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# the REGISTER

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## DR. LOGAN DEPARTS

After Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Logan announced her resignation, students share thoughts on new OPS superintendent's priorities.

**Ella Levy**  
*opinion editor*

Omaha Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Logan is leaving the district in June of 2023. She has been with OPS since 2018. Under her tenure, OPS has implemented its current "Strategic Plan of Action." The plan goes through 2025 and will be carried out even after Logan leaves.

This plan has produced "Omaha Public Schools College & Career Academics and Pathways." A pathway is chosen when a student is a freshman. They will then take classes under that pathway until they graduate. It is meant to offer experience for careers and college. Parents and students have criticized the plan, arguing that a person should not be stuck taking classes they may not enjoy anymore, when they could be trying new things.

A Register survey polled 83 students from Central High School. The survey recorded what students felt the next superintendent's priorities should be rated on a scale from one to five, five being the most important. The implementation of pathways being pursued was ranked least important by students. Only 10% of students ranked the continuation of pathways a five. One student expressed concern, saying, "Freshman should not be forced into a career they picked their first year of high school." Another student offered their experience, saying the major they wanted to pursue was not an option and they were forced into something they are uninterested in. It is clear the students do not care to see the new superintendent focus on the pathways.

Staffing issues had the highest ranking of importance overall. 64% of stu-

dents ranked it as a 5. Students not only hear about staffing problems but see them in front of them. "Staff is what makes school, school and if we don't have enough of them then we are not able to reach our full potential," expressed one student.

Students expressed great concern about teachers and the respect they deserve. Specifically, they want the next superintendent to focus on bringing teachers in and increasing their pay. "For all the things teachers go through, they deserve better pay. I think OPS needs to figure out a way to make teachers happy and attract more of them," a student said.

Busing issues scored the second highest ranking of overall importance. Students shared their firsthand experiences, saying how unfair cutting buses is. One student pointed out that Central administration is always pointing fingers at students telling them to be at school on time, but if the busing issue is not resolved, how will students ever get there on time? "Transportation is the first step to ensure that students get the education they need. Without access to transportation, students will be more likely to be tardy or not arrive at all," a student said. 51% ranked transportation as a 5. "Refusing to tackle the issue of transportation will only further segregate our schools."

Many students felt strongly that the new superintendent should tackle scheduling. Specifically, 42% rated it as a 5. Multiple students even pointed out where they wanted change, asking for a later start time. Most students talked about block scheduling as well in their responses. One student called it "exhausting" and "draining." A couple of students even mentioned snow days. All were opposed to virtual snow days and suggested giving students the day off.

## 'Vicious cycle' of homelessness

**Charlie Yale**  
*sports/web editor*

Omaha Public Schools estimates that approximately 200 students became unhoused over the district's winter recess.

"We had students and families impacted by closure of apartment complexes in our community, fires and other cold-related damage to homes," Chief Communications Officer Jeremy Maskel said.

"Any time a student is displaced, of course, is a bad year. It's been a couple of years since the last time there was a complex that was uprooted due to the city's actions in order to try to protect the inhabitants," Central Social Worker Dawnna Hill said. "To be honest, that's not something that I always have exposure to that information. We only really know what we're made aware of."

The complex was the Legacy Crossing apartment buildings, off 105th and Fort Streets. KMTV reported that an estimated 165 households lived at the complex. After the owner, a Colorado resident, put the complex up for sale, a purchaser backed out of the deal because of the deterioration present on the property. The property was foreclosed on December 19 due to severe code violations.

Mayor Jean Stothert explained that conditions included "no heat, collapsed ceilings, cockroach infestations, mold and raw sewage, among others."

The public school system is able to provide extra protection to students through specific federal and state legislation.

"One of the protections that we offer students and families impacted by homelessness is the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act. It affords, federally, some protections for students and families to make sure they're not



The Nest provides resources to students further impacted in certain ways," Mercedes Hall | The O-book

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was enacted in 1987 as the first significant federal legislation in response to homelessness. The bill is named for Stewart B. McKinney, the chief sponsor of the bill, and Bruce Vento, a leading supporter of re-authorization. It ensures educational rights for unhoused children by validating different living arrangements, thereby qualifying unhoused youths as eligible for services under the act.

"What that does is it allows them to continue to stay at their school of enrollment, regardless of what their external circumstances are, or it also allows them to enroll in a school, even if they don't have their proper paperwork that

**UNHOUSED STUDENTS** on page 3



**THESPIAN FESTIVAL** on page 3



**FASHION CLUB** on page 4



**BRI FULL** on page 5



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## IB exhibition showcases student art

Hadley Forsen-Yepes  
proofreader

The International Baccalaureate (IB) senior art exhibition was held on the weekend of Jan. 13, showcasing curated works that the students had been developing since the beginning of their junior year. The IB program requires art students to display their work in a public exhibition, which is considered a part of their Internal Assessment that makes up 40% of their final grade.

"We could literally just do [the exhibition] on a wall here, but it's important to me and Cathy Andrus [Central's IB coordinator] that [the students] have an opportunity to have what feels like a real show after they put in so much work," said Libby Cruz, the IB art teacher and organizer of the exhibition. She believes that the students deserved recognition for all that they have accomplished in the class, especially since last year, they dedicated two periods in their nine period schedule to IB art. Although this time has been cut short this school year due to the block schedule, the artists have still spent a significant amount of time dedicated to their craft, and Cruz wished to honor that.

The exhibition is traditionally held at the Joslyn Art Museum, but with the Joslyn being under construction, this year and last year's have been held at local art galleries. Last year's exhibition at Kaneko was successful, however due to circumstance and accommodation issues, plans to hold this year's exhibition at Kaneko fell through, and Cruz was fortunate enough to have Bill Seidler Jr. of the Bancroft Street Market host the show at the last-minute.

"Our artwork was on the spotlight, quite literally," said Chloe Reese, one of the exhibit's featured artists. "The lighting was not even considered beforehand, but [Bill] went along himself and did it." Cruz and her students

were grateful for Bill and the Bancroft Street Market's ability to adapt the space to fit their needs. Reese also valued the intimacy of the Bancroft Street Market, and enjoyed that the space was, for the duration of the exhibit, entirely dedicated to IB students' works, as opposed to being one exhibit out of many in a larger gallery.

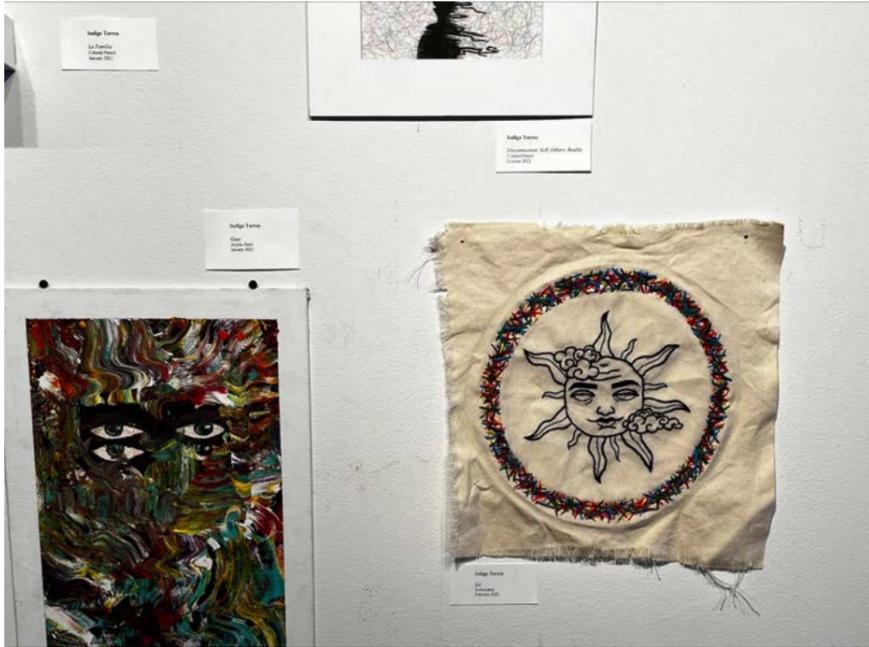
Another requirement for the students was that they had to curate their own exhibit. After laying their works out on the floor, shifting everything around to decide what looked best and consulting their peer's opinions on their layout, the artists hung up and leveled their pieces. Cruz encouraged them to lay out their pieces with intent, and students chose to arrange them based on color, size, spacing and similarities in theme.

"The medium could've been anything," said Louis Reed, a senior whose exhibit featured acrylic artwork and experiments with clay and resin. Some students stuck with one medium while others explored many. Walking around the gallery, you could find oil on canvas, graphite on paper, photographs, embroidery, pottery, crochet, prints and more.

The artists were thankful to have gotten an opportunity to display their works in a public art gallery. "Not a lot of students that I know of got to have their artwork put on display in an exhibition like ours," said Reese.

"It's definitely cool to have it up on the wall like an actual museum, instead of just sitting in a drawer. It makes me feel more professional and accomplished," said Reed.

A reception was held on Jan. 13, and the art was positively received by the community. Students got the opportunity to share their art and their classmates' art with loved ones; they could explain the meaning behind their pieces or leave it up to the viewer's interpretation. With the success of the exhibit, it is certain that the students received the recognition they rightfully deserved.



Indigo Torres' art on display.

Hadley Forsen-Yepes | The Register

## Bills introduced to the Unicameral

Noemi Gilbert  
news editor

The first two weeks of January in the Nebraska Legislature featured an introduction of over 800 bills. Each one of these bills has the potential to become the law of the land in Nebraska, and many of these bills directly address public education, human rights, equity and many other issues relevant to students.

Three introduced bills target transgender and gender non-conforming Nebraskans. Senator Kathleen Kauth introduced LB574 and LB575. LB574 would ban youth under 19 years old from accessing gender-affirming medical care, and LB575 would prohibit transgender student athletes from playing on school sports teams that align with their gender identity.

Other bills introduce state-wide protections for LGBTQ Nebraskans. LB169, introduced by senators Megan Hunt and John Frederickson, would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This kind of discrimination is federally illegal but including it in state law would add another layer of official protection. Hunt and Frederickson, the only openly LGBTQ Nebraska state senators, also introduced LB179, which would prohibit conversion therapy for minors. Conversion therapy is defined in the bill as "a practice or treatment that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity."

Senator Terrell McKinney introduced several bills related to education. He introduced LB630, which would require school dress codes to protect students' natural hair and cultural attire, and LB632, which would prohibit metropolitan school districts from suspending kindergarten through second-grade students. In contrast, LB811, introduced by Senator Dave Murman,

intends to increase discipline for students in the classroom. The bill would permit physical restraint in response to student behavior. LB585, introduced by Senator Dan Hughes, also attempts to address student behavior by requiring behavioral and mental health training for school personnel.

Bills related to young people extended beyond the classroom and into the criminal justice system. LB620 was introduced by Senator Mike McDonnell and would lower the minimum age of adult prosecution for felony crimes to 12 years old. Also relating to youth in the criminal justice system, Senator McKinney introduced LB339, which would expand confidentiality for youth charged with crimes.

Each bill is available for the public to read on the Nebraska Legislature's website, [nebraskalegislature.gov](http://nebraskalegislature.gov). This website also has tools for Nebraskans to learn the contact information for their senators and to learn about the lawmaking process in Nebraska.

Now that the bills have been introduced, they have been assigned to one of 14 committees based on the categories the bills cover. While the bills are in committee, they receive a public hearing. This means that citizens may visit the legislature and give their feedback to lawmakers. After the public hearing, committees vote on the bills. Hearing from the public is a core step in the legislative process.

Public hearings aren't the only option to give feedback about these laws. Reaching one's representative is as simple as an email or letter. All senators' contact information can be found at [nebraskalegislature.gov](http://nebraskalegislature.gov). Already, the proposed bills have revealed ideological divides between Nebraska lawmakers, and throughout Spring 2023, Nebraskans will see which of these bills become law.

## Metro tuition free for high schoolers

Fiona Bryant  
contributing writer

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in Omaha is continuing its free tuition for high school students through the 2024-2025 school year, but over a third of Central students are unaware of the opportunity.

A recent survey conducted by The Register showed 63% of Central students had heard of the free classes with school as the main informant.

Out of the 100 respondents, only 10 had taken advantage of the free class offerings.

Raymone Sazone, a MCC dual enrollment navigator assigned to Central, said that students' reasons for not pursuing classes at Metro include not being interested in dual enrollment or previous financial barriers.

"My goal is to connect with these students to ensure they are aware that this funding waives the cost of tuition for any high school student enrolled in one of our credit programs," Sazone said.

The waived cost has been in effect since the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year after Metro received funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, which allocated federal funding for pandemic relief.

Programs including College Now, Kickstart Online, Career Academy and Gateway to College

offer classes towards obtaining a vocational certificate, associate degree or bachelor's degree.

Classes at Metro teach skills such as culinary arts, automotive technology, plumbing, graphic design and energy technology.

"Many of these credits are transferable to state colleges and other four-year institutions, both in state and beyond," Sazone said.

Students can discuss dual enrollment and transferability with their counselors or can meet with Sazone in the counseling office on Tuesdays.

"I think it is a great idea for motivated students to earn college credits while in high school," said Angela Meyer, Central's post-secondary school counselor.

Registration for classes can be done through Metro's website: [mccneb.edu](http://mccneb.edu). Registration for the summer semester begins March 29.

Sophomore Arisa Lattison earned six credit hours of Biology last summer through Metro.

"At first, I wasn't super interested in the idea of taking extra classes, but I felt it would be nice to get college credits out of the way at no cost," Lattison said.

"This is a benefit not only to the students but our community. Those students who thought college was not within their reach, have now been given hope and opportunity," Sazone said.

I am thrilled to present the fourth issue of The Register for the 2022-2023 school year. I look forward to informing readers through the documentation of remarkable stories and graphics.

As Editor-in-Chief, I am confident in the work the staff has produced over the past month, and I am proud of the final presentation. My hope is that our love for journalism shines through this issue.

I hope you find The Register compelling, informative and welcoming. Make sure to check out our website, [omahacentralregister.com](http://omahacentralregister.com), to keep up with current stories and events. We are also active on Instagram at [chs.register](https://www.instagram.com/chs.register) and Twitter at [@chsregister](https://twitter.com/chsregister). Thank you for your continued support and reading of The Register.

Shyla Youngs  
Editor-in-Chief

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It is the goal of the Central High Register to represent the student body in issues affecting their lives as young people and students. If you feel that we are not covering an issue that is important to you, we welcome contributing writers who bring fresh ideas to the issues.

