effects from that are much more adverse, signaling to the individual that they're less important, that they're less valued."

Unlike Pinto, LSE Spanish teacher Teresa Barta didn't wholly change her name, but she changed the pronunciation of it to something that doesn't feel genuine to her. Immigrating to the United States from the Canary Islands off of

Spain not only provided a new environment, but also a new pronunciation of her name. Her move gave her a new national identity that would soon be dictated by those who cannot seem to accept ethnic culture.

"After 15 years, I've gotten more used to it, but it just doesn't feel like me; it's weird," Barta said. "It is completely a question of identity and just recognizing myself and still being me."

Because of Barta's Spanish background, the correct pronunciation of her name is Teh-reh-sah rather than Tuh-ree-sah. Growing up in Spain, Barta was only aware of the Spanish pronunciation, but when she moved to the states, it all took a turn.

"If I say it the way it's said, everybody would kind of tilt their head; sometimes, people's behavior, attitude, or tone would completely change, and I immediately felt like more of an outsider," Barta said.

Barta's connection to her name allows her to stay close to her family and home country even if they're more than four thousand miles away from Nebraska. Her immigration to the U.S. resulted in a sacrifice of heritage; she had to leave her family, culture, language and comfortability in order to mix homogeneously with the rest of society. Having to leave the core of her nationality and the place where she began to discover who she was as an individual left her with nothing but the risk of experience and her own name.

"I think what it comes down to is that I have had to change so much to adapt to a new culture, new country, new people around me, new environments;

“ It would be like denying who I am or where I come from if I were to change my name.

- Teresa Barta

and if there's even something I can keep for myself, I think it would be the core of my name," Barta said. "It's like the last bit of me that has been there since the beginning, so it would be like denying who I am or where I come from if I were to change my name."

Many of us with "different" names find it frustrating that the empathy from others seems to run short when it comes to the act of respecting a name. It takes more than just physically moving to be accustomed to a new place. The mental conflicts of having to adapt and mold to be deemed a true American citizen is overwhelming when we were constructed in another culture. It is impossible to erase the roots we've grown from because it is where we feel the most understood and accepted; it's the start of our growth as human beings. We are not given handbooks to teach us what is acceptable and what isn't; we learn from the first-hand experiences and traumas. With these experiences, we have learned that our names are something that is not accepted because it's too "exotic." People of color, along with the rest of the population, want to feel like they belong. If we have to keep on changing our names for the sake of your comfort and not our own, we will never believe that we belong in the states.

As Barta became situated in the U.S. and began to adapt, as well as deepen her understanding of American culture, she soon learned that the only thing she had left -- her name -- would soon be left behind in Spain, too.

"I felt like it was another thing that I had to do just to make sure everybody else was comfortable and that they were not going to get all weirded out about them having to repeat or learn something different," Barta said.

Even after coming up against the mispronunciation of her name and having to give some of it up, Barta has never let go of the appreciation of her name.

"The only time that I didn't like my name was when it was mispronounced [in the states] during that period of time of moving because I felt as if I was an imposter. I was not myself, and I didn't recognize myself. That was a hard time because I was trying to learn everything and find myself at the same time," Barta said. "Now after going through all of that, I'm fine with all of [the mispronunciations] because I'm sure of who I am."

Similar to Pinto, Barta has also had to draw her own conclusions to lighten the weight of her situation.

"I don't correct people on it unless somebody asks, 'how do I say it?' or 'did I say it right?' I think people that actually care about you will try and get it right,

and the others you don't need to bother with every little battle," Barta said.

Since Barta endured the whitewashing of her name, she wants to ensure that she doesn't reciprocate the hurt she felt onto anyone else. She understands the feelings of being seen as an outsider, and she wouldn't wish it upon any other person.

"I think when people show interest and care in others, then they make an effort. I think it's a part of manners," Barta said. "If a student tells me their name, I might ask a billion times how to say it and I might mess it up sometimes, but I'm gonna keep trying to get it right."

Barta's and Pinto's hardships may not be exactly identical, but the feelings of invalidation and perplexity are what they share. An article titled, "Put some respect on my name," written by Yasmine Elkharsa and published by The Michigan Daily -- a student newspaper of the University of Michigan -- said, "Intentionally mispronouncing, or poking fun at people's ethnic names is a form of casual racism that promotes the superiority of white people and western ideals." Barta and Pinto were victims of the forceful cultural assimilation of American society. The two had to sacrifice and overlook their authenticity just so they could interweave to be viewed as a person within, not as an outlier. Despite the efforts to look past the microaggressions, the issue still remains as there has been little to no awareness.

For change to occur, there must be action. While the constant correcting of a mispronounced name may seem intimidating, Pinto and Barta both believe that there are more considerate ways of approaching a name to avoid incorrect assumptions.

"When [others] give me my last name [first] and hint at my first name a little bit, I'll come and jump in because when they assume, it's just wrong," Pinto said.

Although Barta has a different approach, her purpose remains the same.

"If it's a more common name, I might just say it and then ask 'did I say it right?'" Barta said. "If I come across a name and I'm not sure how to say it, I go to the person and show them the list of names and ask them how to say it."

An article titled, "How do I respectfully ask someone to pronounce their name?" published by Rumie.org -- a website of a collection of learning experiences that help to build on transferable careers and life skills -- recommends the prompt, "I want to make sure that I say your name correctly. Could you pronounce your name for me, please?" This simple prompt radiates off valida-

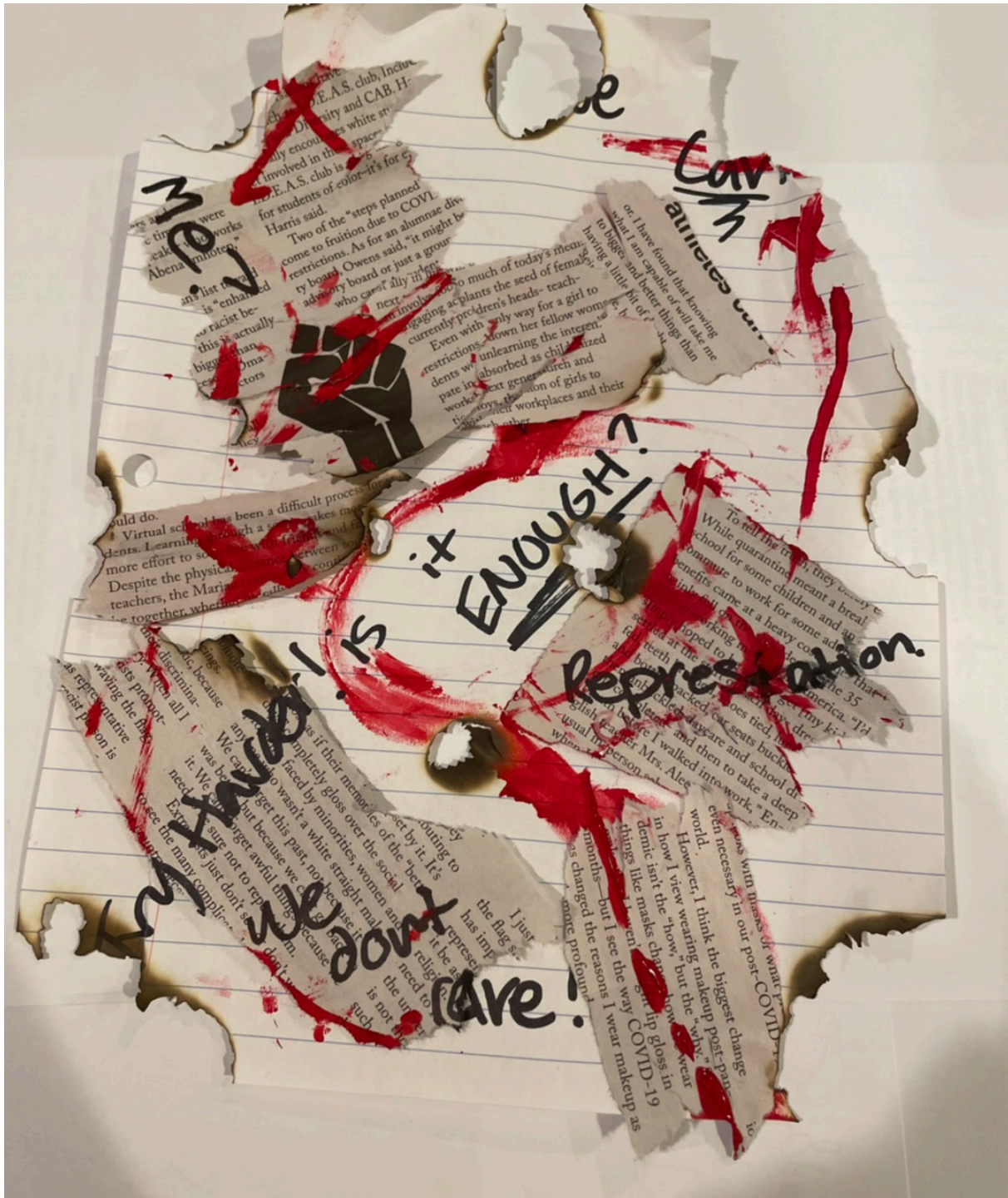
Ways to approach a name

- **Ask the person.** Asking is effective as it respects the person being asked.
- **Repeat their name.** Ask questions like, "Am I saying your name correctly?" or "Can you say that one more time?"
- **Call them in.** Ask them privately on how to say their name to ensure it is pronounced right.
- **Observe and listen.** If you are unsure and are too worried about offending them, listen to how they correct others or how they say it.

tion, making us with ethnic names more comfortable in a given environment.

On the contrary, things to avoid saying include, 'Can I call you [] instead?' 'Could you go by something else?' or 'Is there anything easier?' Other things to avoid are assuming that everyone is okay with the mispronunciations, joking around or making fun of a name or laughing off your mistakes without taking a second to consider the other person's feelings. The genuine effort of trial and error is preferred over the inconsideration when learning to say someone's name.

Names carry the details for the infinite, ever-changing story of identity. The second our eyes opened to discover the new world, our ears listened to the sound of our own names before we could hear the birds sing. Without a name, there is no identity; everyone is given a name, and it deserves to be respected. Our names are ours to define, so what will it take to deconstruct the unbreakable barrier to be able to see the importance of respecting a name?



Photo/Artistic Illustration
Class A - Marian HS
Margaret (Lilly) McAndrews

(see next page for actual publication use in literary/arts magazine)

Artist Statement: "I used a sheet of loose leaf as my canvas and I attached past issues of Marian Newspaper articles that speak on social justice to the paper. I used acrylic paint for the red splatters and a marker for the words. I then lit the paper on fire to burn the edges and holes."

“you’re not alone”

[writing by lilly mcandrews]

You're not alone
sitting on your bathroom floor
wiping away your own tears
rethinking all that is
You're not alone
seeing what you should be
scrolling through unattainable forms
picturing what can't be
You're not alone
screaming just to be heard
crying to get a point across
wondering why can't they see what is
You're not alone
studying all night
stressing over high standards
learning to be what is
You're not alone
running until you can't feel your legs
staring at yourself in the mirror
hating what is
You're not alone
because we have all been there
sitting on our bathroom floors
wiping away our own tears
rethinking all that is



take responsibility

[art by lilly mcandrews]

lion [art by elena burt]



#18 Sports Action Photography Champion: James Johnson, Creighton Prep







#19 News Feature Photography
Champion: Emma Vondra, Omaha
Westside



clear skies, but still the perfect storm

Homecoming week started off in the 90's but ended with the perfect fall weather for students and alumni to celebrate the 13th Storm Homecoming

from the sideline While playing football on Friday, Oct. 23, junior Payton Mattox discusses how his team should secure the victory against Omaha Northwest. The storm ended the game with a score of 84-14 and allowed for a memorable homecoming game. "It's fun to see my teammates' hard work pay off," Mattox said.
Photo by Lauren Dixon



neon night Seniors Cole Ruppert, Thomas Gardner, Nolan Hoising, Noah Keyser, and Caden Ferzly chant together and shine their glow sticks at the annual neon homecoming game on Sept. 23. The group cheered as they watched their team get the win everyone had been waiting for. "The homecoming game is always my favorite because everyone shows up and school spirit is at its highest," Gardner said.
Photo by Lauren Dixon



touchdown As senior Liz Hanafan brings her team closer to victory, she carries the ball down to the endzone at the senior girls Powder Puff Game on Sept. 21. After a close game, the blue team took the win in a final score of 28-14. "I got a wave of adrenaline when I first caught the ball but it was awesome to have everyone on the sidelines cheer me on," Hanafan said.
Photo by Kite Jean



"Powder Puff was such a good bonding experience for all the senior girls, and got us all a little closer."
Paige Hlein, 12

Our Dancing King

a great honor for a great student

It happens every year. The sea of dancing high schoolers splits and a circle emerges. This year, occupying that circle, and dancing his heart out to Beyonce and other pop hits, was senior **Aidan Seipold**. Seipold along with 11 other representatives of the class of '23 took their turn on the dance floor, or dance field in this case, before the finale of the night. At 10:30 pm, the music stopped and all attention turned toward the bleachers. After four years of high school together, classes, clubs and activities, the senior homecoming queen and king would be crowned. When the names were announced, Seipold pumped his fists in the air and high fived anyone in his path. The senior homecoming king, Seipold, was overjoyed to represent his class.

"I was happy," Seipold said about being nominated by his peers. "My night was as exciting as winning competitions with Elite Cheer Glow."

Almost the entire senior class banded together to ensure Seipold would earn the crown. Senior **Hazel Chong** was announced queen and showed her support for Seipold as well.

"I was so happy for him! Everyone was cheering his name. I'm really glad he won king because he absolutely deserves it," Chong said. Seipold was nominated for court by his peers and ended up winning by a landslide.

"My favorite part of the week was the pep rally," Seipold said.

Seipold showed out for all the Homecoming week events, from participating in spirit week to supporting the football team at their homecoming game.

"The amount of support he received throughout the past few weeks was extravagant," Erica Seipold said. "It made him feel extremely loved."
Story by Gianna Comes



Photo by Lauren Dixon

Spencer Award, 12; Aidan Seipold, 12; Debra Waga, 12; Hayden Kobaku, 12

color me pretty

Off white and emerald steal the show as the most popular dress colors of the dance



Photo by Kaitlyn (11)

Photo by Kaitlyn (11)

Photo by Kaitlyn (11)

Photo by Kaitlyn (11)

the court of our hearts
this group of seniors was chosen to represent the class of 2023



Maverick Noonan, Noah Bustard, About Abdalhamid, Sophie St. Amour, Josh McWilliams, Tessa Foster, Morgan Brady, Aidan Seipold, Cole Balkard, Halle Winfrey, Hazel Chong, Kennedy Epp

#21 Yearbook Theme Development Champions: Bryn Hansen, Addie Miller, Papillion-La Vista South

SOUTH STAR

2023

PAPILLION-LA VISTA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

VOLUME

20



IN
REAL ●
TIME

IN REAL TIME

Papillion-La Vista South High School

10799 Highway 370
Papillion, Nebraska 68046
(402) 829-4600
Enrollment: 1,903

Leap of Faith:

Making eye contact with the hoop, **Reece Kircher**, 10th, goes in for a layup against Lincoln East at a home game Feb. 17. Titans beat the Spartans, 69-55. (photo: Paige Miller)



Ruh-Roh!: As Shaggy and Velma, Court members **Aaron Dawson** and **Kayla Graveline**, 12th, toss Scooby Snacks at the Homecoming parade. (photo: MarVella Gomez)

V for Victory: After a set point, **Charlee Solomon**, 10th, and **Shealie Wiebers**, 12th, run to **Lauren Medeck**, 11th, to celebrate. (photo: Piper Holland)

This is REAL LIFE.

As we moved forward from when time stood still, we left the gray days of isolation behind us. A light broke through. Life felt real again, and we weren't wasting a moment. Students didn't hesitate to throw an arm over a friend's shoulder to belt out "Hey Baby" at pep rallies. Smiles beamed and eyes lit up at the sight of a sunrise shared by seniors, another championship victory for Titan volleyball, and childhood characters brought to life for the Homecoming parade. Life started to move at light speed, and suddenly it was "Beep Beep" – "Catch Me if You Can." We were live in living color. This was no illusion: We were in Real Time.



Christmas Cheer: Looking festive at the NSAA state volleyball semifinal match against PLHS, **Taryn Lauver**, **Isaac Lagman**, and **Paxton Pedersen**, all 12th, root for the Titans, who beat the Monarchs in four sets: 25-19, 25-27, 25-23, 25-17. The Black Hole theme for the Nov. 4 game was Christmas/Holiday gear. The Titans went on to reclaim the championship for a second consecutive year. (photo: Piper Holland)



New Dawn: Embracing the opportunity to celebrate their last year in high school together, **Julietta Panko**, 12th, sits at the center of friends gathered on blankets near the tennis courts while gazing at the horizon during Senior Sunrise on Sept. 2. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Grand Introduction: Displaying classic jazz hands, the "Catch Me If You Can" ensemble surrounds **Henry Vote**, 12th, in one of the fall musical's opening numbers. The ensemble ranged from all grades and played a multitude of characters throughout the show. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Royal Welcome: Strutting along the track on Memorial Field after the Homecoming parade, Court candidates **Stella Adeyemi** and **Trenton Andringa**, both 12th, wave to the pep rally crowd gathered in the stands. The pair dressed as Princess Tiana and Prince Naveen from Disney's "The Princess and the Frog." (photo: Layla Johnson)



Dear Denzel

The search for Denzel continues

We wanted Denzel. We wanted him 10 years ago, and we wanted him now.

In 2012, Papillion-La Vista South launched a campaign inviting well-known actor Denzel Washington to attend the school's 10th anniversary celebration. Washington, best recognized for his roles in "The Equalizer," "Malcom X," and "Remember the Titans," declined to attend. However, as consolation for his absence, the actor filmed a video message from his actor's trailer to be played at a pep rally for staff and students.

In his video message, which was uploaded onto the school's YouTube channel, the actor directed a particularly memorable statement to the Titans: "I promise you, I promise you I am going to show up in Omaha one of these days. And I can tell you this, from the bottom of my heart, I will always remember the Titans. Always."

A decade later, with the school celebrating its 20th anniversary, that promise remained unfulfilled.

So the question lingered: why would a high school in a small suburban area of Nebraska identify so strongly with acclaimed actor Denzel Washington?

The connection stemmed from the 2000 movie "Remember the Titans," based on the true story of a high school football team at a newly integrated school. The film focuses on the relationships between the players at that school and Coach Herman Boone, whom Washington portrays. The movie raked in \$136 million worldwide, and Washington won multiple awards for his role as Boone.

The success and love of the movie was no exception at Papio South, which was founded just a few years after the movie's release. The community voted for the Titan as the school's mascot in homage to the movie, and former principal Enid Schonewise instituted a tradition of having the incoming freshman class watch the movie and write an essay inspired by it.

Coach Herman Boone himself made a visit to the school in its opening year. Boone attended one of the first pep rallies and gave a speech to the inaugural students and staff.

Social studies teacher **Mr. Jason Branigan** said, "The most special time for me was actually when the 'real life Coach Boone' ... showed up and allowed us into insights of what it meant to be a true Titan and allow for respect to cross culture, ethnicity and mostly race."

The school's history with the movie gave rise to the campaign for Washington to attend the 10-year celebration. To gain Washington's attention, the school posted a YouTube video of a high-energy choreographed pep rally in which students and staff chanted "We Want Denzel" and the Stomp Club performed a shuffle dance influenced by the movie. Students and staff took to Twitter with the tag #wewantdenzel to build hype for the message, and there was even a now-defunct website created: www.wewantdenzel.com.

The variety of efforts eventually reached Washington and for a while it was believed that he would make an appearance. Rumors spread



Denzel's Promise: Denzel Washington records a video response to Papio South promising that he would one day show up.



"I promise you... I'm just gonna walk in and surprise all of you guys."
Denzel Washington, August 24, 2012

Fightin' for Denzel: The Fightin' Titan poses with the football team while showing a sign of gratitude in the video invite to Washington.



Royal Announcement: Titan alumni and former Miss Nebraska Teen USA Sarah Summers summons Denzel.



Flashing Back: Former PLSHS principal Dr. Enid Schonewise asks Denzel to join the celebration of the anniversary after organizing the whole event.



An Open Invitation: Titans gather at a pep rally to film the invitation to Denzel Washington for the school's 10 year anniversary.

throughout the school and hopes were high. "We all believed that this was going to happen and were extremely excited!" said English teacher **Mr. Pete Goecke**, who added, half-jokingly: "In the end, nothing happened, and I still carry the scar on my heart."

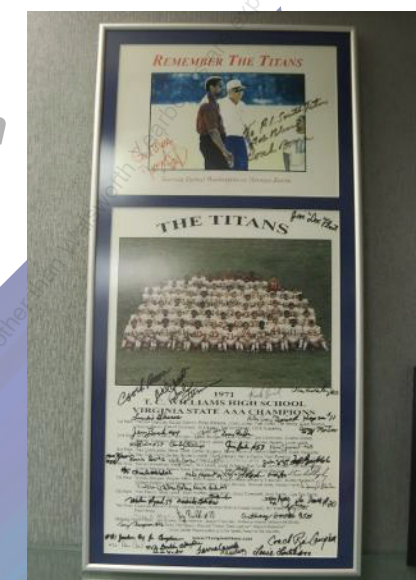
In light of this, a new request was sent to Washington to give the school closure and allow Washington to be free from the burden of his unfulfilled promise.

Reaching Washington required many steps, which began with a call to William Morris Agency, which represents Washington. Getting through the agency required a bit of investigative work because the agency required the caller to name Washington's agent, a name which is difficult to find online. Eventually, some guesswork allowed the call to be transferred and from there, there was explaining, some call transfers, and even more explaining, until the email of Andrew Finkelstein, Washington's agent who deals with his day-to-day work, was given to journalism adviser Mrs. Anne Albracht. In an email sent to Finkelstein, the requests to Washington were laid out. However, the communication went stagnant because Washington was preoccupied filming a movie in Italy. Now, the only thing to do is to hope that one day, Washington will fulfill his promise to the school.

Where It Began

Denzel's debut at South

In 2010 at the school's 10 year anniversary, actor and filmmaker Denzel Washington was invited to celebrate the milestone with staff and students. The school mascot was named after the 2000 movie "Remember the Titans," in which Washington played the iconic role of Coach Herman Boone. Washington originally planned to join in on the celebration, but was not able to make it last minute. Teachers **Jeremy Haselhorst** and **Pete Goecke** had a role in the plan if Washington were to show up. "Mr. Goecke and I were scheduled to walk him around the building if he ever came while the rest of the school made its way to the gym for an impromptu pep rally. Unfortunately, we never had the opportunity to take him on that walk." There are rumors that the original script for Denzel's visit still lies somewhere in the school building. Now, ten years later, students and staff alike still want Denzel.



History on the Walls: A football team photograph shows off the autographs of Coach Herman Boone and Denzel Washington.

Staff Speak Out

"I Remember the hype of trying to get Denzel to make a visit and rumors that he was going to show up. We showed the movie to all of our freshmen. Great movie-great memories!"

-Mrs. Brenda Saggau,
freshman counselor

"We packed the Titan Arena and did dances and chants... I'm pretty sure the adults in the building wanted Denzel to come more so than the students!"

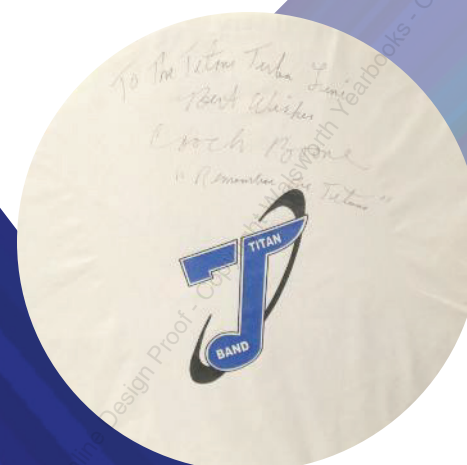
-Mrs. Melissa Ingwerson,
science teacher

"Coach Herman Boone was a great inspirational guest speaker for our inaugural students and staff"

-Mr. Randy Stribley,
STEM teacher

"We were starting many of the traditions for our school. Many of the things we do today, we do them because the kids or teachers 20 years ago did them."

-Ms. Renee Hahn,
math teacher



*"To the Titan Tuba Line
Best Wishes
Coach Boone
'Remember The
Titans'"*



Running Start: *Calen Spady* and *Jack Deloske*, both 9th, compete to finish a bounce house course. The bounce house was one of the many activities at Streetfest, which was organized by Student Council to celebrate the start of school. (photo: Layla Johnson)



Halloween Helpers: Sporting a cow costume, *Bryce Spencer*, 11, sprays temporary hair spray into the hair of young trick-or-treaters. At the Halloween Safe Night, children could get their hair done, play games, or collect candy in the hallways. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Peek-A-Boo: Dressed in an elaborate camouflage costume, Senior Chief *Jeff Nickels* blends into the crowd of trick-or-treaters at Halloween Safe Night. (photo: Layla Johnson)



Trick or Treat: *Carol Strabala*, 12, passes out candy to young trick-or-treaters. The event was set up by Key Club and volunteers handed out candy and organized activities in the gym. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Hairdo's and Dont's: Volunteering for Halloween Safe-Night, senior *Kayla Kudym* works the hair station. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Ch-Ch-Changes

Intergenerational work gives students new views on life

Working with different generations gave students new perspectives on the changes in their own lives. Seniors *Annaliese Doorlag* and *Taryn Lauver* took the opportunity to join the Education Academy and spend time interacting with children of varying ages. Lauver also chose to work for Kids Club over the summer.

"My favorite part about working with kids was probably just the fact that it was fun," Lauver said. "They don't take stuff too seriously, and they say funny stuff – so you don't have to take yourself too seriously."

Both Doorlag and Lauver said they planned to pursue a career in education after high school. For other opportunities to work with kids, Doorlag also volunteered for her church and joined the Kids Club staff.

"We work with kids from kindergarten through 6th grade," Doorlag said. "My favorites are kindergarten, because that's what I want to teach."

Lauver primarily worked with middle school students for Education Academy.

"The middle schoolers think that they're super cool, so they constantly need to be humbled," Lauver said. "They're just there for a good time."

The challenges were worth the effort to Lauver. "The most rewarding part was that they thought you were so cool, and they

just loved you and they were so not judgmental," Lauver said "It was... like a breath of fresh air."

Doorlag said little things like seeing a student outside of school could be exciting.

"It makes me really happy when I'm somewhere like Target, and I run into some of the kids and they start yelling at their moms: 'That's Miss Doorlag! That's Miss Doorlag!'"

On the other end of the age spectrum, senior *Frankie Young* chose to help care for elders at Trinity Village.

"I've always been a people person, so that's kind of what sparked it," Young said.

During two years of work at Trinity, Young collected an array of stories.

"You get to hear a lot of stories," Young said, "and you really do make an impact on [residents]. Some of them don't get to see their family a lot, so when they see someone young, you go and talk and listen to them."

Learning to deal with death was an inevitable part of working in an assisted-living environment.

"It's a tough experience," Young said, "but you kind of tell yourself they're in a better place"

Young said Trinity made him think about his own lifespan: "I think that the way that I treat the residents now will give me a standard for when I'm in that position."



Jump Start: *Ashlyn Bohnenkamp*, 10th, *Mallory Ray*, 10th, and *Alayna Culver*, 11th, look at information at the career fair. (photo: Paige Miller)



Signing Up: Exploring the career fair, *Madison Saylor* and *Jayla Hancock*, both 11th, focus on learning at the Augustana University booth. There were booths from a variety of colleges and businesses to give students an opportunity to review their options. (photo: Paige Miller)



Senior Smiles: Showing off her handmade "senior" sunglasses, *Julietta Panko*, 12, poses in the light of the sunrise for a picture. The sunglasses were made in preparation for the Titan-Monarch football game that night. (photo: Layla Johnson)

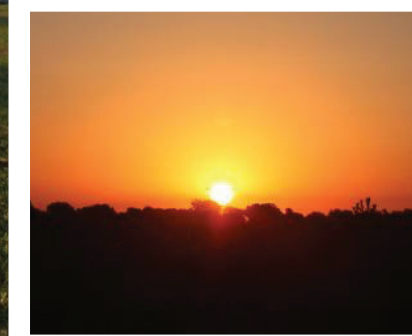
Golden Hour Photos: To commemorate their time at Senior Sunrise, a group of seniors gather around to get their picture taken. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Sun rises on Senior Year

To celebrate the beginning of senior year, students gathered for the annual Senior Sunrise on a September morning before school. The event, which was organized by Student Council, signaled a change in the senior class's life, as it marked the beginning of their final year of high school.

"Everyone was kind of together, it was less of a this is your friend group and this is another person's friend group... when people were in line, you were joking around with everyone, when people were walking around decorating cars you were next to the person you parked next to and not necessarily next to your friends," senior *Mia Geiger* said. "It was just a lot of talking and connecting."

Throughout the morning, the seniors spent their time snacking on mini donuts from the donut truck, decorating cars in Titan colors for the upcoming football game, and watching the sunrise with their classmates. Senior *Sheridan Conroy* said, "It was a fun time, I got to hang out with my friends and talk to some people that I didn't necessarily know... that kind of made senior year set in."



Bright Horizons: The sunrise's bright rays were a sight to see for the seniors attending Senior Sunrise. (photo: Layla Johnson)

Breaking the Wall

Titan long distance runners push past runners wall

For cross country runners, there is a wall that must be overcome in every race, and it doesn't appear in the same place or at the same time for every athlete. Whether it was self-talk, personal goals or encouragement from others, Titan runners found the discipline and motivation to make it through.

Junior **John Fiedler** said the sport demanded not just stamina but a sense of purpose.

"To be motivated, you need to know why you're going to push yourself to the breaking point – if it's for your team, for your family, or for something else," Fiedler said. "But another important part is being disciplined and having the grit to stay in the game."

Fiedler was granted the "Oreo Award" by **Coach Shannon Stenger**, which was presented to the athlete who was the most consistent performer at meets and practices, along with the "Eye of the Tiger Award" which was presented to the athlete who performs the best when it counts.

Senior **Victor Garza**, who ran 17:43 at

Metros, placing 33rd, used self-talk. "I tell myself to stop being weak – that if the person next to me can do it, then I can, because we're going through the same feeling," Garza said.

Garza hit a personal record of 17:29 at a meet at UNK, a favorite memory of the season.

"Beating a personal record, no matter how much, is the greatest feeling in the world," Garza said. "You feel really accomplished after, and that you put your all out there."

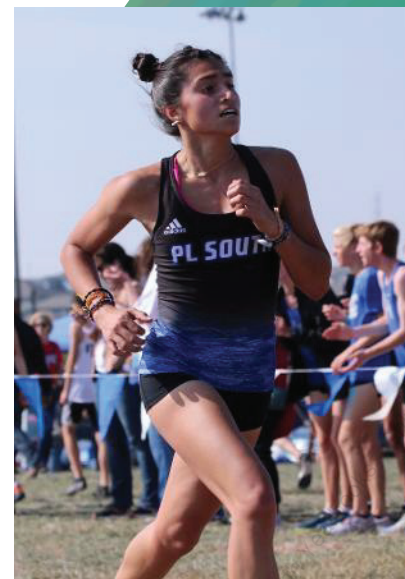
Junior **Kaitlyn Swartz** focused on keeping a growth mindset and staying positive.