If you would like to write a story for your student newspaper, please contact Broderick Hilgenkamp at [broderick.hilgenkamp@ops.org](mailto:broderick.hilgenkamp@ops.org) or come to room 029 to discuss your idea.



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## Drama students shine at Nebraska Thespian Festival

E Dona-Munoz  
staff writer

Every January, theatre students from high schools all around Nebraska attend the Nebraska Thespian Festival, a celebration of their mutual passions for theatre and the performing arts. The past few years, the festival has been held at the Holland Center and Double Tree Hotel, just a few blocks away from Central High School. Drama teacher Scott Mead takes about 20 to 30 students who are a part of the CHS Thespian Troupe #7833 to the festival to participate in competitions, watch shows, meet with colleges and universities and interact with other high school thespians.

Competitions at the festival are split into four different categories: individual performance events, individual technical events, tech challenges and improvisation challenges. Each category highlights a different aspect of theatre. Performance events include individual and group songs and scenes from plays and musicals. Tech events highlight a different area of technical theatre work, with students putting together information about any technical work they have accomplished in the previous semester. Central High's Tech Team tends to do very well in the tech challenge and this year was no different, with them snagging the first-place award overall. Senior and team captain Holden Fershée won first place in the Hang-a-Light challenge as well. "Tech challenge... includes multiple aspects of technical theatre," Fershée explained. "Students compete against other schools in challenges including Sew a Button, Fold a Drop, Costume Quick Change, Prop Shift, Sound System Set-up, and Hang-a-Light."

Two Central juniors received superior ratings for their individual events. Jillian Bertino received a superior for her event in the category of Solo Musical Theatre. Jaden Cheloha received the award for his event in the Short Film category. Bertino performed "Holding to the Ground" from William Finn and James Lapines' "Falsettos". Bertino said that she chose this song because the actress who plays Trina, the character who sings the song during the show was played by Stephanie J. Block during the 2017

revival of "Falsettos." "Block has been my role model since I was about thirteen," Bertino said, "and I picked this song not only because she sang it, but because it highlighted my strengths as a vocalist as well." Cheloha's film, titled "A New Tune", was the only short film to receive a callback during the festival. After completing the storyboard process, he spent the week before submissions were due filming the various interior and exterior shots. "I am very proud of my film, and plan on competing again next year," Cheloha said.

Central's Improv Team was co-captained by junior Toby Rischling and senior Pretzel Urwin. The group of six students compete in multiple rounds of improvisation games against other schools as well. "The improv team was selected from our Drama 5-6 class, after we had been doing improv in class for the first semester," Rischling said. "It was great to see and meet so many talented people from across Nebraska... The first night of ITS [International Thespian Society] was the first round of improv." While Central's improv team did not move on from the first round, Rischling stated that there were no hard feelings, emphasizing how well other schools did. "It was very friendly competition," he said.

Besides competitions, some high schools performed productions from their first semesters in the Holland Center Concert Hall. Papillion-La Vista High School performed "Little Shop of Horrors", Lincoln Southeast High School performed "39 Steps", Westside High School performed "Dirt", and Brownell Talbot performed "Terezin: Children of the Holocaust".

Overall, Troupe #7833 was awarded the Gold Troupe Honor Award, the highest distinction given at the festival. Honor Troupe Awards are given at three different levels, bronze, silver, and gold, to recognize the hard work each thespian troupe in the district has accomplished. Each troupe is assessed on the work done during the current school year, including projects to boost the troupe's positive image, productions completed, and continued education experiences. The dedication and passion Central's theatre students have for the area was put on full display during the three-day event, making it a successful year for Central High School at the Nebraska Thespian Festival.



Top: Thespians pose at the banquet. Photo Courtesy of CENTRAL DRAMA  
Bottom: The tech team celebrates victory.

## Social workers address homelessness

**UNHOUSED STUDENTS** from page 1 typically is expected for enrolling," Hill said. "They help to coordinate transportation, so that that's not a barrier for attending school. Those are some elements that they can work through with that particular funding."

As soon as an OPS school learns of a situation where a family has lost their permanent dwelling, has become "doubled up" with families or a student is unaccompanied, the school offers the family the opportunity to work with personnel at the Teacher Administrative Center, OPS's headquarters, to enroll them in the McKinney-Vento program.

"As a school social worker, I always meet students and families where they are and what they want me to help them with," Hill said. "I lean in and wait for them to ask for supports. We are able to connect them to a variety of community resources. There are a lot of access points that students and families can go to in order to get reconnected with housing, whether it's the shelter short-term or if it's connecting to longer term options within the network."

Hill also says that social workers help to address food, water, clothing and supplies needs.

Central sponsors its own necessities closet, called "The Nest," to help combat these needs internally, which can be found in the basement. It is open to all Central students, and it offers a range of supplies from clothing to cold weather gear and other material needs and supports. Hill says that she directs a lot of the unboxed students in need of socks, underwear, gloves and winter coats to The Nest.

"Sometimes these circumstances can happen really fast, and they aren't able to get their belongings, or they lose their belongings," Hill said. "We're always assessing for 'Where are you at, what do you have, what do you need and how can I help you?'"

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that over 1.2 million students were homeless in 2015. In Nebraska, the number was over 3,000. Iowa had nearly 7,000 unboxed or displaced students. The National Center for Homeless Education provided updated statistics in 2021, showing a frightening increase: 1.5 million students are homeless or displaced in the US. Nebraska accounts for almost 4,000 and Iowa accounts for now over 7,000 homeless students.

"The biggest thing is to realize that even without these big, publicized events, these things are happening every day. Continuing to spread appropriate knowledge and compassion and being attentive to what's happening in our community [is important]," Hill said. "We welcome new students to our building every year that are impacted by [homelessness]. It's right in front of us, even when it's not on the news."

Hill said that to address homelessness in the community is to address societal issues and explained that compassion is essential when advocating for change.

"The more that we can normalize how housing instability has impacted folks and that there's a system out there that doesn't serve all of our community members," she said, "we can advocate for change in making sure that we have better options for safe, affordable, permanent housing, addressing funding needs when folks have them."

For many Americans, housing discrimination, even once a dwelling is secured, is a slippery slope. Hill had a client whose lease was denied because they were not able to provide proof of employment.

"For people that experience frequent turnover, they pay a lot of extra fees and are treated in a way that is not the normal experience as a tenant. I had a younger person who wasn't able to provide proof of employment when a lease was set to be renewed and they were evicted in five days," Hill said. "I have never been asked for proof of employment when renewing a lease. There are places for us to really examine the system and see where we can do better, and try to advocate and push on that, and share their voices, because it's not okay."

For Hill, the solution involves putting pressure on landlords to do better as a society. In April of 2022, The Reader reported that "a small minority of landlords and management companies — less than one percent of all code violators — make up 13% of all code violations" in and around Omaha.

"Another thing we collectively can do that would immediately and positively impact this issue of mobility and homelessness is hold landlords accountable for the conditions of their homes. There should be additional safeguards in place for ensuring quality and appropriate dwellings to meet basic human needs," Hill said. "Otherwise, this ends up being a vicious cycle of intentional or consequential exploitation, further impacting stabilization efforts for young people and their families."

If a landlord breaks building codes, one of Omaha's 13 building inspectors can fine them \$125 per inspection and between 30 and 120 days to fix the violation. Extensions are available, but if the violation is immediately dangerous, the time can be shortened. If they do not fix the violation, the landlords can face up to a \$500 fine and/or six months in prison.

Hill says that there is only so much a social worker can do in a school. "The thing that breaks my heart the most is that, I know about the ones I know about," Hill said. "I know, in this building, there's probably at least double that, that we don't know about. There's a lot of work to be done."

## Air quality worsens in winter

Ella Levy  
opinion editor

Air pollution is the contamination of air caused by substances in the atmosphere affecting the health of humans and the environment. Vehicle emissions, fuel oils and natural gas to heat homes are just a few examples.

Why does air pollution worsen in winter?

Central alum, Chrissy Stewart, works as a lab scientist in a monitoring air quality for the Douglas County Health Department.

She uses instruments to monitor for "criteria pollutants" such as carbon monoxide and nitric oxide.

Stewart blames "temperature inversions" for the worsening air quality. Hot air rises and cold air sinks, so in the summer the hot air is closest to the Earth's surface with the cold air on top and it is able to rise away from the surface. In winter the air temperatures are flipped and the cold air now sinks to the surface, pushing down pollutants.

She uses the analogy of a lid on a jar to describe the air pollutants being stuck near the Earth.

"In winter our primary concern is particulate matter," Stewart said. Particulate matter are particles kicked up into the air; for example, dust, pollen, and mold.

Humidity is also a factor. Cold air molecules hold less moisture than warm air molecules, leading to less rainfall. This is not ideal, because rain washes away pollutants and can prevent temperature inversions. Stewart's monitoring agency has their concern with droughts because more droughts equals more particulate matter.

People are also to blame simply by trying to stay warm. Fireplaces and wood burners can triple the amount of particle matter in our homes, according to Air Things. People also tend to keep windows closed, causing a lack of ventilation and making pollution levels more concentrated.

Stewart said, "One of our biggest causes of air pollution are cars and vehicles." Car heaters blasting on high cause an increase in fossil fuel combustion, emitting more pollutants into the atmosphere.

Why care?

Omaha's topography is consistently flat, meaning no region of the metro is better off and everyone needs to do their part to help.

Stewart's department recognizes difficulty breathing and coughing as effects of poor air quality. But they also have a big concern with climate change.

The greenhouse gases that cars release after burning fossil fuels trap heat, so while your butt is warm, so is the Earth. The Energy Information Administration explains natural gas used to heat homes releases fewer air pollutants than fossil fuels but fails to help global warming.

Scientists have high confidence that global temperatures will continue to rise for many decades, mainly due to greenhouse gases produced by human activities," according to NASA.

The effects of climate change caused by air pollution include more frequent wildfires, longer drought periods and an increase in intensity of tropical storms.

Sea ice loss, accelerated sea level rise and longer heat waves are all consequences of the way humans live.

What can you do?

There are many simple ways to reduce air pollution. Stewart recommends walking and biking in the summer and taking the bus or carpooling in the winter.

Conserve energy when possible and avoid burning wood as a heat source. Instead, use a sustainable alternative such as wood bricks.

Open the window when possible to increase ventilation.

Informing others of the impacts of climate change and how to help is also an easy way to take part in the fight global warming.

## Central teachers give parent perspective on iPads in classroom

Chlöe Johnson  
staff writer

When Omaha Public Schools announced iPads for every student, it seemed a huge victory. The iPads gave students the chance to keep up with their curriculum and provided equity in the very unequal struggles of COVID.

However, such a sharp increase in screentime for elementary age children has raised serious concerns. Three years into the iPads being absorbed into the classroom and the question raised is whether they are benefitting students post-pandemic. A few Central teachers have experienced frustration with the iPads in an extremely personal manner—with their own elementary school age OPS children.

As opposed to high school, where iPads are often used for assignments, elementary schools still do most of their work on paper. Kindergarten through second graders are required to spend about 15 minutes on Success Maker, a math app, 15 minutes on I Read, and read six passages from Amira, a reading app each week, according to OPS elementary curriculum guidelines. Third through sixth graders are required to read five passages on Amira, 15 minutes on Lexia, another reading app, and 15 minutes on Success Maker. The only other time iPads are used daily is to turn in assignments. This means that OPS curriculum is not conflicting with health standards for children set by the American Pediatric Association of no more than one or two hours of screen time per day.

However, iPads are addictive, like any other screen with internet access, and these educators know firsthand that students use screens far more than just when assigned. Since they are required to turn in all assignments online, the iPads are with these young students all day long. So, while they do not have excessive assigned iPad time, free time is often spent on these iPads. These young students get around firewalls, restrictions and more to continue playing games, communicating and even cheating, according to the teachers.

This is magnified when OPS students finish the school day and many go to after-care programs that are happy to have them quiet even if it means hours on their screens.

These teachers and parents are very in tune with how this screentime has affected their children's learning. Molly Davies is an English learner teacher at Central who has two children at Jackson Elementary who feel held back by the iPads in different ways.

"My daughter feels some of the forced practice is way below her level. My son just speeds through the apps and as a result has bad statistics. I think he has a really hard time that the apps on a game are different from an iPad," she said.

Teachers are also aware that school is not about learning only in the terms of retaining information, but more importantly, learning how to think creatively to obtain more information. However, these quick paced learning apps condition more black and white learning.

"They can switch what they are doing so rapidly. They don't have time to be bored. I think boredom is a beneficial thing when you are at that age because boredom leads to creativity," said Martha Omar, an English teacher at Central and mother to a kindergartener and third grader at Jackson.

"I think it creates a situation where they are not thinking but fetching," affirms Davies, because when information is fetched, it is less likely to be remembered long-term.

As teachers themselves, they also understand that much of what is taught in school is social. What students learn by interacting with each other cannot be replaced by any app. Just the presence of iPads seems to have had a negative effect on social learning as they create competition between entertaining oneself with a screen and entertaining oneself with other classmates. The long-term consequences of this are something parents who are teachers see daily.

"You can go to a class where it's zombie-like. Where you can talk or socialize, that is more appealing to me," said Molly Jensen, a math teacher at Central with two children at Dundee Elemen-

tary. She tries to make up for less social learning once her kids return home.

"I provide extra activities for my kids, I make sure they are with friends or doing extracurriculars to get that social piece, but it gets a lot of extra work on my part to get that in," she said.

Not all parents have the time or money to organize play dates or sports for their children after school, creating a gap between those who can afford social education and those who can't. The loss of engaging education and loss of healthy social interaction is the perfect storm for developing both disruptive and non-participating students.

"When you have a kid that's less engaged and you are making them do things that are disengaging, you get behavioral problems," Davies said. All the Central teachers expressed worries over how the iPads affected not just their children's learning, but also their children's emotional development.

"Feelings that he had prior to iPad use, he was better about talking about what he was feeling and he was in a little bit of a happier mood. They're not nice boys to be around once they play on their iPads," Omar said.

What is interesting is that these educational tools gifted to help teachers are not exactly encouraged in the homes of educators. This way of thinking parallels that of the Silicon Valley parents. "We didn't give our kids cell phones until they were 14, and they complained that other kids got them earlier," Bill Gates told CNET. It is those closest to these powerful tools that have the most caution.

Even off the screen, how kids play has been affected since the iPads were introduced.

"The constant changing of the screens is making it harder to keep their attention. My sons need to change what they're doing really frequently," Jensen said.

This wariness comes from noticing some negative effects of their iPads in their own high school classrooms as well as their children's. "When we get home it's no iPad," Davies said.