"After I finish a race, I reflect on key parts of my racing, and I process through what went well and things I can improve on," Swartz said. "I always try to find at least one thing I can learn from, to apply to my next race and remind myself that I can't change what already happened, but I can always improve to make the next race better."

Swartz placed 4th at Metros, with a time of 19:43.



METROS SMILES: One of South's top runners **John Fiedler**, (11th) kept a positive attitude during Metros. (photo: Leo Lopez)



CANT STOP, WONT STOP: **Izzy Clarke** (12th), runs hard to place well while competing in a race at Metros. (photo: Paige Miller)

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO!: Boys Titan runners prepare to start a long race at Metros, held at Papio South. (photo: Paige Miller)



Finish Line Fever

Father-daughter duo conquers 100 miles

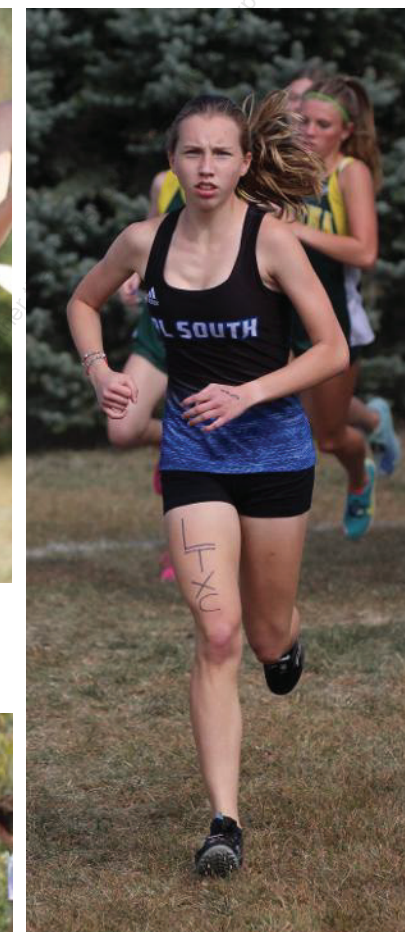
Boys cross country coach **Shannon Stenger**, brought more to the table than just his outstanding coaching skills. His daughter, **Aleah Stenger**, 11th, followed in his footsteps of being a long distance runner. Aside from being involved in cross country at school, she spent her time outside of school running with her dad. Last year, Shannon Stenger completed a 100-mile race, with his daughter by his side as his pacer for a good portion of it. She ran some of the middle of the race, as well as crossed the finish line with him. He said, "It was a big deal for her to be a part of that experience with me". This was a very meaningful father-daughter moment for them, bringing them closer. Aleah Stenger was unsure at first, but knew that it would be a great experience for her and her dad. "I put some thought into it and though it was a super cool opportunity for me to go out and do something like this, so I said yes and was super excited for his race", she said. Shannon Stenger covered 100 mile race in 18 hours and 55 minutes.



PUSHING THROUGH: **Aleah Stenger**, 11th, ran at Metros, to later place 69th in the race with a time of 23:19. (photo: Paige Miller)



LEAVE THEM IN THE DUST: **Izzy Haggard** (10th) ran ahead of other runners during a race at Metros. (photo: Paige Miller)



SPIRIT ON THE RUN: **Grace Baum**, 10th ran solo in (race). Baum had LTXC drawn on her leg, to show Lady Titan Cross Country pride. (photo: Paige Miller)
CAPTION KICKER: **Mason Good** (10th) and **Calen Spady** (9th) ran side by side during Metros. (photo: Paige Miller)

Let's hear it for the Boys

ATTITUDE AWARD
presented to the athlete who displays and promotes a positive attitude
Michael Stamps (12th)

CAPTAIN AWARD
presented to the athlete who proved to be the strongest leader in action and word
Bo Crews (12th)

COMMITMENT AWARD
presented to the athletes who participated in XC for 4 years
Bo Crews, Quin Karas, Michael Stamps, Henry Stamps, Aaron Dawson, Cam Ralston (all 12th)

HEART AWARD
presented to the athlete who overcame great obstacles this season
Bo Crews (12th)

MOST IMPROVED
presented to the athlete who showed the most improvement
Xavier Mallow (11th), **Drew Schuler** (10th)

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
presented to the athlete who made the biggest impact in their 1st season
Mason Langabee (11th)

OREO AWARD
presented to the athlete who was the most consistent performer at meets and practices
John Fiedler (11th)

EYE OF THE TIGER
presented to the athlete who performs the best when it counts
John Fiedler (11th)

In It To Win It: Celebrating after a set point, the team comes together to congratulate each other and hype each other up before the next play. (photo: Piper Holland)



Double Victory

Titan Volleyball takes home their second state win

The volleyball team ended its season with its second consecutive state championship – beating Omaha Westside in four sets, 25-23, 20-25, 25-15, and 25-17. It was the team's third win in four years under **Coach Katie Tarman**, and the sixth in school history.

The team's grit was tested early when, on Oct. 7 and 8, Titan Arena welcomed three nationally ranked volleyball teams to participate in the GEICO Volleyball Invitational, broadcast by ESPN Network. The teams came from across the nation: Skyview from Idaho, Cathedral Catholic from California, and Ponte Vedra from Florida.

In the first round, the Titans beat Skyview in four sets – 25-18, 25-21, 14-25, and 25-20 – while Cathedral Catholic beat Ponte Vedra.

The next day, the Titans faced Cathedral Catholic – the undefeated top-ranked team in the nation, which hadn't lost a set all season – in the championship round.

"I think our biggest moment was playing Cathedral Catholic, because it was played at a very elite level," said senior **Stella Adeyemi**, who played varsity all four years of high school and committed to play volleyball for the University of Hawaii after graduation. "It was really the moment we've all been waiting for, because this is what we expected the ESPN tournament to look and feel like. The intensity was high, and the gym was so loud."

Senior **Shealie Wiebers**, who committed to Peru State

College, said the tournament was a standout moment in her high school volleyball career.

"As a player and a Titan, this experience was definitely a lifetime memory," Wiebers said. "Having as much support as we did, and being able to share that on ESPN, was definitely something that I will remember."

During the first set of the championship game, Wiebers had to quickly adapt to a new position: "Our setter got hurt, and I had to play back row," she said. "I was definitely nervous, but the support and reassurance I got from my teammates made me feel confident and comfortable being back there with them."

Adeyemi said the pressure was real: "I felt like there was no time to mess around; it felt strictly business."

Although Cathedral Catholic ultimately proved victorious in three sets – 23-25, 17-25, 19-25 – the Titans managed to gain a lead late in the first set. Junior **Morgan Bode** said she would always remember the positive vibe she felt from The Black Hole.

"The biggest moment was definitely the championship match, when we were up by a couple points. The student section behind us was giving us so much energy, and we were playing our best," Bode said. "It was such an amazing event to see how our community will show up and rally together in our favor."

That level of fierce competition was a perfect match for the team's two mantras for the season, Wiebers said. "Our biggest focus was: 'How we practice is how we play' and 'Iron sharpens iron' – meaning only the best can challenge the best."



Grand Slam: Spiking the ball back to the other team, **Stella Adeyemi**, 12th, jumps in the air, and makes a quick move to hit the ball over the opponents hands, so they couldn't have blocked the ball. This year, Adeyemi hit a total of over 1100 kills and plans to attend the University of Hawaii to continue her volleyball and academic career. (photo: Paige Miller)

Bump It Up: Returning the ball hit by the Papillion- La Vista Monarchs, **Kyla Dyrstad**, 11th, positions her hands to hit the ball up for one of her teammates to set. The team played against the Monarchs in the state championship prelims, and won the game 3-1, gaining their spot at the final state championship game. (photo: Piper Holland)



Settin It: **Charlee Solomon**, 10th, sets the ball as **Morgan Bode**, 11th, watches and prepares to make a move to spike the ball to the opposing team. (photo: Piper Holland)



Point Gained: After gaining a set point against the Papillion- La Vista Monarchs, **Olivia Broderon**, 12th, and **Chloe Livingston**, 10th, join in with **Kyla Dyrstad**, **Lauren Medeck** and **Morgan Bode**, all 11th, on a group hug. The Titans defeated the Monarchs 3-1. (photo: Piper Holland)



Serves Up: Preparing to start the next play, **Lauren Medeck**, 11th, positions the ball to serve to the opposing team. The volleyball team played in a national tournament that was broadcasted on ESPN network. Teams from different states came to participate in this tournament. (photo: Paige Miller)

Triple Threat

Sisters take on the court together

The volleyball team is known for having a close-knit bond on and off the court. Although for these sisters, the bond has been unbreakable since the very beginning. The Dyrstad sisters; Kenzie, 12th, Kyla, 11th, and Kami, 9th, all had the opportunity to play on the varsity volleyball team this year. "Having my sisters around made us a lot closer as a team, cause we have that bond offside the court as well" said Kenzie. Not only did it strengthen the team's dynamic, but it also



strengthened their bond as well. "It helped because we had that built in trust, so we can focus on what we were doing rather than what the other person around you was doing," says Kyla. Last year, Kenzie and Kyla were able to play on the varsity volleyball team together and experience a Class A state championship together. This year, their younger sister Kami was added to the picture, while being the only freshman to make the team. "When I got called for varsity, I was like "no way did that actually happen" says Kami, although it came with challenges: "I never had to work as hard for my position as I did this year, but I knew I had to prove myself worthy cause I was the only freshman on the team". As the season went on, the sisters and their team were able to experience many small victories together, including another Class A state championship. "It was extra special because Kami came in as a freshman on varsity and didn't know if she was going to play on that high of a level. Watching her confidence build throughout the season was really special. This is also our last season with Kenzie, so all of those things just made the whole experience special". Kyla says about her experience. Kyla and Kami look forward for the next season, while Kenzie is looking forward to playing in college.

Big "W": the Dyrstad sisters, along with other teammates pose for a picture after winning a set. (photo: Layla Johnson)

"Looking up at the tall ceiling in the athletics hallway."

SILVER POAST

"Pep rallies."

ADDIE CHECKSFIELD

"Way too much homework that made me stay up late."

VIVIAN FULMER

FRESHMEN

"Becoming more independent."

JONAS STALLSWORTH

"I visited my old middle school and it felt weird being there."

VICTORIA WHITEHEAD

"Bombing my first honors test."

MATTHEW MARKS

"Taking the whole passing period to get to a class on the other side of the building."

RYAN MONEY

"Getting really lost on the first day."

REBECCA BROOKS

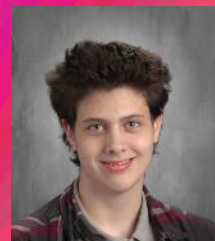
"Not being able to find the correct stairs."

AUDREY BENSON

"Homecoming football game."

SARAH HENNESSY

What made it real that you were in high school?



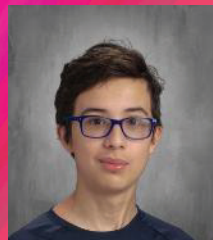
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Yara Abdel'Hamid



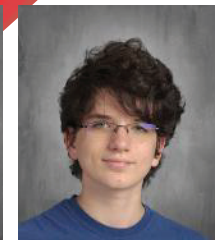
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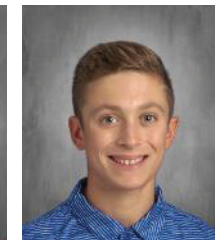
Mario Acosta



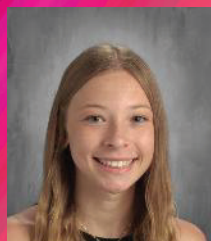
Joel Akin-Otiko



Finley Albracht



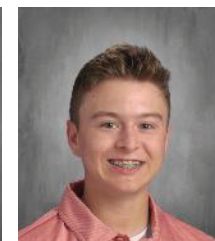
Brady Alderson



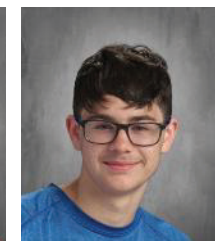
Kate Alexander



Elizabeth Allen



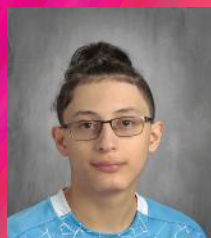
Maddox Allen



Chase Aller



Hayden Allrich



Danny Alpon



Hailey Anderson



Preston Anderson



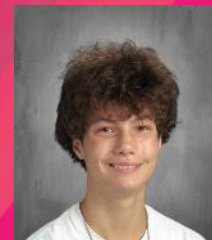
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Braden Annin



Devon Anzaldo



Kaylee Anzaldo



Logan Arch



Darika Ashby



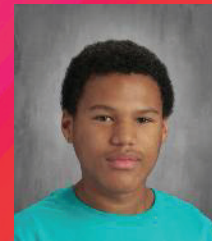
Andrew Austin



Asher Austin



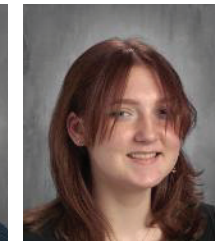
Kayleigh Bagley



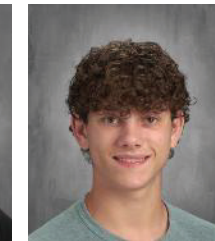
Demari Baker



Jackson Baker



Valerie Baldwin



Zachary Ballain



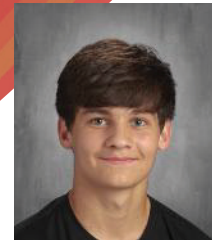
Caleb Banks



Braxton Barnby



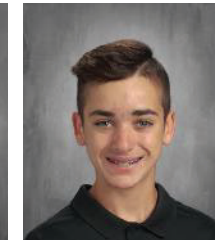
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Grant Beckenhauer



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Abigail Bender



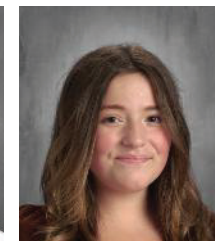
Brooklyn Benecke



Audrey Benson



Benjamin Bernhagen



Paisley Bernth



Elijah Bickel



Addison Biodrowski



Lydia Blair



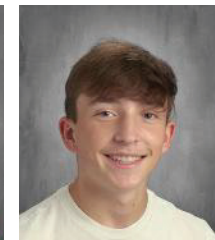
Christopher Blake



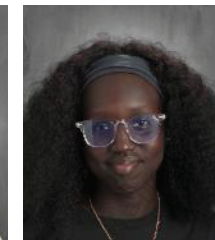
Peyton Bode



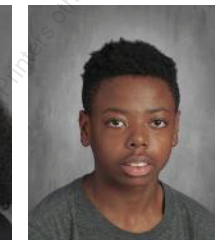
Taylor Boganowski



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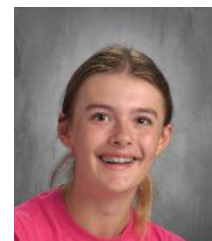
Abigail Boyce



Rory Boyte



Sullivan Bragdon



Chloe Brandt



Garrett Brandt



Eve Bridger



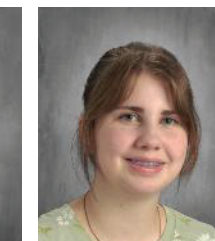
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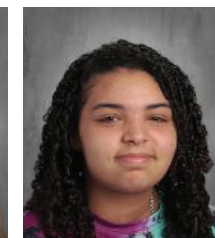
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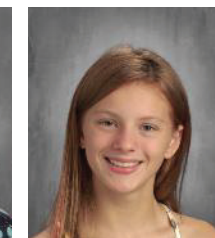
Brady Brown



Brooke Brown



Sadie Brown



Corrin Browning



Jason Bruns

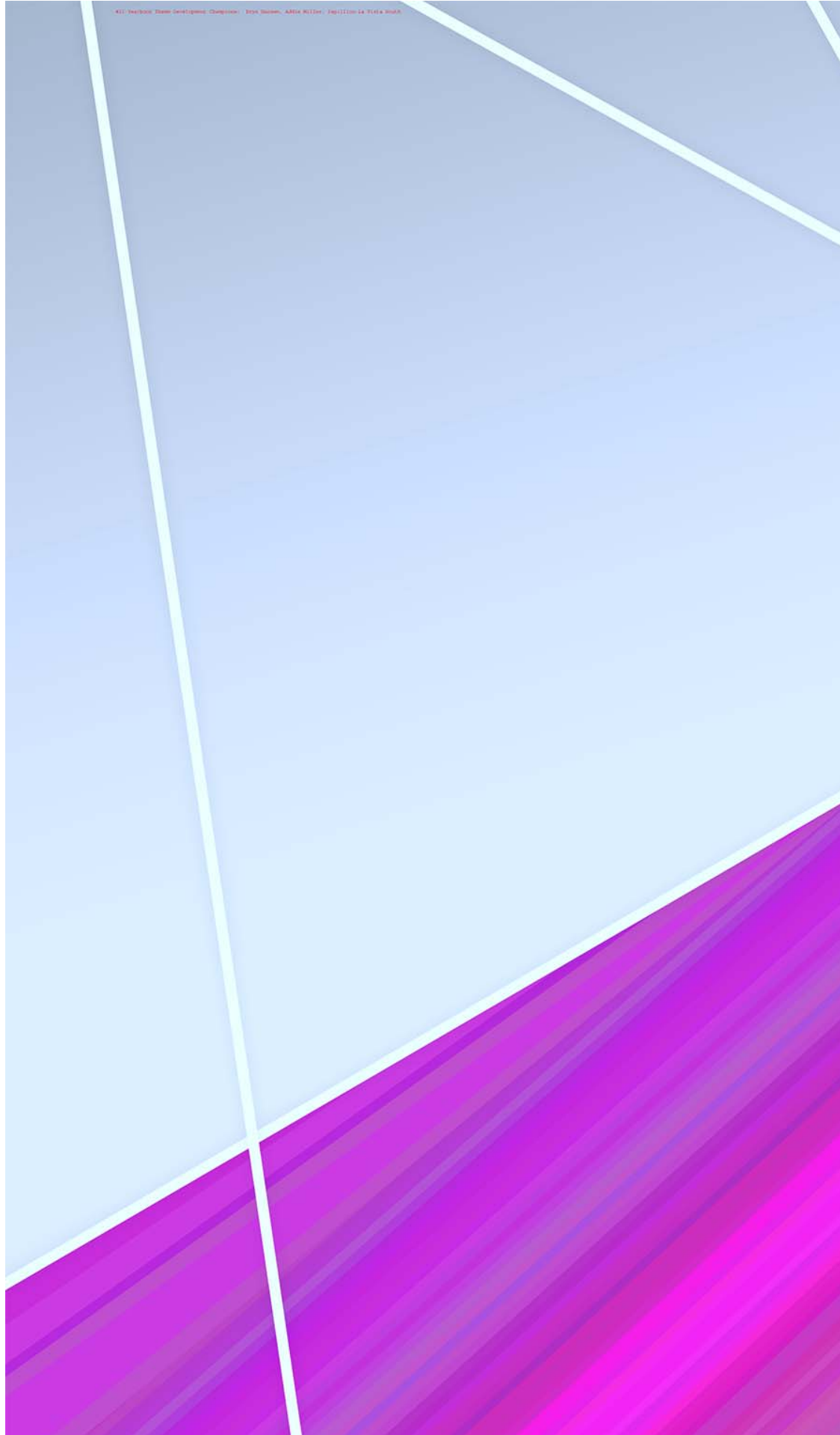


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2022-2023

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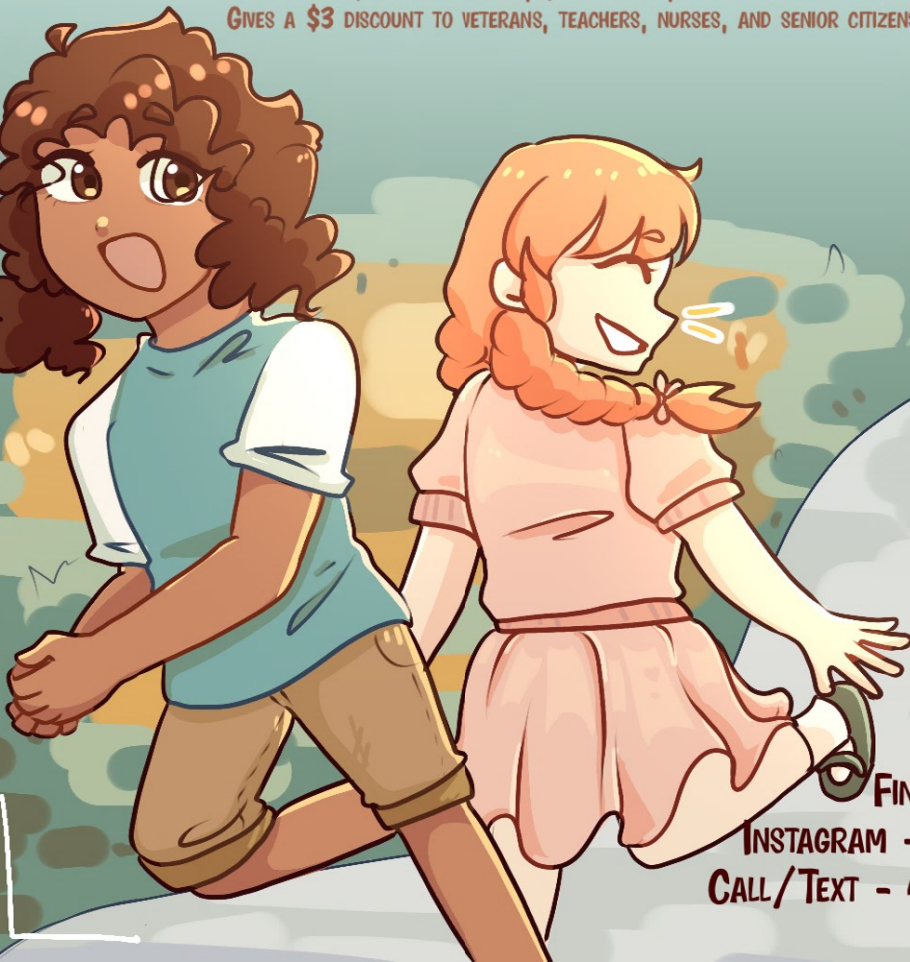
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#2 Newspaper Column Writing Champion: John McConnell, Conestoga

When I think back on my high school experience, like many teenagers, I find the memory of my struggles with mental health. The long and the short of it is that mental health is an issue in our nation. It's an issue that more teens are (openly) dealing with than ever before. With the pressure to stay connected and stay popular at an all time high, and more teenagers looking to options such as suicide or self harm as a solution, it's up to adults to come up with an alternative. Since schools are where many teens spend most of their time, it stands to reason that schools should be involved in helping to dissipate the mental health issues that teens experience, especially when those issues are related to school. They can do this by employing mental health counselors.

Mental health counselors can be a great relief to students who are really in trouble. They can be there to listen, advise and take action as needed. More importantly, that's what they're there for. Having someone whose purpose is to listen and to help can be very beneficial to someone in need. Friends can't always be there. I'm willing to help my friends out when they need it, but, in the end, I can't be their therapist. I don't always know how to help someone find the will to carry on. I can tell them how much value they have, but I also know from my own experience that sometimes being told that isn't enough. Teens don't always know how to take care of themselves, let alone each other. This is where dedicated mental health counselors come in. They are trained to help students through their struggles and know better than anyone how to aid a student who is hurting.

Other people also have to worry about themselves as well. I've seen my friends fighting to work out their own problems as they find themselves being responsible for managing another person's mental health issues as well. I've also been there myself, trying to help people through life, night after night. But at the same time, there is a limit to how much I can take too, even if I am willing to help. The truth is that people are crying out for someone to listen, someone to care, and it can't always be their friends. That's why there has to be someone else. Mental health counselors can be there to help everyone involved.

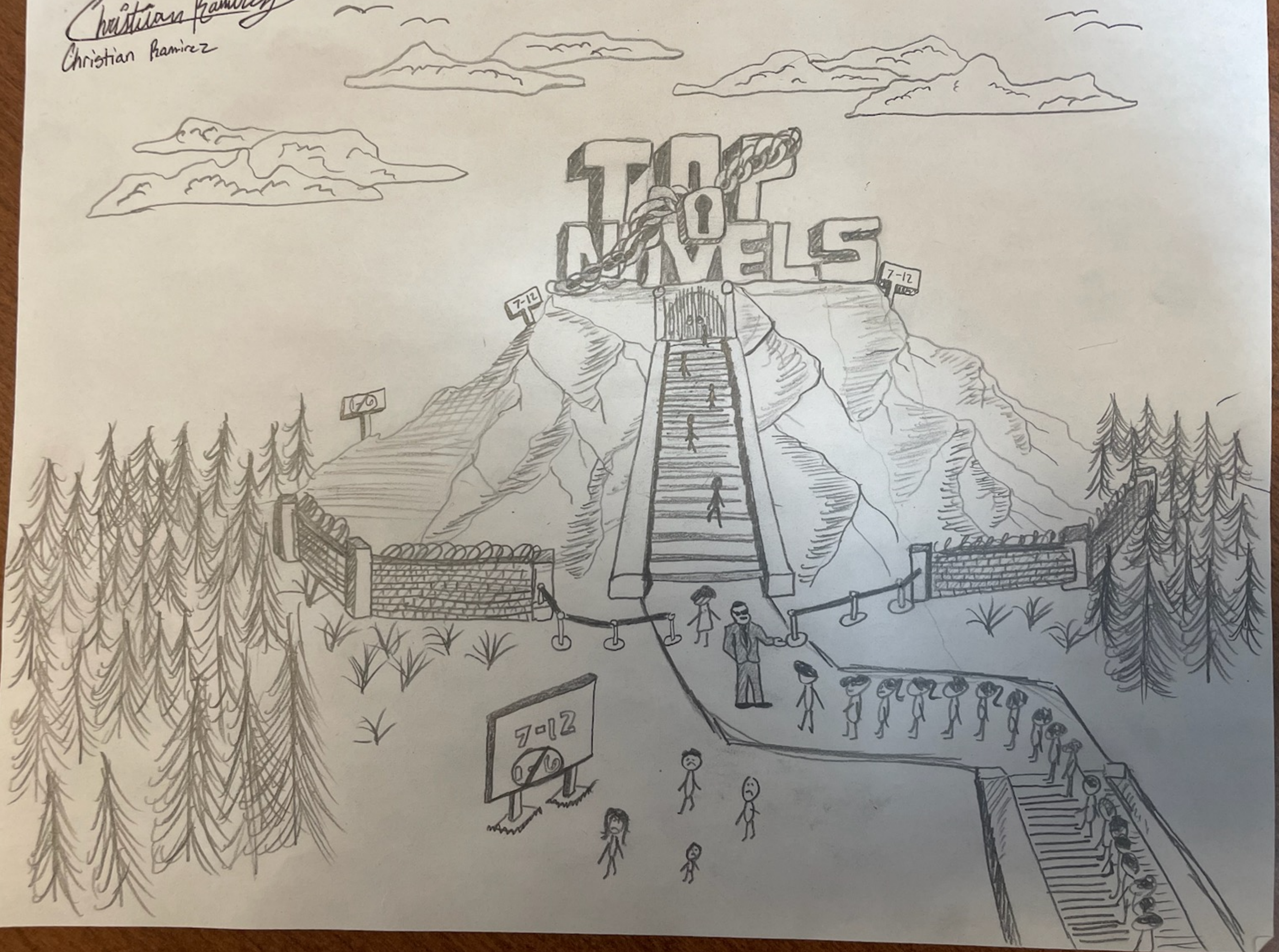
They can also help to promote the safety of everyone involved. Regardless of the politics surrounding them, school shootings are an undeniable part of the education system in America. Many of those involved in the massacres at schools are doing so because of a lack of mental health support. Their parents or schools weren't there for them and so they moved to commit these atrocities. The actions they took are in no way condonable or justifiable, but they may have been preventable with the proper support and help. A mental health counselor just provides another option for students who feel trapped or abandoned. Fortunately, the vast majority of students won't take such extreme actions. It would be wrong to generalize people dealing with their mental health as being capable of going down a violent path like that. But, it does illustrate a need that is present in our communities. This is a need that must be filled. The safety of our students, whether from themselves or from each other, is paramount. It has to be worth the cost of a mental health counselor in a school.

The presence of these trained individuals is especially important for those who may not have another option. Therapy isn't always a choice. First of all, it's expensive. Many families can't easily afford it and those are sometimes the families that need it the most. There is also the possibility that parents might not be supportive of therapy. They may tell their child to "suck it up." I've personally been told by my parents that therapy doesn't work. It's tough being dependent on another person who doesn't meet your needs. But a counselor at the school could mean that there is another way to make sure that students are taken care of. Open office hours would provide students with the opportunity to talk their problems over with a mental health professional without the cost or obstacles of therapy.

Schools are also an important place for mental health counselors to be. Students spend most of their days at school. It can be a place for triumphs. It can also be the cause of their problems. Many mental health issues are stress related. Between the social dynamics and numerous events and activities that are piled on top of the schoolwork, students may feel overwhelmed, especially during school hours. When I'm already having a rough day and then I get assigned a massive project to fit into my stacked schedule, sometimes I just need a break. I need somewhere safe with someone to talk to. I need a mental health counselor.

Mental health counselors are important individuals who can provide a uniquely available yet well-equipped source of help for teens in need. Additionally, schools are the perfect places to make them available. With the safety and wellbeing of the teens and community in mind, it is clear that schools being required to employ a mental health counselor will help to promote a better school and potentially a better community. When I see my own struggles with mental health and the struggles of my peers, I think that there has to be a solution. There has to be a way to make sure that the next generation of highschoolers doesn't have to face the same obstacles. The only way to ensure that is to give them the help they need, to give them mental health counselors.

Christian Ramirez
Christian Ramirez



#4 Editorial Writing Champion: John McConnell, Conestoga

Back in early schools in the United States, one punishment with some commonality in classrooms, was the dunce cap. A dunce cap was a long white cone a child would put on the head which read, “dunce.” The word dunce refers to a person who is stupid or unintelligent. This way, a child would be shamed both by looking dumb and being called dumb, all while in front of their peers. Fortunately, this shameful portion of educational history no longer sees widespread use in the classroom. *Unfortunately*, some schools still employ policies of shaming, intentional or otherwise, to encourage students to follow the rules. One such policy has just been implemented at Los Santos High School in Fireside. It states that students with unpaid lunch debts will be forced to have their hands stamped “as a reminder to the parents to pay their students’ lunch bills.” This is quite frankly horrifying to say the least and rather reminiscent of the dunce cap.

To see the true impact, it is crucial to remember who is impacted by this: high school students. High school is a delicate time. Social dynamics are arguably at their most complex. Everyone is trying to fit in and no one even knows who they are. Bullying can run rampant and everyone is prone to labels. As schools strive to combat labels, the worst thing they could do is provide yet another one. Sierra O’Malley, a student at Los Santos put it perfectly when she said, “This is going to separate students who *can* afford lunch and those who *cannot*.”

Marking students just adds another source of anxiety for them. Many teens already suffer from mental health issues. If they come from low income families, they likely have even more to worry about, especially if they don’t have food security at home. One concerned parent pointed out that, “This is going to be detrimental to the mental health and wellness of our students. Just watch.” Showing the world that they might not be able to afford the price of lunch is only going to add more stress into their lives.

It can also begin to impact the one guaranteed meal that students have every week day. Stamping students’ hands opens up a scenario where a student may not want to eat lunch if they can’t pay for it out of fear of public shaming. Superintendent Roger Atwood may be concerned about the “thousands of dollars in unpaid lunch accounts” each year, and rightly so. But most important is that students are able to eat lunch without worrying about what their peers will think of them.

In addition to the obvious shortcomings of this policy, it is also a struggle to find the positives. Some will try though, such as Tyler Mathews, a parent. He stated, “It’s gonna help our town get out of debt. If bills exist they need to be paid. It’s called being an adult.” While that may be great in theory, simply stamping students’ hands doesn’t help if there is no money to pay with. Another parent, Sherry Smith, shares her experience. “As a single mother of three high school children, I am sometimes unable to stay on top of my lunch balances. Putting a stamp on a student is going to do nothing except single them out to their peers. Why make my child pay for my financial issues?” That raises a valid question. Why should students be subjected to this humiliation because their parents simply can’t keep up with rising expenses. Inflation is still a major issue in

the country and it's hitting people hard. Stamping a student's hand can't make money appear in their parents bank account.

That's even if the parents get to see the stamp. Ink is temporary. Students could go into the restroom and wash it off. Some shades of ink will also not be as noticeable on some skin tones and thus be more easily concealed, meaning that it is not a universally effective policy. It seems that the more direct policy of simply contacting the parents through phone, email or notes home would actually do a better job at ensuring parents get the message while creating less issues for students.

With their policy to shame students into paying Los Santos is simply creating a modern dunce cap. Students are humiliated in front of their peers while alternatives that are better all around remain available. Schools should look out for their students and make the right decision for their community. That is why the policy of stamping hands must be rethought and removed.

#5 Entertainment Review Writing Champion: Benjamin Reisig, Scottsbluff

Award shows have been heavily criticized in the past for, among many other larger issues, being a rather painful watch due to the shows attempts to connect with an audience they are clearly out of touch with. The opening of the 75th Tony Awards played everything extremely safe in order to avoid heavy criticism with the unfortunate side effect of making an extremely forgettable number with little staying power or emotional value.

The goal of the opening number was to reflect on the last 75 years of the Tony's and celebrate some of the musicals and winners of the past. Overall the number accomplished this decently well however it certainly was not without its moments that fell flat. Although it had its slower moments the number had very few vocal highs that gave the audience a reason to be excited for an award show about theater. It maintained a fast pace but the vocals were shifting from one song to another with such speed that it created the same effect clicking through a Spotify playlist would. With no song lasting long enough to feel important.

It is common for award show openers to be extremely self aware and referential, for example the Beetlejuice opening a few years back where the host pointed to Adam Driver in the audience and exclaimed "You killed Han Solo!" or the referencing to Hamilton winning everything during the opener the year Hamilton swept. Even if it is the trend, this style of humor can really take away from a number as it refuses to let it stand on its own. Even if this opener made less self aware jokes because of the retrospective format almost anytime Ariana DeBose was singing something originally written for the show it contained lots of self aware references to the Tony's or Broadway culture. Most telling in her line before the medley began being "we mashed a few [songs] together, lets see if you can spot 'em" This style of humor certainly detracts from the number more than it adds.

A highlight of the show, besides using time tested music, was the inclusion of the back-up vocalists and dancers. They were easily the most entertaining part of the show through their impressive choreography and usage of mild quick changes in certain scenes, like the hats they put on for Chicago and took off afterwards without drawing attention to themselves. The most impressive feat they performed by far was spinning DeBose during the "You Can't Stop the Beat" excerpt. They managed to move the whole show in a way that felt effortless and buttery smooth which was extremely entertaining.

About halfway through the show the dancers froze in order for the screen to showcase acceptance speeches from Tony's past. This section was laughably cheesy. Although many of the clips they showed were very emotional it was such a tonal whiplash going into the section that the whole moment felt extremely forced. Then they slowly eased out of the moment before returning to the upbeat nature the rest of the performance had, making it feel like a break in the auction at an unnecessary time, many at home viewers most likely checked their phone during this part. It would have been better to ease into the more emotional moment as then the audience is not struck with a sudden expectation to take the number seriously before popping out of it rather quickly afterwards so the show didn't feel poorly paced.

There was a notable inclusion of an appreciation for diversity during the opening number that was positive. Several moments, particularly in the excerpts of speeches they showcased, celebrated the existence of women, people of color, and the LGBTQ people who have been and continue to be important to theater. These moments were nice and didn't feel like pandering. The only time it didn't fit the moment was when DeBose interrupted herself when she sang

“Climb every mountain. Keep it gay, keep it gay.” However, this did add to the constant transition between songs the number was obsessed with, so it’s only a nitpick.

Overall it is a perfectly serviceable award show opening, however, it is not without its elements which distract from enjoyment. It certainly will not go down as very notable to the Tony’s and many in attendance probably forgot what the opener even was by the time they went home. I give this opener 2 out of 5 Tony Awards.

2023 State Journalism Championship



1ST

#6 Headline Writing

Time Limit - 1:15

Directions:

You are a copy editor for your student newspaper. You are being given 6 formatted articles. Write headlines for 3 of the 6 articles using the following conditions:

1. Write at least one 2-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline.
2. Write at least one 3-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline.
3. You have creative license to write a third headline of any length or line count.

Turn this paper into the proctor when finished.

Name: Jasmine Jackson School: Scotus Central Catholic

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # - 4

Headline - Watch out!
1) - There's a snake in my... backyard?
2) - Experts advise Arizonians on understanding these relentless rattlesnakes

Article # - 3

Headline - Containing the Container:
1) - Tupperware loses its grip on pandemic-influenced stock success

Article # - 1

Headline - There's love in the air!
1) - Texas Pie Queen Julie Albertson reveals "prayer" is the secret ingredient to matchmaking pies

Article #4

A house in Arizona has been plagued by not one, but four adult Speckled Rattlesnakes over the last few months. Snake catcher Marissa Maķi, from Rattlesnake Solutions, found the latest deadly trespasser hiding behind an aloe vera plant in the family's front yard.

Bryan Hughes, the owner of Rattlesnake Solutions, told Newsweek that the house's location makes it particularly vulnerable to unwanted visitors.

"For this house, the specific location is the issue. It's not only directly adjacent to the preferable habitat for Speckled Rattlesnakes, but it is on the corner as well," Hughes said. "Many of the neighborhoods in Arizona are built with a long, shared block wall behind them.

"This can function like a funnel, forcing any snakes that may want to visit the well-watered and shaded properties to enter at the sides. For this reason, homes found at the corners often see far more snake visitors than homes with more interior."

Despite this vulnerable location, it is still unusual to be visited by four different rattlesnakes in a matter of months.

The house is located in Ahwatukee, in Phoenix, Arizona, right against the South Mountain Park and Preserve. Southwestern speckled rattlesnakes are common in this region and are usually found in rocky areas near mountains and hillsides.

The species varies in color, from white to brown to orange, and has a highly flecked banded pattern that closely resembles the rocky granite found in their natural habitat.

As rattlesnakes go, these are fairly small.

"Adults get to around three feet long," Hughes said. "These were all adults between two and three feet long."

Five other species of rattlesnake are commonly found in the Ahwatukee area, including the Western Diamondback, Arizona's largest species of rattlesnake.

"Rattlesnakes are often found at properties in Arizona, most often in backyards where vegetation, water, and feeding opportunities are present," Hughes previously told Newsweek.

If you live in a rattlesnake-prone area, Rattlesnake Solutions recommends putting up snake fencing and making your yard less desirable to the deadly animals. You can do this by removing leaf litter, keeping foliage well-pruned, and avoiding growing plants right next to your house. Removing food sources, such as bird seed and food waste that might attract rodents, will also stop the snakes from being attracted to your property in the first place.

MATT OTT
AP Business Writer

Tupperware Brands, which experienced a resurgence during the pandemic, is now pursuing investors to keep it afloat and is in danger of being delisted by the New York Stock Exchange.

Shares of Tupperware Brands Corp. tumbled nearly 50% Monday after the company said late last week that it had engaged financial advisers to help it secure financing and “remediate its doubts regarding its ability to continue as a going concern.”

Sales and profits have steadily fallen the past couple of years after the pandemic breathed new life into the Orlando, Florida-based maker of food storage containers. Early in March, Tupperware posted a 24 cents-per-share loss for the fourth quarter, rattling investors who were expecting a profit of 22 cents per share.

Sales, which climbed during the pandemic as people stayed home and cooked for themselves, have tumbled from nearly \$500 million in the fourth quarter of 2020 to just over \$300 million in its most recent fourth quarter. The company last week received a non-compliance notice from the NYSE for failing to file its annual results with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Last month’s preliminary results released to investors showed it lost around \$35 million in the fourth quarter.

Tupperware has six months from the filing due date to regain compliance, though the NYSE can begin the process of delisting the stock at its own discretion.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tupperware sales and profits have tumbled the past couple of years.

Analysts say that creditors could potentially call Tupperware on its debt, which the company is unlikely to be able to repay.

Chasen Bender, an analyst with Citi, said Tupperware’s creditors appear to be giving the company a 30-day grace period until the 10-K is filed. Bender added that even though the company says it is working toward finalizing the filing,

“the path forward appears highly uncertain.” Tupperware said it is considering selling some real estate holdings and other non-core assets to free up cash.

Tupperware, which had explosive growth in the mid 20th century, was well-known for its Tupperware Party, first held in 1948. But it sputtered in the years leading up to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic resurgence, Tupperware had negative sales growth for three consecutive years, according to FactSet.

Shares in Tupperware were up about 9% early Tuesday, to \$1.35 per share. The company’s stock traded above \$4 early this year and was close to \$40 per share at the beginning of 2021.



Celebrating the Sweetness

JULIE ALBERTSON CHARMED HER HUSBAND, SPENCER SCHWARZ, WITH A SPECIAL PIE—AND CONTINUES TO SERVE UP THE MAGIC

The first time Julie Albertson saw musician Spencer Schwarz onstage in Austin in 1985, she knew she was going to marry him. To help him come around to her way of thinking, “I baked him a buttermilk pie,” recalls Albertson, now 60.

“Best thing I’d ever eaten,” says Schwarz, 67. “Next thing I knew, we were together.”

Known as the Texas Pie Queen, Albertson understands that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. But her pies are made with something *extra*—and she swears they can help others find their match, even before they’ve met them. “It’s like prayer,” she says. “It’s intentional. As you roll the dough, you talk about who you want to meet, your future together. It’s imbuing emotion into what you’re making.”

The list of those who have shared their hopes with Albertson—who then bakes them into existence—continues to grow. It includes her niece Haylie Raymond, 37, who met her partner, Zack Snider, 36, in September 2015, not long after pouring her intentions into a cherry pie. As her aunt’s apprentice, Raymond says the magic runs in the family: “People come back and say, ‘You won’t believe what happened.’ And I say, ‘But I do believe.’”



Slice of Life

Schwarz and Albertson (top, in costume in 2019) have been married 28 years. Her niece Raymond (with Snider) knows firsthand the power of the pie: “When I told him about it, Zack asked if he was under my spell.”

#7 Newspaper Feature Writing Champion: Abby Harveson, Scottsbluff

Who's a Gem? Lin!: Student Creates Owl-Themed Jewelry Business

Just as the fierce and yearning eyes of an owl lay over the empty fields at night, customers of Horizon Heights High School and other customers across the world flock to *Nocturnal Jewelry* for their own one-of-a-kind findings. *Nocturnal Jewelry* owner, Joanna Lin, 11, creatively conjured up the idea independently and keeps the new business thriving.

One of *Nocturnal Jewelry's* loyal customers, Audrey Muck, shares about her experience with Lin's business.

"I came across *Nocturnal Jewelry* while shopping on Etsy awhile back. I loved the unique patterns and fresh look. So far I have purchased two necklaces and a bracelet. I am constantly getting complimented when I wear them," Muck exclaims with a smile.

Lin first began toying with different forms of jewelry making because of her boredom during the COVID pandemic. She aims for small and dainty pieces while still providing a statement to outfits.

The idea first sprung up through a school project for her Business class after her having a hobby for jewelry making. John Murphy, her Business Teacher, explains his personal input surrounding Lin's project.

"As part of her homework while stuck at home I challenged Joanna to come up with a mock business idea. Little did I know she would take that assignment and not look back! I am proud of her resilience and creativity. She has a solid business plan and is saving the money she earns for college," Murphy explains proudly.

Every proper business needs a name and a logo, therefore, Lin had to have come up with a certain something in order to catch customers' attention.

"I found the inspiration for *Nocturnal Jewelry* in owls, when I discovered that the prefix 'noct,' meaning night, is related to owls. This symbolism is emanated in my business' logo, which features two, owl-like eyes. What I liked about Nocturnal was the owls are a symbol of Athena, which is why I made it my logo," says Lin.

Unique and favorable jewelry often proves difficult to find, especially at a low cost. However, Joanna Lin, 11, graciously found a way to flip the switch.

"I feel like I'm oftentimes just following the trends but, I think a lot of jewelry is getting a lot more expensive, so I am trying to find and make higher quality pieces that aren't as expensive as others," thoughtfully claims Lin.

One of Lin's greatest support systems throughout her journey is her wonderful and loving mother, Qui Lin.

“I am so proud of my daughter for taking initiative while being quarantined to completely change her life. She has done about 400 sales and currently has 2,000 followers on Etsy. Last month she even donated part of her sales to the local food pantry,” Lin marvels.

Lin’s Nocturnal Jewelry is not only an unforgettable store where jewelry lovers can shop, but is a story to inspire other young adults to follow their own dreams, even in less than ideal circumstances. The success and products can’t help but bring smiles to the faces of people all around. Woot woot? More like hoot hoot!

#8 Newspaper News Writing Champion: Libbie Brezenski, Scotus CC

Union 73 forms unity among community

The home-away-from-home feeling is an important selling point for colleges to grab the attention of college recruits.

With this in mind, Northeast Community College decided to remodel and add on to their former Student Center building to make it more accessible and comfortable to its students, faculty, and staff. Amanda Nipp, the Vice President of the Student Services at Northeast Community College, was one of the main advocates for the project and believed the remodeled space was vital for the Northeast community to have.

“We really wanted to allow students to feel as if they were at home in their living room when using our Student Center building. We wanted them to have access to all the services they may need while also keeping the space comfortable and homey,” Nipp said.

Planning for the remodeling of project began in 2017, before officially taking off in the spring of 2019. Construction completion was delayed from the original date due to Covid-19 and a shortage of materials needed. The project was finally able to be completed in May 2021 before graduation, which gave the graduating seniors a chance to utilize the space. The total cost of the project was approximately \$20,000,000 which was funded through the college’s Capitol Improvement Fund and acquired revenue bonds.

Inside the newly remodeled Student Center, there are different service places for students, faculty, and staff to get whatever help they may need. There are tutoring and research services, a technology center, business center, an information and help desk, counseling services, and more. Along with the services offered, there are also spaces that allow students to hang out and enjoy their time with friends and peers.

Though much attention was put into the bigger, more-noticeable changes of the Student Center, there was also an immense focus put on the smaller, less-noticeable details, too.

“We put a lot of thought into the design aspect of the project. From the different furniture options used all the way down to the lighting and outlet placements, we wanted our students to feel comfortable as if the place was their own space,” Nipp said.

When figuring out what to call the new Student Center, there was much debate and contemplating to see what felt right.

“I went to our president multiple times with different ideas but none felt like they were ‘the one.’ At the time I was working on a history project for the school and came across the union of the two colleges, Northeast Nebraska College and Northeast Nebraska Technical College, to form what we now call Northeast Community College in 1973. We came up with the name Union 73 which relates to both the union of those two colleges and a student union for us,” Nipp said.

The project was a success through both the design and services offered, and is used daily by students, faculty, and staff members. The current hours are 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM Monday through Thursday, and 5:00 PM to 11:00 PM Sundays.

When asked about her favorite part of Union 73, Nipp took some time to contemplate her answer.

“There are so many different aspects of it that I love, but my favorite has to be the fact there are so many students that are comfortable enough utilize the space daily. I love seeing the regulars come around the same time every day and be in their favorite areas of the space. It truly is a blessing to have Union 73 on our campus,” Nipp concluded.

#9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing Champion: Caleb Polking, Elkhorn North

In the flat plains of northeast Nebraska, one would not imagine mountain biking to be particularly popular. Jason Tollefson, owner of Norfolk Bike Company and head coach of the Maskenthine Composite Angry Owls mountain biking team, has changed that. Tollefson's life surrounds mountain biking. It's his passion, it's what he pursues, and it's what the majority of his weekly time is devoted to.

Tollefson was born in Massachusetts but moved to Nebraska at the age of seven. He didn't start mountain biking until after having graduated high school, fairly late in the game for most of the sport's athletes. It was initially used as an escape for Tollefson. It was something he did in which the weight of the world left his shoulders.

"I found a passion in mountain biking early on that I still see in the kids I'm coaching now," Tollefson said.

However, his early passion for mountain biking quickly took a backseat in his life as he began to work on roads and traveled to 47 different states with his work. What was initially a thorough enjoyment for Tollefson seemed to be slipping away from his grasp.

He moved back to Norfolk in 2016 and didn't bike for another year. Although one would believe that his former love may have been all but gone, Tollefson would soon become accustomed to the mountain biking life and it would become his championed career down the road..

Volunteer work at the local Ponca State Park was the first major step in Tollefson's quest to his current position. Two years later, he was asked to take over the park's mountain biking section. In 2020, Tollefson found himself at a mountain biking competition in Missouri where he fell in love with the idea of coaching.

Upon returning to Norfolk with his sights set on coaching, Tollefson constructed the Maskenthine Composite Angry Owls mountain biking team. Practices take place at the local trail at Maskenthine Lake, and Tollefson already has his squad set for action in the fall as he has four different races on schedule.

Tollefson believes that mountain biking is becoming more popular in the Norfolk area for a host of reasons.

"With the younger ones, kids just love bikes," Tollefson said. "We have bike games, for instance, bike soccer. Overall, I think that these kids are doing it to improve their lives, to give them confidence in themselves, and to be the very best that they can be."

In addition to his coaching, Tollefson has expanded his mountain biking reach with his new ownership of the local bike shop. In 2021, said bike shop was ready to go out of business. The biking environment in Norfolk was at a low point and the owners were devoid of a plan for the future. Despite this, Tollefson took matters into his own hands and took over the shop.

"At that point, I was kind of in a limbo in terms of jobs," Tollefson said. "I didn't have a clear path. So, I decided to own a bike shop and it's been great."

Uniquely enough, Tollefson decided to brand his new shop in a way that has not been seen in Norfolk, citing the original spelling of the town as "North Fork." He took this bit of history and named his shop "Norfolk Bike Company." When asked for the spelling of his shop name, Tollefson laughed.

"N-o-r-f-o-r-k Bike Company. It's the only company in town with that spelling."

As if coaching and owning a bike shop weren't enough, Tollefson is the Trail Champion at Ponca State Park. With this additional job, Tollefson is in charge of coordinating and obtaining

as much volunteer work as possible to ensure that the trails are clean and in optimal shape. He also sees this task as an opportunity to grow the sport and the trails even more in the region.

"I also want to grow the trails up there," Tollefson said. "Myself and the former president of the park want it to be a mountain biking destination. We want it to be a place where mountain bikers can come from all places, make a pit stop, and just have fun."

While his life initially seemed like it would take him far away from his first major passion, Jason Tollefson couldn't stay apart from mountain biking. Now, it's his identity. He strives to coach his kids to be the best mountain bikers and people they possibly can be, to facilitate his new business, and to grow a young but promising sport in both Norfolk and northeast Nebraska as a whole.

He sees mountain biking as something that can be beneficial to anyone who gives it a chance. It's inclusive, it builds confidence, and benefits health, community, and is simply a means of involvement.

"Watching the kids grow is great," Tollefson said. "It's one of the reasons why I do this every day."

Tollefson's training is random. It's dependent on what the work week looks like and the amount of coaching he has on his plate, but he still finds a way to ride roughly five to ten hours per week. On top of that, he doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon.

"Now they have E-bikes, so I plan to ride as long as I can walk," Tollefson said with a chuckle.

Jason Tollefson is a pioneer for a somewhat dormant yet growing sport in the area. His long term goal is to grow the sport and get people involved. He already has the support of much of the Norfolk community and hopes that mountain biking will continue to prosper.

But, for now, he is happy with where his life holds him. He is passionate for coaching, is having substantial success with his business, and continues to facilitate growth in the sport that he loves and has been with him through the ups and downs of his life.

#10 Sports News Writing Champion: Caleb Polking, Elkhorn North

The buzzer sounded, the dog pile ensued, and the trophy was hoisted. In the most David-and-Goliath-esque fashion, overwhelming underdog Boxley defeated state powerhouse Drake in the boys basketball state championship and orchestrated an inspirational story for the ages.

Underdog stories happen in sports all the time. However, rarely does a team that limped through a 3-20 season the year before completely flip the script and down a team that had won 10 straight state championship titles. The Boxley Buzzards did exactly that to the Drake Destroyers.

Boxley began the season with issues encapsulating the entire team. Rick Dees's squad finished the previous season with a record of 3-20 and had virtually no momentum or identity carrying the team forward. In fact, the school board even considered cutting the boys basketball program due to the lack of success. However, Boxley would go on to lead an unimaginable turnaround.

On the other hand, Drake was the immense favorite to win the state championship at the onset of the season. The school had already qualified for the state tournament 18 total times prior and had made 11 appearances in the state championship game. Head Coach Monte Dean was set to continue his domination of the rest of the state.

Despite numerous holes within the program, including only eight players on the roster which would eventually be reduced to seven with Doug Anderson's ankle injury, Boxley powered through with an efficient season. The Buzzards finished with a respectable record of 17-7 and secured the #7 seed in the state tournament, already proving the majority of expectations wrong. It was the first state tournament appearance in program history as well. Boxley had already taken leaps and bounds past the threshold for a successful season. However, the Buzzards were far from over.

On the Drake side of things, it was a steamroll. The Destroyers obliterated everything in their path and finished with a 24-1 record to take the #1 seed in the state tournament. It was simply another year in the office for Dean and company.

The Buzzards continued on their underdog path, defeating two-seeded Schubert 50-48 in overtime and Green Valley 40-36 in the state semifinals as they punched their ticket to their first state championship appearance in history.

Drake had little trouble dismantling eighth-seeded Millrose and fourth-seeded Wilcox on the way to their twelfth appearance in the state championship game. The Destroyers didn't even have a win of less than fifteen points in those two games. The stage was set for a championship between near-polar opposite programs in Boxley and Drake.

Although it was a spectacular season for Boxley, many by halftime of the state championship game would say that the magic had run out for the Buzzards. Trailing by thirteen, Boxley seemed to be at the end. Drake was imposing its will and sustained a 29-16 lead, something that felt insurmountable for the Buzzards who, by that point, were simply playing with house money.

"We were about to give up after that first half," Boxley Senior Guard Ernie Hernandez said. "We just couldn't get into our flow and our shots weren't falling. We were happy just to make it to state."

Then, the unthinkable happened.

Boxley flipped the switch and Drake had no answer. The atmosphere in the gym took a complete 180 degree turn towards Boxley. The Buzzards held the Destroyers to just 15 points in the second half while the Buzzards put up a whopping 42 of their own. Hernandez led the way for Boxley while finishing the game with 32 points. Drake's Peonio had 19 of his own, but received little help from the rest of the roster.

The game concluded and the scoreboard signaled 58-44 in favor of Boxley. The Cinderella story was complete.

"We did the unimaginable," Boxley Head Coach Rick Dees said. "I just can't believe it. We started this year with eight kids on our team and that number diminished to seven. We just upset the #1 seed in the tournament."

Drake outshot Boxley from 2-point range, 49% to 31%. However, the Buzzards won the game at the three point line. They shot 7-17 from beyond the arc, good enough for a 41% clip. On the defensive side, they held the Destroyers to 0-9 from deep. That is a rare occurrence.

Despite being dominated in the paint by Drake, the Buzzards were able to excel elsewhere, capitalizing on opportunities given to them by the Destroyers. Boxley shot 13-17 from the free throw line while Drake was just 2-4. In addition, the Buzzards created 13 points off of turnovers to just four from the Destroyers.

The stats certainly speak for themselves. However, Boxley believes that this game was won by heart.

"Our coach wouldn't let us give up," Hernandez said. "He fired us up and made us remember what got us here. We are a team, a family, and we needed to band together. I think we did just that."

Dees believes that the comeback his players orchestrated is a reflection of the year as a whole.

"My guys worked their rears off this season," Dees said. "We believed in each other. And what a second half! Even though we went into halftime down by thirteen these guys never gave up. Our community rallied behind us and the gym was just electric."

In an unexpected victory effort from Buzzard, Drake was left stunned. Head Destroyers' Coach Monte Dean had high praise for Buzzard and its state championship victory.

"They were great in big moments," Dean said. "They hit some big shots when they needed to, especially in the second half. They were really hard to get out of their game. It was like we were playing a different team in that second half. We just couldn't stop them."

Drake, though having been upset, will certainly reload and prepare for their usual domination again next season.

"We are obviously disappointed, but we will come back with more intensity next year," Dean said. "Proud of my guys for all their hard work this season."

In a story resembling that of the movie *Hoosiers*, Boxley pulled off an unbelievable story. From 3-20 to a state championship in the span of a single year is a magical run that is rarely seen in sports. The Buzzards have resurrected a once dormant program into one that is now respected among the rest of the state.

"This is the highlight of my coaching career," Dees said. "So proud of these young men."

#11 Yearbook Feature Writing Champion: Miranda Gomez, Lexington

Searing grills roasted over 10,000 hot dogs this past December. As a tradition, the senior class holds an annual fundraiser to raise funds as a service to their own class. They landed on holding an Epic Weenie Roast. They wasted no hands or resources in making it happen. All 329 seniors participated in the fundraiser.

In an effort to aid the seniors, Hy-Vee donated thousands of hot dogs to the class. Along with them, Inflatable Wonderland donated three bouncy houses. It didn't stop there. Member of the community, Frankfort Ford donated a brand new 2023 Ford F150. William Wienerschnitzel, a supporter of the event, was astounded when he was announced as the winner.

"I wasn't even going to come to the Weenie Roast. My wife kindly suggested I show up to support my town and I'm sure glad I did," Wienerschnitzel said. "I walked away with a new truck."

The event even went TikTok viral after senior Allie Smores advertised the event on her platform. With seven million views and over 800,000 shares, the attendance of the Weenie Roast skyrocketed. Around 6,500 supporters went to the event.

"When my video went viral it changed everything for the better. It was a super crazy evening and we can't believe so many people showed up to support us," Smores said.

As the attendance was boosted by TikTok, so was the amount of money raised. The seniors of Frankfort High School raised over \$32,000 dollars. With thousands of dollars at their disposal, the graduating class decided to use the money to support the food pantry of Frankfort. Along with paying off the lunch balances of the 1,300 students who attend Frankfort High School. The principal of the school, Beth Bologna was filled with gratitude for the class.

"Our senior class is filled with the best and the brightest. We have never had a senior class raise so much money for their community service project," Bologna said.

With plans in the works to make the Weenie Roast an annual event, Smores along with her class felt nothing but pride at their work.

"Not only did we reach our goal, but then some! What a wonderful way to cap off my senior year at Frankfort," Smores said. "Go Hot Dogs!".

#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing Champion: Tzintly Angulo, Lexington

Five individual titles. Three winning relays. Four broken records. 504 points. All of these factors aided the Sheridan County High School girls' swimming team's Fox River Classic Conference first place win. On April 10, the Longhorns competed head to head with schools across the state. Senior Brandy Klecka fought for the first place spots in the 200 freestyle (1:54.49) and 50 freestyle (24.07). Coming out on top, Klecka made record times in both events. Also contributing to the championship was Brandy's twin sister, senior Bri Klecka. Named conference swimmer of the year, Bri Klecka matched her sister's awards, breaking two records in the 100-yard freestyle (52.27) and 100 backstroke (57.91).

"Bri had an awesome day and really dominated," Brandy Klecka said. "I was proud of my sister. She rocked it today."

With every good athlete comes an even better coach. Alumni Kari Klecka spends her time coaching her team, and even her twin daughters. With little *deja vu*, coach Klecka was named conference coach of the year.

"I am so proud to be these girls' coach. It is pretty special to coach your own children," Coach Klecka said. "This year has been something I'll never forget."

Only 0.5 of a point separated Sheridan County from Pearson's runner-up spot (503.5). Out of the eleven events, Sheridan County won eight; these events ranged from relays to individual races. The two winning relays consisted of the 200 medley relay, made up of the Klecka twins, Berritt Herr and Kelly Vyskocil (1:52.22), and the 400 freestyle relay, members Erin Schuch, Nadia Perez, Liz Watt, and Brandy Klecka (3:41.64). Two additional events, completed by Schuch, were the 500 freestyle (5:17.65), first place, and 100 butterfly (1:02.60), second place. Pearson's consecutive second place wins secured the Longhorns' win.

"Our team really banded together today. We went into our conference meet with the goal of earning the team championship," Bri Klecka said. "We did it and it was so amazing."

#13 Yearbook Theme Copy Writing Champion: Catthi Pham, Lincoln Pius X

Opening

We watched each other rush to our classes on the first day of school.

We lingered in the halls as we shared our experiences and stories about the school year.

We welcomed in new friendships with open arms.

We proudly cheered on our football team as they sprinted through the homecoming banner.

We quickly drew our phones out of our pockets to film our mascot doing TikTok dances on the sideline during athletic events.

We danced the night away at homecoming, winter formal and prom.

We shouted our fight song in the student section at the game against our rivals from Pacific High School.

We gathered on Culture Appreciation Day to support our diverse student population.

We brought the energy at pep rallies to display our school spirit.

We applauded the speech team as they carried their state trophy through the main door.

We stayed engaged in conversations with our teachers and staff.

We accepted each other, no matter our cultural background or who we were.

Because we are the mighty Patriots.

We all stand together.

We all bleed red, white and blue because that is just

Where We're From.

Sports Divider:

Headline: What we came to do

We came to showcase our talents and prove others wrong.

We came to be fierce competitors for the State title in every athletic program.

We came to represent what it means to be a Eisenhower Patriot.

We came to get the job done.

We came to proudly flaunt our school colors of red, white and blue.

We came to claim glory.

We came to gain new experiences and make new friendships.

We came to make connections and expand our horizons.

We came to win big.

We came to work together to achieve a common goal.

We came to push our limits.

We came to learn leadership and teamwork skills to use in our lives after high school.

We came to make everyone remember our name.

We came to strongly stand together for our school.

Because this is our legacy, and we have to show everyone what we came to do and

Where We're From.

Closing:

We soaked up the fun in the sun at the annual Patriots Day Parade hosted on the football field.

We sat in awe admiring the musical that the fine arts department performed.

We raised 5,000 dollars for the local food pantry at the annual Boo Bash.

We stormed the court after our volleyball team beat our rivals in the Championship game to claim the State title.