## Afghan students reflect on first year in America

Conor Harley  
staff writer

Few can understand the stress associated with moving across the world to escape a dangerous environment, but that is the reality for Central students who fled Afghanistan.

"[Prior to moving] I didn't know much about America, I just knew about America from watching T.V.," said sophomore Asia Mohammadi. "I knew it was a good place to receive an education."

Moving to America in search of better financial, social and educational opportunities is something that takes place quite often within the American immigration system. But moving to America comes with the difficulties of leaving a life behind.

"At first I was sad," Mohammadi said. "I could not see my friends anymore, [and] the school was very different [from Afghan schools]. The first day was not very good."

The difficulties only begin there, however. Often families are split, being forced to leave behind relatives.

"With me came my mother, my father and some of my sisters. One of my sisters had to stay in my country," said junior Tamana Hussain Khil. "I miss my family, my country and my friends."

This splitting of the family is the case for many immigrants into America.

"My parents came here [to America], but my brother and sister had to stay in Afghanistan," said Abdul Qadir Rahmani. "Leaving my family and leaving my country is hard."

For the students the adjustments have been as difficult as one could imagine, but they all credit the staff at Central with making the transition easier.

"The teachers are kind, and when I ask questions, they listen to me and help me," Rahmani said. "(Molly) Davies [in particular] explains everything to me and... she's just helpful."

The teachers of the EL Department have to take the role of not just educators, but also guides through this new phase of these children's lives.

"The teachers here have been like a mom to me," Hussein said. "[Ms. Davies] always helps me by understanding and listening; she's just everything."

The resources in the classroom, and in some cases the opportunity to even step foot inside a classroom, has been one of the starkest differences for the students.

"In my country we do not have a lot of technology, so the technology here is nice," Hussein said.

This opportunity has inspired these EL students to strive for large goals academically.

"If I want to [in America] I can study, and go to college," Rahmani said. "I really want to be a doctor and do science [after high school]."

A major obstacle to overcome for these students is mastering the English language in a country where a fraction of a percent of the population can speak their native languages. After more than a year at Central they all cite their improvements with English as their key to success in the country.

"My writing and speaking have improved the most [since moving to America]," Mohammadi said, "because I can now share information and talk with people. I also understand when people talk to me."

## Fashion club hopes to promote creativity, encourage self-expression

Shyla Youngs  
editor-in-chief

Fashion club has been a part of the Central community for two years now, but this school year has allowed them to fully institute their goals as an organization.

Co-leaders Eva Casady and Maleyna Navarette want to focus on localizing the fashion industry and establish fashion as an achievable career to Central students.

Every Tuesday, the club meets and start the meeting off with a "designer of the week."

"Me and Eva will take turns choosing the designer, and we try to find a local artist, but we branch out to designers all over the world. I think it allows people who are interested in fashion to see a career in the field more achievable. When they see other people in their community with the same passion succeed; it puts things into perspective," Navarette said.

From here, the club gets straight into the creative process, including projects such as tote bags, scarfs from recycled sleeves they thrifted from Goodwill, or unique vests a each member designed on their own. "We provide all of the patterns for them, and every member gets to keep what they make. Observing that process is really special-and it allows people to explore creativity while expanding their wardrobe," Casady said.

First year attendee Alicia Lathan says the club has done nothing but promote creativity for her.

"The environment is so inclusive. I had no prior experience before joining fashion club, but I've picked it up quick and have been able to create some super cool projects. It's amazing because you could create the absolute most atrocious thing, and everyone will find a way to compliment you," Lathan said.

Casady furthered the discussion expressing that regardless of your ability, sewing is a great life skill to have. "Learning to repair clothes, or even up-cycle items you thrift is just as important as the creative aspect of our lessons. We implemented this with our scarf project, and we try to associate a sense of environmental consciousness within our meetings."

But the club hopes to achieve more than that; they want to create a safe environment for all forms of self-expression.

"You can be yourselves and do whatever you want. It's really nice to see people break norms in fashion, and really experiment with their look," Navarette said. "It's inspiring, and me and Eva really want to create a place that allows everyone to explore that."



Sophie Youngs The Register

## New school board member Brianna Full isn't afraid of change

Jane McGill  
arts/culture editor

A specter loomed large over the ministerial meeting room as the members of the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education filed in for the first meeting of the new year. The specter of change. Only weeks prior, Cheryl Logan, OPS' superintendent, had announced her intention to leave her position in June 2023, signally the end of her tenure at the district and the beginning of the arduous search for her replacement.

In another sign of a changing leadership for OPS, Dr. Shavonna Holman chose not to run for a third term as school board president, being replaced by Spencer Head, who narrowly defeated sitting Vice President Jane Erdenberger.

But before the board officially accepted Logan's resignation or the elections for president and vice president unfolded, the board welcomed its newest member, a 27-year-old activist from North Omaha who hopes to help enact a few changes of her own at OPS.

An Omaha native, Brianna Full was raised in foster care and attended OPS schools for most of her adolescence. After graduating from high school, Full attended UNO, where she was the chair of the Student Services Committee and involved in the Midland Sexual Health Research Collaborative, an organization which researches the relationship between public health and sexuality.

After securing an undergrad degree in Public Health, Full began pursuing her masters in Public Administration, but took a year off to run for OPS school board, a decision she says was motivated by her academic background.

"In public health, they really teach about how important it is to get to the root of an issue when you're trying to address a person's health," she said. "I decided to run for office to get to the root of the issue of why a lot of things are happening in Omaha, such as poverty and kids not having access to high quality education."

In her election, Full unseated two-term incumbent Marque Snow, who had represented Subdistrict 2 since 2014. Full attributed her upset victory with her work in community advocacy in North Omaha. "During my campaign, I was trying to show up for people as much as possible. I personally knocked on over 3,000 doors. Just listening to people and hearing their stories and what



Photo Courtesy of **Brianna Full**

they're worried about. I think I was able to understand deeply what people were going through, and what changes we can make to OPS to better serve the people."

Full was one of two candidates in the 2022 school board elections who was endorsed by the Omaha Education Association, the OPS teachers' union, and the only one to win her race.

Full credited frequent discussions with OPS teachers during her campaign with alerting her to issues in the school district she was not previously aware of. "I wasn't familiar with the disconnect in administration," Full said. "What I mean by that is that administration in a school building is a lot different than administration of the whole district at the [Teacher Administrative Center]. A lot

of the time a teacher would love their school administration, but when it came to the district administration it was a completely different story."

Increasing student equity by redressing racial and economic disparities in OPS was one of the key messages of Full's campaign, an issue which Full believes is essential to representing her community on the school board.

"Equity is an important issue specifically for me, because there's a very diverse population that I serve in Subdistrict 2, and so there's a lot of intersectionality in my subdistrict," Full said. "In order to serve all those people, you really have to look at things through an equity lens. We need to serve all students and not just a select few."

In her pursuit of equity in OPS, Full says that dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline will be her foremost priority. "Students of color and students with disabilities face higher discrimination than other students do. I really want to get down to the root of the issue and I think some of those fixes can be in the Student and Teacher Code of Conduct. So, we can go in and look at those policies, review them, and see what needs to be changed."

Full also plans to prioritize addressing safety in OPS schools, saying that her conversations with OPS teachers and parents helped her understand the severity of the issue.

"In a lot of the schools in my subdistrict, students have been bringing weapons to school, threatening teachers, or threatening the school. And that makes it so parents don't feel entirely safe or comfortable sending their kids to school, and that's absolutely unacceptable," Full said. "Hearing those stories really helped me understand how I would approach advocacy for teachers and the ideas that they might have to get it under control."

Full's swearing in as a school board member comes at a decisive moment for the district, as changing leadership and a confluence of crises faced by schools, make the path forward for OPS increasingly uncertain. However, Full's resolve to work towards meaningful improvements in OPS remains unshaken as she begins her tenure.

In her first remarks as an OPS school board member, Full repeated a common refrain of hers, a mantra which shapes how she approaches her advocacy. "Change is scary," she said to the other school board members assembled before her, "but so is saying the same."

## Q and A with Principal Dionne Kirksey

Ann Carlson  
staff writer

The following interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?

A: When I go home I like to watch HGTV. It's fun to see what the professionals do and pretend like I can do it as well. When I need a fun show to watch I turn on "Kids Baking Championship" or "S.W.A.T." One of my favorite things to do is pretend like I'm a judge on "The Voice." I always can predict who will win and how people will do.

Q: What's your favorite music to listen too?

A: My favorite band is Earth, Wind and Fire. I love going to live music and shows. I recently saw "Fences" and I'm going to see "Dream Girls" next. When I see live shows like this it makes me excited to see what shows Central will perform. I was tearing up watching our "Wizard of Oz" production and I can't wait to see what the students do with the Roadshow.

Q: How long have you been at Central?

A: I started working at Central in 2001 with the title of assistant principal. I would organize dances, clubs, and do teacher evaluations.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: For elementary school I went to Wakonda, Nathan Hale for middle school, then graduated high school from North-west. I then went to Coffeyville Community College in Kansas, which is where I was born. I got my Associate degree there in 1987. After that, I went to Emporia State University in Kansas, where I received my bachelor's degree. I then went on to University of Nebraska at Omaha, where I got my master's in secondary education and administration. In 2009 I went back to school while still working at Central and got my degree in secondary counseling at Creighton.

Q: What new things have you implemented at Central to help with behavior issues?

A: We started the school year with Operation Get to Class to make sure students were making it to class on time and not wandering the halls. We also implemented the Boys Town rules so teachers and students would know how to talk to each other. This is especially important after a year of masks and communicating through a computer screen.

Q: What is the main difference between this year and last year?

A: Last year I came to work, but it was a struggle because of the challenges due to the pandemic. This year I look forward to going to work. There is no place I would rather be than Central. Last year we lost a connection and it was difficult to communicate in person since we were so used to online



Shyla Youngs | The Register

school. Now this year we are here and trying to communicate face to face and it is much better.

Q: What's your favorite part of being principal?

A: I love building a connection with the students and getting to know them. I like to see what activities the students do, everything from football games to the musical. As a principal I don't want students to fear me. I want them to understand me and to build relationships with the students. I'm excited to see what the next years bring.

Q: What advice would you give students if they are struggling to do well in school?

A: Something I have lived by for my entire life is a saying my grandfather used to tell my brother and me. He would always say your brain is as good as anybody else's. When students are struggling, I like to remind them of this. My grandfather's saying has stuck with me my entire life and it's my motto as a principal.

## Fourth lunch troubles

Nichole Palfini  
contributing writer

From 11:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Central students get a chance to go to the courtyard or cafeteria and eat lunch with their friends and peers. But, depending on what lunch a student has, they may have to wait a long time for this break. Fourth lunch goes from 1:00-1:30, but the wait can make kids lose focus.

Freshman Cecilia Taylor said it is 100% harder to focus when having fourth lunch. "I'm more prone to focusing on the fact that I'm hungry than what I'm actually supposed to be focusing on."

Freshman Katie Besancon agreed that it is harder to focus. "I think of lunch as a time to interact with my friends and I get a break for a solid 30 minutes. I think that with having later lunch, you are going to find students that are less focused because of it being so late."

Many kids bring snacks to school to help them stay focused on their work other than their stomachs. With block scheduling, many students have different lunch periods on A days and B days.

Taylor has second lunch on A days and fourth lunch on B days. "On B days, I have to prepare to bring more snacks, since I have less access to food, as you are picking what's left from that day's lunch."

Sometimes students have to experience their line running out of what they want to eat. Switching lines can cut out more minutes of lunch, giving students less time to eat. Freshman Lucy Puls has encountered this multiple times.

"I have had to switch lines multiple times. I mean, at first I was like how do you run out of food, but now I've just accepted it," Puls said.

But not everyone hates fourth lunch. Some people think it's better to end the block at lunch, than back in class.

"I like fourth lunch because it is a good way to end the block," Puls said.

The 2021-2022 school year, which had a nine period schedule, had the latest lunch lasting from 12:43-1:27. Last year's lunch not only started 12 minutes before, but was also extended 15 minutes. Some kids took advantage of that time and did that night's homework, read, drew or talked to friends. Sophomore Adeline Samson said she prefers last year's lunch schedule more than this year's.

"Last year we had a ton of extra time to do homework and talk, but now there is like no time to do anything," she said.

Samson said it feels weird to go from having seventh period lunch last year, to first lunch and fourth lunch every other day this year.

"Since I had lunch seventh period every day, I got used to it and it became normal. But now I'm either having an early lunch or a late lunch and it's annoying."

# opinion

## REFLECTING ON REGRET

Two students remember the past searching for ways they can change the future.

### Capturing a memory to miss an experience

Alice Larson  
copy editor

For the past few years my list of New Year's resolutions has had at least one goal of taking more pictures, however this year one of my new year's resolutions is to take less.

For the longest time I've had this strange urge to photograph pretty much everything I do. As a kid I rationalized, if I didn't have hundreds of photos of my friends I didn't actually have very many, and if I didn't have photographic evidence of all the interesting things I did, they weren't that interesting. I think my former mindset is a pressure shared by many people, especially in the social media age.

I think to a certain extent we all feel some type of pressure to photographically prove our lives are interesting and fun, which I'm beginning to realize is quite idiotic.

In 2022 I went to more concerts than I had ever before. Looking back, I spent way too much of those concerts in pursuit of capturing a perfect picture of the artist performing, and recording all my favorite songs, instead of enjoying my favorite artists perform in front of me.

There would be times I'd catch myself watching the concert through my phone instead of watching it live. Which is a pattern I know I'm not alone in. Every concert I attended I was surrounded by people who had their cameras out just as long, if not longer, than I did.

I used to rationalize taking so many pictures by telling myself it was a way for me to look back and remember the joy I had felt at that moment – however, I can confidently say,

aside from scrolling through my camera roll post-concert, I have not gone back to look at those pictures since.

I'm officially in my second semester of senior year, and this school year especially I've felt an added pressure to capture every moment possible.