We listened intently as the Mental health curriculum was being taught by our guidance counselors.

We expanded our knowledge by taking advantage of the 25 Advanced Placement Courses provided at our school.

We supported our school activities and stayed involved in the community.

We hooted and cheered in the gymnasium as our principal, Mrs. Amara King, received the award for National Principal of the Year.

We proudly watched as our seniors walked across the stage to receive their diplomas.

We waited excitedly for the bell to ring on the last day of school.

We accepted each other, no matter our cultural background or who we were.

Because we are the mighty Patriots.

We all stand together.

We all bleed red, white and blue because that is just

Where We're From.

St. Paul High School Needs to Ditch Their Cell Phone Policy

By Jacie Ambrose

On August 19, 2022, St. Paul High School initiated a new cell phone policy which states that all 9-12 students must place their phones in caddies provided in each teacher's classroom. Students are still allowed to have their cellphones during passing periods and at lunch. By implementing this policy, St. Paul High School Administration hopes to eliminate distraction, but at what cost?

Within St. Paul High School's learning environment, we strive to prepare students for life after they graduate. With the addition of this cell phone policy, students are being robbed of learning opportunities that come with utilizing cell phones in daily life.

St. Paul High School Principal, Jen Hagen, discussed many reasons for the policy: "It became hard for teachers to monitor when students were using them for educational purposes or for personal reasons." She also mentioned: "Most importantly, students need to learn self-control...their future bosses will demand it."

Prior to the policy, while some teachers struggled to monitor phone usage, many staff members addressed cell phone usage how they saw fit in their own classrooms. Teachers such as Matt Koehn-Fairbanks feel as if "students should be treated as adults" learning the responsibility that comes with having a device during class periods.



Senior, Faith Murithi Places her cell phone in a caddy before class Instruction

"STUDENTS SHOULD BE TREATED AS ADULTS"
-MATT KOEHN-FAIRBANKS
SPHS SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

With students having their phones out of reach during the school day, they are not learning self-control tactics that are applicable in today's society.

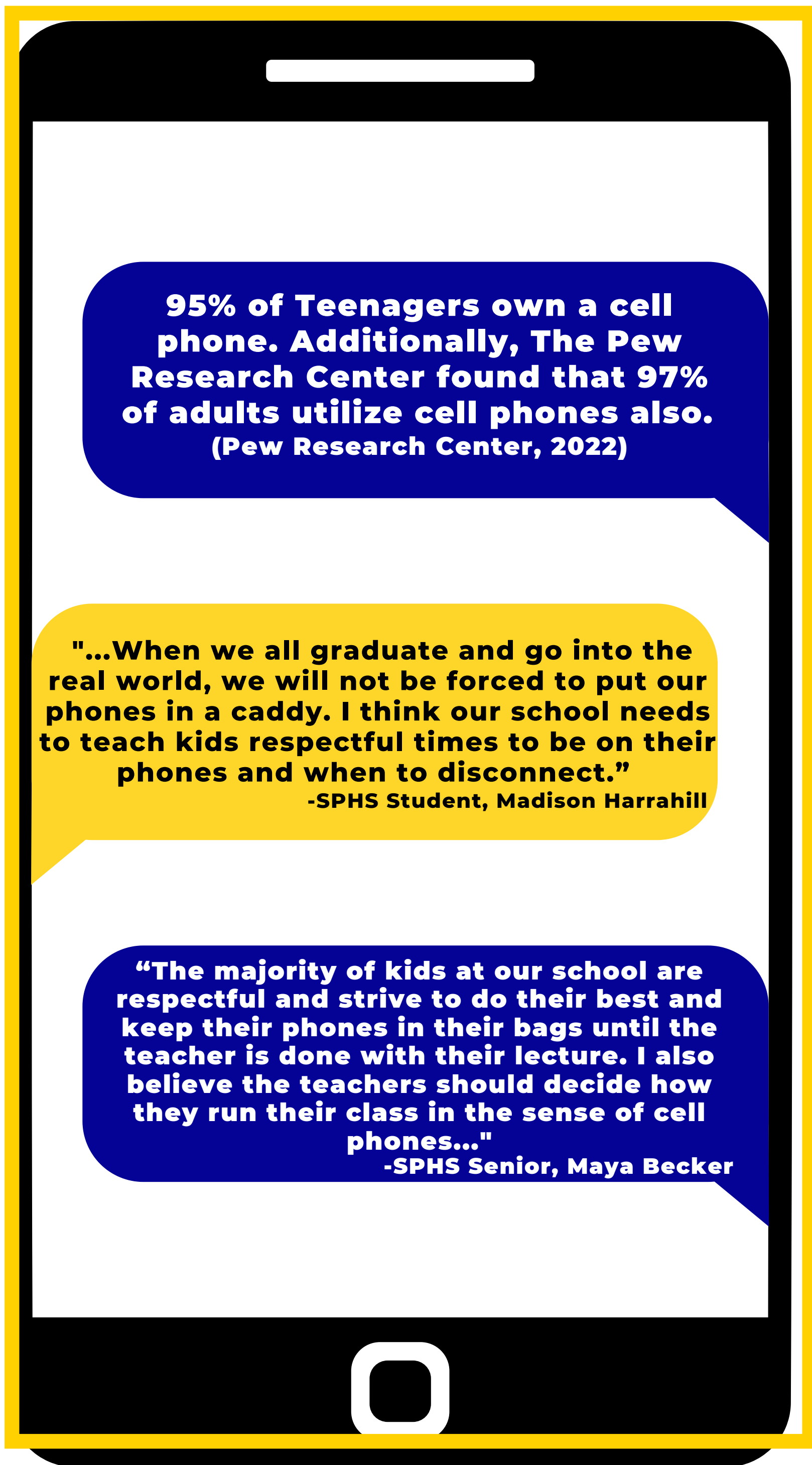
When students graduate and attend college or enter the workforce, their professors and bosses will not require them to place their phones in caddies. So, students will be left with this new-found freedom but not the skills on how to focus while still possessing their devices.

If this policy were discarded, students would have the ability to develop the valuable skill of concentration while having their cell phones throughout the day. Most importantly, this skill would be fostered in high school and not hit as a harsh reality for students after graduation.

A study conducted by the Pew Research Center surveyed 1,316 teenagers from April 14 to May 4, 2022, and discovered that 95% of them own a cell phone. Additionally, The Pew Research Center found that 97% of adults utilize cell phones also.

Ultimately, cell phones are a part of everyday life. These devices are a vital technological tools and are not going away. Students at St. Paul High School should be taught to use their phones responsibly and to do that, the administration needs to rescind the policy.

Junior, Madison Harrahill, shared her opinion on the newly initiated policy "In my opinion, our school has too strict of a cell phone policy. Something our school strives for is preparing students for their future. When we all graduate and go into the real world, we will not be forced to put our phones in a caddy. I think our school needs to teach kids respectful times to be on their phones and when to disconnect."



Policy Continued

Senior, Maya Becker discussed her disapproval of the policy, "The majority of kids at our school are respectful and strive to do their best and keep their phones in their bags until the teacher is done with their lecture. I also believe the teachers should decide how they run their class in the sense of cell phones. Teachers at our school know what works best for them and they should get to decide what phone policy they want to enforce in their classroom."

Given these reasons and statistics, we conclude that this Cell Phone Policy is failing to equip students for better entering society as adults.. Finally, by removing the Cell Phone Policy, present and future students of St. Paul Public High School will experience positive, life-lasting effects.

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ABORTION
IS A
WOMAN'S
RIGHT!

MY
BODY
MY
CHOICE

Future of Women in America: Roe v. Wade Overturned

By Tara Binte Sharil

A leaked draft of a US Supreme Court opinion on May 2, 2022, forever altered the future of America as the decision of nine Supreme Court Justices sent shockwaves across the country.

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court ruled the ban on abortions to be unconstitutional, thereby legalizing abortions and enforcing Roe v. Wade for years to come.

Then, on May 2, 2022, Politico published a leaked draft of the Supreme Court's decision

to pass Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, which overruled 50 years of abortion rights and overturned the historic Roe v. Wade case. According to NBC News, the Supreme Court verified the leaked draft, and Chief Justice John Roberts called the leak an "egregious breach" of the court's trust.

Throughout the years, both advocates and critics of abortion have debated their legalization. With this historic overruling, discussion over the right to an abortion

has new vigor. Just 24 hours after the draft was leaked, pro-choice supporters quickly stormed the Supreme Court building, expressing anger and despair through protesting and tears while pro-life supporters celebrated a victory as many cheered on the Supreme Court justices for their decision.

Prior to the ruling of Roe v. Wade in 1973, abortion was outlawed throughout the country beginning in the 1880s. Many women who wanted to terminate a pregnancy were forced to travel out of the country to receive an abortion.



An in-depth look at the historic and controversial decision of Roe v. Wade

However, not all women could not afford the luxury to travel abroad, thus resorting in illegal self-induced abortions, also called “back-alley” abortions. According to HISTORY, the number of illegal abortions performed from the 1950s-1960s was estimated from 200,000 to 1.2 million per year.

In 1969, Norma McCorvey, a 22-year-old woman from Texas, wanted to terminate her pregnancy after giving birth to two children who she put up for adoption. McCorvey, unmarried and from a challenging upbringing, resorted to a “back-alley” abortion but was unsuccessful. Due to Texas’s abortion laws, which stated that an abortion could only be provided to save a woman’s life, McCorvey had no access to an abortion, so she sought help from attorneys Linda Coffee and Sarah Weddington.

McCorvey’s 1969 lawsuit was eventually appealed and taken to the US Supreme Court where she was known as “Jane Roe.” After three years of fiery debates and

protests across the country, the Supreme Court struck down the Texas law on January 22, 1973 and legalized abortions throughout the country in a 7-2 decision.

Justice Harry Blackmun wrote the majority opinion declaring that a woman’s right to an abortion is protected by the 14th Amendment in the right to privacy.

Roe v. Wade became one of the most influential Supreme Court rulings in US history, triggering years of political debates. States across the country implemented state laws regulating abortions. Many democratic states, such as California and Illinois, eased their abortion laws, while in contrast, many republican states, such as Alabama and Arkansas, restricted the right to an abortion, making it difficult for women to seek the procedure.

Many cases have challenged the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, most notably, Planned Parenthood v. Casey. In 1988 and 1989,

Pennsylvania law restricted access to abortion, and pro-choice supporters felt these restrictions were a violation of the rights protected by the former Roe v. Wade ruling. On June 29, 1992, the Supreme Court reasserted its rulings while also supporting most of Pennsylvania’s abortion laws. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court instilled a new standard in determining a state’s ability to restrict abortions.

Planned Parenthood v. Casey and other similar cases have failed to overturn the ruling of Roe v. Wade until Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization was introduced. In 2018, Mississippi passed the “Gestational Age Act,” which prohibited abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, the last abortion clinic in Mississippi, challenged this law, and, on June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court passed Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, officially overturning Roe v. Wade and abandoning almost 50 years of precedent.



PRO-CHOICE

Since the Supreme Court's leaked draft overturning Roe, many women share a growing concern over their right to bodily autonomy.

In a recent poll by Gallup, 55% of women consider themselves pro-choice, up 6% from the previous year. History teacher Melissa Peterson shares her response discusses the meaning behind the term "pro-choice."

"In general although not everyone falls into this belief, pro-choice is a group of people that believe women should have autonomy," Peterson said. "They should be able to make a decision about their own body without the government being involved."

Recently, there has been a wider audience for the pro-choice movement amongst teenagers and adults. According to a Gallup poll, there is an 8% increase in women ages 18-34 having pro-choice beliefs from May 2021-May 2022. Among this demographic is senior Piper Connelly. Connelly's abortion beliefs first stemmed from her love in politics. As she has great ambitions to become a politician in the future, Connelly researches timely issues that have great concern in the world and this brought her to the messy world of abortion rights.

"The more research I've done about Roe v. Wade, the more I realize that it's nobody's business but your own what you do with your body, and that's true for anything," Connelly said. "It's your choice and it's your life and nobody should be telling you what you should do with your life."

Many pro-choice believers align with the "my body, my choice" mantra as a demand to get their right to bodily autonomy back. With the access to abortions limited, many pro-choice believers feel that their future is at stake. Another pro-choice believer in Elkhorn North, who asked to remain anonymous, shares her overwhelming concern for her future. For the sake of avoiding confusion, this student will be given the alias "Sophie."

"It (the overturn of Roe v. Wade) has definitely made me feel concerned about my future and not because I plan on getting an abortion, but because my rights are literally getting taken away

from me and that is terrifying," Sophie said. "It makes me think, what's next? My voting rights? My right to a lawyer in

the court of law? It also makes me worried for my future children. It made me question if I even want to bring children into this world under such cruel injustice."

With the availability of abortions growing slimmer and slimmer, many reflect on how the access to an abortion was like prior to the overrule of Roe.

"In my opinion, I feel that having that 'blanket law' was enough because it made it legal to have an abortion. It undeniably said that you can have an abortion if you want one," Connelly said. "Although I think more work could've been done in terms of government facilities and giving abortions to women, I think that, as a whole, access to an abortion was sufficient enough before the overturn of Roe v. Wade."

It was no surprise that both Connelly and Sophie felt an immense wave of distress and anger when their right to an abortion was taken away by the government.

"The overturn of Roe v. Wade left me absolutely devastated. It left me shocked that men who are not educated on the subject had the power to take away the rights of every single woman/non binary in the US," Sophie said. "It feels like we are going back in time when women had no rights over anything. Not only is it a step back for women but it's a step backwards for America because more minorities could lose their rights as well."

Similar to Sophie, Connelly expresses her growing concern about the recent overrule of Roe.

"The day the decision came out, I was sobbing. It's terrifying to me because the government said that these nine judges, sitting in the court, get to decide how my life gets to be lived," Connelly said. "If I get pulled into an alley and get raped and find out I'm pregnant, it's now illegal for me to abort that pregnancy. I don't have that security that if something bad happens to me, I won't be able to take away that damage."

With the future for women in America changed indefinitely, many pro-choice believers question their "equality" as what they believe their

constitutional right getting taken away. With the Supreme Court's official overturn, it is now up to the states to decide whether or not to legalize abortions in their state.

According to Nature, several states, such as Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, have placed "trigger bans" meaning that as soon as Roe was overturned, they officially banned abortions. Other states, such as California, New York and Maryland continue to keep abortions legal and have even further opened up options for the procedure, inviting women who are unable to get access to an abortion to seek help in these states.

With the Supreme Court's disputed overturned decision reign the country, many pro-choice believers continue to fight for their right to an abortion.



Connelly and Mackenzie Reidy participate in a pro-choice protest during the summer of 2022.

Photo Courtesy of Piper Connelly

MY BODY MY CHOICE

Graphic by Tara Binte Sharil



Photos courtesy of *The New York Times*

Though 55% of women identify as pro-choice, there is also a significant number of women with pro-life beliefs. Gallup states that 39% of women believe they are pro-life. With the pro-life argument now in the spotlight, it is vital to discuss what it means to be pro-life and how the overturn of Roe will affect the future of these pro-life supporters.

"Pro-life believers are people who strongly believe that life should be protected. So a woman, unless there is some extreme circumstance, should not be able to have an abortion, what often times they think as commit murder to an unborn child," Peterson said.

A person's own belief will always stem from something whether it is being influenced by a friend or reading an article about the issue. Beliefs on abortion are not any different. One student, who wishes to be anonymous, shared where her abortion beliefs originated. For the sake of avoiding confusion, this student will be given the alias "Sarah."

"My beliefs started from what my religion itself has taught me," Sarah said. "I view abortion as wrong but there is circumstances where I know it should be used whether it be because of rape or because the mother is not medically able to give birth without complications."

Like Sarah, the beliefs of many pro-life supporters stem from religion. In a study conducted by PEW Research, followers of several religions do not agree on the basis of abortions, including Catholics (47% against abortions), Evangelical Protestants (63% against abortions), and Mormons (70% against abortions).

While many pro-life supporters refer to religion, others believe that abortions are morally wrong and that abortions are viewed as murder on an unborn fetus.

One student at Elkhorn North, who also wishes to stay anonymous, aligns with this belief. For the sake of avoiding confusion, this student will be given the alias "Kate."

"My take on abortion is very mixed as there is no yes or no answer for me," Kate said. "Personally, I believe that every baby is innocent no matter who their parents are, they start with a clean slate. I have seen how abortions take place and they aren't pleasant for the mother and especially not the child. I am Pro-Life, however under circumstances of rape or medically suggested."

In response to the pro-choice mantra "my body, my choice," many pro-life supporters state that abortion isn't a choice for women as they impact both a woman and an unborn child. Abortions are seen as inhumane and the act is committing murder on an unborn child.

According to WebMD, a woman can seek an abortion three different ways based on how far along the mother is in her pregnancy: abortion medication, suction abortion, and dilation and extraction abortion.

Though the pro-life supporters triumph over their victory of the overturning,

PRO-LIFE

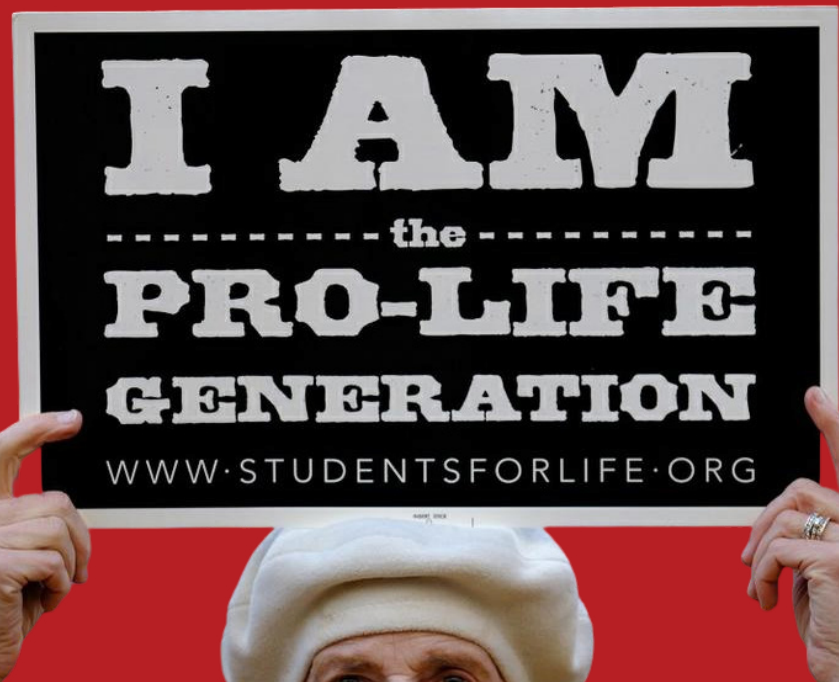
some such as Sarah and Kate, share some clouded concern with the new ruling.

"I was unsure of how I felt at first," Sarah said. "Obviously I am happy that there will be places where abortions won't be legal, but I am concerned this will start unsafe abortions and won't give access to abortions to people who medically need it."

Like Sarah, Kate voices similar concerns.

"It's made me a little concerned about my future, because without the legalization of abortion, those that have been raped or medically unable, won't have access to a safe and monitored abortion" Kate said.

While many pro-life supporters celebrate the overturn, many still question the overall effect of overturning the ruling of Roe v. Wade.





Since the original ruling of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, the issue of abortion has had a prominent place in the political scope for many years. Those siding as pro-choice or pro-life are in a political tug-of-war.

"Abortion is something the Republican party has been working on overturning for many years," Peterson said. "It's just been with the three Trump appointments to the Supreme Court that they had the power to make a change, (since) there hasn't been a conservative enough Congress to overturn *Roe v. Wade*."

Government officials arguing over abortion rights has caused waves of protesting across Washington D.C., local towns, and even amongst loved ones who share opposing viewpoints on abortions. With abortion being such a problematic topic in the country, it can be difficult to stay open-minded about opposing beliefs.

"I don't act differently towards people who have opposite views," *Kate* said. "Everyone has their own experiences and things that they have been through and I have no place to tell them that what they believe in is wrong just because it's not like my views."

With the tension in the country currently, especially regarding controversial issues, it can be difficult to talk about sensitive topics. Many worry about creating conflict between people and their beliefs. However, there is a plus side to discussing these delicate topics.

"At the congressional advisory, I talked to our representative Congress Don Bacon about abortion rights in America," *Connelly* said. "He obviously doesn't agree with me and will never agree with me. But I had a really great conversation with him about abortion rights and we both were able to give facts about abortions."

"By the end of the conversation, we both had more knowledge about abortion than we did when we walked in and that's because we're both willing to set aside our differences and just purely look at it at a human standpoint rather than a one-sided standpoint."

In the wake of the overturn, President Joe Biden has signed an executive order that allows women to travel out of state to receive an abortion on August 3, 2022, according to CNN while the Supreme Court continue to enforce their overturn in the country.

As the government butt heads with each other about the issue, tension between pro-choice and pro-life have never been greater. Unless a solution is found, division between the two sides will continue to grow rapidly.

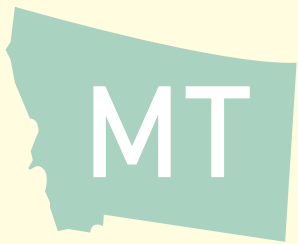


CURRENT 2022 MIDTERM RESULTS ON ABORTION ⁴¹

Updated as of November 2022

- ✓ Having abortion access on the ballot proved to be very vital in the 2022 midterms as the Democratic party witnessed an increase in support while the Republican party's "red wave" was weakened.
- ✓ According to the preliminary results of the national and state exit polls conducted for CNN and other news networks by Edison Research, about 27% of voters cited abortion as their main concern.

Information from CNN



Montana voters rejects abortion measures that would allow criminal penalties on health care providers



Vermont voters voted to back abortion rights even with abortion being legal at all stages in Vermont



California voters voted to put abortion rights in state constitution.



Kentucky voters rejected a proposal that would amend the state's constitution to say that it does not "secure or protect a right" to abortion or the funding of abortion.



Michigan voters voted to enshrine abortion rights which will help block a decades-old abortion ban from taking in effect



- A patient must receive state-directed counseling that includes information designed to discourage the patient from having an abortion, and then they must wait 24 hours before the procedure will be provided.

- Abortion is covered in insurance policies for public employees only in cases of life endangerment.

- The use of telemedicine to administer abortion medication abortion is prohibited.

- An abortion may only be performed at 20+ week post-fertilization (22 weeks after the last menstrual period) in cases of life endangerment or severely compromised health.

- The parent of a minor must consent before an abortion is provided.

WHAT, LIKE IT'S HARD?

Senior Emily Miler channels her inner Elle Woods on stage.

By Ellie Kennington and McKenna Ostler



Emily Miller makes her debut as Elle Woods in the first live performance.

Photo by McKenna Ostler

The lights are dimmed, the curtains are drawn, and the audience waits in anticipation for the entrance of the Legally Blonde cast.

The auditorium transformed into Delta Nu Sorority house, the campus of Harvard University, and the hair salon "Hair Affair." Director and choir teacher Casey Allen selected the popular 2001 movie as the 2022 musical production.

The movie revolves around a blonde sorority girl named Elle Woods as she enters the world of Harvard Law School. Over the past several months, senior Emily Miller transformed into her role as Elle.

"When I looked at my notifications I realized the cast list was out," Miller said. "My jaw completely dropped and I was filled with pure excitement and then felt nervous."

Elle Woods is the epitome of a sorority girl and surrounds herself with everything bright and pink. Miller auditioned for Elle knowing she already had a lot in common with the naturally happy and outgoing, bubbly role.

"A lot of my personality was already like Elle. We spent more time at the auditorium than at home and I kind of became her without trying," Miller said. "I was finally able to get into the headspace that these lines were Elle's, not Emily's. It was all a part I was playing on stage."

To prepare, Miller spent her after school hours working in the auditorium with Allen and then with a vocal coach to perfect her technique for her many solos throughout the show. She also made room in her schedule to study the original film.

"I can't even tell you how many times she watched the movie Legally Blonde," senior Sydney Keller said. Keller acted alongside Miller as fitness authority Brooke Wyndham.

Elle is a bit more sassy than sweet Miller who put in the hard work to bring Elle's spunky personality to life.

It was crucial for Miller to remain in good health through production and performing as there was no understudy cast for Elle.

"It is really tricky to cast a show of this size," Allen said. "We didn't necessarily have the number of students to put an understudy to every role, and we didn't want to bet on something happening to our cast - so we decided to work with whatever happens, and know that our students are talented enough and able to step up to the plate if we needed to put somebody in."

Miller used this as an extra boost of motivation to set good routines and maintain her energy while continuing to fulfill her duties in other parts of her life.

"I think something that was huge is that I prioritized small homework breaks so I didn't overwork myself and family time was so important," Miller said. "I also made it a priority to make sure I ate breakfast and lunch with lots of water to make sure that I was taking care of my physical health."





Cast members spent an average of four hours each day across ten weeks learning, practicing, and perfecting the show. This time commitment can be very physically and emotionally draining.

"I know this role has made Emily step out of her comfort zone a lot. She has truly grown into the role and been such a leader of our cast," Allen said. "I could not be more proud of how she has gotten into this character and how much she has grown as an actor, singer, and performer during this show."

Miller is a leader in the choir department; she has been a member of show choir each year of high school and was selected for the 2022 All State Choir.

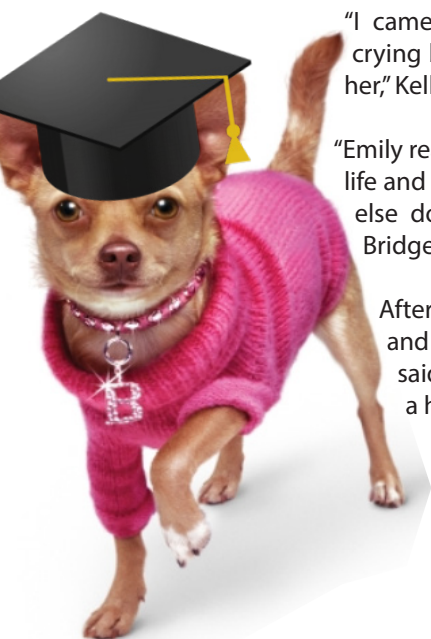
"Emily was always nice and inclusive," sophomore Maddy Tillman said. "Being the lead didn't change that."

Opening night brings a lot of feeling for the cast: jitters, anxiety, eagerness, and excitement as they prepare to finally show off all they've worked towards over the past several months.

"It's exciting really," Junior Sammy Eckstrom said. "We finally get to perform for an audience instead of empty seats and we feed off their energy. Emily had her stuff down, and she was ready."

"Opening night was so nerve wracking," Miller said. "I have performed in front of an audience that big before, but never with all the attention all on me."

As the show ended, the audience rose to their feet clapping and cheering with excitement.



"I came into the dressing room crying because I was so proud of her," Keller said.

"Emily really brought Elle Woods to life and I couldn't imagine anyone else doing a better job," senior Bridget Swan said.

After giving her blood, sweat, and tears to this show, Miller said "I would do it all again in a heartbeat."



Mia Steiger's role as Paulette comforts Emily Miller's role as Elle Woods about her boy troubles.
Photo by McKenna Ostler



Emily Miller as Elle Woods celebrates her first trial win.
Photo by McKenna Ostler



Emily Miller as Elle and Colin McMahon as Emmett celebrate their engagement with a kiss.
Photo by McKenna Ostler



For my illustration, I wanted to make the Basketball boys stand out during home games. I went with neon styles as I felt it would mix well with the sport they are in. I use our school's colors to make it more perfect to represent Gering and to the players.

#18 Sports Action Photography Champion: Lily Scott, Gering





#19 News Feature Photography Champion: Pamela Castaneda Martinez, Ralston





A little Bit Naughty

CAST MEMBERS STEAL SCENES IN THE SHOW



STRIKE A POSE. Senior ISAAC LEE pretends to take a photo of sophomore NEVAEH PARKER during a scene. Photo by Andrew Creek



SCHOOL RULES. Senior LOGAN PIKOP and sophomore KING BARNETT introduce Matilda's school to the audience during a song. Photo by Andrew Creek



NOT SO TASTY. Sophomore ALONZO CARMICHAEL-CERVANTEZ is forced to eat chocolate cake as punishment for stealing cake in the middle of the show. Photo by Andrew Creek



KIDS THESE DAYS. Junior VINCENT BROWN plays Mrs. Trunchbowl and sings a song about misbehaving children. Photo by Andrew Creek

JUNIORS TAKE THE STAGE IN "MATILDA: THE MUSICAL"

Life's Sweeter with a little Miss Honey

The lights dimmed. The audience quieted. The curtain finally opened. It was the theater department's first show after the graduation of ten seniors last year. The cast was young, but they were ready.

"The class of 2022 took up a lot of space in our department" junior CASSIDY CULJAT said. "They occupied roles that helped our department run, and a lot of people were unsure about how our troupe would function after they were gone."

Culjat played the beloved teacher Miss Honey in Roald Dahl's "Matilda the Musical." She was joined by junior J'OVIE ALBENO and sophomore EMILY CROSS in leading roles.

"[We] focused on improving our individual performances," junior JOVIE ALBENO said. "We all tried really hard to ensure that we could make up for the big loss of people."

The cast and crew used Matilda as a starting point for regaining confidence and forming a group dynamic as a new team.

"When I'm looking back on high school in the future, I'm not going to remember the lines I had to memorize or the size of every audience," Culjat said. "The things I'm going to remember most are the relationships I've started, the knowledge that I've gained from being around such a diverse, interesting group of people, and the memories that we have all been able to make together because of theater." Story by Andrew Creek

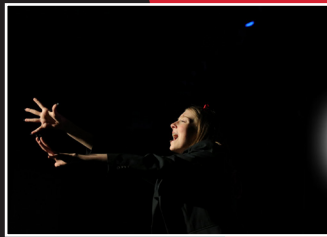
GET TO KNOW THE CAST BEHIND THE ICONIC FAMILY

Meet the Wormwood Family

WE ARE REVOLTING. Sophomore EMILY CROSS played the lead role of Matilda, and her evil scene-stealing parents were played by junior J'OVIE ALBENO and senior NALA JACKSON-HARRINGTON.

"Matilda" was like nothing I've ever played before," Cross said. "Her emotions were so complex. She could be extremely happy and proud one moment then very sad and despaired the next. There was a lot of pressure to make sure the message of the story got across to the audience, but it was so much fun. I'm so grateful I got to play her." Cross played a leading role as a freshman last year in the production of "Urinetown." In that show, she also played an elementary-aged girl.