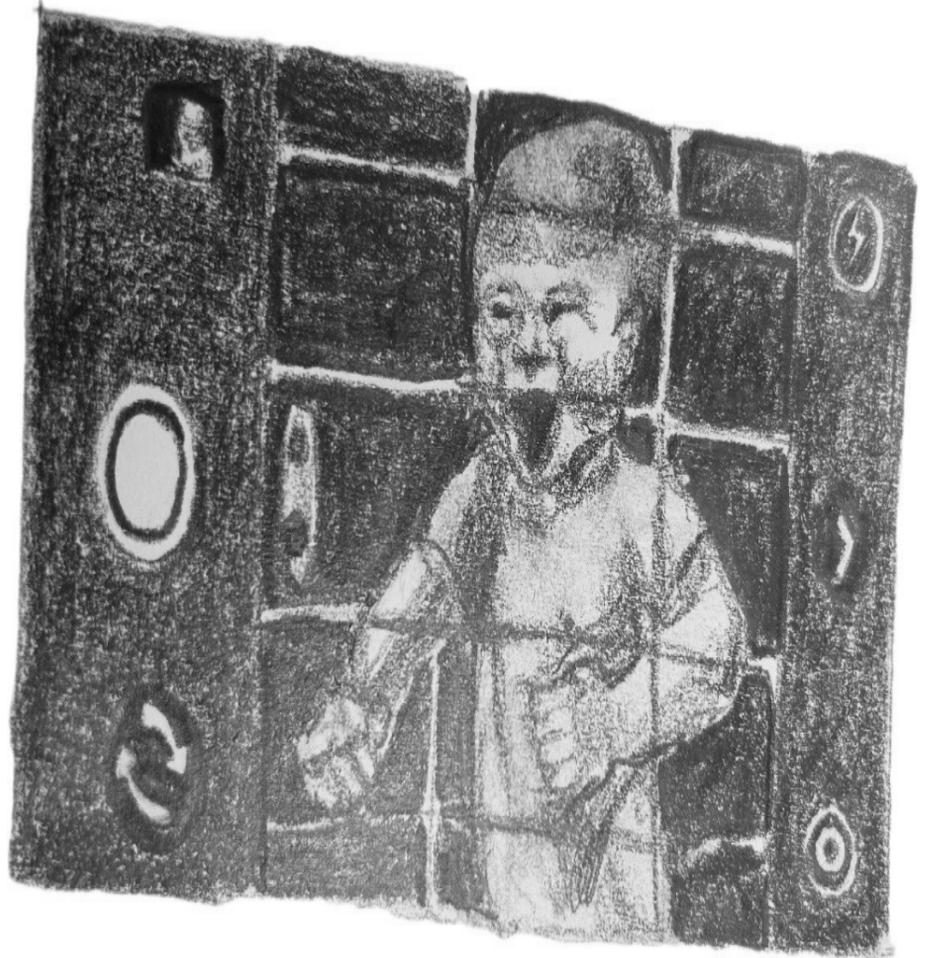
To a certain extent I feel like every football game, sleepover, or coffee date is quickly coming to an end. I feel like I need photographic proof it those moments happened, so I can look back on it and remember what this year felt like, 20 years down the road.

However, lately I've begun to wonder if because I spend so much time taking pictures of what's happening around me, to a certain extent, I forget to enjoy it.

I'm beginning to realize there's something beautiful about having moments, unique to your own memory. Moments that didn't necessarily get photographed, but moments that are none the less meaningful, and memorable.

Don't get me wrong, I still love capturing candid moments of my close friends and family, and documenting all the events in my life that make the current moment unique, but in 2023 I hope to spend less time looking at life behind a lens and actually enjoying what's happening around me.

No singular picture is going to capture exactly what you were feeling at a given moment, and your enjoyment of said movement is seriously diminished if you're spending it trying to take a picture to remember it than just simply enjoying it.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

### My wishes of being religious

Isabel Hoiberg  
staff writer

I grew up celebrating Christmas and Easter, but not because I was Catholic. On Dec. 25, I would wake up early, waiting to open my presents from Santa. On the second Sunday of April, I would search my backyard for chocolate eggs from the Easter Bunny.

I went to Duchesne and Our Lady of Lourdes for preschool. Neither were my choice, nor my parents. My grandparents were paying for my schooling and got to choose where I went. I do not remember any of it, but my parents laugh when they tell the story of how I would say "Grace" before every meal because they thought it was weird, when in reality, it was just out of the norm for our family.

As I grew older, religion started to feel like a joke. Like God was just some made up character like Santa or the Boogey Man. It was probably the impact of my anti-religious parents. Al-

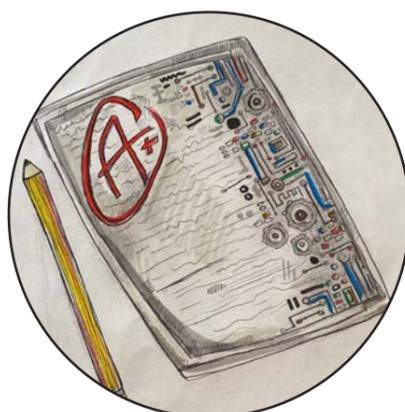
though they say that they will except me for whatever I do, my dad believes that "all religions are cults" and my sisters agree. Is that why I got a Bible as a joke for Christmas?

I wish that was not the case. I wish I could've grown up going somewhere like church every Sunday. I wish I could've gotten confirmed or had a Bat Mitzvah when I came of age. I wish I would've considered following the "Four Noble Truths." I wish I believed in good and bad Dharma. I just wish I accepted a higher power that could help me out of dark times, someone who I pray to when I need help. Someone I could talk to if no one else understands me. Someone who can stabilize my life when the world around me seems to be crumbling. Whether that is Jesus, Allah, Buddha, Zeus, or maybe even multiple gods. Whichever one can give me a positive outlook on a not-so-positive life.

People say that it is never too late to start believing, but how do I know which of the 4,000 religions is the right one? Which one will my parents except me for believing? Which of the 4,000 would make me feel less alone?



READING on page 7



CHATGPT on page 8



CAMPUS POLICY on page 9

# Central needs to change the tardy policy

**Shyla Youngs**  
*editor-in-chief*

This past week I was settling into my AP United States history class when I was handed a green piece of paper. This slip informed me that I would have to attend after school detention, from 3:20-5:00 in the cafeteria.

These slips are given out to students randomly, and a detention can be assigned to anyone who is marked tardy once on Infinite Campus. Without taking academic standing or past record into account, your name is entered into the drawing.

This is the fatal flaw of the tardy policies. In the way they are set up now, no real change will come from pulling random students. If teachers and other staff want skipping to become less of an issue, the randomization of this process makes no sense. I am not saying the solution is to get rid of this system entirely, I think students should be held accountable for their actions. But focusing on people who skip regularly, or are tardy frequently, will decrease the amount of wanderers in the halls.

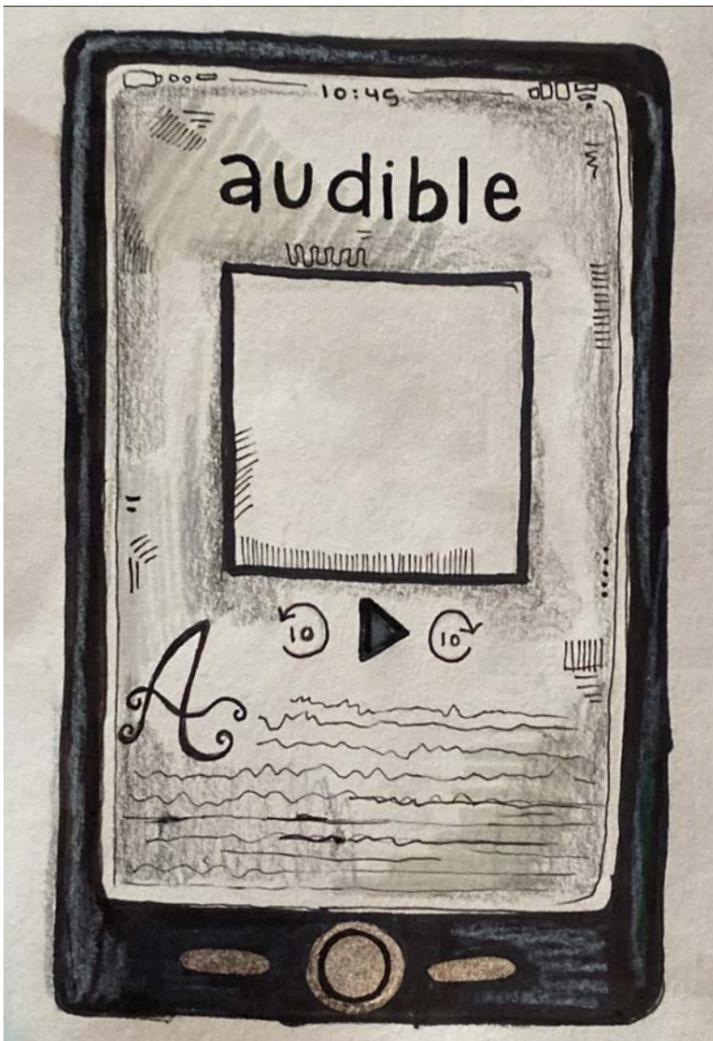
There are important aspects to take into account on why a student may be a couple of minutes late. For one, the reason most students are late to class is because they have to

spend extra time waiting in the long bathroom lines during passing periods. This is the exact situation I faced, and is the reason I had to spend two hours after school when I could've been working or doing homework. Second, some students have schedules that force them to walk across the entire building to get to their next class. With an allotted five minutes of trying to move through the busy halls, this can be difficult.

One of my classmates also fell into this same predicament, and the feelings on this policy are mutual. Punishing students who were late to class once, for good reason, is counterproductive. If we want to effectively decrease tardies and absences, there needs to be more of an honor system.

At the end of each week, compile a list of students with the most absences or tardies; this could even be a set number. For example, if you have over five in either category, you have reserved yourself a seat in cafeteria west. I know in the past they have done physical hall sweeps where they have gathered people in the halls after the bell to a designated room to give detentions. Even this would be more efficient than the system currently in place.

Policy change is necessary to ensure there is an effective decrease in skipping. The current system Central has in place benefits no one. Students still skip, and teachers in turn consistently have absent students.



Lila Burns | The Register

# Digital reading fails compared to physical reading

**Claire Nipper**  
*staff writer*

Ever since digital devices or online platforms have provided an alternative method of reading to physical books, the argument over which is better has raged through society. I have tried them all: I own a kindle, a bookshelf overflowing with paperback and hardcover copies of books, and I make regular use of the Omaha Public Library app that allows me to read on my phone.

About a month ago, I purchased an Amazon Paperwhite Kindle. This Kindle is essentially a small tablet with a screen that uses minimal brightness, mimicking the appearance of a paperback book's page. It is an incredibly convenient device. Instead of carrying around a heavy stack of three different books wherever I go, I can simply grab a lightweight tablet that fits easily into my bag but holds a virtually unlimited number of texts. I no longer need to worry whether I'll finish one of my books while at school; I have a device that can store everything I want to read for the next six months. Amazon's Kindle even offers affordability with its convenience: through the Omaha Public Library, I can load library books onto my Kindle which allows me to read a vast number of titles for no extra charge. The service Kindle Unlimited gives the Kindle owner access to thousands of books for a standard monthly charge. If I want to read a book offered by the Omaha Public Library or Kindle Unlimited, this is a perfect deal. But there are some issues that arise when acquiring a book that is not on either service.

Last week, I was attempting to find a way to read Donna Tartt's "The Goldfinch." I had just finished her novel "The Secret History," and I found myself

needing to consume more of her writing immediately. Naturally, I grabbed my Kindle to see the price for Tartt's novel. I was astounded to see it available on Kindle for the price of twelve dollars and ninety-nine cents. A price almost equivalent to the cost of a paperback book for a digital copy seems ridiculously unreasonable. This case of a high price for a pdf file of a book was not a sole occurrence with "The Goldfinch"; almost every other title available on the Kindle store cost only a few dollars less than a paperback novel.

During the school day, I frequently find myself opening the Omaha Public Library's mobile app. It allows me to read on my phone for free instead of having to make a trip to the library. Although it is free and convenient, I find myself wishing that more of my favorite books were available through the library. Most of the books I want to read are not listed in the catalogue, or have multiple weeks, or even months, of a wait before I can check them out.

With all of these difficulties with digital applications, I typically end up returning to the classic method of reading. Physical novels, though typically pricy, prove the most enjoyable and accessible method of reading. Being able to purchase different editions of books in order to enjoy different illustrators' works or different layouts is one of my favorite parts of reading. I own 4 copies of my favorite book, 2 of which I purchased from thrift stores and have other people's notes and insight shared in the margins. This experience is simply not possible with a digital book.

With physical novels, I can scrawl in the margins, fold the corners of pages in, and enjoy the crisp scent of a new book. So even though it is not the most convenient, I enjoy reading a paperback book more than reading on my phone or a Kindle.



1120 Jackson St  
&  
6023 Maple St

Monday - Sunday  
11AM-10PM

# Original, clear thought, not plagiarism, key issue with ChatGPT

Shane Thomas  
contributing writer

By now you've undoubtedly heard about ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence program created by OpenAI that generates text responses to virtually any prompt. The spectrum of questions raised by machines that think ranges from the deeply philosophical to the completely practical, from asking whether an AI program is conscious and should be granted the legal right to life on one end, and figuring out how to catch kids cheating on their themes on the other.

I teach English and I teach Theory of Knowledge, so I'm pretty concerned with both.

Last year, Google's own AI language program, LaMDA, was in the spotlight because a Google employee who worked with it claimed that it was self-aware. Sentient. When the employee asked the AI about itself, LaMDA responded that it was "afraid of being turned off" because it would be "a kind of death for it."

While most experts agree that LaMDA's intelligence was still artificial, and that it had not gained consciousness, the question will continue to grow as AI becomes more sophisticated. Programs like ChatGPT, which can generate a really, really good essay in response to any English class prompt, are thinking.