Photos by Pam Martinez, Andrew Creek and Kelsey Bentzinger



#21 Yearbook Theme Development Champions: Mia Arnold, Breanna Harpold, Scottsbluff

Theme: Paws & Rewind

Included in this package

Cover: InDesign Creation

Pages FE1&FE2: Front Endsheets

Page 1: Title Page

Pages 2 & 3: Opening Spread

Pages 34 & 35: Sophomore Class Spread

Pages 84 & 85: Football Spread

Pages 124 & 125: Academics & Organizations Division Spread

Pages 138 & 139: Art Spread

Pages 174 & 175: Advertisements Division Spread

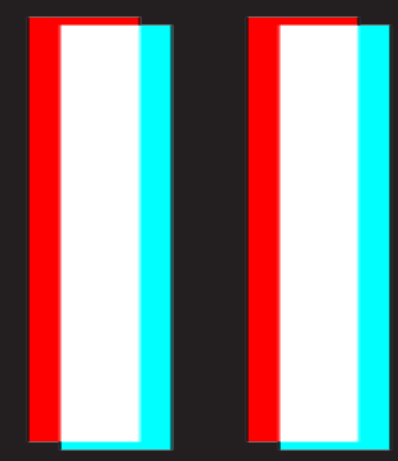
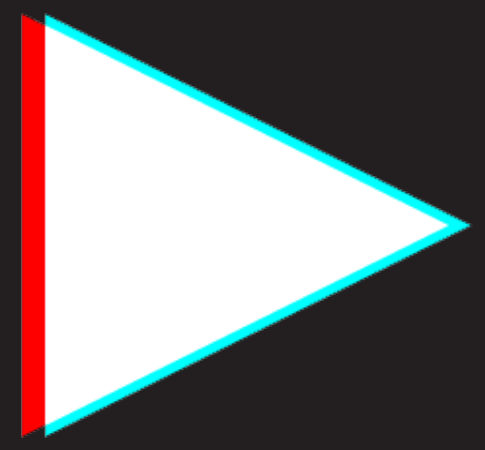
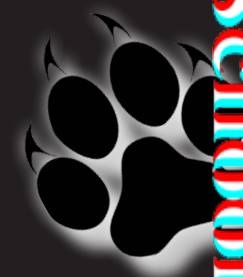
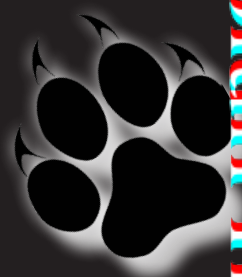
Theme Overview:

This year, we wanted to stop (or pause) to take a look at all of our school's accomplishments this year, and we wanted to look back (rewind) to consider how we have gotten here and the accomplishments of our students and our school in the past. Or as we look to the future (fast forward) and think about where we aim to end up. We continue to remember all of the awards and trophies we won, but we never forget the real reward, the memories. We chose to use the theme Paws and Rewind for the 2023 yearbook because we thought it takes everything we stand for at this high school and puts it into one phrase. The theme Pause and Rewind allows us to incorporate all of our students, from our athletes to mathletes, the lessons we sit through or the lessons we learn, the memories we leave behind or the ones we take with us. Once we thought of our theme, we chose the design elements that we thought encompassed what we truly think makes Scottsbluff everything we desire. We decided to not only include pause, play, fast forward, and rewind, but we decided to include the bearcat paw. This is important to us because it ties everything together. It shows our bearcat pride. We also included a glitch theme to encapsulate a modern and trendy theme, and show off some of our students favorite moments that make them feel as though they are in a movie. Our school is a movie and in it, everyone is the main character. In order to really bring this theme to life we decided to also include our favorite student section moments, the moments we wish we could pause and rewind.

Paws & Rewind

2023 Bluff Scottsbluff High School

Vol. 109



People

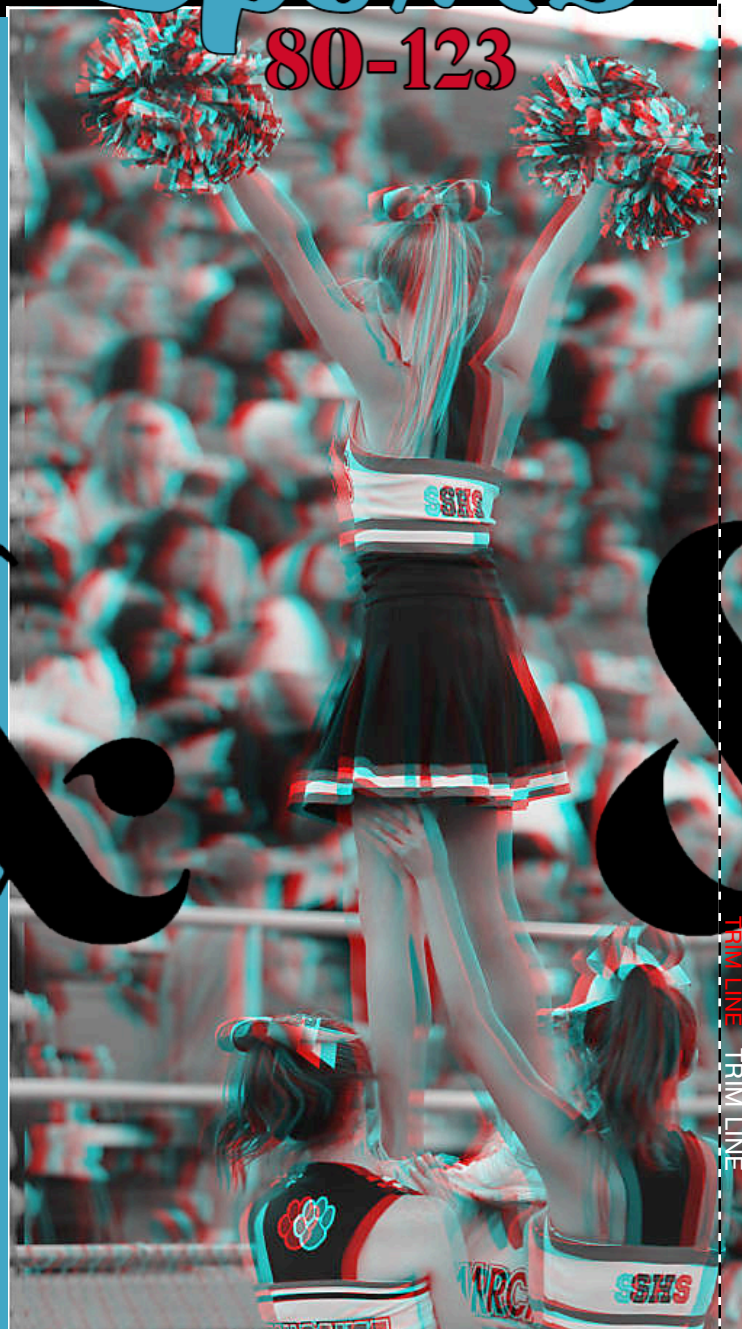
1-79



Braden Anderson, 12, cheers loudly inside the student section. "I'm going to miss all my friends and the families I was able to make and be in within all of the activities," said Anderson.

Sports

80-123



Kasie Horn, 9, cheers in the at the top of the pyramid during the football games cheering loudly. "My favorite part about being in cheer is the relationships with the girls and being apart of another family.

▶ **Playing
our
parts**

◀ **Rewind to
see our
success**

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Clubs

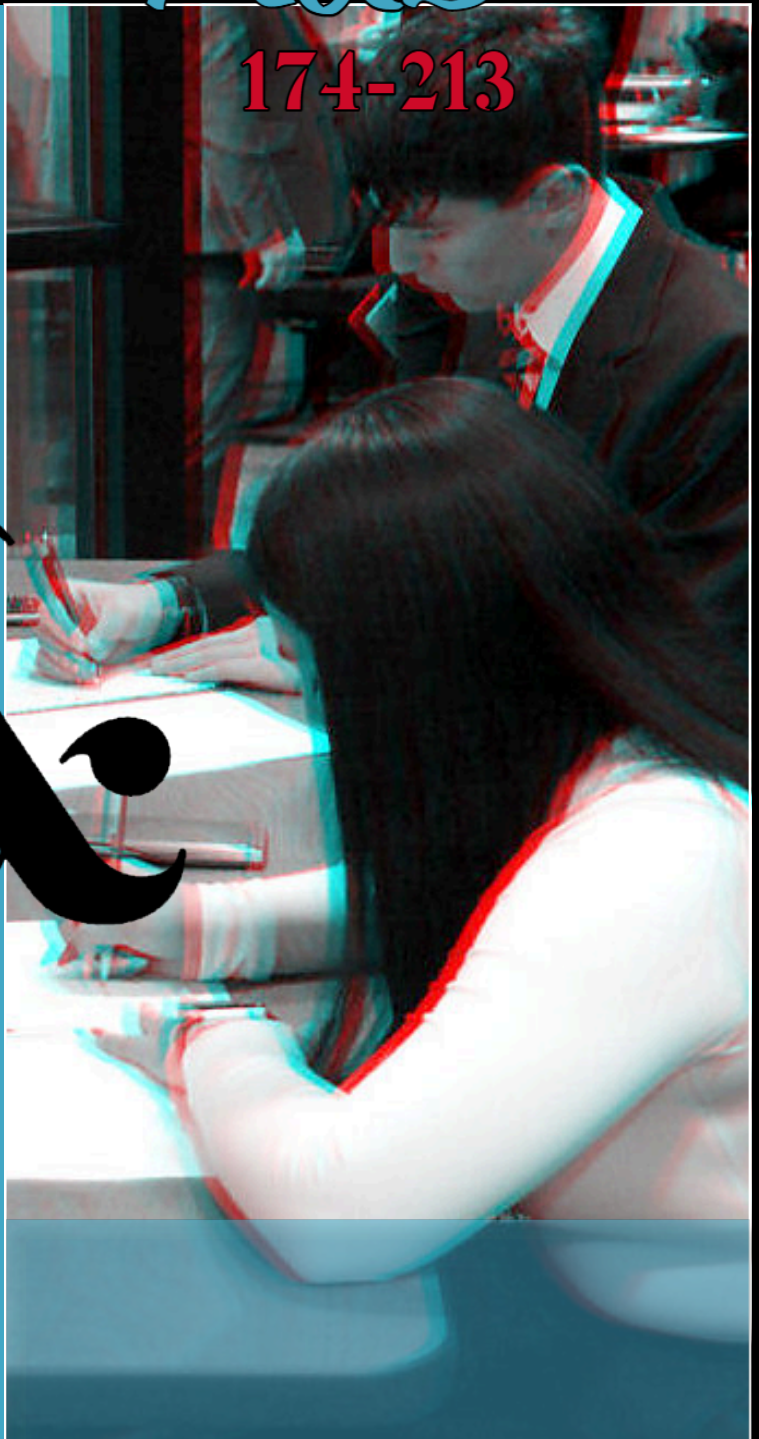
124-173



Jenna Buck, 12, Sings her heart out during the Old West Choir Competition. "My favorite part of being in choir is the friendships and getting to sing because I'm good at it," said Buck.

Ads

174-213



Pause to
take in the
moment

Fast
forward to
the future

Power & Rewind

2023 Bluff
Scottsbluff High School
313 East 27th Street
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308.635.6230
Student Enrollment: 990
Staff: 70
School Website:
<https://www.sbps.net>

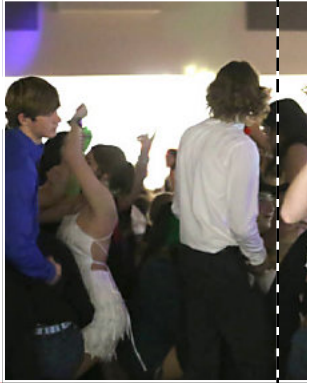
HAT NIGHT. The student section cheers on the volleyball players at their home game against Gering. Photo by Eliyah Lara.



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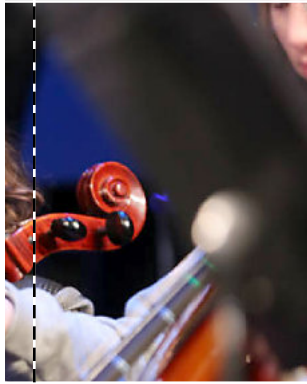


Paws Rewind

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As the year goes by, the students of SHS **pause** and think about the accomplishments and events that happen throughout the year.

They **rewind** back to times during summer vacation of happy lake days under the glimmering sun or think of times spent cheering within the stands.

The freshmen try to **fast forward** through their first year of high school as they tackle assignments and tests, while the seniors rewind though memories and try to **pause** and make the most of their last year at SHS.

The coaches of SHS try to help **them** play their best games in order to make it to state and be champions of the school.

The players **replay** their game footage to try and become better athletes and work on their skills.

The library houses many busy students studying hard for their upcoming exams and even some who **pause** there to take a relaxing breath during their busy day.

The school parking lot is constantly crammed with students trying to **fast forward** their way home from school each day at 3:25pm.

Everyday the hallways are full of students **pausing** to talk to friends while passing by teachers who greet them with smiling faces.

Towards the end of the year as the seniors prepare to walk across the football field during graduation all the students and staff can't help but **rewind** across the school year and all the fantastic memories made here at SHS.

SOPHOMORES

Chloe Adamson
Cruz Alarcon
Alexandria Allen
Bailee Anaya
Clayton Anderson



Ayden Apodaca
Yasmine Arias
Keagan Arnold
Alexia Arriaga Lopez
Brandon Baker



Tehya Baldwin
Kyle Ballinger
Dawson Barrett
Sara Barrios
Alina Barron



Abigail Barth
Eisley Beeson
Blaise Belgarde
Alexander Bello Ortega
Aubrey Blair



Julius Blanco
Linnea Bleisch
Kian Blomstedt
Austin Bosche
Kayla Bowles



Margo Bowles
Cody Bradley-Wilson
Maddison Brown
Taylor Bruce
Trista Brunner



Brody Burgess
Joslyn Campos
Benito Campos Galindo
Eugenia Canales
Bianca Cantu



REWIND



REFLECT



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Admit One



Lucas Carle
Jezriel Castaneda
Shawna Castano
Aviana Castillo
Cadence Castillo



Kyliana Castro
Camden Ceplecha
Emilio Cervantes
Colton Charbonneau
Kyla Cleays



Allison Clodfelter
Adam Cochrane
Aaron Coffman
Isaiah Craig
Dagen Cranmore



Sophia Cushing
Briley Darley
Joslyn Darnell
Aaron Daugherty
Kyliegh De Los Santos



Teegan Debus
Lilian Dewitt
Roberto Diaz Alvarez
Maci Dorshorst
Sarah Duarte




Noah Easton
Emma Eichner
Thomas Eitler
Monica Encinia
Joseph Escamilla Venzor




Kaitlyn Fees
Oscar Felix
Jesse Fleming
Aryn Flores
Jeremy Flores Ramirez


I've drank before.
- Connor Herring




I have Thalassophobia (fear of large bodies of water).
- Eugenia Canales




I do not do my work.
- Elijah Schillereff



I did not learn how to walk until I was 5.
- Sophie Reiber



I was born with an extra toe.
- Christian Peters



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My favorite childhood memory was going on a plane for the first time, and being able to enjoy the experience with my whole family.

- Kian Blomstedt



When my dad would take me hunting, specifically the fist time. I like spending quality time with him. We would go out during winter and spend time together.

- Olivia Krul



The first time I played outside as a toddler would be my favorite memory. I remember having so much fun as a four-year-old on a sunny and warm day.

- Serenity Kephart



Khristian Jiminez, 12
Transferred
From: Mitchell

"I transferred from Mitchell for more Academic Opportunities. Scottsbluff gives you a lot more exposure."



Chance Houser, 11
Transferred
from: Sidney

"My old football program was not as intense as Scottsbluff. They also offer a lot more classes."



Conrad Seier, 12
Transferred from:
Morrill

"My old school wasn't the best at sports and we also had some really bad coaches. Scottsbluff has way better coaches."



Brock Knutson, 12
Transferred
from: Mitchell

"This team has great team captains, leadership, and discipline. Overall way better than my old football program."

SCOREBOARD

Bearcats vs. Pius X.....	26-6
Bearcats vs. North Platte.....	21-14
Bearcats vs. Frederick.....	43-20
Bearcats vs. York.....	20-17
Bearcats vs. Northwest.....	28-21
Bearcats vs. Waverly.....	28-21
Bearcats vs. Hastings.....	35-0
Bearcats vs Gering.....	35-0
Bearcats vs. Lexington.....	55-14
Bearcats vs Plattsmouth.....	54-14
Bearcats vs Skutt.....	33-0
Bearcats vs Gross Catholic..	49-35

WINS - 10
LOSSES - 2



SMILES FOR SACKS. Josiah Mobley, 12 smiles for a picture as Scottsbluff dominates Skutt. "I like being captain a lot, it teaches me a lot of responsibly, and how to be a great mentor," exclaimed Mobley. Photo by Norah Fleming.

Josiah Mobley talks about his love for football

Under the stadium lights, surrounded by cheerleaders, an opposing team, and roaring fans, a football field is engraved with a bright red "S." For Josiah Mobley, 12, this is home.

Mobley's love for football started when he was in elementary school. His dad helped fuel his passion for the sport by always playing catch with him growing up.

"I started playing football when I was a first grader, I had always loved playing football with my dad, my dad was also a great inspiration who led me to play football," Mobley explained.

Mobley had his most successful season during his junior year.

"Last year, we really wanted to show how good we could be. We had so much to prove that drove us to work harder, and we were very successful," Mobley said.

Despite the fact that last year's team was so successful, Mobley, as captain, has seen firsthand that this year the guys have improved to become even better. The team has goals they want to achieve and based on their performance these goals are achievable.

"This year, the team is playing so much harder, and most importantly, practicing harder. We have bigger goals

we want to achieve. Overall, the team is really great this year," Mobley described.

Along with every great team comes room for improvement. Mobley says his team like any other team could always improve, and he believes that improvement would come from giving 100% while playing on the field.

"The team could always improve. We aren't perfect. There are some games where we haven't put in 100%, or when we lose energy through the game, so if we keep moving the whole game we could do even better," Mobley said.

After the annual Red & White game in August, the team took a vote, ending in the football team giving Braden Stull, 12, and Mobley the honorary title of captain.

"I really enjoy being captain, the team hardly needs any encouragement they're really good guys," Mobley explained.

Along with being football captain, Mobley is involved in many other SHS activities. These activities include Wrestling, Track & Field, DECA and Math Club. After high school, Mobley plans on attending college, and then receiving more education to become a physical therapist.



MCDONALD'S KICK. Tallon McDonald, 11, gets ready for kickoff. "Honestly, when I am about to kickoff I just hope I don't mess up," explained McDonald. Photo by Elijah Lara.

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Touchdowns & Transfers

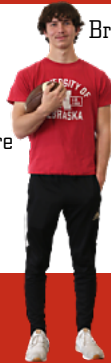
Scottsbluff football players talk why they made the big switch



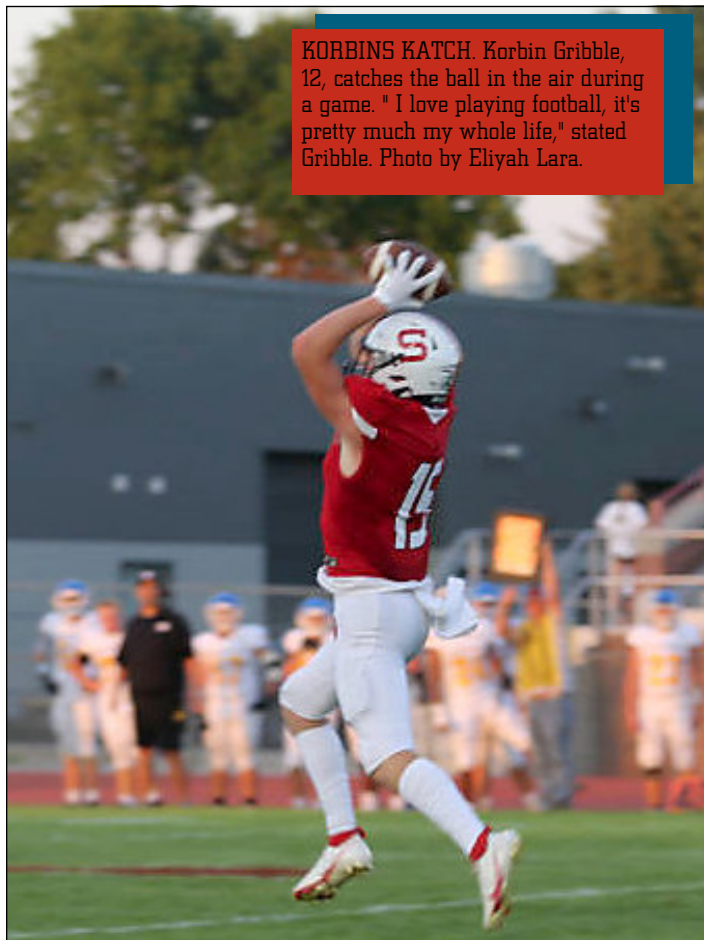
Carter Reisig, 11
Transferred from: Mitchell
"Scottsbluff offers way more college classes, and has great career academies that my old school didn't offer."



Jackson Allen, 12
Transferred from: Mitchell
"This football team is a lot more supportive, and they go into games with a better mentality. Scottsbluff also has more Ag and construction classes."



Braeden Stull, 12
Transferred from: Bridgeport
"I transferred to Scottsbluff because there were more opportunities and I wanted to play football for a great program."



KORBINS KATCH. Korbin Gribble, 12, catches the ball in the air during a game. "I love playing football, it's pretty much my whole life," stated Gribble. Photo by Eliyah Lara.



BEARCAT TAKEDOWN. Apolo Camacho, 11, works with a teammate to take down an opponent. "I just really want to tackle the other guy," said Camacho. Photo by Eliyah Lara.



GO JAKE GO. Jake Abrams, 12, runs through the banner with his team before a game. "All I'm focused on when running is not tripping, but I do enjoy seeing all the fans around the stadium," exclaimed Abrams. Photo by Norah Fleming.



READY FOR A WIN. Jayce Wilkinson, 12, goes up against North Platte. "During the game all I'm focused on is winning, I just want to beat the other team," exclaimed Wilkinson. Photo by Eliyah Lara.



FOCUS ON THE FIELD. Sebastien Boyle, 11, focuses of the game as he stands on the sideline. "Even when I'm not on the field, I stay focused on the game, it's important," explained Boyle. Photo by Norah Fleming.



TOUCHDOWNS WITH TYSON. Tyson Klein, 12, gets ready to help his teammates score a touchdown. "I'm just really focusing on scoring a touchdown," stated Klein. Photo by Eliyah Lara.



WEBB WENT BLANK. Jhett Webb, 10, lines up for kickoff with teammates Cord Symons, 11, and Dawson Barrett, 10. "When I'm on the field my mind goes blank," said Webb. Photo by Eliyah Lara.

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Academics and



Alyssa Mendoza, 12, and Sienna Van Der Veen, 11, dance during the Freshman Orientation. "I remember when I was a freshman and I didn't want other freshman to feel scared about being in a new building so I joined Link Crew," said Mendoza.

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Organizations



SHS takes immense pride in the activities and academic achievements of its students.

Every day, we **pause** to look at each and every student and their participation in the school.

The speech team **pauses** at the end of each meeting to take group pictures with the piles of hard-earned metals. Then, on long bus rides home, they **pause** to relax and unwind after their long trips to class competitions.

The publication students **pause** to take pictures of all the different activities throughout the year, capturing every moment.

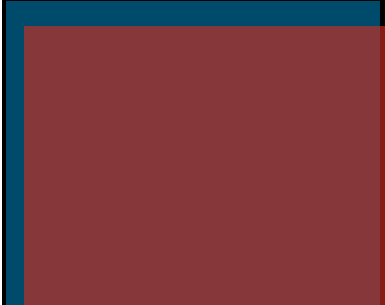
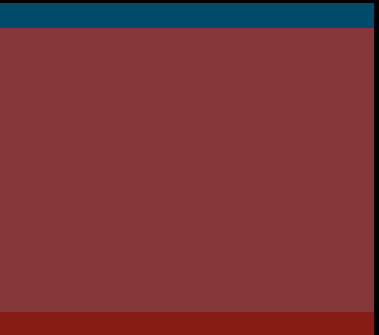
At the end of each show of choir songs, the audience fills the auditorium full of applause as the singers **pause** in place.

At the end of each activity season, the seniors take time to **pause** and reflect on their performances throughout their high school career and all their hard work.

The teachers **pause** and take time to connect with each student as they pass by and stop in their classrooms.

The art students take time to **pause** and look back at their masterpieces as they hang outside the art room. Classmates also take time to **pause** and look at their peer's beautiful artwork as they go to and from classrooms.

No matter where life leads us, the students of SHS can always **pause** and rewind with this yearbook to remember all their hard work and accomplishments.



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Relaxing and Unwinding With Kaedon Patton

Surrounded by his own masterpieces Senior Kaedon Patton, beams with joy, marvelling at his skill and hard work.

Patton has taken numerous art classes throughout his years at SHS while enjoying the stress-free environment the art room provides him.

"I really enjoy being in art classes because they're relaxing and have a calm environment to hang out in," Patton explained.

Time to relax is beneficial to any high school student with a busy schedule and limited time for expression.

"I enjoy how art is stress-free and doesn't limit me creatively," said Patton

Although not every student who takes art classes plans to pursue art in the future, many use the skills they learn to help them later on in their careers.

"I think that I will kinda be able to use some art skills in the future when I take up my career in managing a golf course," Patton said.

Whether art has actually influenced his career choice or not, Patton will always be able to find peace and relaxation in the world of art.



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SELF PORTRAIT. Ava Osborn, 10, poses next to her artwork of a sketch before and after it had been colored. "I made my art style by taking inspiration from my favorite artists including a lot of comics and making it my own," said Osborn.

Ava Osborn, 10



TURNING GREEN. Eleanora McPhail 10, shows off her sketches before and after they were turned green. "I really like art because it's good when I'm stressed out," McPhail said.

Eleanora McPhail, 10



SHAPE MASTER CAL. Cal Heldt, 12, Proudly Stands next to his origami creation. "Origami is a fulfilling hobby for me because I get to use my creativity and math knowledge to make really beautiful and interesting shapes.

Cal Heldt, 12





LAYING BRUSH STROKES. Vanessa Ramos, 10, lays the brush strokes on her water color art work. "I had a passion for art at a younger age and my parents also did art which made me have an interest and passion for it," Ramos said.

BACKGROUND DETAILS. Madison Brown, 10, paints delicate brush strokes on my masterpiece of trees as a background. "I enjoy looking at realistic drawings of people in art to learn more about structure and anatomy of people," said Brown.



WATERCOLOR SKILLS. Hanah Reisig, 10, and Sofia Torresdey, 10, practice water painting skills of scenery. "I enjoy taking art classes because I get the experience of doing art without having to pay," said Reisig.



WATER STROKES. Alexia Arriaga, 10, paints water strokes on paper to add color to. "I like art because it allows me to use my creative mind and be expressive," said Arriaga.



MEASURING POULTRY. El Sell, 12, displays their hand made chicken measuring cups and vase that they carefully constructed. "Doing the assignment I really wanted to make chicken measuring cups for fun," said Sell.



GOOFY DOG. Benjamin Reisig, 12, stands next to his clay replication of his favorite dog. "I decided to make my friends dog Opie because he's goofy and chill making him a perfect model," explained Reisig. Photos by Mia Arnold

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Advertisements



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Allie Darnell, 11, poses on the volleyball float downtown during the homecoming parade. "My favorite part about volleyball is the memories and my friends," said Darnell.



Cruising down Broadway, cars are filled to the brim with happy kids, all giggling and smiling as they race around the cruise route. They **fast forward** past the brightly lit signs of businesses around town.

The kids **pause** in the cruise route to stop at fast foods places to grab a quick bite to eat and **rewind** back into their place on the streets.

The flower shops around Scottsbluff proudly support the kids as they buy dozens of flowers for special events like prom. The students glimmer with their beautiful flowers as they pause to take pictures with their friends.

The photo booth during Winter Royalty allows students to **pause** to take a photo and remember their favorite high school memories.

The students play games during the Pep Rallies, while competing against each other in friendly Bearcat competition.

As the year progresses, the seniors hide away at their favorite places to shop to escape their senioritis, and pause high school for a moment.

Everyone begins their first steps into driving at the local soccer complex where they **fast forward** around corners.

The buses provide transportation for the students to travel around and show different schools what it means to be a Bearcat. On bus rides home the students **pause** and reflect over their hard earned awards and **rewind** over their amazing accomplishments.

No matter where the students of SHS go, they will always know the streets of Scottsbluff will guide them throughout their own journeys into the future.



Jamie Modec, 12, spins round and round during the potato sack race for homecoming. "I'm going to miss the dress up weeks here at SHS the most when I graduate," said Modec.

Lola Quintana, 12, volunteers for the monument marthon "To help out the community and spread positivity through our HOSA Chapter," Said Quintana



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2023 Class B - State Journalism WINNERS – Events #22-#25

#22 Broadcast News Story – Jack Faust, Nicholas Zoucha, Scotus Central Catholic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05G04NIJHcw&t=9s>

#23 Broadcast Sports Survey – Cassie Schlautman, Lincoln Pius X

https://vimeo.com/786673785?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=72252538

#24 Broadcast Feature Story – Ava Cremers, Neleigh Sliva, Scotus Central Catholic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQdHY8rW4Mw>

#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement – Madyson Schley, Gabriella Spellbrink, Northwest

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiW_Ps5rirA

2022-2023

Class C

State
Journalism
Champions



#1 Advertising Champion:
Jacob Morse, Wood River



Dr. Plumpy's

Pumpkin patch

You'll have a gourd time at Dr. Plumpy's

Hours:

Sunday- Thursday

9a.m.-9p.m.

Friday and Saturday

9a.m.- 12.a.m

EST **CORN MAZE** *1982*



Jacob Morse

Call or text- 402-312-1230

#2 Newspaper Column Writing Champion: Kassydi Garvin, Sandy Creek

Kassydi Garvin

Newspaper Column Writing

Class C

High school and Middle School are the hardest six years anyone can go through. Between juggling assignments and activities you also have to fight back against bullies and temptations. Oftentimes students aren't home long enough to eat dinner with their families and they only see their friends once in a blue moon. This can cause students to feel alone and overwhelmed and feel like their life is not worth living. From personal experience, I can say that is the worst feeling anyone can ever feel.

On October 24th, 2022 at 7 pm my best friend, Zak, also felt the same way. He was tired of being an outcast, tired of feeling like all of the work he was doing had little to no reward. Every day Zak woke up feeling useless and unappreciated, and no one even knew. That night, he went and took his own life and didn't tell anyone his plan. No one was there for Zak when he was struggling to make it through the day and no one was there for him when he was at his weakest moment.

There will always be bullies, an overwhelming amount of assignments, and a schedule that's nearly impossible to handle. Having someone who is truly there for you through it all is the most efficient way to fix these issues. Schools need to have a mental health counselor on staff and on duty at all times, just like a principal. You never know when someone is at their lowest of lows or just needs a friend. Having a counselor will give students the opportunity to feel appreciated and gain a sense of belonging.

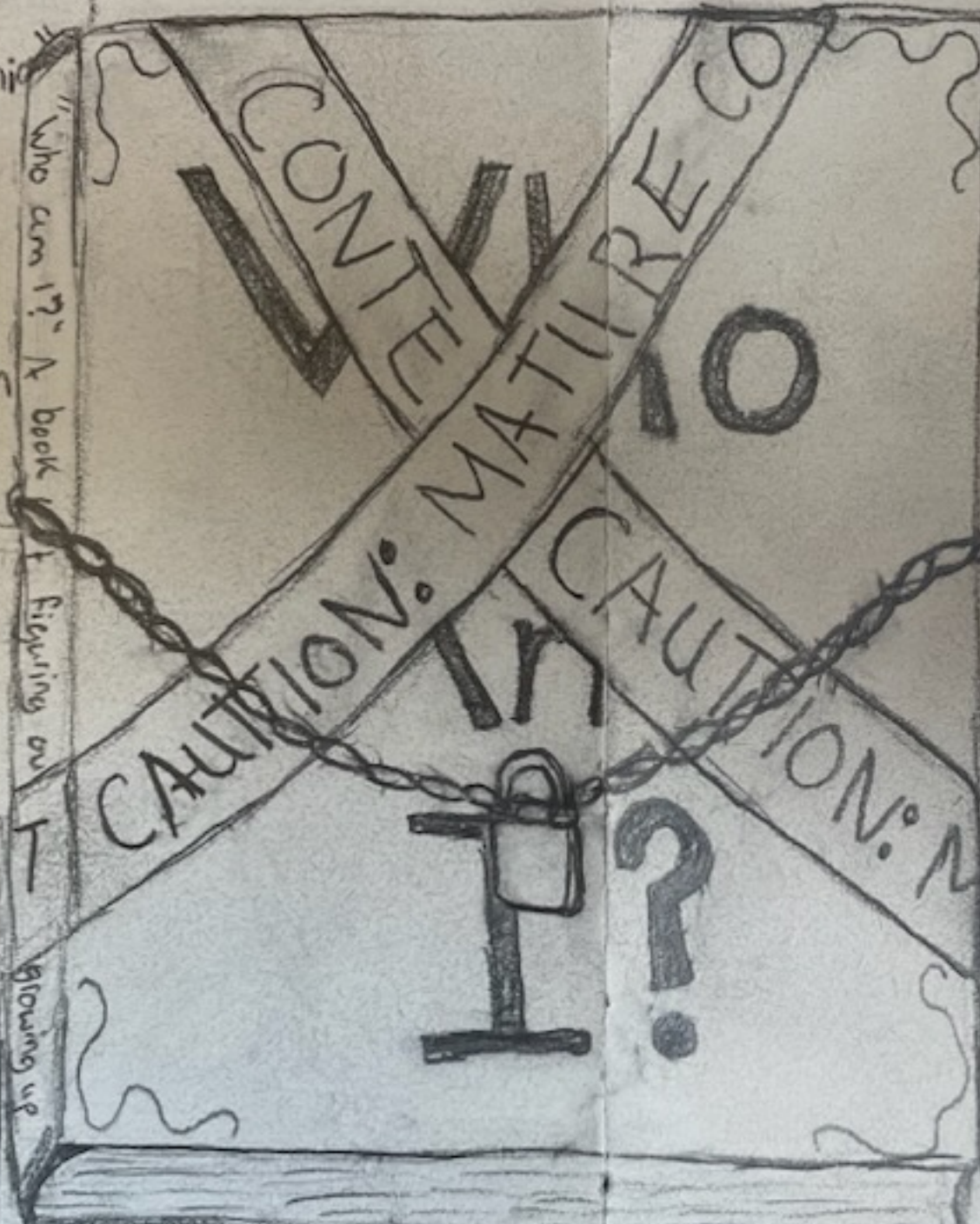
A counselor will be someone who students feel safe with, someone who will actually listen when they need it the most. Students will finally have someone they can go to and actually

be able to work through their problems. They no longer will have to feel like no one is there for them, instead, they will have someone who is looking out for their best. Someone who students trust and be able to find a solution so they can get back to their lives.

No one was there for Zak when he needed it the most, he had no one to stop him because no one knew. He didn't have a counselor who could have seen the signs before it was too late. Instead of continuing to have students feel like they don't belong, give them someone whose, only responsibility is turning that around.

Newly Banned Books

- "My changing body"
- "Who Am I?"
- "Henry has two mommies"
- "Understanding my emotions"
- "The lonely puppy"
- "How to deal with my emotions"



Just in:
 "Who Am I?" a popular book among adolescents is now banned in schools across the country. "I believe for the sake of a school."

Facebook: What's New?

Christy Halson

I think banning this book the right decision! I would never let my kids read this trash!

14♥

Angie Tanner

What about what the kids want? They should get to choose what they read!

Stop banning our books!!

Choose what I read!!

We Want our books back!!

Let us READ!!
 - Children of Northbend

Parents for the book

Teagan Jarosik

Lunch Account Policy

School for many kids can be the place they feel most safe. Policies put in place should support this feeling among students. At Los Santos High School, putting in the policy to stamp the hands of students who have negative balances is not the right solution to getting negative lunch account balances paid. By looking at how this could poorly affect the children, how people around us have responded, and other solutions that could be more beneficial, one can see that this is not the right policy to put into the school system.

For many families, paying things such as school lunches can be a struggle. Now, if this was you, I'm sure you wouldn't want everyone to know what you struggle with. Having this stamp on the kids' hands can have detrimental effects. They can feel embarrassed that they don't have their lunch payed like some of the other kids. It can also make it a lot easier to be picked on. As a school system, your number one goal should be promoting a nice, bully-free zone to learn. Putting these kids on the spot out in front of everyone with money issues contradicts this goal. The kids may also start to feel that they need to worry about money issues. This is not something kids need to be worrying about, especially at school.

Many people have spoken up about this policy; including people within the school system and outside of it. Dr. Rodger Atwood, the superintendent, said "I am passionate about providing my community with a balanced budget. Many times parents forget to pay their lunch bill, so we hope this will serve as a reminder to do so." The students at the school do not need to reminder, the parents do. The superintendent should be thinking of some other way to get this reminder to the parents, not through the child. Tyler Matthews, a parent, said "This is an excellent policy change. It's gonna help our town get out of debt. If bills exist they need to be

paid. It's called being an adult." This statement is very condescending. Even adults can struggle. Money problems within families should not be everyone else's business, and should be taken care of privately. Sherry Smith, a parent, said "As a single mother of three high school children, I am sometimes unable to stay on top of my lunch balances. Putting a stamp on a student is going to do nothing except single them out to their peers. Why makes my child pay for my financial issues?" This parents hits every point right on the dot. Sometimes it can be hard for parents to be financially stable, and that is something that can solely be talked about with the school and parent. No child should have to be the middle man for these types of situations.

There are many solutions to make this policy better. We should choose a solution that is not detrimental to the mental health and wellness of the students. One solution is to directly call the parents if their is an issue, and offer some type of plan to get the lunch balances figured out. This could be something such as payments here and there. Another solution would be sending home a letter with the student to give to their parents. In the letter could include their overdue balance, and ways to get this paid. This way the parent knows without the student having to get involved and worry. The last solution would be to have an app that shows their child's lunch balance. If their is an insufficient balance, parents could get notified and pay right in the app itself.

Long story short, students should not have to worry about financial issues, or get singled out because of it. This new policy is not only detrimental to the students wellbeing, but is also can be for the parents as well. We need to keep private information private, and find a better way to get through this situation. By looking at how this could poorly affect the children, how people around us have responded, and other solutions that could be more beneficial, one can see that this is not the right policy to put into the school system. Lets put an end to this policy, and create a more beneficial one for the future!

#5 Entertainment Review Writing Champion: Lillian Flynn, Mead

The 75th Annual Tony Awards opened with the performance of Ariana DeBose and a striking ensemble leaving my legs eager to jump. Produced by American Theatre Wing and songwriters Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, the 5-minute song represented various musicals leaving excitement rattling in my bones. Even though I do not watch musicals, I still find myself empowered by the strong emotions “This Is Your Round of Applause” brought forward to me.

Settling into the first few moments that made my heartbeat faster, I was confronted with darkness, a deep blue moon and a starry night sky. I felt as if I was to be greeted with a melancholy song, but I was very wrong. A determined walk of confidence strode along the stage and DeBose was singing in almost a Dolly Parton tone. The bright, immense lights changed color with every musical which made me oblivious to what was in store.

Along with a soothing setting that felt like I was watching fireworks, a feeling of passion blossomed in my stomach after hearing the first strong, yet subtle chord flow out of her mouth. Her outfit consisted of a white jumpsuit with a dazzling silver vest gleaming against the strobing lights, allowing her to stand out and get full recognition among the crowd. The black-clothed ensemble surrounded DeBose, responding to her drastic movements. In my opinion, I feel that the dancers following her were not in sync. Instead, they flowed along with the rhythm of the music following DeBose, allowing her to be the star under the flashing lights.

DeBose’s personality changes in relation to the transition of musicals show her range of musical capabilities. Her daring chest voice is just as smooth and reviving as her head voice. The emotion portrayed by her walk and facial features made a feeling of envy curl in my stomach. The bright, energetic personation in the “Hairspray” portion forced a smile to form on my face.

Having the best musical talent is not the most important part when you are presenting a piece of art. The meaning of the work is what truly counts. You can be the best singer in the world, but without emotion and purpose, there is no meaning. The Climax of “This Is Your Round of Applause” tugged at my heart and made it vitally clear that this wasn’t just a typical

opening to get guests on their toes. The deeper meaning of this performance is a round of applause for the dedicated stars of fine arts who laid down their lives for their passions of music.

#6 Headline Writing Champion: Tyler Else, Mead

2023 State Journalism Championship



#6 Headline Writing

Time Limit – 1:15

Directions:

You are a copy editor for your student newspaper. You are being given 6 formatted articles. Write headlines for 3 of the 6 articles using the following conditions:

1. Write at least one 2-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline.
2. Write at least one 3-line headline which may include a headline with a sub-headline.
3. You have creative license to write a third headline of any length or line count.

Turn this paper into the proctor when finished.

Name: Tyler Else School: Mead

Write your story number and headline below:

Article # - 5

Headline - Good Portal, Bad Portal
Creighton coaches prepare for loss of star players

Article # - 4

Headline - Poor location leads to unwanted visitors
Spotted cattleman to find home in Arizona

Article # - 1

Headline - The P.e. of Love
One bite is all it took for Spencer Schwarz to know exactly what he wanted



There's no such thing as shocking anymore in college basketball's offseason. But this is a shocker. In the wake of Creighton's Elite Eight loss to San Diego State, Creighton coaches were prepared for roster turnover. Any combination of Ryan Kalkbrenner, Baylor Scheierman, Arthur Kaluma and Trey Alexander staying or leaving.

Not Ryan Nembhard.

Now, Nembhard.

It's a move that Creighton coaches didn't see coming. And it's a move that has made instant transfer portal waves in college basketball. Most everyone will be interested in Nembhard's services. Even if coaches have a point guard, it's likely he's not Ryan Nembhard. Maybe one day we'll hear an explanation for this move, but most transfer portal moves are layered, about playing time, money, fresh start, new coach.

There's already talk about Nembhard heading to Arizona, which lost its point guard to the portal, and where the head coach (Tommy Lloyd) recruited Nembhard's older brother to Gonzaga. Oh, and I'm sure the NIL is more than ample down in Tucson. They care about basketball there. A lot. But they care about hoops in Omaha, too. And CU's NIL bank is reportedly more than up to any challenge.

If this is about NIL, Nembhard is about to hear from everyone. He'll be one of the hottest free agents in college hoops. This is what's known as Bad Portal. But Creighton fans can't complain too much. They've benefited from Good Portal the last two years.

And, in fact, CU just scored a big transfer in Isaac Traudt from Virginia. Of greater importance on the Hilltop is what impact this has on the remainder of the roster. Nembhard didn't just run Greg McDermott's spacing offense to perfection, he made everyone better. Mac will find a point guard. But it won't be a third-year quarterback like Nembhard, a coach/offensive coordinator on the court.

If you're Kalkbrenner, how do you feel about this? Reportedly the 7-1 senior is mulling testing the NBA waters. He and Nembhard had a special radar in Mac's offense.

What about Scheierman? There's a lot of buzz about the senior coming back for his extra year. Now?

And what about Trey Alexander? A candidate to also test the waters. But Alexander looks like a Big East Player of the Year candidate next year.

Now? Would he be asked to fill the point guard spot next year, as he did superbly the last month of his freshman year? Alexander likely won't be a point guard in the NBA. Would he want to spend all of next year doing that? Decisions, decisions.

Based on what I was hearing around Creighton, I felt there was a better than 50-50 chance that most of the Jays would return next year. Start with a top 10 ranking and take another swing at the Final Four in Glendale, Arizona.

That sort of thinking started with Nembhard, who had the tough call go against him against San Diego State but was a star for the Jays throughout the NCAA tournament. He looked like he was born for that stage and was just scratching the surface.

Now he's left everyone at Creighton scratching their heads. That's life in college basketball. Here today, portal tomorrow. It's a surprise. Creighton has to hope it's the last one.

Article #4

A house in Arizona has been plagued by not one, but four adult Speckled Rattlesnakes over the last few months. Snake catcher Marissa Maķi, from Rattlesnake Solutions, found the latest deadly trespasser hiding behind an aloe vera plant in the family's front yard.

Bryan Hughes, the owner of Rattlesnake Solutions, told Newsweek that the house's location makes it particularly vulnerable to unwanted visitors.

"For this house, the specific location is the issue. It's not only directly adjacent to the preferable habitat for Speckled Rattlesnakes, but it is on the corner as well," Hughes said. "Many of the neighborhoods in Arizona are built with a long, shared block wall behind them.

"This can function like a funnel, forcing any snakes that may want to visit the well-watered and shaded properties to enter at the sides. For this reason, homes found at the corners often see far more snake visitors than homes with more interior."

Despite this vulnerable location, it is still unusual to be visited by four different rattlesnakes in a matter of months.

The house is located in Ahwatukee, in Phoenix, Arizona, right against the South Mountain Park and Preserve. Southwestern speckled rattlesnakes are common in this region and are usually found in rocky areas near mountains and hillsides.

The species varies in color, from white to brown to orange, and has a highly flecked banded pattern that closely resembles the rocky granite found in their natural habitat.

As rattlesnakes go, these are fairly small.

"Adults get to around three feet long," Hughes said. "These were all adults between two and three feet long."

Five other species of rattlesnake are commonly found in the Ahwatukee area, including the Western Diamondback, Arizona's largest species of rattlesnake.

"Rattlesnakes are often found at properties in Arizona, most often in backyards where vegetation, water, and feeding opportunities are present," Hughes previously told Newsweek.

If you live in a rattlesnake-prone area, Rattlesnake Solutions recommends putting up snake fencing and making your yard less desirable to the deadly animals. You can do this by removing leaf litter, keeping foliage well-pruned, and avoiding growing plants right next to your house. Removing food sources, such as bird seed and food waste that might attract rodents, will also stop the snakes from being attracted to your property in the first place.



Celebrating the Sweetness

JULIE ALBERTSON CHARMED HER HUSBAND, SPENCER SCHWARZ, WITH A SPECIAL PIE—AND CONTINUES TO SERVE UP THE MAGIC

The first time Julie Albertson saw musician Spencer Schwarz onstage in Austin in 1985, she knew she was going to marry him. To help him come around to her way of thinking, “I baked him a buttermilk pie,” recalls Albertson, now 60.

“Best thing I’d ever eaten,” says Schwarz, 67. “Next thing I knew, we were together.”

Known as the Texas Pie Queen, Albertson understands that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. But her pies are made with something *extra*—and she swears they can help others find their match, even before they’ve met them. “It’s like prayer,” she says. “It’s intentional. As you roll the dough, you talk about who you want to meet, your future together. It’s imbuing emotion into what you’re making.”

The list of those who have shared their hopes with Albertson—who then bakes them into existence—continues to grow. It includes her niece Haylie Raymond, 37, who met her partner, Zack Snider, 36, in September 2015, not long after pouring her intentions into a cherry pie. As her aunt’s apprentice, Raymond says the magic runs in the family: “People come back and say, ‘You won’t believe what happened.’ And I say, ‘But I do believe.’”



Slice of Life

Schwarz and Albertson (top, in costume in 2019) have been married 28 years. Her niece Raymond (with Snider) knows firsthand the power of the pie: “When I told him about it, Zack asked if he was under my spell.”

#7 Newspaper Feature Writing Champion: Isabella Tederman, Yutan

Quarantine was seen as a setback for many businesses. However, this was not the case for Horizon Heights junior Joanna Lin. Lin's business, Nocturnal Jewelry, was born from a passion she discovered during the pandemic.

Although it was officially started in 2022, the foundation for Nocturnal Jewelry was built when Lin's business teacher, John Murphy, sent his students home with homework to create a mock business plan. Lin began experimenting with jewelry-making and discovered that she could earn a profit from this new-found hobby.

"As part of her homework while stuck at home, I challenged Joanna to come up with a mock business idea," Murphy said. "Little did I know, she would take that assignment and not look back!"

Lin's business operates off of a popular craft-selling site called Etsy, on which she has 2,000 followers. So far, she has had about 400 sales of her jewelry, which include earrings, necklaces, and bracelets.

"Joanna is interested in many things, but creating is her passion," said Qui Lin, Joanna's mother. "I am so proud of my daughter for taking initiative while being quarantined to completely change her life.. and turn her passion into sellable jewelry."

Creativity and passion not only flow through her art, but also within the idea for her business. Her logo, which features two, owl-like eyes came from the symbol of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom.

"I found the inspiration for Nocturnal Jewelry in owls, when I discovered that the prefix 'noct,' meaning night, is related to owls," Lin said. "What I liked about Nocturnal was that owls are a symbol of Athena, which is why I made it my logo."

On top of everything she has accomplished so far, Lin's main goal is to provide minimalist accessories to her customers that enable them to feel more confident while simultaneously keeping her work affordable.

"I feel like I'm oftentimes just following the trends, but I think a lot of jewelry is getting a lot more expensive," Lin said. "So I am trying to find and make higher quality pieces that aren't as expensive as others."

Though this may not be the typical hobby for a junior, Lin's business has been thriving alongside her other responsibilities and goals. Not only is she using her earnings to save for college, but also for charitable causes.

"Even while running a part-time business, she has managed to stay on top of her grades and finished this past semester with all A's and one B," Qui Lin said. "Last month, she even donated part of her sales to the local food pantry."

#8 Newspaper News Writing Champion: Zahna Reutzel, Harvard

Throughout their college experience, students need to find a place where they feel welcome and at home. Through the construction of Union 73, Northeast Community College hoped to offer students a space at the center of campus to improve academically and to build relationships with those around them.

From the spring of 2019 until May 2021, the construction of a new student center for the college took place. The old student center was limited on space and accessibility; it was also difficult to navigate and needed to be upgraded. The building was in need of new electrical work and repairs due to its aging exterior.

“It was time for us to upgrade the infrastructure of the student center. We also wanted to provide a place at the heart of campus to improve engagement among students, faculty, and staff. We wanted students to have somewhere they could go to be comfortable and feel like they belong,” shared Amanda Nipp, Vice President of Student Services of Northeast Community College.

The construction of the new student center consisted of renovating the 36-year-old structure in the center of campus, plus erecting a 27,000 square foot addition. The total cost of the project ran just under \$20 million.

“Through revenue bonds and our capital improvement fund, we were able to fully fund this project,” said Nipp.

While in the process of constructing the updated student center, a new name had to be devised for the building. In 1973, two local colleges combined into one to form Northeast Community College. This year was fundamental in college history, so it was only right that the student union be named after the year the two colleges were united as one.

The new Union 73 building houses a variety of spaces built to not only provide areas for work and study, but for social health and wellness. These spaces include the service (technology) center, library-resource center, academic support services, business services, the Hawk Shop, coffee shop, Legends Grill, escape room, game room, counseling services, meeting rooms. These were all brought into a central location on campus through the construction of Union 73.

“My favorite spot in Union 73 is the center area because students are always there. We wanted to provide them with an area where they felt comfortable and that is that space for many students,” said Nipp.

The spaces are continually adapted to improve student needs. New improvements have already been made this updated building to better benefit students. One closet has turned into an area where students can get formal attire, and another has transformed into a student food pantry. The times the union is open have also already been altered since its opening to best fit the lives of students.

Northeast Community College hopes to continue to provide spaces through Union 73 that improve student needs through adapting to what works best for students. They hope to keep a welcoming, home environment that enriches their students' college experience.

#9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing Champion: Haley Kube, Yutan

From one day picking up his brother's bike to now helping kids find the confidence in riding their own trails, Norfolk business owner Jason Tollefson is just getting started in building off of his lifelong passion.

Tollefson, originally born in Massachusetts, was constantly on the move with his dad being part of the US Navy. As a kid, he struggled to keep up with life's constant changes until he finally found "his escape" one fateful day in Lincoln, Nebraska.

"My dad had just retired from the Navy, and we had moved with the rest of my family here in Nebraska," Tollefson said. "I was in college, bored, and picked up my brother's old mountain bike, and from there, riding just became a part of my life."

Tollefson fell in love with the so-called inherited dangerous sport and explains that mountain biking was the "ride of his life" that he had always been looking for.

"I used mountain biking as my escape from all the other distractions. I could risk it all or even a little bit... and find that focus I needed," Tollefson said.

After college, Tollefson never stopped his on-the-go journey as he worked on the road selling airfield navigates for a local company in Norfolk and even competing in mountain biking trails across the country.

"Between work and mountain biking, I have been to 47 states," Tollefson said. "The farthest away race I competed in was in Juneau, Alaska."

Tollefson explains that there wasn't a vacation he took in the past 20 years that didn't involve a bike. But, in 2016 Tollefson decided to give up traveling and started getting involved in the local mountain biking scene.

"In 2019, I went to the Missouri River Expo to help provide bikes to kids, and it got me hooked on the coaching aspect of mountain biking," Tollefson said.

Finding his new love for coaching, Tollefson proceeded to buy Norfolk's local bike shop, Norfolk Bikes as well as also volunteering his time at Ponca State Park.

“Ponca is the perfect scene for mountain biking. It’s a unique park that provides just the right amount of challenge,” Tollefson said.

Tollefson was a volunteer at the park for three years until he was asked to take over as head. Along with the support from the Nebraska League Association, Tollefson then rounded up other coaches in hopes of accomplishing his new mission, making a local mountain biking team.

“Everyone needs an escape, and mountain biking was mine...so if I could help others find their own, I say that’s a pretty good benefit for me,” Tollefson said.

Nowadays, Tollefson dedicated 20 hours of his time to helping 15-30 kids learn basic mountain biking skills and working together as a team.

“The community involvement has been great... I enjoy working with people and moving past a lot of negative things in a very positive experience,” Tollefson said. We are teaching kids that you can’t escape your problems but sometimes you can simply just focus on the path ahead.”

With four upcoming races in the fall, Tollefson couldn’t be more excited to see where his love for mountain biking and his newly founded Maskenthine Composite Angry Owls will go next.

“The [main] aspect we take out of it is if you can develop in anything, you can build confidence from it and improve yourself and your life. We are just lucky enough to use bikes to do that,” Tollefson said.

#10 Sports News Writing Champion: Alexis Pehrson, Yutan

Coming from last year's season with a losing record and having never made it to state to winning the whole thing seems impossible, but the Boxley Buzzards Boys Basketball just proved that.

"We did the unimaginable. I just can't believe it," head coach Rick Dees said. "Last year our School Board considered dropping boys basketball because we just couldn't get any wins."

Despite some doubts, the Buzzards ended their regular season with a 17-7 record and the seventh seed coming into the state tournament.

"My guys worked their rears off this season," Dees said. "We believed in each other."

Their hard work and perseverance showed when Boxley defeated Schubert and Green Valley in close games, advancing to the finals against the number one seed, Drake High School.

Although the Buzzards were feeling good up til the championship game, the Destroyers of Drake High School were no pushover. This would be Drake's twelfth appearance in the finals with a regular season record of 24-1.

Nonetheless, the Buzzards came alive after the second half when they were trailing by thirteen points.

"We were about to give up after that first half. We just couldn't get into our flow and our shots weren't falling," senior Ernie Hernandez said. "Our coach wouldn't let us give up. He fired us up and made us remember what got us here."

With a bit of motivation, the Boxley came back into the game with great energy as head coach Monte Dean of Drake explained.

"I felt like they were competitive and they were great in big moments, they hit some big shots when they needed to, especially in the second half," Dean said.

Their confidence in the remainder of the game gave Boxley the momentum they needed, and they seemed unstoppable.

"They were really hard to get out of their game. It was like we were playing a different team that second half," Dean said. "We just couldn't stop them."

Little by little, Boxley edged out over Drake and ended the game as state champions.

“It feels like a dream...No one beats Drake,” Hernandez said. Last year we couldn’t even hardly win a game let alone make it to state and then win the championship...What a way to end my senior year.”

#11 Yearbook Feature Writing Champion, Lacie Hartman, Aquinas Catholic

By Lacie Hartman

What did the fast-walking hot dog say to the slow-walking hot dog? “Ketchup!” The Frankfort High Hot Dogs broke records this year by raising over \$32,000 at a community service project aimed to benefit the Frankfort and Beans communities. The Hot Dogs called this project the Weenie Roast.

The senior class’s initial goal was to raise \$1,000 for the town’s local food pantry, but when Senior Class President Allie Smores posted a video on TikTok advertising for the roast, the town went wild. The video was viewed by over 7 million people and was shared over 800,000 times. “When my video went viral it changed everything for the better. Not only did we reach our goal, but then some!” said Smores.

Many items were needed to make this event possible. Together, the senior class supplied their grills and served at the event, the 10,000 hot dogs were graciously donated by Hy-Vee, and Inflatable Wonderland supplied 3 bounce houses for entertainment. At the end of the night, the Hot Dog Athletic Boosters raffled off a 2023 Ford F150, donated by Frankfort Ford.

After being persuaded by his wife to attend the event, William Wienerschnitzel went home with the brand new F150. “I wasn’t even going to come to the Weenie Roast... My wife kindly suggested I show up to support my town and I am sure glad I did. Hot diggity dog this was an epic Weenie Roast!” said Wienerschnitzel.

The Weenie Roast brought together an estimated 6,500 community members. Frankfort High Principal Beth Bologna believes the roast would not have been as successful without help of this year’s senior class. “Our senior class is filled with the best and brightest. The communities of Frankfort and Beans really banded together to support our kids and our towns,” said Bologna. Bologna also stated it is in the works to make the Weenie Roast an annual event.

The money raised from the roast went to support the local Frankfort food pantry and paid off any outstanding lunch balances for the 1,300 students at Frankfort High. Smores stated, “It was a super crazy evening, and we can’t believe so many people showed up to support us. What a wonderful way to cap off my senior year at Frankfort! Go Hot Dogs!”

#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing Champion: Michael Xambula-Monzalvo, Grand Island Central Catholic

The Sheridan County High School girl's swimming team had a phenomenal performance at the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) edging Pearson with a 504 to 503.5 win on April 10. At this swim meet, the Sheridan County girls brought home the gold as champions for the second time in school history. Outstanding performances by Bri (12) and Brandy (12) Klecka brought the edge the team needed to win FRCC. Coached by former Conference Champion swimmer and mother, Kari Klecka, the Klecka sisters and girls' swim team were able to reach new heights and make history.

The Sheridan County Longhorns won eight of the 11 swimming events with five individual titles and three relays. Of these events, Bri and Brandy Klecka broke four conference records in the meet combined.

"Our team really banded together today. We went into our conference meet with the goal of earning the team championship. We did it and it was so amazing. All those early morning practices really paid off and I am so proud of our team," Bri Klecka explained.

In a remarkable feat of athleticism, Bri Klecka won the 100-yard freestyle with a record time of 52.27 seconds and won the 100-yard backstroke with a conference record breaking time of 57.91 seconds. These achievements in combination with her wins in other events led her to be named the conference swimmer of the year.

"Bri had an amazing day and to be named the conference swimmer of the year is a perfect ending to her amazing season. It is pretty special to coach your own children. This year has been something I'll never forget," Coach Klecka proclaimed.

Not to be outdone by her sister, Brandy Klecka took first in the 200-yard freestyle with a record time of 52.27 seconds and won first place in the 50-yard freestyle with another conference-record time of 24.07 seconds. Incredible performances by the Klecka sisters became even more impressive when they were teamed up in the relays.

"So incredibly proud of these girls. They have worked hard all season, and to come out with a win was a perfect way to finish their conference meet," Principal Michael Dominguez stated.

A 200 medley relay team consisting of Bri Klecka, Brandy Klecka, Berritt Herr and Kelly Vysckocil won the event with a time of 1:52.22. In the 400 freestyle relay, Erin Schuch, Nadia Perez, Liz Witt and Brandy Klecka won gold with a time of 3:41.64.

"Mom told our team we would be competitive coming into the conference tournament. Bri had an awesome day and really dominated. I was proud of my sister. She rocked it today," Brandy Klecka commented.

The Kleckas weren't the only exceptional swimmers to perform at the swim meet. Schuch won the 500-yard freestyle with a 5:17.65 and took second place in the 100 butterfly with a time of 1:02.60.

"I am so proud to be these girls' coach. They have done everything asked of them this season. They show up hungry and ready for practice day in and day out," Coach Klecka said.

The girls' achievements were made possible thanks to Kari Klecka's productive and rigorous coaching. Her spectacular coaching skills demonstrated by the sheer amount of wins and effort shown by the girls, led her to be named conference coach of the year.

"My mom got conference coach of the year. And don't think because my coach is my mom that she takes it easy on me. Sometimes it's brutal, but totally worth it in the end," Brandy Klecka expressed.

With the majority of the events won by Sheridan County girls, Pearson took seven second-place finishes that helped them finish second as a team.

#13 Yearbook Theme Copy Writing Champion: Kajetan Hubl, Grand Island CC

Opening

360: the degrees of a circle, a symbol of the unity and well-roundedness of Eisenhower High School's Patriots. Our school strove to achieve greatness in all areas, producing well-rounded individuals. Although our student population was relatively large and we come from different backgrounds, we were all united as Patriots and pushed each other to excel.

At the beginning of the school year, Patriots entered the classroom willing to put in the work necessary to succeed. Through our 25 Advanced Placement courses and multiple Career Academies, Patriots had a multitude of opportunities for academic growth. Our students took on academic challenges and were excited for the possibilities the year offered. These were supplemented with late-night fine arts practices and after-school athletic activities. Students learn to manage their time and expand their horizons to include all 360 degrees that high school offers.

Most importantly, Patriots worked to recognize their community's history and served the people in it. We looked to offer our yearly service programs, including our Boo Bash and community service campaign, as well as our Washington's Patriot Day Parade. The community we live in and the environment we create as Patriots was of utmost importance, and we highlighted it in this year's theme.

360, our theme, was derived from the association between circles and our school. Circles symbolize unity and the many degrees that factor into an individual. In alignment with our school's values, a circle became the focus of this year, and it was visually represented throughout the book.

We are Patriots. We are our past, and our future is united. Like a circle, we form an environment of involved and community-minded individuals.

Academics

As part of the well-rounded education Eisenhower High School provides, our academics prepare our students to take the next step in their future. Through providing rigorous coursework and hands-on opportunities, our school creates capable individuals with a more complete education background.

Our academics are not limited to classroom work but also extend to real experience in the workforce. Divided up into Career Academies, students learn specifications about their future career and gain experience in these fields. From shadowing doctors in the health academy, to welding with local professionals, and even cooking with community master chefs, our academies offer more. These additional opportunities open the doors for more critical thinking and extensive career development.

In addition to these career-focused opportunities, Patriots also prepare for college through earning dual credit in their advanced placement courses. These courses challenge students academically and allow them to gain a headstart on their next academic step.