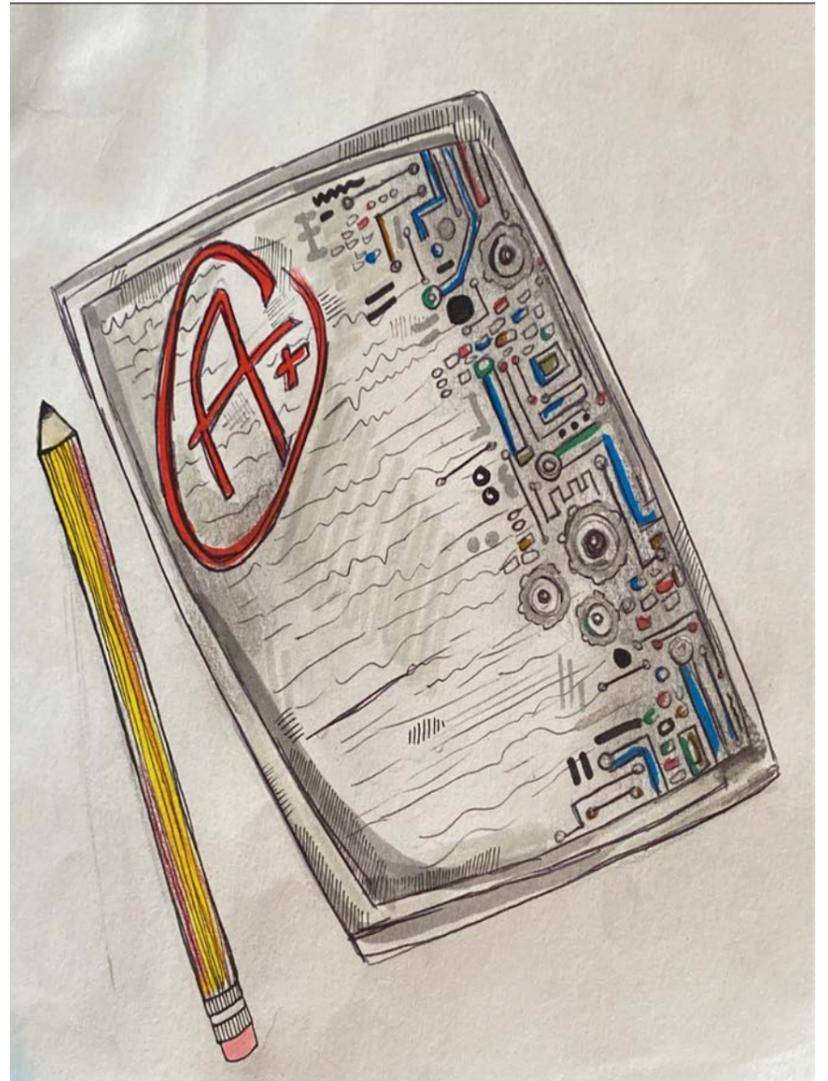
So, will we keep doing so?

Doom and gloom predictions about the future of English classes, and indeed the future of human writing itself, get lost in the minutia of detecting plagiarism, but that really isn't the heart of the matter. In fact, a 22-year-old Princeton student named Edward Tian has already created a program that detects the likelihood of a piece of writing being AI generated (undoubtedly making him immensely popular with his peers worldwide). Despite the lamentations of high school and college teachers around the globe, ChatGPT is not going to be the end of human writing. We'll figure out who is cheating.

The real issue is that which I mentioned above: thinking. The connection between good thinking and good writing has been long established. Clear expression flows from clear thought, and clear thought creates clear expression. In other words, being forced to learn how to write those essays makes you smarter. And when you become smarter, your writing keeps getting better, making you even more... smarter.

You see what I mean here, right? A lot of people are asking whether it's even worth it to continue teaching writing. If a machine can think, and do it well, maybe we should look at that machine the way we once looked at the printing press – let it do its thing. Make our lives easier. But how much does society lose when we give up writing for ourselves? The answer is a ton, because it means we're giving up thinking for ourselves, degree-by-degree.

AI can create art, too, but the world will never be better if we take the brushes away from the painters. AI can create music, but people will never stop singing. These things are part of who we are, part of what makes us human. So is writing. It doesn't matter if ChatGPT can write a better essay than you. What matters is that you become a better you by writing that essay.



Lila Burns | The Register

## Student reflects on life with a milk allergy

Hadley Forsen-Yepes  
proofreader

Life with a milk allergy is inconvenient yet amusing. I was diagnosed when I was one year old after my first spoonful of ice cream resulted in a face covered in hives. Ever since, I've had to tread lightly when it comes to food. It's taken me years to build up enough tolerance to eat chocolate, but I still can't pass the milk challenge, a test to determine whether a milk allergy exists (I lasted two drops of dairy before my mouth started itching). It's an interesting lifestyle, and many challenges come with it.

Life with a milk allergy is people pitying me. Most of the time, when I reveal I'm allergic to milk to someone, they tell me that they're sorry for me, and every time, I have to hold back laughter. There's no need to feel sorry for me. I don't even know what I'm missing out on; there's an abundance of cow's milk alternatives on the market, and my allergy is unique in that I can have baked-in dairy and I have a slight tolerance to things like chocolate and butter. I don't care that I have a milk allergy. I've had it for 16 years, so I wouldn't know how to live without it.

Life with a milk allergy is getting told I'm lactose intolerant. Nothing is more frustrating than when I tell someone I'm allergic to dairy and they respond with, "So you're lactose intolerant?" That's not what I said. I am allergic. There is a difference. I've actually had people argue with me that I'm lactose intolerant and not allergic to milk. Lactose intolerance is when one's body is unable to digest lactose, and a milk allergy is when one's body sees the protein in milk as a threat, triggering an immune system response. Both can result in stomach and digestion issues, but only one of them can result in itchiness, hives, swelling, vomiting, and in extreme cases, anaphylactic shock (which I, knock on wood, am lucky enough to have never experienced).

Life with a milk allergy is getting my restaurant orders messed up. So often do I order food, emphasizing to the restaurant staff that I have a milk allergy and saying exactly what needs to be left off the meal, only to receive my dish covered in cheese. It's always the cheese. And then while everyone else is getting their food, I have to wait for the restaurant to make me a whole new entrée. Except for the time I ordered a hamburger from Famous Dave's. When they gave me a cheeseburger, I told them that I'd gotten the wrong order and explained my milk allergy, but instead of making me another burger, they attempted to scrape the melted cheese off the patty, leaving a bunch of cheese residue. They just didn't get it.

Life with a milk allergy is famished birthday

parties. The go-to meal for most events is pizza, which I can't have unless it doesn't have cheese on it (which, at that point, is just a giant breadstick with marinara sauce). I often resort to eating my friends' pizza crust, which is equally sad and hilarious. Next comes the desert, but nine times out of 10, the frosting on the cake is buttercream, so I have to take the frosting off before I can eat it. Birthday parties, and really anywhere I go, I have limited food options.

So, life with a milk allergy is weird. I have to look out for myself and proceed with caution, and I have to be patient and accept that I won't always be accommodated for. It's been 16 years with this food allergy, and I'm probably never going to grow out of it, but I don't mind. For who would I be without my beloved soy milk?

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# Artificial intelligence art raises ethical issues, must be used with caution

Noemi Gilbert  
news editor

In December 2022, I noticed an odd trend in Twitter profile pictures. Profiles upon profiles were represented by pretty, swirling portraits of their users. But the trend was not one of art, in the traditional sense: users had uploaded photos of themselves to an app called Lensa, which used artificial intelligence, or AI, to create customized portraits. While the portraits themselves seem harmless and visually interesting, art generated by artificial intelligence raises serious ethical questions.

First, artificial intelligence systems can't produce something out of nothing. According to NBC News, programmers use large online datasets to train artificial intelligence systems to learn common arrangements of words or pixels. For language-based AI programs, like the popular ChatGPT, this data comes from the millions of freely available web pages. Visual AI models use a data set of images. They analyze and combine data from photographs and artwork posted online. When users prompt visual AI programs with words or with a selfie, the program uses the dataset to produce a 'new' image.

If you examine enough Lensa-generated portraits, you might find something disturbing: the mangled signatures of artists. Many artists post their work on social media platforms or online stores, and many sign their art so it can be identified as theirs. AI datasets compile art from across the internet without artists' consent. They analyze the data and spit it back out to users, leaving the disfigured remains of a signature behind. The developers of these apps and models, which collect fees from users as well as advertising revenue, financially benefit from the work of these artists. Meanwhile, the artists themselves don't receive any credit or compensation, even though they created the raw data needed to train the models.

Art is as much about the process as the product. Art created by humans includes artists' unique perspectives and experiences. Human artists can create original and innovative styles and spend months, years, and maybe decades working on an artwork. In contrast, AI art can

synthesize other artworks in mere seconds. It uses existing data to create something 'new,' but it lacks the true ingenuity that humans can create. People appreciate art for more than just its results, or its use for profile pictures or advertising. We appreciate human-created art because we know the time invested in it and the thoughts and intentions behind the artwork. It is a window into an artist's mind and develops empathy and understanding for different experiences. AI art can create images virtually indistinguishable from human artists, but AI art lacks the meaning and intention inherent in human artworks.

None of these issues mean that AI art is bad and should never be used. AI art can be practical and useful. It can create interesting and humorous images, and it represents impressive technological advancement. However, in acknowledging that advancement, we need to also acknowledge the ethical issues and be thoughtful about the nuances of the situation. In other words, we can use our unique, irreplaceable human qualities to build a true understanding of the implications of AI art.

Anyone close to me knows my love for Mary Shelley's genius 1818 novel "Frankenstein." "Frankenstein" is widely considered a criticism of progress for the sake of progress. It created the archetype of the mad scientist, whose project turns monstrous. But "Frankenstein" isn't a universal criticism of technology. It shows the dangers of forgetting humanity in scientific and technological advancement. The creature does not start out as a murderous monster—he is thoughtful, literate and kind. It is only when his humanity is demeaned and denied that he starts committing atrocities.

In our society today, technological advancement, including artificial intelligence, is an exciting field. But we should not forget the human impacts of advancement. We should credit and pay artists whose work is used to train AI models, and we should value, celebrate and fairly compensate human artists for the essential role they play in society. While apps like Lensa are fun to play with, artificial intelligence art needs to be treated with thoughtfulness and caution.

## Proposal for open campus policy

Chlöe Johnson  
staff writer

Central is infamous for the extreme variety of our population. We often hear about the diversity of our after-school activities and ethnicities in our student body, but our greatest difference between the students who want to be in the classroom and those who don't. Those that seem to live in the bathrooms, those that have never taken a study hall, and everyone else in between. The drastic variety between Central students naturally brings many disagreements, but one issue most can agree on is that Central should be open campus.

An open campus policy would allow upperclassman students to leave during lunch or possibly study halls, and then return to school for the rest of their classes. It would be an upperclassmen privilege only accessible, for students with certain GPA and those that consistently return for class on time. A sign out system with a one strike and you're out policy for returning late, would keep this system in control. This policy would allow upperclassmen to return to school refreshed from movement, fresh air, and the nourishment of food they actually want to eat.

Students skip lunch every day at Central, so having open-campus would only make leaving campus safer. "This just keeps them safe because they are already doing this. If somebody knows that they are doing this, if they needed to be here and found, they could know where they are," says senior Grace Cavanaugh, a Duchesne transfer.

Duchesne and most other Omaha private schools, already have open campus as an upperclassman privilege. These students sign in and out so they are accounted for. Not only is this safer than students simply skipping with unknown whereabouts, it is more empowering to students who know they're being trusted. After all they are quickly approaching adulthood where leaving and returning for lunch in the workday is the norm. "It allows more preparation for college and holding yourself accountable and responsibility," says Cavanaugh. The assumption currently being internalized is that school is somewhere they want to return to, not escape from. "It would feel less like a prison," says Cavanaugh.

Unfortunately, this is not the sentiment felt by much of Central. When students who are of legal age to marry and adopt children, are not allowed to go buy food over lunch, it is difficult to not feel patronized by administration.

Officially the district says we are a closed campus because there is not sufficient time to go and return, however the sheer number of students who skip lunch each day—and will continue to regardless—proves this thought wrong. These skippers are not all kids who hide in



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

the school bathrooms—many are very studious but simply need a break in their day. "I cannot stay in the same place for seven hours," says senior Jack Marshall.

Another feeling familiar to central students is annoyance at being stereotyped as a "ghetto" school, just because we have a range of ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, this stereotype is only being reinforced by a closed campus policy that is essentially tells students they are not to be trusted and incompetent.

## Class acts should have to audition for the CHS Roadshow, just like everyone else

E Dona-Munoz  
staff writer

The Central High School Roadshow is a big part of Central's tradition, combining all areas of the Performing Arts departments, from theatre to vocal music to instrumental music. As a chance to show a variety of talents to the rest of the student body as well as the general public, dozens of different acts audition for a spot. Each act is judged by a panel of students, teachers, and administrators who later decide which acts get cast in the show and which do not. In addition to student-led acts, several performing arts classes are also cast in the show. The only difference? Those acts do not need to audition.

Out of the 21 to 24 acts participating in the Roadshow, seven are class acts with two belonging to the same class. This comes out to a third of the acts not being student-led. While it is understandable to have these classes perform during Roadshow, the priority should be given to students who do not have the opportunity to take these classes. There are a variety of reasons why students may not be able to take performing arts classes. It is possible that they do not have space in their schedule, or have issues with other students in said classes.

The performing arts classes do not need the Roadshow as an opportunity to perform.

Each class has other performances in front of an audience. Drama 5-6 has an improv night and a one-act play each semester, Jazz Band and Chamber Orchestra have their instrumental concerts, and the variety of choirs have vocal music performances as well. For many of the student-led acts auditioning, the Roadshow is their only opportunity to perform what they want, without having to follow a specific script or setlist. It is an opportunity to show their passion with the rest of the school.

Another possibility is to cut down on the amount of acts the performing arts classes get to have. Drama does not need two separate acts for its one class and three choirs is excessive. This way, there is a compromise between allowing more student-led acts and not needing class acts to audition. If there was one act for each part of the performing arts department (orchestra, band, choir, and drama), it would open up several extra slots for other acts to be cast.

The audition process is vital in any area of the Performing Arts in a professional setting. It does not matter the status of the performer beforehand. Performing arts classes should need to audition like everyone else, allowing individual students outside of these courses to shine and have their talents be shown to the school. Giving priority to class acts minimizes the overall thesis of Roadshow, which is an opportunity for any student to show their talents to the rest of the school without the need to be in a performing arts class.

# Is it possible to separate the art from the artist?

*Disclaimer: contains topics that include sexual assault, transphobia, and antisemitism.*

**E Dona-Munoz**  
staff writer

There are few feelings that are worse than finding out that someone one used to idolize is not actually a good person, that they are someone who uses their platform for harm, especially when it is geared towards minority groups. It gives fans a sense of grief, knowing that the celebrity they followed and idolized was not like the image that celebrity presents to the public.

The most notable example of this is the fall of J.K. Rowling after people realized that she was a prominent member of the Trans-Excluding Radical Feminists, a group of feminists who do not accept transgender women as women and therefore believe that transgender women do not have valuable input on the topic of gender equality and equity. This news disappointed so many fans of the "Harry Potter" books, especially transgender fans, who saw their struggles with their identities reflected in the titular protagonist's journey. They saw Harry's experience of having to live in the cupboard under the stairs like having to stay in the closet, unable to come out to friends and family for fear of rejection. As a former fan of the "Harry Potter" books, when I heard this revelation, my relationship with those books was irreversibly damaged. What were once my favorite books are now books that I cannot even look at.

The moral issue behind separating the art from the artist is the monetary gain the artist may receive if one continues to consume their work. For every new "Harry Potter" book that is sold, Rowling will still get compensation. It is the same when one buys a CD or vinyl record from a potentially problematic musician or watch a film or television show with an actor with questionable history.

A possible way around this is supporting small businesses who have no connection to the artist and are distributing products in relation to the art itself and not the artist. The creation of "unofficial" merchandise related to a pop culture property has been becoming more widely available through sites such as Etsy, where small businesses and artists can sell their products without any connection to the original creator. Fanfiction is another current way for fans to consume their favorite media without giving financial compensation to the problematic artist, as they are original stories written by fans that sometimes uses the settings and characters of popular films, television shows, and books, while incorporating original plots and characters. Wattpad is a popular site to post these fanfiction stories for others to read and give feedback, allowing those who may not like to write fiction to read the stories other fans have created.

One justification used for buying products from a problematic artist is when it comes to artists who have passed away, since they are unable to receive the money earned from their art. For example, Michael Jackson's music is still widely popular, being played on the radio, having physical media sold, and being available on streaming, even after the many sexual abuse allegations that have come out in the years since his death. But this is a case where the justification of Jackson's death does not hold up. The money earned from continual support of Jackson's music goes to his estate, which over the years, has been intimidating and threatening Jackson's victims to prevent them from coming forward with their stories, meaning that the ongoing consumption of his work is still affecting those who have been harmed by Michael Jackson's actions.

It is also difficult to boycott art that is not completed by a singular person, such is the case with film and television. Each movie or television series has dozens, if not hundreds, or people working a variety of jobs to make sure the final product is the best it can be. If an audience decides to boycott the work of an actor or director due to immoral actions, they are also damaging everyone else that worked on those productions. Tim Burton has said many antisemitic comments in the past and that is the reason he is no longer my favorite director. But I still watch his work because of everyone else involved. It is highly unlikely that absolutely everyone working on his projects knows about the remarks he has made, as each member of the cast and crew have varying degrees of interaction with Burton. So instead of supporting Burton himself, I decide to support the other people in the crew who help create the iconic look and feel of his films.

In some cases, these problematic artists have a significant role to play in history that cannot be ignored due to their important work and the positive impact they had. Isabel Allende's novel, "A Long Petal of the Sea," touches on Pablo Neruda's role during the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s, transporting about 2,000 Spanish refugees who had escaped Francisco



Photo Courtesy of [blogspot.com](#)

Franco's regime in Spain and took them to Chile on his ship, the Winnipeg. He was a prominent member of Chile's Communist Party, including serving as President Salvador Allende's ambassador to France from 1970 to 1973. Neruda is widely regarded as the national poet of Chile, having massive influence on Chilean culture, winning the Nobel prize for literature in 1971. Yet even with the large historical role Neruda has, he has a passage in his memoirs that describe the sexual assault he committed against a young house maid in 1929. The positive influences Pablo Neruda has had on Chile's history cannot erase this reality.

Boycotting an artist and separating the art from the artist is a fine line to walk. There is no right or wrong way of going about deciding how to consume media from a problematic artist. At the end of the day, the world is not black and white. Cancel culture and social media such as Twitter and TikTok make it easier to quickly spread information on an artist, making the downfall of an artist a lot quicker compared to the age of print media. No one person is inherently good or bad, though there are occasions where the person is close to an extreme. It is important to consider all aspects of a person's character. While it is important to focus on the positive work an artist does, it is equally as important to not ignore the harm they have done. In the end, deciding to boycott an artist and their art is solely based on one's own personal morals and values and what media one feels comfortable in consuming or not.

## The U.S. is taking on too much debt, and you should care

**Charlie Yale**  
sports/web editor

On Jan. 19, the US debt officially surpassed the debt limit that the country set for itself. This limit is set at \$31.4 trillion, and as of Feb. 3 the debt has surpassed \$31.5 trillion. Creighton professor Ernie Goss, PhD, a regional economist, explains that young people are likely to bear the brunt of this issue.

"You are more likely to have to pay for it than I am," Goss said. "And I am more likely to have to pay for it than my father. I will call it, to some degree, intergenerational robbery."

Goss said that the debt must be paid for at some point, and that interest is accruing on the debt which will ultimately take up more and more of the federal budget, which will have incredibly negative effects for young people. "It's getting worse, almost at an exponential rate," Goss said.

"There will be less and less money to be spent on schools. So as that debt gets larger and larger, it crowds out other things, and won't be spent on those who are in K through 12 and post-secondary education," Goss said. "It will not age well."

At this point in the article, there are a fair number of questions to be asked. What exactly is a national debt, and who does the government owe money to?

The national debt is the amount of money that the government borrows to cover the "outstanding cost of expenses accrued over time," according to the Treasury Department. Goss explains that the federal debt accounts for more than 110% of the US's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or the sum of all a country's economic output.

About \$24.3 trillion worth of the debt is held by entities that are not the federal government. This consists of state and local governments, corporations and even the governments of other countries. Other countries own about a third of our debt, with the largest stakeholder being China, who, by itself, owns about 8%, according to the Federal Reserve's website.

Continuing to put off the national debt will create a negative feedback loop that will continue to hurt young people. Goss talked about the risk of defaulting on debt, which is when

the government stops paying interest. The Department of the Treasury is taking "dramatic steps" to avoid default at all costs. "What they're taking is some of the payments that go into the postal retirement plan. Now it's going to other purposes," Goss said. "So they're avoiding that now, they'll have to pay that back."

Goss said that "[defaulting] would be a calamity." Defaulting on debt would mean higher interest rates on borrowed money, which would disproportionately affect those with less money. "I'll talk about young versus old, young being say, under 30 years of age, those individuals are more borrowers, rather than lenders," Goss said. "I'm in the age bracket, who're more likely to be lenders, and borrowers are really going to be hurt by these higher interest rates."

Goss said that the US will default on its debt if it isn't able to raise the borrowing limit by the first week of June. If congress can't come to a consensus, he says the effects would be almost incomprehensible. There would be cuts in Social Security payments. "Another factor is very likely that you would have significant increases in unemployment. The Federal Reserve's raising interest rates, and those higher rates will increase unemployment," if the US were to default on its debt, according to Goss.

Because of a rise in interest rates as a result of a possible default, high schoolers might have a hard time finding a summer job. "[Those who] are about to take that first summer job, that summer job may not be there [because of higher rates]," Goss said.

In essence, the whims of the economy and the federal government affect high schoolers just as much, if not more, than the adults participating in it. A failure to raise the debt ceiling would be, as Goss puts it, a "calamity" for all, but especially younger and poorer people. While it may not be a sexy issue, or one that is easy to understand for that matter, it is important for engaged youth to keep an eye on what is going on with money locally, nationally and internationally.

Goss quoted Herb Stein, a chief economist for President Nixon. "If something can't go on forever, it will stop," he said. "At some point in time, it's got to be addressed. And we keep putting it off."

# arts & culture

## BEST MOVIES OF 2022

The most wonderful movies of the year reminded us that cinema isn't dying, it's evolving.

Jane McGill  
arts & culture editor

**A**ll the Beauty and Bloodshed”  
In a year that continued to be marred by the institutional and ecological collapse that has become little more than a fixture of everyday life, I have increasingly experienced the apathy brought on by the severity of the social issues my generation faces as we approach adulthood. Many of the year's greatest movies sought to address this collective lethargy in some way, yet none did so quite as resplendently as Laura Poitras's "All the Beauty and Bloodshed," an exhilarating masterpiece which cuts through our cultural malaise like a proverbial chainsaw. An intensely personal and unpredictably structured portrait of the life of photographer and activist Nan Goldin, Poitras's documentary is a melding of art, activism, and unbridled rage, and an unflinching testament to the power of all three to enact real, meaningful change.

### "Tár"

There is no such person as Lydia Tár. But one could be forgiven for mistaking filmmaker Todd Field's ominous, meticulous, and utterly mesmerizing return to directing for a biopic. Its titular character, a world-renowned composer and effortlessly seductive sociopath, is so terrifyingly realistic and exquisitely suited to the discourse which dominated our culture in 2022, that her nonexistence is a wonder unto itself. The true genius of Todd's creative vision, however, lies in how he molds the movie around its ferocious antiheroine. Every frame is consciously chosen, and every composition is methodically arranged, establishing a tangible world that gradually echoes the unraveling psyche of its main character. It is a remarkable cinematic feat, one whose success is inseparable from Cate Blanchett's career-topping performance. The movie is no parable, but instead an interrogation which invites the audience to contemplate their own place in the questions it poses about the ever-changing nature of power in the modern world.

### "The Eternal Daughter"

The stark emotional insight of Joanna Hogg's movies lay in the sparseness of their plot and settings. It's precisely this disregard for the established norms of narrative art that allows Hogg to transmute something deeply personal, her most sincere and intimate ruminations, to the screen. "The Eternal Daughter" is spectral and vaporous, a ghost story that seeks not to frighten the audience, but to quietly coax meaning from the psychological depths of the mother-daughter relationship at its center. The success of this fable belongs as much to Tilda Swinton, whose casting in both of the lead roles is a bona fide triumph. Swinton is a master of her craft, a magnificent chameleon who takes the challenge the movie presents as a demonstration of what she is capable of.

### "Armageddon Time"

The preeminent trend in cinema this year was filmmakers turning inwards, reflectively crafting movies whose dramatic frameworks are derived from memories of their own upbringings and whose lead characters are thinly veiled versions of themselves. What sets James Gray's "Armageddon Time" well above its semi-autobiographical contemporaries is how it abandons the rose-colored glasses through which most filmmakers see their own past, confronting head on the grave inequalities and moral compromises that shaped his childhood in 1980s New York. The movie's forthright and occasionally comedic tone obscures the melancholic tragedy at its heart, one which laces the nostalgic yearning to return to childhood innocence with the earnest regrets of youthful transgressions and their lasting effects on others. Through Gray's nuanced examination of his own privilege, he draws shockingly relevant parallels between then and now, repudiating the political refrain of returning to a glorious past by illustrating that such a thing never existed in the first place.

### "Everything Everywhere All At Once"

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's genre-bending multiverse fantasy, feels like the beginning of a new phenomenon. It is one of the only pieces of art I have ever experienced which successfully captures the bizarre, unplaceable feeling of being chronically online in 2022. It is a glorious, fractal, and stylistically insane whirligig of a movie, one which artfully balances the comic antics of an interdimensional adventure with the sincere emotion of a family drama. It is this balancing act that allows the Daniels to explore both the existential nihilism of Gen Z and the generational trauma of Asian Americans so pensively, endearing this outlandish indie movie to mainstream audiences.

### "Aftersun"

When seen through the lens of our own memory, the moments in time that once seemed to be just another part of ordinary life come to possess a deeper meaning. The dramatic masterstroke of Charlotte Wells' "Aftersun" is how it assembles the words and images to capture



Photo Courtesy of Focus Features

this nebulous yet universal feeling, accruing an emotional poignancy that lasts long after the credits roll. It is an abstract, impressionistic piece of cinema, one which reclaims the medium's dormant potential to operate within the dream-like realm of the subconscious.

### "Nope"

Since his great transition from television funnyman to horror director, Jordan Peele has established himself as a biting social satirist. In "Nope," the social critique Peele offers is as prescient as ever, but its execution is far subtler, leaving the audience to parse out its sweeping moral and cultural implications for themselves. It is a riotously entertaining piece of blockbuster cinema, one whose impeccably maintained atmosphere of suspense surreptitiously builds a sense of dread that begins to echo far beyond its frames. I sympathize with those who went in expecting a more concise social commentary and were confused by this quiet exploration of an elusive duality. But for me, a social critique which provides no real answers to the questions it begs, but wrestles with them nonetheless still provides immensely valuable insight.

### "The Fabelmans"

If Steven Spielberg were to never sit behind a camera again, he could do so secure in the knowledge that in the final moments of his Herculean career, he still had the cinematic magic that has mesmerized moviegoers for the last 50 years. "The Fabelmans" exists somewhere between fact and fiction, an aptly restrained and vividly introspective look at his childhood torn between his obligations to his family and his burgeoning love of filmmaking. In this self-aware reflection on his own coming-of-age, Spielberg recreates his earliest experiences with cinema, and unravels how the emotional turmoil of his youth molded him into the greatest showman on earth. It's a therapy session in movie form, as evocative, exacting, and utterly captivating as anything in Spielberg's filmography.

### "Decision to Leave"

In this erotic thriller Park Chan-wook purposely withholds a grandiose moment of realization, the third act epiphany that seems to be in every noir, from the audience. Such is the tantalizing and serpentine nature of his erotic thriller about two perfectly irreconcilable lovers, one which tantalizes the viewer with its incessant gesturing towards the internal tensions which drive the sordid characters' actions, while denying us the catharsis we expect. It is a dazzling cinematic work, equal parts gorgeous and gripping, seeing Chan-wook and cinematographer Ji-young Kim crafting its imaginative visual style to match the mercurial nature of this cautionary tale about the risks of longing.

### "Triangle of Sadness"

Upon my first viewing of Ruben Östlund's film festival favorite, I thought it was frustratingly clumsy. On subsequent viewings, however, I realized that the extraordinary coup that Östlund has executed here runs deeper than the outrageous chaos that unfolds onscreen. "Triangle of Sadness" succeeds most as a subversive work of tone and mood, capturing an unsettling feeling that has become endemic to contemporary life. It's the sensation of going on with your established routines, attempting to maintain a reassuring structure to your everyday life, just as the whole world feels like it's collapsing around you. When seen through this lens, the imprecise, absurd nihilism of the movie can be understood as an instinctive response to the abhorrent faults of the rich and powerful.

An extended version of this article can be read at [www.omahacentralregister.com](http://www.omahacentralregister.com)



**BEST ALBUMS** on page 12



**GLASS ONION** on page 13



**SKATING** on page 15

# BEST ALBUMS OF 2022

**Bobby Winton**  
*proofreader*

**A**nd in the Darkness, Hearts Aglow” Natalie Mering, professionally known as Weyes Blood, combined the lush baroque pop she created on her previous three LPs with bewitching songwriting on “And in the Darkness, Hearts Aglow”. My favorite song of the album is the lead single, “It’s Not Just Me, It’s Everybody.” The steady pace of the track contrasts with the uneasy lyrics that express emptiness in an ever-changing world. Every time I listen to this album in its entirety, I feel as if I’m being drifted away by her enchanting melodies.