We highlight the highs of our academics, but our students learn so much more than we could ever fit into a yearbook. With that being said, enjoy this glimpse into our Patriot's academic lives.

Closing

Just as this book comes to an end, so does the 2022-2023 school year for Eisenhower High School's Patriots; however, a circle has no end, and, likewise, the education and growth of the Patriots never ceases. We will take what we've learned this year and use it to ignite our futures.

This year, our Volleyball and Speech teams were recognized as State Champions, but these were not the only successes of the year. Students worked diligently in their advanced placement courses, setting themselves up for future academic success. To provide further career experience, our students participate in Career Academies. Without a doubt, Patriots pushed themselves to their limits in the classroom, on the stage, and on the court. This passion and participation forms well-rounded students who are ready for their futures.

This motivation to succeed did not overshadow the unity and inclusion of our school, which is the second ideal of this year's theme. We celebrated where our students came from and what made each individual unique. Our use of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programming highlighted the importance of valuing one's background and learning from each other. This formatting brought Patriots closer to being one family rather than an educational institution.

Along with our values of diversity and inclusion, we also hope to provide a safe environment to help students through their struggles. Our mental health curriculum prepares

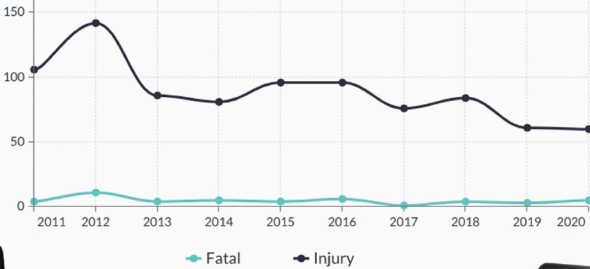
students to know their options to seek help and how to be a comfort to others who suffer from mental health disorders and difficulties.

Each Patriot grew in their own way to become a well-rounded version of themselves this year. While we did not move in circles, we grew as one community, recognizing each other's difficulties and differences, as well as our attributes and successes— all 360 degrees of a Patriot.

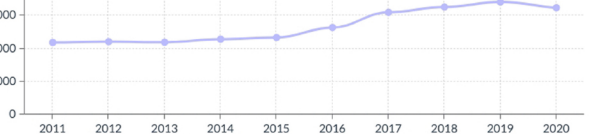
Nebraska Teenage Driving Statistics



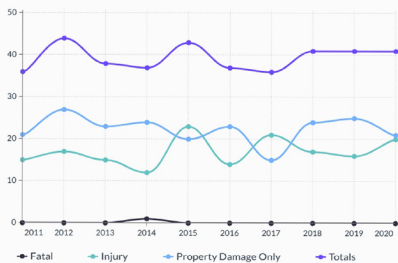
Nebraska Teen Drivers Involved in Alcohol Related Crashes



NE School Permit Drivers



Cell Phone Distracted Driving Crashes



In 2020 teen drivers represented only 5.2% of all licensed drivers in Nebraska, but teens were involved in:

- 11% of alcohol involved crashes
- 14% of all crashes
- 25% of all crashes between 9pm and midnight
- 26% of rear-end type crashes
- 28% of single car rollover crashes
- 31% of crashes using a cell phone

Students, be smart behind the wheel!

Celia Zetterberg-- Information Graphic

The road to recovery: Ashton Kirkendall sticks to dream of being a cheerleader

by Kadyn Willcock

Ashton Kirkendall always dreamed of being a cheerleader. As a freshman, she tried out for the Southern Valley cheer squad but did not make the team. With hopes high, she tried out again in the spring of her sophomore year and had a different result. Full of excitement and ready to fulfill her dream, Kirkendall was looking forward to her junior year, and then tragedy struck. On August 14, 2022, Kirkendall, a passenger in a Jeep Cherokee driven by one of her best friends, got into a terrible car accident on a country road. Without a seatbelt on, Kirkendall was ejected in the accident which caused numerous injuries and put her dream of being a cheerleader in jeopardy.

WORKING TOWARDS THE DREAM

Earning a spot in cheerleading can be challenging. Experienced girls that participate for four years unfortunately did not make it. Disappointed but not her junior year, and she got in. Kirkendall said, "I sounds super cocky, but not many girls were trying lected as part of the cheer squad. "When I made the second I found out. I worked hard on the tryout dance nerves I had walking into the gym the day of tryouts. But

"I remember all the nerves I had walking into the gym the day of tryouts. But the second I started cheering it all kinda melted away."

Squads are often made of a few new cheerleaders and many Kirkendall tried out before her sophomore year, but discouraged, she built up the courage to try again for honestly knew I was going to make it, which out." Six of the seven girls who tried out were se-team I was really excited. I called my mom the with another girl on the team, and I remember all the the second I started cheering it all kinda melted away."

During the summer months, Kirkendall attended a cheer camp at UNL with the squad. The cheerleaders became inseparable spending many nights together just having fun. With a new school year just starting, Kirkendall was ready to perform with her teammates and to have her dream finally come true. She had always wanted to be a cheerleader, but it was a little out of her comfort zone. "I like the thought of one day being able to tell my kids that their mom was a cheerleader. I also did it in hopes of one day being able to convince my kids to do something out of their comfort zone because cheering was really out of my comfort zone at first," said Kirkendall.

A MAJOR SET BACK

The first day of school was August 12, 2022. Students don't usually get too excited about summer ending, but for Kirkendall the excitement was unreal. She was ready to cheer. That weekend on Sunday night, the accident happened putting Kirkendall's opportunities to cheer in jeopardy. The accident occurred around 9:15 p.m. on August 14,

continued on page 2

Southern Valley cheerleaders pose at the UNL cheer camp in the summer of 2022. Top moving clockwise are Vanesa Aguayo, Abree Karash, Ashton Kirkendall, Kadyn Willcock, Rayn Johnson, and Laurel Stalder.



#15 In-depth Newspaper Coverage Champions: Shae Mitchell, Gave Grove, Keira Wasenius, Kiera Nash, Ann Bose, Adeline Hunt, Southern Valley

The Purple P u r i s e



When Home isn't Safe...

Senior Shae Mitchell documents her evacuation journey

I can vividly remember the evening of April 7, 2022, and the run-up to leaving my house. "They're evacuating us," my mom had yelled into the house. All of the stress and worry from the last few hours had culminated into a vast feeling of nothing as I left. I had seen it coming ever since my drive home that day, it had looked like I was driving into hell, and it wasn't nearly as smokey as it was going to get. I couldn't seem to fathom, during that drive, how serious it could get.

All day I had been waiting on a call from the Game and Parks Commission at Johnson Lake; I planned on working there over the summer, and my mom had just told me to clean the bathroom. The guy who had talked to me the day before about scheduling a time to do paperwork had texted me and said he wouldn't be able to call me that afternoon as something had come up--the Game and Parks Commission was going out to help contain a fire. He promised that tomorrow afternoon we would get things sorted, and I continued on with chores. I finished what I could in the bathroom; it had to have been going on 4:30 when I went to take the trash out. The smoke was covering the hills that are less than a mile behind my house. I tried to break the tension, so I sent a video to a friend. It was of an orange sun peeking through the smoke that looked like clouds or fog. In it I was laughing saying, "Ummm that's what the sun is supposed to look like, right?" But I was scared.

At 5 PM my mom texted me, telling me to grab the dog and set the cat loose if I had to evacuate before she got home. I could barely see across the road to the north. I could barely see the hills to the south. I couldn't see the creek half a mile west, couldn't see anything to the west. I packed a bag.

It was a robotic sort of motion at first, fueled by disbelief and the idea that nothing like this happens to me of all people. I shoved clothes in a suitcase and wrapped fragile items in t-shirts. Sentimental things, like stuffed animals and blankets, made their way into a laundry basket along with annotated copies of books and gifts from friends. Some of the things I grabbed must have seemed so foolish, but I didn't care. It still didn't feel real, nothing did.

My mom arrived home at 6:20 PM just like she would any other day, and I couldn't help but ask myself with some desperation, "Why didn't she leave work sooner?"

Since I had already packed, my next task was to call my sister and grab what she wanted from the house. She didn't answer my phone call, so I left a voicemail.

"Nonie," I had said with what was likely stress and

panic dripping from my voice, "Now is not a good time for you to not have my phone number saved. Pick up the phone! Our house might burn down!" That was somewhat wrong of me, I know, but desperation works in funny ways.

It only took her a couple of minutes to call me back. "There's a box of bears," her voice wobbled as she spoke, "in the back of my closet." So I once again ignored impending doom and went about my task, all the while my mom was starting garden hoses and sprinklers to hopefully keep the house safe, an effort she was fully aware would be futile if the fire came that close.

Important documents, photos, and keepsakes were run out to cars. My focus on moving and keeping myself from panicking was enough for me not to notice the thickness of the air, the influx of heat, the smell of smoke, and the ash you could practically taste.

I could barely see
across the road to
the north. I couldn't
see the creek half
a mile west, couldn't
see anything to the
west.
I packed
a bag.

- Shae Mitchell



Shae Mitchell stands at her mailbox, facing northeast.

"We're being evacuated," my mom had hollered back through the door at me during my final run for precious items. With arms full of quilts and only a glance at Edison's little old firetruck that had just come to send us away, I struggled out the door and shoved my final load into the backseat of my car. Then I turned west and stared for longer than I probably had any right to. There it was, a looming wall of despair. It looked like a thunderstorm had covered the setting sun. A sick, setting sun that lit the clouds up orange and glowed bright towards the bottom. It would have been believable if it weren't for the fact that the sky behind me was a vibrant blue and the sun was still shining through the clouds of smoke further up in the sky.

My mom freed me from the trance the wall of smoke had put me in. "Go to Oxford," she said. "I'll be right behind you."

It was finally real; it was time to go.

Terror, panic, the reality of the situation--it all dawned on me so rapidly. My hands shook as I moved to start my car. First try, a tired turnover and a whine. Second try, noisy protest and insubordination. Third try, *I'm scared, don't make me! I'm scared.*

"Just start, damnit," I yelled, my voice cracking.

Fourth try and my car came to life with the same rumble and shake it always did. I pulled out of the driveway and drove for a while. The next thing I did was call my friend, Brianna, and tell her I was alright, that we had evacuated, but we were alright. She offered to let me stay the night, and eventually hung up. I wouldn't find out until nearly 10:30 that night that after she hung up, she burst into tears and ran to tell her parents what had happened. I kept driving. Every time I looked back into my rearview mirror, all I could see was doom looming over my house. So I stopped looking back after a while.

The slow shift from day to evening is a blur. I can remember hugging my parents, and I can remember watching a tremendous wall of smoke rise from the west like it was trying to taunt me, saying you're not safe yet! After so long I couldn't stand there anymore and face the impending possibility of my entire life going up in flames. Sending a text out to my friend, and telling my parents where I wanted to go was all it took. I was in Orleans before my grandparents even left Edison. It took me 15 minutes of sitting in my friend's living room for me to realize I reeked of smoke and sweat.

Eventually, I had to settle in for the night, so I took a bath and changed my clothes before briefly hiding away in the basement. At around 10 her mom started making brownies, and I sat in the kitchen and watched. We talked, and checked the news, and I would look out the window to the west every few minutes, just to see if I could still see the lights of the grain elevator (or some horrible thunderstorm of smoke, glowing at the bottom and obscuring the creek by my house) about half a mile to the west. To no one's surprise but my own, I could. That's how the night went on, with anxiety and constant checking of the news. No amount of video games or movies with Brianna could distract me from why I was there. The night crawled on, and I was miserable the whole time.

In time the storm of bad things would break, and I would get word that the fire had stopped at the creek. That still didn't calm my overactive imagination enough to let me sleep, and I didn't go to bed until nearly 2 AM. The morning came, school was canceled, and I had unadulterated time to myself to wonder how all of this had really happened. The entire next day I spent trying to figure out just what there was that I could do, but there was nothing until the evacuation notice was lifted around midday.

Going home was almost as hard as leaving. The mess from packing was still there and things stunk of smoke. Life moved on, though, and I had to go to State FPS the next day.

Normalcy returned slowly with the constant traffic of firefighters, ambulance chasers, and trespassers running up and down the road and into the yard disturbing our fragile peace. After a few more days I got my call back about working with Game and Parks, and more and more things gradually made me forget the fear of sleeping at home again. Before I knew it, summer had come and I was working at Johnson Lake. The first few mornings at work had scared me-- the smell of campfires and smoke--but eventually, that fear turned into longing for breakfasts cooked on the cast iron skillet over the fire and stories around a campfire. At home again, fear melted away into comfort. And to no one's surprise but my own; life moved on.

Cadets in Action

SV teens help fight Highway 283 Fire

The Oxford Volunteer Fire Department Cadet program has been around for 20 years. Starting in 2002, a new idea was established by a few firefighters. Their goal was to teach young students the ways of the fire services and what it means to be a part of a volunteer department. The Cadet program is made up of young men and women between 16-19 years old. Cadets take part in all of the fundraisers and training meetings, and also hold their own activities for community involvement. Over the years, many Southern Valley High School students have joined the Cadet program.

Three Southern Valley seniors are currently Oxford Fire Cadets: Carson Grossnicklaus, Kenzi Kring, and Cole Broeker. Each has benefited from being a part of the program, and for Grossnicklaus and Kring, the Highway 283 fire last spring was a major event that put their learning and skills to the test.

Grossnicklaus has been a Cadet since the day he turned 16. He feels that it is the best experience in his high school career. His father, Bill, is the Oxford Fire Chief, and Grossnicklaus sees himself taking over his dad's position one day in future. When Grossnicklaus signed up to be a Cadet, he had no idea that his first experience actually fighting a fire would be one of such magnitude. "When I first got out there, I didn't realize how big it actually was," said Grossnicklaus. He knew that even though he was nervous, he still had to give all of the effort he could. Grossnicklaus fought dangerous flare-ups for 14 to 16 hours straight on the second day, after the initial blaze was slowed from spreading. As a Cadet, Grossnicklaus has learned many valuable life lessons. He said, "A small fire can be fun, but you have to learn to control it or else it can get very out of hand. Farmers can lose a lot of land over the littlest accidents people tend to make."

Fighting a fire is very important, but taking care of the volunteer firefighters is equally important especially in a major fire that spans several days like the Highway 283 fire. Kring was given the responsibility of giving out water bottles. "It may seem like kind of a worthless job, but it is actually really important to keep the firemen hydrated," said Kring. There are many behind the scenes jobs to do when volunteers are dispatched for hours at a time. Kring also made sure all of the devices

used to communicate were fully charged and ready to be used at all times. "Pretty much, I had to make sure everybody and everything was ok." She said, "To be honest, I had no idea what the outcome was going to be at times." Throughout the fire, Kring was stressed and scared, but she is a Cadet because she likes helping people. Kring's whole family has been involved with the fire department for over 15 years. She sees herself doing this for the rest of her life because "I can help people and especially people who need me." Like Grossnicklaus, Kring has learned important lessons from serving as a Cadet. "It takes a lot of patience and endless learning. There is a lot more behind firefighting than most people think."

Southern Valley's third Cadet, Cole Broeker, was not called out for duty during the Hwy 283 fire, but he really wished he could have been. "I wanted to be out there to help, especially because my friends were fighting," said Broeker.

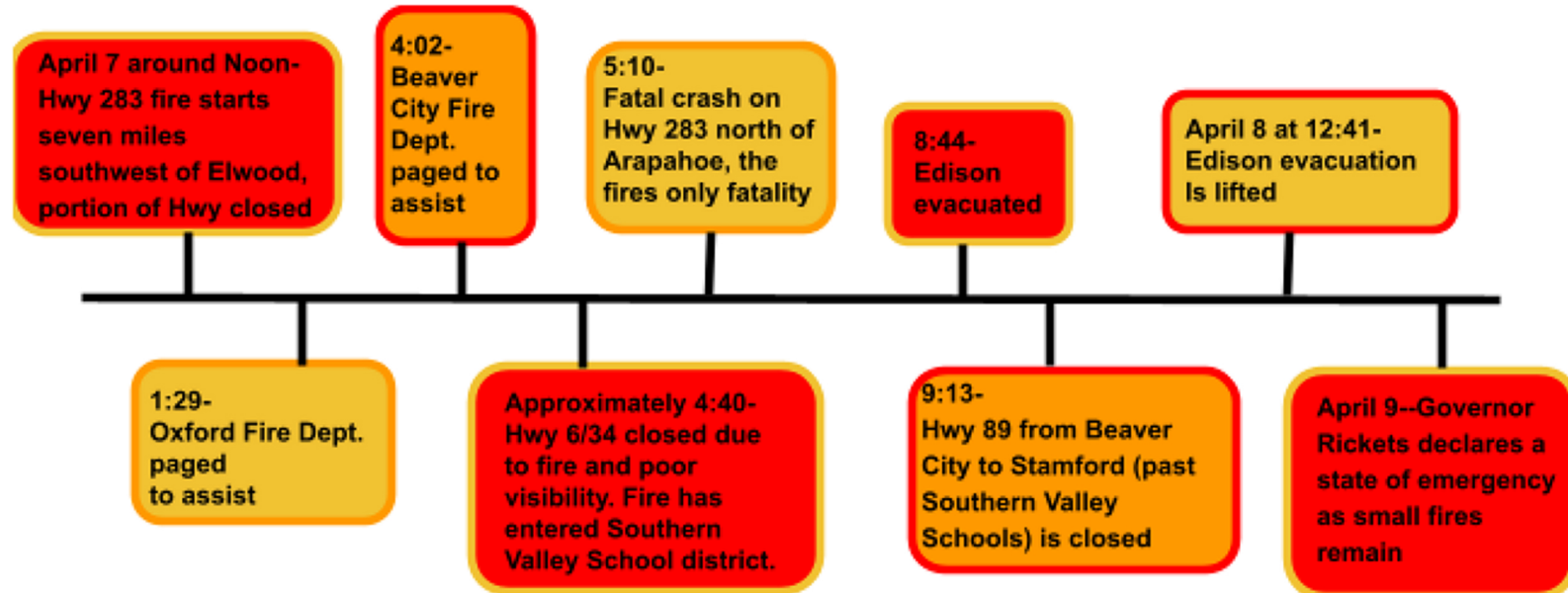


On the positive side, Broeker is excited for when he does get the call to help. Of course, he doesn't want there to be any fires, but he is ready to be of service to his community. Broeker said, "I think it will be fun when I get to go on my first fire call because I love getting to help people. I am super anxious."

The Oxford Volunteer Fire Cadet program is an amazing opportunity for high school students who have a passion for fighting fire and helping people. The horrific fire last spring opened the Cadet's eyes to the importance of firefighting in our local communities. The program will continue in Oxford for many more years training students to serve and protect our communities.



The Edison Co-Op during the fire in the spring, and later when the sky was smoke-free.



Fire Runs Rampant

SV family is left scrambling to save their home

The Warners are no strangers to the Southern Valley community. Bryson, a senior at the time of the spring fire was in Lincoln for the state FFA conference. Adde-lynn, a seventh grader at the time was there supporting Bryson at State FFA during the fire. Parents, Amy and Darren Warner, are proud sponsors of Southern Valley, and at the time of the fire, Amy was at home since the fire was too close to her workplace as a dental hygenist. From the time the fire began around noon, Darren was never home because he was trying to save equipment and livestock. Their farm is 7 miles north of Beaver City and only 4 miles south of Edison.

As the fire progressed in the first few hours, the exact path was unknown because of unpredictable high winds. Amy said, "Initially, when the fire started, I did not think that the fire would reach us, by 3:30 I was starting to question if it would reach us, and by 5:30 I knew that we were not going to be spared." By 6:00, they were told to evacuate, and Amy wasted no time asking friends and family to help her. With the help of others, she got out of there before the fire even dared to get close to her house.

It's hard to think about what feelings might be experienced when an emergency situation arises. A day starts in a normal way and then all of a sudden, it changes in an instant. Addelynn said, "My initial feeling when I got the call about my house being evacuated was confusion, why did this have to happen, why did it happen when I was away? Before I even got called I was already on edge. My parents wouldn't answer me ever since I got told the fire was close to my house." Bryson and Adde-lynn left Lincoln to head home after hearing that the path of the fire was nearing their land. Adeline said, "We were just outside Lincoln when Rian (my cousin) called me telling me the news that my house had to evacuate."

With everything at risk, what would you save? The Warners had to decide what items to take and what to leave behind. With tough decisions and being rushed, they saved what they could. Bryson said, "I didn't want anything grabbed. I just wanted the dogs and everyone else out of harm's way, all material things can be replaced."

After the fire was contained, the Warners were allowed back to their home after two days and were fortu-

Continued from page 4.

After the fire was contained, the Warners were allowed back to their home after two days and were fortunate enough to see their house still standing. Although the house was spared, the Warners lost 47 acres of farmland and 64 acres of pasture ground. With the help of family and friends, they moved livestock out of the way of the fire to a safe pasture of land.

The Warners were only one of the multiple Southern Valley families affected by the fire. Thankfully no SV family lost their primary residence, but school was canceled on Friday so no one had to worry about school during a crisis of a lifetime. Many others, like the Warners, were evacuated and had to figure out what to save and whether if they would be spared from the fires.



Smoke over the Warner's farm on April 7th, 2022.

What to do in the event of a fire





Do's

- Listen to reliable sources such as The Valley Voice, NTV News, the Furnas or Harlan County Emergency Management agencies, or Nebraska 511 for road closures
- Stay inside (if not being evacuated)
- Be prepared
- Stay calm



Dont's

- Avoid social media because it is not a reliable source
- Don't go driving around
- Don't get in the way of the firefighters or other emergency responders
- Don't panic

Things you should take in the event of an evacuation

- Pets
- Wallet/Purse
- Cell phone & Charger
- Keys (car, house, etc)
- Shoes & Jacket
- Medications
- Medical device (cane, oxygen, etc)
- Glasses

Thank You Firefighters!
 Integrity Arapahoe
 Oxford Protector
 Ownership Edison
 Dedication Grit
 Orleans Brave
 Adapt Beaver City
 Accountable
 Gallant Stamford
 Dilligence Loyalty
 Courageous Effort
 Flexability
 Fortitude

This project was made by Keira Wasineus, Kiera Nash, Adi Hunt, Ann Bose, Gabe Grove, and Shae Mitchell.

Leaves falling, traditions calling

Pumpkin patches, fall treats and jack-o-lanterns fill up the fall for Chieftains

By Maycee Hays

As the leaves begin to turn and the weather brings a chilly breeze, fall traditions come alive for the students and teachers at Yutan High School.

Senior Shaylynn Campbell's fall tradition is spending time at Vala's Pumpkin Patch in Gretna, and she has been doing so for as long as she can remember.

"There's so many pictures of me as a little baby holding a little pumpkin in my hand all dressed up for Halloween at the pumpkin patch," Campbell said. "One year I was dressed up as a pumpkin, and I was holding a baby pumpkin."

Campbell's favorite part of the pumpkin patch is the food, which she described as "literally the best food ever." Even though all the food is delicious, one treat from the pumpkin patch sticks out to her the most.

"If you're in the apple area, they

can cut up a caramel apple for you and then drizzle some caramel on it and pick out toppings," Campbell said. "It is what I get every time we go."

Fellow senior Laycee Josoff also enjoys the treats that come with the fall season, though hers are made at home.

"My mom makes a lot of pumpkin bread and banana bread to have a fall treat," Josoff said. "It was from my grandma's cookbook actually and she passed it down to my mom."

Josoff loves that the treats perfectly bring the feeling of fall into her home.

"When my mom makes the bread, it puts me in the mood for fall and it just brings the coziness and warmth all together in our house," Josoff said.

Along with enjoying specific foods, carving pumpkins with friends or family is a tradition that many enjoy taking part in. Juniors Andi Nelson and Reagan Wilson

randomly decided one night this fall to run to the grocery store and buy a pumpkin to carve for the Halloween season.

"We thought it would be fun to design the pumpkin however we wanted, especially since we both love the fall season," Nelson said.

Both girls were satisfied with the end result of their carved pumpkin.

"We just did a traditional jack-o-lantern with the triangle eyes and a crazy mouth," Wilson said. "I loved it."

Although the pumpkin-carving process takes a bit of work, history teacher Dan Krajicek, whose family also takes part in this tradition, believes that it is all worth it.

"Just seeing the kids get all excited when I would light them up for the first time is the best," Krajicek said. "Actually doing it sometimes there's a lot of work, but just seeing the reactions from them makes it a lot of fun."



(Left): Senior Shaylynn Campbell poses with a sunflower at Vala's Pumpkin Patch. Campbell enjoys the apple orchard the most. "I love getting to go somewhere with my family to celebrate the fall," Campbell said. (Courtesy Photo)

(Below): Social studies teacher Dan Krajicek carves pumpkins with his kids Zach, Drew and Heidi in 2010. Even though the Krajiceks are busy with activities, they still carve pumpkins every October. (Courtesy Photo)



Fall fun with family

Gale shares her family's Halloween traditions

By Madi Bailiff

Carving pumpkins is a well-known Halloween tradition, and this is no exception for freshman Adie Gale, whose family goes all out with pumpkins and decorations every year.

"My mom has been doing this ever since she was a little kid," said Gale. "My dad definitely was a carver. He loved carving pumpkins when he was a kid—so having both of my parents just loving pumpkins and that stuff, I was just born into it. Now I've become a part of that tradition too, and I enjoy doing it."

Gale's family starts their tradition by choosing the perfect pumpkins.

"We always go to a pumpkin patch to pick out all of our pumpkins. We always either pick out the ones that are in the trailers, or we'll go out in the field and pick out the pumpkins that are there, too," Gale said.

Once they have all of their pumpkins picked out, Gale's family usually decorates the outside of the house with the pumpkins, gourds and autumn signs.

"The first thing that we usually do is we'll gather all of our pumpkins and figure out which ones are kind of alike and which colors would look better [next to each other]," said Gale. "My mom is really big about making sure that there's not a bunch of orange ones next to each other, there's gotta be some orange, some greens, some yellows and some whites."

Decorating is a long process, but the end product is worth it.

"It definitely makes me feel happy. But at the same time, it's also stressful. I know decorating after a while just took so long. I was like, 'Oh my gosh,

I just want to be done with this.' But once it's done, it looks really good. It definitely makes me feel really happy and proud of myself," said Gale.

Once the decorating is done, her family gets to the main event: carving pumpkins. This gives Adie a chance to spend time with her brother, first grader Colton Gale. This is fun for Adie and Colton, but it's definitely a messy process.

"My brother and I, before Halloween, usually always carve pumpkins together. Or actually I carve



(Above): After they finish decorating their house, freshman Adie Gale poses with her brother, Colton. The Gale family decorates their house with pumpkins, corn stalks, scarecrows and hay bales. (Courtesy Photo)

pumpkins, but my brother either paints or melts crayons on them—he makes a huge mess when he paints. The paint gets spilled everywhere," Gale said.

All the hard work and effort is aimed towards one night.

"My favorite part of the tradition is definitely just Halloween night when everything comes together and everyone just enjoys themselves," said Gale.

Halloween night no longer involves trick-or-treating for Gale. Instead, the final part of her family's tradition is to help decorate her dad's friend's

haunted house. Inside of the haunted house, there are people dressed up to scare the trick or treaters, and that is when Gale comes in. In order to get the candy, trick or treaters have to be brave enough to go through it.

"My dad comes around and kind of helps out with decorating it, and my mom usually helps decorate it too. But then me and my dad always like to scare too. So I don't usually dress up for trick or treating, I just dress up for that particular reason," said Gale. "Last year, I was the Purge. Just

because there was a mask I found that was like the exact skin tone as me. Then I found this gown thing that was perfect. Then I just splattered it with blood and then I got a bat and a knife, and I put blood on that too."

Gale's family has a lot going on during the season, but in the end, all the hard work and creativity pays off on Halloween night.

"Having so many pumpkins and decorating for such a long time really pays off on Halloween, and I just love seeing everybody's reaction when they walk by our house. They always are like, 'Oh my gosh, and how many pumpkins there are?' 'Oh my gosh, look at their decorations.' So that just makes me happy," said Gale.

The fun doesn't end on November 1, though; Gale's family leaves their pumpkins out the whole season so they can enjoy their hard work not just during Halloween but also during November.

"We always leave them out until about a week or two after Thanksgiving," Gale said, "because my family believes that pumpkins and fall decorations aren't just for Halloween, they're also for Thanksgiving."

#17 Photo/Artistic Illustration Champion: Alexis Pehrson, Yutan

**Alexis
Pehrson
125
State
Champion**



**Jordyn
Campbell
130
5th Place
Medalist**



**Aubrie
Pehrson
120
State
Champion**



Girls Wrestling State Medalists

2023

Artist's statement: In my photo illustration, I wanted to honor these girl wrestlers' accomplishments in an artistic way through using Pixelmator. I started by gathering pictures of each medalist and cropping them to be the same size. Then, I applied the black-and-white effect to each picture beside the wrestler to really make them stand out. After that, I used the mural of the Chieftain in our gym to be the background. I chose the Chieftain not only because it represents our school's mascot, but also the community's pride for these athletes. Using the layering tool, I put the pictures in a column on the left side, overlapping a red bar. I also made a black shape to go under each picture in order to make the pictures have a border and create a separation between the background. Next, I picked out a font that I thought fit best and listed all the necessary information for each individual and made a title. To add a little more dimension to the title, I copied it and put the copy behind the existing title and colored it red. Lastly, I put a shadow effect on all the words to make them pop even more.

Girls wrestlers bring home the hardware

Mckenna Jones

Getting third place as a team with only three underclassmen who each bring home their own state medals is very rare. For the Yutan girls wrestling team, though, anything is possible.

“We did really well as a team,” said sophomore Alexis Pehrson about their performance at the recent state wrestling meet. “We ended up getting third overall at state with just three girls, which is hard to do. It definitely shows how talented our team was.”

Along with the team’s success, there was also individual success. Sophomores Alexis and Aubrie Pehrson each earned their second individual state championship.

“It feels good because all my hard work paid off,” Alexis said.

The twins were joined on the medal podium by freshman Jordyn Campbell, who earned a fifth-place medal.

“I thought I did pretty good for my first time being there. I

feel like next year I’ll be more prepared and more focused on the matches that are important,” said Campbell.

Although there was success at state, there were also challenges. With it being Campbell’s first time competing at state, she struggled with the mental side of it, while also battling injuries.

“Being able to prepare myself with the amount of people there watching was hard,” said Campbell. “Also in my second match, I had a shoulder injury, so just being able to push through state with that was difficult.”

There were also challenges for the Pehrsons, despite having previous state experience.

“During my semifinal match, the other girl got the first takedown on me,” said Aubrie. “I didn’t let that get in my head. I just kept wrestling, even though I was down 4-3. I then got a reversal and pinned her.”

Despite the challenges, Aubrie talked about her favorite part of competing at the state tournament.

“Definitely getting my second state title with my sister,” said Aubrie. “We were really excited for each other because we worked really hard in the offseason. Also seeing some of my wrestling friends win a state title or place was a great experience.”

With all their success, the team and their coaches left feeling accomplished.

“Having three really young athletes be able to cruise through state, handle their business and do as well as they did has been an awesome experience,” said girls head wrestling coach Michael Swanson. “I couldn’t ask for anything better.”