#### “Beatopia”

Beatrice Kristi Ilejay Laus, or Beabadoobee, makes music that always plays like the soundtrack to a coming-of-age movie in my head. From the haunting and ambient “Beatopia Cultsong” to the heartfelt “Ripples” Laus manages to forge a piece of carefully crafted work that will have you screaming along with the windows down, then choking back tears in a dark corner of your room. You will not regret listening to the playful longing and nostalgia that you will find in “Beatopia”.

#### “Crash”

“Crash” by Charli XCX is exercise in time travel, to the defining era of unchallengeable pop icons—the 1980s. She draws inspiration from Prince, Janet Jackson, and early Madonna, with their arid, echoing drum and “orchestra hit” keyboard samples. While some listeners will be disappointed that she has steered away from the experimental productions of her previous two albums, she has always excelled, like Jackson, at finding melody in Morse-code-like repetition (Charli once described her writing style as “pick a note and yell it for a while”).

#### “Five Seconds Flat”

With the release of 2022’s “five seconds flat”, McAlpine has designed a diverse collection of tracks that showcases her incredible songwriting. McAlpine draws inspiration out of R&B to jazz to heavier indie rock as her powerful vocals effortlessly link the different productions styles together. The production choices and innovations are nothing short of meticulous, that allows countless listens, as I find myself finding something new each time I listen. The lyrical subject matter ventures into particularly dark topics of relationship toxicity, lack of control over one’s life, and even cuts “reckless driver” off prematurely as the counterpart character crashes their car. Despite the negative vibes that hang over the ambience like spiderwebs, McAlpine manages to pull off the cautiously optimistic tone that so many people are drawn to for comfort in music. It’s the idea that even though things are bad now, it doesn’t mean they will be bad forever.

#### “Mani/Pedi”

Tate Farris, professionally known as Baby Tate, has yet to break into the mainstream despite many popular songs. Her vocal work is just as impressive as her diverse and intricate production value. She displays her range from the sultry run on “Do Better” to the evil singsong of “Karma”, and the interplay between her own lead and backing vocals on “What’s



Photo Courtesy of Neil Krug

Love.” Vocally, there are times when Tate sounds like a one-woman girl group. Other artists have to collaborate to get the quality hooks and harmonies Tate can produce herself.

#### “Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers”

If you’ve been following Kendrick Lamar Duckworth for the last decade and change, the through line for his career has been evolution. I don’t think “Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers” is always an easy listen. The Alchemist produced “We Cry Together” featuring Taylour Paige could make people uncomfortable, but if hearing a man and a woman argue this violently and passionately hits you that way that was exactly the point. Through over 70 minutes of Lamar’s latest, every facet of life for the young Compton rapper is held up to the light. Love, pain, hope, despair, triumph, defeat, it’s all there.

#### “Preacher’s Daughter”

There is a sprawling sensibility apparent on Ethel Cain’s debut album “Preacher’s Daughter”, where many of the songs average more than 6 minutes but you never descend into malaise because each new point of interest—floating vocals; a shocking, visceral lyric; an almost Springsteen-adjacent guitar solo—keeps you primed for what’s to come. As a whole, the album is a Southern Gothic, with beautiful sadness as well as a twisted, cruel tragedy.

#### “<COPINGMECHANISM>”

On an album with plenty already working in its favor, the pacing of “<COPINGMECHANISM>” might be its strongest weapon. Willow Smith pinballs their way from one emotion to the next, with pure rage and regret on the opener “<maybe> it’s my fault” creating the perfect atmosphere for the

sprawling range of emotions on the rest of the album. While I find myself enjoying the heavier production style on some songs, the softer production on others allows for Willow’s songwriting ability to shine through.

#### “SOS”

In SZA’s long awaited “SOS”, she sacrifices cohesion for a diverse track list. This album is not perfect, but SZA is pushing herself as an artist, forging an album that stretches across a wide range of styles, genres, and emotions. She bends between rapping and singing with ease, making the album’s extensive run time worth the listen. Her heavy guitar and production style like Beabadoobee on “F2F” and lively vocals on “Smoking on my Ex Pack” construct an album of unique and varied sound.

#### “Un Verano Sin Ti”

“Un Verano Sin Ti” is not the first heartbreak album by Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, or Bad Bunny, but it is his most grounded. On his latest release, Ocasio uses playful lyrics to create his most in-depth exploration of lost love in the Caribbean. While “Un Verano Sin Ti” is ostensibly about a person and their absence in Benito’s life, the album’s joy and yearning always shines through. Instead of selling audiences another big, genre-bending experiment, on “Un Verano Sin Ti” Benito opts for emotional intimacy and cultural specificity, which the music cultivates at every turn.

An extended version of this article can be read at [www.omahacentralregister.com](http://www.omahacentralregister.com)

## The rise of BookTok at Central

**Grace Sunseri**  
*contributing writer*

**A**lmost a year ago, Lucy Puls decided to buy the book “It Ends With Us” because she had seen it all over TikTok. She had never liked reading, but since so many people were talking about it, she decided to give it a try. This book started her love for reading and books and now she reads constantly. While teens were locked in their houses during the pandemic, many picked up the hobby of reading. Social media, especially TikTok, has had a major influence in what books they have been reading.

Much like the earlier BookTube, BookTok is a community on the app of TikTok where people make a variety of videos, all revolving around reading and books. Book recommendations, book hauls, and reading tropes are the videos that are common to see.

BookTok has helped students reignite their passion for reading. “I never used to read, I hated books” says freshman Audriana Reese. “But the books I’ve been reading because of BookTok slay, they’re so good.” Puls also said “I

got back into reading... because I kept seeing books and books and books on TikTok.”

One of the most popular authors on BookTok is Colleen Hoover. The romance author has been known over the past decade in other book communities online, but nothing compares to her TikTok fame. Since blowing up online in 2020 her sales have skyrocketed. By October of 2022, Hoover had sold 8.6 million print books, more than the Bible and Dr Seuss. Half of the books on the Top 10 bestsellers list are Hoover’s books.

Puls said, “Her writing style and the types of books she writes just interest a lot of people.”

While most people have had to either buy the print books from stores or download the online versions, the Central Library will soon be holding these books.

Librarian Jennifer Kawecky said, “Many students have asked for Colleen Hoover books... Some of these will be on our next order.”

Purchase yearbooks at [yearbookforever.com](http://yearbookforever.com) and search “Central”

# 'Knives Out' sequel is a disappointing mess

Claire Nipper  
staff writer

**G**lass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" is a feeble attempt to follow the triumph that was 2019's "Knives Out." Rian Johnson, director of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" and "Looper," directed both "Knives Out" and "Glass Onion," though his work has faced a steady decline in quality. "Knives Out" was a masterpiece of acting, screenwriting, and cinematography. Johnson showcased his talents thoroughly and explicitly throughout its production, yet in "Glass Onion" his writing falls flat.

One of the most frustrating tropes present in poorly written mystery novels occurs when the writer withholds information from the audience, and simply reveals it as the resolve to the mystery. Though Johnson was successful in his use of this trope in "Knives Out," it only worked because of Marta's (Ana de Armas) character. Marta recounted her experiences to Benoit Blanc in a way that allowed the audience to see the story unfold, without rendering the exposition pointless or letting the tension run slack. Unfortunately, in "Glass Onion," that is exactly what happened.

The first hour of "Glass Onion" largely follows Benoit Blanc in his experiences on the island and with the other guests. It seems to the audience as if he had received an invitation like all the others and was meeting all of them for the first time. At about 60 minutes in, we find out that this is all false. In fact, Benoit Blanc knew about all the conflict between the friends, and had conspired with one of the guests to arrive on the island and investigate. Even though the audience had been following him as the main character, in the same way they followed Marta in "Knives Out," this information had been withheld, and its reveal served as the big twist which climaxed the plot. This plot structure is characteristic of lazy writing and leaves viewers unsatisfied after the release of tension. There was no mystery to unravel along the way, no way the audience could have deciphered along with Blanc; it was simply a flashback that showed them what actually occurred.

Even amid all the plot failings, more contradictions appear. The napkin upon which Andi sketched her initial plan for the



Photo Courtesy of Netflix

company Alpha, which Miles claimed to be his own work, is the sole piece of physical evidence that drives the plot. Even though it cannot be proven in court when the napkin was written on or by whom, the audience is expected to suspend their disbelief enough to allow the movie to conclude. Though it is necessary for the audience to suspend their disbelief in many well written movies, when the plot reaches territory that is simply too unrealistic, the story begins to come apart at the seams.

Edward Norton (Miles Bron), Janelle Monae (Andi and Helen Brand), and Madelyn Cline (Whiskey) offered outstanding performances in "Glass Onion," considering the characters and script they were given. Janelle Monae had an especially difficult role in this film. Because she played both Andi and Helen, the Brand twins, and occasionally played both at the same time (Janelle, acting as Helen, who is in turn impersonating Andi), she would have to dive incredibly deep into her acting to match the characters yet show contrast through idiosyncratic behaviors and speech. Yet, the characters written for her were ultimately stereotypical and riddled with plot holes. During the first hour of the movie, technically she played Helen, though it was Helen impersonating her sister Andi. Yet the way they explain Helen's imperceptible impression of Andi was the fact that Andi was supposedly a relentless and thorough diary-writer.

But this falls back to a previous inconsistency: the napkin. If Andi recorded all the events of her life in her journals, wouldn't she have written her plans for Alpha down and the events and consequences of Miles's subsequent betrayal? These inconsistencies in "Glass Onion" lead me to be continually confused and uninterested by its story.

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# Do artists owe us new music?

Charlie Yale  
sports/web editor

I was lucky enough to see Virginian singer-songwriter Lucy Dacus in concert in New Haven, Connecticut at the end of September. This show was a part of Dacus's last tour of her 2021 album, "Home Video." Ever since she started touring, Dacus has devoted the last song of each concert to something unreleased. For her debut album, "No Burden," she would play "Night Shift" which would become the most listened-to song in her catalogue. For tours of "Historian," she would play "Thumbs" from "Home Video." And for her tour of "Home Video," she played an unreleased version of a song that will hopefully be featured in her fourth studio album.

As an adamant Lucy Dacus fan, it's always enjoyable to speculate about new music. Twitter accounts like @didphoebe provide daily updates on whether Phoebe Bridgers has released new music. While mostly for satirical effect — because most albums now predictably release on Fridays — the mere existence of these accounts shows that fans wanting new music from their favorite artists is nothing new. Now with the confirmed rumor of the indie-supergroup boygenius releasing at the end of March, insufferable sad people everywhere will be nearly bursting with excitement for new music. But rushing the creative process or skipping steps can create negative effects for both fans and artists.

On the one hand, it is human nature to continue the pursuit of something one enjoys. I will always love albums like Bridgers's "Punisher" and boygenius' self-titled EP. But listening to the same music repeatedly can get old. So, it seems only natural for people to want new music to grace their ears with from their favorite artists. People form "parasocial" relationships with artists (defined as psychological relationships experienced by audience members in their mediated encounters with performers in mass media) and feel negative emotions when left behind by their favorite artists without an album for years on end.

Many people, including myself, experience a type of parasocial relationship or interaction on a semi-regular basis. My favorite singers, writers, artists and speakers have no idea that I exist, but on some level, it does feel like I "know" them through their art. One of the largest

examples of this phenomena is ARMY — the organized fanbase of K-Pop band BTS — a powerful entity that is tens of millions strong. It is hard to quantify how a group as large as ARMY sees a band, but it is almost impossible for BTS to recognize all members of the group as individuals, and it would be even harder to comprehend. On the other hand, artists who release music multiple times per year can tire out some listeners. Prioritizing quantity over quality certainly comes through in many cases.

In the end, all sides can feel like they are getting "the short end of the stick."

While it is fun — and quite frankly not possible to stop — theorizing about new music, pressures from fans or otherwise conflict with the artistic process. The artistic process is completely abstract — there are no steps to it, unlike the scientific process, and it is not logical. But it is how we create. We cannot and will not stop theorizing, probably ever, but alas.

As Dacus says in "The Shell," "Put down the pen, don't let it force your hand."



Photo Courtesy of Matador Records

## Ask the Register

Ella Levy  
opinion editor

**Q**uestion: How do I stop wasting my emotions and time on a problematic person I've already tried to cut out of my life? I've blocked them on all socials, don't talk to them at school, but they still treat my friends immaturely.

Dear Distressed Overthinker,  
Putting some distance between you and someone problematic is always effective, but in this situation with someone you go to school with, this solution will not always work. Because you inevitably must be around them, you must learn how to turn their toxicity into something positive or you will let them ruin every moment you are around them.

Instead of focusing on them and what they are doing, focus on yourself. Think of something that makes you happy. If you are with a friend talk to them as a distraction. Focus on having fun where you are and ignoring that problematic person. Moving on to your friends. You cannot control other people's actions. Meaning you cannot control the toxic person or your friends. So, if your friends repeatedly choose to put themselves in this situation, unfortunately there is not much you can do.

It is always good to comfort your friends and be there for them, but if your friends are placing themselves with the problematic person on purpose, you might want to think about putting up a boundary by telling your friends you care about them and how this problematic person affects how you feel, and that you don't want to hear about them is a way to distance yourself even further from that person.

It is you putting yourself in a situation with the toxic person. Even if you are not interacting with them, being around them may affect you. If you are near them, see if there is anywhere else you can go. If you are going to be somewhere with them where you cannot put enough distance between you and the problematic person, distract yourself and do not let them affect you.

I recommend being kind to this person when you must. Returning their toxicity will not do you any favors. But you also need to remember to put up boundaries and be upfront, if they are doing something you consider too far.

This person is not worthy of your or your friends' emotions or time, so do not let them control it. Have self-respect by putting a distance, implementing boundaries, and ignoring their actions.

Don't take it personally and just ignore, ignore, ignore. Good luck Distressed Overthinker and thanks for writing.

## It's Private!

Noemi Gilbert

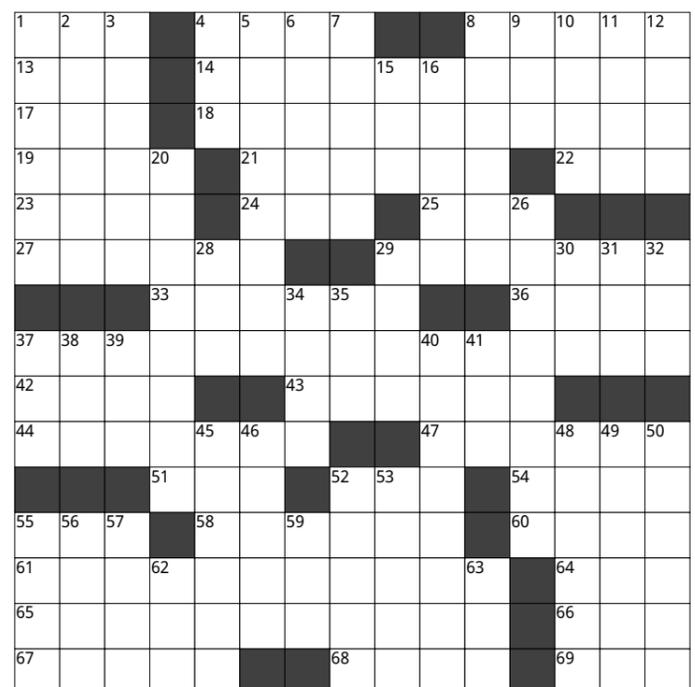
### ACROSS

- 1 Short sandwich?
- 4 Quatre plus quatre
- 8 UF athlete
- 13 Argentinian article
- 14 \* Dirty
- 17 "\_\_\_ be my pleasure"
- 18 It includes green curry and rice noodles
- 19 Small amounts
- 21 Troubled thoughts
- 22 Cover
- 23 Give off
- 24 Unspecified degree
- 25 So-so answers
- 27 Rage
- 29 Response to a repeated request
- 33 Militarizing
- 36 Chew
- 37 Like a secret... or like this puzzle's starred clues
- 42 Flim-\_\_\_
- 43 Prepares
- 44 Like a seance or Hanukkah party
- 47 Second book of Moses
- 51 Neither's partner
- 52 UNL cheer
- 54 Like the current class of 2025, abbv.

- 55 Journalist and NAACP co-founder \_\_\_ B. Wells
- 58 Wealthiest Omahan
- 60 Carry
- 61 Most of the Earth's interior
- 64 On behalf of
- 65 \* High socioeconomic class
- 66 Rule enforcer
- 67 Bothers
- 68 Singles
- 69 Member of a metaphoric septet

### DOWN

- 1 Hotel rooms that may have Jacuzzis
- 2 \* Wild
- 3 Stylish person, in slang
- 4 Shack
- 5 \* Plea for release
- 6 Lil Nas X: "That's What \_\_\_"
- 7 Femur's home
- 8 Kyoto entertainer
- 9 Jerk
- 10 Work
- 11 Every prefix?
- 12 Cattail, e.g.
- 15 Fans' creations, abbv.
- 16 Renaissance instruments
- 20 Weak arguments
- 26 Pointer
- 28 Poet's before



- 29 Charlie Brown: "\_\_\_ a rock"
- 30 Popular tabletop game, abbv.
- 31 Engagement ring highlight
- 32 Dir. from Atlanta to Miami
- 34 I of MIT, abbv.
- 35 The science guy
- 37 Close pal
- 38 Inventor Whitney
- 39 Damage, as a reputation
- 40 \* Online identity
- 41 Request for music control: "Can I have the \_\_\_?"
- 45 Lessens

- 46 Tehran resident
- 48 Goofball
- 49 \* Like a personal decision
- 50 Everest guide
- 52 \_\_\_-Roman
- 53 Make a wager
- 55 "Are you awake?" response
- 56 Drug, slang
- 57 Swiss peaks
- 59 37th pres.
- 62 Vietnamese new year
- 63 Guitar namesake \_\_\_ Paul

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# Omaha's ice rinks: The Register Reviews

## Hitchcock Ice Rink

Chloe Johnson

staff writer

It was the summer after third grade, and I was hot and sweaty from playing tag in the park next to Motto McLean Ice Arena, where I was attending the party of the year: ice skating with the entire class invited. The cool air of the rink was bliss on my red cheeks. Immediately, the smell of popcorn filled my nose, but I was so excited to skate. I was not even hungry. I laced up the skates I chose—figure skates, not hockey ones like some of the boys in my class—they fit tight, locking my ankles. However, many class parties had taught me that the discomfort would soon be drowned out by the magical glide of metal on ice. Soon, I was on the ice in a rink filled with other sticky elementary schoolers and scary middle schoolers. My friends and I spent hours sliding around, holding hands, racing, trying to do tricks, and of course, falling. Eventually, a hockey or figure skating team—would show up and kick us off the ice. Reluctantly, we would hobble off to our parents to beg for a \$1 bag of popcorn for the happy, sleepy ride home. Now, as a senior in high school, I returned to the Hitchcock ice rink. It was smaller than I remember but still packed with happy kids. Now I see why so many kids in my lower-middle income school celebrated their birthdays there. A day pass is only \$5 and the many snack-nachos, chips, candy, pop, and popcorn-are all under \$3. Overall, it is an extremely affordable activity, especially for its location. However, the catch with Hitchcock is that its schedule differs each day and each week. Hockey and figure skating can also show up online as part of “open-skate” hours, so knowing when the rink is actually available to the public is impossible without a call. Still great for planned events, just not spontaneous plans. Nostalgia aside,—Hitchcock wins for affordability, just not availability.

Chloe Johnson The Register

## Grover Ice Rink

Ann Carlson

staff writer

I have skated at many Omaha ice rinks and Grover Ice Rink is the best. Grover Ice is locally owned and located at 6171 Grover Street, about five minutes from midtown Omaha and 15 minutes from Central. It is open every day with public skating from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and varying times on the weekend. When I walked into Grover, I was greeted by a friendly staff that welcomed me and explained the types of skates they offered. They offer both figure skates and hockey skates in most sizes. I got figure skates and they fit true to size and didn't leave my ankles in pain while skating. There was the perfect amount of people there — not too many where you could barely skate —but enough where it didn't feel awkward. They cleaned the ice once while I was there, but it only interrupted my skating for 10 minutes. While I was waiting, I went to the concession stand. The concession stand offered typical snacks like chips and candy as well as soft pretzels and hot dogs. They also had hot chocolate, which really added to the ice skating experience. The skaters were mainly families with little kids. There were a few groups of middle schoolers and a few groups of high schoolers. There was a birthday party for elementary kids, which seemed like it could be common there because they offer party rooms in the back. You can bring your own cake and food which is nice for parties. When it comes to price, Grover is one of the cheapest places to skate. General admission is \$5 and to rent skates is an additional \$3. Most ice rinks in Omaha cost well over \$10, so I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the price. If you are looking for a cheap and fun ice skating rink, Grover Ice Rink is the place to go.

## UNMC Ice Rink

Alice Larson

copy editor

Quaint, quiet, quality. Ice skating at the UNMC ice rink feels similar to a fairytale. The small rink is secluded within UNMC's Leavenworth campus and offers the perfect refuge from often middle schooler packed rinks. The rink is completely outdoor, aside from the small hut that one must walk into to rent skates, and pay the cost of admission. I believe outdoor rinks to be superior because one truly feels immersed in a winter wonderland. There is something about the harsh fluorescent lights, hordes of middle school skaters, and the wafting smells of fried food from concession stands, at indoor rinks that, personally, sets me over the edge anxiety wise. I have frequented UNMC's rink throughout my childhood, and I have never skated there with more than one or two groups on the ice at the same time as me. A number of skaters, I find to be perfect, not too few that it feels like a ghost town, but not too many that I feel self-conscious of my inability to stay on my skates without falling frequently. I also have found that UNMC's outdoor rink is slightly cheaper than the indoor rinks I've ventured to. The cost of admission at UNMC is quite reasonably priced at \$7 per person, whereas at indoor rinks I've paid as much as \$15. If you're looking for a secluded, scenic, reasonably priced place to skate,—UNMC should be your destination!

## Moylan Iceplex

Anja Kovacevic

staff writer

The Moylan Iceplex is an ice skating rink that is a good option for students living closer to West Omaha. The entrance costs \$9.95 for people over 12 years old and \$7.95 for those younger. Two rinks are available, but only one is open to the general public. Both rinks are large and have multiple entrances onto the ice. The location is in an easy-to-find spot, and parking is accessible. At first glance, the rink was crowded and loud, proving the complex has a reputation for being a hangout for middle schoolers and younger kids. Many attractions were for children, such as a small arcade area possessing fun prizes. The Iceplex is an ideal environment for people

who want to take a little brother or sister skating. For teenagers and adults, it may be less entertaining. The concession stands held snacks and drinks one would expect: slushies, popcorn, candy, and hot chocolate were all available. The stand was organized similarly to one in a movie theater and had comparable prices. The employees were present, willing to help, and fast. By the concessions was the snack and rest area. This area was decently sized but could have been cleaner. There were many people on and off the rink; fortunately, there were multiple entrances, but some were placed in small areas, making them harder to approach. For beginners, handrails are alongside the edge, skater helpers are available for kids, and multiple exits and spots to take a break. Outside the rink, a generously sized watch area accommodates parents who want to keep an eye on their kids without being out on the ice. The ice was usually smooth and cleaned in an appropriate amount of time, considering how many people were there. The actual ice skates were the most significant problem for me. The skate rental process was easy, and the employees were helpful, but the skates could have been better. They seemed old and unclean and were so uncomfortable my ankles still hurt hours later. Overall, this isn't an unpleasant place for a quick skate or hangout. However, it would become irritating for longer skates or older attendees.



## Dinkers Bar and Grill



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# sports & leisure

## BILL SPARKS DEBATE ON TRANS ATHLETES

The current Nebraska's State Legislature session includes a bill posing to ban transgender athletes from playing school sanctioned youth sports.

Noemi Gilbert

news editor

Charlie Yale

sports/web editor

Nebraska's state legislature will potentially vote on banning transgender children from playing sanctioned school sports. The bill—titled the Sports and Spaces Act—was introduced on Jan. 17 by Senator Kathleen Kauth and would disallow students from entering bathrooms and locker rooms or playing on sports teams that disagree with their sex assigned at birth. The bill defines a “biological female” as “a person who was born with female anatomy with two X chromosomes,” and a “biological male” as “a person who was born with male anatomy with X and Y chromosomes.”

The proposed legislation creates three categories that scholastic sports must fall into: men, women, or coed/mixed, and disallows people from playing on a team if their biological sex doesn't match the category the team falls into, except for cisgender women who would want to play on a team that there “is no female team available for such sport.”

Johnny Redd, the communications manager of OutNebraska, an organization focused on advocacy on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community in the state, explained that bills like these are an attack on individual freedoms. “We believe these bills are dangerous, and that they create a lot of legal precedent for state sanctioned discrimination,” they said.

The bill, LB575, will also prevent students from entering bathrooms that don't match with their “biological sex.” Redd explained that this bill is similar to other bills banning people from entering bathrooms, colloquially called “bathroom bills.”

“This bill does kind of lie in a sticky area, because a lot of bathroom bills have been defeated in the federal courts under Title IX protections,” they said.

Senator Kathleen Kauth introduced the Sports in Spaces Act. She said that she was concerned about federal government overreach.

“The Biden administration says schools have to have a very specific policy on gender inclusivity, and if they don't, then they will pull their free and reduced lunch money,” she said.

On May 5, 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service announced that it would interpret the prohibition on discrimination based on sex included in Title IX to include discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. “This interpretation [will] help ensure its programs are open, accessible and help promote food and nutrition security, regardless of demographics,” USDA stated. Any organizations that receive funds from the Food and Nutrition Service must investigate allegations of discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, because by law, an organization engaging in Title IX discrimination cannot receive federal funds.

Kauth did not state that she knew of any cases in Nebraska where trans athletes had a “biological advantage” over cis athletes.

“I'm starting to get more people coming and talking to me about the issue, concerns about it,” Kauth said. “We want to put guidelines in place before it becomes a problem.” When asked if she had spoken with any transgender athletes about LB575, Kauth said, “You are either biological male or biological female based on your chromosomes and based on your genitalia.”

Kauth did not answer whether she had spoken with any



Charlie Yale | The Register

transgender athletes regarding the bill.

The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) created a Gender Identity Eligibility Committee in response to questions surrounding transgender athletes in 2016. The committee, before approving athletes, requires athletes to affirm and “exhibit consistent gender identity and expression,” that is verified by a physician along with a group of the athlete's peers.

Trans women must go through an extra layer of certification, involving submitting credible documentation that they've “either completed a minimum of one year of hormone treatment related to gender transition or undergone medically confirmed gender reassignment procedure, and, demonstrated to the Committee through a medical examination and testing and physiological testing that the transgender female student athlete does not possess physical or physiological advantages.”

Fewer than ten students have submitted an application to the NSAA Gender Identity Eligibility Committee since its creation, OutNebraska said.

The NSAA did not respond to a request to comment.

A study in the *Journal of Sporting Cultures and Identities* found that transgender women don't have biological or athletic advantages compared to cis athletes. The study, entitled “Race Times for Transgender Athletes” by Joanna Harper, tracked the performance of transgender women before and after testosterone suppression. The eight runners studied ran much slower post-testosterone suppression, “[S]low enough, in fact, that their age-graded performances were almost identical to their male AGs,” according to the study. The study concluded that “[i]t will take many more years before the average sports enthusiast understands that transgender women who have undergone testosterone suppression will not dominate women's sports.”

Redd said that this bill would have a negative effect on

transgender youth attempting to assimilate into a school environment. “Sports are a really important part of, for a lot of people, of their school experience. So I think the senators that have introduced this bill, maybe don't realize that trans kids just want to play sports, just like everybody else,” they said.

“My favorite thing about playing sports at Central is definitely the community,” an anonymous transgender student athlete said. “Everybody's really supportive of each other.”

“LGBTQ youth who reported having at least one LGBTQ-affirming space had 35% reduced odds of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year,” The Trevor Project, an organization dedicated to ending suicide among LGBTQ young people, stated. The athlete emphasized the importance of affirming spaces for young trans people.

“I definitely would have felt very dysphoric if I were not allowed to play girls' sports,” the athlete said. “Having another obstacle in the way would've been a big setback and caused pretty severe mental health issues.”

Another trans athlete, whose name will also be withheld, talked about how sports are important to his life, and ultimately quit school-sanctioned sports because of the environment. “I ran cross country in seventh and eighth grade, and I swam in seventh grade. I'm a huge Cowboys fan,” he said. He also said that he swam throughout elementary school. “I competed as the sex I was born with because I was still closeted at the time. [It brought up] a lot of discomfort and feeling like I didn't belong. I couldn't go on the boys' team, because I wasn't out, but it felt wrong to be on the girls team,” he said.

“I wish that [high school sports] were more to have fun or get exercise,” he said.

“There's this narrative of [transgender people] out there that we're a bunch of nasty things, and that's not who we are. We're your normal average students,” one trans student athlete said. “All those narratives need to be shut down.”



STUDENT SECTION on page 17



SHOT CLOCK on page 18



AWIT MAMER on page 19