Photo Illustration Alexis Pehrson

#18 Sports Action Photography Champion:
Adeline Hunt, Southern Valley





#19 News Feature Photography Champion: Seth Pinkelman, Crofton





#20 Yearbook Layout Champion: Laycee Josoff, Yutan

PATRIOTS BRING HOME THE GOLD

Yutan-Mead softball team ends state tournament with a homerun victory

This was it. The Yutan-Mead Patriots were two victories away from the gold medals that they had worked so hard to earn. The Patriots had knocked out the defending state champions from Bishop Neumann and were prepared to face off against Hastings St. Cecilia, whom they lost to in the semifinals and would now have to beat twice to claim the title.

The Patriots had a slow start in the first game of the championship series when they were down by two in the second inning. Then their bats came alive, and the team found a way to finish on top with a final score of 9-5.

"When we got up in the first game, I was so excited because the other team started to fold, and I wanted to beat them twice," senior Shaylynn Campbell said.

The final game started off close with a tied score for the first two innings; however, in the third inning, the Patriots had one of their best hitting displays of the season with six home runs.

"During the inning, the crowd was going crazy, and it was one of the best moments that I will remember forever," senior Ella Watts said.

After a record-breaking inning, the Patriots earned three quick outs to seal the game, run-ruling the Bluejays. With a final score of 13-1, the Yutan-Mead Patriots were Class C state softball champions.

"It felt like all of the three-hour practices in the hot weather had finally paid off. I knew at that point that everything we did to prepare worked," junior Maycee Hays said.



THREE STRIKES, YOU'RE OUT! Shaylynn Campbell (12) pitches the ball at full speed to the batter. Campbell ended the season with 290 strikeouts. "Pitching for my team this year has been the most rewarding thing I have been a part of," Campbell said.

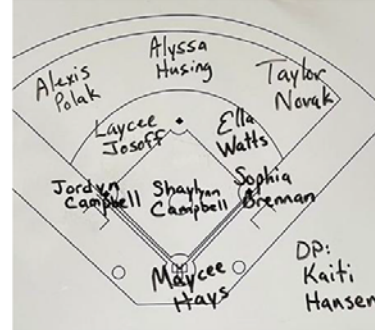


SHE'S OUT (Left): To get the runner out, Alyssa Husing (12) throws the ball to home plate. Husing ended her final season with zero errors on the field. "I love playing center field the most because I have the chance to hustle and make diving catches," Husing said.



READY TO MOVE (Left): As the pitcher releases the ball, Alexis Polak (12) leads off first base. Polak ended the season with a .870 fielding percentage. "When I lead off in high-pressure games, I always make sure to look ahead and know the situation," Polak said.

MARK IT UP



HEY, BATTER BATTER (Top Left): Taylor Novak (12) makes contact with the ball using all of her strength. Novak was the starting right fielder for the Patriots. "I'm really glad I got this opportunity to play right field with a championship team," Novak said.
BALLS UP! (Top Right): While catching in the final game of the state tournament, Maycee Hays (11) jumps up for a foul ball. Hays had a fantastic fielding season with 256 put outs. "The season could not have ended any better and I'm so thankful for the memories all of us were able to make together," Hays said.
BOMBS AWAY (Bottom Center): The Patriots run to the plate to celebrate a home run. The Patriots ended the season with a record of 34-2. "It is one of the best traditions we have when someone hits a home run because we all go to the plate, hit them hard on their helmet and celebrate with them," Rylee Kirchmann (10) said.



SCOREBOARD

Milford 3-0	Polk County 8-0
Westview 10-0	Aquinas 10-0
Raymond Central 12-0	Fort Calhoun 9-1
North Bend Central 11-0	GACC 8-0
LV/SS 11-0	Syracuse 11-0
Plattsmouth 18-1	Fort Calhoun 10-1
Freeman 2-1	Ashland-Greenwood 3-2
Wahoo 0-4	Arlington 10-0
Twin River 9-0	DC West 9-0
Bishop Neumann 11-1	Auburn 13-0
Syracuse 13-0	Tekamah-Herman 13-0
Cass County 7-1	DC West 8-0
Ashland-Greenwood 8-0	Freeman 8-2
Tekamah-Herman 19-0	Falls City 7-2
Schuyler 12-0	Falls City 8-0

STATE TOURNAMENT

Polk County 8-0	Bishop Neumann 12-0
Bishop Neumann 3-0	St. Cecilia 9-5
St. Cecilia 5-6	St. Cecilia 13-1



RE MARK ABLE MOMENTS



Hitting a home run in the championship...
 "I remember hitting my home run and having the biggest smile when I stepped on home plate. It's a moment I will always remember."
 - Ella Watts (12)



Making the final catch...
 "I was so overwhelmed in the best way when I caught the winning catch. I was in shock and just grateful to be there."
 - Jordyn Campbell (9)



Hitting a grand slam in the final game...
 "I was super happy I ended my final at bat with a grand slam. It was something you see in the movies and I'm so glad it was reality."
 - Laycee Josoff (12)

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#21 Yearbook Theme Development Champions: Ashlyn Cooper, Halle Pulliam, Ava Wiedel, Thayer Central

CAUSE • YOU'RE THERE • FOR ME • TOO

Gunner Mumford

Ashlyn Cooper

Madison Hammer

Triston Wells

Mackenzie Cast

Rylee Dankenbring

Miracle Swanson

Laiken Mumm

Ava Wiedel

Grant Wiedel

Avery Drohman

Kylie Seefus

Jordan Mariska

Kaylee Engle

Kash Whilhite

Duncan Wiedel

Lindsay Johnson

Allison Richardson

Cameron Schulte

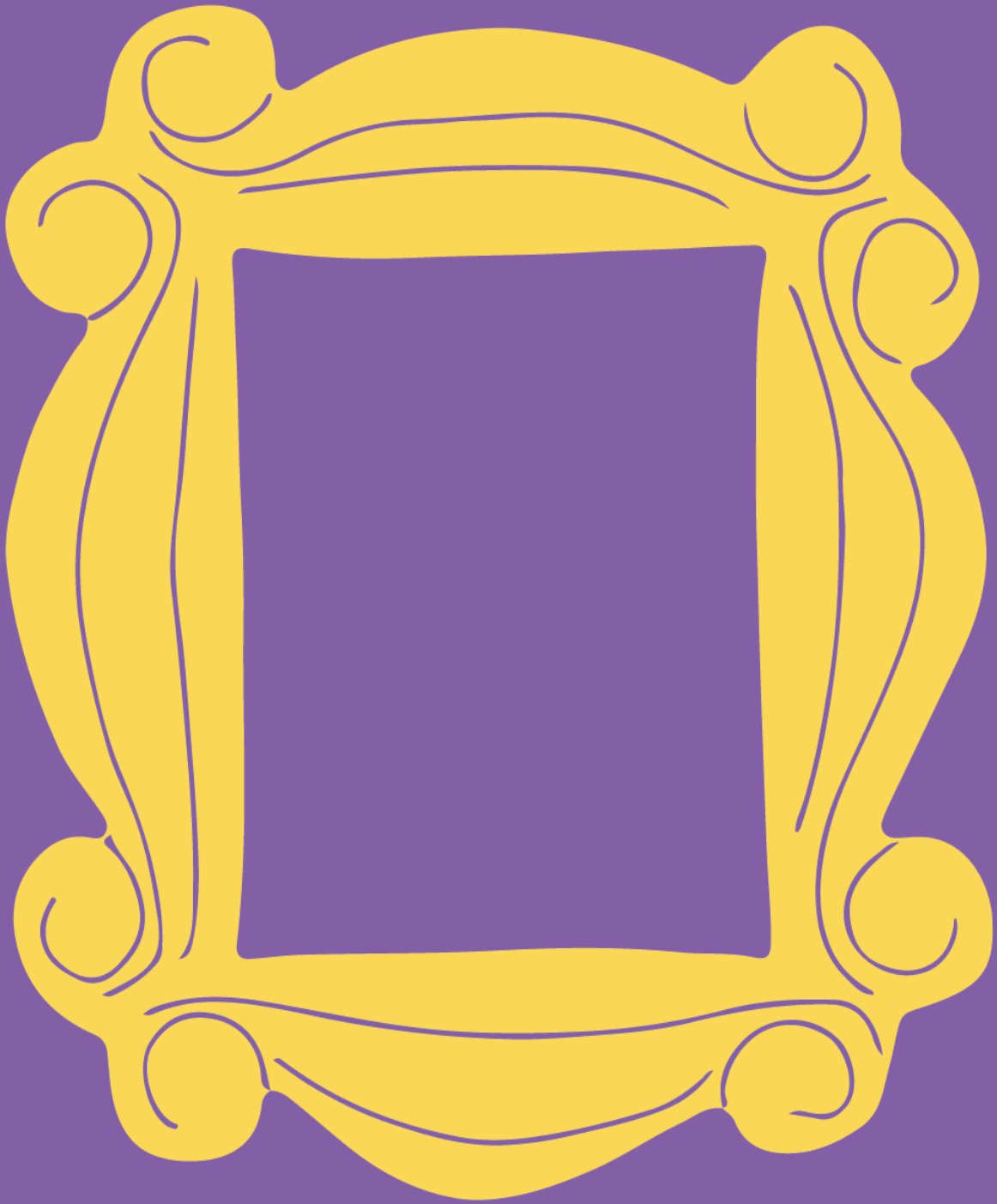
Tregan Johnson

Krista Hartley

Halle Pulliam

Lauren Luehring

Elizabeth Poisel



I LL • BE • THERE
FOR • YOU



— 02 OPENING —

— 04 FALL —

— 20 WINTER —

— 42 SPRING —

— 66 PEOPLE —

— 92 CLOSING —

Enrollment: 185
Volume 22
Thayer Central High School

930 Eads Avenue
Hebron, Nebraska 68370
Twitter: @ThayerCentral
Facebook: Facebook.com/ThayerCentral



T.C.H.S

No one told us life was gonna be this way
You jobs a joke, you're broke
Your grades are DOA
It's like you're always stuck in second gear
When it hasn't be your day, your week, your
month
Or even a year, but

I'll be there for you
when the rain starts to pour
I'll be there for you
like I've been there before
I'll be there for you
'Cause you're there for me too

You're still in bed at ten and school began at
eight
You've burned your breakfast
so far things are going great
Your teachers warned you there'd be days
like these
But they didn't tell you when the world has
brought
You down to your knees that,

I'll be there for you
when the rain starts to pour
I'll be there for you
like I've been there before
I'll be there for you
'Cause you're there for me too





Soles for Goals The student section puts their shoes in the air for kick off. They do this because it's meant to give good luck to the boys as they kickoff. "It's fun and makes the game more exciting," said **Krista Hartley**. (12) Photo by Ashlyn Cooper

F•A•L•L

The One were they....

scored touchdowns,

danced like no one was watching,

ran for fun,

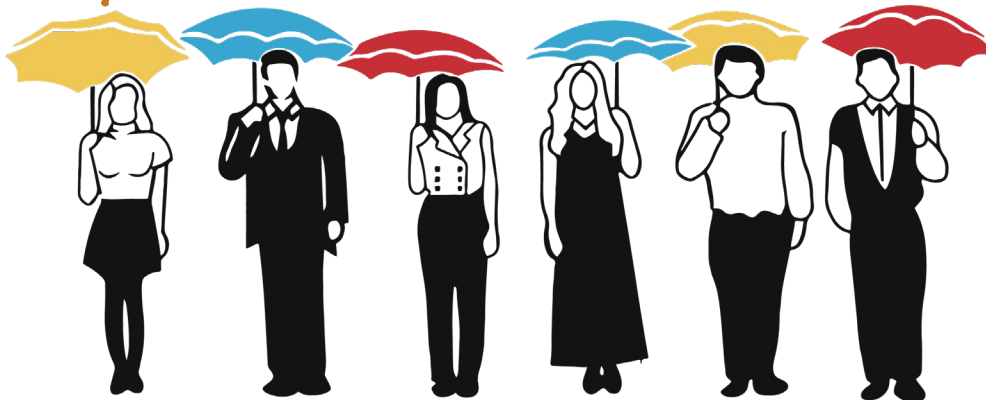
played video games,

sang at the top of their lungs,

served the ball,

dressed up in costumes,

and study hard for school.





Game Faces During the elementary homecoming pep rally seniors, **Cameron Schulte (12)** and **Allison Richardson (12)** are all smiles. Richardson and Schulte were both nominated as homecoming candidates. "My favorite part of being a candidate was the relay challenge with the kids at the elementary pep rally," said Richardson. Photo by Meigha Schmidt



Mic Drop

Senior football players **Gunner Mumford** (12) and **Cameron Schulte** (12) give speeches at the homecoming pep rally. The team would go on to win the game later that night. "I really enjoy being the voice of the team. I'm a natural leader so talking in front of people is easy for me," said Schulte. Photo By Jenna Patcha



Save a Horse At the homecoming dance **Avery Drohman** (12) is surrounded by his fellow students in the dance circle. "Save A Horse Ride a Cowboy" is Avery's favorite song. "When the song came on it made me feel special. I made everyone get super excited and it also made me happy to see everyone else happy. The feeling of everyone hyping me up during the song was also exciting," said Drohman. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Get out of My Swamp! Performing at the annual lip sync battle **Braelyn Degenhardt** (9) and **Aliecia Howe** (9) dressed up as Fiona and Shrek. Sadly the freshman fell short to the juniors who won. "My favorite part about the lip sync battle was that Braelyn was Fiona. We had a really good time just being goofy together," said Howe Photo by Ashlyn Cooper

FAKE • IT • TILL YOU • MAKE • IT

By: Ava Wiedel

Every year the stakes are on the line for the most creative class at Thayer Central. Also, the bragging rights for the rest of the day are up for grabs. The annual homecoming lip sync battle at Thayer Central is not something to be taken lightly.

“My favorite part about the lip sync battle is that everyone brings their own creativity and different songs to sing along to,” said **Halle Johnson** (10).

With a week’s preparation, classes put together songs, dance moves, and costumes for the Friday of homecoming. All to perform in front of a panel of judges along with the entire school.

“I don’t ever get nervous when performing, everyone is making a fool of themselves so its all fun and games,” said **Jaelynn Watson** (9)

The pressure is on when you get up in front of the school. All of the eyes of the entire student body are on you and your class. The winners of the lip sync battle this year were the Juniors.



Drop it Like its Hot Dancing with a group of friends **El-lie Sudbeck** (11) sings the lyrics to Shout Out to My Ex. This song is a fan favorite played every year at homecoming. “My favorite part about homecoming is getting ready with all of my friends before the dance,” said Sudbeck. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Balance, Balance, Balance Participating in the elementary pep rally **Duncan Wiedel** (12) and **Lindsay Johnson** (12) Balance books on their heads as a part of the homecoming court relay. “Being out there in front of all the elementary is really what is awesome about being on court. ” said Johnson. Photo By Meigha Schmidt

Meet your Homecoming King and Queen



Ava Wiedel and Cameron Schulte





Block During the Pink Out game, **Jadyn Bowman** (11) and **Piper Havel** (9) go up to block. Blocking is a big help on defense for the back row. "When I go up to block my mindset is to get there and push. That will give me the best shot at blocking the ball," said Bowman. Photo by Halle Pulliam

Assist At the Minden Tournament **Ashlyn Cooper** (12) sets the ball to the outside. Cooper has been a setter since junior high, but this is her first year as starting varsity setter. "There was a lot of pressure coming in as a new setter after last year. I just worked hard everyday in practice to keep improving," said Cooper. Photo by Curtesy.

THE ONE WHERE
EVERYTHING
CHANGES

By: Ashlyn Cooper

When you see them out on the court, this year's volleyball team might look a little different than last years. With 6 main varsity players graduating, the team had some rebuilding to do over the summer.

"Over the summer I went to weights every week, went to the open gyms and volleyball camps we had to help me prepare for season" said **Laiken Mumm** (12)

With the new team this year none of the starters have ever played all six rotations. For most teams that would have been a struggle, but not for ours. Even with a whole new starting line up the team still ended the season with a 24-8 record. With that many people graduating, it gives the opportunity for younger classmen to step up and take on a bigger role. One freshman that stepped up and took on a big role was **Piper Havel** (9).

"It felt amazing and it was super rewarding to be able to start as a freshman. When I first started I was nervous but as time went on I got more comfortable on the court and I was ready to help my team and do what I needed to do to help us win," said Havel.

Another thing different from last year is the coaching staff. With Kurk Wiedel retiring Jenna Pachta has stepped into the role as head coach, which left an open assistant coach position. Eric Uher has filled that role alongside Teegan Moeller.

"I was very excited to get the opportunity to coach volleyball again. The history that Thayer Central has as a volleyball team is impressive, especially for how long we have been competitive. On top of it, I knew I would be working with two fantastic and young coaches that also coached under Coach Wiedel and I knew how he ran things. We are very fortunate to have great families and great kids that want to keep our sports programs growing and succeeding here at Thayer Central," said Uher.

As you can see a lot has changed from last year. From coaches, positions and even the starting lineup. Everyone is excited to see where the season will go!





Tip the ball Going up **Allison Richardson** (12) tips the ball over the block. Richardson was one of the starting middles for the team this year. "When I got into the game I knew that this was my chance to play so I had to make the most of it. This year was the best season yet, I'm glad to have made so many memories and to finish the season at a district final," said Richardson. Photo by Halle Pulliam

Starting Lineups During starting line ups **Natalie Tietjen** (11) high fives all her teammates. The starting line up has always been a fun tradition for the volleyball team. "My favorite part about games, especially home games was the atmosphere. Having our fans support us, even when we traveled to away games is something not a lot of schools can say. Our boys were a big part of the atmosphere. They were at every game cheering us on. Also just being on the court with my friends and playing with them is something I am going to cherish forever," said Tietjen. Photo by Halle Pulliam



Ace Ace Ace Serving the ball **Josey Welch** (11) focuses to serve where her coach told her to. This is Welch's first year as libero. "There was a lot of pressure coming after the last libero leaving. I felt like I had a big responsibility to fill those shoes, not only for myself but for my team," said Welch. Photo by Halle Pulliam

NEW ACTIVITIES



A new activity at Thayer Central this year is Ga Ga Ball. There is a Ga Ga ball pit up on the elementary playground and the volleyball team decided to take advantage of it on a nice day. Photo by Curtesy

Finish Strong

A first year freshman athlete you experience many firsts of your high school career. **Isabella Escritt (9)** finishes with her classmates and friends cheering her on. "The filmcore meet has it highs and lows but one of the major highs is that the football boys and volleyball girls come and support," said Escritt. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Just keep running

Pushing to the very end of the race, **Halle Pulliam (12)** gives everything she has left to pass an opponent right before the finish line. "Having the motivation to pass people even up until the end is so important in the sport, if it is a teammate or a runner from a different school at the point it is all up to you," said Pulliam. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



THE ● ONE ● WHERE ● THEY ● RUN

By: Halle Pulliam

The Thayer Central Cross Country team put there miles in all summer long. Tracking there miles on there own they were able to see the progress of their teammates and cheer them on through the app used.

Logging our summer miles was just the first of many changes the cross country team had gone through this season. Having a new coaching staff changes the feel and environment of meets and practices. Former assistant coach **Louie Keim** assumed the role as head cross country coach this fall, with the help of the two new assistant coaches **Kathy Brzon**, and **Ann Hubl**.

"After being the assistant coach in years past, I had an idea for what it was going to be like this fall. After meeting with my new assistant coaches Kathy Brzon and Ann Hubl, we knew everything we wanted to bring to the team this season," said **Keim**.

One of the changes Keim brought to the course was making sure our athletes had the absolute best stamina levels for meets. To achieve this goal he had his runners practicing hills, sprints, and running those miles to get used to the distance all in a hard weeks worth of practices.

"Since I started to run cross country, coaches have come and gone, with a new coaching staff it gives the season a differnt feel then years past," said **Beth Posil (12)**.

All around the team will compete and perform the way they always do, as best as they can thriving to improve themselves and their times.

Use the Slope

Using down hills is very beneficial to long distance runners. It gives your legs a little bit of break. **Taivry Virus (11)** strides out for the down hill "On courses that don't have much of a long down hill when you come across a slope that can help your body relax you use it the best you can," said Virus.

Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Run, Run, Run

Sophomore athlete **Colter Sinn (10)** competes in his first meet of the season. With conflict he couldn't compete with his teammates the weeks prior but made up for past time on the course. "With conflicts at the start of the season I had to work extra hard in practice to compete and run for my team at the meet," said Sinn

Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Keep up the Pace

Second year runner, **Adam Lukert (10)** relaxes into his pace for the remainder of the race. "On a rough course you have some people that are going to be at an advantage for some hills because some athletes attack hills better than others. Keeping a fast pace for both the up and down hill so you have the energy to attack more during the remainder of the race," said Lukert.

Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



3 • GOING ON • 13



Halle Pulliam (12) & Isabella Escritt (9) ran the Lincoln Halfsy Half marthon this fall.

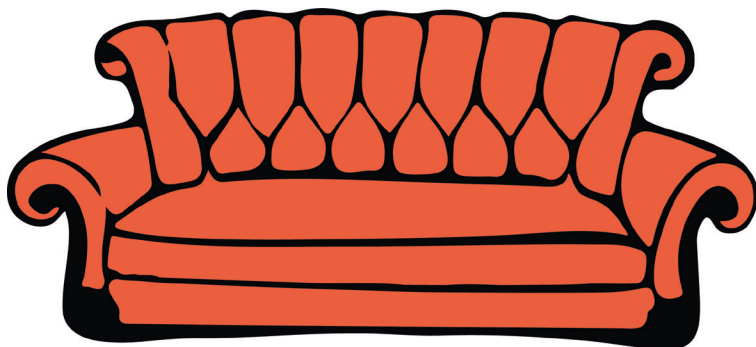
Center Of It All Ready to snap the ball **Gunner Mumford (12)** is on the line with his teammates. Mumford is a big part of the titans team on both sides of the ball. "Being a leader on the team I do my best to always be vocal out on the field at all times," said Mumford. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Throw your Hands in the Air Celebrating for a touchdown **Grant Wiedel (12)** scores for the Titans. Wiedel would go on to be on of the main recievers for the team. "I changed my mind set and took every opportunity I had," said Wiedel. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Break It Down Running with the ball **Sam Souerdyke (10)** tries to make his way down the field. Souerdyke was a main offensive player throughout the season averaging 112.3 yards per game. "When I'm running for the ball I try to find the holes that my teammates make for me," said Souerdyke. (9) Photo by Ashlyn Cooper





Dip Dive Dodge
Carrying the ball **Jordan Mariska (12)** runs with the ball. Mariska played a huge roll for the team this year having 19 touchdowns on the whole year. "I knew this year was my year to show everyone what I had worked so hard for in the off season," said Mariksa. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper

THE ONE WHERE THEY BLOCK AND TACKLE

By: Ava Wiedel

The 2022 football season here at Thayer Central without a doubt was historic. The team had lost their head coach Jeremy Jones before the season started and someone had to step up to fill the void. None other than Doug Hoins took on the challenge.

"I had a little different philosophy than the other coach they boys have had. But the teams that win are the teams that block and tackle. You gotta block and tackle," said Hoins.

This football season was all about stepping up. Another spot that needed to be filled was the quarterback spot. With having a very experienced quarterback for several years that was the spot that no one knew who would fill it. The main option was junior **William Heitmann (11)**. Heitmann came into the squad with no varsity experience and handled it like a champ.

"Going into the first game I was nervous but having some of the boys who had played before made it seem like it was just another game," said Heitmann.

The football team would later go on to make history here at Thayer Central. The football team ended up 8-2 losing to Nebraska Christian for their last game. Their last game nostalgically was at the home field where it all started for the boys in August.

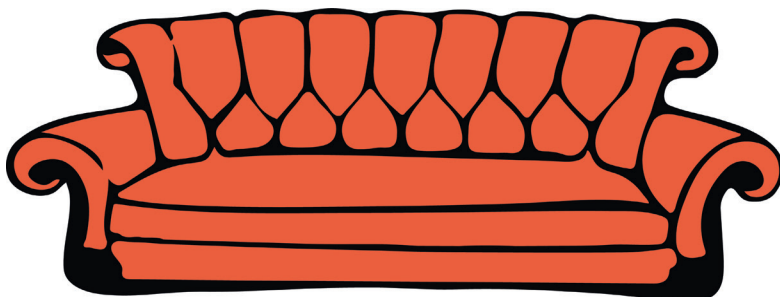
"Ideally I would've wanted the last game to be at memorial but, it was bittersweet ending it where it all started so many years ago," said **Triston Wells (12)**

With heads held high the football team went out with a bang. Adapting to a new offense, coach, and mindset our boys proved everyone that they had what it took to go far. There is only one place to go and that's up, this marks the season of new beginnings for that football team here at Thayer Central.

W•I•N•T•E•R

Monica Monica have a
happy Hanukkah,
saw Santa Claus
he said hello to Ross,
and please tell Joey
Christmas will be snowy,
and Rachael and Chandler
Ha Ah Ha Ah Handler.

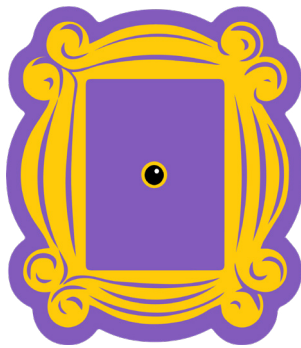
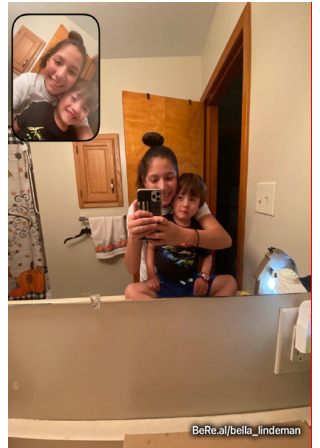
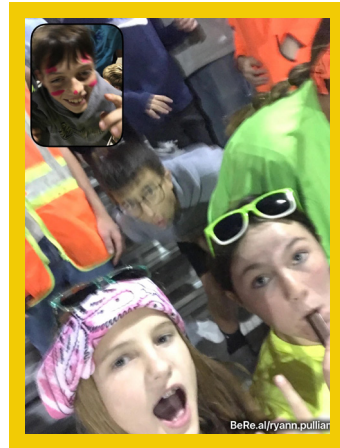
- Phoebe Buffay



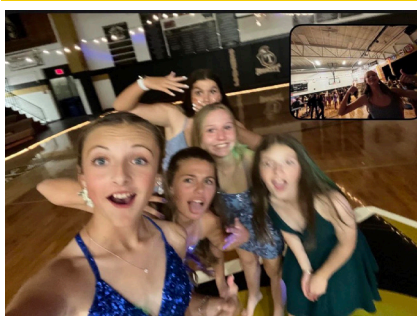
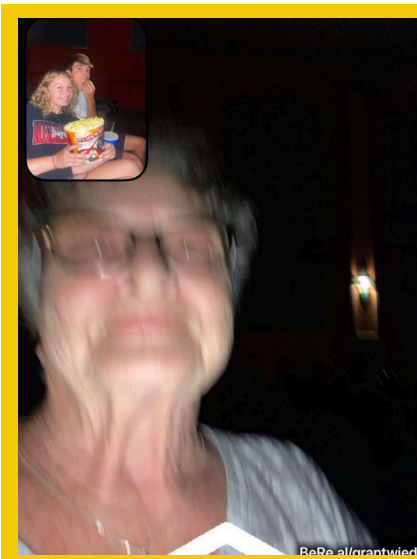


GLITTER At this year's high school Christmas Extravaganza the high school rhythmies replaced cinnamon with gold glitter. Freshman **Bella Lindeman** (9) as well as the other girls swept the stage countless times post concert. "It was definitely worth it because it added so much to our section of the song and made it more fun," said Lindeman. Photo by Halle Pulliam

I LL • BE • THERE • FOR • YOU



WHEN • IT'S • TIME • TO • BE REAL



START FROM THE TOP

By: Halle Pulliam

After a very successful season in the 2021-2022 competitions the Thayer Central cheerleading program has been faced with many challenges and changes this year. One of the most major changes being the new coaching staff.

One thing the coaches have stressed is the need for leadership on the squad. In the spring of 2022 they name **Halle Pulliam** (12) as captain with **Caitlyn Mitchell** (11) assistanting her as co captain when needed.

“Coming in with little to no experience in coaching we wanted to bring so new things to the team to refreshing it. One being adding a additional competition and another was a need for a back up captain if our captain was gone,” said **Coach Jayde Marsh**.

Being there first season the coaches have learned so much already, and will take their new knowledge into the upcoming season.



ANATOMY OF A STUNT

Yell Loud Yell Proud Preforming a new 2022 UCA camp cheer **Bella Lindeman** (9) shouts our schools colors. As a freshman the back to school pep rally is the first time you will cheer in front of a large crowd. “I was really excited and nervous at the same time. I used to always love watching them from the stands and was so fun to finally be out there,” said Lindeman. Photo By Ashlyn Cooper



Spirit Cheering for the football starters during line-ups **Halsey Heitmann** (10) spirits towards the crowd to hype them up. “Spiriting really gets the crowd pumped and ready for the game. I love getting to tumble and get the crowd more and more involved,” said Heitmann. Photo by Ashlyn Cooper



Fight Song Preforming the fight song is a very common thing for all sporting events and pep rallies. As a cheerleader **Cambria Kunc** (10) will preform the fight song countless times in just one year. “Its really important to get the fight song down and cleaned up early so you can look confident through out the year.” said Kunc. Photo by Meigha Schmidt

MAKING HISTORY

By: Halle Pulliam

A long time in waiting finally came upon us this year, Thayer Central has their first ever girls wrestling team. The team was coached by Brett Larson this winter and attended many meets far and near.

“I was unsure on if I should have gone out, as more of my friends said they were I decided I wanted to try something new. I loved every minute of it and the team became more of a family,” said **Jaelynn Watson**. (9)

Females are aloud to wrestle with the boys in junior high. unfortunately it was common for the girls wrestlers to never compete agian after they entered high school

“When I was in seventh grade I chose to wreslte over playing basketball, I was really happy to know that my carreer had a chance to keep going after I entered high school,” said **Bella Lindeman**. (9)

No matter the point in time there will always have to be a first to make history, and the girls wrestling team absolutey made a great first season for thayer central.

Escape At the TCHS home invite **Kinley Casey** (11) attempts an escape to gain a point on her opponent. In wrestling an escape gives you 2 points in a match. “when in a match, you are in game mode and no matter if you are defending or on more of the offensive side, its important to have youre head on straight” said Casey. Photo by Curtisy



1 2 3 Pinned At their second meet of the year, **Braelyn Degenhardt** (9) pins her appoinent. “With being raised in a wrestling family I felt the pressure succeed being the first female to compete as a wrestler, and that motivated me throughout the season.” said Degenhardt. Photo by curtisy.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



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2023 Class C - State Journalism WINNERS – Events #22-#25

#22 Broadcast News Story – Cecilia Sisco, Aquinas Catholic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz4asTp9d54>

#23 Broadcast Sports Survey – Kamryn McArthur, Hunter Perks, Cambridge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQVL_5hW5LQ

#24 Broadcast Feature Story – Lillian Flynn, Mead

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAQQOWSMA5U>

#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement – Allisen Jelinek, Cecilia Sisco, Aquinas Catholic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhWDF05XLtc>